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## Defaulters spared by PBMC

### Serves preferential 'kindness' to 'fortunate' few

ROOPA LALL

**PORT BLAIR, NOV 20/--** While the Port Blair Municipal Council (PBMC) never delays in taking stringent action on small shop owners, failing to pay rents of shops owned by the Municipal Council, there are hundreds of 'surprisingly' fortunate ones who are running their offices on assets/



buildings allotted by the Municipal Council and have defaulted to pay their rents for the past many years. The civic body is suffering loss to the tune of several crores for non-payment of rents by a few who have been allotted office/assets by the Council. Surprisingly, the Municipal Council on the one hand shows no mercy to

the petty shop owners threatening them eviction for not paying rents on time, at the same time, the Municipal Council takes a complete U-Turn when it comes to taking action on the selected few who have not paid rent to the Council for the past many years, causing loss to the tune of several crores to the Council. The Civic Body seems in no hurry to initiate action against defaulters, who are allegedly having links with elected members of the Council. Despite non-payment of rents for many years, the PBMC is allowing the defaulters to keep the municipal assets in their possession. In one such glaring example, the PBMC has maintained complete silence on Priyadarshani Mahila Mandal located near Jama Masjid at Aberdeen Bazaar. This mahilamandal is housed in the municipal property and for the past many years, Priyadarshani Mahila Mandal has not paid rent to the tune of over Rs 2.35 lakh to the Council. The building housing the Priyadarshani Mahila Mandal on the first floor near Jama Masjid at Aberdeen Bazaar

was constructed under the MPLAD Fund and allotted to a former woman Councillor sometime in the year 2000 for carrying out activities related to the welfare of the women community. Sources told EOI that notices were served to the Priyadarshani Mahila Mandal to clear their dues. But despite not clearing their dues/rents, PBMC has failed to initiate action on the so-called Mahila Mandal for not clearing the municipal dues. As of now, Priyadarshani Mahila Mandal has to pay accumulated rent to the tune of over Rs 2.35 lakhs to the Municipal Council. The amazing part of the story is though the Priyadarshani Mahila Mandal is allotted to a former Municipal Councillor, actually this Mahila Mandal is run by a male who has not even cared to respond to the notices of the Municipal Council. Inside sources said that this is just the tip of the iceberg. The PBMC is still unaware of its properties and lands that were leased decades ago. Some private individuals has been taking advantage of flaws and are using the land and properties of the PBMC for commercial purposes and individual gains. PBMC officials have never made any

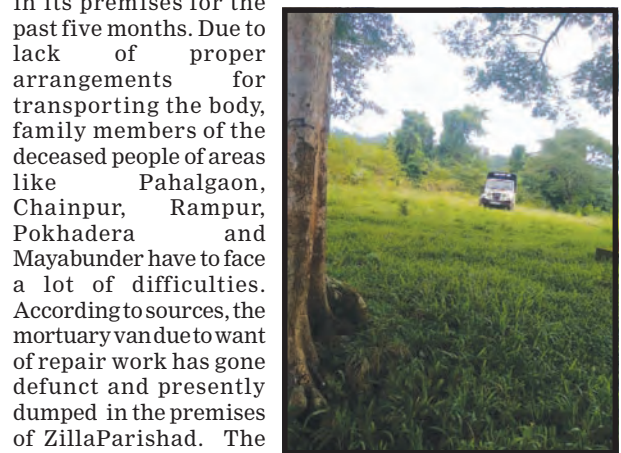
field visit to inspect or check it out whether the municipal properties given on rental basis are being used for the purpose for which it has been allotted or not. Many of the shop owners without seeking permission from the PBMC have altered the municipal properties allotted to them on rent as per their own needs and requirements basis, a gross violation to the agreement. The Priyadarshani Mahila Mandal is leading from the front when it comes to violating the Municipal rules. The Municipal asset has also been altered without permission of the Council by constructing a kitchen and illegal extension of the building. The sign board mentioning Priyadarshani Mahila Mandal has been removed deliberately so that nobody knows about the Mahila Mandal, opening scope for other activities. Besides, nearby residents have been complaining that people are staying in this municipal property, converting it as their homes. The most surprising part is that except activities related to the welfare of women, this municipal property is used for all other unauthorized purposes, including turning this office into an election hub during the election period.

**'Sleepy' attitude costs crores to Municipal Council**

## No mortuary van, villagers of Mayabunder region face problems to transport dead bodies

KURMA RAO

**MAYABUNDER, NOV 20/--** Transporting bodies for the last rites to the burial ground has become a difficult task for the residents of Mayabunder, Tugapur and many other villagers of this region as the only mortuary van available with the Zilla Parishad of N&M Andaman has been dumped



in its premises for the past five months. Due to lack of proper arrangements for transporting the body, family members of the deceased people of areas like Pahalgaoon, Chainpur, Rampur, Pokhadera and Mayabunder have to face a lot of difficulties. According to sources, the mortuary van due to want of repair work has gone defunct and presently dumped in the premises of Zilla Parishad. The mortuary van was earlier under the Panchayat Samity. But after the abolition of Panchayat Samities, the mortuary van was handed over to Zilla Parishad of North & Middle Andaman. But due to lack of attention by the Zilla Parishad, the repair of the van was not carried out on time and now cannot be used. Residents of Tugapur and other villagers want immediate repair of this mortuary van or a procuring a new mortuary van so that people of this region can transport bodies of the deceased people to the burial ground for cremation.

## Swachhta run to mark 'World Toilet Day' at D/pur



EOI CORRESPONDENT

**DIGLIPUR, NOV 20/--** To mark the 'World Toilet Day', a Swachhata run was conducted on Saturday by Gram Panchayat Sita Nagar, involving the volunteers of the local Government Model Senior Secondary School. The students pledged to spread the message of adopting healthy practices of cleanliness in their localities.

## IGNOU celebrates 37th Foundation Day



**PORT BLAIR, NOV 20/--** The Regional Centre of IGNOU at Port Blair celebrated the 37th Foundation Day of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) at its premises on Saturday. Dr. C. Sivaperuman, Scientist-D, ZSI, Port Blair was the chief guest and shared his experience about the

*Since its inception in 2006, IGNOU has provided higher education to about 60,000 students in A&N Islands*

development of IGNOU activities at A & N Islands. Dr. Sivaperuman in his speech invited IGNOU, Regional Director and students to collaborate with ZSI for workshops and other programmes. He also briefed the learners, how ZSI had earlier collaborated with IGNOU in various seminars and events in the past as

well. The Regional Director, IGNOU Regional Centre-Port Blair Dr. RVR Murthy conveyed the greeting to all the staff and IGNOU learners

and addressed the RC staff. In his address, Dr. RVR Murthy recollected the contribution of Port Blair Regional Centre in providing quality higher educational opportunities in the Islands. Dr. Murthy recollected that in recognition of IGNOU services in the field of higher education, the UT administration has conferred "Certificate of Commendation" twice on IGNOU, Regional Centre in 2011 and 2017, put greater responsibility on each one of the staff to rededicate themselves to service the learner community in a proactive manner.

(Contd. on page-6)

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# Why waste votes on Cong which doesn't have development roadmap: PM at Gujarat poll rally

AMRELI, NOV 20 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday appealed to the people of Amreli district to not waste their votes on Congress as it doesn't have the roadmap for development and instead choose BJP in the next month's Gujarat Assembly elections.

Addressing a rally in Amrelitown in Saurashtra region on the second day of his visit to poll-bound Gujarat, the prime minister said the Opposition party can never do anything good for the region. Notably, Congress had won all five Assembly segments in Amreli district - Dhari, Amreli, Lathi, Savarkundla and Rajula - in the 2017 elections whereas the BJP drew a blank. "The BJP government did several works to strengthen



ask any Congress leader what is the roadmap for development and they do not have any plan," he said.

The Prime Minister said the people of Amreli had elected Congress candidates in the previous elections with

very high hopes from that party. "Now tell me what did they do for you (during these five years)? Do you remember at least one work done by them? Then why are you wasting your votes on them? To strengthen Amreli, I urge you to choose lotus (BJP) this time," said the Prime Minister. He listed several government schemes which he said benefited all sections of society including farmers. "Under the 'PM Kisan Samman Nidhi' scheme, Gujarat's 60 lakh farmers have received Rs 12,000 crore. You can't expect such things from Congress. Just ask any Congress leader what is the roadmap for development and they will be clueless," said Modi. At another election rally at Botad town in Saurashtra, the Prime Minister on Sunday said the BJP has compelled all other parties in the country to talk about development as the

main issue during elections. He also appealed to voters to reject those who always defame the state.

"Earlier, allegations about scams used to be the main issue during elections. But, after BJP's rise in Gujarat, the main issue has become development instead of scams. We compelled all other political parties in the country to talk about development during polls," Modi said. On the occasion, the Prime Minister promised youths that the entire belt covering Botad, Dholera and Bhavnagar will soon become Gujarat's "most happening industrial belt where even aeroplanes will be manufactured". He said the upcoming Assembly elections, scheduled to be held in two phases on December 1 and 5, will decide Gujarat's path for the next 25 years and not for just five years. (PTI)

# BJP suspends 7 leaders for filing nominations as independents

AHMEDABAD, NOV 20 /--/ The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Gujarat on Sunday suspended seven party leaders, including two former MLAs, for filing nominations as independent candidates for the upcoming state Assembly elections after they were denied tickets.

The seven candidates are contesting from the seats that will go to polls in the first phase of the elections scheduled to be held on December 1. The party suspended former MLAs Arvind Ladani, who had won from Keshod constituency in 2012, and Harshad Vasava from the Scheduled Tribe-reserved seat of Nandod, after they filed their nominations as independents from these seats. The BJP has

fielded Dr Darshana Deshmukh from Nandod and Devabhai Malam from Keshod. The saffron party also suspended Chhatarsinh Gunjariya, a district panchayat member from Surendranagar, after he filed his nomination as an independent from Dhrangadhra seat.

Other suspended leaders include Ketan Patel, Bharat Chavda, Uday Shah and Karan Baraiya, who have filed their nominations as independents from Pardi, Rajkot, Veraval and Rajula seats respectively. The BJP, in a release, said, "These leaders have filed their nominations as independent candidates against the candidates declared by the party. They are being suspended on the

direction of the state BJP president C R Paatil." Paatil had earlier told reporters that it is a norm to suspend leaders who seek to contest as independents against party candidates after they fail to withdraw their nominations on the last day of withdrawal. Several BJP leaders have come out in the open to express their unhappiness for being denied tickets and have declared to contest as independents. Six-time MLA Madhu Shrivastav from Vaghodia, who was denied a ticket, has also filed his nominations as an independent. The BJP has fielded Ashwin Patel from the seat.

Another former BJP MLA Dinesh Patel aka Dinu Mama of Padra seat in Vadodara district has

# Don't vote for those who want to stop welfare work: Kejriwal to Delhiites ahead of MCD polls

NEW DELHI, NOV 20 /--/ Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday urged people not to vote for those in the upcoming municipal polls who want to stop the development and welfare work in the national capital.

Addressing a public meeting in Paharganj here, Kejriwal said though his government improved schools and hospitals, it could not do much on the sanitation front as the responsibility lies with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). The chief minister alleged that the BJP, which has ruled the civic body for 15 years and is seeking a fourth term, is planning to create another garbage mountain in Delhi. The Delhi chief minister was accompanied by his deputy Manish Sisodia. "Do not vote for those who want to stop the development and welfare work in Delhi," Kejriwal said in an apparent reference to the BJP.

"During our tenure, we improved schools and hospitals, provided free electricity and water besides installing CCTVs and building mohalla clinics. But we feel sad that we could not do anything to improve sanitation as it is the responsibility of the MCD. "Give us one chance to clean



Delhi and we will deliver results," he added. Targeting the BJP, Kejriwal said the party has "deployed LG sahab to stop my work". "You have to support those who do the work and develop Delhi," he told the gathering. The chief minister said the BJP is "planning" to create another garbage mountain at Basant Road.

"They (BJP) will collect garbage from Karol Bagh and throw it on Basant Road. There will be a garbage mountain within a year. There will be a foul smell in the entire area, and mosquitoes and flies will breed at the landfill site. "I guarantee you that we will not let them create a garbage mountain at any cost," Kejriwal said. The national capital has three landfill sites -- Ghazipur, Bhalswa and Okhla. As part of its campaign for the December 4 MCD polls, Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had repeatedly targeted the BJP over its "failure" to clear the landfill sites during its 15-year tenure in the municipal corporation.

Over the years, fires have broken out at these dumping yards which have tonnes of legacy waste, leaving neighbouring areas shrouded in smoke for days. The chief minister also alleged a "conspiracy" by the BJP to stop the free power supply in Delhi. "But Kejriwal will not let them succeed," he said. Kejriwal exuded confidence that the AAP will oust the BJP from the MCD this time. "We will win the MCD polls," the CM said, adding, "You gave me 67 out of the 70 seats in the assembly elections. I am fond of the taste of such victories. I do not want anything less than that." (PTI)



Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Singh Thakur with the crew of Alma and Oskar at the 53rd International Film Festival of India (IFFI), in Goa

# Circumstantial evidence, forensic exam key in Mehrauli murder probe: Experts

NEW DELHI, NOV 20 /--/ A week since the arrest of Aaftab Amin Poonawala, police have been scouring for evidence to nail him in court for the murder of Shraddha Walkar but it remains a challenge as the crime was detected after nearly six months.

Circumstantial evidence and forensic examination hold the key in such cases, according to experts here. Poonawala allegedly strangled his live-in partner Walkar, 27, and sawed her body into 35 pieces which he kept in a 300-litre fridge for almost three weeks at his house in Mehrauli before dumping them across the city over several days past midnight.

Noting that it is a six-month-old murder, former Delhi Police commissioner S N Shrivastava said the scene of crime has been cleaned up and police are basically depending on the confession of the accused, who seems to be a "clever" person. "It is going to be a very difficult case and will require the help of all organs of the criminal

justice system to nail him down. Police will get what it can, but the court will also have to understand the situation and act accordingly," Shrivastava told PTI.

The police have so far recovered 13 body parts, which are mostly skeletal remains, but the weapon used to chop her body is yet to be recovered, even as searches continue in the forest areas of Mehrauli and other parts of Delhi, and Gurugram. Shrivastava said since Poonawala did a lot of research on how to kill, dispose body and destroy evidence; it is possible he had also researched on how to "fool" the police. On November 17, a Delhi court granted permission to the police to conduct a macro analysis test on Poonawala. The test will be conducted at Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital here in Rohini, most likely on Monday as Poonawala's five-day police custody ends the next day. Officers are of the view that it even though it will not be admissible in court, the test could lead to some crucial

# Blast in autorickshaw: Karnataka CM says suspect had terror links

BALLARI, NOV 20 /--/ Karnataka chief minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday said the suspect who allegedly carried out a bomb explosion in Mangaluru had terror links as he had travelled to various places, including Coimbatore in neighbouring Tamil Nadu.

According to the preliminary information, it was an LED-linked instrument, the chief minister told reporters here. The blast occurred on Saturday evening inside an autorickshaw, near a police station, leaving the passenger and the driver injured. Both have been admitted to hospital. According to police sources, a cooker fitted with detonator, wires and batteries were used to trigger the blast. After the explosion, the interiors of the autorickshaw were badly damaged. "When the antecedents of the suspect are carried out, it becomes very apparent that the name mentioned in the Aadhaar card found from the spot was different from the person who was carrying it. The suspect had a duplicate Aadhaar card. It had a Hubballi address," Bommai said. The chief minister said more details emerged when the police tracked the original address of the suspect and the locations where he had stayed. "Prima facie, this is a terror act. The places he had travelled to such as Coimbatore or any other places clearly point to his terror link," Bommai said.

The chief minister added that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) officials have also joined the state police in investigating the matter. A four-member team of the NIA has arrived at the spot and is coordinating with the police. "The suspect is in the hospital. After he regains consciousness, further investigation will be taken up. Investigation will reveal more details. There is a wide network which will be busted," he said. When his attention was drawn towards the fact that the incident occurred on the day he was in Mangaluru, the Chief Minister said he had attended the programme in the coastal city and returned from there at 3 pm whereas the blast happened after that. Regarding the terror incident's link with the banned outfit Popular Front of India, Bommai said the investigation will reveal the truth.

Meanwhile, police sources said the suspect had obtained a mobile SIM card using the fake Aadhaar card, which was found from the site of explosion. That SIM card was used everywhere by him, they said. Sources added that five teams have been dispatched to different locations including Coimbatore to investigate the case. Police suspect that the person had links with those who had carried out a car blast in Coimbatore in October ahead of Deepavali. On October 23, a youth was charged to death when a cylinder exploded in a moving car outside a temple in Coimbatore. The case is being probed by the NIA.

The police sources suspected that the terror suspect hailed from Shivamogga and might have been involved in the objectionable graffiti in the town. Recently, a few terror suspects were arrested from Shivamogga including some youth who were in touch with the terror outfit Islamic State (IS) through social media. (PTI)

# By-poll campaign: Akhilesh touches uncle Shivpal's feet at rally

ETAWAH, NOV 20 /--/ In a show of bonhomie during the campaign for the Mainpuri Lok Sabha bypoll, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday touched the feet of his uncle Shivpal Yadav and asserted that there has never been any strain in their relationship.

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) chief Shivpal Singh Yadav termed the by-polls a high stake contest, and told the audience that

the family has become one. He also said that the BJP-led Uttar Pradesh government peddles a lot of lies. Addressing an election rally in the family bastion of Saifai, Akhilesh asserted that his party will register a historic win in the by-poll. Dimple Yadav, the wife of Akhilesh, has been fielded from the seat, which has never been represented by the SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav. The by-poll was necessitated due to the

death of Mulayam Singh last month.

"The by-polls are taking place at a time when 'Netaji' (Mulayam Singh Yadav) is not among us. The entire country is watching this election, and I can say that the entire country will see how the Samajwadi Party registers a historic win," the former UP chief minister said. After remaining at loggerheads since 2017, Akhilesh and his uncle had decided to mend fences

before the 2022 Assembly polls. Both had put up a united front at the behest of Mulayam Singh Yadav. However, the cracks appeared again after the poll in which the BJP came back to power.

"At times people say that there is 'dooriyaan' (distance). There was no 'dooriyaan' between 'chacha' (uncle) and 'bhatija' (nephew). 'Dooriyaan' was there in politics. I had never considered any 'dooriyaan'

between uncle and nephew. And, I am happy that today the 'dooriyaan' in politics has also ended," the Samajwadi Party chief said to a rousing applause from public.

"And it is because of this that the BJP is feeling frightened. It knows that the people of Jaswantnagar have made up their mind to vote for the SP. Karhal is also walking along, and the people of Mainpuri too have made up their mind,"

the SP chief said.

Jaswantnagar and Karhal are represented by Shivpal and Akhilesh respectively in the UP Assembly. The poll campaign on Sunday saw Akhilesh, Shivpal Yadav and SP general secretary Ramgopal Yadav sharing the stage. During the rally, Akhilesh Yadav also said that this is the first government (referring to the BJP), which has forgotten its promises. (PTI)



# OPINION

## A Legend Named Lt Bikram Singh Rathore One of the bravest sons of India, sacrificed his life for the nation, 60 years ago

BHOPINDER SINGH

The 1962 War is a poignant reminder to acknowledge just how much is owed by so many, to just a 'few'. These 'few' were those who stood to the 'last man, last bullet'. Noting the hand given to the Indian Army materially and politically, the TIME magazine had observed on the prevailing situation then, "fighting has shown that the Indians need nearly everything, except courage". For the Indian volunteers to the profession-of-arms their self-imposed 'unlimited liability' towards timeless adjectives like duty, honour, courage, integrity and selfless service was a civilisational code and truth. Also Read - Will India Be Able to Give G-20 a New Direction? The 1962 war was just another duty-bound call to honour, irrespective of the personal cost and the end result. Exactly 60 years to this date, stood one such unsung colossus, who didn't return home, clearly, freedom isn't free. It is often a forgotten debt that can frankly never be fully repaid. Since time immemorial, fierce and noble Rathore warriors have established a saga of indomitable courage, supreme sacrifice and an unmatched talent for war. To this cauldron of instinctive soldering was born, Lt Bikram Singh Rathore (6 Kumaon), a revered family elder who remains an inspiration to our proud Military family to keep the faith and stand tall, irrespective. Also Read - 3-S For Unity - Sangeet, Sari, Sanskrit However, besides patriotism and pride, Military families are also freighted with irresolvable wounds, personal losses, and an occasional

sense of being taken for granted and forgotten, especially considering the unparalleled valour and price involved. This weighty sentiment personifies our Military family, 60 years since Lt Bikram Singh Rathore paid that ultimate price, willingly. Within the family, generations have served the nation with great dignity, elan and much combat decoration in all wars and combat engagements since/before Independence. Each combatant tried to live up to the hallowed standards of Lt Bikram Singh Rathore's daredevilry and heroics. Also Read - Can EWS Reservation Remove Poverty in India? Bikram had followed the well-marked footsteps of his ancestors and joined the National Defense Academy (NDA) in 1956, and acquitted himself as a natural horseman and accomplished polo player. His sheer physicality, impressive bearing and thoroughbred conduct attracted the attention of the equally cavalier clansman, Lt Gen K Bahadur Singh (Kumaon Regiment) who talked out Bikram from opting for Rajput Regiment, as Lt Gen K Bahadur Singh wanted the fine specimen for his own Regiment. So Bikram was to join the much decorated and illustrious band of Bullas, the Kumaonis. Also Read - Massacre at Adelaide In the bloody Battle of Walong, Lt Bikram Singh Rathore was to forefront what was arguably the only counterattack of its ferocity, intensity, and Chinese fatalities, in the 1962 War. When the politicians and many of their interfered/preferred leadership within the 'Uniform' had capitulated to the Chinese fate, it was left to the

ramrod steel and fire of the young leadership in the Indian Armed Forces to never give up and ensure a fight that the Chinese would remember, for posterity. It wasn't the proverbial 'wall' of Himalayas that guaranteed the Indian sovereignty as much as the 'few' (completely outnumbered and ill-equipped) hardy men of battalions like 6 Kumaon, 2 Rajput, 4 Dogras, 1 Sikh etc., who defied all known limits of combat endurance and resistance. The 6 Kumaon was subjected to a brutal and full-frontal 'wave' style attack of the Chinese and the doughty Kumaonis fought back in the true spirit of Parakramo Vijayate (Valour triumphs) – the raw fury of the 'creed of the maneaters' (Kumaon Regiment's motto) knew no bounds as they roared 'Kalika Mata Ki Jai' and kept counterattacking, ambushing and deterring the Chinese offensive. Bikram and his band of fearless Bullas inflicted 200 Chinese casualties. As the war dragged on, supplies and support for the Indian line of defense waned, paltans like 6 Kumaon and individuals like Bikram Singh Rathore still stood staring the enemy in the eye, just like their forefathers had done for eons. Later, Bikram was tasked to defend a key feature and was surrounded by 300 Chinese, it was an impossible situation, but Bikram contacted his Brigade Commander, Brigadier NC Rawley MC, and told

him that he would fight to the end, come what may. This wasn't cheap talk or empty bravado as Bikram had repeatedly stared death in the face during the 27 days of relentless battle, as days earlier he had written a letter home, explicitly stating, "Don't worry at all. Traditions of our race can never be forgotten. I have killed many to avenge my comrades. I will kill more till the b.... finish up". He fought as only a true warrior could, he was the last man standing of the 107 men of his paltan who were martyred (16th Nov 1962). By not retreating, even though he knew the consequences of his brazenness was a conscious decision as Bikram had given his word, and that had to be honoured at all costs. Such warriors are cut of a different cloth and the unbelievable odds faced by Bikram and his band of Kumaonis was ironically recognised by the Chinese who admitted to substantial losses, but somewhere in the larger din of the loss in 1962 – Bikram's personal valour went unrecognised institutionally, even though his personal legend reverberated within his paltan and in the odd survivor who lived to tell the tale. He was virtually left to engage in hand-to-hand combat after he had exhausted all ammunition and supplies and was ultimately run over. Many of us who have been in various combat situations in the thick of battle



and have seen/read various citations of valor, still wonder as to how Lt Bikram Singh Rathore's simply unmatched heroics in the annals of combat history, went unrecognized. His battle account is not hagiography but an historical record of the timeless never-say-die spirit, till the end. Perhaps the national pathos, shame and hurt of 1962 didn't help matters, even though Bikram's own Brigade Commander Brig NC Rawley MC commented bluntly, "He (Bikram) held on as long as humanly possible. Very few men from his Company managed to escape. The bulk of them were killed and wounded on the hill. Under his courageous and gallant leadership the men fought until all their ammunition was exhausted and they were completely overrun. Bikram's message to me over the wireless was that he would hold on and not withdraw. He has fulfilled these words to the limit". Later Lt Gen K Bahadur Singh stated movingly, "Bikram died but like a gallant Rajput on a battlefield". Yet 60 years later, a Yodha (warrior) deserving of nothing less than a Param Vir Chakra (PVC) went to his Valhalla, sadly unsung and unrecognized. Years later, when Bikram's younger brother Narendra Singh Rathore was to answer his own calling in the Indian Army – he marched up to the same Lt Gen K Bahadur Singh and requested for something that the grand General immediately understood and appreciated, Narendra Singh Rathore too joined the bloodline of 6 Kumaon. The short but glorious life of Lt Bikram Singh Rathore are reminders of the true strength of the sacred idea called

'India'. It is like Senator John McCain's daughter, Meghan, noted about her warrior father that he was, "the real thing, not cheap rhetoric from men who will never come near the sacrifice he gave so willingly, nor the opportunistic appropriation of those that live lives of comfort and privilege while he suffered and served. He was a great fire who burned bright". Despite the overall outcome of 1962, Lt Bikram Singh had to pay the unsaid price for the indignity of India's politicians and diplomats, when he himself did everything to make his own conscience, his family's legacy, his Kumaon Regiment's honor, and the dignity of the nation, supreme. Today the family treats a memorial dedicated to the 'unknown soldier' at a height close to Walong town as the sanctum sanctorum of Bikram's gallant memory. As the anonymous saying goes, "Our flag does not fly because the wind moves it. It flies with the last breath of each soldier who died protecting it." It was Lt Bikram Singh's last breath in service of his revered motherland, to whom we owe our freedom, and it is to him we owe that duty to never forget. Ever. Sixty years since the Battle of Walong, 6 Kumaon justifiably reflects, remembers, and celebrates it sons who gave their everything, just as Lt Bikram Singh's family has done every day since he finally fell, and just as the nation should do it, even if very belatedly. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

## Painting competition at CIARI to mark 'Agricultural Education Day'



PORT BLAIR, NOV 20/--/ To mark the 'Agricultural Education Day', CIARI has conducted a painting competition on 18th November for school students on the topic "Innovation to increase agricultural production in the Islands". Around 80 students, along with eight teachers from 14 Schools participated in the competition. In continuation, a quiz competition will be held on 21st November for school students. On 25th November, Dr. Lalji

Singh, Joint Director & Head, Botanical Survey of India, Andaman & Nicobar Regional Centre will deliver a Lecture on "Floral diversity of Andaman & Nicobar Islands". On 28th November, the Garacharma Campus of CIARI is open for the school students to visit its R&D activities. In addition, students can submit a concept paper on "Innovative ideas for agricultural development in the Islands" by 30th November. The highlight of this fortnightly

programme is the Scientist-Student Interaction, wherein a team of Scientists will visit the schools to create awareness among the students about the "Career opportunities in agriculture and allied sectors" and to inculcate scientific temperament. Dr. P. A Bala and Mr. K. Muniswamy, Sr. Scientists along with Smt. Asma Bibi Technical Assistant, Mr. Abubaker, Senior Technician, Mr. Ali Akbar, Technician and Shri Saravanan, SSS coordinated the event.

The participants schools are Ummat Public School, Kamaraj English Medium School, Khalsa Public School, Don Bosco School, GSSS Port Mout, St. Mary's School, Saraswathi Shishu Mandir, Mahatma Gandhi International School, Navy Children School, Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kendriya Vidyalaya-1, Girls Sr. Secondary school Garacharma and Rabindra Bangla Vidyalaya, Govt. Boys Sr. Secondary School participated.

## Chess players selected for participation in 35th National U-13 Chess Championship

PORT BLAIR, NOV 20/--/ The Andaman Nicobar Chess Association (ANCA) conducted a selection trials on Sunday at ANCA office-cum-chess centre Dairy Farm to select two best chess players each in boys and girls for the 35th National Under-13 Chess Championship 2022. Around 40 young chess players took part in the selection trials passionately in which few chess players of Andaman & Nicobar Islands have been selected as per their final standings of the selection trials.

The details of the selected players are as below:

Sl. No.	Name of Participant	Position	School Attached
(Boys)			
01	D Shrestha Vijay	First	Carmel Sr. Sec. School Port Blair
02	V Yashwant	Second	GMSSS Port Blair
(Girls)			
01	Kavya Raj	First	VKV Lambaline
02	Tanisha Raj	Second	VKV Lambaline

These players are eligible to represent A & N Islands in the upcoming 35th National Boys & Girls Chess Championship-2022 scheduled to be held from 10th to 18th December 2022 in Puducherry. Further they are hereby directed to attend a two weeks chess coaching camp which will be held from 21.11.2022 to 04.12.2022 between 5.30 pm to 7.00 pm at ANCA Chess centre, Dairy Farm. For more details one may contact General Secretary, Andaman Nicobar Chess Association (ANCA) @ 9434293379.

## Sahyog appreciates ADM

PORT BLAIR, NOV 20/--/ A team headed by Mr. Selvam, General Secretary of Sahyog visited the Registration Cell upon the direction of Pt. GyanPrakash Mishra, President, Sahyog to get a detailed report upon the difficulties being faced by islanders during registration of the land. After the visit, Pt. GyanPrakash Mishra discussed the issues with the Additional District Magistrate, Mr. Ankit Yadav and appreciated him for the ease of registration process after his appointment as ADM. He also thanked him for the simplified and speedy process of land registration and other related facilities for the islanders. He also requested ADM to look for further possibilities to ease registrations to save time and money for the people.

## Vinod, Aato condole demise

PORT BLAIR, NOV 20/--/ Mr. M.Vinod, President, Andaman Association of Tour Operators, along with all its members have expressed deep condolence on the sudden demise of Mr. Samikannu, aged 83 years, resident of Garacharma. Mr. Samikannu is the father of Mr. Shiva Guru, Treasurer of AATO. Mr. Vinod prayed to the almighty to grant eternal peace to the departed soul and courage to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss. All members of AATO stand by the bereaved family at this hour of sorrow.

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**Time: 11.00 am to 6.00 pm**

Venue: **APOLLO CLINIC**  
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*I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestioned ability of a man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor*  
**Henry David Thoreau**

## Nepal votes for hung parliament

Nepal went to polls on Sunday but political stability may elude the Himalayan nation as political experts closely watching the national and provincial elections have predicted a hung parliament, though the Nepali Congress-led ruling coalition is expected to emerge winner. Political instability has been a recurrent feature of Nepal's Parliament since the end of the decade-long Maoist insurgency, and no prime minister has served a full term after the civil war ended in 2006. The frequent changes and fighting among parties have been blamed for a slow economy, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. There are two major political alliances fighting it out for the general elections - the Nepali Congress-led democratic and leftist alliance and the CPN-UML-led leftist and pro-Hindu-pro-monarchy alliance. The Nepali Congress-led ruling alliance includes CPN-Maoist Centre, CPN-Unified Socialist, and Madhes-based Loktantrik Samajwadi Party while the CPN-UML-led alliance includes pro-Hindu Rastriya Prajatantra Party and Madhes-based Janata Samajwadi Party. Out of a total of 275 members of the federal Parliament, 165 will be elected through direct voting, while the remaining 110 will be elected through a proportional electoral system. Similarly, out of a total of 550 members of the Provincial Assembly, 330 will be elected directly and 220 will be elected through the proportional method in which over 17.9 million people were eligible to vote in seven provinces across the country -- sandwiched between India and China -- to decide the electoral fate of 5,907 candidates. Out of a total of 2,412 candidates contesting the election for federal Parliament, 867 are independents.

Current prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has formed an electoral alliance with former Maoist guerrilla leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda against former premier K P Sharma Oli. The next government will face challenges of keeping a stable political administration, reviving the tourism industry and balancing ties with neighbours. Among the major political parties, the Communist Party of Nepal- Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) has fielded 141 candidates while the Nepali Congress and CPN-Maoist Centre have fielded 91 and 46 candidates respectively. The Nepali Congress led by Deuba, a five-time premier, in its election manifesto promised to maintain good governance, accountability, transparency and financial discipline if it wins the election. The party has also assured to generate 1.25 million jobs for the youths in the next five years and provide skill development training and career-oriented education to generate more employment opportunities and to encourage people to self-employment. The party aims to resolve border issues through dialogue and diplomatic efforts while giving high priority to neighbours in foreign policy. The coalition government is needed for another five years for maintaining political stability, argues the party. Nobody will die of hunger and job and earnings will be ensured for all, if our party wins the election, claims the CPN-UML, led by former premier KP Sharma Oli, in its manifesto. While pursuing free and balanced international relations, the party aims to develop friendly relations with the international community by giving priority to relations with neighbours. It also promises to get back the three territories of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura from India if it comes to power. The CNP (Maoist Centre) gives top priority to good governance, transparency, checking corruption and digitising government offices in its manifesto, which promises to maintain cordial, friendly and close relations with both the neighbours (China and India) keeping in view the geopolitical situation and will not take part in any type of multilateral or bilateral military groupings. Sustainable economic growth, quality education and health, and poverty reduction are the major agenda for pro-Hindu and pro-monarchy Rastriya Prajatantra Party.

# Italy’s Far-Right govt already at war with migrants

## REFLEX ACTION

Richard Braude

Threats, lies, and the breaking of international conventions. Another Italian government, another round of attempts to turn the ports of Italy into a circus of violations and dehumanizing logistical wranglings. Another round of bolstering Europe's racist border regime — as if the sea were barbed wire and every boat a checkpoint. Immigration has been the bugbear of Italian politics for over a decade. The boats of desperate souls have never left the front pages for long — whether rightfully (in recognition of the vast resistance mounted by the African and Asian proletariat to an unjust, divisive border regime), or in error (a spectacularized distraction from the siege launched by the Italian ruling class against society as a whole). This story has continued with the new government formed in October, a right-wing coalition including the misogynist media mogul Silvio Berlusconi; the Trumpist, Putin-supporting Matteo Salvini; and, in the leading role, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and her “post-fascist” Fratellid’ Italia party. It was no surprise that after taking office three weeks ago, this coalition immediately took aim at the NGOs operating rescue missions in the Mediterranean Sea. There has been no official search and rescue mission organized by either Italy or Europe since 2014; the majority of migrants arriving by sea either do so without assistance, or are intercepted by often dangerously inexperienced military or commercial vessels. Yet many are rescued at sea by ships launched by NGOs. Of the eighty-five thousand people who have survived the crossing to Italy this year alone, around one-fifth were rescued by activists. Half a century of maritime law and international conventions establishes the limits and duties within which the rescues take place: anyone rescued at sea must be taken to the nearest port of safety; anyone arriving in port has the right to claim asylum. Despite the clarity and simplicity of these laws, successive Italian governments have attempted to sidestep them, infringing upon the human rights of those arriving along the peninsula's coastline. It happened in 2009 when hundreds of East African refugees were ferried to Libya by the Italian military under Berlusconi’s watch. It happened

in a torturous 2016, when the government, led by Italy’s Democratic Party, wiretapped rescue ships, sent secret service agents on board, and initiated criminal proceedings. It happened in 2018 when then interior minister Salvini detained hundreds of migrants on board Italian Coast Guard ships and NGO vessels alike. It happened in 2021 when ships were confiscated and activists’ homes raided shortly after the inauguration of Mario Draghi’s technocratic government. (For the first of these cases, Italy was sentenced by the European Court of Human Rights; for the second, the rescue crews are currently in court; for the third, Salvini himself is in the dock). And these are but a few exemplary episodes. The new government formed while four NGO rescue ships were still at sea — and immediately declared that they would not be allowed to disembark anyone in Italian ports. It claimed that the migrants should be sent to other countries according to where the rescue ships are officially registered, in this case Germany and Norway. The claim makes for good nationalist propaganda but has no basis in international conventions. Nevertheless, with more than one thousand people on board, the four ships were left waiting for a place of safety to be assigned: the aptly named Humanity 1, the Geo Barents, the Rise Above and the Ocean Viking. In this recent diplomatic war of words, the importance of “European solidarity” has been repurposed on all sides. “The other countries are isolating us,” walls the Italian interior minister, “they are not acting in the spirit of European solidarity.” “We must follow the rules,” retorts the German government, “we have a mechanism for solidarity.” “Yes, we can take some of them,” indicate the French, “but we would like Italy to remember that they are the primary beneficiaries of European solidarity” — in

terms of economic redistribution among member states, they knowingly imply. The only remnant of the previous centrist hegemony, President Sergio Mattarella, attempted to calm the waters: “this is a challenge that can only be overcome through European solidarity.” And finally, Meloni found an ally in the form of Manfred Weber, head of the European People’s Party (EPP), the main centre-right group in the European Union parliament. He too commented that “Italy can’t be left to go it alone, we need to show solidarity on a European level.” For the time being, it seems that the government has faced an embarrassing failure. Diplomatic incompetence, lawmakers with the wrong footnotes, outraged professionals — this is not the road to economic or political stability. Those in charge lack both the experience to govern, and the radicality to excuse their naivety. Furthermore, despite being only weeks into their legislature, this is not the first occasion on which they have demonstrated a certain juridical clumsiness, having already published a decree against “rages” and tabling an antiabortion law that both contain patently unconstitutional elements. Perhaps the Italian government is less blundering than it might seem. If last year, for Draghi and the European political class, “European solidarity” meant redistributing wealth away from the North and down to the South — Italy included — today it means uniting with Ukraine against Russian military invasion. Draghi and his government were fully behind this project; the new government is looking toward other alliances. The last time a right-wing party dominated the government, in 2018, it soon found out there was little to play for on the European level: an attempt to install a sovereigntist economy minister was soon vetoed by President Mattarella. But 2022 is not 2018. War and disease have transformed our world. And in this new political remaking of Europe, the racist attacks on the African and Asian working class arriving in Europe by sea may well be paramount. While European states argue over the meaning of their solidarity, internationalists must fight against the right-wing political forces trying to take hold of Europe, while remaining steadfast in our solidarity across all borders. (IPA)



Statues lay out in the Sun, to be stored for use next year --Arijit Ganguly

# Why the new CJI means hope for Indian Judiciary

## FOCUS

N. Kavitha Rameshwar

“It is well for a judge to remind himself or herself of the fact that flattery is the graveyard of the gullible”, said then Supreme Court Justice Dr. D.Y. Chandrachud, in one of his judgments. While being alive to this thought of his and how he handles encomiums, here's why the new Chief Justice of India (‘CJI’), Dr. Chandrachud means the dawn of hope to new India. While talking of the new CJI (‘DYC’, as he is endearingly referred to), what is spoken of in terms of his strengths is more of the new order he represents than of himself as an individual shouldering an onerous and powerful position of being a judge as well as the administrative head of the judiciary. The new CJI is known for his pleasant demeanour, youthful energy, sharp intellect, and distinguished legal acumen. This vivacity is reflected with greater vigour in his judgments – on the right to privacy, decriminalising homosexuality, adultery, his dissent in the Aadhar case, abortion rights to unmarried women and to married women who are victims of marital rape, women’s equal right to work- right to permanent Commission in the Army, recognising and protecting against intersectional discrimination, reasonable accommodation in respect of the disabled, maternity benefit to mothers who conceive through surrogacy, acknowledging the changing definition of the family and the household, to name the star judgments of the many erudite ones he has authored. His progressive thoughts, in sync with the times, are cast in iron in his judgments, which bear the unmistakable stamp of his

compelling commitment to personal liberty, individual dignity, and equality, holding them in high esteem, while upholding the pluralistic ethos of our nation and society, and guarding against erosion of secular values. It is worth mentioning that the CJI’s commitment to the values that stand out in his judgments are also seen in his personal interactions with people who work with him. In an article in The Week, one of his former judicial clerks, who is visually disabled, has elaborated on his inclusive experience in working with Justice Dr. Chandrachud, when the latter took many steps to implement the principle of ‘reasonable accommodation’ to make his judicial clerk have accessibility and comfort in all aspects of work on par with his sighted counterparts, including introduction of audio captcha on the Supreme Court website, and directing that all files and written submissions were to be mailed in PDF format in order that a screen reader could read all files for the benefit of his judicial clerk. Beyond all trappings of power and position, legal jargon and prolix judgements, what stands out to the litigant public is the degree of sensitivity employed by the judges to see through the technicalities and to reach out to them to

address their real grievances. This, the new CJI, has excelled at and set a very high standard for everyone to follow in the higher judiciary as well as the subordinate judiciary. The constitutional and legal principles applied in his judgments, reflect the welcome progressive thought of the higher judiciary, rejection of artificial distinctions and discrimination, and an equal acceptance of the State of all its citizens, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, social status, and disability, to ensure their equal participation and enjoyment in all areas of life as equal stakeholders of society. This augurs well for a nation, diverse in every way while being unitary in spirit, and where the only test to be applied is that of constitutional morality. While the term ‘constitutional morality’ is still being debated and is likely to be given expansive scope and meaning in the upcoming times, what one understands at the very first blush would be to mean the judiciary’s single-minded commitment to the Constitution, its ideals and philosophy, and importantly putting them first. The judiciary deserves the credit for making the Constitution stand strong when faced with a storm of attacks from within and without, and in this, judgments by the CJI in cases mentioned above have been the

sturdiest of pillars. Such judgments have ensured the rich display of resilience by the Constitution with its ideals of liberty, equality, justice, dignity, democracy and secularism emerging more extensively meaningful than ever before. And for as long as these ideals are protected with unflinching commitment by the judiciary, even in the face of staunch attacks by majoritarian onslaught of ideology or politics, it can be asserted with faith and certainty that the Constitution will survive. The new CJI will also have to ensure the independence of the judiciary and guard against the shifting of power of judicial appointments in any manner not constitutionally contemplated, as well as continue to fortify the secular democratic credentials of India. While there is natural tendency to compare any CJI with his predecessor(s), especially when they have been hugely popular, the new CJI faces the formidable twin challenge of standing up to the legacy of Justice U. U. Lalit in terms of his blitzkrieg reforms in 74 days (increased listing of cases and setting up of more than one Constitution Benches), as well as measuring up to the expectations from his own larger than life persona. The next two years are going to provide him further chance to be the harbinger of a more sensitive judiciary and to usher in systemic reforms in the judiciary. It is entirely for him to raise the bar of the judiciary to its highest, in order that it may attract the best talent of the country, given that it is Lady Justice that we must care for, for all time to come. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword																													
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ACROSS															DOWN														
1	Weapon														1	Highway													
4	Narrate														2	Originate													
7	United														3	Cost for services													
8	Barrel														4	Look after													
9	Ward off														5	Self													
12	Naming word														6	Tall and thin													
13	Longed for														10	Edge													
15	Mingle														11	Hackneyed													
16	Secret agent														14	Precise													
18	Pig’s enclosure														17	Abstract													
19	Faucet														18	Vision													
21	Goes back														20	For each													
24	Exultation														21	20 quires													
26	Region														22	Small river valley													
27	Sweet potato														23	Let it stand!													
28	Falsehood														25	Optic													
29	Swarm																												
30	Search																												

## SUDOKU:3702

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## Yesterday’s Solution 3701

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

## Yesterday’s Cross Word Solution 1710

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## DISCLAIMER

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# Vishal bats for implementation of Minimum Support Price for Copra

PORT BLAIR, NOV 20/--/ Mr. Vishal Jolly, BJP's National Executive Member has requested for ground level implementation of Minimum Support Price for Copra, in A & N Islands through a letter addressed to Prime Minister, Home Minister, Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and a separate letter addressed to the Chief Secretary, A & N Administration.

In his letter, he mentioned the vital issue pertaining to ground level implementation of the scheme of Minimum Support Price (MSP) on COPRA (an agricultural produce of Coconut) at A & N Islands. He mentioned that during his recently concluded visit to Car Nicobar Island, he came across certain disheartening facts pertaining to the condition of farmers, which require immediate intervention.

It is a matter of fact that the entire Tribal population of Nicobar group of Islands relies solely on the coconut

produce for their livelihood and the sale of Copra is the only source of income for the tribal population to meet their daily essential needs. Copra being the sole bread earner of the Tribal community of Car Nicobar, Kamorta, Chowra, Terrasa, Campbell Bay and other Islands, the minimum support price of the same are fixed by the Government of India for the benefits of all farmers dealing with COPRA.

To support the farmers, GOI from time to time announces minimum price support scheme in the month of December every year for a period of next one year. Last year also the MSP was announced in the month of December 2021, but till date the same has not found being implemented on ground level and none of the farmers dealing with COPRA are availing the benefits which the Government of India has formulated for their welfare. Under the above

circumstances the tribal farmers are compelled to sell their produce to local vendors at very meager prices of Rs. 35/- to Rs. 39/- per kilogram whereas the MSP fixed by the GOI is Rs. 105.90 per kilogram.

Although the scheme is announced every year, the same has not been implemented by the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) since 2013. It is pertinent to mention that the produce of Nicobar zone is 100 percent organic (notified by Agriculture Department).

It was placed on record that NAFED is the authority to deal with the farmers and purchase the agricultural produce from them.

The NAFED doesn't have any branch in our Islands and the entire transactions / arrangements are done at its regional jurisdictional office situated at Kolkata, West Bengal. Unless &

until an office of the NAFED is set up in our Islands it would be extremely difficult for the farmers to get the real fruits of their hard-work. Furthermore, reportedly there is only one Surveyor deputed for the entire A & N Islands and that officer remains camped at Port Blair whereas the main "source" of collection/procurement is at Car Nicobar, Kamorta, Terrasa, Chowra, Campbell Bay, various parts of North & Middle Andaman District, villages of South Andaman and Port Blair.

Accordingly, he requested to intervene into this issue in order to ensure that every farmer living at every isolated Islands of Andaman & Nicobar are equally and largely benefited by receiving the maximum value of their agricultural produce, especially the farmers belonging to the tribal community shall be deeply indebted for your valuable support in this regard; he added.



PORT BLAIR, NOV 20/--/ The 6th day of Cooperatives for Youth, Women, Weaker Sections & Health of 69th All India Coop. Week-2022 organized at A & N State Coop Union office premises. Smti.ItiAgarwal, Director of Social Welfare, A & N Administration graced the program as chief guest. Mr. P. G. Paul, General Secretary, ANSCU, Mr. Suresh Babu, Principal, RGCTC, Directors of ANSCU, Officers, NCUI, ANSCB, Directors & members of different cooperatives & large of numbers of SHG attended the programme.Mr.Suresh Babu,, Principal, RGCTC spoke on the topic on Cooperatives

for Youth, Women, Weaker Sections and Health. The chief guest encouraged the women and states to ensure that the health and strength of wonders, men and women and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age and strength and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment. Earlier, Smti.Shameema Begum, Instructor, ANSCU welcomed the guests while Smti. Monika Sheel, FM, ANSCU proposed vote of thanks.

## Maharashtra: Teachers turn motivational speakers for students, fellow educators in Karmala

PUNE, NOV 20 /--/ Teachers have become motivational speakers in Karmala of Maharashtra's Solapur district thanks to the initiative 'Teachers Talk', which encourages them to speak on latest trends and best practices in the field of education.

The initiative, modelled on the lines of TED Talks and Josh Talks, has been introduced by the panchayat samiti in Karmala tehsil. "On the lines of TED Talks and Josh Talks, we decided to start Teachers Talk in primary and secondary schools in the tehsil. Teachers can speak about the latest topics in education and allied fields for 15 to 20 minutes in a precise and motivating manner," said Manoj Raut, the block

development officer, Karmala tehsil. The objective is to encourage teachers to be insightful, curious and keep them abreast of the global trends and developments in the field of education and allied avenues and motivate other educators, he said. The authorities brainstormed and curated 30 topics, such as the American education system, UNICEF's role in the field of education, artificial intelligence, experiments in the education sector, sports infrastructure, child psychology, robotics among others, the official said.

"The talks are organised at 17 centres in the tehsil during monthly education conferences, where teachers from schools attached to these centres meet to discuss

best practices and various issues faced by them," Raut said. Two such talks have been organised so far and several teachers took part in it, he said. The talks are not restricted to teachers from government schools. Educators from private, aided and unaided institutions can also participate, it was stated. Balasaheb Bodakhe, a teacher from a school in Khatgaon, said he spoke about sports and the role of teachers in encouraging students who have the potential to excel in the field.

"During my Teachers Talk, I cited the example of a farm labourer's daughter who went on to win a gold medal in athletics at a national event after she received proper guidance

and training at school," Bodakhe said. Similarly, Praffulata Satpute, a teacher from a primary school in Khadaki, spoke about inculcating good reading habits in children.

"The initiative not only makes teachers insightful, but also helps fellow educators and students gain knowledge," she said. The authorities have tied up with Yashkalyani Sevabhavi Sanstha, an NGO, which has agreed to give a cash prize of Rs 3,000, a certificate and medal to educators who give the best 'Teachers Talk' every month, Raut said. "We also plan to start a YouTube channel to stream these speeches, and there are plans to include the best talks in a book in the coming days," the official said. (PTI)

## Rumblings surface in TN Cong, state chief dismisses it as internal affair

CHENNAI, NOV 20 /--/ After a prolonged silence, rumblings against the state leadership surfaced in the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee with few office bearers overtly expressing their resentment.

What took everyone by surprise was the chaos and a sudden scuffle between the supporters of two MLAs on the premises of Sathymurthy Bhavan - the TNCC headquarters - on November 15. Though TNCC chief K S Alagiri, later, dismissed this as the party's internal affair, which would be sorted out, the incident nevertheless brought to the fore the bickerings within the party. Party's Thoothukudi north district Congress president R Kamaraj resigned from party post protesting against the alleged handling of the incidents. TNCC treasurer and Nanguneri legislator Ruby R Manoharan, whose supporters created ruckus leading to a minor scuffle, said he has been served a show-cause notice by the party leadership and he would make his submission before the disciplinary committee on November 24. His supporters had protested against the election results of the block presidents for Kalakkad and Nanguneri. The supporters of Tirunelveli east district Congress committee president K P K Jayakumar entered into an argument with

them leading to a scuffle between the two groups. "The party posts were filled without consulting the district presidents. The arbitrary action against Manoharan is unacceptable. The party cadres were attacked by goondas inside the Congress state headquarters. What action has the state president taken against the goondas?" Kamaraj asked.

Also, he alleged that the TNCC did not pass a resolution condemning the release of the convicts in the former Prime Minister and Congress leader Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. Dismissing it as an internal issue, Alagiri claimed that "dissatisfaction against leadership is natural in any political party." The appointments were made as per the procedure laid down by the state election commission, he said. About 62 district leaders signed a petition seeking disciplinary action against the Nanguneri MLA. "We are trying to resolve the issue in a democratic manner. Alagiri's car was waylaid by a group of persons," claimed former union minister Dhanushkodi Athithan. Posters demanding action against Manoharan in Tirunelveli district and few posters in Chidambaram flaying Alagiri, took the party by surprise. (PTI)

## Well marked Low Pressure Area develops into depression, rains likely in TN

CHENNAI, NOV 20 /--/ The well-marked Low Pressure Area (LPA) over Bay of Bengal concentrated into a depression on Sunday and rainfall is likely to commence soon, the India Meteorological Department said. The depression is very

likely to maintain its intensity and move west-northwestwards slowly, towards north Tamil Nadu- Puducherry and south Andhra Pradesh coastline during the next 48 hours, a Regional Meteorological Centre bulletin said here.

Under its influence, light to moderate rainfall is likely to commence from Sunday evening over north Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry and coastal Andhra Pradesh. Heavy rainfall is expected at isolated places over north Tamil Nadu and

Puducherry on November 21 and 22. The LPA over southeast Bay of Bengal on November 18 moved west-northwestwards and concentrated into a well-marked LPA over central parts of south Bay of Bengal on November 19 morning. (PTI)



Artists performing 'Ganesh Vandana' at the opening ceremony of the 53rd International Film Festival of India (IFFI), at Goa

## Disowned by teenage mother and kin, MP baby girl to get orphan' status

BHOPAL, NOV 20 /--/ A newborn baby girl, disowned by her teenage mother -- a "rape survivor" -- and her family members, is staring at an uncertain future and heading towards getting the status of an "orphan".

The 28-day-old baby, born prematurely on Diwali, was initially kept under observation of doctors and has now been shifted to a children's home (orphanage) -- Kilkari -- in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh, officials said. She has become a victim of a crime that has left multiple lives in disarray. It all unfolded when a 15-year-old girl returned to her home in a village located 45km from Khandwa district headquarters during Diwali after staying with her maternal aunt in Indore. The girl's parents, in a celebratory mood, were clueless about the storm brewing in their life. "The girl complained of severe abdominal pain after falling from stairs during cleaning work on the day of Diwali (October 24)," Khushbu Parmar, sub-inspector at Indore's Lasudia police station who is investigating the case, told PTI. The worried parents immediately rushed her to a local healthcare centre. A medical examination revealed the young girl was pregnant and doctors advised her family to take her to the district hospital in Khandwa. However, the teenager delivered a baby girl on way to the hospital,

sub-inspector Parmar said. The girl and her daughter were later shifted to the district hospital. The family members of the girl are saying they were unaware of her pregnancy all these months and came to know about it only when doctors told them, Parmar said. "After the young girl gave birth to the baby, she filed a police complaint of rape against a 15-year-old boy, a resident of Indore," the woman officer said. Parmar said the girl had stayed at her maternal aunt's house in Indore's Lasudia area for a few months and during this period, became friendly with the boy who lived in the neighbourhood. The complainant accused the 15-year-old boy of raping her when her maternal aunt and uncle were out of home for work, and impregnating her, said the police official.

The police have collected DNA samples of all three -- the girl, the boy, and the newborn -- and sent them for laboratory examination, she said. The police sub-inspector said following the complaint, the minor boy was detained under provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. The newborn's future is, however, hanging in the balance as the girl and her family members have refused to take care of the baby, who is heading towards getting the tag of an "orphan".

"After the teenage girl delivered a premature baby,

we recorded her family members' statements. The girl and her parents expressed their wish to disown the newborn seeking to know where they will keep the baby and how will they face society. "But the survivor's parents are ready to keep their daughter with them," Vijay Sanava, chairman of the District Child Welfare Committee, said.

He said now that the baby has been disowned, legal steps to safeguard her future will be taken. "The newborn is healthy after spending initial days in the hospital under doctors' observation. We are in the process of taking further legal steps as per rules and regulations," the District Child Welfare Committee chief said. Sanava said the girl and her family members will soon be called to complete the paperwork to surrender the child. "We will ask the family members again if they want to take the newborn with them. If they decline, the legal process to surrender the child to the orphanage will be set in motion," he said.

After this process, the girl and her family will have 60 more days to claim the newborn, Sanava said. Sanava said after the completion of 60 days, the baby can be adopted by others through Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) by following due process. CARA is the nodal agency for the adoption of children in the country. (PTI)

## LeT 'hybrid' terrorist killed in encounter in J&K's Anantnag

SRINAGAR, NOV 20 /--/ A "hybrid" terrorist of Lashkar-e-Taiba, accompanying a police party for identifying a hideout, was killed in an encounter between security forces and ultras in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, police said.

"Hybrid" terrorists are not listed as ultras but are radicalised enough to carry out a terror strike and then slip back into routine life. The "hybrid" terrorist, Sajad Ahmad Tantray alias Furqan, a resident of Shirpora in Kulgam, was involved in the killing of a non-local labourer at Rakhmomen in Anantnag's Bijbehara on November 12, a police spokesperson said. He was arrested and during questioning, he confessed to his involvement in the labourer's killing.

At his instance, a pistol used in the commission of the terror crime was recovered, the spokesperson said. Tantray also revealed information about the presence of terrorists in Bijbehara's Cheki Duddo area, he added.

On the basis of information provided by Tantray, the police said, a search and cordon operation was launched in Cheki Duddo.

As the search party approached the hideout, it came under heavy firing from the hiding terrorists and Tantray was critically injured. (PTI)



Ministry of Women and Child Development, Indevar Pandey at the "Training Modules for the Child Welfare Committees" and the "Protocol for Repatriation and Restoration of Children organised by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, on the occasion of World Children's Day, in New Delhi





**THE SHOW BEGINS:** A bird's eye view of the opening ceremony of Fifa World Cup 2022 at Al Bayt Stadium in Qatar

## Qatar opens West Asia's first World Cup

DOHA, NOV 20 /-- Qatar on Sunday opened West Asia's first FIFA World Cup before global leaders and soccer fans who have poured into this energy-rich nation after it was battered by a regional boycott and international criticism. With American actor Morgan Freeman's dulcet voice and an Arabian theme with camels, the opening ceremony began with a promise of "everyone is welcome." Regardless of the outcome of Qatar versus Ecuador on the pitch, Doha already has drawn Saudi Arabia's powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to the opening ceremony and inaugural match of the tournament. The venue, Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor outside Doha, is one of an array of brand new stadiums built for the tournament, which has cost Qatar an estimated \$200 billion.

South Korean K-pop star Jung Kook headlined the 30-minute opening ceremony. Jung Kook of BTS performs with Fahad Al Kubaisi during the opening ceremony of the 2022 FIFA World Cup at Al Bayt Stadium on November 20, 2022 in Al Khor, Qatar. World Cup organisers hope the start of the football will quell the controversies that have overshadowed preparations for the tournament ever since Qatar was named as host nation in a shock FIFA vote in 2010. Qatar's treatment of migrant workers and the Gulf state's human rights record have dominated the pre-tournament headlines. On Saturday, FIFA president Gianni Infantino went on the offensive in an aggressive rebuttal of the opprobrium aimed at the event, arguing that much of the criticism was unfair. "This moral lesson-giving - one-sided - is just hypocrisy," Infantino said. "I don't want to give you any lessons of life, but what is going on here is profoundly, profoundly unjust." (PTI with Agency inputs)

## PM slams Cong over Medha Patkar joining Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra

DHORAJI, NOV 20 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asked on what moral ground is the Congress seeking votes in Gujarat when its leader was joined in his Bharat Jodo Yatra by a woman who stalled the Narmada dam project for three decades.

Modi was referring to Narmada Bachao Andolan activist Medha Patkar

"When Congress leaders approach you to seek votes, I want you to ask them to explain on what moral ground the opposition party is seeking votes when their leader was doing padyatra with a woman who was against the Narmada project. I urge you to ask this question to Congress," he said. The BJP government in Gujarat had worked hard for 20 years to resolve the water shortage issue



joining the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra in Maharashtra on Saturday. Addressing a poll rally in Dhoraji town of Gujarat's Rajkot district, Modi said the ambitious project of building Sardar Sarovar Dam over Narmada river was delayed because many people had tried hard to stall it. "The Narmada project was the only solution to quench the thirst of the arid region of Kutch and Kathiyawad (Saurashtra region). You must have seen yesterday how a Congress leader was doing padyatra with a woman, who was an anti-Narmada activist. She and others had stalled the project for three decades by creating legal hurdles" he said. "These activists held protests just to make sure that water does not reach here," Modi said, and accused the activists of defaming Gujarat to such an extent that even the World Bank stopped funds for the project.

through various schemes, such as building check dams, digging new wells and lakes and providing water through pipelines, the Prime Minister said.

"Today, the entire Kutch-Kathiyawad region is receiving water through this pipeline network. We believe in bringing permanent solutions to problems. We understand that water and electricity are crucial for development. Congress governments were only interested in installing hand pumps," he said. Gujarat will go to polls in two phases on December 1 and 5 with the counting of votes on December 8 along with that of Himachal Pradesh. Of the total 182 Assembly seats in Gujarat, voting for 89 seats will be held on December 1 and the balance 93 seats on December 5. Polling in Dhoraji area, held by Congress, will take place on December 1. (PTI)

## Mamata-Modi meeting likely on Dec 5 in Delhi

KOLKATA, NOV 20 /--/ Chief minister Mamata Banerjee is likely to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the CMs' meeting in New Delhi on December 5, an official said on Sunday. During the likely meeting, Mamata may press for the release of the state's dues from the Centre, he said. She may also draw the Prime Minister's attention to the issue of Ganga river bank erosion in areas around Farakka barrage, the official said. "In the meeting, the chief minister is expected to highlight the arrears pending for the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Bengal. She may also remind the PM about the dues to the state," he said. The Prime Minister has convened the chief ministers' meeting in the national capital as India will host the G-20 Summit in 2023. The invitation has also reached Mamata's office and the CM will go to Delhi to attend the meeting, the official said. The meeting between Mamata and Modi is expected at a time when there is growing clamour from states for the release of dues from the Centre. Several states, including West Bengal, had claimed that they have been "facing difficulties" in taking up development and social welfare programmes as the fund flow from the Centre has been getting "inordinately delayed". In a memorandum to the Prime Minister, Mamata had tabulated that the dues to the state from the central government as on July 31, 2022 has been estimated to be around Rs 1,00,968.44 crore. The CM at a recent rally in Jhargram had said the Centre should do

away with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime if it is unable to clear the dues to the state. Mamata had also wondered if she would have to "beg" to get the dues cleared. She had also claimed that "shortage of central funds was the primary reason for the halt of piped water project implementation under the 'Jal Jeevan Mission' scheme. Recently, former state finance minister Amit Mitra had slammed the Centre and exhorted Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to 'urgently' convene a meeting of the GST Council, which has not met since June. Mitra, now principal chief advisor to Mamata, in a letter to Sitharaman, has said that as per the Rules of Conduct, the GST Council has to meet every quarter in a fiscal year. The GST Council, chaired by Sitharaman and her counterparts from all states, last met on June 28-29 in Chandigarh. Mamata had recently written to PM Modi expressing her concern over the continuous erosion by Ganga river in Malda, Murshidabad and Nadia districts and requested him to advise the ministry concerned to conduct a detailed study and formulate an integrated plan to control the situation. The TMC supreme, during her last meeting with the PM in August, had raised a host of issues concerning West Bengal, including GST dues and timely release of funds by the Centre under various schemes. At that meeting, she had repeatedly sought the PM's intervention for urgent release of dues to the state on account of the implementation of the rural job scheme, MGNREGA, and other programmes like PM Awas Yojana and the PM Gramin Sadak Yojana. (PTI)

## Shah says Cong exploited tribal community for votes

### Rahul accuses Centre of weakening laws framed during UPA regime to empower tribals

DEDIAPADA, NOV 20 /--/ Union home minister Amit Shah Sunday accused the Congress of exploiting the tribal community for votes, and said it was only after Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister that the country got its first tribal President in Droupadi Murmu. Shah also alleged that poverty increased under the Congress rule even as the party had given a call of eliminating it. "Congress only delivered speeches. It gave the slogan of eliminating poverty, but instead worked to eliminate the poor. It exploited tribals by garnering their votes. Despite 70 years of independence, not a single tribal brother or sister became the president of the country," Shah said, addressing a poll rally at Dediapada in tribal-dominated Narmada district. "It was after Narendra Modi became the prime minister that he worked to make Droupadi Murmu, a daughter of a tribal, poor family from Santhal pargana of Odisha the country's President," the home minister said.

Shah said that Modi worked towards ending the division between the rich and the poor and delivered his first speech after becoming the Prime Minister. "When Modi became the Prime Minister, his first speech was that his government will be for the tribals, Dalits, poor and OBCs. He did what he said. In eight years, Modi reserved a large portion of the budget for 80 crore poor people of the country," Shah said. He said there is not a single village in the country that

is now without access to electricity. "Modi worked for uniting the country which was divided into poor and rich," he added. Shah also took a swipe at the Gujarat Congress' election campaign highlighting its achievements when it was in power three decades ago, and said the opposition party did not do anything other than increasing poverty. "Congress says 'Kaam bole chhe' (it is work that speaks). It has not been in power since the last 32 years.



When the people of Gujarat did not vote it to power for 32 years, it says its work speaks for it. You did nothing other than increasing poverty," he said. He said that in its last budget, the Congress government had allocated Rs 1,000 crore for tribals in Gujarat, while Bhupendra Patel, the current chief minister, allocated Rs 1 lakh crore for this community in his last budget, he said. "Congress does not know what tribal development means...It did nothing other than make each other fight. After BJP came to power, not a single curfew was imposed in any police station in the last 20

years," Shah said. Shah's remarks against the Congress come on a day when former Congress president Rahul Gandhi accused the Narendra Modi-led Central government of weakening laws framed by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) to empower tribals, and said his party will strengthen them further after coming to power again. Addressing the Adivasi Mahila Workers' Sammelan at Jalgaon-Jamod in Maharashtra's Buldhana district, Rahul said tribals are the "first owners" of the country and have equal rights like other citizens. The Modi government was weakening laws like the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, Forest Rights Act, Land Rights, Panchayat Raj Act and the reservation for women in local bodies, the Congress leader said. He said PM Modi calls tribals as 'vanvasis'. There are different meanings of the words 'adivasi' and 'vanvasi', he said. "Vanvasi means you can live only in jungles, not in cities, you can't become doctor and engineer and can't travel by plane," he said. Rahul alleged that the PM wanted to take away the tribal land and give to his industrialist friends. "When we come to power, we will strengthen these laws and frame new legislations for your welfare," he said. Rahul said his grandmother (former Prime Minister) Indira Gandhi would say adivasis were the first owners of the country. "You will not understand the country if you don't understand the culture and history of tribals," he said. (PTI)

## SC to hear plea seeking probe into Morbi bridge collapse incident today

NEW DELHI, NOV 20 /--/ The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea seeking the constitution of a judicial commission to probe the Morbi bridge collapse incident in Gujarat which claimed over 130 lives. A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice Hima Kohli will hear the PIL filed by advocate Vishal Tiwari, which said that the accident depicted

the negligence and utter failure of the authorities. On November 1, Tiwari had mentioned the matter for urgent listing, and the top court had said it would take up the matter soon. According to reports, the death toll in the collapse of the British-era bridge on October 30 on the Machchu river in Morbi in Gujarat has gone up to 134. "From the past decade, various incidents have taken place

in our country wherein due to the mismanagement, lapse in duty, and negligent maintenance activities, there have been cases of huge public casualties which could have been avoided," Tiwari has said in his PIL.

The more than a century-old bridge, located around 300 km from state capital Gandhinagar, had reopened five days back after extensive repairs and

renovation. It was crammed with people when it collapsed around 6.30 pm on October 30. In his plea, Tiwari has sought the constitution of a judicial commission under the chairmanship of a retired judge of the apex court to initiate a probe in the matter. The plea has sought directions to the states to form a committee to survey and conduct assessment risk of old and risky

monuments and bridges to ensure environmental viability and safety. It has also sought a direction to the states to constitute a construction incident investigation department so that fast and prompt probes can be done whenever such incidents occur. The plea said such departments should also enquire about the quality and safety of any public construction taking place. (PTI)

## IGNOU celebrates 37th Foundation Day

From page-1  
All the staff and learners of IGNOU participated in the 37th IGNOU Foundation Day programme. The main programme has been relayed through the Gyandarshan Channel which has been viewed by the RC staff at its premises. In 1985, by an Act of Parliament, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was established as a Central University to meet the educational needs of millions of people; thus emerged as 'People's University'. The success of IGNOU in reaching the 'unreached' sections of India is a great achievement in higher education of our Country. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has been accorded A++ grade by NAAC. The Port Blair - Regional Centre of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), has reached the unreached population and provided higher education to nearly 60,000 students of Andaman & Nicobar Islands since its inception in 2006 with 08 active Learner Support Centres spread in different Islands of Andaman and Nicobar.

## Howrah Bridge among iconic buildings in city illuminated in blue on World Children's Day

KOLKATA, NOV 20 /--/ Several iconic structures and buildings, including Bidhan Sabha Bhavan and Howrah Bridge, in Kolkata were illuminated in blue on Sunday on the occasion of World Children's Day. West Bengal Assembly building, Kolkata Press Club and Birla Industrial and Technological Museum are among the structures lit up in blue to convey solidarity on the issue of child rights, UNICEF said in a press statement. November 20 is celebrated as World Children's Day every year. Places of worship like Shiv Mandir at Taratala, Masjid Un Noor at Park Circus, Basanti Church, Gurdwara Sant Kutia at Bhawanipur, Japanese Buddhist Temple at Dhakuria and Pareshnath Swetambar Jain Temple at Manicktala were also illuminated with blue light to develop awareness about the rights



of children among the believers of multiple faiths. "To send out a message to the whole world to uphold the rights of children and create a better world for them, these iconic structures have been illuminated so to build awareness among people for creating a world full of peace, opportunity, safety, equality, inclusiveness and happiness for every child," said Mohammad Mohiuddin, Chief of UNICEF in West Bengal. People belonging to all walks of life are urged to uphold the rights of children as they deserve to feel celebrated, included and protected against all forms of discrimination, he said. UNICEF has been working with leaders of various faiths to generate awareness about the issues of children among people and the illumination of the places of worship has been done as part of its 'Go Blue Campaign'. (PTI)



## Vice Prez Dhankhar arrives in Doha to attend FIFA World Cup opening ceremony



**DOHA, NOV 20** --/ Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday arrived in Doha for a two-day visit to the Gulf Kingdom during which he will represent India at the inauguration of the FIFA World Cup.

Dhankhar is visiting Doha at the invitation of Qatar Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. "Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar arrives to a warm welcome in Doha, Qatar," External Affairs Ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi tweeted. Besides attending the inaugural ceremony of the football World Cup, the vice president will also interact with members of the Indian community during his visit. The vice president's visit would be an opportunity to join a close and friendly country Qatar as it hosts a major sporting event and also to acknowledge the role

played and support extended by Indians in this World Cup, an MEA statement said on Friday.

India and Qatar enjoy close and friendly relations with multi-faceted partnership extending to areas of trade, energy, security, defence, health, culture, education, among others, the MEA statement said. In the last financial year, bilateral trade crossed USD 15 billion (one billion=100 crore).

Qatar plays an important partner in India's energy security and India participates in the gulf nation's food security. India and Qatar would be celebrating 50 years of establishment of full diplomatic relations next year. The MEA statement said people-to-people ties form an important element of bilateral relationship with over 840,000 Indians in Qatar. (PTI)

## Pak's politically charged run up to appointment of next Army Chief may end soon

**ISLAMABAD, NOV 20** --/ Pakistan's controversial and politically charged run up to the appointment of next Chief of Army Staff may end soon with the government naming the next head of the Army within days.

Though it may be a routine administrative affair in many other countries, in Pakistan the appointment of the army chief attracts a lot of attention, primarily due to multiple hidden powers attached with the powerful post. According to Article 243(3) of the Constitution, the president appoints all services chiefs on the recommendation of the prime minister, who may consult his aides but he solely has the power to make the appointment. The appointment of chiefs of navy and air force goes unnoticed but it is not the case with the nomination of the Army chief. The guessing game starts months before the end of the tenure of the incumbent. In the latest case, Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, 61, is set to hang his boots on November 29 but speculation began as early as August as to who would be his successor. The leading English-language daily Dawn ran a report on August 16 about the top generals, with one of them entering the shoes of Gen Bajwa, while the other getting the post Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). The brief introduction of the top five is given below: Lt-Gen Asim Munir:



He is the senior-most. His four-year tenure as Lt-Gen will end on November 27, just two days before retirement of Gen Bajwa. He is in the race as the decision for the army chief would be made before his retirement. If appointed, he would get a three-year extension in the service. Lt- Gen Munir was commissioned into the Frontier Force Regiment and has been a close aide of the incumbent COAS ever since he commanded troops in the Force Command Northern Areas as a brigadier under Gen Bajwa, who was then the Commander X Corps. He was later appointed chief of Military Intelligence in early 2017, and in October next year was made the ISI chief. However, his stint as the top intelligence officer turned out to be the shortest ever, as he was replaced

by Lt-Gen Faiz Hamid within eight months, on the insistence of then-Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Lt-Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza: He is senior-most amongst the other four candidates who belong to the same batch. He hails from the Sindh Regiment. He came to prominence as director-general military operations (DGMO) during the last two years of Gen Raheel Sharif, the COAS from 2013-16. In that role, he was part of Gen Sharif's core team at GHQ, which supervised the military operation against the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militants in North Waziristan. He has served as the chief of general staff, and in that role he was closely engaged in crucial decision-making related to national security and foreign affairs. In October 2021, he was

posted as Corps Commander Rawalpindi to enable him to acquire operational experience and become eligible to be considered for the top posts. The Dawn newspaper quoted a military source as saying that while commenting on his profile he was the clear frontrunner for either of the two posts of COAS and CJCS.

Lt Gen Azhar Abbas: He is the most experienced in Indian affairs among the current brass. Currently, he is the chief of general staff (CGS), effectively running the army with direct oversight of both operations and intelligence directorates at GHQ. Prior to that, he commanded the Rawalpindi-based but Kashmir-centric and politically-significant X Corps, which indicates that he enjoys the complete trust of the present army chief. It was during his time as commander X Corps that the Indian and Pakistani armies reached an understanding on respecting the 2003 ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control (LOC). He has also commanded the 12th Infantry Division based in Murree, from where he was responsible for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Lt-Gen Nauman Mehmood: He belongs to the Baloch Regiment. He is currently president of the National Defence University. He also has extensive experience as chief instructor at the Command and Staff College, Quetta. (PTI)

## Two death row convicts in Bangladeshi-American blogger murder case flee dramatically from court premises

**DHAKA, NOV 20** --/ Two Islamist militants, who were sentenced to death for killing prominent Bangladeshi-American secular blogger Avijit Roy and his publisher, escaped dramatically from the premises of a crowded court here on Sunday with the help of unidentified bikers who sprayed some chemical on police and created a smoke screen before whisking away the convicts.

Hours after the incident, home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told reporters that a nationwide alert has been issued to recapture them and an investigation launched to ascertain how the event took place. "We have launched a massive manhunt to recapture them and their helpers," a police spokesman told newsmen at the scene. He said Moinul Hasan Shamim alias Samir alias Imran and Abu Siddiq Sohel -- both of whom were operatives of the outlawed terrorist group Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) -- were brought to the court for indictment hearing in a different case when some unidentified motorcycle-borne men whisked them away while they were being escorted to transition prison room. Police said the two ABT operatives were sentenced to death last year for killing 42-year-old Bangladesh-born US secular blogger Roy and his publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan.

According to police and eyewitnesses, the convicts fled the court premises on motorbikes as their accomplices sprayed some chemical on policemen escorting them and created a smoke screen. The eyewitnesses said the spray temporarily blinded only two policemen, suggesting that the convicts in the high-profile murder cases were being treated just like any other ordinary prisoners. "The prisoners were just handcuffed, their legs were not shackled, a usual protective measure for dangerous criminals or militants," a court official said.

CCTV footage aired by TV channels showed two bikers wearing helmets carrying the two militants through a narrow road in front of the Dhaka Metropolitan Judges Court complex, while a plainclothesman was chasing them. Roy, an outspoken critic of religious fundamentalism, was hacked to death with machetes by ABT militants just after he left a book fair at the Dhaka University on February 26, 2015. His wife Rafida Ahmed was also injured in the attack. The terrorist group also hacked to death his publisher Dipan in November the same year at his office at Dhaka's Shahbagh area. Dhaka's Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal court sentenced five militants to death in the Roy murder case, while eight Islamists were sentenced to death for killing Dipan. (PTI)

## Sikh students allowed to wear kirpan on campus of US university



University of North Carolina at Charlotte —File Photo

**NEW YORK, NOV 20** --/ A prominent US university has announced that it would allow Sikh students to wear a kirpan on campus, a religious article in Sikhism.

The change comes about two months after a video was posted online showing a student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte was handcuffed for carrying a kirpan. The University of North Carolina in a statement on Thursday said that the school's policy will allow students to wear kirpans on campus as long as the blade length is under 3 inches and is "worn close to the body in a sheath at all times." The statement released was signed by Chancellor Sharon L. Gaber and Chief Diversity Officer Brandon L. Wolfe said the ruling was effective immediately. "The Office of Diversity and Inclusion, with support from Institutional Integrity, also conducted additional awareness training this week with our police department and will continue its work to expand our cultural education and training opportunities for all of campus," the statement said. The university also said other religious accommodations, including

a request to wear a larger kirpan, can be made to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX and evaluated on a case-by-case basis, it said. "Over the past several weeks, we have engaged in dialogue with representatives from the local and global Sikh communities about how we could modify University policies to honour the tenets of religious freedom while protecting the safety of our campus," the statement said.

The university thanked Sikh leaders, including nonprofit organisations The Sikh Coalition and the Global Sikh Council, who provided expertise and perspective to help with the policy change. In September, a video of the student being handcuffed went viral on social media. The video was uploaded on Twitter and said that the police had handcuffed him for refusing to let the officer remove his kirpan. "I wasn't going to post this, but I don't think I will receive any support from @unccharlotte. I was told someone called 911 and reported me, and I got cuffed for resisting" because I refused to let the officer take my kirpan out of the miyaan," the student tweeted. (PTI)

## Pak's ruling coalition PDM initiates talks with Oppn PTI to resolve political crisis

**ISLAMABAD, NOV 20** --/ For the first time since coming to power, the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) alliance-led federal government has initiated a dialogue with ousted prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to resolve political issues, including the appointment of a new Army chief, according to a media report on Sunday.

The development came as Finance Minister Ishaq Dar met with President Arif Alvi on Friday and offered dialogue to resolve political issues, The Express Tribune newspaper quoted a source as saying. The source said the president, a member of Khan's party, told Dar that his message would be conveyed to the PTI leadership. In response to the government offer, the PTI leadership also showed willingness and authorised the president to engage with the government, the source added. Dar held two meetings with the president in the last three days, the paper reported. "The PTI wants the announcement of the date for the early general elections. If the government agrees, then the PTI is willing to rejoin parliament for a dialogue on the electoral framework," the paper reported. It is also reported that the purpose of the meeting between the finance minister and the president was to ensure that the process regarding the appointment of a new Pakistan Army chief would culminate smoothly. Pakistan Army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa will retire on November 29.

Under the law, the president can hold back the summary on the appointment of the Army chief sent to him by the prime

minister for 25 days. The sources, however, said the appointment of an army chief was a very sensitive matter, and it would not be in the national interest to delay the process. A PTI leader told The Express Tribune that if the government appoints an army chief in violation of the settled process then the president may hold the summary for reconsideration. He, however, said that the party would not dispute the appointment of any general as the army chief. "Now, the appointment of the new chief is not an issue of PTI," he added. However, he remarked that the civil and military leadership were not on the same page regarding the appointment of the new chief. The Express Tribune also reported that a summary regarding the appointment of the chief of army staff (COAS) is yet to be initiated by the defence ministry.

One source claimed that the summary could be initiated anytime in the next 36 hours, but if it was delayed further, then the government may approve the appointment of the new army chief through the federal cabinet. However, a Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader rejected the report regarding differences between the civil and military leadership on the matter, saying that the decision had already been taken and the announcement would be made soon. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif consulted former president Asif Ali Zardari and PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman. On the other hand, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has warned that in case any mess is created in the process, then the president will be held responsible. (PTI)

## Turkey strikes in Syria, Iraq a week after Istanbul bombing

**ISTANBUL, NOV 20** --/ Turkey launched airstrikes

over northern regions of Syria and Iraq, the Turkish Defence Ministry said on Sunday, targeting Kurdish groups that Ankara holds responsible for last week's bomb attack in Istanbul.

Warplanes attacked bases of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, and the Syrian People's Protection Units, or YPG, the ministry said in a statement, which was accompanied by images of F-16 jets taking off and footage of a strike from an aerial drone. There was no immediate comment from either group. The ministry cited Turkey's right to self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter in launching an operation it called Claw-Sword late on Saturday night. It said it was targeting areas "used as a base by terrorists in their attacks on our country." Turkey said it was seeking to prevent attacks, secure its southern border and "destroy terrorism at its source." The airstrikes came after a bomb rocked a bustling avenue in the heart of Istanbul on November 13, killing six people and

wounding over 80 others. Turkish authorities blamed the attack on the PKK and its Syrian affiliate the YPG. The Kurdish militant groups have, however, have denied involvement. Ankara and Washington both consider the PKK a terror group, but disagree on the status of the YPG. Under the banner of the Syrian Democratic Forces, the YPG has been allied with the US in the fight against the Islamic State group in Syria.

The PKK has fought an armed insurgency in Turkey since 1984. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people since then. Following the strikes, the Defense Ministry posted a photo of an F-16 fighter plane with the phrase, "Payback time! The scoundrels are being held to account for their treacherous attacks." The DHA news agency reported that F-16s took off from airfields in Malatya and Diyarbakir in southern Turkey while drones were launched from Batman. Defense Minister Hulusi Akar oversaw the airstrikes from an operations center and congratulated pilots and ground staff. "Our aim is

to ensure the security of our 85 million citizens and our borders and to retaliate for any treacherous attack on our country," he said, according to a ministry statement.

Akar added: "Shelters, bunkers, caves, tunnels and warehouses belonging to terrorists were destroyed with great success. ... The so-called headquarters of the terrorist organization were also hit and destroyed with direct hits." The airstrikes targeted Kobani, a strategic Kurdish-majority Syrian town near the Turkish border that Ankara had previously attempted to overtake in its plans to establish a "safe zone" along northern Syria. Syrian Democratic Forces spokesperson Farhad Shami in a tweet added that two villages heavily populated with displaced people were under Turkish bombardment. He said the strikes had resulted in "deaths and injuries." Local media reported that the northern Iraqi city of Sinjar was also targeted. Syrian opposition media reported that the Turkish airstrikes targeted Kurdish-led SDF positions. (AP)

## UN climate deal: Calamity cash, but no new emissions cuts

**SHARM EL-SHEIKH, NOV 20** --/ For the first time, the nations of the world decided to help pay for the damage an overheating world is inflicting on poor countries, but they finished marathon climate talks on Sunday without further addressing the root cause of those disasters - the burning of fossil fuels.

The deal, gavelled around dawn in this Egyptian Red Sea resort city, establishes a fund for what negotiators call loss and damage. It is a big win for poorer nations which have long called for cash - sometimes viewed as reparations - because they are often the victims of climate-worsened floods, droughts, heat waves, famines and storms despite having contributed little to the pollution that heats up the globe. It is also long been called an issue of equity for nations hit by weather extremes and small island states that face an existential threat from rising seas. "Three long decades and we have finally delivered climate justice," said Seve Paeniu, the finance minister of Tuvalu. "We have finally responded to the call of

hundreds of millions of people across the world to help them address loss and damage." Pakistan's environment minister, Sherry Rehman, said the establishment of the fund "is not about dispensing charity". "It is clearly a down payment on the longer investment in our joint futures," she said, speaking for a coalition of the world's poorest nations. Antigua and Barbuda's Molwyn Joseph, who chairs the organisation of small island states, described the agreement as a "win for our entire world". "We have shown those who have felt neglected that we hear you, we see you, and we are giving you the respect and care you deserve," he said.

The deal followed a game of climate change chicken over fossil fuels. Early Sunday morning, delegates approved the compensation fund but had not dealt with the contentious issues of an overall temperature goal, emissions cutting and the desire to target all fossil fuels for phase down. Through the wee hours of the night, the European Union and

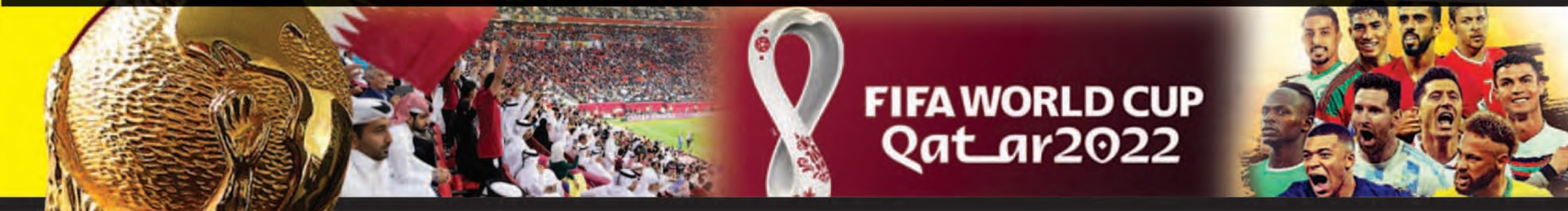
other nations fought back what they considered backsliding in the Egyptian presidency's overarching cover agreement and threatened to scuttle the rest of the process. The package was revised again, removing most of the elements Europeans had objected to but added none of the heightened ambition they were hoping for. "What we have in front of us is not enough of a step forward for people and planet," a disappointed Frans Timmermans, executive vice president of the European Union, told his fellow negotiators. "It does not bring enough added efforts from major emitters to increase and accelerate their emissions cuts. "We have all fallen short in actions to avoid and minimise loss and damage," Timmermans said. "We should have done much more."

Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock likewise voiced frustration. "It is more than frustrating to see overdue steps on mitigation and the phase-out of fossil energies being stonewalled by a number of large emitters and oil producers," she said. The agreement includes a veiled

reference to the benefits of natural gas as low emission energy, despite many nations calling for a phase down of natural gas, which does contribute to climate change. While the new agreement doesn't ratchet up calls for reducing emissions, it does retain language to keep alive the global goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). The Egyptian presidency kept offering proposals that harkened back to 2015 Paris language which also mentioned a looser goal of 2 degrees.

The world has already warmed 1.1 degrees (2 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times. Nor does the deal expand on last year's call to phase down global use of "unabated coal" even though India and other countries pushed to include oil and natural gas in language from Glasgow. That too was the subject of last minute debate, especially upsetting Europeans. Last year's climate talks president chided the summit leadership for knocking down his efforts to do more to cut emissions with a forceful listing of what was not done. (AP)





**TODAY'S MATCH**  
**Group B: England vs Iran (Khalifa International Stadium, 6:30 PM IST)**  
**Group A: Senegal vs Netherlands (Al Thumama Stadium, 9:30 PM IST)**  
**Group B: USA vs Wales (Ahmed bin Ali Stadium, 12:30 AM IST)**

# Major setback for France as Benzema ruled out of tournament

## Pogba, Kante, Nkunku already out



France striker Karim Benzema during training on Saturday at Al Sadd SC Stadium in Doha

DOHA, NOV 20 /--/ France's hopes of successfully defending the World Cup were dealt a huge blow late on Saturday as Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema was ruled out of the tournament in Qatar with an injured left thigh.

The 34-year-old Real Madrid striker had been struggling with the injury for some time and had played less than half an hour of football in his club's last six games before the World Cup. On Saturday, he took part in full training for the first time since the World Cup holders gathered last week ahead of the tournament. He was forced to withdraw from the session at the home stadium of Qatari champions Al Sadd with the injury and was taken for tests. The French Football Federation (FFF) later said in a statement that the injury "will require a recovery period of three weeks", ruling out any prospect of him being fully fit for the tournament which finishes on December 18. "I am extremely sad for Karim, for whom this World Cup was a major objective," France coach Didier Deschamps was quoted as saying in the FFF statement. "Despite this new blow for the France team I have full faith in my squad. We will do all we can to rise to the huge challenge that awaits us." The 36-year-old Olivier Giroud is set to benefit from Benzema's absence by coming into the France attack alongside Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann. However, under FIFA rules Deschamps can still call up a replacement for an injured player until Monday, on the eve of their first game. France begin their defence of the trophy on Tuesday, when they take on Australia in Al Wakrah. They will also play Denmark and Tunisia in Group D as they aim to become the first team since Brazil in 1962 to retain

the World Cup. Benzema's injury is a major blow for Deschamps, whose preparations for the tournament had already been hampered by fitness problems. France have come to Qatar without the key duo of Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante, their starting midfield pairing from the successful 2018 World Cup campaign, who were both ruled out due to injury before Deschamps named his squad. Back-up goalkeeper Mike Maignan and centre-back Presnel Kimpembe also withdrew before RB Leipzig forward Christopher Nkunku had to pull out after suffering a knee injury in France's final training session before departing for Qatar. Nkunku was replaced in the squad by Eintracht Frankfurt forward Randal Kolo Muani. Manchester United defender Raphael Varane has also been struggling to prove his fitness since coming off in tears with a leg injury in a game against Chelsea on October 22. Benzema, who will turn 35 next month, had targeted the World Cup to cap off a remarkable career renaissance. He won the Ballon d'Or after scoring 44 goals in 46 games for Real Madrid last season as the Spanish club won the Champions League and La Liga. Benzema had previously been frozen out of the France team for five-and-a-half years because of his involvement in a blackmail scandal over a sex tape involving his former teammate Mathieu Valbuena. That saw him miss France's victorious 2018 World Cup campaign and led to him being handed a one-year suspended prison sentence as well as a fine of 75,000 euros. On winning the Ballon d'Or he said: "There are things that are still left to be done. I hope to be in the squad for Qatar, to go to the World Cup and do everything to win it." (AFP)

## GAME NOTES

### Romelu Lukaku to miss Belgium's first two games, says report

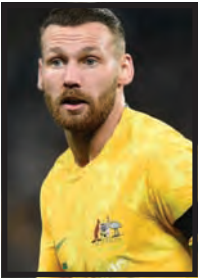
DOHA, NOV 20 /--/ Romelu Lukaku will not play for Belgium at the World Cup until at least their final Group F match against Croatia, a team source told AFP on Sunday.

The forward did not take part in the Red Devils' first proper training session since they arrived in Qatar on Friday as he continues his recovery from a hamstring injury. Lukaku is Belgium's all-time top scorer with 68 goals in 102 appearances and was called up to their World Cup squad despite coach Roberto Martinez admitting he was not fully fit. The 29-year-old has endured a difficult past 18 months, moving back to Inter Milan on loan after a dismal season with Chelsea. However, he has played just twice for Inter since August after first picking up the injury in a 3-1 defeat at Lazio. He returned to action in style last month, scoring in a 4-0 win against Viktoria Plzen that ensured Inter's passage to the last 16 of the Champions League but he then injured his hamstring again a few days later. FIFA World Cup: Controversies and bizarre build-up as Qatar 2022 gets underway Belgium begin their World Cup campaign on Wednesday against Canada and also take on Morocco before meeting 2018 World Cup finalists Croatia at the start of next month. (AFP)



### Australia's Martin Boyle Out of World Cup With Knee Injury

DUBAI, NOV 20 /--/ Australia winger Martin Boyle was ruled out of the World Cup on Sunday with a knee injury and replaced in the squad by Marco Tilio. Scotland-born Boyle has scored five times in 12 games this season for Scottish Premiership side Hibs but the 29-year-old has been sidelined since hurting his knee in late October. "We all feel for Martin and it is a cruel blow for him on the eve of the World Cup," Australia coach Graham Arnold said in a team statement. "He has been an integral part of our journey to get to Qatar and we thank him for everything he has given the Socceroos during this campaign." His place in Qatar will be taken by Melbourne City FC winger Tilio, who has five caps and has been in Doha since Tuesday. "Marco has done everything that has been asked of him to be ready for this tournament," said Arnold. "He is familiar with the national team set-up and we are looking forward to what he can bring to our squad." (AFP)



### FIFA World Cup: Teams set to defy FIFA with 'OneLove' armbands

DOHA, NOV 20 /--/ FIFA proposed a series of alternative armbands featuring different social campaigns on Saturday in response to plans by European teams to wear "OneLove" rainbow armbands at the Qatar World Cup. European teams launched the "OneLove" initiative in response to the treatment of LGBTQ communities in Qatar, where homosexuality is illegal. FIFA though has requested that all captains wear a different armband on each match day, promoting social messages such as "Football unites the world" and "Share the meal" in a United Nations-backed campaign. "Each round of matches will be associated with its own dedicated campaign designed to maximise reach and impact," FIFA said in a statement. The move puts football's world governing body on a potential collision course with teams such as Germany, whose captain Manuel Neuer said he would still wear a "OneLove" armband to promote diversity and inclusion. "Other European nations are wearing (the armband) and it is good we are doing it together," Neuer said on Saturday. Denmark's Christian Eriksen said his country's captain Simon Kjaer would be wearing the rainbow armband too, regardless of any disciplinary action taken by FIFA. (PTI)

## The opening ceremony took place the Al Bayt Stadium, AlKhorin Qata

### Enner Valencia strikes again as Ecuador Go 2-0 up vs Qatar



DOHA, NOV 20 /--/ Ecuador are in control of the proceedings against Qatar in the opening match of the FIFA World Cup at the Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khol. Ecuador captain Enner Valencia have found the net thrice, but his first strike was ruled out. Valencia scored his second goal of the match after heading in from Angelo Preciado's

cross. Valencia had earlier made it 1-0 after converting a penalty, which had won in the 14th minute. Earlier, Valencia had put Ecuador in front inside the first three minutes, but his happiness was cut short as VAR came to Qatar's rescue. Ecuador are at the 44th spot in the FIFA rankings while hosts Qatar are at the 50th spot.

## Sensational Suryakumar hits another T20I, continues stellar run

MOUNT MAUNGANUI, NOV 20 /--/ Suryakumar Yadav on Sunday became only the second Indian to hit two hundreds in a calendar year, continuing his rich vein of form in the shortest format of the game. Skipper Rohit Sharma (4) is the only other Indian batter to score two T20I centuries in a calendar year in 2018. With the feat Suryakumar also joins Rohit, opener KL Rahul (2) as the only other Indian to have two or more T20I hundred. While Suryakumar's second T20 ton came against New Zealand, he had scored his maiden hundred in July against England. "In T20 cricket, a hundred is always special," Suryakumar told the broadcasters after India's innings on Sunday. "I'm enjoying batting this way, I've been doing the same thing in the nets, all practice sessions and going out (to the middle), all these things happening, I'm very happy with that." Suryakumar reached the three-figure mark with back-to-back boundaries off Lockie Ferguson in the 19th over. He remained unbeaten on 111. Since making his T20I debut in March last year, Suryakumar has been in scintillating form, collecting over 1300 runs at an average of 45.00 in 41 matches. His strike rate of 181.64 is the highest by any batter in the format. He has cemented his place in the Indian middle-order and seems to be in the form of his life over the past year. His phenomenal ability to play unconventional shots all around the ground has earned him the tag of 'Mr 360'. One such shot had come in the T20 World Cup Super 12 match against Zimbabwe. Going down on one knee, Suryakumar

had picked up a Richard Ngarava full toss from outside the off stump and scooped it on the right of fine leg for an unthinkable six. He dazzled in his maiden T20 World Cup plundering 239 runs in six innings at a brilliant strike rate of a shade under 190 to end the tournament as the third highest-run getter. He scored fifties in crucial games against South Africa, Zimbabwe and Netherlands. (PTI)



Suryakumar Yadav takes a behind-the-wicket selfie with fans

## Manuel Neuer to defy FIFA on captains' armbands

DOHA, NOV 20 /--/ Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is set to defy FIFA's campaign for captains to wear only official armbands with selected slogans at World Cup games. "Yes," the veteran goalkeeper said when asked at the German training camp about overriding a new FIFA project backed by United Nations agencies. Denmark is also not backing down, playmaker Christian Eriksen said Saturday. The launch a day before the opening World Cup match seemed designed to supplant a pledge by European teams to wear their own armbands as part of a Netherlands-led anti-discrimination

campaign drawing attention to host nation Qatar's laws and record on human rights issues. World Cup rules require that equipment such as captains' armbands must be authorized and provided by FIFA, but Neuer said he will wear the "OneLove" design even if it comes with a fine. "It's good that we have the power with other nations in western Europe," Neuer said. Although Germany does not play until Wednesday, against Japan, three teams that joined the "One Love" campaign in September will play on Monday: England, the Netherlands and Wales. FIFA had not directly addressed the Europeans' request several weeks



ago for permission to wear the heart-shaped, multi-colored logo, then unveiled its proposal on Saturday. The FIFA choice of slogans for group games include "SaveThePlanet," "ProtectChildren" and "ShareTheMeal." "These campaigns have taken into account feedback received from our member associations who, like FIFA, are committed to using the power of football to effect positive change around the world," the soccer body said. The slogan "NoDiscrimination" — the only one that aligns with the European teams' wish — is scheduled to appear at the quarterfinal stage. "Obviously the

short notice is surprising," Germany team director Oliver Bierhoff said within two hours of the announcement. "It looks as if FIFA doesn't have a clear stance." Denmark starts on Tuesday against Tunisia and captain Simon Kjaer should be wearing the "One Love" armband. "What the consequences will be, I don't know," Eriksen said at a news conference where he wore a plain black T-shirt for practice. Denmark has the option of playing in a black game jersey, the color of mourning for migrant workers who died helping build infrastructure needed for hosting the tournament. (AFP)