

1920 hrs

18th March 2018

THE HEADLINES ::

- **New Year festivals being celebrated in different parts of country, President, Vice President and Prime Minister greet people on the occasion.**
- **5 members of family killed in Pakistani shelling along Line of Control in Jammu & Kashmir.**
- **Union Agriculture Minister says Centre is working for welfare of agriculture sector through reforms and innovation.**
- **Madhya Pradesh school team on a five-day visit to Nagaland educational institutions.**

||<><><>||

The New Year festivals of Chaitra Sukladi, Ugadi, Gudi Padava, Cheti Chand, Navreh and Sajibu Cheiraoba are being celebrated in different parts of the country today. The day also marks the beginning of Chaitra Navratri. President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have greeted the people on the occasion. In a message, Mr Kovind said, the festivals reflect the nation's diversity and unity. Mr. Naidu said, the festivals mark the beginning of the traditional New Year and reflect the composite culture and rich heritage of the country. Mr Modi also extended greetings to the people across the nation.

||<><><>||

In Jammu and Kashmir, five members of a family were killed as Pakistani forces resorted to heavy shelling along the Line of Control in Mendhar area of Poonch district today. Defence sources informed that the Pakistani Army started unprovoked shelling targeting civilian areas and Indian positions this morning in Balakote sector. The sources said, heavy mortar shells landed in a house in Devta village killing five of the family members. Two girls were seriously injured. The sources said, Indian troops gave a befitting reply to the firing, which continued till afternoon.

||<><><>||

Nagaland Additional Chief Secretary & Finance Commissioner Temjen Toy has assumed the charge as the new Chief Secretary of Nagaland. According to official sources Mr. Toy has formally took over the new post during a short handing over ceremony in the Nagaland Civil Secretariat after the farewell programme to the outgoing Chief Secretary, Pankaj Kumar held at Secretariat Plaza in Kohima. Kumar said in the normal course, his batch mate R. B Thong would have taken over charge, but as he is not well, Temjen Toy is going to take over the responsibility. He said Temjen Toy is one of the most action oriented, efficient and effective officers of the IAS cadre. Mr. Kumar has been assigned as the Additional Secretary in the Union Ministry of Electronics and IT.

||<><><>||

Nagaland Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change & Parliamentary Affairs C.M Chang encouraged officers and staff of Nagaland Pollution Control Board (NPCB) to work harder by serving the public with better environment in the state. According to a press release from NPCB Member Secretary Rusovil John informed that Mr. Chang was visiting the NPCB office at Signal Point in Dimapur yesterday and held an interaction with officers and staff of the board. The Minister in his address to the board recalled his experiences as a Government employee and also various issues such as climate change, air and water pollution, coal mining and solid waste management were discussed during a meeting with the officials.

||<><><>||

Marketing linkage and quality produce were the urgent needs that emerged out of the three-day Symposium on Spices and Aromatic Crops (SYMSAC-IX) at SASRD, Medziphema, which concluded yesterday. The farmers followed by exhibitors and suppliers expressed concern about the need for marketing linkages, the buyers had their own share of problems in the form of timely and quality delivery of products. These issues were the main points emphasized at the valedictory programme of the three-day SMYSAC-IX.

||<><><>||

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has asked people to take due precautions while sharing their personal information such as Aadhaar number on the internet for availing any service. In a statement, UIDAI asserted the robustness of the Aadhaar identity

system. It said publication or posting of Aadhaar cards on the internet by some unscrupulous people have absolutely no bearing on UIDAI and not the least on Aadhaar security. The nodal body, which issues the 12 digits biometric identifier, emphasized that just like any other identity document, Aadhaar too is not a confidential document.

||<><><>||

Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh has said, the Centre is working for the welfare of farmers and the agriculture sector through reforms, good governance and innovation. Addressing the valedictory ceremony of three-day Krishi Unnati Mela in New Delhi today, Mr Singh said, the steps taken by the Narendra Modi Government for the welfare of farmers are now giving encouraging results and have brought qualitative changes. He said, every year there has been an increase in the spending and budgetary provisions for the agriculture sector. Mr Singh said the Government is committed to doubling farmers' income by 2022.

||<><><>||

A group of teachers and students from Madhya Pradesh presented a 'Holi' song on their visit to Dimapur Government College (DGC), as part of the Teachers-Students exchange programme under 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' yesterday. According to official sources the team from Madhya Pradesh is on a five-day visit to Nagaland and they will be visiting various educational institutions in Dimapur and Kohima. Under the Ek Bharat Shreshtra Bharat programme, every state in the

country is paired with another state for a year during which they carry out a structured engagement with one another in spheres of languages, literature, cuisine, festivals, cultural events and tourism. Madhya Pradesh is partnered with Nagaland and Manipur for the year 2017 to 2018, in which four Professors and 12 students from Madhya Pradesh visited Nagaland.

||<><><>||

Representatives from 50 countries will gather in New Delhi tomorrow for a two-day informal World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial meeting. The meeting will provide an opportunity to engage in free and frank discussions with the hope that it will lead to political guidance on some major issues. In the absence of Ministerial guidance at the Eleventh Ministerial Conference that took place in December last year in Buenos Aires, it is hoped that the meeting in New Delhi will provide an opportunity for ministers to explore in greater detail options on different issues for re-invigorating the WTO.

||<><><>||

The Associated Chambers of Commerce of India (Assocham) today said, India should engage bilaterally with its key trading partners to promote exports if the world witnesses an escalation of a trade war. In a statement, the industry chamber said, the higher level of imports than exports will not provide the country much space to retaliate at the time of increasing trade war as most of the Indian imports are

unavoidable. It said, India may end the current fiscal with a hefty import bill of 450 billion US dollars against exports of about 300 billion.

||<><><>||

In Maharashtra, three Bangladeshi nationals were arrested in Pune yesterday by the state Anti-Terrorism Squad,ATS for allegedly providing shelter to suspected terrorists of Ansarullah Bangla Team. The ABT is an al-Qaeda inspired Islamic extremist group in Bangladesh. The three had been staying illegally in the country, without any authorised travel documents for the past five years in Wanavadi and Akurdi areas. They were produced in local court and are remanded to police custody till 29th of this month. An official said, the ATS is also probing that if these arrested persons had any links with the six Bangladesh nationals, who were arrested from Panvel three days ago by the newly-formed Navi Mumbai unit of ATS.

||<><><>||