

## MP urges Civil Aviation Minister for special concession to stretcher patients

**Seeks to charge one seat fare from stretcher patients of ANI**

PORT BLAIR, DEC 15/--/ Civil Aviation, Govt. of India to give special concession to all stretcher patients of Andaman and Nicobar Islands so that they



have to pay the cost of only one seat instead of nine seats to Airlines Companies. In a letter addressed to the Minister of Civil Aviation, Mr. Sharma added that Andaman and Nicobar Islands are situated nearly 1200 KM (approx) away from nearest Airport in Mainland India, Chennai and Kolkata, for serious medical cases, evacuation in passenger aircraft is the only option. He added that in the recent past for stretcher patients from Port Blair till now family members of the patient had to pay Rs. 1,32,000 (One lakh thirty two thousands) one

way, excluding cost of tickets for patient attendants. He pointed out that nearly two months back the rate of tickets for stretcher patients has been almost doubled without any valid reason to nearly Rs. 2,41,000 (two lakh forty one thousand only), which has come as a massive blow to the people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, most of whom can't afford to buy tickets for stretcher patient in such a high rate in case of medical emergency. He mentioned that charging such an exorbitant amount from stretcher patients during the time of medical emergencies is unethical. The member of Parliament

further pointed out that before 2007 for some years the Government of India had fixed the rate for stretcher patients from Andaman and Nicobar Islands, under which a stretcher patient had to pay only Rs. 29,000 approx (lump-sum rate), which used to be issued through ANIIDCO. But in 2007 the fare was revised. He mentioned that in 2009, replying to a Parliament Question the Civil Aviation Ministry has stated that Air India had revised the stretcher fare with effect from 15.05.2007 from a single fare to six fares for carrying invalid passengers on stretcher from Port Blair since they need to remove a maximum of 9 seats for accommodating the stretcher. He pointed out that if cost of 9 seats are calculated, considering Rs. 10,000 as average fare for one seat then also the total cost remains Rs. 90,000 which is much lower than Rs. 2,41,000 (two lakh forty one thousand only), the present fare.

(Contd. on page-6)

## Pradhans of various GPs of Diglipur zone meets

**Hold intensive brainstorming session**



(File Photo)

### EOI CORRESPONDENT

DIGLIPUR, DEC 15/--/To share and solve the issues related to the school students, a meeting was convened by the Deputy Education Officer at the conference hall of the office, involving Gram Panchayat Pradhans and the Head of Institutions of the different schools of Diglipur zone recently.

Welcoming the Pradhans and PRI representatives, the

**Speakers underscore better coordination between PRIs and Schools to tackle issues of drug & other negative menace among students**

Deputy Education officer Mr. R.P.Pandey, briefed about the recent achievements made by the students at the state level in Kala Utsav, Energy conservation competitions, and academics. He elaborated the key features of the PM-SHREE programme of the Government, launched

recently for the schools. Appreciating the gesture of the Pradhans for coming positively for the meeting, he said that they can help the school authorities in tackling the menace of drug abuse among the students.

Expressing concerns over the surge in the drugs cases among some of the school going students, the Pradhan of the Subhash Gram Panchayat, Mr. PR

Singaram said that, due to less exposure to sports activities students have become vulnerable to drugs, specially the illicit Ganja. Schools should engage the students in creative activities, so that their energy remains channelized in a constructive direction.

(Contd. on page-6)

## PBGKR donates Computer Unit to Govt. Primary School Ograbraj



PORT BLAIR, DEC 15/--/The smile and happiness on the faces of students of Primary School Ograbraj was seen when the School received a complete computer system with a printer from Team PBGKR. Mr. Bhupinder Singh, Head Master reached out to Mr. Mandeep Grewal, President, PBGKR and requested for a computer system unit for the students of Primary School, Ograbraj as it was a long pending requirement of the School. Mr. Mandeep Grewal thanked Mr. Dhanbalan, Max Computers for coming forward and helping team PBGKR to fulfill the demand of the School. "We will try our best to serve as many schools as possible. We are also thankful to all those who come forward to support us in the noble cause" added Mr. Grewal.

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# No one can finish me off politically, says Yediyurappa amid speculation of being sidelined in BJP

**BENGALURU/KOPPAL, DEC 15** --/ BJP Karnataka strongman B S Yediyurappa on Thursday dismissed reports he is being neglected in the party and said he has his own strength and no one can finish him off politically.

Chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, meanwhile, rubbished reports of differences with his predecessor Yediyurappa. "There is no truth in the statement that I am being neglected. I am attending all the programmes," Yediyurappa told reporters in Bengaluru before leaving for the district headquarters town of Koppal, where the party's national President J P Nadda participated in a programme also attended by Bommai. According to sources close to him, the former Karnataka chief minister had initially decided not to attend the Koppal event. On Thursday morning, he said he would participate in the programme. He

said there is no need for people to invite him as it is his duty to attend party programmes. Asked if he was not willing to go there because he got an invitation at the last minute, Yediyurappa said: "There is no truth in it. I was not in a position yesterday to go there. Because there was a pressure to attend the event, I decided to participate". When asked whether there was any attempt to finish him off politically, the party veteran said, "There is no truth in it. No one can finish off anyone. I have my own strength. I have strengthened the party and toiled to bring BJP to power. The entire state knows this." He said everyone knows that he was among



B S Yediyurappa

the important people who worked for the BJP day and night. Hence, there is no meaning in talks that he was being neglected. Speaking to reporters in Koppal, Yediyurappa said the BJP under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah will come back to power with 140 seats in Karnataka. "The BJP is one and united. Our party will come to power. So we need people's blessings," the former chief minister said. He also ruled out the possibility of becoming Chief Minister again. "I don't have ambition for power. I have just one desire to bring the BJP to power again for which we all are working

together," Yediyurappa said. Regarding his son B Y Vijayendra's electoral debut in the next Assembly elections, Yediyurappa said, "I have told Vijayendra to contest from Shikaripura. He will contest from the place decided by the party. The BJP's decision will be final." Bommai ruled out any differences between him and Yediyurappa. "It's all a lie. He (Yediyurappa) is our supreme leader. We are doing all our activities keeping him at the forefront. We have his blessings," the chief minister said.

Bommai said there cannot be any differences between him and Yediyurappa saying that those speculating such things will be disappointed. "Mine is son and father relationship (with Yediyurappa). Hence, it (differences) will never happen on any occasion for whatsoever reason. Those who are expecting it will be disappointed," he said. (PTI)

## Home secy reviews crowding at airports; 1,400 more CISF personnel sanctioned for IGI

**NEW DELHI, DEC 15** --/ An additional 1,400 CISF personnel have been sanctioned to secure the expanding terminal areas of the Delhi Airport and also to meet the challenge of its growing passenger traffic, officials said on Thursday. This was conveyed at a high-level meeting chaired by Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla along with the representatives of the civil aviation ministry, the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), Bureau of Immigration among others. The meeting was called to review measures taken to ease the recent congestion reported at large airports, particularly in Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru. It was informed during the meeting that an additional force of 1,400 Central Industrial Security Force personnel would soon be deployed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport where expansion is going on at three terminals -- 1, 2 and 3 -- apart from its cargo hold area.

The terminal 1 renovation and expansion was scheduled to be completed by December next year or January 2024 but the government wants it to be expedited and finished by November 2023, the start of the holiday season. More CISF personnel will be required to secure the expanding areas of the IGI and hence the new manpower sanction, they said. The enhanced manpower, over and above the



Ajay Bhalla

existing strength of about 5,000 personnel, has been recently approved after a four-month long joint survey undertaken by security agencies. The proposal was finally moved by the BCAS and approved by the Civil Aviation ministry. The joint review had estimated creation of about 2,400 posts for the CISF to meet the upcoming needs at the IGI but the manpower was finally rationalised at 1,400 personnel apart from filling up the existing vacancies in the sanctioned 5,000 personnel strength, sources said. The IGI will have a total strength of about 6,500 men and women personnel after the induction of the fresh manpower, they said.

The new CISF strength will not only be used to render the core duty of the force -- of providing an anti-terrorist and anti-hijack cover at the hypersensitive facility -- but also to meet the challenge of the ever growing passenger footfall, both for domestic and international travel, sources said. Bhalla had also convened the meeting to discuss with stakeholders continuous complaints from passengers about the rush at the entry gates, luggage drop and security check areas. The meeting discussed the issue of crowding and how to fix the problems faced by passengers, an official said. (PTI)

## Gujarat: Ex-minister Shankar Chaudhary set to become next Assembly Speaker

**AHMEDABAD, DEC 15** --/ The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Gujarat on Thursday declared Shankar Chaudhary and Jethabhai Bharwad as its candidates for the posts of Speaker and Deputy Speaker, respectively, of the newly-formed 15th state Legislative Assembly. An official notification issued by the Assembly secretariat said the new Assembly will meet for the first time for a day on December 20, and election for the posts of Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be held in the first half, while other businesses will be taken up in the second half. Another notification said that all the newly-elected MLAs will be administered the oath of office in the Assembly on

December 19 by Protem Speaker Yogesh Patel. In the just-concluded Assembly



elections, the BJP retained power by winning 156 out of the total 182 seats, while the Congress bagged only 17 seats. The remaining seats went to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), independents and the Samajwadi Party (SP). Considering the numbers, both Chaudhary

and Bharwad are all set to win the respective posts in case an election takes place. Speakers are generally elected unopposed. Chaudhary, who represents the Tharad seat in Banaskantha district, had served as a minister in the governments led by Anandiben Patel and Vijay Rupani between 2014 and 2017. Chaudhary had lost Assembly elections in 2017 from Vav seat. Bharwad, a six-time MLA from Shehra Assembly seat of Panchmahal district, had served as the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly for a year between 2021 and 2022 in the 14th Assembly. While Bharwad is the chairman of Panchmahal Dairy, Chaudhary heads Banas Dairy. (PTI)

## J&K: ISI-run drug nexus busted with arrest of juvenile girl from LoC

**JAMMU, DEC 15** --/ Security agencies have busted a Pakistan ISI-run narcotics trafficking racket with the arrest of a school-going girl living along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, official sources said Thursday.

The juvenile, a student of class ten, lives in a village ahead of the LoC fence in the Mendhar sector of the Poonch district and has been apprehended with 400 grams of "suspected heroin" in a joint operation conducted by the Border Security Force

(BSF) and the Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday. The agencies have been informed about another cache of drugs that the juvenile allegedly hid in a ditch near her house even as her questioning is going on, the sources said. The security agencies have also identified a Pakistani "handler", Ashaiq, who reportedly used to visit the juvenile's house to hand over the narcotics to her for further supply to school-going students and youngsters living in the adjoining villages near the LoC. (PTI)

## Himachal cabinet will be formed after state Assembly session: CM Sukhu

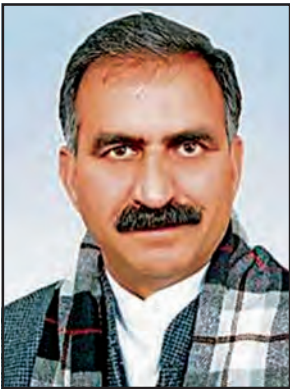
**NEW DELHI, DEC 15** --/ The new cabinet in Himachal Pradesh would be formed after the Vidhan Sabha session which will be convened soon, chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Thursday.

Sukhu, along with all newly elected MLAs of the Congress, met party chief Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence here. This was his first visit to the national capital after being elected as chief minister. "The Himachal cabinet will be formed soon and you will be informed accordingly. The cabinet will be formed after the Vidhan Sabha session," the chief minister told reporters after the meeting. During his meeting with legislators, Kharge told them to remain united and asked them to share power with all party workers. He also urged them to remain connected with the grassroots level and serve the people of Himachal Pradesh earnestly. The Congress president told the party leadership in the state to fill up all vacancies in the government and make appointments in the boards and corporations soon. Kharge asked the chief minister to share power with party workers so that they also feel the ownership of the government and work more closely with public, sources said. The party will ensure that there is equitable share of power in the hill state between various factions, they added. Terming the meeting as a courtesy meeting, Sukhu said, "We had come to thank the Congress president as he had campaigned for us in Himachal elections. All 40 MLAs and PCC chief Pratibha Singh have come and thanked Kharge ji on how he extended the party's support." "Kharge ji told us to serve the people of Himachal with our hearts and thanked the people of Himachal for electing

a Congress government," Sukhu said.

The legislators met Kharge a day after Sukhu arrived in the national capital to meet senior Congress leaders. The Himachal Congress chief and AICC in-charge of state Rajeev Shukla were also present during the meeting. The sources said deliberations are underway in the party for cabinet formation as only Sukhu and deputy chief minister Mukesh Agnihotri were sworn-in on Sunday in Shimla. Shimla Rural MLA and former CM Virbhada Singh's son Vikramaditya Singh said the Congress will provide good governance in the next five years and fulfil all the promises made to people. Asked about cabinet formation, he said the high command would decide it. Kasumpti MLA Anirudh Singh said the Congress president told the MLAs not to forget the people and workers who have helped them get elected. Later, CM Sukhu, his deputy and all legislators, besides the Himachal PCC chief, left for Rajasthan, where they will be joining the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra.

Gandhi has invited all the new legislators to accompany him in the yatra in Rajasthan where it completes its 100 days of journey starting from Kanyakumari. All new MLAs would take oath at the assembly session to be convened soon, the sources said. Senior Congress MLA Chandra Kumar was on Wednesday appointed as pro-tem Speaker and he would administer the oath to the newly elected MLAs. Pro-tem speaker is a temporary speaker appointed for a limited period of time to conduct the work. Kumar will function as chairman of the Vidhan Sabha till the new speaker is elected, a state government notification said. (PTI)



Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu

## Limb Anomaly case operated by Dr. Ravi Chandra V at Apollo Hospital



### EOI CORRESPONDENT

**VISAKHAPATNAM, DEC 15** --/ Baby Madhavi, 4 year old child from Srikakulam, was born with deformed left lower limb. She was evaluated at multiple hospitals, but no solution could be obtained. The child finally visited Dr. Ravi Chandra Vattipalli, an orthopaedic Surgeon at Apollo Hospital Arilova, Visakhapatnam. The child was evaluated using clinical examination, X-rays and

MRI. It was found out that her knee cap was lying in an abnormal position, dislocated outwards. Only one similar case has been reported so far in Orthopaedic literature. Treatment of such complex cases is not straightforward and needs multidisciplinary care.

In view of the complexity of the case, along with Plastic Surgeon, Dr. PRK Prasad, Dr. Ravi, operated on this child in September, 2022. Child made a good

recovery, and is now walking without need for any walking aids. Dr. Ravi Chandra stated that success of this surgery was attributed to the excellent team work and coordination from the departments of Anesthesia, Radiology & Nursing team. Apart from the diagnostic challenge, care of the child during and after surgery needed great expertise. Apollo Hospitals, known for such a multi speciality care, was happy to handle such complex cases with ease.

## Oppn members in RS ask Govt to take holistic approach to tackle effects of global warming

**NEW DELHI, DEC 15** --/ Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday said the government should take a holistic approach by coordinating across various ministries and bringing agencies together to tackle the effects of global warming.

Tiruchi Siva of the DMK, Pramod Tiwari of the Congress and Sandosh Kumar P of the Communist Party of India (CPI) raised a "short duration" discussion in the Upper House of Parliament on the serious effects of global warming and the need for remedial steps to tackle those. Initiating the discussion, Siva said global warming is threatening not just India but the entire planet and

humanity, and it is time for collective action. "What is looming above our head is alarming and threatening. I feel that it is not the prerogative of only the Union government, but it is also of the state governments, it is also of the private sector; it is also of the civil society.... Everyone in the country, we have our own responsibility," he said. Siva said it is not the sole responsibility of the environment ministry but it has to coordinate with other ministries such as agriculture, urban development and industries so that a holistic approach is taken as activities in each of these areas have a consequence on the environment. The DMK member also voiced

concern over a "recent EIA (environment impact assessment) notification, the Environment Protection Act, the Water Act, the Forest Conservation Act and the Biodiversity Act", saying "all these will result in degradation of forest.... Only protection and extending the forest will save the nation, save the world, save humans". Expressing concerns over the possibility of many states suffering from more droughts while others being impacted by frequent cyclones and coastal areas facing a threat from rising sea levels, Siva said "stronger guidelines" are needed from the ministry. Taking part in the discussion, Ameer Yajnik of the

Congress reiterated the need to enhance India's usage of renewable and clean energy and reduce dependence on fossil fuels while increasing forest cover to meet the net zero target set for 2070.

"All these require a holistic approach. You need to bring all these policies together. Unless and until we do not bring a coordinated effort to bring all these agencies together to have an approach to see that we bring down net zero, this will not fructify," she asserted. Jawahar Sircar of the Trinamool Congress (AITC) said climate change affects the coastal states of the country the most as one of the most immediate effects is the rise in sea levels. (PTI)



AXIS Bank resumes ATM services at Bathubati



PORT BLAIR, DEC 15/--/ Acting on a news report on 'ATMs of all banks shut down in Bathubasti', AXIS Bank has opened its ATM at Bathubasti area in the next

report appearing in this publication. However, ATMs of other banks are still not functioning, causing hardship to the customers. Since

Bathubasti is a commercial area, both business people and bank customers are facing difficulties due to the closure of ATMs.

—KARTIK

MESSAGE

16th December is celebrated every year as 'Vijay Diwas' to commemorate and celebrate the Indian Armed Forces' victory in the 1971 war. This day gives us an opportunity to express our respect and gratitude towards our armed forces and pay homage to our martyrs.

On the special occasion of Vijay Diwas, I urge all the residents of A&N Islands to join the whole nation, to remember and salute the selfless service, heroic valour and exemplary sacrifices of the gallant men of our Armed Forces.

Jai Hind!

(Admiral D K Joshi)  
PVSM, AVSM, YSM, NM, VSM(Reid.)  
Lt Governor, A&N Islands  
&  
Vice Chairman, Islands Development Agency

SC to hear pleas challenging electoral bond scheme in last week of Jan

NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /--/ The Supreme Court said on Thursday it will hear in the last week of January 2023, a batch of PILs challenging laws permitting funding of political parties through the electoral bond scheme.

Electoral bonds have been pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring in transparency in political funding. A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Vikram Nath said the matter requires to be heard. "This is a 2015 matter. You can't have such an emergency just before the penultimate day of the vacation...There is no election as of now. We will hear it in the last week of January, 2023," the bench said. Lawyer Prashant Bhushan, appearing for PIL petitioner NGO 'Association for Democratic Reforms', said there are several constitutional questions involved in the petitions which have a bearing on sanctity of the electoral process. He said the issue of whether it should be referred to a Constitution bench can be looked at first.

The apex court said that this will also require hearing. The apex court was hearing PILs by NGO Association for Democratic Reforms, The Communist Party of India (Marxist) and other petitioners. Earlier, Bhushan had sought urgent listing of the PIL by the apex court seeking a direction to the Centre not to open any further window for sale of electoral bonds during the pendency of a case pertaining to funding of political parties and alleged lack of transparency in their bank accounts. The NGO, which had filed the PIL on the issue of alleged corruption and subversion of democracy through illicit and foreign funding of political parties and lack of transparency in the bank accounts of all political parties, had moved an interim application in March 2021 before the Assembly polls in West Bengal and Assam seeking that the window for sale of

electoral bonds be not reopened.

The NGO, in its fresh application filed in the pending petition, had claimed there was a serious apprehension that any further sale of electoral bonds before the upcoming assembly elections, including in West Bengal and Assam, will further increase illegal and illicit funding of political parties through shell companies. On January 20, 2020, the apex court had refused to grant interim stay on the 2018 Electoral Bonds Scheme and sought responses of the Centre and the Election Commission to an interim application by the NGO seeking a stay on the scheme. The government notified the Electoral Bond Scheme on January 2, 2018. According to the provisions of the scheme, electoral bonds may be purchased by a person who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India. An individual can buy electoral bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.

Only political parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and which secured not less than one per cent of votes polled in the last general election to the House of the People (Lok Sabha) or the Legislative Assembly of the state are eligible to receive electoral bonds. According to the notification, electoral bonds shall be encashed by an eligible political party only through an account with an authorised bank. The apex court had in April 2019 declined to stay the Centre's Electoral Bond Scheme 2018 and made it clear that it will accord an in-depth hearing on the pleas as the Centre and the EC have raised "weighty issues" having "tremendous bearing on the sanctity of the electoral process in the country".

The Centre and the EC had earlier taken contrary stands in the court over political funding, with the government wanting to maintain anonymity of the donors and the poll panel batting for revealing their names for the sake of transparency. (PTI)

3-day workshop by SIE

PORT BLAIR, DEC 15/--/ The State Institute of Education, Port Blair in collaboration with State Project Management Unit (SPMU), NIPUN Bharat, SamagraShiksha organized a three-day workshop for identified mentors under BRC South Andaman from Dec.12 to 14, 2022 in the conference Hall of ShikshaSadan. The workshop was intended to equip teachers in the area of NIPUN Bharat Mission



implementation in the Islands which is a very vital component of National Education Policy 2020. All the teachers teaching in FLN Grades(Foundational Grades) have already been mapped under the mentor-mentee scheme to achieve the set target by 2026-27. To make the workshop more lively and participatory, the mentors were divided into four groups viz. 'Kabil', 'Saksham', 'Kaushal' and 'Gunvaan' and they participated in all group activities and mock sessions with great enthusiasm. A daily online quiz was also conducted in which Group 'Gunvaan' was adjudged as the best-performing group. During the valedictory function, Mr. R K Singh, Principal, SIE/State Nodal Officer, NIPUN Bharat Mission emphasized on the role of FLN grade teachers in the teaching-learning scenario as without their active support, the mission won't get its right path to move forward smoothly. He urged all the teachers to work with full vigour, innovativeness, and with intrinsic motivation, so as to make the teaching-learning process more joyful in all the schools. He also gave away the participation certificate to all the mentors during the function.

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AHEAD

MP sanctions over Rs 74.93 lakhs for developmental works at LA from MPLADS funds

PORT BLAIR, DEC 15/--/ Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma, Member of Parliament has sanctioned several developmental works for the people of Little Andaman under various Panchayats worth over Rs. 74.93 lakhs from MPLADS fund.

The development works sanctioned by the Member of Parliament are Rs 1.94 lakhs for installation of floodlights (LED) at RRO playground at Hut Bay Gram Panchayat, Little Andaman for development of sports and cultural activities. Once floodlights are installed, the youths of the areas will be able to play under floodlights till night hours. Rs 10 lakhs has been



sanctioned for construction of a children park at RK Pur, Little Andaman. Rs 15 lakhs for installation of Multi-Gym at PanchayatBhavan, Vivekananda Pur, Little Andaman for physical activities of youths. Rs 10 lakh for construction of mini stadium gallery of 100 seating capacity at playground, Rabindranagar GP, Little Andaman for sports and cultural activities of the youths. Rs 10 lakh for installation of multi Gym at Chidambaram Park, Hut Bay for physical activities of youths and Rs 15 lakh for providing Mortuary Van to the PanchayatSamity, Little Andaman for transportation of dead bodies.

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Oprah Winfrey

## RBI keeping ‘Arjuna’s eye’ on inflation

Data released earlier this week show that retail inflation dipped below the RBI's upper tolerance level of 6 per cent for the first time in 11 months in November on softening food price index. Though the consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation declined to 5.88 per cent in November, experts still expect the Reserve Bank to hike interest rates by another 25 basis points in its February monetary policy review. The RBI, which takes into account retail inflation for formulating monetary policy, had last week said the worst of inflation is behind us, but there is no room for complacency and hiked the benchmark policy rate by 35 basis points to 6.25 per cent.

The central bank also said it will keep 'Arjuna's eye' (keen focus) on the evolving inflation dynamics and projected inflation to remain above 4 per cent for the next 12 months. The RBI can certainly consider a pause in raising interest rates, given the fact that in both food and fuel, the uncertainties from weather and war make any predictions foolhardy. The RBI keeps a close watch on CPI inflation, which is expected to remain above 6 per cent in December. The wholesale price-based inflation fell to a 21-month low of 5.85 per cent in November as prices of food, fuel and manufactured items softened. The WPI (wholesale price index) based inflation has been on a declining trend since May and came down to single digit in October at 8.39 per cent. Experts say a high base of last year and some easing in food prices also worked in favour of the November 2022 wholesale price index coming in at its lowest level since February 2021 when it was 4.83 per cent.

Decline in the rate of inflation in November 2022 is primarily contributed by fall in prices of food articles, basic metals, textiles, chemicals & chemical products and paper & paper products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year. Buoyed over the decline, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told Parliament that the government will work for the common man to further bring down inflation. Her remarks came against the backdrop of inflation in food articles in November pegged at 1.07 per cent against 8.33 per cent in the previous month. Inflation in vegetables was (-) 20.08 per cent during the month compared to 17.61 per cent in October. WPI inflation continued to moderate in November with the base effect working in favour of lower numbers. Within food, prices of fruits, vegetables, especially tomato and potato, dragged down the prices. However, there is an uptick in prices of wheat, pulses and milk products. With Russian federation re-joining the Black Sea Grain initiative, wheat prices are expected to see some volatility in the coming months. Core WPI softened to two-year low of 3.5 per cent in November. As per WPI data, in the fuel and power basket, inflation was 17.35 per cent, while in manufactured products, it was 3.59 per cent in November. As of now, RBI needs to pause on rate hikes.

# Neo-liberal economic agenda leading to high inflationary pressures

## REFLEX ACTION

Prabhat Patnaik

workers. The second factor working in the same direction is this: even as activities shift from the metropolis to some countries of the periphery, thereby weakening the workers' bargaining and striking strength in the metropolis, the vast labour reserves of the periphery do not get exhausted, so that the workers in the periphery acquire no greater strength.

The fact that workers in the metropolis get restrained by being linked to the vast labour reserves of the periphery, which is what neoliberalism ensures, is well recognised. The increasing gap between the conditions of the metropolitan workers and those in the periphery that had characterised capitalism in the earlier period when it had segmented the world economy into two parts, across which neither labour nor capital moved, can no longer be sustained; but neoliberalism had always held out the promise that relocation aided rapid growth of the peripheral economy, would use up the labour reserves there, i.e., that these reserves which are a legacy of colonialism and semi-colonialism (though neo-liberal ideology does not recognise this fact), would finally dwindle.

The third factor that weakens the position of workers everywhere is the privatisation of public sector units. Workers in public sector units are invariably better organised than those in private sector units, a fact evident from the extent of unionisation in the two sectors. In the US for instance almost a third of public sector employees (including in the sphere of education) are unionised, compared to only about 7 per cent of private sector employees. It follows that privatisation has the effect of subduing

working class militancy. This in turn subdues workers' militancy in the economy as a whole.

The typical explanation for this upsurge of militancy that one comes across in the western press attributes it to inflation. Inflation in turn is believed to have been caused by factors, like the Ukraine war or Covid-induced disruptions in supply chains, that are supposedly wholly extraneous to the functioning of neo-liberal capitalism. This explanation however is inadequate for two obvious reasons: one, neither the Covid episode nor the Ukraine war is extraneous to the functioning of neo-liberal capitalism. This is clear in the case of the Ukraine war whose genesis lies in the attempt to maintain the hegemony of western imperialism that neo-liberal capitalism also seeks to buttress.

But even the Covid episode is not extraneous to neo-liberal capitalism: its sweep and intensity owe much to the western reluctance to part with monopoly control over vaccine technology; besides, even the origin of Covid, it now appears from the report of a Lancet-appointed committee, has been in a laboratory which could well make it a fall-out of military-linked research on behalf of imperialism.

The second reason why the current inflation is not extraneous to neo-liberal capitalism is the following. Capitalist crises have this characteristic that attempts to resolve them often simply lead to crises in a different form. The tendency towards over-production that neo-liberal capitalism has generated because of the rise in the share of surplus in output in the world capitalist economy as a whole, as well as in individual capitalist economies, has been sought to be overcome for a long time in the US, the leading metropolitan country, by keeping interest rates close to zero and pumping in huge amounts of liquidity into the economy through what is called "quantitative easing". (IPA Service)



Bride and bridegrooms traditional crowns being sold during marriage season at Chitpur market in Kolkata on Thursday----Arijit Ganguly

Conventional Crossword							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9					10		
11						12	
				13	14		
15	16		17				
					18	19	20
21		22		23			
24				25	26		27
28					29		
30				31			

ACROSS				DOWN			
1	Fondle	1	Freight	1	Freight	1	Freight
6	Feline	2	Top airman	2	Top airman	2	Top airman
9	Sharp	3	Ladder steps	3	Ladder steps	3	Ladder steps
10	Therefore	4	Greek letter	4	Greek letter	4	Greek letter
11	Of the kidneys	5	Vend	5	Vend	5	Vend
12	Craft	6	Steep rugged rock	6	Steep rugged rock	6	Steep rugged rock
13	Shelf-like surfaces	7	Concurs	7	Concurs	7	Concurs
15	Kiln for drying hops	8	Toddlers	8	Toddlers	8	Toddlers
18	Church service	14	Water storage	14	Water storage	14	Water storage
21	Soup dish	16	Talisman	16	Talisman	16	Talisman
24	Drink	17	Neckwear	17	Neckwear	17	Neckwear
25	Over	19	Make up for	19	Make up for	19	Make up for
28	Rawhide	20	Kind of wheat	20	Kind of wheat	20	Kind of wheat
29	Accessible to bribery	21	Faucets	21	Faucets	21	Faucets
30	Pigs' enclosure	22	Depend on	22	Depend on	22	Depend on
31	Ruler	23	Part of a church	23	Part of a church	23	Part of a church
		26	Seek charity	26	Seek charity	26	Seek charity
		27	Forefront	27	Forefront	27	Forefront

## SUDOKU: 3727

2	9		7		5	4	8	
8								5
		4				7		
4		9		3	6	7		
	3						9	
		1	4	5		8		2
	4					2		
1								7
	6	2	3		1		4	8

## Yesterday's Solution 3726

5	4	7	6	9	1	8	2	3
8	1	9	2	5	3	4	6	7
2	6	3	8	4	7	1	9	5
3	5	6	1	2	4	7	8	9
4	9	8	3	7	6	5	1	2
1	7	2	9	8	5	3	4	6
6	3	4	7	1	2	9	5	8
7	8	5	4	6	9	2	3	1
9	2	1	5	3	8	6	7	4

## Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1735

A	G	U	E			B	R	A	Y
C		N				O	D	E	
T	W	I	S	T		A	D	D	S
U		S	O	I	L	S	E		
A	C	O	R	N		T	A	R	T
L	A	N	D		C	U	R	S	E
	N		I	R	A	T	E	R	
B	A	N	D		T	E	N	O	R
A	D	O				A		O	
D	A	W	N			U	S	E	R

## DISCLAIMER

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# World armament companies making huge money from Ukraine War

The wars in Ukraine, the Middle East and elsewhere have fueled skyrocketing U.S. and global arms sales. Those sales were already rising even before the start of the 10-month war in Ukraine. According to figures published this week, there have been seven straight years now of rapidly rising war profits.

A report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said that sales of weapons and associated "services" by the world's 100 biggest military supplies companies rose by 1.9 per cent to a staggering \$592 billion in 2021. According to the institute, 40 U.S. companies made sales totalling \$299 billion in 2021. These figures do not include the many billions in sales of weapons to the Pentagon during the Ukraine War.

Five U.S. companies headed the list of top-selling arms manufacturers: Lockheed Martin, Raytheon Technologies, Boeing, Northrop Grumman and General Dynamics. Each of those companies have dumped thousands of dollars in contributions to both Republican and Democratic lawmakers, insuring support for not just the war in Ukraine but for other military adventures around the world. The Pentagon called in all five of those companies early in 2022 and asked them to provide what it said would be a continuing supply of weapons needed for a long-term war against Russia.

They didn't even mince words by at least pretending to be concerned for freedom or peace in Ukraine. The increase in profits by the weapons makers took place despite problems with the shipping of some components. The rip-off of the public till has not been limited to just the war machines in the U.S. Israel's Elbit Systems was also among the world's top arms manufacturers with the Middle East's rate of growth in arms sales outstripping the rest of the world. Sales by Elbit Systems jumped from \$4.2 billion in 2020 to \$4.75 billion, making it 28th on the list of the top 100 arms makers in the world.

This is the highest ranking for an Israeli military supplies firm since Israel Aerospace Industries was in 27th place in 2002. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said that five Middle Eastern companies reported a 6.5 per cent surge in sales to \$15 billion. As well as Elbit, the other companies were IAI, Rafael and Turkey's ASELSAN and Turkish Aerospace.

Lucie Beraud-Sudreau, director of the institute's military expenditure and arms production program, said: "We might have expected even greater

growth in arms sales in 2021 without persistent supply chain issues. "Both larger and smaller arms companies said that their sales had been affected during the year. Some companies, such as Airbus and General Dynamics, also reported labour shortages."

European arms companies anxious to cash in on the war in Ukraine did not do as well as their U.S. counterparts because they had to struggle more with supply chain blockages, which led to many of them actually losing out to U.S. war profiteers who were at the top of the heap. The fossil fuel companies in the U.S. have joined the U.S. armament makers as major beneficiaries of the war in Ukraine as they sell their expensive cracked gas which Europe is forced to buy to replace the cheaper Russian gas they benefitted from for many years. The CEOs of U.S. weapons companies and U.S. fossil fuel companies both are having a Merry Christmas this year as they wallow in the profits they are raking in from the war in Ukraine.

France's Dassault Aviation Group was an exception to the rule that European armament makers have taken a hit, registering a growth in sales of 59 per cent to \$6.3 billion in 2021.

## FOCUS

John Wojcik



# SC to hear pleas challenging electoral bond scheme in last week of Jan

**NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /--/** The Supreme Court said on Thursday it will hear in the last week of January 2023, a batch of PILs challenging laws permitting funding of political parties through the electoral bond scheme.

Electoral bonds have been pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring in transparency in political funding. A bench of Justices B R Gavi and Vikram Nath said the matter requires to be heard. "This is a 2015 matter. You can't have such an emergency just before the penultimate day of the vacation... There is no election as of now. We will hear it in the last week of January, 2023," the bench said. Lawyer Prashant Bhushan, appearing for PIL petitioner NGO 'Association for Democratic Reforms', said there are several constitutional questions involved in the petitions which have a bearing on sanctity of the electoral process. He said the issue of whether it should be referred to a Constitution

bench can be looked at first.

The apex court said that this will also require hearing. The apex court was hearing PILs by NGO Association for Democratic Reforms, The Communist Party of India (Marxist) and other petitioners. Earlier, Bhushan had sought urgent listing of the PIL by the apex court seeking a direction to the Centre not to open any further window for sale of electoral bonds during the pendency of a case pertaining to funding of political parties and alleged lack of transparency in their bank accounts.

The NGO, which had filed the PIL on the issue of alleged corruption and subversion of democracy through illicit and foreign funding of political parties and lack of transparency in the bank accounts of all political parties, had moved an interim application in March 2021 before the Assembly polls in West Bengal and Assam seeking that the window for sale of electoral bonds be not reopened.

The NGO, in its fresh ap-

plication filed in the pending petition, had claimed there was a serious apprehension that any further sale of electoral bonds before the upcoming assembly elections, including in West Bengal and Assam, will further increase illegal and illicit funding of political parties through shell companies. On January 20, 2020, the apex court had refused to grant interim stay on the 2018 Electoral Bonds Scheme and sought responses of the Centre and the Election Commission to an interim application by the NGO seeking a stay on the scheme.

The government notified the Electoral Bond Scheme on January 2, 2018. According to the provisions of the scheme, electoral bonds may be purchased by a person who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India. An individual can buy electoral bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.

Only political parties registered under Section

29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and which secured not less than one per cent of votes polled in the last general election to the House of the People (Lok Sabha) or the Legislative Assembly of the state are eligible to receive electoral bonds. According to the notification, electoral bonds shall be encashed by an eligible political party only through an account with an authorised bank. The apex court had in April 2019 declined to stay the Centre's Electoral Bond Scheme 2018 and made it clear that it will accord an in-depth hearing on the pleas as the Centre and the EC have raised "weighty issues" having "tremendous bearing on the sanctity of the electoral process in the country". The Centre and the EC had earlier taken contrary stands in the court over political funding, with the government wanting to maintain anonymity of the donors and the poll panel batting for revealing their names for the sake of transparency. (PTI)

## India's`cultural renaissance' began after Modi became PM: Shah



**AHMEDABAD, DEC 15 /--/** Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the period starting from 2014 when Narendra Modi became Prime Minister will be known as an "era of India's cultural renaissance".

The senior BJP leader was speaking after inaugurating the month-long 'International Convention for Better Living' at 'Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar' set up on the outskirts of the city as part of the Pramukh Swami Centenary Celebrations of the BAPS Swaminarayan sect. "PM Modi's leadership has freed Indian society from several uncertainties and inferiority complexes. He has also finished several unfinished works related to cultural renaissance, be it the Ram temple in Ayodhya or Kashi Vishwanath Corridor," he said. "Whenever history is written in the future, the period starting from 2014, when Prime Minister Modi assumed office, will be known as an era of India's cultural renaissance," Shah added.

The biggest contribution of Pramukh Swami Maharaj (who passed away in 2016) was that he rejuvenated the institution of family and "Sanyaas Parampara" or the tradition of renunciation, he said. The month-long centenary celebrations were launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the sect's chief Mahant Swami Maharaj on Wednesday. Shah in his

speech also noted that Pramukh Swami Maharaj prepared a disciplined team of more than 1,100 sanyasis (monks), built thousands of temples including some in other countries, visited nearly 70,000 villages of India and inspired nearly 2.5 lakh families to take the path of 'dharma'. "Pramukh Swami's concept of ghar-sabha (house meeting) strengthened our family values. He played an important role in rejuvenating the institution of family. Existence of Indian culture is dependent on the existence of this institution," said the Union minister.

"He also redefined and rejuvenated sanyas parampara. This tradition helped our nation come out of many crises in the past. This sanyas or sanyasi parampara also provided guidance during political crises in the country. Despite having so many sects and beliefs in our country, people remained together without any conflict," Shah said. He also credited the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) Swaminarayan sect for helping lakhs of youth in Gujarat give up addiction. The event was attended by several businesspersons and corporate leaders including Gautam Adani of Adani group, GM Rao of GMR Group, Pankaj Patel of Zydus Group, chairman of Torrent Group Sudhir Mehta and director of Reliance Industries Parimal Nathwani.(PTI)



Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat addressing the audience at the 7th edition of the India Water Impact Summit (IWIS), in New Delhi

## All parties barring BJP work for commission, says Nadda

**KOPPAL, DEC 15 /--/** The Bharatiya Janata Party national president J P Nadda on Thursday alleged all parties come to power to serve their families and earn through commission except the BJP.

"All political work for their families and earn through commission except the BJP. Right from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Karnataka chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, everyone in BJP toils day and night to serve the people and to change their image and destiny," Nadda was addressing people after inaugurating BJP offices in 10 districts of poll-bound Karnataka. He said the Congress in Karnataka was dividing communities and knows nothing about development. "The Congress does not know what development is. They know only one thing how to come to power and use it for their purpose and earn through commission. The Congress cannot think beyond this. Is it not the history here," the BJP president said.



Nadda said the chief ministers such as Basavaraj Bommai and his predecessor B S Yediyurappa (both from BJP) carry their report cards with them about the work done by them, which no one else can. "Former chief minister Siddaramaiah cannot say what his government had done for the State, but, yes, he can explain how he divided communities in society," the BJP leader said. He said the BJP is the only party which is working with a nationalistic ideology since 1951-52.

In this regard, he cited how the BJP worked for the abrogation of Article 370, sacrifice of Jan Sangh leader Shyama Prasad Mookerjee in Kashmir, Goa's liberation movement, protests against a road in Shimla pact, flying the Indian tricolour in Lal Chowk in Srinagar and raising Shah Bano case. The BJP president ridiculed the

Bharat Jodo Yatra and slammed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for allegedly siding with those who raised anti-India slogans.

"This is not Bharat Jodo Yatra' (Unite India march) but Bharat Todo Yatra' (Break India march). This is also Prayashchit Yatra (Repentance March) because his (Rahul Gandhi's) ancestors spared no efforts to divide India," Nadda said referring to the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. The BJP chief charged Nehru with ceding Jammu and Kashmir from the rest of India by incorporating Article 370 in the Constitution giving special status to the restive State. However, Modi rectified the blunder by abolishing the provision from the Constitution.

"Rahul, you go to the Jawaharlal Nehru University and stand with those who raised slogans like Afzal Hum Sharminada Hain Tere Qatil Zinda Hain'. Afzal Guru was the mastermind of the terrorist attack on Indian Parliament," Nadda said.

Apparently referring to former JNU students union president Kanhaiya Kumar, Nadda alleged that the man who raised slogans Bharat Tere Tukde Honge Insha Allah' was roaming with Rahul Gandhi during his Bharat Jodo Yatra in Karnataka. "Will such people unite India or destroy it," the BJP leader wondered. He said BJP followed the principle of appeasement to none and justice to all".

The BJP president said the BJP aims to set up offices in every district headquarters. So far, there are 296 offices and 210 more would be ready by March 2023, he added. (PTI)

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, MOHAMMAD SHAHNAWAZ S/O MOHAMMAD NEZAM UDDIN R/O 4A, TOPSIA 2<sup>nd</sup> LANE, PO+PS. TILJALA, KOLKATA 700039, WB. NOW HAVE CHANGE MY NAME AS MOHAMMAD SHAHNAWAZ PREVIOUSLY CALLED MOHAMMAD SHAHNAWAL WHICH IS WRONGLY MENTION IN MY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE MY ACTUAL NAME IS MOHAMMAD SHAHNAWAZ BY NOTARY AFFIDAVIT KOLKATA ON 15.12.2022 WB.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends 'At Home' reception on the eve of Vijay Diwas at Army House, in New Delhi

## BJP won Gujarat polls as it is home state of Modi and Shah: Kamal Nath

**CHHINDWARA, DEC 15 /--/** Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath on Thursday said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won the recently-held Gujarat Assembly polls as it is the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah, which "influenced" the voters.

The BJP registered a landslide victory in Gujarat, where elections were held on December 1 and 5. The party won 156 out of the total 182 Assembly seats, while the Congress could bag only 17 seats. "The main reason behind the success of BJP in Gujarat is that it is the home state of both Modi ji and Amit Shah, due to which the voters got influenced," Nath told newsmen.

The former chief minister and his son Nakul Nath, who is a Congress Lok Sabha member from Chhindwara, were here for taking part in various programmes. When asked about Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announcing the suspension of officials from stage during his visits in various parts of the state, Nath dubbed it as "drama". "It is all drama and nothing else. He announces from the dais, but has he suspended them on paper," the former MP chief minister asked. These are tactics to grab media attention, he alleged. "He (Chouhan) has nothing to tell people and therefore keeps searching for new excuses to remain in the limelight. It clearly reflects his frustration and he only knows how to misuse police, administration..." he claimed. Earlier this month, Chouhan suspended four officials for alleged dereliction of duty while addressing a programme in the tribal-dominated Betul district. (PTI)

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, Ketaki Bijoykumar Singh (old name) W/O Bijay Singha Presently residing at VILL- Janadari, P.O.- Gopinathpur, P.S.- Bhagwanpur, Dist- East Medinipur, 721633, West Bengal, India, have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) Ketakirani Singha (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 14/12/2022.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, Sekh Amanat Ali (old name) S/O Sk Liyamat Ali Presently residing at Vill & P.O.- Sahapur, P.S.- Panchla, Howrah- 711310, West Bengal, India, have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) Sk Anamat Ali (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 15/12/2022.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, Bijoy Kumar Singh (old name) S/O Late Adhar Singha Presently residing at VILL- Janadari, P.O.- Gopinathpur, P.S.- Bhagwanpur, Dist- East Medinipur, 721633, West Bengal, India, have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) Bijay Singha (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 14/12/2022.

## States must 'rebuff' centre's attempts to centralise power through multi-state cooperative society route: CPM

**NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /--/** The CPM has called on state governments to come together to "rebuff" the centre's attempts to centralise administration and power through the multi-state cooperative society route.

The latest editorial of the party mouthpiece People's Democracy has alleged that one of the ways in which the Narendra Modi government attempted to violate the constitutional powers of the states was by forming a ministry of cooperation. The party stated that after the Supreme Court ruled in October 2022 that the 97th amendment would not be applicable to local cooperative societies but only multi-state cooperative societies, the government decided to use the multi-state cooperative society route to intervene in the states.

"The proposed 2022 Bill is a dangerous legislation. It is a blatant attempt to thrust

the decisions of the central government on to cooperative societies functioning under state laws... "All these amendments are explicitly intended to insert multi-state cooperative societies into the cooperative structures of states.

This will allow the central government to strain and strangle local cooperatives and take control of the whole cooperative structure in states through penal actions, mergers, board takeovers, and interventions in elections," the party said.

It also raised the issue of how under the central government's directions, AMUL is either joining

hands, or being merged, with five local cooperatives to form a multi-state cooperative society.

"This society would be engaged in certification of products of 'natural farming' and export of milk. Such politically motivated steps will only weaken state-level dairy cooperatives as well as a professionally run cooperative like AMUL," it alleged. The editorial also alleged that the government was infusing funds into defunct multi-state cooperative societies based in Gujarat and Maharashtra and sending them to establish new bases in faraway states like Kerala. "The intent is to weaken the operations of local cooperative societies in Kerala, takeover their business, and expand the political capital of BJP in the state. The very spirit of cooperation in India is premised on regional diversity. Neoliberal policies in the banking sector have already pushed cooperative societies in states into a crisis. (PTI)

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, Kahinin Begum (old name) W/O Anwar Ali, D/O Manwor Ali Presently residing at 13/H/10, Mayur Bhanj Road, P.O.- Khiddeepore, P.S.- Ekbalpore, Kolkata- 700023, West Bengal, India, have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) Kohinoor Begum (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 15/12/2022.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, Mohammed Rizwan (old name) S/O Mohammed Azim Presently residing at 32/1/C, Ekbalpore Lane, KOLKATA-700023, West Bengal, INDIA I have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) Sk Rizwan Ahmed (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 15/12/2022.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, Sk Izul Rahaman (old name) S/O Late Sk Lutfar Rahaman Presently residing at Vill- Anantapur, P.O.- Ilahipur, P.S.- Harpal, Pin- 712707, West Bengal, India, have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) Sk Azizul Rahaman (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 15/12/2022.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, Soyeab Munshi (old name) S/O Jasimuddin Munshi Presently residing at Vill-Kandarpapur, P.O.- Garia, P.S.- Sonarpur, Baruipur, Pin- 700084, West Bengal, India, have changed my name to (shall henceforth be known as) Shoaib Ali Munshi (new name) vide an affidavit sworn before Notary public at Kolkata on 15/12/2022.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, Jasimuddin Khan, S/o Late Karamuddin Khan, R/o Flora Fountain BL-1, 19FR, FL- 19B, 45 , Christopher Road, P.O. Gobinda Khatick Road, P.S. Topsia, Dist- Kolkata, Pin- 700046, W.B. declare that I have change my name Jassmuddin Khan to Jasimuddin Khan . As per affidavit before the Notary Public at Kolkata on 15 Dec 2022.

## Rare case of Limb Anomaly operated by Dr. Ravi Chandra V at Apollo Hospital, Visakhapatnam.

Baby Madhavi, 4 year old child from Srikakulam, was born with deformed left lower limb. She was evaluated at multiple hospitals, but no solution could be obtained. Child finally visited Dr. Ravi Chandra Vattipalli, an orthopaedic Surgeon at Apollo Hospital Arilova, Visakhapatnam. Child was evaluated using clinical examination, X-rays and MRI. It was found out that her knee cap was lying in an abnormal position, dislocated outwards. Only one similar case has been reported so far in Orthopaedic literature. Treatment of such complex cases is not straightforward and needs multidisciplinary care. In view of complexity of the case, along with Plastic Surgeon, Dr. PRK Prasad, Dr. Ravi, operated on this child in September, 2022. Child made good recovery, and is now walking without

need for any walking aids. Dr. Ravi Chandra stated that success of this surgery was attributed to the excellent team work and coordination from the departments of Anesthesia, Radiology & Nursing team. Apart from the diagnostic challenge, care of the child during and after surgery needed great expertise. Apollo Hospitals, known for such a multi speciality care was happy to handle such complex cases with ease.

About Dr. Ravi Chandra: Dr. Ravichandra, Vattipalli, DNB Ortho is a specialist in Joint Replacement and Limb lengthening surgeries. Trained in Deformity Correction and Joint Replacement Surgeries at top Centres both in India and abroad, Dr. Ravi Chandra presently is associated with Apollo Hospital, Health City, Vizag

For more details contact: **Gitanjali Medical Hall,** Dhaleswar, Jail Ashram Road, Agartala, Tripura-799007. Ph: **9402599091**



For more details contact: **Dr. Ravichandra, Vattipalli,** Apollo Hospital, Health City, Arilova, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Ph: **9398600638.**



## Our endeavour is to increase impact of governance, reduce interference of govt: PM



President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi gesture to each other at Vijay Diwas Reception, in New Delhi on Thursday

### Sincere efforts should be made to bring corrupt public servants to book: SC

NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /--/ Observing that sincere efforts should be made to bring corrupt government officials to book, the Supreme Court on Thursday said a public servant can be convicted of the charge of illegal gratification in a corruption case on the basis of circumstantial evidence even when there is no direct oral or documentary proof.

The apex court said even if direct evidence of the complainant is not available, owing to death or other reasons, there can be conviction of the public servant under the relevant provisions of law. "In the event the complainant turns hostile or has died or is unable to let in his evidence during the trial, the demand of illegal gratification can be proved by letting in the evidence of any other witness either orally or documentary evidence or the prosecution can prove the case by circumstantial evidence. "The trial does not abate nor does it result in an order of acquittal of the public servant," the bench said. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice S A Nazeer said complainants as well as the prosecution should make sincere efforts so that corrupt public servants are brought to book and convicted so the administration and governance become unpolluted and free from corruption. "In order to bring home the guilt of the accused, the prosecution has to first prove the demand of illegal gratification and the subsequent acceptance as a matter of fact. This fact in issue can be either proved by direct evidence, in nature of oral evidence/documentary evidence. "Further, the proof of demand and acceptance of illegal gratification, can also be proved by circumstantial evidence in the absence of direct, oral or documentary evidence," the bench also comprising justices B R Gavai, A S Bopanna, V Ramasubramanian and B V Nagarathna, said. The apex court's verdict came while examining whether in the absence of direct or primary evidence of demand of bribe, inferential deduction of guilt of a public servant can be drawn based on other evidence.

Justice Nagarathna, while reading out the judgement, also reiterated some previous verdicts of the apex court wherein it had said "corruption is corroding like cancerous lymph nodes the vital veins of the body politics, social fabric of efficiency in the public service and demoralising the honest officers." (PTI)

### Govt trying to micromanage judiciary: Oppn leaders on Rijiju's 'frivolous PILs' remarks

NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /--/ The Union government is trying to micromanage the judiciary, Opposition leaders alleged on Thursday, a day after Union law minister Kiren Rijiju said if the Supreme Court takes up all bail applications and "frivolous PILs", then it will cause a lot of extra burden. Rijiju made the remarks in Rajya Sabha after he introduced the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2022 on Wednesday. Taking to Twitter, senior lawyer and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said, "Rijiju alleged(ly) said: Supreme Court must not take up bail pleas ... Does he even know the meaning of liberty?" Lok Sabha MP Manish Tewari asked the minister if he has read the treatise -- bail, not jail is the rule. "Obviously law minister Kiren Rijiju had other pressing preoccupations in Law School other than Law. He perhaps has never read Justice Krishna Aiyer's seminal treatise -- bail not jail is the rule. How else can a law Minister say SC should not hear bail pleas," the Congress leader said on Twitter. Hitting out at the government, former law minister Salman Khurshid said, "Forget NJAC, Government wants to micromanage judiciary: cut vacations, no priority to bail, et al. What next?" Speaking in the Upper House, Rijiju had the Supreme Court should take up those cases which are relevant and appropriate for it. "If the Supreme Court of India starts hearing bail applications, if the Supreme Court of India starts hearing all frivolous PILs, it will definitely cause a lot of extra burden on the hon. court itself because the Supreme Court, by and large, is treated as a constitutional court," he said. (PTI)

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In this context, he said that Physical Education teachers have a greater role to play in transforming the mindset of the students and keeping them involved in sports activities, Mr. Singaram said. The Pradhan of R.K Gram Panchayat, Mr. ShyamalBhowmick too emphasized the need to put a check on the conduct of students, bringing them inside the perimeter of discipline. He said that the Physical Education Teachers have to discharge their duties more efficiently to deal with the students psychologically to instill discipline and Educational values. He said the parents should keep vigil on the activities of their children and be in touch with the school. Showing apprehensions over the decline in the number of students in the Bangla medium schools, the Pradhan of Madhupur Panchayat, Mr. ShymalDebnath said, there is a trend among the parents to admit their children in English medium private schools. He demanded to start English medium government Primary Schools, keeping Bangla as one of the compulsory subjects. He stressed upon the need to improve the quality of the Government schools, so that the parents get encouraged to enroll their children in these schools. Contradicting the suggestions of converting Bangla medium school into English medium, the PRI member from Khudirampur, Mr. K. V.Raj said that learning in his own mother tongue makes the child more efficient, moreover, it helps him be rooted with his rich tradition and culture too. He said that

NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said it has always been his government's endeavour to increase the impact of governance and reduce the interference of the Union government in every citizen's life. Modi said his government is striving tirelessly to make the ecosystem transparent and faster by simplifying procedures and processes at every level. In his message on 'Second Sushasan Saptah' (good governance week) to be observed from December 19 to 25, the Prime Minister said his government has taken various citizen-centric initiatives, including redressal of public grievances, online services, disposal of service delivery applications and good governance practices. "It has always been our endeavour to increase the impact of governance, but reduce the

interference of government in every citizen's life," he said. Modi said the scrapping of thousands of unnecessary compliances, repealing of thousands of outdated laws and decriminalisation of many kinds of minor offences are major steps towards this end.

Guided by the principle of 'citizen first', he said technology has immense potential to bring the government and citizens closer. "Today, technology has become a powerful tool to empower citizens, as well as a medium to optimise transparency and accountability in day-to-day functioning," the Prime Minister said in a message dated December 12. Through various policy interventions, he said, "We are strongly marching ahead towards digital empowerment of citizens and digital transformation

of institutions". Modi said the people have resolved to build a glorious and self-reliant India during 'Amrit Kaal' of next 25 years. "The government's role is to complement the people's resolve by being an enabler in their efforts. Our role is to increase opportunities and remove obstacles from their path," the Prime Minister added. Modi expressed hope that the Second 'Sushasan Saptah' will help in furthering good governance at every level. "It is particularly pleasing to note that this year too, the 'Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore' campaign continues to be a part of good governance week," the Prime Minister said. Modi on Thursday also said every Indian is proud to see the bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the United Nations headquarters in New York. His tweet came after external affairs minister S

Jaishankar jointly unveiled Gandhi's bust at a sombre ceremony at the North Lawns of the United Nations with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and President of the 77th session of the General Assembly Csaba Korosi. Antonio Guterres described Gandhi as an uncompromising advocate for peaceful co-existence, non-discrimination and pluralism. He said: "The new installation located at @UN Headquarters will serve as a reminder of the values Gandhi upheld, and to which we must remain committed." Responding to him, Modi tweeted, "It makes every Indian proud to see the bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the @UN HQ. May the Gandhian thoughts and ideals make our planet more prosperous and further sustainable development." (PTI)

### Bengal fights for humanity, unity and integrity: Mamata CM demands Bachchan be honoured with Bharat Ratna

KOLKATA, DEC 15 /--/ Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday asserted that the state always fights for humanity, unity and integrity and does not bow down to anyone on these issues. Speaking at the inauguration of the 28th Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) at the Netaji Indoor Stadium here, Mamata said Bengal has a long history of struggle. "Bengal has been fighting for unity, humanity, diversity and integrity. This struggle will go on," she said. "Our state does not bow down to anybody, nor does it beg," the chief minister added. Incidentally, the West Bengal government has repeatedly urged the Centre to release funds to clear dues for GST as well the MNGREA. Mamata had also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi a few times to discuss the issue. During her speech, the chief minister demanded that superstar Amitabh Bachchan be honoured with the Bharat Ratna for his immense contribution to Indian and world cinema. Megastar Amitabh Bachchan on Thursday inaugurated the 28th edition of the KIFF by lighting the ceremonial lamp. Apart from the chief minister Mamata, West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose, Big B's actor-wife Jaya Bachchan, superstar Shah Rukh Khan, former India cricket skipper Sourav Ganguly, filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt and veteran actor Shatrughan Sinha, among others, were present on the occasion at Netaji Indoor Stadium here. An exhibition on the 80-year-old legendary actor's life and works will be showcased during the film festival, with the inaugural movie being 'Abhimaan'. A total of 183 movies will be screened in 10 theatres across the city from December 16-22. (PTI)



Amitabh Bachchan lighting the ceremonial lamp to inaugurate the 28th edition of Kolkata International Film Festival at Netaji Indoor Stadium. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Governor CV Ananda Bose, TMC MP Shatrughna Sinha and Shahrukh Khan are also seen — Photo: Arijit Ganguly

### Pradhans of various GPs of Diglipur zone meets

The efforts should be to improve the quality of Education, instead of converting the medium to English. Calling it wastage of Government money the Pradhan of Laxmipur, Mr. Sujan Kumar Dass said there are many Government teachers' quarters lying vacant for many years in Laxmipur. The representative of Ramnagar Panchayat also showing his displeasure over the teachers quarters remaining unused said that it is unfortunate that the condition of the quarters is deteriorating, being neglected and remaining vacant for a long time. The lady Pradhan of Kishorinagar, Smti Rita Dhali raised her demand of upgrading the Parangara School to Senior Secondary level. The Pradhan of Radhanagar, Smti Neelima Samaddar and the representative of Nabagram too joined her, highlighting the shortage of teachers in the schools of their respective areas. The Shibpur Pradhan, Mr. Neelu too wanted to upgrade the school of his area to senior secondary level. He said, nowadays a lot of paperwork has made the teachers overburdened and the classroom teaching is sidelined somewhere, which is a very worried state in schools. The Incharge of the Model School Sitanagar said that students coming from Kalighat area are forced to wait for hours at times, due to the late arrival of the bus on their return journey to home from the school. He asked the PRIs to talk to the authorities to provide school bus on time. The Principal of the Keralapuram School, Mr. B. V.R Reddy in his address said that the students give excuses in the name of online classes, are often found misusing the facilities.

It is also noticed that many students have developed the habit of playing online gambling using their mobiles, which must be discouraged, he said. Calling upon the Pradhans, Mr. Reddy said that they should also take the responsibilities of the students of their area, interacting with them periodically, knowing about the social or personal problems being faced by them. Mr. Reddy said that there should be a healthy atmosphere at home, so that the children learn positive attributes. The DEO, Mr. R.P. Pandey, replying to the PRIs, said that the department is committed to provide qualitative Education to the students, and the demands related to schools' infrastructures and other facilities are being fulfilled on priority. He had already taken up the issues at the higher level and hoped for positive results soon, he assured. All the PRIs in one voice said that they would help in all possible manner for the better education of their children. Proposing the vote of thanks to the Pradhans and the other PRI members, for their participation, the Principal of the Subhashgram School, Mr. M. Nehru said that together the society and the school can bring remarkable reforms in making school Education successful in achieving its goals. The head of the family should create a conducive environment at home, encouraging the children to imbibe moral values to become good human beings, he said. All the Pradhans of the 15 Panchayats and the other members of the Panchayati Raj Institutions participated in this brainstorming meeting.

### MP urges...

From page-1 Hence, he requested the Minister to intervene in this matter and give special concession to all stretcher patients of Andaman and Nicobar Islands so that they have to pay the cost of only one seat instead of nine seats to Airlines Companies, which will be a great support to the family members of serious patients. The Member of Parliament also requested to issue necessary directions to all private Airlines Companies to allow evacuation of stretcher patients as presently only Air India is allowing stretcher patients.

## At KIFF, BIG B speaks about current brand of historical movies

### Social media often driven by certain narrowness: SRK

KOLKATA, DEC 15 /--/ Legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan on Thursday while tracing the history of Indian cinema, described the current brand of historical movies as couched in fictionalised jingoism. Bachchan in a speech at the 28th Kolkata International Film Festival which he declared open, pointed out that the Indian film industry has always propagated courage and managed to keep an egalitarian spirit alive. "Since early times there have been many changes in cinema content ... from mythological films and socialist cinema to the advent of the angry young man ... to the current brand of historicals, couched in fictionalised jingoism, along with moral policing," the Octogenarian superstar of Indian cinema said. He added: "The range has kept audiences reflecting on the politics and social concerns" of the times. The actor also pointed out that



Shahrukh Khan waves at audience as he enters Netaji Indoor Stadium with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to attend the inauguration ceremony of KIFF — Photo: Shyamal Maitra

even now "questions are being raised on civil liberties and freedom" by Indian cinema. The Super-star also spoke of legendary movie maker Satyajit Ray, with whom he and his wife had shared a close relationship and pointed out that his 1989 movie 'Ganashatru' (Enemy of the people) was perhaps an indication of how Ray may have reacted to the current times. The movie Ganashatru highlights the struggle between religious superstition and medieval prejudices in a doctor's fight against an epidemic. Bachchan also thanked the city of Joy for giving him his first job and for giving his wife Jaya her "first film 'Mahanagar' (The Big City, 1963) directed by Satyajit Ray. "The actor's first job was at Kolkata-based Bird & Co., a former British-owned firm. "I salute you all for the artistic temperament that embraces the

essence of plurality, that is what makes Bengal so special," he said. On his part, Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan on Thursday said that positive people like him, will stay alive. The comment came in the midst of a row over a song in his upcoming film 'Pathaan'. The actor while addressing a star-studded gathering at the inaugural of the Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF), also decried how social media is often driven by certain narrowness of views, "making it divisive and destructive." Khan told a cheering audience, "Hamare jaise positive log zinda hai (We are positive and alive)." This is being seen as a response to the criticism of his upcoming film. Protests have been staged in various parts of the country alleging a community has been offended by the content of the song "Besharam Rang" in the yet to be released movie 'Pathaan'. Among

others, the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Thursday objected to Deepika Padukone's saffron attire and certain scenes in a song in the film. The RSS affiliate also objected to the title of the song "Besharam Rang", saying Hindu society will never accept such a film. Khan who has earlier made the highly acclaimed movie 'My Name is Khan' on the subject of Islamophobia, said in his speech, "Cinema brings to the fore humanity's immense capacity for compassion, unity and brotherhood." "Cinema is the best place to sustain a counter-narrative that speaks to the larger nature of humankind," Shah Rukh Khan, the guest of honour at KIFF, said. The superstar also described cinema as a vehicle "for people of different colours, castes and religions to better understand each other." (PTI)



## Indian Navy chief holds discussions with top political and defence leadership in Lanka to boost bilateral military ties

COLOMBO, DEC 15/--/Indian Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar has held discussions with senior political and defence leadership of Sri Lanka, including President Ranil Wickremesinghe, on furthering defence cooperation between the two nations. Kumar, who arrived here on Tuesday on a four-day visit, called on President Wickremesinghe on Wednesday. "Discussions focused on furthering defence cooperation between India and Sri Lanka towards strengthening bilateral ties. Sri Lanka's role in steering Colombo Security Conclave towards ensuring peace and security in the region was acknowledged," the Indian High Commission here tweeted.

He also called on Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena. "Discussed the importance of strong defence ties between and means to further strengthen existing linkages between Armed Forces of the two countries," the mission tweeted.

Kumar also met Premitha Bandara Tennakoon, State Minister of Defence of Sri Lanka, Chief of Defence Staff General Shavendra Silva and the chiefs of Sri Lankan Air Force and the Army, the Indian High Commission tweeted on Thursday. He also met with Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne, Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy. Earlier, the Indian High Commission in a statement said that the visit of CNS symbolises strong relations and close cooperation between the two countries, with Sri Lanka being accorded the status of Priority One' partner by India. It would strengthen the existing bilateral maritime relations between the two countries and areas of common security concern and enhancing capacity and capability

## EAM Jaishankar thanks UN chief Guterres for highlighting reforming of UNSC

UNITED NATIONS, DEC 15/--/External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday thanked UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for highlighting the growing desire of a majority of member countries for reforming the Security Council, the UN's top organ. India has been at the forefront of the years-long efforts to reform the Security Council, saying it rightly deserves a place as a permanent member of the 15-member top organ of the world body, which in its current form does not represent the geo-political realities of the 21st Century. "Thank you Secretary General for highlighting the growing desire for reforming the Security Council. Your presence at the Open Debate yesterday is deeply appreciated," Jaishankar tweeted. Jaishankar arrived

here on Tuesday to preside over two signature events on counter-terrorism and reformed multilateralism being held under India's current Presidency of the UN Security Council before the curtains come down this month on the country's two-year tenure as an elected member of the powerful 15-nation Council. His reaction came in response to UN chief Guterres's tweet in which he said a majority of UN member countries acknowledge that the Security Council should be reformed to reflect today's geopolitical realities.

"A majority of @UN member countries now acknowledge that the Security Council should be reformed to reflect today's geopolitical realities. I hope regional groups & countries can work together to achieve greater consensus on the way

forward and the modalities of reform," Guterres wrote. On December 1, India assumed the monthly rotating Presidency of the Security Council, the second time after August 2021 that India is presiding over the Council during its two-year tenure as an elected UNSC member.

India, whose 2021-2022 term on the Council ends December 31, has been at the forefront of efforts calling for urgent reform of the Security Council, which has remained deeply divisive in dealing with current challenges.

India has asserted that the Council, in its current form, does not reflect today's geo-political realities and its credibility is at risk if nations such as developing powers like India do not have a permanent seat at the horse-shoe table. (PTI)

building initiatives towards ensuring peace in the region would be discussed during the visit, it said.

The visit is also indicative of the growing camaraderie and friendship

between the two nations in line with India's Neighbourhood First' policy. High Commissioner Gopal Baglay along with the Navy chief hosted a reception on board the INS Sahayadri. Sri Lankan Parliament Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena and ministers, including Nimal Siripala Silva, Douglas Devananda and Kanchana Wijesekera, several dignitaries and friends of India attended the reception. "Truly a memorable evening on board!!!," the Indian mission tweeted.

Kumar also visited Sri Lanka Navy Ship SLNS Sindurala and Naval facilities at the Colombo Port. "During interactions, the @srilanka\_navy leadership & the ship's crew acknowledged the operational utility of the OPVs, built by @goashipyardltd for the Sri Lanka Navy," the mission said.

Remembering the supreme sacrifice of brave Indian soldiers, Admiral Kumar paid his tributes at the IPKF Memorial on Tuesday. Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was the Indian military contingent performing a peacekeeping operation in Sri Lanka between 1987 and 1990. Kumar has been invited as the Chief Guest and Reviewing Officer for the Commissioning Parade at the Naval and Maritime Academy (NMA), Trincomalee, scheduled on Thursday. Admiral Kumar's visit comes months after the docking of a Chinese spy ship at Sri Lanka's Hambantota port triggered a diplomatic row between New Delhi and Colombo. (PTI)



# Toshakhana case: Pak court admits Election Commission's plea for criminal proceedings against Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD, DEC 15/--/A Pakistani court on Thursday asked Imran Khan to appear before it next month after it accepted a plea filed by the country's Election Commission, seeking criminal proceedings against the former premier for not revealing the proceeds of sale from the state gifts. The Islamabad district and sessions court deemed the petition for criminal proceedings against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman in the Toshakhana (state depository) case as maintainable and summoned him on January 9.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) last month filed a case against Khan in the district court after disqualifying him on October 21 in the Toshakhana case.

The plea asked the court to proceed against Khan under criminal law for allegedly misleading officials about the gifts he received from foreign dignitaries during his tenure as the prime minister.

Additional Sessions Judge of Islamabad District and Sessions

Court Zafar Iqbal, after hearing the arguments declared the ECP petition as valid and summoned Khan to the court on January 9.

The case is based on the plea by that Khan had "deliberately concealed his assets relating to Toshakhana gifts retained by him, particularly in

2018 and 2019 and sought a conviction for the offences mentioned under Sections 167 (corrupt practice) and 173 (making or publishing a false statement or declaration) of the Elections Act 2017.

The judge on Monday had reserved its verdict in the case. The election body had disqualified Khan under Article 61(1)(p) of the Constitution for the current term of the Parliament. Khan in various statements has been saying that the case was a kind of witch hunt to disqualify him. (PTI)



## EU Parliament chief says lawmakers are reviewing Qatar files

BRUSSELS, DEC 15/--/The European Union's Parliament is reviewing its files involving Qatar to see if any pressure was exerted on lawmakers, the assembly's president said Thursday as a corruption scandal rocked the EU's only directly elected institution. Parliament President Roberta Metsola said the work under review includes an agreement to allow Qataris with biometric passports to have short visa-free stays in the EU. On Monday, the agreement was "sent back to committee for a full investigation," she said. Metsola said questions also have surfaced about a separate EU-Qatar air agreement on which the European Parliament must be consulted. Talks have started with the EU's executive branch, the European Commission, to assess whether the accord should be suspended.



The agreement, signed in October 2021, would allow all EU airlines to operate direct flights to Qatar from any airport in the 27-nation bloc and give Qatari airlines the same access to European capitals. EU member countries have yet to approve it. Metsola vowed that this would not be all. "We will look into everything. We will look into any undue pressure and any undue influence that we see that takes place," she told reporters after talks with EU leaders in Brussels. Belgian prosecutors have charged four people with corruption, participation in a criminal group and money laundering on suspicion of trying buy political favours at the parliament with money or gifts. They include a former vice president of the European Parliament and her partner. Greek lawmaker Eva Kaili remains in custody awaiting a hearing on December 22 and whose term in office was terminated by lawmakers this week. Her partner, Francesco Giorgi, who is a parliamentary advisor.

The heads of two charity groups have been charged. Pier Antonio Panzeri, head of the Fight Impunity campaign group and a former member of the EU parliament, and Niccolo Figa-Talamanca, secretary-general of another non-governmental organisation, No Peace Without Justice.

Metsola promised sweeping reforms in coming months to crack down on corruption and influence peddling at the assembly. Referring to the institution's transparency register, she said: "yesterday, an NGO called No Peace Without Justice, which is allegedly connected to this investigation that is ongoing, which had 11 persons accredited on it, was suspended." (AP)

## Russia warns 'consequences' if US missiles sent to Ukraine

KYIV, DEC 15/--/Russia's Foreign Ministry warned Thursday that if the United States confirms reports that it plans to deliver sophisticated air-defence missiles to Ukraine, it would be "another provocative move by the US" that could prompt a response from Moscow. Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said in a weekly briefing Thursday that "the US has effectively become a party" to the war in Ukraine, following reports that it will provide Kyiv with Patriot surface-to-air missiles, the most advanced the West has yet provided to help Ukraine's military repel Russian aerial attacks. Zakharova added that growing amounts of US military assistance, including the transfer of such sophisticated weapons, "would mean even broader involvement of military personnel in the hostilities and could entail possible consequences." She did not specify what the consequences might be. US officials said Tuesday that Washington was poised to approve sending a Patriot missile battery to Ukraine, finally agreeing to an urgent request from Ukrainian leaders desperate for more robust weapons to shoot down incoming Russian missiles that have crippled much of the country's vital infrastructure. An official announcement is expected soon. A Patriot battery can need as many as 90 troops to operate and maintain it, and for months the US was reluctant to provide the complex system because sending forces into Ukraine to operate it is a non-starter for the administration of President Joe Biden. Yet concerns remain that even without the presence of US servicemen to train Ukrainians on how to use the system, deployment of the missiles could provoke Russia or risk that a fired projectile could end up hitting inside Russia, further escalating the conflict.

Even before reports emerged on the delivery of Patriot systems, Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia's Security Council which is chaired by President Vladimir Putin, warned that if Patriots enter Ukraine "along with NATO personnel, they will immediately become a legitimate target for our armed forces." Asked Wednesday whether the Kremlin backs that threat, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov answered yes, but added in a conference call with reporters that he would refrain from more detailed comment until the US officially announces the Patriot delivery to Ukraine. Ukraine has so far been cautious in reacting to the reports. Hanna Maliar, Ukraine's deputy defense minister, told reporters in Kyiv on Thursday that the delivery of weaponry like Patriots remains "sensitive not only for Ukraine, but for our partners," and that only President Volodymyr Zelenskyy or Defence Minister Oleksiy Reznikov would make any official announcement on such an agreement.

White House and Pentagon leaders have said consistently that providing Ukraine with additional air defences is a priority, and Patriot missiles have been under

consideration for some time. Officials said that as the winter closed in and the Russian bombardment of civilian infrastructure escalated, that consideration took on increased priority. Ukraine's electricity provider said Thursday that the country's energy system was suffering a "significant deficit of electricity," and that emergency shutdowns had been applied in some areas of the country as temperatures hover around or below freezing.

The state-owned grid operator Ukrenergo warned in a statement on Facebook that damage caused to energy infrastructure by Russian attacks is being compounded by harsh weather conditions, including snow, ice and strong winds.

Maximum temperatures in the capital Kyiv were forecast to barely go above freezing headed into the weekend, with even colder weather expected early next week. Kyrlyo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office, wrote on Telegram that the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson was left completely without power following Russian shelling on Thursday, adding that two people were known to have been killed in the attacks. Heavy shelling of a critical infrastructure facility in the city's Korabelny district was still underway as of around 1 p.m. local time, and Russian shells had hit 100 metres (yards) from the regional administration building, he said.

As Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure continued to knock out power around the country on Wednesday and Thursday, seven civilians were killed and a further 19 wounded, according to a Thursday report from the Ukrainian president's office. The head of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk province, Pavlo Kyrylenko, reported Thursday that Russian strikes the previous day had killed two civilians and injured seven. In Avdiivka, some 10 kilometres (6 miles) north of Donetsk, there were two airstrikes overnight Wednesday, and a residential area came under rocket fire Thursday morning. Periodic artillery fire in Vuhledar, located to the southwest of Donetsk, damaged three houses. West of Donetsk, the city of Kurakhove and two villages came under fire, with one house damaged.

Kremlin-backed authorities in the region, which was illegally annexed by Moscow in September, announced that Russia had taken control of 80 per cent of the city of Marinka, seen as critical to Ukrainian hopes of retaking the Russian-held regional capital, Donetsk. The Moscow-installed mayor of Donetsk, Aleksei Kulemzin, said Thursday that the city centre had been hit by "the most massive strike" since the area came under the control of Russian-backed separatists in 2014. Writing on Telegram, Kulemzin said 40 Ukrainian rockets struck Donetsk at 7 a.m. local time on Thursday, noting that multistory residential buildings were hit and that fires had broken out at a hospital and university campus. (AP)

## Harry, Meghan vent grievances in final Netflix episodes

LONDON, DEC 15/--/ Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, vent their grievances against the British monarchy in the second half of their Netflix documentary series released Thursday, which includes Harry describing how his older brother shouted at him during a meeting and Meghan talking about wanting to end her life as she struggled to cope with toxic press coverage. The couple have detailed their experiences leading to their decision to step away from royal duties and make a new start in the United States in "Harry & Meghan," a six-part series. The first three installments, released last week, focused on the British media's coverage of the couple and the way it was influenced by racism. The final three episodes see Harry, 38, recounting the growing rift between him and Prince William, whom he said

lashed out at him during a royal summit at Sandringham Castle in January 2020 to talk about Harry and Meghan's plan to step down as senior royals and move away. "It was terrifying to have my brother scream and shout at me and my father say things that just simply weren't true, and my grandmother quietly sit there and sort of take it all in," Harry said.

Elsewhere in the series, Meghan, 41, says she thought about killing herself before she and Harry decided to move to America. "It was like All of this will stop if I am not here," she said. "And that was the scariest thing about it, because it was such clear thinking." Harry added that he believed the Mail on Sunday's publication of a letter Meghan wrote her estranged father, Thomas Markle, contributed to her having a miscarriage. Meghan later sued the Mail's

publisher and won. "I believe my wife suffered a miscarriage because of what the Mail did," Harry said. "Bearing in mind the stress that caused, the lack of sleep and the timing of the pregnancy - how many weeks in she was - I can say from what I saw, that miscarriage was created by what they were trying to do to her." Harry stressed it was his decision, not Meghan's, to leave the UK. "I said, 'We need to get out of here,'" he said. Palace officials have not commented on the series. The production is Harry and Meghan's latest effort to tell their own story after the couple stepped back from royal life in early 2020 and moved to the wealthy Southern California enclave of Montecito. Lucrative contracts with Netflix and Spotify have helped finance their life on an estate overlooking the Pacific Ocean. (AP)

# Indian PhD student at Cambridge University solves 2,500-year-old Sanskrit puzzle

LONDON, DEC 15/--/ A grammatical problem which has defeated Sanskrit scholars since the 5th Century BC has finally been solved by an Indian PhD student at the University of Cambridge, it emerged as his thesis was published on Thursday. Rishi Rajpopat made the breakthrough by decoding a rule taught by Panini, known as the father of linguistics, and is now encapsulated in his thesis entitled In Panini, We Trust: Discovering the Algorithm for Rule Conflict Resolution in the Astadhyayi'.

According to the university, leading Sanskrit experts have described Rajpopat's discovery as "revolutionary" and it could now mean that Panini's grammar can also be taught to computers for the first time. "I had a eureka moment in Cambridge," recalls Rajpopat. "After nine months trying to crack this problem, I was almost ready to quit, I was getting nowhere. So, I closed the books for a month and just enjoyed the summer, swimming, cycling, cooking, praying and meditating. Then, begrudgingly I went back to work, and, within minutes, as I turned the pages, these patterns started emerging, and it all started to make sense. There was a lot more work to do but I'd found the biggest part of the puzzle," said the 27-year-old scholar.

Over the next few weeks, he was so excited that he couldn't sleep and would spend hours in the library, including in the middle of the night, to check what he'd found and

solve related problems. It would take another two and half years before he would get to the finish line. "Panini had an extraordinary mind and he built a machine unrivalled in human history. He didn't expect us to add new ideas to

meant to work like a machine. Feed in the base and suffix of a word and it should turn them into grammatically correct words and sentences through a step-by-step process. Until now, however, there has been a big problem. Often, two



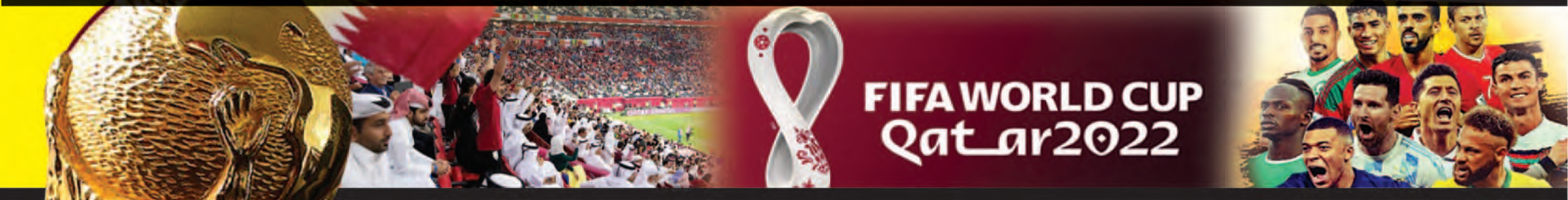
his rules. The more we fiddle with Panini's grammar, the more it eludes us," says Rajpopat. The 2,500-year-old algorithm decoded by him makes it possible, for the first time, to accurately use Panini's so-called "language machine".

Rajpopat's discovery makes it possible to "derive" any Sanskrit word, to construct millions of grammatically correct words, using Panini's revered language machine, which is widely considered to be one of the greatest intellectual achievements in history. Panini's system 4,000 rules detailed in his renowned work, the Astadhyayi, which is thought to have been written around 500 BC is

or more of Panini's rules are simultaneously applicable at the same step leaving scholars to agonise over which one to choose. Solving so-called "rule conflicts", which affect millions of Sanskrit words including certain forms of "mantra" and "guru", requires an algorithm. Rajpopat's research shows that Panini's so-called language machine is also self-sufficient. "My student Rishi has cracked it he has found an extraordinarily elegant solution to a problem which has perplexed scholars for centuries. This discovery will revolutionise the study of Sanskrit at a time when interest in the language is on the

rise," said Professor Vincenzo Vergiani, Sanskrit professor and Rajpopat's PhD supervisor. Six months before Rajpopat made his discovery, Professor Vergiani gave him some prescient advice: "If the solution is complicated, you are probably wrong". A major implication of Rajpopat's discovery is that now there is the algorithm that runs Panini's grammar, it could potentially teach this grammar to computers. "Computer scientists working on Natural Language Processing gave up on rule-based approaches over 50 years ago. So teaching computers how to combine the speaker's intention with Panini's rule-based grammar to produce human speech would be a major milestone in the history of human interaction with machines, as well as in India's intellectual history," said Rajpopat. Sanskrit is an ancient and classical Indo-European language from South Asia. While only spoken in India by an estimated 25,000 people today, it has influenced many other languages and cultures around the world. "Some of the most ancient wisdom of India has been produced in Sanskrit and we still don't fully understand what our ancestors achieved. We've often been led to believe that we're not important, that we haven't brought enough to the table. I hope this discovery will infuse students in India with confidence, pride, and hope that they too can achieve great things," added Rajpopat. (PTI)





# France end Morocco's dream FIFA World Cup run to set up final clash with Argentina



Theo Hernández



France's forward Randal Kolo Muani scores

DOHA, DEC 15 /--/ France ended Morocco's World Cup dream as goals from Theo Hernandez and Randal Kolo Muani gave the holders a 2-0 win in their semi-final clash and set up a showdown on Sunday with Lionel Messi's Argentina. It looked like France might make short work of their opponents when Hernandez scored inside five minutes at Al Bayt Stadium, despite having a hostile crowd against them. But Morocco, the first African and Arab team ever to reach the last four at a World Cup, fought on despite losing key players to injury only to see substitute Kolo Muani seal victory for Les Bleus with a late second. It will be France's fourth World Cup final in seven editions and they are hoping to become the first team since Brazil 60 years ago to retain the trophy when they take on Argentina at Lusail Stadium on Sunday. That will be billed as a showdown between Messi and his Paris Saint-Germain teammate Kylian Mbappe, but this match was not about the latter's individual brilliance. Instead France's victory was down to a team effort against a Moroccan side who will now face Croatia in Saturday's third-place play-off. Morocco had reached the semi-finals after beating Belgium in the group stage and then knocking out Spain and Portugal. But whether they could repeat the feat against the holders was another matter, and coach Walid Regragui's plans were left in turmoil by a slew of injuries. Having missed the quarter-final, centre-back Nayef Aguerd was recalled only to withdraw at the last minute, with Achraf Dari stepping in. Then fellow defender and captain Romain Saiss had to abandon his teammates after just 21 minutes, and by then Morocco were behind. France were met by deafening whistles when in possession

from the huge Moroccan support but they silenced the crowd with the early opener, Hernandez netting with an acrobatic volley at the back post after Mbappe's shot was deflected. Remarkably it was also just the second goal conceded by Morocco at this World Cup and the first scored by an opposition player. If the excellent Azzedine Ounahi forced a fine save from Hugo Lloris soon after, there was the feeling that the evening could quickly turn into a rude reality check for them. When Saiss let a simple forward ball bounce over his head, Olivier Giroud broke away but his shot hit the post. Then when Saiss came off Regragui abandoned his back three and matched France's 4-3-3. Morocco finished the half strongly and nearly drew level when, following a corner, defender Jawad El Yamiq saw his overhead kick tipped onto the post by Lloris. The Atlas Lions then also lost Bayern Munich left-back Noussair Mazraoui at half-time, but France had not been saved from fitness worries themselves. Two of their starters in the quarter-final win over England, Adrien Rabiot and Dayot Upamecano, were missing due to illness. Les Bleus have been used to playing semi-finals on a knife-edge and their previous three wins at this stage -- in 1998, 2006 and 2018 -- had all come by a single goal. Coach Didier Deschamps took off Giroud and replaced him with Marcus Thuram -- son of Lilian -- as Mbappe moved inside. Kolo Muani then came on for Ousmane Dembele, and with 11 minutes remaining he scored from his first touch, tapping in after another Mbappe shot had been deflected. The Moroccan players knew then it was game over, and so did French President Emmanuel Macron, standing to applaud in the crowd. (AFP)

## Jubilation on Paris Champs-Elysees after France reach World Cup final

PARIS, DEC 15 /--/ There were jubilant scenes on the Champs-Elysees avenue in central Paris on Wednesday as French supporters waved tricolour flags and let off flares to celebrate the win over Morocco that put Les Bleus into the World Cup final. Some 10,000 police were mobilised across France to ensure there was no unrest during and after the match, given the potential of clashes between French supporters and those backing France's one-time North African colony. But there was little sign of tension as supporters thronged the end of the avenue leading to the Arc de Triomphe in impassioned but largely good-natured scenes with Moroccan supporters accepting defeat. AFP correspondents said. "We are in the final. We are in the final," hundreds of French supporters chanted as drivers sounded horns and anti-riot police lurked in vans lining the area. "What pleasure it will be to play Argentina in the final," said Sylvain Badin, 24, clutching a French flag. "I came to share a moment of joy." Dozens of Moroccan fans had also made themselves heard during the match in the area, swathing themselves in national flags as

they followed the match on their phones. "We lost but it's only football and we made history by making the semi-finals. We are proud of our country and happy for France," said Kamal Seddiki, a 22-year-old Moroccan student. There were 170 arrests nationwide, including more than 100 in Paris, when Morocco and France made the semi-finals at the weekend. But celebrations appeared free of tension and a French anti-riot police van even used one of its sirens to mark the moment when Kolo Muani scored the goal to give France a 2-0 lead. Police did however move to disperse a group of fans who were setting off fireworks around the Arc de Triomphe. And a group of about 40 people aligned with far-right groups were arrested for carrying prohibited weapons, a police source said, as they prepared to move towards the Champs-Elysees. "They clearly wanted to fight on the Champs," the police source said. In the southern city of Nice, trash cans were set on fire after the game in the centre of the city where thousands had gathered, an AFP photographer said. In Lyon, police used tear gas when supporters began to let off firecrackers in the central Place Bellecour. (AFP)



Kylian Mbappe

## Antoine Griezmann says France 'keeping feet on ground'

AL KHOR, QATAR, DEC 15 /--/ Antoine Griezmann said France were staying grounded after the defending World Cup champions defeated Morocco 2-0 on Wednesday to set up a final against Argentina. The Atletico Madrid attacker has thrived in a playmaking role for France at the World Cup in Qatar, where Les Bleus are attempting to become the first team in 60 years to retain the title. "Four years ago after (the 1-0 semi-final win over) Belgium, I was crying, but now I'm already more focused on Sunday," said Griezmann. "Instead of celebrating getting to the final, we're keeping our feet on the ground. We're focused on recovering well and preparing for the game." An early goal from left-back Theo Hernandez and a late second from Randal Kolo Muani put France into a fourth World Cup final in



seven tournaments, ending Morocco's brave run. "The Moroccans impressed me. They were set up very well tactically, defensively, offensively. After half-time they created a lot of problems for us," said Griezmann. (AFP)

## GAME NOTES

### "Immensely proud" that France in World Cup final says Macron

AL KHOR, Dec 15 /--/ French President Emmanuel Macron said he was "immensely proud" that France reached the World Cup final after he travelled to Qatar to watch the team's win over Morocco in the semifinals on Wednesday. Macron sat beside FIFA president Gianni Infantino during the match at Al Bayt Stadium and stood up to applaud after the 2-0 victory. France will play Argentina in the final on Sunday. "I feel very proud of my country. I'm very happy," Macron told reporters after the match. "I want the French to enjoy this simple happiness." The French leader paid tribute to the "great" Moroccan team, Africa's first-ever semifinalist. "The Moroccans have played very well," he added. "I want to tell the Moroccan people they have a great team ... I want to tell them of our friendship." Morocco was ruled by France from 1912-56. Wednesday's match had political and emotional resonance for both nations, dredging up everything that's complex about the relationship in which France still wields considerable economic, political and cultural influence. Macron said he will come back to Qatar on Sunday to attend the final at Lusail Stadium. He joked about being "too superstitious" to give his prediction. (AFP)



### France, England World Cup quarterfinal viewed by 13.5M in US

NEW YORK, DEC 15 /--/ World Cup quarterfinal audiences in the United States ranged from 13.5 million to 7.4 million. Defending champion France's 2-1 win over England on Saturday, which started at 2 p.m. EST, was seen by 13.5 million, including 8.3 million on Fox, 3.1 million on Spanish-language Telemundo, 560,000 on Fox digital platforms and 1.5 million on the Telemundo and Peacock streaming services. Argentina's penalty-kicks victory over the Netherlands on Friday, which began at 2 p.m. EST, was viewed by 11.1 million, including 5.78 million on Fox, 3.1 million on Telemundo, 665,000 on Fox digital and 1.53 million on Peacock and Telemundo streaming. The English-language TV audience for France-England was the 17th-highest for men's soccer since 1994 and for Argentina-Netherlands was 22nd, Nielsen said Wednesday. Morocco's 1-0 upset of Portugal on Saturday, which started at 10 a.m. EST, was viewed by 8.8 million, including 5.2 million on Fox, 1.98 million on Telemundo, 441,000 on Fox digital and 1.17 million on Peacock and Telemundo streaming. Croatia's penalty-kicks win over Brazil on Friday, which began at 10 a.m. EST, was seen by 7.4 million, including 3.9 million on Fox, 1.76 million on Telemundo, 563,000 on Fox digital and 1.2 million on Peacock and Telemundo streaming. (AFP)

### India missing bowling coach, says Harmanpreet

MUMBAI, DEC 15 /--/ The Indian women's team is badly missing a bowling coach, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur said after her team lost the third T20I against Australia to concede a 1-2 lead in the five-match series. The captain, though, is pleased with the way bowlers are stepping up and taking charge of the situation. India don't have a full-time bowling coach as Ramesh Powar was moved to National Cricket Academy (NCA) and Hrishikesh Kanitkar was named the batting coach of the side two months before the T20 World Cup in South Africa. Playing Australia is part of team's preparation for the T20 showpiece. India won the second T20 via Super Over but lost the third game by 21 runs on Wednesday. "I know we are definitely missing a bowling coach but our bowlers are taking charge," Harmanpreet said in the post-match press conference. (PTI)

## Kuldeep's dream comeback puts Bangladesh on mat

CHATTOGRAM, DEC 15 /--/ Kuldeep Yadav sizzled with an all-round performance as he helped put India firmly in the driver's seat on day two of the opening Test against Bangladesh here on Thursday. Playing his first Test after more than 22 months, Kuldeep continued his 'birthday' party a day after turning 28, in his sensational run with the bat and ball. Batting at number nine, the left-hander first came up with a career-best 40 from 114 balls (5x4) in a 92-run eighth wicket partnership with veteran Ravichandran Ashwin (58; 113b) to push India to 404 in their first inning from an overnight score of 278/6. Coming into bowl in the 25th over, the left-arm wrist spinner struck off his second ball as he flummoxed the Bangladesh batters with his wrong ones to end the day with figures of 10-3-33-4, a

performance that is certain to regain his confidence. At stumps on day two, Bangladesh were 133 for eight, trailing India by 271 runs. With two wickets in hand, the hosts still need 72 runs to avoid a follow-on. First, it was Indian quick Mohammed Siraj who was on a song, as he rattled the Bangladesh top-order, dismissing the left-handed opening duo of Najmul Hossain Shanto (1), Zakir Hasan (20) and Litton Das en route to 9-1-14-3. Siraj struck in the very first ball when he induced an edge off Shanto with an away going delivery. Leading the pace department in absence of Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah, Umesh Yadav then reduced Bangladesh to 5 for 2 inside the fourth over after inducing an inside edge off Yasir Ali. Litton Das (24) showed glimpses of his form with some fluent drives but Siraj had the last say. Both

teams were also involved in a bit of banter especially after Das gave a 'I can't hear you' gesture after an elegant drive off Siraj. The Indian pacer cleaned him up of the next delivery as he along with Kohli gave him a fiery send-off. On a roll, Siraj also ended the dogged resistance of Hasan to reduce Bangladesh to 56/4. The stage was just apt for Kuldeep to make inroads and the Indian did just that, dismissing Shakib Al Hasan when the Bangladeshi senior all-rounder played against the spin. He then surprised newcomer Nurul Hasan with a wrong one and in the next ball nearly dismissed him LBW but the 'umpire's call' rule gave a breather to the Bangladeshi wicketkeeper. It was not a rank-turner but he spun the ball square, extracted awkward bounce and the Bangladeshi batters looked all at sea negotiating Kuldeep at the fag end of the day. (PTI)



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