The Union government has decided to completely withdraw NSG commandos from the task of protecting VIPs. The ‘black cat’ commandos of the elite counter-terror force will be shifted out from VIP protection duties, a task not originally meant for it when the force was created in 1984. The NSG force provides proximate and mobile security cover — commandos armed with sophisticated assault weapons — under the top ‘Z+’ category to 13 ‘high-risk’ VIPs that consists of about two dozen personnel for each one of them. The protection duties of the commandos, which include giving security to Defence minister Rajnath Singh and Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, will soon be transferred to paramilitary forces. The other NSG protectees include ex-CMs Mayawati, Mulayam Singh, Chandrababu Naidu, Parkash Singh Badal and Farooq Abdullah, Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal, former Deputy Prime Minister L K Advani.

The National Security Guard will take over, as per its original charter, the handling specific tasks of counterterrorist and anti-hijack operations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi - rechristened Kolkata Port Trust after Shyama Prasad Mookerjee on January 12

The Prime Minister addressed the 150th anniversary programme of Kolkata Port Trust and launched commemorative stamps of the port trust.
During the event, the PM also launched Rs 600 crore worth port development activities.
It includes upgrade of a ship repair facility, upgraded railway infrastructure for the port and also river front development schemes
Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was the founder of Bharatiya Jana Sangh
He laid the stone for the development of Chittaranja Locomotive Factory, Damodar Valley Corporation and Hindustan Aircraft Factory.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

Home Minister Amit Shah - chaired the 6th Island Development Agency meeting in New Delhi.
The meeting focused on “Green Development in the Islands to reach new heights”
It had reviewed the progress of the programme, “Holistic Development of Islands”, taken up by the Island Development Agency (IDA)
In the first phase, the plan will be implemented in 4 islands of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and 5 islands of Lakshadweep Islands.
In the second phase, 12 more islands of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and 5 Islands of Lakshadweep islands are to be covered.
Also, the city of Port Blair and other 7 islands of Andaman and Nicobar Islands are to be digitally connected through submarine optical fibre cable by June 2020

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

Indian Space Research Organization - will launch GSAT-30 satellite on the launch vehicle Ariane-5 on January 17, 2020
It will be launched in Ariane Launch Complex at Kourou
The GSAT-30 is a communication satellite, which seeks to replace INSAT-4A.
The mission life of GSAT-30 is 15 years.
It will help in supporting VSAT network, teleport services, DTH televisions services, cellular backhaul connectivity and digital news gathering.
The INSAT-4A was launched in 2005 mainly to facilitate communication.
APPLE Experimental was the first Indian ‘experimental’ satellite launched by Ariane in 1981
It was used for TV and radio communications.
Ariane Space is a commercial satellite launching organization, founded in 1980
Since then, it has launched 23 Indian satellites.
DEFENCE

- Two Indian Coast Guard Ships (ICGS) — Annie Besant and Amrit Kaur — were commissioned by Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar at Kolkata on January 12.

- Annie Besant will be based at Chennai and Amrit Kaur will be based at Haldia.
- The ships are fitted with state-of-the-art technology, and navigation equipment, along with Bofors 40/60 guns and 12.7 mm Stabilised Remote Controlled Guns for sophisticated fighting efficiency.

SPORTS

- Tamil Nadu’s Sherin Abdul Gafoor - won the silver with a jump of 6.30m in the Under 21 Long jump event in the Khelo India Youth Games on January 12.
- 18 year old Kerala athlete, Ancy Sojan produced an impressive 6.36m performance to win the women’s U-21 long jump event.

- She also broke the U-20 national record, overtaking the earlier mark of 6.30m in U-20.
- Her effort was impressive, considering that the record at the senior level in women’s long jump last season was 6.42m in the name of Rintu Mathew.
- Ancy had won four gold medals in the SGFI National School Athletics Championship in Sangrur last month.
- Telangana’s Jeevanji Deepthi and Tamil Nadu’s Ruthika Saravanan won the gold and silver respectively in the girls U-17 100m race after both clocked 12.26 seconds in a photo finish.

- Hero MotoSports’ Portuguese motorbike driver Paulo Goncalves - died after a fall while competing during Stage VII of the Dakar Rally on January 12.

- During the ride from Riyadh to Wadi ad-Dawasir, Goncalves met with the accident after a 276km ride on the route.
He was placed 46th in the overall bike standings after Friday’s Stage VI.
This was Goncalves’ 13th edition of Dakar, having made his debut in 2006.
He had finished runners-up to Marc Coma in 2015 Dakar Rally
Goncalves was the first competitor to die in the gruelling endurance event since Polish motorcycle rider Michal Hernik in Argentina in 2015.
The Portuguese finished in the top 10 at the Dakar Rally four times other than the runner-up finish in 2015 to Coma, who is competing this year as codriver to double Formula One champion Fernando Alonso.
The 2013 FIM cross country rallies world champion was representing the Hero team, along with his brother-in-law Joaquim Rodrigues.
Goncalves crashed out on the fifth stage in Peru last year, while Rodrigues was at 27th after Stage 6.