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Partially cloudy sky and very light rain is likely at isolated places over Sri Vijaya Puram. Maximum and Minimum temperature will be around 29.5°C and 23.0°C respectively on Friday 02/01/2026.

Maximum Temperature (°C) of Date: 28.9

Minimum Temperature (°C) of Date: 22.8

Relative Humidity (%) at 0830 IST : 072

Relative Humidity (%) at 1730 IST : 072


Sunrise time on 02/01/2026 (in IST): 0540

Sunset time on 02/01/2026 (in IST): 1707

Rainfall upto 0830 hrs of date (last 24 hrs)- in mm: 000.0

Rainfall upto 1730 hrs of date in mm: 000.0

Rainfall (Progressive total from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025 upto 0830 hrs of date) in mm: 000.0



Weather Report

## Decisive role of DRDO weapons during Operation Sindoor serves as a testament to its commitment towards safeguarding national interests: Hon'ble Raksha Mantri on DRDO Day

### Hon'ble Raksha Mantri exudes confidence that DRDO will achieve the creation of Sudarshan Chakra soon

New Delhi, Jan. 1 (PIB)

"The weapon systems developed by DRDO played a decisive role during Operation Sindoor, which serves as a testament to the professionalism and commitment of the organisation towards safeguarding national interests," said Hon'ble Raksha Mantri, Shri Rajnath Singh during his visit to the DRDO Headquarters in New Delhi today on the occasion of 68<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day. Commending the DRDO for bolstering India's indigenous capabilities by equipping the Armed Forces with state-of-the-art technologies/equipment, Hon'ble Raksha Mantri stated that DRDO's equipment worked seamlessly during the operation, boosting the morale of the soldiers.

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri exuded confidence that the DRDO will play a crucial role in the creation of Sudarshan



Chakra as announced by Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi during his Independence Day 2025 address from the ramparts of Red Fort. "Under this initiative, DRDO is responsible for equipping our vital installations with an air defence system to ensure complete aerial protection over the next decade. We witnessed the importance of air defence in modern warfare

during Operation Sindoor. I am confident that DRDO will work wholeheartedly to achieve this goal soon," he said.

Shri Rajnath Singh praised the DRDO for becoming trust builders along with technology creators, which makes the people look towards it with hope, certainty, and belief. Acknowledging DRDO's collaboration with the private sector, he stated

that the increased engagement with the industry, academia and start-ups has resulted in the creation of a synergetic defence ecosystem. "DRDO has consistently improved its systems, processes, and working methods. From procurement to project management, from industry engagement to collaborating with start-ups and MSMEs, there is a visible effort to make the work easier, faster, and more reliable," he said.

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri called upon the DRDO to continue marching ahead in sync with the rapidly-evolving technological ecosystem, and keep coming out with products that are relevant to the changing times. He urged the organisation to continue focusing on innovation and identify more areas which can enhance the participation of the private sector. Appreciating the efforts being

(Contd. on last page)

## Consultative Committee of Ministry of Home Affairs to visit A&N Islands from Jan. 2 to 4

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1 Hon'ble Members of the Consultative Committee of Ministry of Home Affairs will be on visit to A&N Islands from Jan. 2 to 4. Soon after arrival, the

Members of the Committee will visit National Memorial Cellular Jail and also witness Light & Sound Show on Jan. 2. A meeting of Consultative

Committee of Ministry of Home Affairs on CFSL - NFSU will be held at Sri Vijaya Puram on Jan. 3, a press release from Protocol Unit, A&N Administration said.

## Assistance for farmers under Minor Irrigation scheme

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1 The Department of Agriculture, Andaman & Nicobar Administration is implementing schemes for "Development of Minor Irrigation" in Andaman & Nicobar Islands under UT plan. This initiative aims to support individual farmers and co-operative farming societies by enhancing irrigation infrastructure through various forms by providing financial assistance for the following components under the Loan-cum-subsidy, Shramdan-cum-subsidy and Cash-cum-subsidy pattern of assistance. In case of loan-cum-subsidy, the

beneficiary share can be availed as loan amount from Nationalized Bank. To avail the benefit of the schemes, the back end assistance is provided to the farmers for the following Components: ♦ Excavation of Ponds- Bonafide individual farmer with minimum 0.50 ha. of cultivable land/ Co-operative Farming Societies will be provided 50% of estimated cost or limited to Rs. 1,50,000/- per pond. ♦ Construction of RCC Ring well- Bonafide individual farmer irrespective of land holding/ Co-operative Farming Societies will

be provided 50% of estimated cost or limited to Rs. 1,00,000/- per well. ♦ Purchase of Pumpset (0.5 HP to 5.0 HP)- Bonafide individual farmers/ Co-operative farming societies irrespective of any land holding size. Subsidy will be provided for a minimum of 0.5 HP to maximum of 5.0 HP pumpset will be provided 50% of purchase cost or limited to Rs. 10,000/- per pumpset. ♦ Installation of Micro Irrigation System (Drip/ Sprinkler)- Bonafide individual farmer with minimum 0.05 ha. cultivable land/ Co-operative Farming Societies will

(Contd. on last page)

## PAWS initiative strengthened through Inter-Departmental collaboration to address Stray Animal Management

### General public can report presence of stray animal in public spaces over Helpline No. 112

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1

In a major move to manage the stray dog population and enhance public safety, the Department of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services (AH&VS), in collaboration with the District Administration and the Department of Rural Development (RD), is actively implementing the PAWS (Partnering for Animal Welfare & Sterilization) initiative with the objective of promoting humane, scientific, and

sustainable management of stray animal populations. As part of the PAWS initiative, an Orientation-cum-Training programme was conducted on July 25, 2025 which was attended by all the stakeholders including representatives of District Municipal Council, Rural Development Department, members of Tribal Council and PRI, College students among others. While the

responsibility for management and control of stray animals falls within the statutory purview of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Municipal bodies, the Department of AH&VS has voluntarily extended its support for undertaking essential veterinary and medical procedures, particularly Animal Birth Control (ABC), sterilization, and vaccination, as part of a coordinated and humane approach. As part of the initiative, during this month, two dedicated veterinary

teams, operating under the leadership of Dr. Mohammed and Dr. Baljit Kaur, were deployed at Shaheed Dweep and Swaraj Dweep, respectively. The teams successfully covered 91 animals at Shaheed Dweep and 121 animals at Swaraj Dweep under the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme and allied veterinary interventions. Smti Pinki Das, Pradhan, GP Shaheed Dweep; Shri Alok Mridha, Pradhan,

(Contd. on last page)

## Ensuring smooth functioning of Smart PDS 2.0 system & timely delivery of services

### All ration card beneficiaries urged to mandatorily update/ correct their ration card details through self-service online mode on official Smart PDS 2.0 portal

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1

The Directorate of Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs has informed all ration card beneficiaries that during review of data available in the Smart PDS 2.0 system, it has been noticed that a large number of ration cards do not contain complete and accurate information. Due to incomplete details such as Complete Address with Pin Code, Mobile number, Village/Ward Number, Tehsil, District and other mandatory fields are causing difficulties in

verification, approval and processing of ration card related services, including updation, correction and other beneficiary-oriented services to avoid cancellation of their ration cards. In order to ensure smooth functioning of the Smart PDS 2.0 system and timely delivery of services, all ration card beneficiaries have been advised to mandatorily update or correct their ration card details through self-service online mode on the official Smart PDS 2.0 portal : an.smartpds.nic.in

Beneficiaries have been requested to ensure that all mandatory fields are correctly filled while submitting their online application for updation/correction. Fair Price Shop (FPS) owners shall inform and guide their respective ration card beneficiaries about the mandatory requirements and assist them in applying online for updation or correction of ration card details through Smart PDS 2.0. Further, the ration card beneficiaries can also approach the

Directorate of CS&CA, Sri Vijaya Puram at Room No. 24 or their respective Supply Units for applying their update/correction of their ration card. The Department solicits the cooperation of all ration card beneficiaries for maintaining accurate records and for the efficient and transparent functioning of the Public Distribution System. For any further information, contact the Toll-Free Helpline: 03192-230337, a press release from Department of CS&CA said.

## TRAFFIC ADVISORY

### For assistance, contact: Traffic Helpline No.: 03192-243812/WhatsApp: 9531892228

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1

It is informed that in view of official delegation visit and to ensure smooth and safe flow of vehicles. Certain measures will be taken for maintaining orderly traffic conditions.

Certain alternative route will also be facilitated for public at specific locations for ease of movement as notified below.

03.01.2026 (Saturday)		
Main Route	Alternative Route	Timing
Netaji Stadium, Fire Brigade HQ, Secretariat, Dollygunj, Bathu Basthi, Garacharma, Sippighat, Dhanikhari	RGT Road - Hawaghar Jn. Nayagaon - Chakkargaon - Corbyn Chowk Jn.- Bathu Basthi (Vice versa)	02:30 pm to 05:30 pm

In case of any emergency, including travel to airport, attending an examination, medical requirements, or any urgent situation, commuters have been requested to contact the Traffic Control Room or send a message on

WhatsApp. Traffic Police A&N will provide priority facilitation for such movements. Nowhere road blockade or closure would be imposed. Alternative traffic route plan have been put in place to control the flow of traffic on roads, to

prevent congestion and to maintain smooth vehicular flow across the city.

Commuters have been advised to also plan their travel, Traffic Police personnel will assist in smooth movement, a press release from SP, Traffic said.

## Adhyaksh, ZPSA greets Islanders

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1 The Adhyaksh, Zilla Parishad, South Andaman, Shri Prakash Adhikari has extended his heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all Islanders on the auspicious occasion of the New Year 2026. In his message, he expressed his hope that the coming year would usher in peace,



prosperity, and overall well-being for the people of the A&N Islands.

## Training on Anemia Mukht Bharat imparted for ANMs and CHOs



Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan 1 A one day training on Anemia Mukht Bharat

was organized for ANMs and CHOs (Contd. on last page)

## Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, GoI to conduct first edition of Khelo India Tribal Games in Chhattisgarh during Feb.

Directorate of S&YA to conduct State Level Selection Trials in various sports disciplines on Jan. 6 & 7 for eligible tribal youth

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1 The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India is going to organize the first edition of the Khelo India Tribal Games in Chhattisgarh during February 2026, to provide a platform to showcase the sporting skills and thus a suitable platform for talent spotting for development pathways for gifted and talented youth to achieve excellence, specifically for Tribal Youth (Open-Age Category).

Andaman & Nicobar Sports Contingent, the Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, A&N Administration will conduct State Level Selection Trials in the

following sports disciplines on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2026 for eligible tribal youth.

Interested tribal youth have been requested to

(Contd. on last page)

## Restriction on carrying items in public functions

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1 This is with reference to the preparation of Police arrangements for the VVIP to the A&N Islands during the first week of January 2026; the VVIP will be attending public functions. From Security point of view, the

invitees/general public have been advised not to carry items such as Garland, Bouquet, Power Bank, Battery operated Toys, Coins, Pagers, Cameras, Binocular, Cigarette, Lighters, Match Box, Hand bags, Umbrella,

(Contd. on last page)



Decisive role of DRDO weapons during .....  
(Contd. from page 1)

made by the DRDO towards deep tech and next-generation technologies, he stated that headway in this endeavour will not only increase the nation's capabilities, but also strengthen the defence ecosystem.

Emphasising that the present era is not just of science, but of continuous development and constant learning, Shri Rajnath Singh stated that technology scanning, capability assessment, and future readiness are no longer just words in this changing world. "The world is changing every day. Technology, innovation, and new warfare domains are rapidly advancing, making yesterday's knowledge obsolete. We must never assume that the learning process has ended. We must continue learning and challenge themselves, paving the way for the new generation," he said.

During the meeting, Hon'ble Raksha Mantri was briefed by Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO, Dr Samir V Kamat about the ongoing R&D activities, achievements of the organisation in 2025, various initiatives in promoting industry, start-ups & academia and the roadmap for 2026.

Awareness prog. on drug and substance abuse held under 'Nasha Mukth Bharat Abhiyaan'

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1  
In connection with Nasha Mukth Bharat Abhiyaan, awareness programme on Drug and Substance Abuse was held on Dec. 30 at Gram Panchayat Brindaban. The programme was organized by Integrated Rehabilitation Center for Addicts (IRCA) under District Administration, South Andaman and collaboration with NAPDDR Directorate of Social Welfare, NTCP Directorate of Health Services and Anti-Narcotic CID Branch A&N Police. Large number of public and PRIs member, Gram Panchayat Brindaban attended the programme. Smt M.A Naseem Banu, Pradhan Gram Panchayat Brindaban and Shri U.K. Abdul Aziz, Zilla Parishad



Member Gram Panchayat, Brindaban addressed the gathering and urged them to refrain from addiction. Dr.M.K Mahato, Medical Officer DDR/IRCA, SA spoke at length regarding ill effect of alcohol and substance abuse, he also spoke about the methods how to refrain from substance abuse. Shri Rathindra Mallick, Psychologist Counselor, NTCP, Directorate of Health Services spoke on the ill effects of tobacco and how to refrain from tobacco. He also spoke the details of COTPA Act. Shri Surya Narayan, Assistant Sub Inspector, Anti-Narcotics (CID) spoke on the legal aspect including NDPS Act offences. Ms. Anchamma, Project Coordinator, NAPDDR, Directorate of Social Welfare, provided insights into the current status of drug addiction in the A&N Islands. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks proposed Shri Rohit Paroi, Project Coordinator- Cum-Vocation Counsellor, DDR/IRCA, a press release from DDR/IRCA, SA said.

Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, GoI to .....  
(Contd. from page 1)

attend the selection trials along with the documents issued by the A & N Administration viz. Original ST Certificate and two self-attested copies; Original State Domicile Certificate and two self-attested copies (Islander Card/ Local Certificate, etc).

Schedule and Venue of the State Level Selection Trials		
SPORTS DISCIPLINE	DATE AND TIME	VENUE
1. Football-Men	6 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 8:00 am	BJR Stadium, Car Nicobar
2. Football-Women	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 8:00 am	
3.Hockey-Men	6 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 10:00 am	
4.Hockey-Women	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 10:00 am	
5. Athletics-Men	6 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 8:00 am	Modern Sports Complex, Lapathy, Car Nicobar
6. Athletics-Women	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 8:00 am	
7.Weightlifting-Men	6 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 10:00 am	
8. Weightlifting-Women	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 10:00 am	
9. Swimming-Men	6 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 8:00 am	Swimming Pool and Archery Range, Netaji Sports Complex, Sri Vijaya Puram
10. Swimming-Women	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 8:00 am	
11.Archery-Men (Recurve & Compound)	6 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 8:00 am	
12. Archery-Women (Recurve & Compound)	7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2026, 8:00 am	

For any further queries, contact Shri. G Nagesh Rao, PET, 7063974074 and Shri.A G Praveen Rao, PET, 9474230278, a press release from Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs said.

Training on Anemia Mukth Bharat .....  
(Contd. from page 1)

on 29/12/2025 & 30/12/2025 in the Conference Hall of AYUSH Hospital, Junglighat. The training was aimed to combat anaemia among children, adolescents, women, and pregnant mothers and focuses on improving nutrition, promoting iron-rich diets, and providing iron and folic acid supplements. The program was graced by Dr H.M Siddaraju, Director of Health Services, Dr. B. Ajit Kumar, Link Officer, Deputy Director (FW) and Dr. Kalyan P Kadhane, Deputy Director (AYUSH).

The Director of Health Services emphasized on creating awareness on T3 (Test, Treat and Talk) camp in schools, Anganwadi Centres and Community level.

Dr. Bhawani Prasad S M, Assistant Professor (Medicine), ANIIMS, Dr Mitul Saha, SR, Community Medicine, ANIIMS and Dr. Rohit, SNO, UNDP were the resource persons for the above said training. Altogether 30 No. of ANMs and 25 CHOs from various health institutions were trained, a press release from DHS said.

Assistance for farmers under Minor ....  
(Contd. from page 1)

Societies will be provided 75% of system cost including Pumpset or Rs. 93,750/- per ha. whichever is less with 100% transport subsidy.

**Documents to be Submitted are:**

1. Filled application form in the prescribed format.
2. Latest copy of land record from CSC (in original) or attested by a Gazetted Officer / Revenue Officer.
3. Copy of Aadhaar Card.
4. Copy of bank details in favour of the farmer.
5. NOC from co-tenants (in case of joint property).
6. Mobile number linked with the applicant's bank account.

**How to Apply:**

Interested farmers have been requested to contact the Agriculture Sub-Depot or Zonal Office in their respective areas to obtain the prescribed application form.

The filled-in application form along with the required documents are to be submitted to the respective Zonal Office for availing the Assistance under Scheme. Application forms for the subsidy are available at all Agricultural Sub Depot and Zonal Agricultural offices in the Islands.

For further details, may contact Assistant Director (Soil)/Zonal Officers/Kisan Call Centre No. 03192-243434/18003451145, a press release from Department of Agriculture said.

Venue of written exam for post of Forest Ranger scheduled to be held at DBRAIT on Jan. 3 & 4 shifted to Carmel Senior Secondary School

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1  
The candidates appearing for the written examination for the post of Forest Ranger in the Department of Environment & Forests, A&N Administration scheduled to be held at DBRAIT, Dollygunj on 03.01.2026 & 04.01.2026 have been informed that due to administrative reasons, the venue of written examinations stands changed as indicated below.

Sl. No.	Subject (s)	Date	Day	Timing	Venue
1.	Computer Application, Computer Engineering, Computer Science	03/01/2026	Saturday	09:00 AM To 12:00 Noon	Carmel Senior Secondary School, Sri Vijaya Puram
2.	Forestry, Physics	03/01/2026	Saturday	02:00 PM To 05:00 PM	Carmel Senior Secondary School, Sri Vijaya Puram
3.	General Knowledge & General English	04/01/2026	Sunday	09:00 AM To 12:00 Noon	Carmel Senior Secondary School, Sri Vijaya Puram

All other terms, conditions and Hall tickets issued by the Department in this regard shall remain the same. There is no change in any other centers of examination on 4.1.2026. For any further information, the candidates may contact 03192-233233/241874, a press release from Van Sadan said.

J S Virat and S Bhavishya shine at 14<sup>th</sup> National Schools Chess C'ship 2025

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan 1  
Young chess talents J S Virat and S Bhavishya from the Andaman & Nicobar Islands delivered commendable performances at the 14th National Schools Chess Championship 2025, which concluded yesterday at the Sarusajai Indoor Stadium, Guwahati, Assam. The championship, held from 27<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, witnessed participation from over 1100 players across India, competing in twelve categories ranging from Under-7 to Under-17.

J S Virat delivered an outstanding performance in the Under-13 category, remaining undefeated throughout the



championship. He scored an impressive 6.5 points out of 9 rounds, secured eighth position, finished among the top ten players in a highly competitive national championship, and won a medal & cash prize at the national level.

In the Under-17 Girls category, S Bhavishya put up a brilliant performance, scoring 5.5 points out of 9 rounds to secure ninth position, finishing among the top ten players at the national level, earning a medal & cash prize.

In addition, six other players from the Andaman & Nicobar Islands namely ACM Disha Meenakshi G (Under-11 Girls), ACM Saw Jinson Samuel (Under-9), ACM Agrata Singh (Under-13 Girls), ACM Nuhaan Siddique V K (Under-7), ACM Agrima Singh, and ACM Priya Singh (Under-13 Girls) also put up commendable performances in their respective age categories, a press release from ANCA said.

Pre-Marital Communication Center inaugurated at Andaman Law College

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan 1  
The Pre-Marital Communication Center (PMCC) was inaugurated at Andaman Law College. The PMCC is an initiative of the National Commission for Women Capacity Building Cell, with the tagline 'Tere Mere Sapne.' This center is the 64<sup>th</sup> one in the country and the first in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands UT.

Shri Ravinder Kumar, Director, Directorate of Social Welfare, A&N Islands, has inaugurated the center in the presence of students, staff, and



faculty members of Andaman Law College. In his address, Shri Ravinder said that the lack of premarital preparation leads to marital discord, disharmony, and dissatisfaction, leading to the development of mistrust, an increase in cases of domestic violence and abuse, and eventually leading to divorce among young couples.

Speaking on the occasion, Principal, ALC said that the very objective of this PMCC is to help prospective partners understand that if marriage is a choice, let it be an informed choice, a press release from ALC said.

Deptt. of AH&VS conducts awareness prog. on stray dog management in two schools in South Andaman

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1  
Continuing its intensive Island-wide mass awareness campaign on 'Stray Dog Bite Prevention and Management', the Department of AH&VS organised two dedicated sessions on Dec. 26, 2025, reaching out to students and teachers at GSSS Prothrapur and Saraswati Shishu Mandir Senior Secondary School, Pathergudda.

At GSSS Prothrapur, Dr. V Subramanian, Senior Veterinary Officer (SVO), Veterinary Hospital Garacharma, addressed students and teachers. The session covered



safe behaviour around stray and pet dogs, immediate first-aid measures in case of bites, the importance of thorough wound washing and prompt reporting, and the scientific role of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme in humanely controlling the stray dog population.

Similarly, at Saraswati Shishu Mandir Senior Secondary School, Pathergudda, the SVO sensitised students and teachers on recognising signs of aggression in dogs, avoiding situations that provoke bites, responsible community practices such as not feeding strays on roadsides, and supporting sterilisation and vaccination drives.

Both sessions featured lively interactive discussions where students raised practical questions and doubts, all of which were patiently clarified, a press release from Deptt. of AH&VS said.

Registration of Motor Vehicles in Series 'AN01-W' available for reservation from Jan. 5

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1  
The general public have been informed that the Registration Marks for registration of Motor vehicles in the Series 'AN01-W' will be made available for reservation from Jan. 5 as the current series i.e. 'AN01-T' is nearing end. Those vehicle owners who intend to reserve registration mark of their choice can avail the facility of reservation of registration marks for motor vehicles in the following series by submitting application online:

1. U-Series (This series will be the normal running series)
2. V-Series
3. W-Series

Further, it is informed that those vehicle owners who intend to book registration mark of their choice in the previous series can also avail the same for the left-out registration marks on payment as per the prescribed price, a press release from Transport Department said.

Viewing of Moon & Planet Saturn at Science Centre

Sri Vijaya Puram, Jan. 1  
The Science Centre, Sri Vijaya Puram shall be organizing a 'Sky Show' on Jan. 2 from 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm. The programme to be presented includes description about the Moon and the Planet-Saturn & its satellites.

The visitors shall be provided with a Sky map of the sky over Sri Vijaya Puram for locating planets and other celestial bodies. The visitor can also have the exciting experience of viewing the Planet-Saturn & its Gigantic Rings popularly known as Lord of the Rings and the Moon & its craters through powerful telescope. The entry fee for the sky show is Rs.10/- per head.

Further, there shall be a Special 3D Show at 5.30 pm & 6.10 pm. The entry fee for the '3D Show' is Rs. 20/- per head, a press release from Science Centre said.

PAWS initiative strengthened through .....  
(Contd. from page 1)

Shyam Nagar; Shri Ajit Roy, Pradhan, Govind Nagar, Smti Gurjit Kaur, BDO, Prothrapur Block, Shri Sudhanshu Biswas and Smti C. Aleena, Panchayat Secretary, Swaraj Dweep, extended valuable support by facilitating temporary dog shelter and arrangements for feeding and management of the animals during the programme. Additionally, the SVP MC provided trained dog catchers, who also trained local volunteers in humane dog-catching methods, contributing significantly to the smooth implementation of the programme.

During the campaign, awareness programmes were conducted on 'Stray Dog Bite Prevention' all over the Islands to educate citizens on safe behavior around community animals including schools and among general public. In Shaheed Dweep, 636 students and teachers attended the awareness programmes while in Swaraj Dweep, 1198 students and teachers were covered. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students as well, who were advised to participate in the ABC programmes by bringing their pets to the Veterinary Dispensary for sterilization. The general public were made aware of the need for waste management and identification of dedicated dog feeding zones, especially in tourist popular beaches.

Encouraged by the progress achieved in Swaraj Dweep, similar veterinary teams have now been constituted for North and Middle Andaman, and field operations are being planned in coordination with the respective District Administration and local bodies to ensure effective coverage and sustained outcomes. The campaign will cover towns in Rangat and Diglipur where ABC programmes will aim at sterilization of maximum numbers of stray dogs while at the same time sensitize the general public, especially the school children, about their role in management of stray dog population and the need for avoiding human-dog conflict.

The Department of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services earnestly requests the cooperation of residents, Pradhans, and local NGOs to extend their cooperation for making this program successful.

The Andaman and Nicobar Administration has designated Helpline No. ERS- 112 to report presence of stray animal in public spaces.

The collaborative implementation of PAWS reflects the Administration's commitment to responsible stray animal management, community participation, and humane animal welfare practices, in alignment with national guidelines and judicial directions, a press release from Department of AH&VS said.

**Restriction on carrying items.....**  
(Contd. from page 1)

Water Bottle, Packets, Briefcase, Transmitter, Tiffin Box, Glass Items, Sharp Objects like Screw Driver etc. at the places of function which is to be attended by the VVIP, a press release from SP (Security) said.



# India's First Maritime NBFC, SMFCL Begins Lending, Sanctions Rs.4,300 Crs

## India's Maritime Finance Ecosystem Gets Dedicated Lender as SMFCL Targets Rs.8,000 Crore Loan Book in FY26

### About RS.4,000 Crore earmarked for Greenfield Port Project

New Delhi, Jan. 1 (PIB)

Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL), India's first maritime focussed Non Banking Financial Company (NBFC), commenced its lending operations, marking a major milestone in the evolution of India's maritime finance ecosystem. The company approved loan sanctions of about Rs.4,300 crore at its 51st Board Meeting held on Dec. 30, 2025, formally entering the maritime lending space in line with the strategy approved by its Board.

The move follows an aggressive market roadmap cleared at SMFCL's Annual General Meeting (AGM), where the Board approved an overall borrowing limit of Rs.25,000 crore and a lending target of Rs.8,000 crore for the current financial year. With the latest sanctions scheduled for disbursement within the ongoing fiscal year, SMFCL is targeting a loan book of Rs.8,000 crore in FY 2025-26, reinforcing its ambition to emerge as a dedicated and credible financier for the maritime sector.

An amount of about Rs.4,000 crore has been earmarked for a Greenfield Port Project, reinforcing the Centre's push for port-led development. In addition, Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) secured Rs.150 crore, while Goa Shipyard received Rs.110 crore from the same tranche, supporting dredging capacity and indigenous shipbuilding capabilities.

SMFCL was inaugurated on June 26, 2025, as India's first Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) exclusively focused on maritime financing by Hon'ble Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) Shri Sarbananda Sonowal. The institution was created to bridge long-standing financing gaps and deliver sector-specific financial solutions to ports, MSMEs, startups and institutions, in alignment with the 'Amrit Kaal Vision 2047' and the country's broader blue economy goals.

Commenting on the commencement of lending operations, the Hon'ble Union Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal said, "This is a milestone which reflects PM Shri Narendra Modi ji led government's resolve to build robust financial architecture for India's maritime growth. SMFCL's entry into lending marks an important step in strengthening maritime infrastructure and enterprise financing. This initiative draws strength from our dynamic Hon'ble PM Shri Modi ji's bold, inspiring and visionary leadership. Under Shri Modi ji's leadership, our maritime sector has witnessed unprecedented policy clarity, institutional reform and investor confidence. Such commitment to long-term, future-ready growth has created the ecosystem that enables specialised institutions like SMFCL to catalyse development across the blue economy. With strengthened maritime sector, we are cruising smoothly towards our goal of Viksit Bharat."

The company said ratings from major credit rating agencies are expected shortly, a development that is likely to further optimise borrowing costs and support the scaling up of lending operations. SMFCL's expansion strategy is backed by strong institutional support from the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, which has designated the corporation as the nodal agency for the establishment and operational coordination of the Maritime Development Fund (MDF) with a total corpus of Rs.25,000 crore.

The MDF includes the Maritime Investment Fund with a corpus of Rs.20,000 crore and the Interest Incentivisation Fund with a corpus of Rs.5,000 crore. Under the approved framework, SMFCL will hold and manage the Government of India's contribution to the Alternative Investment Fund established for the Maritime Investment Fund in a fiduciary capacity. In addition, SMFCL will act as the nodal agency to channelise the Interest Incentivisation Fund, significantly expanding its scope of funding support across maritime segments. SMFCL said the forthcoming notification of guidelines for the Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Scheme, with an outlay of Rs.44,700 crore, is expected to open new avenues for investment and collaboration, particularly in shipbuilding and allied industries, further strengthening the domestic maritime manufacturing ecosystem.

The corporation will offer tailored financial products to eligible government and private sector entities operating across the entire maritime value chain. Its offerings will include short-, medium- and long-term loans, solutions to address cash-flow mismatches, balance-sheet financing, and non-fund-based products designed to meet the specific needs of maritime projects and enterprises.

With lending operations now underway, SMFCL said it is positioned to play a catalytic role in accelerating maritime infrastructure development, supporting indigenous shipbuilding, and deepening access to institutional finance for India's rapidly expanding blue economy, in line with national development priorities.

## DRDO successfully conducts salvo launch of two Pralay missiles in quick succession

New Delhi, Jan. 1 (PIB)

Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully conducted salvo launch of two Pralay missiles in quick succession from the same launcher off the coast of Odisha at about 1030 hrs on December 31, 2025. The flight-test was conducted as part of user evaluation trials. Both the missiles followed the intended trajectory meeting all flight objectives as confirmed by tracking sensors deployed by the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur. The terminal events were confirmed by Telemetry systems installed onboard ship, deployed near the impact points.

Pralay is an indigenously developed solid propellant quasi-ballistic missile employing state-of-the-art guidance and navigation to ensure high precision. The missile is capable of carrying multiple types of warheads against various targets.

The missile has been developed by Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories - Defence Research and Development Laboratory, Advanced Systems Laboratory, Armament Research and Development Establishment, High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory, Terminal Ballistics



Research Laboratory, Research & Development Establishment (Engineers) and Integrated Test Range), Development-cum-Production Partners (Bharat Dynamics Limited & Bharat Electronics Limited) and other Indian industries. For the tests, the systems were integrated by the two Development-cum-Production Partners. The tests were witnessed by senior scientists of DRDO, representatives of users from the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army as well as industry representatives including the Development-cum-Production Partners.

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri, Shri Rajnath Singh has complimented DRDO, Indian Air Force, Indian Army, DPSUs and the industry on the successful launch of the missiles in quick succession. The successful completion of the salvo launch of the Pralay missile has established the reliability of the missile, he said.

Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO, Dr. Samir V Kamat has congratulated the DRDO teams involved in the successful flight-tests and stated that the achievement indicates imminent readiness of induction of the system with the users.

## BSNL Launches Voice over WiFi (VoWiFi) Services Nationwide Across All Circles

New Delhi, Jan. 1 (PIB)

On New Year Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), India's premier state-owned telecommunications provider, is delighted to announce the nationwide rollout of Voice over WiFi (VoWiFi), also known as Wi-Fi Calling. This advanced service is now available to all BSNL customers across every telecom circle in the country, ensuring seamless and high-quality connectivity even in challenging environments.

The service is now available to BSNL customers across all telecom circles in the country. VoWiFi enables customers to make and receive voice calls and

messages over a Wi-Fi network, ensuring clear and reliable connectivity in areas with weak mobile signal such as homes, offices, basements, and remote locations.

VoWiFi is an IMS-based service that supports seamless handovers between Wi-Fi and mobile networks. Calls are made using the customer's existing mobile number and phone dialer, without the need for third-party applications.

The service is particularly beneficial in rural and remote areas where mobile coverage may be limited, provided a stable Wi-Fi connection is available, including BSNL Bharat Fiber or

other broadband services. VoWiFi also helps reduce network congestion and is offered free of cost, with no additional charges for Wi-Fi calls.

The launch of VoWiFi is an important step in BSNL's network modernization programme and its commitment to improving connectivity across the country, especially in underserved areas.

VoWiFi is supported on most modern smartphones. Customers only need to enable Wi-Fi Calling in their handset settings. For device compatibility and support, customers may visit the nearest BSNL customer service centre or contact the BSNL helpline - 18001503.

## Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana flagship scheme completes nine years

New Delhi, Jan. 1

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, a flagship scheme of the Government for pregnant women and lactating mothers, has completed nine years today.

The scheme was launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 to provide financial support to pregnant and lactating mothers to improve their health and nutrition.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana is a Centrally Sponsored flagship scheme to provide maternity benefits to women belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged sections of



society.

Under the Scheme, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers receive a cash benefit of five thousand rupees for the first child and six thousand rupees for the second girl child.

The first instalment of three

thousand rupees is given on registration of pregnancy and the second instalment of two thousand rupees is given after childbirth. The eligible beneficiaries also receive a cash incentive under Janani Suraksha Yojana.

According to the Women and Child Development Ministry, four crore 50 lakh beneficiaries are enrolled under the scheme and more than 19 thousand crore rupees has been disbursed to the beneficiaries. The scheme offers financial assistance to support nutrition, medical checkups, and overall health during pregnancy.

(Source: newsonair.gov.in)

## Centre notifies draft rules for four new Labour Codes, seeks public feedback

New Delhi, Jan. 1

The Centre has notified draft rules for the four new Labour Codes. These Labour Codes are - The Code on Wages, 2019, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020 and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020.

The rules define workers, wages, types of employment, gratuity, bonus and social security of workers, including gig workers.

These draft rules are open for public consultation, and

stakeholders have been invited to submit objections and suggestions within 45 days.

The Labour Ministry had announced the implementation of these four new labour codes on 21st November last year to simplify and streamline the existing, decades-old labour laws in the country.

According to the Ministry, the new labour codes will ensure better wages, safety, social security and welfare for the country's workforce.

The Labour codes guarantee

timely minimum wages for all workers, appointment letters for the youth, equal pay and respect for women, social security for 40 crore workers and gratuity for fixed-term employees after one year of employment.

These reforms also ensure free annual health check-ups for workers above 40 years of age, double wages for overtime, and a guarantee of social justice for workers as per international standards. (Source: newsonair.gov.in)

## UPI transaction volume rises 29% year-on-year to 21.63 billion in December

New Delhi, Jan. 1

The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) continued its strong growth momentum in December, registering a year-on-year increase of 29 per cent to reach 21.63 billion transactions. According to data released by the National Payments Corporation of India, the value of transactions also rose by 20 per cent annually to around 28 lakh crore rupees.

On a month-on-month basis, both transaction volume and value recorded notable growth. The average daily transaction value in the last month stood at 90 thousand 217 crore rupees, compared to 87 thousand 721 crore in November 2025.

Average daily transaction count rose to 698 million from 682 million in the previous month. Meanwhile, transactions through the Immediate Payment Service, IMPS, amounted to 6.62 lakh crore rupee in December, marking a 10 per cent annual increase and a rise from 6.15 lakh crore rupee in November.

IMPS transaction volume stood at 380 million, up from 369 million in November. The average daily IMPS transaction value increased to 21 thousand 269 crore rupees from 20 thousand 506 crore rupees. (Source: newsonair.gov.in)

