

# THE ECHO OF INDIA

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## DIGITAL INDIA INITIATIVES

### Telecom dept to connect all corners in ANI with 4G services by 2023



ROOPA LALL

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/-/** At a time when 5G services have been launched in some selected States of the country, the telecom department of A&N region has not been able to connect each and every village in the islands with 4G services. Though, the Telecom department has a plan to take the mobile network by providing 4G services to each and every village of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands by December 2023 that are still unconnected, the department has planned big to make the ambitious Digital India programme more

inclusive. According to Telecom dept sources, BSNL presently has about 175 towers installed across the islands, of which only 93 towers are providing 4G services. By August 2022, about 256 villages of rural areas in the islands have been connected with mobile connectivity. Presently, BSNL has been providing both 3G and 4G services in the islands. During August, BSNL was awarded the work to cover 256 villages in the islands with 4G services which are targeted to be completed by December 2023. The present 4G operated by BSNL in 93 towers in A&N Islands are limited to 4G (using existing 3G spectrum). While 63 towers in rural areas of Andaman & Nicobar

Islands will be converted to provide 4G services, another 63 new 4G towers will be installed in the months ahead. The land handing over process for installation of the towers by the UT administration is under process. However, delays can be witnessed in handing over land that comes under the forest areas. Once all the towers are equipped to provide 4G services, it will be easy for BSNL to upgrade it to 5G. Under the Digital India initiative, the Telecom department is committed to connect every nook and corner of the Islands with broadband Internet, and deliver services electronically through mobile phones.



*The Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai called on Lt Governor, Admiral D K Joshi, (Retd.) at Raj Niwas on Monday. During the meeting, they discussed the issue of expediting the execution of mega infrastructure projects worth ₹ 75,000/- crores in A&N Islands, including International Container Transhipment Terminal and new Green Field Airport, consequent to the final clearance accorded by Government of India. Identification of additional projects for the follow-up phases was also discussed.*

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



### Pankh NGO inspires disabled children celebrate their unique talents

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/-/** To mark the International Day of person with special ability, Pankh Andaman NGO in collaboration with the Social Welfare department has initiated Khushi Ka Utsav in which tailoring and

beautician training classes by Anita's has been started for the women with special abilities. The aim is to make the women feel empowered and become the backbone of their families. The women will also be stitching cloth bags and selling the products at shops. If anyone is interested please contact the following contact no. 94742 08288. This programme was graced by Smt. Ilti Agarwal, Director of Social Welfare and Swami Shudhanandji, Chinmaya Mission.

Pankh also celebrated this day with the inmates of

Farangunj Old Age Home by donating microwave and few gifts and also arranged for a musical programme for them with pop and show in the presence of Secretary Social Welfare, Smt. Smita R as the chief guest. Probationary Officer, Mr. AK Biswas, Mrs. Sampa Banerjee, Member Child Tight Commission, Mrs. Komal Anand, Founder President Pankh and other members were also present.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities is an international observance promoted by the United Nations since 1992. It has been observed with varying degrees of success around the globe.

## MP donates freezer box to Chowra from MPLADS fund

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/-/** The Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma has handed over a dead body freezer box to the Tribal Council of Chowra from MPLADS fund. Mr. Sharma observed that in case of any death in Chowra Island, the tribal brothers and sisters had to face a lot of difficulties in preserving the body till arrival of family members of the deceased from other islands. In order to address this problem, the Member of Parliament handed over the freezer box to the Chief Captain of Tribal Council of Chowra Island, Mr. Johnathan in presence of other captains.



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# Defamation complaint: Bombay HC extends relief to Rahul Gandhi from appearance before local court till Jan 25

MUMBAI, DEC 5 /--/ The Bombay High Court on Monday extended till January 25, 2023 the relief granted to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi from appearance before a local court in a defamation complaint pertaining to his alleged remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A single bench of Justice Amit Borkar adjourned hearing till January 20, 2023 on the plea filed by Gandhi challenging the summons issued to him by the local court. "The interim relief granted earlier shall continue till January 25, 2023," Justice Borkar said. Gandhi's advocate Sudeep Pasbola told the court this is a case where a person is claiming to be defamed by alleged comments made on the

prime minister. Justice Borkar said the court would hear the matter on January 20. The local court had directed Gandhi to appear before it in a defamation complaint filed by one Mahesh Shrishrimal, claiming to be a BJP party worker. The complaint had been filed for Gandhi's "commander-in-thief" remark against Prime Minister Modi in 2018 over the Rafale fighter jet deal. Gandhi later approached the high court challenging the summons issued to him. The HC in November 2021 directed the magistrate to defer hearing on the defamation complaint which meant the Congress leader would not be required to appear before the magistrate. The magistrate had

initiated criminal proceedings against Gandhi in August 2019. However, the Congress leader in his petition before the HC claimed he learnt about the same only in July 2021. The complainant's allegation was that in September 2018, Gandhi conducted a rally in Rajasthan where he made defamatory statements against Modi. Due to the said defamatory statement, Modi was allegedly trolled on media by various news channels and social media platforms. As per the complaint, four days later, Gandhi purportedly commented on a video and posted on his personal Twitter account "The sad truth about India's commander in thief." The complainant alleged Gandhi was making "defamatory statements

against Modi and by calling him 'Commander in Thief' made a direct allegation of theft against all members of the BJP and Indian citizens connected to Modi". Gandhi stated in his petition, filed through advocate Kushal Mor, that the instant complaint was a classic example of a frivolous and vexatious litigation motivated by the sole purpose of furthering the complainant's latent political agenda. He also said the complainant had no locus to file the complaint since defamation can be initiated only by the person who has been allegedly defamed. The Congress leader had sought for quashing the magistrate's order and a stay on the proceedings pending hearing of the petition. (PTI)



Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman lighting the lamp at the 65th Foundation Day of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), in New Delhi

## J&K: Fear among Kashmiri Pandits palpable after fresh terror threat

JAMMU, DEC 5 /--/ Kashmiri Pandits working in the Valley are in a state of panic after a terrorist group released a hit list of 56 employees from the community. In the aftermath of targeted killings by terrorists, several Kashmiri Pandits employed in the Valley under the Prime Minister's Rehabilitation Package (PMRP) have shifted to Jammu and are on a protest for over 200 days demanding relocation. They have been camping outside the rehabilitation commissioner's office here. Recently, a blog linked to The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, published a list of 56 Kashmiri Pandit employees under PMRP, and warned of mounting attacks on them. "Terror groups have previously sent us threat letters, but this time, the warning is accompanied by a list of employees. This has created a fear not only among the protesting employees but the entire community," Ranjan Zutshi, one of the protesting employees, told PTI on Monday. He said the latest warning cannot be dismissed as a propaganda as "they (terrorists) have all relevant information about the employees". Demanding a probe into the leak of names to terrorists, Zutshi said it shows the terror ecosytem is deep-rooted and needs to be dismantled by taking stern action against overground supporters. "The government must find out who leaked such vital information to terrorists. The police should take such things seriously and ensure the safety of those employees who are still stationed in the Valley," he said.

Another employee Rakesh Kumar said their demands for the past 208 days have gone unanswered. "The government is stopping our salaries and using pressure tactics to force us to move back to our place of postings in the Valley. How can we even think of returning in such a situation?" he said. Kumar said the Kashmiri Pandits have decided not to rejoin their duties in the Valley as it is directly related to their "life and death". "We can work only if we are alive...the government should immediately relocate us to save our families who are suffering immensely, both mentally as well as financially," he said. (PTI)

## Forced religious conversion against Constitution: SC

NEW DELHI, DEC 5 /--/ Reaffirming that forced religious conversion is a "serious issue", the Supreme Court said on Monday it is against the Constitution. The court was hearing a plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeking direction to the Centre and states to take stringent steps to control fraudulent religious conversion by "intimidation, threatening, deceivingly luring through gifts and monetary benefits". The Centre told the court it is collecting information from states on religious conversion through such means. Appearing before a bench of Justices M R Shah and C T Ravikumar, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sought time to furnish detailed information on the issue. "We are gathering information from the states. Give us a week's time," Mehta said. He said statutory the regime will determine whether a person is converting due to some change in belief. The top court acknowledged forced religious conversion is a very serious matter. When a lawyer questioned the maintainability of the plea, the bench said, "Do not be so technical. We are here to find a solution. We are here for a cause. We are here to set things right. If the purpose of the charity is good then it is welcome but what is required to be considered is the intention. Do not take it as adversarial. It is a very serious issue. Ultimately it is against our Constitution. When everyone stays in India, they have to act per the culture of India," the bench observed. The apex court will now take up the matter on December 12. Forced religious conversion may pose a danger to national security and impinge on religious freedom of citizens, the top court had said recently, and asked the Centre to step in and make sincere efforts to tackle the "very serious" issue. (PTI)

## DMK seeks review of EWS quota judgement, says it overrules larger 9-judge bench's 1992 Mandal verdict

NEW DELHI, DEC 5 /--/ Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK on Monday sought a review of the November 7 verdict of the Supreme Court which upheld 10 per cent reservation for the economically weaker sections (EWS) in educational institutions and government jobs that excluded the poor among the SC/ST/OBC categories, contending it "legitimises discrimination". It said there is an apparent error in the judgement as it directly overrules the landmark 1992 nine-judge Constitution bench verdict in the Indra Sawhney versus Union of India case, popularly referred to as the Mandal verdict". The DMK said all five judges on the Constitution bench which pronounced its verdict on November 7 upholding the EWS quota introduced in 2019, have answered that the 103rd Constitution Amendment cannot be said to breach the basic

structure of the Constitution and therefore it overruled the 1992 judgement, which a u t h o r i t a t i v e l y pronounced that reservation cannot be granted on the basis of economic criteria. The review plea said, "It is respectfully stated that this is error apparent on the face of the record since it directly overrules the judgement passed by the nine Judge Constitution Bench in Indra Sawhney versus Union of India 1992, which has a u t h o r i t a t i v e l y pronounced that reservations cannot be on the basis of the economic criteria and such interpretation was on the basis of Articles 14, 15(1) and 16(1), not articles 15(4) and 16(4) alone". The party said similarly, the majority opinions have committed an error apparent on the face of the record by answering issue 3 (Whether the 103rd Constitution

Amendment can be said to breach the basic structure of the Constitution in excluding the SEBCs/ OBCs/ SCs/ STs from the scope of EWS reservation) in favour of the Respondent-State. It said, "The majority opinion is contradictory - after going in depth into how poverty prevents access to education and employment, and the importance of alleviating the same, the majority judges have not given any justification for excluding ST, SC & OBCs from the EWS reservation other than to say that they have already been given reservations under Art 15(4) and 16(4)". It said this view of majority judges is "error apparent on the face of the record" since the reservations under Article 15(4) and 16(4) are on the basis of social backwardness and historic oppression. If the majority accepts that there can be a separate classification on economic criteria, social

backwardness cannot be used as exclusion for the poor among ST, SC and OBCs merely because they suffer "both backwardness", it said. The review plea said the November 7 judgment, if allowed to stand, conveys a strong message that the SC, ST & OBC's historic oppression of more than several hundred years, who have been prevented from having jobs and education and who have been kept away from mainstream, suffers from disqualification from getting economic reservation. "It is respectfully stated that none of the three opinions that constitute the majority judgement have considered the identity', width of power' and unguided power' tests that have been laid down by this Court to test c o n s t i t u t i o n a l amendments despite it being argued before this Court," it said. (PTI)

## On 1st day of Winter Session, UP Legislative Assembly pays tributes to Mulayam Singh Yadav

LUCKNOW, DEC 5 /--/ Members of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, including chief minister Yogi Adityanath, paid tributes to Mulayam Singh Yadav on the first day of the House's Winter Session. Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav, who served as chief minister for three consecutive terms, passed away on October 10 at the age of 83. With his death, an era in Indian politics has come to an end, Adityanath said. He came from a humble background, was down to earth and had vast experience and contributions to Indian politics. His achievements in the social and political fields have been extraordinary." The Samajwadi party patriarch's son and party president Akhilesh Yadav as well as party MLA Shivpal Singh Yadav were not present in the House due to voting in the Mainpuri Lok Sabha bypoll. Chief whip of the Samajwadi Party Manoj Pandey said, "An era of socialism has come to an end with the death of Mulayam Singh Yadav. Netaji's personality was multifaceted, extraordinary and vast. He worked to take forward and strengthen the socialist thinking and politics laid by the great leaders of socialist ideology." Mulayam Singh Yadav worked for the welfare of the people and the development of the state as a sensitive public representative, he said. Paying tribute to the former chief minister, Apna Dal leader Ashish Patel said that his death has created a void in Indian politics and socialist ideology. Rashtriya Lok Dal leader (RLD) Ajay Kumar said Mulayam Singh Yadav took forward the fight for socialism. Nishad Party member Sanjay Nishad, Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party leader Omprakash Rajbhar, Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhana Mishra, Jansatta Dal Loktantrik leader Raghuraj Pratap Singh alias Raja Bhaiya, Bahujan Samaj Party member Umashankar Singh, former Assembly Speaker Mata Prasad Pandey and SP member Mehboob Ali also paid tributes to Mulayam Singh Yadav. Mulayam Singh Yadav has been a member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative assembly 10 times and an MP on seven occasions. He was also the defence minister of the country. (PTI)

## Bharat Jodo Yatra in Rajasthan, CM Gehlot alleges media 'boycott'

JHALAWAR, DEC 5 /--/ Congress leader Rahul Gandhi began the Rajasthan leg of his Bharat Jodo Yatra from Jhalawar district on Monday, with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot in attendance. The 89th day of the yatra started from Kali Talai in Jhalrapatan, a rural area on the Rajasthan-Madhya Pradesh border. Gandhi set off the yatra at 6.10 am when the temperature was 13 degrees Celsius, but he was seemingly comfortable walking in a half sleeves T-shirt and trousers teamed with sports shoes, while the other leaders and workers were seen in jackets. The other notable leaders who accompanied Gandhi were AICC general secretary (organisation) KC

Venugopal, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee chief Govind Singh Dotasra, senior leader Bhanwar Jitendra Singh, and Food and Civil Supplies Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas. Addressing a press conference here, Gehlot lashed out at the mainstream national media, claiming they have "boycotted" the yatra as editors and owners were under pressure. Gehlot claimed the media has completely failed to fulfil their responsibility as the fourth pillar of democracy, and history will not forgive them for that. "Kaan khol kar sun lo national media wale bhi, state media wale bhi. Itihaas apko maaf nahi karega!" he said. ("Listen carefully...national and state media, history will not forgive you)."

As the Rajasthan chief minister launched his tirade against the media, All India Congress Committee general secretary (Communication) Jairam Ramesh intervened to defend the journalists present there, saying they should not be blamed as they have been doing their job properly. However, he also lamented the coverage of the yatra in the mainstream was not as per their expectations. The Rajasthan chief minister further said the Bharat Jodo Yatra was attracting the attention of "the whole world" and the youth associated with it would prove to be an asset for Rahul Gandhi. He was referring to the 10 yatri who have accompanied Gandhi from the beginning of the yatra on September 7. "This yatra is not only attracting the attention of

the country but the whole world. It is a big message for those countries where there is democracy," Gehlot said. For those where there is no democracy, Gandhi is the man walking the path of truth and non-violence, and urging people who believe in democracy to join the yatra, he said. In the course of his march, Gandhi waved at people who participated in it and interacted with about half-a-dozen children. He sipped his morning tea at a roadside dhaba. During the yatra, former MP Raghuvveer Meena felt uneasiness and was taken to the district hospital in Jhalawar in an ambulance. After covering about 14 km, the padayatra halted at Balliborda chauraha. It resumed after lunch from the Nahardi area around 3.30 pm. (PTI)

## Three villages boycott 2nd phase of Gujarat Assembly polls over unresolved water shortage issue

MEHSANA, DEC 5 /--/ At least 5,200 voters from three villages in Mehsana District of Gujarat on Monday boycotted the second and final phase of voting alleging the state government has failed to resolve their long-pending issues including water shortage. An official, however, said the villagers remained adamant on their stand despite the government having already accepted the main demand to fill up all the lakes in their villages with the Narmada water. This is the third year in a row that villagers from Varethha, Dalisana and Davol in Kheralu taluka refrained from exercising their franchise in different elections, the official said. Voting for the second and final phase was held across 93 constituencies in 14 districts of the north and central regions of Gujarat. Polling for 89 of the 182 seats was held on December 1. The counting of votes will be taken up on December 8. Residents of the three villages had not cast votes during the taluka, district, and village panchayat polls held earlier, the official said. The villagers had given a call to boycott voting in the Assembly elections alleging their demands were not resolved despite submitting multiple reminders to authorities. They had demanded the government fill up all the lakes in the three villages with the Narmada water through a pipeline, and that adequate water is released from the Dharoi dam for agriculture. Nearly 5,200 voters of Varethha, Dalisana and Davol villages refrained from exercising their franchise on Monday during voting held between 8 am and 5 pm, the official said. District Collector Udit Agrawal said the villagers remained adamant despite the government having already accepted their main demand. "This is the third year of their poll boycott. I visited these villages a few months ago and tried to convince them (to vote). Though the government had already approved a project to fill up the lakes, no one from the village cast votes today," he said. Meanwhile, the local administration convinced voters from Bariyaf village in Becharaji taluka, also in Mehsana district, against boycotting the elections. The villagers had given a call to stay away from polling earlier over some pending issues, including water supply. "With our consistent efforts, residents of Bariyaf village finally withdrew their boycott call in the afternoon. The village saw nearly 50 per cent voter turnout till evening," said Agrawal, who is also the District Election Office. (PTI)

## India and Germany ink mobility pact, discuss key global challenges

NEW DELHI, DEC 5 /--/ India and Germany on Monday inked a mobility partnership pact and held comprehensive discussions on key global challenges including the Ukraine conflict, the situation in Afghanistan and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. At a media briefing after talks with his German counterpart Annalena Baerbock, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the mobility pact will make it easier for people to study, do

research and work in each other's country and is a strong signal for a more contemporary bilateral partnership. Jaishankar also strongly defended India's import of crude oil from Russia and noted that it is largely driven by market forces. From February to November, European Union has imported more fossil fuel from Russia than the next 10 countries combined, he said in a sharp retort to a question on why India has been procuring crude oil from Russia. The German

foreign minister arrived here this morning on a two-day visit to discuss ways to further expand bilateral cooperation in a range of areas including energy, trade, defence and security and climate change. At the joint media briefing, Jaishankar said that India's position on the Ukraine issue is clear that this is not an era of war and the conflict should be resolved through dialogue. The visiting German foreign minister described India as a role model for many

countries and noted that Berlin wants to bolster its security cooperation with New Delhi. Asked about challenges facing the region from China, Baerbock said there is a need to assess the threats while describing Beijing as a competitor and rival in many ways. "We now know what happens when a country becomes too dependent on another that doesn't share the same values," Baerbock said. Jaishankar said the situation in Afghanistan and cross-border terrorism

emanating from Pakistan figured in the talks. He asserted that there can't be talks with Pakistan if it continues cross-border terrorism. Earlier in a statement, the German foreign minister described India as Germany's "natural partner" and said that the country will have a decisive influence in shaping the international order in the 21st century. "The Indian government has set itself ambitious goals not only in the G20 but also at home for its own people. When it

comes to expanding renewable energies, India wants to push ahead with the energy transition more than before. Germany stands by India's side," she said. The dramatic effects of the climate crisis affect us all, destroying livelihoods in Europe as well as in India, the visiting German minister said. "That we want to strengthen our economic, climate and security policy cooperation with India beyond our strategic partnership, are not empty words," she stressed. (PTI)

## Vishal forenhancing pensions, allowances of old age, widow, destitute & disabled



**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/--/** Mr. Vishal Jolly, National Executive Member of BJP has demanded for increasing old age pension, widow pension, destitute allowance, and disability persons allowance, considering the prevailing cost price index of these Islands through a letter addressed to Chief Secretary, A & N Administration.

In his letter, Mr. Jolly mentioned that the Directorate of Social Welfare has been providing old age pension, widow pension, destitute allowance and disability allowance for the welfare of people under which several eligible needy people are availing these benefits. But, there is one factor which is quite important and requires positive consideration is that these pension & allowances are merely Rs. 2500/- which is quite less. He mentioned that the prevalent cost price

index of the Islands, due to its geographical isolation & distance is much more higher than other States and Union Territories and it has also been observed that the meagre amount of Rs. 2500/- is disbursed either in the second week or third week of the month which is extremely unfortunate and disheartening.

Further he also mentioned that islanders are largely dependent upon goods and products from other parts of our Country and consequently the prices gets escalated to such an extent that it is nearly impossible for any beneficiaries of the aforementioned pensions & allowances to manage themselves with a meager amount of Rs. 2500/- only. They are totally dependent upon these benefits and under no circumstances this amount would suffice the very objective of providing their basic needs.

Accordingly, he requested the Chief Secretary for considering the plight of these categories of people and increase these pension & allowances from Rs. 2500/- to Rs. 4000/- per head and ensured that these pensions & allowances are disbursed at least in the first or second day of each & every month, for the welfare of these beneficiaries.

## Waahid Events performs on SHG Utsav at Marina park



**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/--/** NABARD had organised a 'SHG Utsav' at Marina park on 3rd December 2022, where Waahid Events, a unit of BRW. Entertainments had provided its services. A large gathering of people visited the stalls & witnessed the cultural programmes which included classical welcome dance, a beautifully presented skit on financial Inclusion & Digital Banking for the awareness of the general public, followed by a powerful Live Orchestra Musical programme. Foreign tourists also enjoyed dancing with the renowned performer of the islands Waahid Shah. In his address, the GM. Nabard, Mr. H. Manoj praised the top class quality of the programmes & also presented an award to Mr. Shah & his unit for their excellent services yet again. Waahid also appealed to the populace to purchase & support the local vendors in order to support the efforts of NABARD in promoting the SHGs.

## Appeal for claiming dead body

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/--/** On 25TH November 2022, a FIR was registered at PS Humphrey Gunjon on finding a dead body of a deceased new born baby from the creek of Sippighat near SAI Boat house area.

Since then no family members/relatives have come forward to claim the body.

Further, the body of the deceased new born baby has been preserved at the cold mortuary of GB Pant Hospital. The family members of the baby are being requested to approach PS Humfrygunj and take over the deceased body from GB Pant Hospital.



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## Bairagi attends National office bearers meeting at New Delhi



**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/--/** Mr. Ajoy Bairagi, State BJP President is at New Delhi to attend the National Office Bearers meeting at party Headquarters at New Delhi. The two-days meeting was inaugurated on Monday at BJP

Headquarters and will be attended by the Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, Mr. J P Nadda, National BJP President, along with National office bearers of the party, in-charge and co-in-charge of all the States.

## 3-months short term training by Industries dept

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/--/** Under skill development initiatives, the Directorate of Industries, A & N Administration will be organizing 3 months short term training. Interested applicants, unemployed youth / SHGs and other needy persons may apply their candidature in the

prescribed format with necessary documents. The application form can be obtained from the Development Section of the Directorate of Industries. The training for various trades like basic carpentry and wooden handicraft, cane & bamboo handicrafts and general engineering (basic

welding, spray painting, smithy & sheet metal will be conducted at the Directorate of Industries for a period of three months. Last date for receipt of application is Dec.12, 2022. The date of commencement of training is Dec.15, 2022.

Interested applicants can contact and apply directly to the Development Section at Directorate of Industries, Port Blair. The essential documents to be furnished (self-attested) are proof of date of birth, educational qualification certificates, copy of local certificate, 1 passport size photograph and proof of Aadhaar copy.

For more details, one may contact Directorate of Industries, Port Blair over Phone nos. 03192-234360 / 232771, Mobile No. : 9933295538, 9474285743, 9434272771, 9474253065.

## Lecture sessions on IHub Data & Solar Power Components

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/--/** A special lecture session was held on 28th Nov 2022, in DBRAIT as part of Industry Institute Interaction (III) program where Dr. BapiRaju, faculty from the Director, Indisolard Products interacted with students on the topic "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly of Solar Energy. Students from Electrical and Mechanical Engineering department along with faculties attended the special lecture sessions. As part of training and placement initiatives the institute organizes such Industry Institute Interaction (III) sessions to orient students about the future skills and requirements of industry.

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Aberdeen Bazar, Port Blair

## Padho Pardesh-scheme of interest subsidy on educational loans for overseas studies for students of minority communities

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/--/** The Ministry of Minority Affairs, GoI is implementing Padho Pardesh- Scheme of interest subsidy on educational loans for overseas studies for the students belonging to Minority Communities. The objective of the scheme is to award interest subsidy to meritorious students belonging to economically weaker sections of notified minority communities so as to provide them better opportunities for higher education abroad and enhance their employability. The eligibility criteria for availing the scheme is that the student should have secured admission in the approved courses at Masters, M.Phil or Ph.D levels abroad for the courses viz. Arts/Humanities/ Social Sciences, Commerce, Pure Sciences, Engineering, Biotechnology / Genetic Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Nano-technology, Marine Engineering, Petro-chemical Engineering, Plastic Technology, Cryogenic Engineering, Mechatronics, Automation Robotics including Artificial Intelligence, Laser

Technology, Low Temperature Thermal Dynamics, Optometry, Art Restoration Technology, Dock and Harbour Engineering, Imaging System Technology, Composite Materials Engineering including Decentralized Power Distribution (for Solar Heat) system, Energy Storage Engineering, Energy Conservation, Energy Efficient Habitat, Packaging Engineering/Technology, Nuclear Engineering, Information Technology including Computer Engineering, Software, Quality Assurance, Networking/ Connectivity Engineering, Communication system under Hazardous or Post-disaster conditions, Multimedia Communication, Industrial Safety Engineering, Agriculture & Agro Technology, Agronomy, Medical, Floriculture & Landscaping, Food Sciences & Technology, Forestry & Natural Resources, Horticulture, Plant Pathology, Energy Studies, Farm Power & Machinery, Veterinary Sciences, Soil & Water Management, Plant Breeding & Genetics, Small-scale Rural Technology,

Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences, M.B.A, M.C.A, any other Subject.

He/ she should have availed a loan from a scheduled bank under the Education Loan Scheme of the Indian Banks Association (IBA) for the purpose. Students should apply for benefits under the scheme during the 1st year itself of the course. Fresh applications received during 2nd year or subsequent years will not be accepted in any case. Preference will be given to those applications which are covered under lower rate of interest by various banks of each State/UT to their quota. Payment of financial benefit may be linked with Aadhar Number if available. For availing the scheme, the total income from all sources of the employed candidate or his/her parents/guardians in case of unemployed candidate shall not exceed Rs. 6.00 lakh per annum. Income certificates issued by the competent authority in the State/ Union Territory should be submitted in support of income shown by a candidate. The detailed guidelines of the scheme are available on the website [www.minorityaffairs.gov.in](http://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in).

## MV Swaraj Dweep sailing to Chennai postponed

**PORT BLAIR, DEC 5/--/** In view of weather advisory issued by IMD about the formation of Low Pressure Area over Southeast Bay of Bengal and South Andaman Sea and its likely to intensify into a Cyclonic Storm and reach Southwest Bay of Bengal near north Tamil Nadu coasts on 8th December, this Directorate keeping in view the safety of the passengers and the vessel, the scheduled sailing programme of MV

Swaraj Dweep for Chennai on 06.12.2022 from Port Blair (under voyage No. 1022) has been postponed. The vessel will now sail for Chennai on 08.12.2022 (Sun) at 1000 Hrs instead of 06.12.2022 from Haddo Wharf.

Passengers can also get update/status from the Information Counter at Phoenix Bay by using the Number 03192-245555/ 232714 & TOLL FREE NUMBER 18003452714.

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*It is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our lives that we must draw our strength to live and our reasons for living*  
**Simone de Beauvoir**

### Prez concerned over jail overcrowding

President Draupadi Murmu’s recent call to the government and the judiciary to address the issue of overcrowding of prisons is a welcome intervention. Indian jails are becoming increasingly overcrowded, creating problems of hygiene, sanitation, management and discipline. According to the National Crime Records Bureau report, the prison capacity has increased from 3.32 lakh to 4.25 lakh in the last decade, a growth of 27%, while the number of prisoners has increased from 3.7 lakh to 5.54 lakh in the same period. This imbalance has caused the rate to increase from 112% to 130% over the past decade. Statistics also show that Indian jails have reached an explosive state, battling with the crowd of prisoners. In the latest report on the condition of the prisons of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), it was said that as of 31 December 2021, in the country’s total 1,319 jails, on an average, 130 prisoners were living in the designated place for every 100 prisoners. The cramped conditions in jails militate against prisoners’ right to good health and dignity. This needs serious consideration as part of the broader idea of prison reforms.

According to Prison Statistics India 2021, a report published by the Ministry of Home Affairs, between 2016 and 2021, the number of convicts in jails decreased by 9.5% whereas the number of undertrial inmates increased by 45.8%. It clearly indicates a deeper problem with the country’s justice system. Ideally, a prosperous and progressive society should not build new prisons. Rather it should close down the old ones. With three out of four prisoners being undertrials, the problem of overcrowding of prisons essentially boils down to how the undertrials are treated. As of December 31, 2021, around 80% of prisoners were confined for periods up to a year. The MHA report states that an overwhelming 95% of undertrials released in 2021 were granted bail by courts while a mere 1.6% were released on acquittal by court. As the number of prisoners increases and there is no additional space available to house them, prisons become overcrowded. There has been an increase in the number of people placed under preventive detention. Unfortunately, a majority of undertrials, languishing in jails for years, are so poor that they cannot afford to seek bail. The sub-human conditions in several prisons across the country often drive many undertrials to commit suicide. About 1,000 prisoners die in custody every year, with 90% of them being undertrials.

Building more prisons is obviously not the solution. The Supreme Court recently asked the government to think ‘out of the box’ and consider a one-time measure to release prisoners in certain cases on the occasion of the 75th year of Independence. The key solution lies in tackling the cause, which is the indiscriminate arrest of individuals. Identifying those who cannot afford bail, even when available, is also crucial. Lawmakers too must urgently respond to this crisis. The abysmally low rate of conviction in criminal cases appears to weigh on the mind of the magistrates while dealing with bail applications and in most cases, the bail pleas are rejected. It must, however, be pointed out that bail is a fundamental aspect of any criminal justice system and the practice of bail grew out of the need to safeguard the fundamental right to liberty. In fact, bail is a rule and jail an exception. The apex court had rightly pointed out that the culture of too many arrests, especially for non-cognisable offences, is unwarranted and emphasised that even for cognisable offences, arrest should not be mandatory. In a country where inordinate delays in the justice delivery system force undertrials to languish in jails for years, the urgency of reforms need not be overemphasized.

# Indian Navy takes up initiatives for security in Indo-Pacific Region

## REFLEX ACTION

Ashok B Sharma

Indian Navy has become active in the Indo-Pacific Region following government’s focus in the region with emphasis on its Act East Policy. It convened a three-day Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2022 (IPRD 2022) in New Delhi from November 23, this year, in which there were participants from stakeholders in the region. It dealt with all aspects of the Blue Economy.

The IPRD-2022, organised by the National Maritime Foundation (NMF) as the Indian Navy’s knowledge partner and was attended by over 800 participants, including delegates from twenty friendly foreign countries and international organisations. Based on the overarching theme of ‘Operationalising the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative’ (IPOI), the IPRD 2022 explored sub-themes that could provide a greater degree of specificity and traction to the seven ‘pillars’ or ‘spokes’ of the IPOI. The event witnessed active participation from senior officials from the Indian Armed Forces, Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, senior representatives from Indian industry, diplomatic representatives from missions in India, the academia and eminent scholars and experts from abroad. In addition, about 2000 uniformed personnel and veterans, eminent citizens and students from renowned universities in Delhi NCR attended the event over the three days. The IPRD was conducted in three thematic sessions, which focused on three specific ‘pillars’ or ‘spokes’ of the IPOI namely, “Trade, Connectivity and Maritime Transport”, “Capacity Building and Resource Sharing”, and “Maritime Resources”.

The first session was based on the theme: “Building Maritime Connectivity: Ports, Trade and Transport”. The session included a special address by Dr Sanjeev Ranjan, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, who outlined India’s approach in building maritime connectivity. Perspectives from the ASEAN, Australia, India and Sri Lanka were also discussed during the session. The next session was conducted on the theme “Capacity-Building and Capability Enhancement: Leveraging the Physical and Social Sciences” which commenced with a special address by Dr M Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India. Dr Ravichandran emphasised that science and scientific research is a key element of the architecture of

any ocean economy aspiring to be increasingly ‘Blue’, both at the national and regional level. He also laid stress upon the symbiotic relationship between the social and the physical sciences. The other speakers in the session presented views from the ASEAN, Israel, India, Japan and Chinese Taipei.

The final day of the IPRD comprised three sessions. In the first session, aptly termed the ‘Margdarshan’ session, The Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral R Hari Kumar, said that the IPRD represented the Samvad or ‘Dialogue’ aspect of the 5 Ss– Samman, Samvad, Sahyog, Shanti, and Samridhi as enunciated by Prime Minister Modi. He also reaffirmed the Indian Navy’s committed resolve in preserving the nation’s maritime interests adding that the IPRD was instrumental in evolving a shared approach towards regional maritime security. The Navy Chief said that the IPOI leveraged the uniting nature of the oceans through two key elements of ‘holistic approach’ and ‘inclusivity’.

Giving a succinct summation of the proceedings of the last two days, Admiral R Hari Kumar brought out the key issues that had been articulated by distinguished speakers, which included Union Minister Bhupender Yadav and Minister of State for Defence, Ajay Bhatt. He added that over the last two days, which witnessed deliberations by speakers from 17 countries and international organisations, there was a unanimous agreement that the Indo-Pacific was emerging as the economic and military centre of gravity in global affairs.

Invoking India’s rich maritime tradition and heritage, the Hon’ble minister emphasised the importance of the oceans for India’s growth, prosperity and security, as also for that of the Indo-Pacific. Rajnath Singh said that in today’s deeply interconnected world, security was a collective enterprise. Alluding to India’s faith in an elevated sense of shared security, he gave the example of the COVID-19 pandemic, which gave an opportunity to India to

demonstrate her concept of the world as an extended family, or Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, through Op SAMUDRA SETU and Vaccine Maitri initiative.

The Defence Minister said that in today’s complex geopolitical environment, national security could not be considered a zero-sum game, and that a ‘multi-aligned policy’ was the only pragmatic solution to global security concerns. In conclusion, the Hon’ble minister expressed his appreciation towards the Indian Navy and the National Maritime Foundation for organising the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue 2022. The Hon’ble Minister also released a book, published by the National Maritime Foundation, titled “Coastal Security Dimensions of Maritime Security”.

The final session commenced with the Valedictory Address, in which Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar (Retd), the National Maritime Security Coordinator, touched upon issues impacting maritime security in the Indo-Pacific such as inter-agency coordination, the importance of information sharing in enhancing Maritime Domain Awareness and also certain challenges such as problems in enforcement of rules and maritime disputes. The valedictory address was followed by release of a book entitled “Public International Maritime Law”, published by the National Maritime Foundation.

The IPRD 2022 culminated with the closing address by Vice Admiral SN Ghormade, the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, in which he recounted the diverse tapestry of the Indo-Pacific comprising the political, social, economic, and military aspects that emerged during the vibrant three-day discussions. Vice Admiral Ghormade laid stress upon the need to leverage the rich diversity within the Indo-Pacific and be more imaginative in arriving at solutions to problems affecting the Indo-Pacific. He also summarised the key takeaways of the event, such as a wider interpretation and understanding of the Blue Economy, and the fact that there were several issues of concern, such as the lack of proper management and regulation of fish stocks, which if unaddressed, could potentially emerge as disasters in the future. Concluding his remarks, Vice Admiral Ghormade acknowledged the effort by the National Maritime Foundation in organising the IPRD and also thanked all participants for their contribution towards an invigorating and intellectually stimulating dialogue. (IPA)



Classic cars are seen cruising on a street during the annual Christmas Classic Car Cruise event in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada

# Jharkhand CM ready to take BJP leadership head on

Last week Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren got a relief from the Supreme Court with it setting aside a high court order upholding the maintainability of a public interest litigation (PIL) for a probe against the chief minister in a mining lease case but Hemant is not content with this gain, instead he is contemplating to resort to political action against the manoeuvrings of the BJP which has been planning to implicate him in the case and make him lose membership of the assembly.

The Election Commission adopting a proactive stance and seeking Governor’s opinion whether he could be debarred from the membership of the house has rang the political death knell for Hemant. Sources close to Hemant confide that once the Gujarat assembly elections are over the BJP leadership, especially Amit Shah would once again launch his campaign to destabilise the Hemant led Mahagathbandhan government in Jharkhand. Apprehensions are also being expressed that he may be arrested in mining case.

Narendra Modi and Shah are desperate to have the state under their wings as with Hemant in power they are finding it tough to fulfil the aspirations and needs of their big business friends. Already some senior lawyers from Delhi visited the state and collected some material and info about Hemant and his government. The lawyers had also met the Governor of Jharkhand. JMM spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya had claimed: “We met him at Raj Bhavan and he assured us that he will take a stand within a few days.” But the meeting of Governor

with the JMM leaders could not take place. Incidentally governor Ramesh Bais on Friday left for New Delhi. This has triggered a wide speculation that the Union government may come up with some action against Hemant.

Hemant on his part has started broad basing his struggle against the BJP government and in his effort he is also planning to reach out to particularly the Adivasi people. As a first step in the direction to strengthen his relation with the Congress, Hemant has sent a group of its leaders to join the Congress’s Bharat Jodo Yatra in Madhya Pradesh. He has sent its state water resource minister and Garhwa MLA Mithilesh Thakur along with senior Congress leaders. JMM central general secretary and spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya said, “It was a spontaneous decision taken with the approval of the chief minister Hemant Soren. We wanted to show our solidarity with the issues raised during the Bharat Jodo Yatra.”

As a part of its outreach programme Hemant will pay its first interim relief to drought-affected farmers on December 29, which marks the completion of three years of the JMM-Congress-RJD government in the state. Sources in the chief minister’s secretariat in Ranchi said Hemant Soren would be doling out the interim assistance

of Rs 3,500 to some of the farmers at a function in the capital city on December 29. The government has asked the deputy commissioners to create maximum awareness among the farmers on a mission mode so that the maximum number of farmers can benefit from the interim relief on December 29. However, it would be an ongoing process and those who are left out can complete the verification and get the interim assistance even after December 29. This is a major move of the Hemant to reach out to the farmers.

Only during the last session of the assembly the Hemant government had announced increase in the reservation. In continuity of the move at the Tribal Development Council (TAC) at its meeting chaired by chief minister Hemant Soren in Ranchi last week made it clear that the ST reservation should be maintained in scheduled areas with a tribal majority population and in municipal areas too. With this civic body polls in Jharkhand, scheduled to be held in December, have been deferred to facilitate the implementation of the reservation decision.

Earlier the Governor Ramesh Bais had given consent to the proposal of the state election commission to hold elections in all the 48 municipal bodies of the state but now in the changed situation it would take

several months to decide the schedule for fresh elections. This step of the Government would provide ample opportunity to Hemant to consolidate his hold on the Tribal voters as it is expected that candidates pawing allegiance to JMM would sweep the polls. This will also deny the BJP the opportunity to use the local level bodies to manoeuvre the things according to their desire and political convenience which suits the interest of the big business houses in grabbing the land.

Hemant has also prioritised the welfare of the tribal girl child and ensure that they do not become the victims of the trafficking. Hemant has asked the officials to keep a strict watch on the traffickers. All the districts have been given strict instructions by the women and child development department to maintain vigil. Trafficking has been a very sensitive issue and has been causing much concern amongst the Adivasi people. In a statement he said; “Every measure is being taken to ensure the rehabilitation of girls rescued from the clutches of the traffickers. They are being provided Rs 2,000 per month as living expense until they attain 18 years of age. Apart from that, the girls are also entitled to free education, and vocational training which would help them become self-reliant”.

He emphasised that migrant labourers are being provided with welfare benefits and jobs in accordance with their skill sets. He also revealed that his government will come up with a detailed plan for rehabilitation of children who have lost their parents to COVID-19. (IPA)

## FOCUS

Arun Srivastava

**Conventional Crossword**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8						
9					10	11
			12			
13	14					
			15		16	17
18	19					
20				21	22	
			23			
24				25		

**ACROSS**

1 Story  
5 Likeness  
8 Keen insight  
9 Bill of fare  
10 Anger  
12 Open fireplace  
13 Country  
15 Wanders off  
18 Gem weights  
20 Period of time  
21 Conceal  
23 Stringed instrument  
24 Bird of prey  
25 Look after

**DOWN**

1 Stops up  
2 Top card  
3 Sudden forward movement  
4 Flightless bird  
5 Originates  
6 Greedy  
7 At all times  
11 Put trust in  
12 Gala  
14 Have on  
16 Nimble  
17 Use money  
18 Surrender  
19 Chimed  
21 Pungent  
22 Clamour

**SUDOKU:3717**

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

**Yesterday's Solution 3716**

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

**Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1725**

P	R	U	D	E			R
O	U	R		R	O	S	E
I	N	A	N	E	A	V	O
S	N	O	M	A	D	L	
E	U	N	I	T	R	O	C
S	O	S		T	O	M	E
W		R	E	M	I	T	U
C	E	D	E		I	D	I
	D	U	P	E	S		R
	N				E	W	E

**DISCLAIMER**

The views in the articles published here are absolutely the views of the author and The Echo of India does not stand liable for them.



Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman at the 65th Founding Day of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), in New Delhi---PIB

## Over 40 per cent of the total inmates lodged in Himachal jails arrested in NDPS cases

SHIMLA, DEC 5 /--/ Drug abuse has become a major challenge in the hill state of Himachal Pradesh and over 40 per cent of the total inmates lodged in 14 prisons in the state have been booked in connection with drugs under NDPS Act.

The prisons in Himachal are overcrowded as 2,909 inmates are lodged against the capacity of 2,437 of which 68 per cent are under trial and 32 per cent are convicted. Out of the total 2,909 inmates 1,189 (40.8 per cent) were arrested in drug-related cases, officials said. A total of 7,942 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) cases were pending in the courts as on November 18, out of which 688 were pending for less than three months, 664 for three to six months, 935 for six months to one year, 953 for 12 months to 18 months, 1,110 for 18 months to two

years and 3,601 were pending for more than two years.

Over 40 per cent of the total inmates lodged in 14 prisons in the state have been booked in connection with drugs under NDPS Act, the officials said. As speedy trials would also help in decongesting the jails in the state, the Himachal Pradesh Police have implemented a 'Robust Trial Management' mechanism under which deposition by police officials and independent witnesses in the courts is being reviewed every week to ensure speedy trials in the NDPS cases.

Himachal police are the first in the country to start robust trial management and the police officers have been directed to depose on time to reduce the pendency of the NDPS cases. As many as 8,734 police personnel have been deposed from March 29, 2021, till

November 18, 2022, Himachal DGP Sanjay Kundu told the PTI. Our initiative has started yielding results and 346 cases have been decided in the first ten months of 2022 till October 31 as compared to 202 in 2020 and 126 persons have been convicted in NDPS cases in the current year in comparison to 64 in 2020, he said.

The weekly and cumulative record of the number of Police Officers and witnesses deposed in the courts under the NDPS Act, pending deposition, processes served to witnesses and the number of cases in which charge sheet has been submitted by the police for trial is being maintained, to expedite trials. There are 2,307 drug trafficking operators (drug peddlers) in the state out of which 80 per cent (1,836) are from Himachal, 18 per cent

(422) are from other states and two per cent (49) are foreigners, according to the data procured from the police department. About 60 per cent of the drug peddlers in Himachal have taken to Chhitta (adulterated heroin) smuggling for pecuniary gains, adding a new dimension to the drug menace in the state and Chhitta consumption has surpassed all other drugs.

On average, over 1,500 NDPS cases are registered in the state every year with over 2,000 arrests. As many as 1,732 persons were arrested in 1,195 NDPS cases in the first ten months of 2022 till October end and the police have seized 274 kgs charas, 31 kgs opium, 306 kgs poppy husk, 164 kgs Ganja, smack and cocaine, 7.9 kgs of heroin (chhitta) and 30,152 capsules and tablets and destroyed 70,602 poppy plants and 47,737 cannabis plants, officials added. (PTI)

## Dead bodies of Gangster Raju Theth, another man handed over to family: Police

SIKAR, DEC 5 /--/ The dead bodies of gangster Raju Theth and another man who were killed in a shootout were handed over to their family members on Monday, police said.

Theth was killed on Saturday in a hail of bullets outside his house here. A man, Tarachand Kadwasara, who had gone to meet his daughter studying in a coaching institute there was also hit by bullets and died. The assailants fired at him and stanching the key of his car and fled in it from the spot. The family members, relatives and locals have been protesting and sitting on a dharna outside the mortuary of the district hospital demanding the arrest of the accused and security for the family of Theth and compensation to Kadwasara's family. After two rounds of meetings, the deadlock ended late on Sunday night.

The meeting was attended by Nagaur MP Hanuman Beniwal, Ladnu (Nagaur) MLA Mukesh Bhakar and Sikar MP Swami Sumedhanand. "The deadlock has ended and the dead bodies were handed over to family members after a postmortem on Monday," Sikar SP Kunwar Rashtradeep said. Two of the five accused nabbed on Sunday have been arrested, Rashtradeep said. Of the five accused, two received bullet injuries during the exchange of fire and are undergoing treatment at the SMS hospital in Jaipur amid tight security arrangements and one accused is a minor. The other two accused, Manish Jat (25) and Vikram Gurjar (28), were questioned during detention and have been placed under arrest later. The dharna was called off on Sunday night after Theth's family members were assured of security to them and witnesses of the shootout. It was also decided during the meeting that the investigation will be done by the SIT, and compensation will be given to Kadwasara's family. Also, Kadwasara's daughter will be provided with a free medical degree (MBBS) in a government college and compensation will be given to another man injured in the incident.

Another man Kailash also received bullet injuries and is undergoing treatment in a hospital. Theth, who had several criminal cases against him and was out on bail, had a rivalry with dreaded criminal Anandpal Singh, killed in a police encounter in June 2017. (PTI)

## Singer Lucky Ali says squatters on his assets, links IAS officer to 'land mafia'

BENGALURU, DEC 5 /--/ Popular singer Lucky Ali has alleged that a property owned by him in the city has been encroached upon illegally by a "land mafia" with the help of a woman IAS officer.

The son of the late actor and comedian Mehmood Ali, whose original name is Maqsood Mahmood Ali, has written to Karnataka Director General of Police in this regard and has posted the same on social media sites. The family of IAS officer Rohini Sindhuri, who has been named by Ali, has denied the charges. "I am currently in Dubai for work, hence the urgency. My farm which is a

Trust Property located in Kenchenahalli Yelahanka is being encroached upon illegally by Sudhir Reddy (and Madhu Reddy) from the Bangalore Land Mafia. With the help of his wife who is an IAS Officer by the name of Rohini Sindhuri they are misusing State resources for their personal gain," Ali said in the post. Alleging that they are forcibly and illegally coming inside his farm and refusing to show the relevant documents, he said, "My legal counsel is informing me that this is totally illegal and they don't have the court order to come inside the property as we are in possession, and living there since the past 50

years."

Further stating that he wanted to meet the DGP before he left for Dubai, but as he was unavailable, lodged a complaint to the jurisdictional ACP. Ali claimed that he has not had any positive response yet, and his family and small children are alone on the farm. "I am getting no help from the local police, who are in fact supporting the encroachers and are indifferent to our situation and the legal status of our land...I request your (DGP) help to stop this illegal activity of them trying to prove a false possession before the final court hearing on December 7.

Please help us as I have no choice other than to take this to the public," he added. Madhusudhan Reddy, who is the brother-in-law of Sindhuri, termed the allegations of Ali, against him and his family members, as "false and baseless". "In 2012, my father (Narayan Reddy) bought this land from Mansoor Ali, the brother of Maqsood Ali alias Lucky Ali and since then he has been troubling us in various ways. We approached the court in this regard in 2016, which has given the injunction order in our favour and against Lucky Ali," he said in a video statement. (PTI)

## Patel blames Mizoram for not implementing central schemes up to the mark

AIZAWL, DEC 5 /--/ Union Minister Prahlad Patel Monday blamed the Mizoram government for not implementing the Centre's schemes up to the mark and tht he will look into the implementation of the Centre's schemes under his ministry.

Patel, who in the union minister of state for food processing industries, said the Centre has already released Rs 45 crore for the Zoram Mega Food Park at Khamrang and although its building and other facilities exist no work has been carried out there till now.

"It is painful to see that the project is not operational even many years after it was launched," he said at a press conference here. The union minister had visited the food park, about 40 km from here, soon after his arrival here on Monday. Zoram Mega Food Park is an integrated project which provides infrastructure and services for food processing across the value chain to maximize value addition and minimise wastage. The Rs 75 crore project is being executed by the ministry of food processing industries.

Patel, who is also holds the charge of Jal Shakti portfolio, said that the implementation of the Centre's schemes under his ministry. He will also visit south Mizoram's Lawngtlai district near Myanmar border on Tuesday and return to Delhi the next day, officials said.

Quoting from the report submitted by the Mizoram

government, Patel said that only 70.46 per cent of the work under the Mission to provide functional household tap connections (FHTC) has been done from 2019 to November this year and the state is planning to achieve its goal to cover all villages in the state by 2023.

The Mission was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Independence Day in 2019 and the Mizoram government aims to provide potable drinking water to every rural household in more than 700 villages of the state through (FHTC) by 2024. Patel also blamed the Mizoram government for allegedly using plastic barrels as water source against the scheme's guideline for concrete water tanks. Besides, plastic pipes are being used in many villages instead of metal pipes. The visibly irked union minister said that he will closely look into the implementation of and review the Centre's schemes under his ministry. The state ministers and officials could not be contacted for comment. During his three-day visit, Patel will hold meetings with officials to review the implementation of the Centre's schemes under his ministry. He will also visit south Mizoram's Lawngtlai district near Myanmar border on Tuesday and return to Delhi the next day, officials said. (PTI)

## People stranded for hours in bumper-to-bumper traffic on Goa highway

PANAJI, DEC 5 /--/ Vehicles were stranded for more than three hours in heavy traffic on the nation highway connecting Panaji to South Goa due to a minor accident on the bridge over Zuari river on Monday morning.

Several passengers missed their flight from Dabolim airport, while office-goers were inconvenienced as they could not reach their workplace on time. A tempo dashed an SUV on Zuari bridge, around 15 km from Panaji, disrupting vehicular movement in the morning, a senior police official said. The traffic was held up for 45 minutes before the two vehicles were towed away by a special crane. But the congestion continued as vehicles kept queuing up on the national highway, he said. Several vehicles were stranded for more than three hours.

"We were heading to Panaji from Margao when we got stuck in the traffic jam for more than three hours. We chose to return home, as the congestion was heavy and there was no possibility of crossing the bridge," said Kedar Mapexencar, a real estate professional, who was stranded in the traffic with his children. Avit Narvekar, who was travelling to the airport from Panaji, said that he missed his flight to Mumbai. (PTI)

## To make Guwahati flood-free, Himanta says his govt exploring engineering solutions

GUWAHATI, DEC 5 /--/ Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said his government is exploring engineering solutions to make the state's largest city, Guwahati, free from floods. Clearing of encroachments on water-carrying channels of the city and de-siltation are also being given priority, he said. "Discussed modalities to make Guwahati flood-free and decided to bring in engineering solutions to flash flood and water logging problem in the city," Sarma tweeted on Sunday after a meeting with officials.

All the pumping stations will be revamped and two more will be built, he said. Sarma said the Kamrup Metropolitan district administration, Guwahati Municipal Corporation and Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority will take up a widening project of the Bharalu river, a tributary of the Brahmaputra which flows through the city. All illegal encroachments on both sides of Bharalu, Basistha and Bahini will be cleared, he said. Basistha and Bahini are two rivulets that flow through Guwahati. Sarma said that de-siltation of water-carrying channels and drains will be done on a war footing. "Garbage bins & CCTVs to be installed across the city," he added. (PTI)

## Weather advisory to general public, tourists

PORT BLAIR, DEC 5 /--/ The weather forecast bulletin received from Meteorological Department indicates Low Pressure Area formation over South Andaman Sea and subsequently Depression formation over Southeast Bay of Bengal by 6th December, 2022. Hence keeping in view the safety of passenger and vessels, the sailing of DSS vessels may get suspended/ cancelled in all sectors including Harbour Ferry at short notice. Sailing in respect of Inter Island & Foreshore Sector vessels will be reviewed one hour prior to her scheduled departure time. Therefore, the passengers and tourists are hereby advised to plan their journey suitably to avoid any inconvenience.

However, passengers can also get update/status of the vessels from the Information Counter at Phoenix Bay by using the Number 03192 245555/232714 & TOLL FREE NUMBER 18003452714.

## TRS MLC Kavitha seeks deferment of CBI questioning in Delhi liquor policy scam case

HYDERABAD, DEC 5 /--/ TRS MLC K Kavitha, who has been served with a notice by the CBI for questioning in connection with Delhi Excise Policy scam, on Monday said she will be able to meet the sleuths from December 11-15 (except on 13th) instead on December 6, due to her preoccupied schedule.

In a letter to the investigating agency, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's daughter said she had gone through the contents of the FIR copy as well as the complaint available on the website in connection with the case and her name did not figure anywhere in any manner whatsoever. "As proposed by you, I am not in a position to meet on 6th December, 2022, because of my preoccupied schedule. I will be able to meet you either on 11th, 12th or 14th or 15th of this month whichever is as convenient to you at my residence in Hyderabad. Same may please be confirmed at the earliest," she said in the letter to the CBI. The letter was addressed to Raghavendra Vatsa, Head of Branch/ DIG, CBI, ACB Delhi. The CBI on December 2 issued a notice to the TRS leader for questioning in the case on December 6. The probe agency asked her to

intimate the place as per her convenience for the "examination" at 11 AM on that day.

Kavitha, in a statement, had said she informed the authorities that they can meet her at her Hyderabad residence. "I am a law-abiding citizen and will cooperate with the investigation. I will meet you on any of the above said dates to cooperate with the investigation. It is made clear that this is without prejudice to my legal rights available under law," she further said. After her name cropped up in a remand report filed by the Enforcement Directorate in a Delhi court on the alleged kickbacks in the scam, Kavitha had said she was ready to face any probe. The CBI on November 25 filed its first charge sheet in the case against seven accused. "As per the investigation carried out so far, Vijay Nair, on behalf of leaders of AAP has received kickbacks to the tune of at least Rs 100 crore from a group, called South Group (controlled by Sarath Reddy, Ms K Kavitha, Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy) by various persons including Amit Arora," the ED had said in the remand report filed on one of the accused -- Amit Arora -- in a Delhi Court. (PTI)

## AIFF working on to create players to represent India in World Cup: Chaubey

KOHIMA, DEC 5 /--/ All India Football Federation President Kalyan Chaubey on Sunday said the AIFF is working on a road map to create a strong national team which can be part of the World Cup. With FIFA increasing the number of teams from the present 32 to 48 for the 2026 World Cup, India will surely have its players at the top level in future editions, Chaubey told reporters here. Indian football team's current FIFA ranking is 106. Chaubey, a former footballer who represented the country, said that in the past the national team used to be built with players from only three or four states. "There are 26 football associations in the states and Union Territories across the country, but their collective contributions have not been utilised properly," the former goalkeeper said. He asserted that the present team of AIFF will

make efforts to reach out to the state associations by creating a football ambience to have a national team and fulfil India's dream of participating in the World Cup. Chaubey came to Nagaland on a two-day official visit. Observing that Nagaland has lots of potential, he said that as president of AIFF, he would like to see the boys and girls of the state play football at the highest level. For that, infrastructure and opportunities have to be created, he said and urged the Nagaland government to create a scholarship programme so that AIFF can send its best coaches to the state to train at least 16 coaches one each for every district - and 10 referees for the state. These quality coaches will train youngsters and build national-level players from Nagaland, he said. (PTI)

### NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

The **Executive Engineer, Panchayati Raj Institution, South Andaman Division-** I on behalf of **Pradhan, Gram Panchayat, Ferrargunj** invites online item rate tender (in CPWD form-8) from bonafide and experienced contractors of appropriate class of APWD, MES, ALHW & P&T for the below mentioned work.

**1. NIT NO.** EE/PRI/SAD-I/GEN/2022-23/77 **Name of Work:** - Repair and Maintenance of Panchayat Bhawan at Ferrargunj-04 under Ferrargunj Gram Panchayat. **Estimated Cost Rs:-** 16,65,713/- **Earnest Money Deposit:-** 33,314/- **Time of Completion:** - Ten (10) Months, Tender Fee: - ₹500/- & last date & time of submission of bid: - 13/12/2022 (1500 hrs)

The tender forms and other details can be obtained from the website <https://eprocure.andaman.gov.in>. **Tender ID:- 2022\_RDPRI\_8318\_1**

**Executive Engineer,  
Panchayati Raj Institution,  
South Andaman Division-I  
Junglighat, Port Blair  
South Andaman**

# Exit polls predict big majority for BJP in Gujarat; cliffhanger in Himachal

NEW DELHI, DEC 5/--/ Exit polls on Monday predicted a big majority for the BJP in Gujarat and a dead heat in Himachal Pradesh where most pollsters gave an edge to the ruling party over the Congress. The counting of votes in both states will take place on December 8. Elections for the Himachal Pradesh assembly took place on November 12, while polling in Gujarat happened in two phases on December 1 and 5.

All exit polls predicted a big mandate for the BJP in Gujarat in the range of 117-151 seats in the 182-member assembly, while the Congress was predicted to bag seats in the range of 16-51 seats. The Aam Aadmi Party was projected to bag anything between two and 13 seats. The majority mark in Gujarat is 92. In Himachal Pradesh, the exit polls projected a range of 24-41 seats for the BJP and 24-40 seats for the Congress. The majority mark is 35 seats.

While the Aaj Tak-Axis My India predicted 129-151 seats for the BJP, 16-30 seats for the Congress and 9-21 seats for the Aam Aadmi Party, ABP News C-Voter predicted 128-140 seats for the BJP, 31-43 for the Congress and 3-11 for AAP. News 24-Today's Chanakya also predicted a huge majority for the BJP in Gujarat with its survey stating that the BJP was likely to get 150, Congress 19 and AAP 11. News X-Jan Ki Baat exit poll on Gujarat



GUJRAT ASSEMBLY TOTAL SEATS : 182 MAGIC FIGURE : 92					
SOURCE	BJP	CONG+NCP	AAP	OTH	
Aaj Tak-Axis My India	129-151	16-30	9-21	2-6	
ABP News-CVoter	128-140	31-43	3-11	2-6	
India TV-Matrize	112-121	51-61	4-7	1-3	
News 24-Today's Chanakya	150	19	11	2	
News X- Jan Ki Baat	117-140	34-51	6-13	1-2	
Republic TV P-MARQ	128-148	30-42	2-10	0-3	
Times Now-ETG	135-145	24-34	6-16	1-3	
TV9 Gujarati	125-130	40-50	3-5	3-7	
Zee News-BARC	110-125	45-60	1-5	0-4	
Poll Of Exit Polls	132	38	8	4	
HIMACHAL PRADESH TOTAL SEATS :68 MAGIC FIGURE : 35					
SOURCE	BJP	CONG	AAP	OTH	
Aaj Tak-Axis My India	24-34	30-40	0	4-8	
ABP News-CVoter	33-41	24-32	0	0-4	
India TV-Matrize	35-40	26-31	0	0-3	
News 24-Today's Chanakya	33	33	0	2	
News X- Jan Ki Baat	32-40	27-34	0	1-2	
Republic TV P-MARQ	34-39	28-33	0-1	1-4	
Times Now-ETG	34-42	24-32	0	1-3	
TV9 Gujarati	33	31	0	4	
Zee News-BARC	35-40	20-25	0-3	1-5	
Source: Regional and National Channels					

elections said the BJP was likely to get 117-140 seats, Congress-NCP 34-51, AAP 6-13 and others 1-2. Republic TV P-MARQ predicted 128-148 seats for the BJP, 30-42 for the Congress-NCP, AAP 2-10 and others 0-3. TV9 Gujarati forecast that the BJP would get 125-130 seats, Congress-NCP 40-50, AAP 3-5 and others 3-7. For Himachal Pradesh, Aaj Tak-Axis My India predicted a close contest between the Congress and the BJP. It said the BJP would get 24-34 seats and the Congress 30-40 seats. News 24-Today's Chanakya also pointed to a cliffhanger in Himachal Pradesh, predicting 33 seats for both the BJP and the Congress with a margin of plus-minus seven seats for both.

While ABP News C-Voter said the BJP was likely to get 33-41 seats and Congress 24-32, India TV predicted that the BJP would bag 35-40 seats, Congress 26-31 and AAP zero. News X-Jan Ki Baat survey said the BJP was likely to get 32-40 seats in the hill state, Congress 27-34 and AAP zero.

While Republic TV P-MARQ predicted that the BJP would get 34-39, Congress 28-33 and AAP 0-1, the Times Now-ETG said the average seats BJP was likely to get was 38 and the Congress 28. For the Municipal Corporation of Delhi polls, most exit polls predicted a huge win for the AAP over the BJP with the Congress a distant third. (PTI)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi showing ink-marked finger after casting vote during the second phase of Gujarat Assembly election, in Ahmedabad on Monday

## Centre could have used any nat'l symbol other than lotus for G20 logo: Mamata



*It cannot be denied that the national flower is also the logo of a political party. There are so many other national symbols which could have been used in the logo (for G20). Even if I don't raise this matter (in Delhi), others may... I have seen it but did not say much. It's not a non-issue. It's an important issue and they (Centre) must think over the matter*  
—Mamata Banerjee

KOLKATA, DEC 5/--/West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday stated that the controversy over the use of lotus in the G20 logo is "not a non-issue" but she would refrain from raising it as the matter, if discussed outside, may not augur well for the country. The CM also contended that the central government could have chosen any national symbol other than the lotus for the summit's logo, as the flower also represents a political party. The Congress has alleged that the Centre used lotus in the G20 logo in a bid to promote the Bharatiya Janata Party. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh responded to the allegation, saying that the flower was part of the country's cultural identity. Banerjee, before leaving for New Delhi, told reporters at the city airport, "I have also seen it (the Lotus logo). As it's a matter related to our country, we are not saying anything. It does not augur well for the country if the issue gets discussed outside." At the national capital, the CM will be attending the meeting

called by PM Narendra Modi to discuss the preparatory process for the G20 summit in 2023. "It cannot be denied that the national flower is also the logo of a political party. There are so many other national symbols which could have been used in the logo. Even if I don't raise this matter (in Delhi), others may," she said. "I have seen it but did not say much. It's not a non-issue. It's an important issue and they (Centre) must think over the matter," the TMC supremo added. India has assumed the Presidency of G-20 grouping for one year. A press release from the prime minister's office had stated that the logo, which was unveiled last month, draws inspiration from the vibrant colours of national flag saffron, white and green, and blue. "It juxtaposes planet Earth with the lotus, India's national flower that reflects growth amid challenges," the statement noted. "The Earth reflects India's pro-planet approach to life, one in perfect harmony with nature," it added. The summit will held in Delhi on September 9 and 10 next year. (PTI)

## People of RSS, BJP will have to say 'Hey Ram', Jai Siyaram: Rahul Gandhi

JHALAWAR, DEC 5/--/Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday accused the BJP and the RSS of ignoring the invocations of 'Hey Ram' and 'Jai Siyaram', which acknowledges both Lord Ram and Goddess Sita. Gandhi was addressing a corner meeting organised on the arrival of his Bharat Jodo Yatra at Nahardi in Jhalawar district. He later proceeded for the night halt at the Khel Sankul here. "The people of the BJP and RSS, learn to live your lives by the ideals of Lord Ram. And listen carefully, you will have to say 'Hey Ram' and 'Jai Siyaram'," he said. He said earlier the 'Jai Siyaram' slogan was used in the entire country. "Can Ram exist without Sita... the question does not arise. Without Sita, there cannot be Ram and without Ram there cannot be Sita," he said. "Then why have the BJP and the RSS removed maa Sita from their slogans. Why don't they ever say Jai Siyaram?" "It's okay if you want to say Jai Shri Ram. Do so. But the RSS people will have to say Jai Siyaram and they cannot insult mother Sita," he said. The Congress leader also targeted the BJP and the RSS over the slogan 'Hey Ram'. "There is another slogan that Gandhiji used to say. That is probably the most beautiful slogan... Hey Ram! This is the slogan having the deepest meaning. I want to tell you the meaning of Hey Ram. These are words that Mahatma Gandhi said after being shot. Hey Ram, Hey Ram, Hey Ram," he said. "Today, I want to tell you the depth of that slogan and the thinking of Gandhiji. Hey Ram means Lord Ram. He said Lord Ram respected everyone and had no hatred towards anyone. "Lord Ram had a thought, he had a feeling in his heart, he had a way of life. He used to respect everyone. He didn't hate anyone. He loved everyone and hugged everyone. We call that feeling Hey Ram. When we say Hey Ram, we decide that we will live our life by the ideals Lord Ram had. This is the meaning of Hey Ram," he said. The people of RSS have forgotten this, he said. "They never say Jai Siyaram, Sita has been removed and they never chant Hey Ram as they do not believe in the ideals of Lord Ram," Gandhi added. Because if they did, they would not have "spread hatred", he said. (PTI)

## PM chairs key all-party meet on G-20, seeks cooperation of everyone

NEW DELHI, DEC 5/--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday chaired a meeting of leaders from all parties on India's presidency of the G-20 and sought their cooperation to make it a big success as the government highlighted its year-long programmes to mark the exercise. G20 or Group of 20 is an intergovernmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economies. Some opposition leaders, including Sitaram Yechury and D Raja of the Left, noted that India taking over the presidency was by rotation and said it should not be projected as the government's achievement, sources said.

Modi, in his speech, asserted that it was an occasion for the entire country to be proud of and everyone should contribute to its success, they added. The prime minister had spoken on similar lines at a BJP meeting, saying that every citizen should be proud of the development. TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, who is also the West Bengal chief minister, said at the meeting that the G-20 presidency was not about one party's agenda but of the entire country, sources said.

TRS president K Chandrasekhar Rao and JD(U) chief Lalan Singh did not attend the meeting. RJD also skipped the meeting. In a statement highlighting Yechury's comments at the meeting, the CPI(M) reiterated that India's turn at the helm of the grouping is by the dint of a "rotating presidency". Opposition leaders' comments are apparently aimed at countering the ruling BJP's attempt to project the development as a major success for the government. "Every country in the G20 will automatically be President when their turn comes," Yechury said. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge highlighted at the meeting that India has in the past chaired the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit. Raja said the government should take the opportunity to showcase the achievements of India's youths and farmers, and pitched for empowering women by bringing in legislation for reservation for them. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Sikkim's Prem Singh Tamang, and Maharashtra's Eknath Shinde attended

the meeting. Also in attendance were Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his Andhra Pradesh counterpart Jagan Mohan Reddy, Tamil Nadu's M K Stalin, BJP president J P Nadda, former prime minister H D Deve Gowda and Telugu Desam Party chief Chandrababu Naidu. Those on the government side present at the meeting included Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Union Minister Piyush Goyal. India officially assumed the G20 presidency on December 1. The country is expected to host over 200 preparatory meetings across the country beginning this month. The next G20 Leaders' Summit at the level of heads of states or governments is scheduled to be held on September 9 and 10 next year in New Delhi. G20 comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US and the European Union. (PTI)

# Dominique Lapierre, French author of 'The City of Joy', dies aged 91

LONDON, DEC 5/--/Dominique Lapierre, the bestselling French author well-known in India for his ode to the city of Kolkata titled 'The City of Joy', has died aged 91, his wife has confirmed. Lapierre, who was conferred the Padma Bhushan in the 2008 Republic Day honours, founded a humanitarian association with his wife entitled the City of Joy Foundation rescuing children suffering from leprosy from the slums of Kolkata. Dating back to 1981, it was supported by the royalties

from his many literary successes. "At 91, he died of old age," the author's wife Dominique Conchon-Lapierre was quoted as saying by the French newspaper Var-Matin' on Sunday. The couple's foundation from the 1980s is believed to have rescued 9,000 children suffering from leprosy and other diseases due to malnutrition and poverty in India. The charity website notes that it has also helped fight back tuberculosis in 1,200 villages, dug 541 tube wells for

drinking water, provided medical assistance to over 5 million patients over the years. Born on July 30, 1931 in Chatelaillon, the author was known for his passion for travel. While researching in Kolkata, Calcutta at the time, he became a close associate of Mother Teresa who gave him the authorisation to write a film on her life and the work of her sisters, the Missionaries of Charity. With Geraldine Chaplin playing the role of Mother Teresa, the film Mother Teresa: In the



Name of God's Poor' was aired on the Family Channel in the US and several European channels. Lapierre's script was also nominated by the prestigious Humanitas Prize for communicating the best values. According to the Speaker Booking Agency, Lapierre's first taste of fame came when as a 17-year-old he left Paris with USD 30 and worked aboard a ship. Disembarking in the US, he managed a 30,000-mile jaunt around North America. This

adventure led to Lapierre's first bestselling book, A Dollar for a Thousand Miles' and since then, he continuously searched for new messages and stories in different parts of the world. While completing military service in 1954, Lapierre met an American soldier named Larry Collins. An everlasting friendship and a valuable partnership sprang from this meeting and the duo went on to collaborate on some of the most memorable books including Is Paris Burning?' made into a major

motion picture and others such as 'O Jerusalem', 'Freedom at Midnight', and 'The Fifth Horseman', books read by millions of readers in more than 30 languages. In 1991, Lapierre published 'Beyond Love', the epic story of the discovery of the AIDS virus. Among his later works, 'A Thousand Suns' chronicles the heroes and events that have shaped the life of the author-philanthropist and India monamour' his memoir reflecting his love for India. (PTI)

## Six-year-old Indian-origin boy becomes youngest Singaporean to reach Everest Base Camp

**SINGAPORE, DEC 5** /--/ Six-year-old Indian-origin boy Om Madan Garg has become the youngest Singaporean to finish the Everest Base Camp trek in Nepal, a feat that has been recognised by the Singapore Book of Records. Om made the 10-day journey with his parents in October, reaching the south base camp in Nepal at an altitude of 5,364 metre, after a trek of 65 km. The outdoorsy child is no stranger to adventure -- his parents have taken him on backpacking trips to Vietnam, Thailand and Laos since he was just two-and-a-half months old. Om, his father Mayur Garg, 38, and mother Gayatri Mahendram, 39, kicked off their 10-day trek on September 28, aided by a guide and two porters. The Straits Times newspaper reported on Monday. Their entire journey has been documented on the family's YouTube travel channel, The Brave Tourist, in a seven-part series. "I want to see the whole world," said Om, the

Kindergarten 2 student from Canossaville Preschool whose 65 km trek took him past remote villages, Nepalese temples and monasteries, and scenic vistas of Himalayan Mountains like the Everest, Lhotse and Lhotse Sar. When the going got tough on the undulating and rugged paths towards the Everest Base Camp, lollipops, raisins and cookies kept Om going on the once-in-a-lifetime expedition with his parents. Mayur -- a senior business analyst and avid mountain climber who has scaled peaks in Indonesia, Russia and Tanzania -- had made the trip to Everest Base Camp in November 2021, and thought it would make for a fun family trip. To prepare for the trip, the family watched YouTube videos of other trekkers who had logged the journey, and made it a point to be active every day six months prior to the trip. "We live in the Yio Chu Kang area, and we walk to the Marina Bay Sands area which is about 10 km away. It takes us four to five hours, but

we just go," Mayur said. The regime also included swimming, stair-climbing and excursions to places like Fort Canning. "Fort Canning was hard because we had to go up and down the stairs 30 times. But because it was hard when we were training, when we went to Everest Base Camp, it was easy," Om said. The high-altitude hike, with an elevation gain of about 2,500 m, is a challenge even for adults. From the starting point at the Nepalese village of Lukla, which is at 2,860 m above sea level, the trio headed to the Sherpa capital of Namche Bazaar (3,440 m) and frozen lake bed Gorakhshep (5,164 m) before reaching the Everest Base Camp (5,364 m). The family originally planned for a 13-day trek so that they could go at an easy pace of 5 km a day on the trail. But bad weather conditions meant that their helicopter ride to Tenzing-Hillary Airport in Lukla, notorious for being the most dangerous airport in the world, was held back for two days.

The family had to make up for the lost time by covering more distance per day, especially on the first day, when they hiked 12 km to the village of Benkar. "Om coped and went along, but towards the end, I got a bit of altitude sickness and had headaches. It's a difficult journey because it's all uphill," said Gayatri, a senior physiotherapist, recalling the first day of the trip. Om fell sick on the second night of the expedition. "I had a tummy upset, and I was feeling yucky. I had to change my trousers three times, but I only had three pairs of trousers. I had to wash my trousers in cold, cold water," he said. Om's parents added that he was able to continue the journey after he rested and took some medication from a local pharmacy. "There was a plan for every kind of situation. We had helicopter tickets already booked. If something breaks, we thought, we will fly back," said Mayur. Thankfully, the rest of the trek continued without major hiccups. (PTI)



People in Santa Claus costumes participate in the Santa Run in downtown Budapest, Hungary

## Blinken vows US support for Israel despite unease over govt

**WASHINGTON, DEC 5** /--/ Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Sunday the US will not shrink from its unwavering support for Israel despite stark differences with Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu and concerns the Biden administration may have about potential members of his incoming right-wing government.

Speaking to a left-leaning group that some on the right accuse of being too sympathetic to the Palestinians and Iran, Blinken said the United States will remain a stalwart friend of Israel even as it pursues goals that Netanyahu has opposed, including a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a restoration of the languishing 2015 Iran nuclear deal. The US-Israel "partnership and all that it's produced for the people of our nations and the world has always been underwritten by the United States ironclad commitment to Israel's security, a commitment that has never been stronger than it is today," he said. Blinken said the Biden administration would engage with Netanyahu's government based on its policies and not on personalities, including potential senior Cabinet ministers who have expressed vehement anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab views in the past. But, Blinken also warned that the U.S. would object to policies that marginalize the Palestinians, diminish their "horizon for hope," or make a two-state resolution more difficult. He said those would be detrimental to Israel's long-term security or future as a Jewish democratic state. "We expect the new Israeli government to continue to work with us to advance our shared values, just as we have previous governments," he said. "We will gauge the government by the policies it pursues rather than individual personalities. We will hold it to the mutual standards we have established in our relationship over the past seven decades," Blinken said.

U.S. officials have previously expressed concerns about the possible positions in Netanyahu's government of at least two right-wing Israeli politicians: Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich. Ben-Gvir, a lawmaker known for anti-Arab vitriol and provocative stunts, has been offered the job of national security minister, a powerful position that will put him in charge of Israel's police force. Meanwhile, Smotrich, leader of the Religious Zionism party, which shares anti-Palestinian and anti-gay views, has been offered oversight over the Israeli agency for Palestinian civil affairs. Blinken noted that the US-Israel relationship is seven decades old and the Biden administration would "speak honestly" with the new Israeli government as well as the Palestinians, whose leaders he said must also refrain from raising tensions that endanger a two-state solution.

He pointed out that the Biden administration continues to support its predecessor's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and is working to expand former President Donald Trump's "Abraham Accords" that saw several Arab nations normalize relations with Israel. He lauded the recent completion of a maritime border accord between Israel and Lebanon. Blinken's comments came at the annual conference of J Street, a pro-Israel group that has distinguished itself from the much larger and older American Israel Public Affairs Committee by advancing positions often supported by the Democratic party. (AP)

## Pak envoy Nizamani returns from Afghan after escaping gun attack in Kabul

**ISLAMABAD, DEC 5** /--/ Pakistan's Charge d'Affaires in Afghanistan Ubaid-ur-Rehman Nizamani arrived here on Monday, three days after being targeted by unidentified gunmen while taking a walk in the Pakistan embassy compound in Kabul.

Ambassador Nizamani escaped unharmed, but his guard was critically injured in the attack claimed by the Islamic State Khorasan chapter (IS) terror group. Nizamani, who is on a pre-scheduled visit to Pakistan, will meet foreign ministry officials and hold consultations, according to the Express Tribune newspaper on Monday. He will return to Kabul in a couple of days, the report said. Charge d'Affaires Ubaid-ur-Rehman Nizamani was targeted by unidentified gunmen while taking a walk in the Pakistan embassy compound on Friday. His guard was critically injured

in the attack. Pakistan repatriated the wounded guard by helicopter and he was being treated at a hospital. The Islamic State (IS) on Sunday claimed responsibility for the attack.

In a brief statement in Arabic on social media, the terror group's Khorasan chapter (ISIS-K) claimed that its two members armed with "medium weapons and snipers" targeted the ambassador and his guards who were present in the courtyard of the embassy on Friday. In response, Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO) said that it was "verifying" the claim made by ISIS-K about the attack on its mission in Kabul. "Independently and in consultation with the Afghan authorities, we are verifying the veracity of these reports," the Foreign Office said. "This notwithstanding, the terrorist attack is yet another reminder of the threat that terrorism poses to

peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region," it said.

Meanwhile, an official US report to Congress has expressed doubts about the Taliban's ability to counter the IS, the Dawn newspaper reported on Monday. "Experts disagree about the potency of the ISKP threat and the Taliban's self-asserted ability to counter the group without external assistance," the newspaper quoted the report sent this week to Congress by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) as saying. "An arguably more potent armed threat to the Taliban is the local Islamic State affiliate ISKP, a longtime Taliban adversary," the CRS report said. The US has also condemned Friday's attack on the Pakistani embassy in Afghanistan's capital and called for a full and transparent investigation.

On Friday, Pakistan summoned Afghanistan's

Charge d'Affaires in Islamabad and conveyed to him its deep concern over the attack on the country's Head of Mission in Kabul. Pakistan demanded that perpetrators of the attack must be apprehended and brought to justice urgently, an investigation be launched into the serious breach of security of the embassy premises, and that all necessary steps be taken to ensure the security of the diplomatic premises, officers and staff working in Pakistan's Mission in Kabul and Consulates in Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif. The attack came days after Pakistan's deputy Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar flew to Kabul to hold talks with Muttapi on a range of issues, including the latest threat from Pakistani Taliban who recently ended a months-long ceasefire with Pakistan and asked fighters to resume attacks across the country. (PTI)

## South Korea says North Korea fired artillery rounds near border

**SEOUL, DEC 5** /--/ South Korea's military said North Korea fired about 130 suspected artillery rounds on Monday into the water near their western and eastern sea borders, the latest military action contributing to worsening relations between the neighbours.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the weapons, fired Monday afternoon from North Korea's western and eastern coastal areas, fell within the northern side of buffer zones created under a 2018 inter-Korean agreement to reduce military tensions. There were no immediate reports of shells falling inside South Korean territorial waters. South Korea's military said it communicated a verbal warning to North Korea over the firings and urged it to abide by the agreement.

The South Korean and US militaries were closely monitoring North Korea's military activities while

strengthening their readiness to respond to any "potential contingency", the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. The North Korean firings were possibly a response to South Korean artillery exercises scheduled from Monday to Wednesday near the inland border town of Cheorwon.

The firings also came days after Washington, Seoul and Tokyo announced largely symbolic sanctions on some North Korean people and institutions accused of illicit activities to finance the country's nuclear weapons and missile programmes. It was the first time North Korea has fired weapons into the maritime buffer zones since Nov 3, when around 80 artillery shells landed within North Korea's side of the zone off its eastern coast. North Korea has fired dozens of missiles as it increased its weapons demonstrations to a record pace this year, including multiple tests of

an intercontinental ballistic missile system potentially capable of reaching deep into the US mainland, and an intermediate-range missile launched over Japan.

North Korea has also conducted a series of short-range launches it described as simulated nuclear attacks on South Korean and US targets in an angry reaction to an expansion of joint US-South Korea military exercises which North Korea views as rehearsals for a potential invasion.

Experts say North Korea hopes to negotiate economic and security concessions from a position of strength and force the United States to accept it as a nuclear power.

South Korean officials have said North Korea might up the ante soon by conducting its first nuclear test since 2017. North Korean state media said last week that leader Kim Jong Un has called for a major

political conference before the end of the year at which he is expected to address increasingly tense relations with Washington and Seoul over the expansion of North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes.

The inter-Korean military agreement that established the buffer zones is one of the few tangible remnants of the countries' short-lived diplomacy of 2018.

Former South Korean President Moon Jae-in met North Korean leader Kim Jong Un three times that year while also helping to set up Kim's first summit with former US President Donald Trump. But the inter-Korean negotiations never recovered from the collapse of the second Kim-Trump meeting in February 2019, when the Americans rejected North Korean demands for a major easing of US-led sanctions in exchange for a partial surrender of the North's nuclear capabilities. (AP)

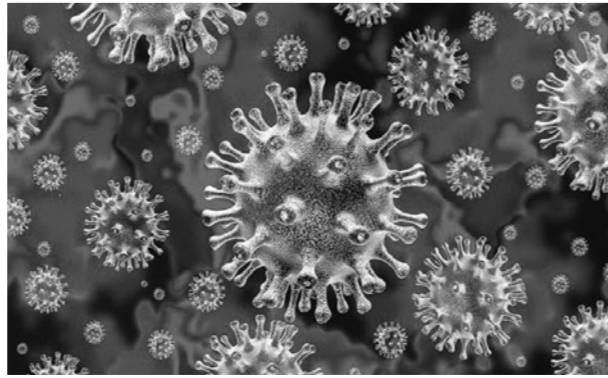
## Symptoms of long Covid in children may change over time: Lancet study

**LONDON, DEC 5** /--/ Symptoms of long Covid experienced by children and young people may change over time, according to the largest study of its kind published in The Lancet Regional Health - Europe. Researchers asked children aged 11 to 17 about their health six months and 12 months after taking a PCR test between September 2020 and March 2021. They also asked them to recall their symptoms at the time of taking the test. None of the children initially invited to participate in the study had been hospitalised. The researchers examined data from 5,086 children, 2,909 of whom tested positive for

Covid-19, and 2,177 of whom tested negative. They asked the children and young people what they had experienced from a list of 21 symptoms, including shortness of breath and tiredness, as well as using validated scales to assess quality of life, mental health, wellbeing and fatigue. The team found that, at time of testing, health issues were more common in children and young people who had tested positive for the virus compared to those who tested negative, as well as six months and 12 months post PCR test.

For example, among the test-positives, 10.9 per cent reported fatigue at all three

time points while among test-negatives only 1.2 per cent reported fatigue at all three time points. They also noted that the symptoms



experienced changed over the course of a year. And while some of the children's

original symptoms declined, new symptoms were reported. This was also the case when researchers looked at scales measuring

poor quality of life, experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties,

poor wellbeing and fatigue. The researchers found that the symptoms of long Covid experienced by children and young people change over time and that clinicians should be aware of this "Our research goes one step further than existing studies and indicates that researchers need to track individual trajectories using repeated measurement on the same children and young people over time," said study corresponding author Snehal Pinto Pereira from University College London Hospitals (UCLH), UK. "Simply reporting repeated cross-sectional prevalences -- or snapshots -- of symptoms over time may

obscure important information about long Covid in young people that has clinical relevance," Pereira said.

The study will continue to analyse survey results from participants for up to two years after the initial PCR test. The authors acknowledged some limitations to the study. The symptoms reported by participants at time of testing are subject to recall bias as they were reported at the time of first contact with the study -- at either three months or six months post-test. However, six-month and 12-month symptoms were reported at the time they were being experienced, the researchers added. (PTI)

## Sikh woman shot dead in Canada's Ontario province

**TORONTO, DEC 5** /--/ A 21-year-old Canadian-Sikh woman has been shot dead, in an apparent "targeted" killing in Canada's Ontario province, according to the police.

The victim, identified as Pawanpreet Kaur from Brampton, was fatally shot by an unidentified assailant on Saturday night in Mississauga city of Ontario province, according to a press release by the Peels Regional Police on Sunday. According to the Toronto Sun newspaper, Kaur was shot outside a gas station.

Police received information about a woman being shot at around 10:39 pm, and located the victim with apparent gunshot wounds upon arrival at the scene. Life-saving measures were attempted however the victim succumbed to her injuries, the press release said. The police believe it to be a "targeted" incident. Kaur was pronounced deceased on the scene, according to Duty-Inspector Tim Nagtegaal quoted by the news report.

Little information was provided about the suspect. "We are not able at this time to state the sex of the suspect, only that it was a party seen leaving all dark clothing," Nagtegaal was quoted as saying in the report. "The culprit was seen running from the scene wearing all dark clothing," he added.

"We saw her fall down and then suddenly the gunman pointed the gun at her head," the Toronto Sun newspaper quoted an eyewitness, Carmela Sandoval, as saying. This comes days after an Indian-origin teenager Mehakpreet Sethi was stabbed to death by another teenager in a high school parking lot in Canada's British Columbia province. (PTI)

## Protesters near White House demand 'Free China!'

**WASHINGTON, DEC 5** /--/ About 200 protesters lit candles and shouted "Free China!" two blocks from the White House on Sunday in a show of support for demonstrations in China calling for an end to severe anti-virus controls and for political change.

Protesters in Freedom Plaza held up signs saying, "No Dictatorship, No Censorship," demanding that President Xi Jinping and the ruling Communist Party give up power. They held up blank sheets of paper, a symbol of opposition to the party's pervasive censorship. Some yelled, "Free China!" The protests erupted Nov. 25 after at least 10 people died in a fire in Urumqi, a city in China's northwest. Authorities rejected suggestions firefighters or people trying to escape might have been blocked by anti-virus controls.

But the disaster became a focus for public frustration with curbs that confine millions of people to their homes. "I did not care much about these public issues before as it did not happen to me," said a Chinese student who would give only her surname, Liu, due to fear of retaliation. "The COVID policy is really improper," said Liu. "Now that I am in a country with free speech, I shall do my best when my rights can be protected."

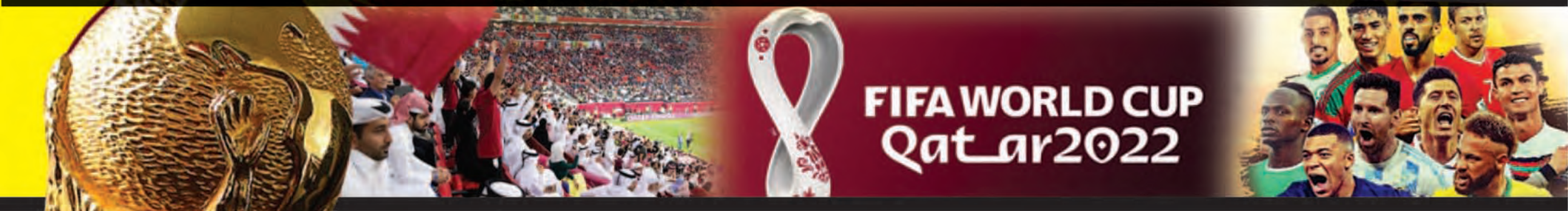
Uighurs, Tibetans and members of other ethnic minorities that are targeted for surveillance and control by the Communist Party joined the protests. "I was encouraged by the courageous young people in China," said a man who refused to give his name. "How can we not stand up after they did?" he said. "I shall at least let them know they were not alone." (AP)

## Airplane crash in Gulf of Mexico leaves 2 dead, 1 missing

**VENICE, DEC 5** /--/ A private airplane crashed into the Gulf of Mexico off the Florida coast Saturday night, with two people confirmed dead as authorities searched for a third person believed to have been on the flight, police said.

Authorities in Venice, Florida, initiated a search Sunday after 10 a.m. following a Federal Aviation Administration inquiry to the Venice Municipal Airport about an overdue single-engine Piper Cherokee that had not returned to its origin airport in St. Petersburg, Florida. Around the same time, recreational boaters found the body of a woman floating about 2.5 miles (4 kilometers) west of the Venice shore, city of Venice spokesperson Lorraine Anderson said in a statement. Divers from the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office located the wreckage of the rented airplane around 2 p.m. about a third of a mile offshore, directly west of the Venice airport, Anderson said. Rescuers found a deceased girl in the plane's passenger area.

A third person, believed to be a male who was the pilot or a passenger, remained missing Sunday, Anderson said. The county sheriff's office, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Sarasota Police Department, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the District 12 Medical Examiner's Office and the National Transportation Safety Board were involved in the investigation, Anderson said. (AP)



# England outclass Senegal 3-0 to set pp Quarter-finals date with France



DOHA, DEC 5 /--/ England set up a titanic World Cup quarter-final against holders France as Jude Bellingham's masterclass inspired a 3-0 win against Senegal in the last 16 on Sunday. Gareth Southgate's side survived a nervous start at the Al Bayt Stadium before Jordan Henderson and Harry Kane put Senegal to the sword with a pair of clinical finishes before half-time. Bukayo Saka scored England's third, but it was Bellingham's prodigious work-rate and burgeoning quality in possession that allowed them to turn the tide. Bellingham set up Henderson's opener and the Borussia Dortmund midfielder was involved again when England captain Kane bagged his first goal in this World Cup. Kane has now netted 11 times at major tournaments, overtaking Gary Lineker as England's all-time top scorer in those competitions. But at the tender age of 19, it is Bellingham who has emerged as England's driving force.

He is the first teenager to assist in a World Cup knockout stage game since 1966, having already announced his arrival on the global stage by netting his first England goal in the 6-2 rout of Iran in their group opener. Just two years after he was playing in the English

second tier with Birmingham, the precocious Bellingham was totally unfazed against Senegal in the biggest game of his life. England will need another command performance from Bellingham if they are to extend their stay in Qatar beyond the last eight. Eyeing a third successive semi-final appearance at major tournaments, England will return to the Al Khor desert on Saturday to take on the red-hot Kylian Mbappe and company after France brushed aside Poland 3-1 on Sunday. Euro 2020 runners-up England have won only one of their last eight meetings with France, who pose a significant threat to their hopes of winning a first major title for 56 years. The depth of attacking talent available to Southgate could be crucial and, defending his decision to drop Marcus Rashford for Saka despite the forward's double against Wales, he boasted "we have an embarrassment of riches in all areas of the pitch". After a rocky opening when they passed too slowly and looked anxious at the back, England hit their stride to show why Southgate has such confidence in them. Fuelled by the incessant drumming from their vibrant fans, African champions Senegal initially showed no fear as they tested England's composure with a high press. Senegal

squandered a golden opportunity to take the lead when Harry Maguire gave the ball away and Boulaye Dia's volley deflected off John Stones into Ismaila Sarr's path, only for the Watford forward to blaze over from close-range. Preying on England's nerves, Sarr harried Saka and Dia seized the loose ball, forcing a good save from Jordan Pickford with a fierce drive. That proved the turning point as England snatched the lead against the run of play in the 38th minute. Bellingham sprinted onto Harry Kane's incisive pass into the Senegal area and clipped a precise cutback into the path of Liverpool midfielder Henderson, who guided his low strike past Edouard Mendy from 12 yards. Henderson's goal served as a jolt of adrenaline that coursed through England as they doubled their lead seconds before the interval. Bellingham was the catalyst with his well-timed tackle and a crisp pass to Foden, whose perfectly-weighted lay-off allowed Kane to race clear for a clinical finish. England strolled through the second half and, repaying Southgate's faith, Saka put the result beyond doubt in the 57th minute.

Foden made a dynamic run down the left and Saka reached his cross to flick a clever effort over Mendy from close-range. (AFP)

**TODAY'S MATCH  
(ROUND OF 16)  
Morocco vs Spain  
- 8.30 PM IST  
Portugal vs  
Switzerland  
- 12.30 AM IST**

**FIFA World Cup  
is my obsession,  
says Kylian  
Mbappe after  
firing France into  
quarter-finals**

DOHA, DEC 5 /--/ Kylian Mbappe said Sunday he dreamed of winning the World Cup for a second time after his brace helped France to a 3-1 win over Poland which advanced the holders to the quarter-finals in Qatar. "Of course, this World Cup is an obsession for me, it's the competition of my dreams," said the 23-year-old who burst onto the global stage by starring when France won the title in Russia four years ago. "I have built my season around this competition and around being ready both physically and mentally for it. "I wanted to come here ready and so far things are going well, but we are still a long way from the objective we set and that I set." The Paris Saint-Germain superstar now has five goals in just four games at the tournament and is already France's second-top scorer ever at the World Cup with nine goals in 11 appearances overall. Only Just Fontaine, who scored an incredible 13 times at the 1958 tournament in Sweden, has more World Cup goals for France. However Mbappe insisted he was not bothered about the prospect of winning the Golden Ball for the tournament's best player. "The only objective for me is to win the World Cup which means now to win the quarter-final," said Mbappe, who also set up the opening goal against Poland for Olivier Giroud. (AFP)

## Japan vs Croatia, FIFA World Cup 2022 Croatia beat Japan 3-1 on penalties



DOHA, DEC 5 /--/ Japan and Croatia squandered a few early opportunities to score. But, just minutes before the half-time whistle, Daizen Maeda opened the scoring for Japan from a well-worked corner kick. Early into the second-half, Ivan Perisic put Croatia level 1-1 through a terrific header. The two teams couldn't be separated in 90 minutes, pushing the match into extra-time for the first time in this edition of the FIFA World Cup. Even in the extra-time, the two teams couldn't be separated. The Croatian goalkeeper stepped up in the shootout as his side secured a 3-1 (1-1) win in the penalty shootout. Japan will take on 2018 runners-up Croatia in the knockout round of the World Cup. The two teams squared off two previous times in group play. Croatia won in 1998, and the teams finished with a goalless draw eight years later.

This time, Japan won Group E after a come-from-behind 2-1 victory over Germany and Spain and is in the knockout round for back-to-back tournaments for the first time in team history. Croatia, the runner-up to France in the 2018 World Cup, is making its third appearance in the knockout round. Croatia beat Romania in 1998 to advance to the semifinals and defeated Denmark 3-2 on penalties in 2018 en route to the final game — a 4-2 loss to reigning World Cup champion France. It is the first time Croatia will play an Asian team in a World Cup knockout match after eight previous games against European teams.

### Nation pays tribute to Baba Saheb Ambedkar on his Mahaparinirvan Diwas

#### Government of India Dedicated to Inclusive Development

- ▶ Loan of ₹16 thousand Crore to 50 lakh of SC, OBC entrepreneurs and Safai karamcharis for self-employment in last 8 years
- ▶ 11.33 Crore OBC students benefited during last 8 years, under various schemes with assistance of ₹ 9284 Crore
- ▶ SC Students scholarship, which was ₹ 2700 Crore in 2014 has been increased 80% to ₹ 4,800 Crore in last 8 years
- ▶ Free training to 1.25 lakh SC youth for self employment and paid employment under PM DAKSH scheme
- ▶ 6500 SC majority villages, developed as Model villages.
- ▶ Financial and technical support to companies run by scheduled communities under the Ambedkar Social Innovation and Incubation Mission
- ▶ The SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act has been more strengthened, to provide a dignified living to the SCs, National Toll-free Helpline Number 14566 has been dedicated.
- ▶ National Portal for providing help and livelihood opportunities to transgender and people involved in begging - SMILE
- ▶ National Toll-free Helpline for Senior Citizens 14567 and 14446 for de-addiction

“Babasaheb was always devoted to the upliftment of the weak, downtrodden and marginalized. He inspired us all to serve humanity and create a future filled with justice, opportunity, dignity and harmony for all mankind.”

**Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister

All are cordially invited for Floral Tribute

Venue: Parliament House Lawns | Time: 9:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. | Date: 6<sup>th</sup> December | Entry: Opposite PTI Building, Sansad Marg, New Delhi

(Please do not bring prohibited articles such as Bags, Briefcase, Packets, Cell Phones, Pens, Camera, Flag, Lathis, Playcards, marshals, Banners, Firearms, Swords, Hailers and other objectionable items. Personal belongings may be deposited in the Foundation's stalls erected opposite PTI building.)