

Spruced up city gears up to welcome G20 delegates

Darkspots “dressed up” in white & green shroud



ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/--/ While the Port Blair city has been decked up to greet the foreign delegates who are arriving on November 25th 2022, to participate in the G20 India briefing meeting to be held at SwarajDweep on 25th & 26th November 2022, large white and green cloth sheets have been used to cover up the view of filthy drains and dilapidated structures in the city, all along the routes the foreign delegates are likely to travel in the city. Workers of APWD and PBMC were seen cleaning up roads, painting the roadside walls in the routes to be used by the foreign delegation. Giant banners have also been displayed from the airport to all roads in the city. As per sources, while

Ambassadors of few G20 member countries have already reached Port Blair, some foreign delegates will be arriving tomorrow by a chartered plane to participate in the 2-days G20 India briefing meet scheduled to be held at SwarajDweep on Nov 25th and 26th 2022. After landing at Port Blair, the delegates will leave for SwarajDweep in two private cruise vessels.

A series of cultural events, consisting of traditional dance and music will be performed for the visiting guests. The delegates will also visit Cellular Jail during their stay in the islands. The G20 is an intergovernmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economy and India has bagged G20 Presidency this year.

Padmanabhapuram Community Hall cries for attention

Neglect plagues the once “Royal Premises”

KARTIK

MAYABUNDER, NOV 24/--/Leaking roofs, broken windows, uprooted tiles, damaged doors, clogged washrooms and loose electric wiring has resulted the community hall at Padmanabhapuram under Shivapuram Gram Panchayat rendered unusable and calls for urgent renovation work. The residents of this region said that amid the space

Absence of a community hall has been causing inconvenience to the villagers. Be it any function or social gathering, the villagers are unable to accommodate large gatherings of people

crunch, they have been suffering for years due to the appalling condition of the community hall. Absence of a community hall has been causing inconvenience to the villagers. Be it any function or social gathering, the villagers are unable to accommodate large gatherings of people. During marriage or other social ceremonies, villagers have to look for community halls located in other localities. (Contd on page-6)



3-shops gutted in fire at SwarajDweep



ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/--/ A fire on Thursday gutted 3 shops housed in a Panchayat building at SwarajDweep. As per reports, the fire was reportedly caught due to a short circuit in which three LPG cylinders were also blasted. Two fire tenders immediately reached the spot and put the fire blaze under control. The Fire served department is assessing the damages in the fire incident.

MP seeks repair of youth hostel, adding more rooms

PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/--/ The Member of Parliament, Mr Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Lt. Governor to repair the Youth Hostel and also extend it by adding more rooms so that more and more youths from inter-islands can get affordable and safe shelter at Port Blair. In a letter, Mr Sharma mentioned that the Youth Hostel, situated near Netaji Sports Complex used to be one of the most favourite



places for youths of inter-island for lodging and boarding because of affordable lodging and boarding facilities, clean toilet, secure campus, central location and excellent management. He added that the Youth Hostel had two wings for male and one wing for female guests with locker facilities and an affordable canteen for everyone. (Contd on page-6)

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Jama Masjid withdraws order banning entry of women after LG's request

NEW DELHI, NOV 24 /--/ The Jama Masjid on Thursday withdrew a controversial order restricting the entry of women in the mosque, after an outrage over the issue prompted Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena to intervene.

The notice by the mosque's administration read: "Jama Masjid mein ladki ya ladkiyon ka akele daakhla mana hai (The entry of a girl or girls is not permitted in Jama Masjid)." "The LG spoke to me. We have removed the notice boards. But people visiting the mosque have to maintain its sanctity," Syed Ahmed Bukhari, the Shahi Imam of the Jama Masjid, told news agency PTI. The administration of the mosque had put up notices outside the main gates banning the entry of "girls", whether alone or in groups. As the issue led to an

outrage in some quarters, the Shahi Imam had earlier in the day stepped in to say the order was not applicable to those coming to offer prayers. The notices, which had no date, came up a few days ago outside the three main entry gates, sources in the mosque administration said.

Earlier in the day, the National Commission for Women (NCW) asked the Centre and the Delhi government to take appropriate action against the ban on the entry of 'girls' into the Jama Masjid here, calling it gender-biased and a violation of fundamental rights of women worshippers. The mosque administration has put up notices outside the main gates banning the entry of 'girls', whether alone or in groups, and as controversy escalated, its Shahi Imam said the order is not applicable to those coming to offer prayers.

The Constitution guarantees citizens the right to religious freedom and associated cultural practices, and prohibits gender-based discrimination, the NCW, which took suo motu cognisance of the matter, said. The notices, which have no date, came up a few days ago outside the three main entry gates of the mosque, said sources in the administration of the 17th century Mughal era monument that attracts thousands of devout as well as tourists. However, it has come to attention only now.

"The diktat of Jama Masjid is gender-biased and is a violation of fundamental rights of the women worshippers to pray. Chairperson Rekha Sharma has written to secretary, ministry of minority affairs and secretary, department of social welfare, government of Delhi to take appropriate

action in the matter and to ensure the right of women to practice religion as enshrined in the Constitution," the NCW said in its statement. The commission has also written to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal to look into the matter and take appropriate measures, it said.

The issue led to an outrage in some quarters as women rights activists termed the mosque's decision regressive and unacceptable. Ranjana Kumari, an activist, said this is completely unacceptable. "What kind of 10th century mindset is this. We are a democratic country how they can do this. How can they bar women," she told PTI.

"This diktat takes us 100 years back. This is not just regressive but shows what kind of mindset these religious groups have about girls. (PTI)



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with his sister and party's general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during Bharat Jodo Yatra in Khandwa

It's time to generate income from electricity than getting it for free: PM in Gujarat

MODASA, NOV 24 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said it was time to generate income from electricity instead of getting it for free, in an apparent move to counter the Aam Aadmi Party and the Congress over their promise of free electricity in poll-bound Gujarat.

Addressing an election rally in Modasa town of Aravalli district in north Gujarat, Modi said only he knows the art through which people will be able to earn money from electricity. The Prime Minister also slammed the Congress, saying it believes in the formula of "divide and rule" and focusses only on how to be in power.

AAP national convener and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has been trying to woo voters with a promise that just like the national capital and Punjab, his party would provide free electricity up to 300 units per month if voted to power in the BJP-ruled Gujarat. Kejriwal has on many occasions claimed he is the only politician in the country who has "mastered this magic of providing free electricity".

The Opposition Congress has also joined the bandwagon and mentioned in its election manifesto



that the party will also provide free electricity up to 300 units if voted to power in Gujarat, where the Assembly polls are scheduled on December 1 and 5. On Thursday, Modi said he wants to see people across Gujarat earning money from excess electricity generated from solar rooftop systems instead of just getting it for free.

"You must have seen how the entire Modhera village (in Mehsana district) is now running on rooftop solar power. They are using electricity as per their need and sell excess power (to the government). I want to replicate this system across Gujarat," the Prime Minister said.

"Under this system, you can earn money by selling excess electricity generated from solar panels. Only Modi knows this art wherein people will be able to earn from electricity," said the Prime Minister. He told the audience that a woman from Modhera is now planning to buy a refrigerator and an air-conditioner as electricity has become affordable after the installation of rooftop solar power.

"She told me that though her family was able to afford the appliances earlier, they refrained because they could not bear the running cost. Now, they can afford it because electricity is free. I am working to bring this revolution at the doorstep of each and every household in Gujarat," Modi said. The Prime Minister reminded the people of Aravalli that there was a time when farmers of this district were killed in police firing under the Congress rule for demanding affordable electricity for agricultural use.

Modi said now the farmers are themselves generating electricity through solar panels installed on unused corners of their farms. "They can also sell excess electricity and earn money. The era of demanding affordable electricity has gone. Today, you can generate income by selling electricity," he said. On the occasion, Modi also slammed the Congress, saying the opposition party only believes in the formula of "divide and rule" and it only focusses on how to get power.

"Rajasthan is near your border, have you seen any development in that state? Have you seen any good news coming out of that state? The Congress cannot do development," he said. (PTI)

Priyanka joins Bharat Jodo Yatra; woman in MP village asks Rahul to announce farm loan waiver

BORGAON/RUSTAMPUR, NOV 24 /--/ Congress general secretary in-charge of Uttar Pradesh Priyanka Gandhi Vadra along with her husband and son joined the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by her brother Rahul Gandhi in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday.

During the foot march in Rustampur village of Khandwa district, a 63-year-old woman suggested to Rahul Gandhi that if he wants the Congress to come to power in MP, where the Assembly polls are due next year, he should announce the waiver of farmers' loans. On the second day of the yatra's Madhya Pradesh leg, Rahul started the foot march from Borgaon in Khandwa district after sunrise. Priyanka, her husband Robert Vadra and son Rehan were seen matching steps with Rahul for the first time since the yatra started on September 7 from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu.

Congress workers raised slogans in support of Rahul

and his sister and tried to come close to them, but police were seen making hectic efforts to prevent them from doing so. The yatra, a mass contact initiative of the Congress, entered its 78th day on Thursday. Talking to news agency PTI after the foot march entered Rustampur, Anita Mahajan (63), hailing from a family of farmers, said, "I told Rahul that if he announces loan waiver for farmers, his party's government would surely be formed in MP." The woman also suggested to Rahul to make efforts for a reduction in the prices of cooking gas and chemical fertilisers and a hike in the government's pension for widows.

Farm loan waiver was the Congress' main plank in the 2018 Madhya Pradesh Assembly polls, which the party had won and formed government after 15 years. But, later 20 MLAs quit the Congress, resulting in the collapse of the Kamal Nath government in March 2020.

BJP came back to power in the state on March 23, 2020 under the leadership of chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Meanwhile, on the second day of the yatra in MP on Thursday, Rahul also tried his hands at the bow and arrow amid a group of tribals. He also made his sister Priyanka, brother-in-law, nephew, Congress veteran Digvijaya Singh and other party leaders to give it a try. Police personnel on both sides of the road held ropes as part of the security to Rahul. Rajasthan's former deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot was also seen walking along with Rahul and Priyanka during the foot march.

The yatra will enter Rajasthan from Madhya Pradesh on December 4, after covering a distance of 380 km. Pilot has joined the foot march at a time when demands for the change of leadership have been raised again in Rajasthan, before the entry of Rahul's yatra into the desert state. (PTI)

Little-known outfit IRC claims responsibility for Mangaluru blast

BENGALURU, NOV 24 /--/ A little-known outfit Islamic Resistance Council (IRC) has reportedly claimed responsibility for the Mangaluru blast on November 19, saying that one of its 'Mujahid brother Mohammed Shariq' attempted to attack a 'Hindutva Temple in Kadri.' The Additional Director General of Police (law and order) Alok Kumar said the police are verifying the genuineness of the organisation. "We the Islamic Resistance Council (IRC) would like to convey the message: One of our Mujahid brother Mohammed Shariq attempted to attack the Hindutva Temple in Kadri (in Dakshina Kannada district), a bastion of the Saffron terrorists in Mangaluru," the message which has gone viral in social media said. It further said: "Although this operation didn't meet its

objectives, we still consider it a success from a trade craft and tactics point of view as the brother in spite of being wanted and being pursued by the state and central intelligence agencies, was not only able to successfully evade them but even prepared and mounted an attack."

For the 'premature explosion' which led to Shariq's arrest, the outfit said such possibilities exist with 'all military and subversive operations.' The outfit even warned the ADGP Alok Kumar. "As for those rejoicing at the arrest of the brother, especially the likes of ADGP Alok Kumar, we say 'Your joy will be short-lived and you shall reap the fruits of your oppression soon. We have you in our sights and it is just a matter of what and not if we will get to you.'" Regarding the attack, the IRC said they are forced into this war and the path of

resistance by the fascists and "We are only responding to the worst forms of state terrorism."

"We are only retaliating because an open war has been declared upon us, because mob lynching has become a norm, because oppressive laws and legislations are passed to suppress us and interfere in our religion, because our innocents are languishing in prisons, because public spaces today reverberate with call of our genocide," the outfit said. Reacting to the viral post, Alok Kumar said: "We are verifying the genuineness of the avowed organisation and veracity of the contents of the post."

On November 19, Mohammed Shariq, who was at large, was travelling in an autorickshaw with a cooker which exploded in Mangaluru injuring him and the driver. Police called the blast an act of terror. (PTI)

Centre to introduce law to regulate digital media: I&B minister Thakur

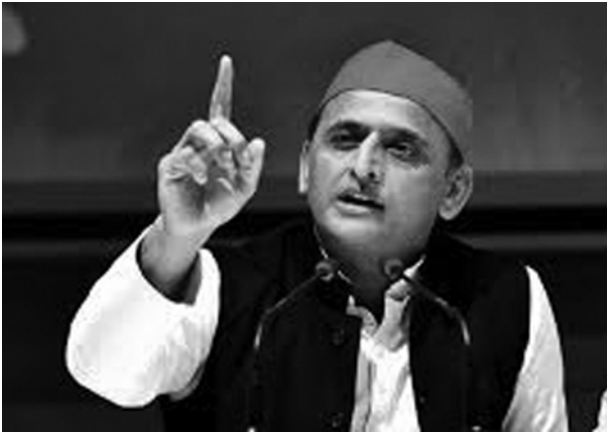
JAIPUR, NOV 24 /--/ Union information and broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur has said the Centre is working on a bill to regulate digital media. Thakur said there used to be one-way communication of news earlier, but with the development of electronic and digital media, communication of news has become multidimensional. Now even small news of a village reaches the national platform through digital media, he said on Wednesday. In a statement, Thakur said the government has left most of the print, electronic, and digital media to self-regulation. "Digital media presents opportunities as well as challenges. To have a fine balance, the government will see what can be done on this."

"I would say that changes have to be brought in law, we will bring that to make your work simple and easy. We are working to introduce a bill," Thakur said at an event organised by Hindi news daily Mahanagar Times. The Union minister also said that the process of registration of newspapers will be simplified and the central government will soon bring a new law to replace the 1867 Press and Registration of Books Act. Under the new law, it will be possible to complete the registration process, which now takes about four months, in a week through online mode.

The minister also said newspapers should bring the "right news" before the general public at the "right time." He said along with the shortcomings of the government, public welfare schemes and policies of the government should reach to the common people. Thakur urged the media to do its work "responsibly" and avoid creating an atmosphere of "fear and confusion." The Union minister assured journalists that the Centre takes care of their interests and added that financial assistance was provided to families of the journalists who died of Covid. (PTI)

Akhilesh hints at contesting 2024 LS polls from Kannauj

KANNAUJ, NOV 24 /--/ Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday indicated that he may contest the 2024 parliamentary elections from Kannauj, which had elected him as an MP for the first time. "It is our job to contest... what will I do sitting idle? I will contest from where I had contested the first election," Akhilesh told reporters here when asked if he will contest from Kannauj in 2024. The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister, however, said the party would take a decision at the right time. Akhilesh Yadav was here to attend a private function organised by party leader Sunil Kumar Gupta alias 'Munna Bhaiya'. To a question as to why he has fielded his wife Dimple Yadav from Mainpuri in the December 5 by-poll as she had previously contested from Kannauj, the SP chief said: "Elections are in 2024 again."



The by-poll in Mainpuri has been necessitated following the death of sitting MP and SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav. To repeated questions by media persons if contesting the next Lok Sabha polls from Kannauj is final, the SP chief said: "The party will decide." Akhilesh who was elected to the Lok Sabha from Azamgarh seat in the last Lok Sabha elections had resigned from the seat after being elected to assembly from Karhal early this year to remain active in state politics. The SP leader won three elections from Kannauj parliamentary seat since 2000, first he won the by-poll and then 2004 and 2009 general elections. After becoming the chief minister, he was elected to the UP Legislative Council, and Dimple Yadav represented Kannauj winning the by-poll in 2012 and then again winning it in 2014 general elections.

Dimple, however, lost the seat in the 2019 elections to BJP's Subrat Pathak. On being told that fielding Dimple Yadav in Mainpuri by-poll has led to confusion among the workers in Kannauj, Akhilesh described Kannauj as his 'karmabhoomi' and said that the people of Kannauj have elected him as MP thrice. He asserted that the people here have always given him affection and love and so he can never leave Kannauj. Veteran socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia had represented Kannauj in Parliament in 1967 as a Samyukta Socialist Party nominee. Known for the perfume trade, Kannauj constituency was carved out of Farrukhabad in 1997. Akhilesh who is presently busy campaigning in Mainpuri bypoll said that people were supporting the Samajwadi Party there in a big way. Every section is extending support to Samajwadi Party as 'Netaji' gave new dimensions to Mainpuri Lok Sabha constituency and had a strong association. The people of Mainpuri themselves are contesting the elections, he added. After attending the function, Yadav left for Mainpuri. (PTI)

Pilot traitor, can't be made Rajasthan CM: Gehlot

NEW DELHI, NOV 24 /--/ Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot called Sachin Pilot a "gaddar" (traitor) on Thursday and said he cannot replace him as he had revolted against the Congress in 2020 and tried to topple his own government.

The remarks have further widened the fissures in the Congress party in Rajasthan, where Assembly polls are slated next year. The Bharat Jodo Yatra, led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, is also set to enter the desert state. Pilot, who walked alongside Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday, did

not react to Gehlot's remarks.

Gehlot also alleged that Union Home Minister and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Amit Shah was involved in Pilot's rebellion, when some Congress MLAs loyal to him were holed up in a Gurugram resort for more than a month and Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan visited them often, claiming that he has proof that an amount of Rs 10 crore was paid to each of those legislators, including Pilot.

The veteran leader also said the Congress can replace him with any of its 102 MLAs in Rajasthan except Pilot if the top

leadership feels that the prospects of the party would improve in next year's Assembly polls. "The MLAs will never accept someone who has revolted and has been dubbed as a gaddar. How can he become the chief minister? How can the MLAs accept such a person as the chief minister? I have proof that Rs 10 crore each were distributed to the MLAs holed up in a Gurugram resort for toppling the Congress government in Rajasthan," Gehlot told NDTV. He said one will never find an example where a party president "tries to topple his own government". Rajasthan BJP chief Satish Punia has,

however, denied the charge that the saffron party was involved in paying money to Congress legislators in 2020 to defect.

Gehlot said if Pilot had apologised to the MLAs and won them over, things would have been different. "Till now, he has not apologised."

If he had apologised, I would not have had to apologise," the chief minister said, referring to his apology to former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi after more than 90 MLAs close to him did not allow a Congress Legislature Party meeting to take place. Asked if Pilot can still replace him if the high-command decides so,

Gehlot said it is a hypothetical question. "How will that happen? That cannot happen," he said. The Rajasthan chief minister said a recent meeting of the party MLAs after they did not allow the CLP meet to take place was not a rebellion but a "revolt against Pilot who tried to topple his own government". Gehlot and Pilot have been at loggerheads over chief ministership ever since the Congress won the Rajasthan polls in 2018.

While Gehlot has been saying that Pilot's 2020 rebellion cannot be ignored and that he does not enjoy the support of a majority of the Congress MLAs, the Pilot camp has been

claiming that the legislators want a change in the leadership. There have been murmurs in the Rajasthan Congress over a possible change in the leadership, but the same is being resisted by another section too.

Gehlot has been saying that the 90 MLAs who had saved the government during Pilot's rebellion are loyal to the party high-command and not to him. He said the legislators wanted Pilot to at least apologise to the party high-command and the people of Rajasthan. The chief minister expressed the hope that the Congress high-command will do justice with Rajasthan. (PTI)



A delegation led by Australian High Commissioner to India and Ambassador to Bhutan, Mr. Barry O' Farrell, including Australian Consul-General, Chennai Ms Sarah Kirew & 4 members currently on visit to A&N Islands for G20 India briefing event, called on Admiral D K Joshi (Retd.), Lt Governor, A&N Islands on Thursday at RajNiwas. They discussed avenues for furthering interaction with Andaman & Nicobar Administration, including Education links, Trade & Investment relationship, under the aegis of the India Economic Strategy and Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement.

CITU State Conference at Port Blair

PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/-/- The 9th Andaman & Nicobar State Conference of CITU will be held at Port Blair on 26th and 27th November, 2022. The Conference will begin with the Open Session at Tiranga Park in the evening of 26th November, 2022. A massive procession will take out from Tiranga Park at 3.30 p.m on 26th November, 2022 which will converge into a public meeting at 4.30 p.m. at Tiranga Park. Shri AK Padmanabhan, All India Vice President of CITU will inaugurate the Open Session. The delegate session of the Conference will begin at AtulSmritySamity Hall (Bengali Club), Port Blair at 9.30 a.m on 27th November, 2022. The venue of the Conference has been named after RanjanaNirula, the former leader of the CITU while the Manch of the Conference has been named after late VK

Krishnadas, a prominent trade union leader of Middle Andaman. About 125 Delegates and Observers from different parts of the union territory representing a number of trade unions will attend the Delegate Session. General Secretary, State Committee will present the report on the functioning of CITU for the last 3 years while the Treasurer will present the Audited Accounts. Delegates will participate in the discussion on the Report and Audited Accounts. The 9th State Conference is being held after 3 years of the last Conference held in November, 2019.

The Delegate Session is expected to discuss various demands of the working class and adopt resolutions on it. The new State Committee of the CITU will also be elected in the Delegate Session.

NABARD sanctions project for geographical indications tagging of seven products from ANI

PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/-/- NABARD Andaman and Nicobar Regional Office had sanctioned a project for geographical indications tagging of seven products from Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The products include NicobariHodi Craft, Andaman and Nicobar Coconut, Nicobari Mat, Nicobari Traditional virgin Coconut Oil, Nicobari Hut, Andaman Black Rice, Padauk furniture and craft.

Application for the Geographical Indication tag was filed for NicobariHodi craft on 21.10.2022, which makes it the first product from Andaman and

Nicobar Islands to be filed for Geographical Indications tagging. The application for remaining 6 products are in the final stages of submission. Human Welfare Association, Varanasi is NABARDs technical partner for the project. Geographical Indication tagging of products have proven to increase the marketability of products in national and international market and has also enabled producers to command a premium price in the market in addition to promoting tourism. This project is in line with vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of local to global and is expected to benefit the farmers, artisans and MSME from the Islands.

ANTCC President raises problems of farmers at Campbell Bay



PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/-/- The ANTCC President, Mr. Rangalal Halder has raised genuine issues faced by the farmers of Campbell Bay. In his letter addressed to the Director of Agriculture, he said that the farmers are suffering due to the unfriendly attitude of the department. He said that the administration has earlier given Minimum Support Price on sale of Copra/Coconuts crops. However, for the past 3-4 years, this practice was discontinued and their crops were not considered to be purchased under MSP. The farmers have to sell their produce to private people at Rs. 6 to 8 per piece which caused a huge loss to the farmers. He said that the farmers are unable to support their family from the meagre income with the sale of copra/Coconut crops without considering MSP.

which are used to provide seeds and fertilizers to the farmers. He further demanded the Administration on behalf of the farmers of Campbell Bay to fix the Coconuts and Copra prices under MSP immediately in considering the faith of the residents in Campbell Bay.

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Everyone is a genius at least once a year. The real geniuses simply have their bright ideas closer together

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

Assam-Meghalaya border dispute refuses to die

Assam and Meghalaya have a longstanding dispute over 12 areas of the 884.9 km long inter-state border. The two north-eastern states had signed a Memorandum of Understanding in March in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi to end the dispute in six of them and initiated discussions to resolve the disputes in the remaining six. Meghalaya was carved out of Assam in 1972 and its challenge of the Assam Reorganisation Act, 1971, led to the dispute. This is not the only state Assam has a border dispute with. Last year, the Assam-Mizoram border witnessed a massive escalation of tension, ending in violence which claimed the lives of five Assam policemen. At least 42 Assam Police personnel were injured. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Meghalaya counterpart Conrad Sangma had signed an agreement in March to resolve the five-decade-old dispute, but the two states share a rocky border dispute that led to violence earlier this year. The firing triggered unrest in the already disputed region and forced authorities to block the internet to avoid any further escalation. The incident happened just months after the chief ministers of the two bordering states signed an agreement in March to resolve the five-decade-old dispute in six of the 12 contested areas along their 884.9 km-long border between the two states.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who mediated the dispute at the time, called the accord historic and said 70 per cent of the dispute will be resolved with its signing. Sarma and Sangma held talks to resolve the dispute in the remaining areas in August. But, at least six people were killed on Tuesday in violence at the disputed Assam-Meghalaya border after a truck allegedly laden with illegally felled timber was intercepted by forest guards from Assam. Meghalaya CM in a tweet tagging Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Assam CM Himanta Sarma soon complained that the Assam police and forest guards entered Meghalaya and resorted to unprovoked firing. On the other hand, Assam police officials, however, said the truck was intercepted in the West Karbi Anglong district of the state by a state Forest Department team and a mob from the Meghalaya side had later attacked the team of forest guards and policemen from the state, which led firing by the Assamese side to control the situation.

Before Independence, Assam formed the major chunk of the northeast and consisted of present-day Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya, besides Mizoram, which later became separate states. However, Meghalaya was carved out of Assam in 1971 under the Assam Reorganisation Act 1971, a piece of legislation that was challenged by the newly created state and that's when the dispute began. The main bone of contention between Meghalaya and Assam is Meghalaya's Langpih district, which borders the Kamrup district of Assam. It was earlier part of Assam and became a disputed territory thereafter. The other point of controversy is the Mikir Hills, which Assam considers to be its part, but Meghalaya also claims its authority over the region. Now Karbi Anglong region is part of Assam. Meghalaya says these were parts of erstwhile United Khasi and Jaintia Hills districts. The 12 prime disputed locations that sum up the Assam-Meghalaya dispute are Upper Tarabari, Gazang reserve forest, Hahim, Langpih, Borduar, Boklapara, Nongwah, Matamur, Khanapara-Pilangkata, Deshdemoreah Block I and Block II, Khanduli and Retacherra.

New Data Protection Bill boosts feminists

REFLEX ACTION

K Raveendran

feminists would be immensely pleased with the new law, but it is a moot point whether such symbolism is enough for the empowerment of women in the country.

The new draft takes care of some of the objections that activists and the opposition parties had raised about the previous bill, which was withdrawn in the wake of the strong opposition. But it still retains powers for the Centre to monitor data in national interest, a provision that is bound to continue causing eyebrows to go up.

A major departure is the provision in the new draft for cross-border interactions of data with certain notified countries and territories, which are friendly to India. This is a victory for the world's IT giants, which have been lobbying for such a facility citing cost benefits. Asia Internet Coalition, a lobby group that represents Meta, Google, Amazon and others had lobbied that the companies be given the freedom to decide on cross-border transfer of data. The group had argued that placing restrictions on cross-border data flows was likely to result in higher business failure rates, introduce barriers for start-ups, and lead to more expensive product offerings from existing market players. This will ultimately affect digital

inclusion and the ability of Indian consumers to access a truly global internet and quality of services, the group had insisted.

On the positive side, the proposed new law places restrictions on companies in the use of personal data collected at various levels while dealing with customers. The draft stipulates that companies only use the data they have collected from users only for the purpose for which it was originally collected. It also seeks accountability from the firms that they ensure that they are processing the personal data for the users for the precise purpose they collected it. Companies are also not supposed to store the data perpetually by default. According to a note from the IT ministry, the storage should be limited to such duration as is necessary for the stated purpose for which personal data was collected. The draft proposes various penalties for violations and failures. A penalty of up to Rs 250 crore is provided for failure to ensure reasonable security safeguards to prevent personal data breach. Penalties of up to Rs 250 crore are slapped if a firm fails to notify the authorities and users about personal data breach.

The draft is, however, expected to meet continued opposition over much of the retention of control over citizens data and access to it for the government and its agencies. The government was forced to withdraw the earlier bill due to political as well as judicial pressure on account of the scope for abusing personal data both by the government as well as the companies collecting such data. (IPA)



A vegetable vendor sets up his wares for sale at Bowbazar market on Thursday--Arijit Ganguly

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

ACROSS					DOWN				
1	Expensive	1	Scarcity		1	Scarcity			
3	Catch sight of	2	Fruit		2	Fruit			
7	Wrath	4	Knight's title		4	Knight's title			
8	Copious	5	Royal family member		5	Royal family member			
11	Ireland (poet)	6	Japanese currency unit		6	Japanese currency unit			
12	Citrus fruit	9	Become less		9	Become less			
13	Long lock	10	Printers measures		10	Printers measures			
15	Diplomacy	11	Tempt		11	Tempt			
18	Sibilant sound	14	Little wave		14	Little wave			
19	Waterway	16	Reluctant		16	Reluctant			
20	Bring out	17	Verified facts		17	Verified facts			
21	Pass over	19	Spirit		19	Spirit			
23	Worth	21	Drink slowly		21	Drink slowly			
24	Unwell	22	Everyone		22	Everyone			
25	Rawhide								
26	Camera part								

SUDOKU:3706

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

Yesterday's Solution 3705

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

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1714

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

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North East India-Bangladesh trade gets a big boost

FOCUS

Ashis Biswas

Thanks to improved regional connectivity and growing bilateral interest, the volume of trade between India's Northeastern states and Bangladesh has gone up significantly in recent years. Present trends are positive enough to generate optimism among analysts about medium term prospects of North East India-Bangladesh bilateral trade: they feel that the foundation of a new trade/business hub dominated by imports and exports, has finally been laid.

The present phase of growth is the outcome of consistent efforts made by both Indian and Bangladeshi authorities during the past decade to explore new ways for expanding bilateral trade. The exercise fitted in well with India's own regional Look East initiative, seeking to extend its diplomatic/economic outreach. While welcoming the growth in Indo-Bangla bilateral trade, Chambers of Commerce sources are hopeful that growing economic ties between the two countries could well ensure the success of the Look East programme: by way of comparison. It can be seen Indo-Myanmar bilateral business, largely because of the volatility of Myanmar's domestic politics, has not progressed smoothly in recent years.

Broadly speaking, Bangladesh imports more finished products and value-added items from India, whereas the bigger country imports comparatively goods less processed and raw materials. This naturally results in

a negative balance of trade for the smaller country. Both countries have over the years tried to reduce the gap to the extent possible, through periodic negotiations and re-arrangements of existing terms of trade.

By reducing levies / withdrawing tariff on some Bangladeshi goods, India has tried to accommodate Bangladesh as far as possible. Occasionally this has evoked protests within India from sections of entrepreneurs, especially in the textile sector, who complained of losing their domestic markets. On the other hand, Bangladesh, faced with growing trade imbalance, feels India could be more helpful. However, with industry and manufacturing picking up in Bangladesh in recent years, its exports have grown gradually more sophisticated.

Recent Assam-based media reports indicate that the Northeastern states imported from Bangladesh taka 367 crore worth of items during 2019-20, a sharp increase from the year before, when the figure was tk 40 crore! (One Bangladeshi taka equals about 85/90 paise of the Indian rupee). The NE states exported tk 472 crore worth of goods in 2018-19 and good worth tk 390 crore during 2019-20. During bilateral negotiations, it was generally agreed

that there was a rising demand in both countries to step up trade and business. The seven NE states sold to Bangladesh large quantities of coal, engineering items and products, auto equipment, besides coal, stones, eggs and onions, etc. There was a special demand in Bangladesh for tea produced in Assam, along with cotton and products, petroleum goods as well as glass items and ores from Meghalaya. Fruits and corn grown in Arunachal Pradesh and handicrafts from Manipur too, were popular in Bangladesh.

Similarly, in the NE region, there was good demand for cement, plastic items and packaged foods from Bangladesh, as well as for different varieties of fish--especially the Hilsa!

With India granting Bangladesh transit rights to access Nepal and Bhutan through its territory, experts are hopeful that the volume of regional trade as a whole would expand gradually. As both India and Bangladesh have agreed to use rivers, roads and railways linking both countries mutually, travel and easier movement of goods, involving the saving of both travel time and costs, have become possible. Moving through Bangladesh territory, the distance from Agartala to Kolkata has been reduced

from about 1600 kilometres through the long Assam detour, to about 600 kms only -- and time taken has been cut from about 48 hours earlier to about 32 hours at present.

Bangladeshi Prime Minister Mrs Sheikh Hasina during her meetings with Indian Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi, had suggested that NE-based industrialists/entrepreneurs could use the Chittagong and Mongla ports for their export trade, which were geographically much nearer than the Kolkata port. The use of Mongla port could ease the congestion and delays often experienced at Chittagong. Mongla port could earn more revenues, while Indian users could profit by saving travel time and costs, not to mention the occasional congestion at Kolkata port.

India has started dispatching engineering goods and foodgrains to Agartala from Kolkata port, using the river routes within Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, efforts are on among entrepreneurs to ascertain the possibilities of expanding trade with Nepal and Bhutan. Travel operators and agencies are confident of a rapid expansion in tourism and related activities.

Bangladesh is also keen to import power from both Nepal and Bhutan, to meet its growing domestic demand. At present, the country receives fuel supplies through a pipeline from Bongaigaon refinery complex running through North Bengal. (IPA)

President, State BJP chairs vital party meeting



PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/--/ Mr. Ajoy Bairagi, State BJP President, along with Mr. Sanjay Singh, State BJP Vice President during their ongoing visit to Nicobar group of Islands, along with local leaders chaired organizational meet of party

karyakartas at Gandhinagar village, Laxmi Nagar village, Shastri Nagar village and discussed various burning issues concerning the villagers. Both the leaders also chaired a meeting of Party Karyakartas at Katchal village and discussed the problems faced by them.

Vishal holds series of meeting with Tribal leaders, Sri-Lankan settlers during 5-days tour



PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/--/ As part of the 05-days tour to Nancowry Group of Islands, Mr. Vishal Jolly, BJP's National Executive Member held a series of meetings at Katchal Island on 22th November 2022 in MRN Tribal Village, E-Wall Tribal village, Sri-Lankan Settler community.

During the interaction, Mr. Arun 1st Captain, Mr. Shankar Samsung, Vice Chief Captain and Mr. Philip 1st Captain and Tribal community members were present in the meeting. During the interaction, the villagers put forth their grievances in the meeting and he assured them of making all the efforts to redress their grievances at appropriate level. Further, interacting with Katchal Sri-Lankan Settler community, he enquired about the difficulties faced by them and they asked about the resettlement progress, Jolly assured and informed that the resettlement process is in its final stage, it will be implemented as early as possible.

Malik appears in court through videoconferencing in Rubaiya Sayeed kidnapping case

JAMMU, NOV 24/--/ Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Yasin Malik appeared before a special court here via videoconferencing on Thursday and cross-examined a witness in the 1989 kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed, the daughter of then Union home minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. Malik, who is lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail in a terror financing case, was not produced in the court physically due to a Ministry of Home Affairs order restricting his movement. Senior Public Prosecutor SK Bhat told reporters, "Today, accused Yasin Malik participated in the trial through videoconferencing... and did not oppose cross-examination of the witness." "I made a submission before the court as a CBI representative that production warrant should not be issued

as he participated in the trial. Court accepted that and no production warrant was issued," he said. The court asked the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to produce the rest of the witnesses on the next date of hearing on December 23. Rubaiya did not appear for the hearing, as her exemption application had earlier been approved by the court. Bhat said two witnesses were scheduled to record their statements in the court. While one of them, a retired doctor, was present in the court, the other was in Saudi Arabia and could not join the trial, he said. Another witness' exemption application was approved by the court as he was reported to be undergoing dialysis, he said. The retired doctor's statement was recorded in the court in the presence of Yasin Malik, he said. Bhat said that Malik

seeking his physical appearance in the court was a ploy to delay the trial. "Due to security reasons, it is not feasible to produce him here," he said. During the last hearing on July 15, Rubaiya had identified five accused, including Malik. Rubaiya was abducted from near Lal Ded Hospital on December 8, 1989. She was freed five days later after the then VP Singh government, supported by the BJP, released five terrorists in exchange. Now living in Tamil Nadu, Rubaiya is listed as a prosecution witness by the CBI, which took over the case in early 1990. Malik, 56, is lodged in Tihar Jail after he was sentenced by a special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court in May. He was arrested in early 2019 in connection with the 2017 terror financing case registered by the NIA. Malik had observed a 10-day hunger strike from July 22 after the Centre did not respond to his plea to physically appear in the Jammu court hearing in the abduction case. (PTI)

Labourer in actor's farm house gets 43 yrs jail term in POCSO case

BENGALURU, NOV 24/--/ A special POCSO court in Mysuru has sentenced a labourer from Bihar to 43 years in prison for sexually assaulting a nine-year-old girl. Judge Shayma Khamroz found Najeeb (33) guilty and sentenced him on charges under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. A fine for Rs 50,000 was imposed on him. Najeeb was employed in Vinish Darshan Katewari Stud Farm owned by Kannada actor Darshan. He used to look after the horses

at the farm house located on T Narasipura Road. According to prosecution, the 33-year-old man repeatedly sexually assaulted the minor in 2021. The matter came to light after the victim narrated the ordeal to her parents, who brought it to the notice of the stud farm management. Subsequently, a complaint was lodged with the police, following which a case was registered. The court directed Karnataka State Legal Services Authority to release a compensation of Rs 7 lakh to the victim. (PTI)

Block level Science Exhibition at Campbell Bays school



CAMPBELL BAY, NOV 24/--/ A Block level Science Exhibition was held today at Govt. Sr. Sec. School Campbell Bay under the 'Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan'. The exhibition was inaugurated by Dr. Nitin Shakya, Assistant Commissioner, Campbell Bay as the chief guest. Shri Ayyub Hassan, Divisional Forest Officer was the guest of honour. Altogether 17 models in the field of Agriculture, Biology, Physics and Mathematics were demonstrated in a befitting manner. The handicrafts made up of waste materials were also displayed. In his address, the chief guest appreciated the exhibition and remarked that it is an example of successful endeavour in bringing out the talents of the children in remote area. He also lauded the efforts of the students, teachers and the Principal in organizing this exhibition. Visitors, especially Government officials visited the exhibition and appreciated the hard work of the students. The winners of this exhibition will participate in Port Blair Exhibition competition.

ABVP seeks for continuation of admission process in ALC

PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/--/ The ABVP, A&N Islands has demanded to continue the admission process by conducting counselling sessions in Andaman Law College. Mr. Siddhanth Rai Sharma, State Joint Secretary, ABVP through a representation expresses the immediate need of arranging counselling sessions for 2022-23. The letter conveys that more than 1500 aspirants are willing to take admission in Andaman Law College. The counselling is still pending after the release to the list of students eligible to attain the counseling. Further, expressing concern on this issue, he has written that the unusual delay in admission of 1st year students in Andaman Law College will create undue burden to the students.

Jolly hoists BJP party flag at remote Katchal



PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/--/ Mr. Vishal Jolly, BJP's National Executive Member hoisted BJP party flag at Katchal Settler Basthi, Mildera Village, on 23rd November 2022, in presence of representatives of Katchal Settler Welfare Association and residents and party workers. His efforts are that the party's ideology should reach even to the remotest part of the country.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **FATHIMA**, R/o Mathura, under Ferrargunj Tehsil, South Andaman hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under:-
1. That in my passport bearing No. N0074457 my surname was blank. So I am facing hardship officially. I am not having any individual surname. So I hereby declare that my name and surname is **FATHIMA**.
2. That the affidavit is made for the purpose of declaration of my surname as **FATHIMA** to record the same in my above said Passport record.
The above said statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
Place: Port Blair
Date: 23.11.2022
DEPONENT

Vishal expresses gratitude to CS

PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/--/ Mr. Vishal Jolly, BJP's National Executive Member has expressed gratitude to the Chief Secretary for considering his request for allocation of more seats in Port Blair CTET Examination & more Examination Centres in order to ensure & allow all aspiring students to ap-



pear for the CTET exam, by pursuing the matter with CBSE. Accordingly, capacity has increased by allocation of additional 3000 seats in Port Blair CTET examination centre. Now all the candidates of the Islands can appear for this examination in Port Blair without any hurdle.

Mariyam, team discuss health related issues with Secretary (Health)



PORT BLAIR, NOV 24/--/ A delegation led by Miss V. K. Mariyam Bibi, Zilla Parishad member of Bambooflat, along with Smti Dhana Rekha, ZPM Shorepoint, Mr. A. Ummer, ZPM, Wimberlygunj and Smti Rasheeda Bibi, Pradhan Hopetown met Mr. Arjun Sharma Secretary (Health) on Wednesday. Problems faced by the patients due to

non-availability of ultrasound facilities in CHC Bambooflat for the last few days due to transfer of doctors from CHC Bambooflat were discussed. They requested the Secretary (Health) to provide one Radiologist to take ultrasound at least once in a week as the public has to wait for a long time to get an ultrasound at GB pant hospital. They also

demand for one Pediatrician to be appointed at CHC Bambooflat for taking care of child's health. They expressed their gratitude towards the Secretary (Health) and DHS for providing Gynecologist, Surgeon at CHC Bambooflat for giving better health care facilities to the people. The Secretary assured the delegation to do the needful at the earliest.

Try to reduce friction, HC tells Ukrainian mother on meeting 3-year-old son

NEW DELHI, NOV 24/--/ The idea is to interact with her three-year-old son and make him feel comfortable, the Delhi High Court told a Ukrainian woman on Thursday and asked her to try and reduce the "areas of friction" with her estranged Indian husband. The woman has alleged that the child was illegally brought to India from Ukraine by his father during the Russia-Ukraine war. The court was informed that in pursuance to its earlier directions, the family -- the boy, his parents and sister -- spent some time together at the Delhi High Court or the court and they wish to interact with each other again. The woman, who along with her daughter has come to India to meet the child, told a bench of justices Siddharth Mridul and Amit Sharma that on November 22, when they were with the child at the court and she took his

pictures for memories, her former husband forcibly got those deleted from her phone. To this, the court said, "You try and reduce the areas of friction. The idea is that you interact with your son, so do that. The child has to get to the stage where he is comfortable with the mother. Sometimes children get traumatised." The bench allowed the woman to meet and interact with the child at the court or the court or the boy's father said he had no objection to this arrangement. It asked the parties to appear before it again on Friday. In an endeavour to re-unite the child with his mother, the court had, on November 22, asked the family to spend some time together. The woman had earlier informed the court that she was divorced and though the minor's custody was granted to her by a court in Ukraine, her former husband took the boy away without informing her. The man and the child appeared in the court pursuant to earlier directions by which the bench had asked

the Delhi Police to trace them. The woman, in her plea moved through advocate Sravan Kumar, has alleged that her son was abducted by her former husband on March 23, when he had taken the child for a walk and not returned. (PTI)

CENTRAL WAREHOUSING CORPORATION
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Ph. No. (044) 2220 0350
Email ID: chennai.engineering@cewacorp.nic.in

Inviting E-Tender
E-NIT: 08/2022-23 Dt: 21.11.2022
PRESS NOTICE
CWC invites on-line tenders from the contractors for the following works: **Name of work:** Replacement of AC Sheets with Pre-coated Galvalume Sheets (0.6MM THICK) and Relaying of Road at Godown 1 (SINGLE SPAN) at CW, Port Blair. Estimated Cost: ₹ 55.00 Lakhs. Last date of on-line submission: 05.12.2022. Detailed Tender Notice along with Conditions of Contract and Notice Inviting E-Tender may be seen and downloaded from the CWC's website www.cewacorp.nic.in or e-tender website www.cewacprocure.com or CPP Portal <http://eprocure.gov.in> / e-publish/app. Further Corrigendum/Addendum to this Tender, if any, will be published on above websites only. Press advertisement in Newspapers shall not be issued for the same.
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

VETERINARY COUNCIL OF INDIA
(Statutory Body of the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India)
A-Wing, August Kranti Bhawan, Bhikaji Cama Place, New Delhi-110066
PUBLIC NOTICE

(VCI Counseling [15% seats] for Admission to First Year BVSc & AH Programme in Veterinary Colleges)
It is hereby notified that the Online Registration for VCI E-counseling for admission to B. V. Sc. & A.H course under 15% All India Quota in the recognized Veterinary Colleges for the academic year 2022-23 will commence from 28th November, 2022. The counseling and allotment of seats will be online and based on the merit in NEET- (UG) -2022. The Information Bulletin with other details may be seen in the website : www.vci.admissions.nic.in www.vci.dadf.gov.in and www.dahd.nic.in.
Dated: (D. Vinod Bhat)
Place: New Delhi Secretary (Addl. Charge) VCI
CBC-01222/12/0002/2223

MP seeks repair of youth hostel, adding more rooms

From page-1

He pointed out that the Youth Hostel was built with the funds made available by the centre and was under the Tourism Department initially and later it was handed over to the then Youth Affairs Department. He mentioned that the Youth Hostel was widely used for accommodating sports persons, cultural groups, school groups from inter- Islands. Also cultural groups from Mainland India were also accommodated in Youth Hostel many times. The Member of Parliament noted that in the last few years the Youth Hostel lost all its importance because of various reasons and hence presently the Youth Hostel is un-operational, which is a major setback for youths of various Islands, who have to pay heavily for lodging and boarding in private accommodations at Port Blair. Considering all these points, Mr. Sharma requested the Lt. Governor to intervene in this matter and do needful to repair the Youth Hostel and also extend it by adding more rooms.

Padmanabhapuram Community Hall cries for attention

From page-1

Constructed in the year 2009, this community has been used by the villagers for marriage and family functions. PRIs members also conduct village level meetings in this community hall on a regular basis. However, after its inauguration some 12 years ago, no repair work has been carried out. As a result of lack of repair work, the community hall at GP Shivapuram presents a picture of neglect. Speaking to EOI, a PRI of GP Shivapuram said that after years of delay, finally the estimates for carrying out the renovation work of the community hall have been sent to the Engineering Wing and immediately after approval, the tendering process for renovation of the community hall will be started. Villagers have complained that for organizing social events like marriages, birthday functions and village meetings, they have to depend on the neighbouring Panchayats. "If we are lucky enough, we get the booking of the community hall of our neighbouring Panchayats. However, first preference is given to the demands of their own villages", said a villager of Shivapuram.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with his sister and party's general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during Bharat Jodo Yatra in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh on Thursday

BJP committed to bring UCC but only after following all democratic process: Shah

NEW DELHI, NOV 24 /--/ Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the BJP is committed to bring Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the country but only after following all democratic processes and discussions on it.

Addressing an event here, he also exuded confidence in BJP's victory in the Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat Assembly elections as also in the MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) polls. The home minister credited Prime Minister Naredra Modi for making the country's politics free from the "naasur" (canker) of casteism, dynasty and appeasement. "Modi ji has made country's politics free from casteism, dynasty and appeasement and started politics of performance. Whosoever perform, will govern the country. Whosoever puts in effort, will govern the country. Those who are pro-country will govern (it). "Nobody would rule on the basis of place of one's birth or to the caste he or she belongs or how much appeasement somebody does," Shah said, adding that the country's people have accepted this policy of the Modi government.

Talking about the UCC, the home minister said it has been a promise of BJP since its days of Bhartiya Jan Sangh. "Not only BJP, the Constituent Assembly had also advised the Parliament and states that UCC should come in the country at an opportune time," he said at the Times Now Summit on 'India: A vibrant democracy, global bright spot'. Shah said for any secular country, laws should not be on the basis of religion. "If a nation and states are secular, how laws can be based on religion? For every believer, there should be one law passed by the Parliament or the state assemblies," he said. He, however, said that the commitment of the Constituent Assembly was forgotten over a period of time. "Except the BJP, no other party is in favour of the Uniform Civil Code. They don't even speak on it. If they don't have courage, they won't oppose it. But they won't say that, ok you implement it we are with you. We are a part of a democracy. In a

democracy, healthy debate is a necessity. There is a need for open and healthy debate on the issue," Shah said. The home minister said in three BJP ruled states -- Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Gujarat -- a panel under the chairmanship of retired Supreme Court judge and High Court chief justices has been formed, where all groups and people of different faiths are putting forth their views. "We will take any action on the basis of advice coming after this

fast pace towards achieving the target of a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025. "In 2014, the country had four unicorn start-ups and the number has now spiralled to over 100," Shah highlighted. When asked about allegations of agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement Directorate being misused ahead of elections, the home minister said that the federal bodies were working freely and anyone having grievances can move courts. On the

question of purported video of jailed AAP minister Satyendar Jain in which he is seen receiving special treatment at Tihar Prisons, Shah suggested that it should be posed to the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party to respond whether or not the video was genuine. "If the video is genuine, the accountability lies on his party and you are asking questions from me. I had also gone to jail and resigned as minister. Such shamelessness to cling to the post of a minister even after lodged in jail is unprecedented", he said. When asked about provisions allowing the Centre to remove a minister in such a scenario, he said even the Constitution makers had perhaps not seen such things coming, and hence, there was no such provision. To a question on the need of having anti-conversion laws, Shah said



Union Home Minister Amit Shah being felicitated by Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma during 400th birth anniversary celebrations of Ahom Commander Lachit Barphukan, at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Thursday

exercise... The BJP is committed to bring UCC but only after the conclusion of all democratic discussions," he said. On abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, Shah said many security pundits used to say that don't touch 370, it will burn your hand. Now, Article 370 is gone and Jammu and Kashmir is prosperous and it has also helped in getting terrorism controlled in the country, he said. "It was propagated for years that Jammu and Kashmir was a part of India because of Article 370. Now there is neither Article 370 nor 35A, yet Jammu and Kashmir is with India," Shah said. Earlier, in his inaugural speech during the summit, the home minister said it was time that India's democratic values were let known to the world. He said the country was moving at a

wherever BJP-ruled state governments are there, such laws have been made. "In Gujarat, I can tell you in detail. We have it and we are implementing it strictly as well. It is for state legislatures to decide on it," he said. When asked about the upcoming assembly elections in Gujarat, Shah said the contest is between the BJP and the Congress. "We will beat all records in terms of seat and vote percentage in Gujarat," he said. The home minister said that the BJP will win elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh besides the MCD polls with huge margins. On border issues in Ladakh, he said our border dispute with China is years old and it is a legacy of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. (PTI)

India upset at 'unnecessary' reference to Modi by US official, raises issue of Zakir Naik in Qatar

NEW DELHI, NOV 24 /--/ India is upset at a reference to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by a US state department official while defending the immunity it had extended to Saudi Arabian ruler Mohammad bin Sultan, who is facing allegations of killing journalist Jamal Khashoggi. "Frankly, I fail to understand how the comment on Prime Minister Modi was either relevant, necessary or contextual," external affairs ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said responding to questions about a US official referring to Modi while explaining the reasons for granting immunity to the Saudi ruler. "Our two countries enjoy a very special relationship which is growing from strength to strength and we look forward to working with the US to further deepen it," he said, referring to the bilateral ties between India and the US. When asked about giving immunity to the Saudi Crown Prince over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, US State Department principal

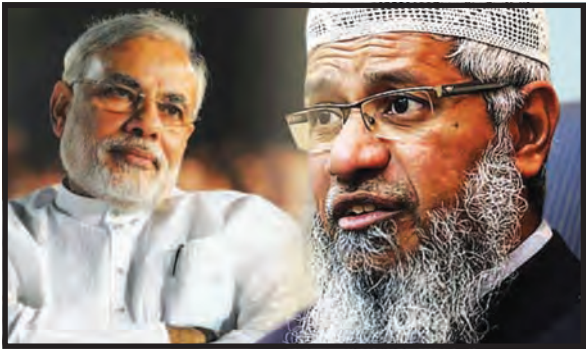
deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel said in a briefing last Friday that this is not the first time that the US has done this and it has been applied to a number of heads of state previously, including Modi, according to reports. Bagchi also said reports about the prime minister's visit to the US in December were incorrect.

"No proposal for a visit by the Prime Minister to the US in December has been made by our side. Media reports in this regard are incorrect," Bagchi said. He also dismissed social media posts about "false comments" attributed to external affairs minister S Jaishankar and White House spokesperson with regard to the brief bilateral meeting between Modi and US President Joe Biden on the sidelines of the recent G-20 summit in Bali. "We have seen some incorrect social media posts which attribute false statements to the External Affairs Minister, who has not made any comment on this to the press or on social media. It also attributes false statements to the White House

press secretary. So, I would request you all not to lend credence to such incorrect information," Bagchi said. The MEA spokesperson said the Prime Minister met Biden on a number of occasions in the course of the Bali Summit, including a brief bilateral meeting and a trilateral meeting that involved Indonesian President Joko Widodo. "During these interactions, they exchanged views on a number of issues. Our press releases and tweets as well as the foreign secretary's briefing in Bali encapsulates all these conversations. "The US side has also issued its readout of the trilateral meeting and also separately indicated that a brief bilateral meeting did take place between the two leaders," Bagchi said. The MEA spokesperson also said that India has raised the issue of Islamic preacher Zakir Naik being a

fugitive of law with authorities in Qatar, amid reports of his presence in the emirate during the ongoing FIFA World Cup. Bagchi said India will make every effort to make Naik face the law and continue with its efforts for his extradition. Bagchi said the issue was not raised by Vice-President Jagdeep

counterparts that no invitation was extended to Naik, who is wanted in India since 2016 for allegedly laundering money and inciting extremism through hate speeches. Naik has taken refuge in Malaysia. "Qatar did mention to us that no invitation was extended to Zakir Naik to attend



Dhankhar during his visit to Qatar to attend the inaugural ceremony of the FIFA World Cup, indicating that it was brought up through diplomatic channels. He also made it clear that authorities in Qatar had conveyed to their Indian

continue to take every step to make him face the law here. In March, the home ministry declared the Islamic Research Foundation (IRF) founded by Naik as an unlawful association and banned it for five years. (PTI)

Countrywide campaign next year for eco-friendly lifestyle: environment minister

NEW DELHI, NOV 24 /--/ Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav said on Thursday that his ministry would launch a nationwide campaign to popularise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mission LiFE and encourage people to adopt an environment-friendly lifestyle. Mission Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) is a pro-people and pro-planet effort that seeks to shift the world from mindless consumption to mindful utilisation of natural resources. It was launched by Modi on October 20 in the presence of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. The agreement of the UN climate summit COP27 in Egypt included "sustainable lifestyle" at India's behest, Yadav said at Times Now Summit. He said the Niti Aayog has developed an action programme to bring behavioral change in people, starting from reducing wasteful consumption of water and electricity. "The ministry will launch a campaign to take it forward next year," he said. Addressing the special United Nations Country Team (UNCT) at the UN House in New Delhi, Yadav said UN India was working with the Niti Aayog and the ministry to create a "LiFE compendium of global best practices on sustainable lifestyles". This will be a comprehensive repository of the best practices from around the world, according to the minister. (PTI)

SC questions tearing hurry in appointment process of Election Commissioner Goel

NEW DELHI, NOV 24 /--/ The Supreme Court on Thursday questioned the "haste" and "tearing hurry" in appointing Arun Goel as Election Commissioner.

The Centre vehemently resisted the observations, with Attorney General R Venkataramani saying the whole issue pertaining to the appointment of Goel be looked into its entirety. At the outset, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice K M Joseph perused the Centre's original file pertaining to Goel's appointment as EC, and said: "What kind of evaluation is this? Although, we are not questioning the merits of Arun Goel's credentials but the process." As the bench questioned the "lightning speed" with which Goel was appointed as an EC and also that his file did not even move within departments for 24 hours, the Centre through Venkataramani vehemently urged the bench not to make observations without looking into the entire issue pertaining to the appointment process. During the hearing, lawyer Prashant Bhushan attempted to make submissions before the bench when the attorney general was arguing. "Please hold your mouth for a

while," the top-most law officer told Bhushan. The apex court reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas seeking a collegium-like system for the appointment of ECs and the Chief Election Commissioner and asked the parties to file written submission in five days. Justice Ajay Rastogi, who is also a part of the bench, told Venkataramani, "You have to listen to the court carefully

court said the 1985-batch IAS officer got voluntary retirement from service in a single day, his file was cleared by the Law Ministry in a single day, a panel of four names were put up before the prime minister and Goel's name got the nod from the President within 24 hours. The bench, which also comprised Justices Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and CT Ravikumar,



and answer the questions. We are not on individual candidates but on the process." The attorney general said he is bound to answer the questions of the court. The apex

said none of the four names in the panel were "carefully hand-picked" by the Law Minister so that they could complete a six-year tenure. Venkataramani responded that

there is a mechanism and criteria for selection and there cannot be a scenario where the government has to look back at every officer's track record and ensure that he completes the six-year tenure. Under the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991, an EC can have a tenure of six years or up to the age of 65, whichever is earlier. Referring to Goel's appointment, the Attorney General said his profile is important and not the voluntary retirement which is being made an issue. The bench said the 1991 Act says that the EC's tenure is of six years and the government has to ensure that the person who holds the post completes the stipulated period.

The apex court said it is "struggling" to find the reasons and objects on how the Law Minister selected a panel of four names who were not going to complete the stipulated six-year tenure. The apex court perused the original file of Goel's appointment as an EC, which was placed before the bench by the Centre in pursuance of Wednesday's direction given by the top court. On Wednesday, Goel's appointment as an EC came under the scrutiny by the

top court which had sought from the Centre the original records pertaining to his appointment for perusal, saying it wanted to know whether there was any "hanky panky".

The apex court, which had rejected the Centre's objections to its order for producing the original file, had said it wants to know whether everything was "hunky dory" in the appointment process as claimed by the government. On November 19, Goel, a Punjab cadre IAS officer, was appointed as election commissioner. Goel would be in line to be the next CEC after incumbent Rajiv Kumar demits office in February 2025. His total tenure in the Election Commission would be of over five years. He will join Kumar and Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey on the poll panel. There was a vacancy in the Election Commission (EC) following the retirement of previous CEC Sushil Chandra in May. Goel was the secretary in the ministry of heavy industries till recently and his voluntary retirement came into effect on November 18. He has also served in the Union culture ministry. (PTI)

Pakistan names former top spy Lt Gen Asim Munir as new Army chief

ISLAMABAD, NOV 24/--/ Pakistan's former spy master and senior-most Lt General Asim Munir was named as the new Army chief by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, ending speculation over the most powerful position in the coup-prone nation, where the military wields considerable power in matters of security and foreign policy.

Lt Gen Munir has served as chief of two most powerful intelligence agencies - the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Military Intelligence (MI) - but his stint as the spy chief at the ISI was the shortest ever as he was replaced by Lt Gen Faiz Hamid within eight months on the insistence of then-Prime Minister Imran Khan in 2019.

He would replace Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, who retires on November 29 after two consecutive three-year terms. Gen Bajwa, 61, was appointed as the army chief in 2016 for a three-year term. He was given a three-year extension by the Khan government in 2019.

Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb announced on Twitter that Prime Minister Sharif has named Lt Gen Munir as the new army chief. Lt Gen Sahir Shamsahd Mirza had been picked as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC).

"The summary about (appointments) has been sent to the President," Marriyum Aurangzeb tweeted. Both officers have also been promoted to four-star generals. The CJCSC is the highest authority in the hierarchy of the armed forces but the key powers including mobilisation of troops, appointments and transfers lie with the COAS which makes the person holding the post the most powerful in the military.

The powerful Army, which has ruled Pakistan for more than half of its 75-plus years of existence, has hitherto wielded considerable power in matters of security and foreign policy.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party earlier quoted Imran Khan as saying that "when the summary comes, I and the President of Pakistan will act according to the constitution and laws."

The appointment coincides with a dispute between the military and Imran Khan, who blames the army for playing a role in his ouster in April this year through a no-confidence vote.

Khan's close aide and former information minister Fawad Chaudhry said on Wednesday that "until we see the conduct of the new army chief, we cannot say anything about it, but the role of the army in politics in the last 6 months is controversial, this role will need to be changed."

Lt Gen Munir is the senior-most general. Although he was promoted to the rank of two-star general in September 2018, he took charge two months later. As a result, his four-year tenure as Lt Gen will end on November 27. But with his appointment as COAS, he would get a three-year extension in the service.

He was commissioned into the Frontier Force Regiment and has been a close aide of the incumbent COAS ever since he commanded troops in the Force Command Northern Areas as a brigadier under Gen Bajwa, who was

then the Commander X Corps. Munir was later appointed chief of Military Intelligence in early 2017, and in October next year was made the ISI chief. He was then posted as Gujranwala Corps commander, a position he held for two years, before being moved to the GHQ as Quartermaster General.

Lt-Gen Mirza, who hails from the Sindh Regiment, has had an impressive career in the army, particularly in senior leadership positions during the past seven years.

He came to prominence as director-general military operations (DGMO) during the last two years of Gen Raheel Sharif, the COAS from 2013-16. In that role, he was part of Gen Sharif's core team at GHQ, which supervised the military operation against the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militants in North Waziristan.

Further, he was closely involved in the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (CGQ) that brokered intra-Afghan talks involving Pakistan, China, Afghanistan and the United States. Besides, he was also a member of the Sartaj Aziz-led committee on

reforms for Gilgit-Baltistan.

After his promotion to the three-star rank, he was appointed chief of general staff, effectively making him the second-most powerful person in the army after the COAS. In that role, he was closely engaged in crucial decision-making related to national security and foreign affairs. He also joined former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in strategic talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in 2021.

In October 2021, he was posted as Corps Commander Rawalpindi to enable him to acquire operational experience and become eligible to be considered for the top posts.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif told the media after the appointments that the "advice" had been forwarded to President Arif Alvi, adding that all matters had been settled according to the law and the Constitution.

He called on citizens to refrain from viewing it through a "political lens," Dawn newspaper reported.

He hoped that the President would not make the appointments "controversial" and would endorse the advice of the premier.

The defence minister reiterated that the President should endorse the premier's advice so that a "controversy may not arise".

"This will also help our country and the economy to get on track. Currently, everything is at a standstill."

There has been extraordinary interest in the appointment of Bajwa's successor as many believe ousted prime minister Khan's long march is linked to the change of command in the Army. He has asked his supporters to gather in Rawalpindi on November 26, two days before Gen Bajwa hands over the baton to the new Army chief.

The high drama around the key appointment has not gone unnoticed around the world as the army chief of a nuclear army, which is also one of the biggest, of the sixth biggest strategically placed country, when it is also facing political turmoil and economic meltdown, is by no means an ordinary affair. (PTI)



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (R) shakes hands with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel at a joint press conference in Ankara

Ukraine works to restore power after bruising Russian attack

KYIV, NOV 24/--/ About 70 per cent of the Ukrainian capital was left without power, Kyiv's mayor said on Thursday, a day after Moscow unleashed yet another devastating missile and drone barrage on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Wednesday's renewed Russian attack on Ukrainian infrastructure caused power outages across large parts of the country, further hobbling Ukraine's already battered power network and adding to the misery for civilians as temperatures plunge. The strikes also caused power outages in neighbouring Moldova. Russia has been targeting Ukraine's power infrastructure following a string of battlefield setbacks its forces suffered during the full scale war it launched February 24, exactly nine months ago on Thursday.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said in a Telegram statement that "power engineers are doing their best to get (electricity) back as soon as possible" and added that the water supply has been restored in about half of Kyiv on the left bank of the Dnieper River. Ukraine's General Staff reported on Thursday morning that Russian forces fired 67 cruise missiles and 10 drones during Wednesday's "massive attack on residential buildings and energy infrastructure" in Kyiv and several other regions in Ukraine.

Efforts to restore power, heating and water supplies disrupted by the Wednesday attacks were underway elsewhere in Ukraine as well. Ukraine's energy minister Herman Haluschenko said three out of four nuclear power stations that are fully functioning and which had been forced offline by Wednesday's strikes were subsequently reconnected to the grid.

Governor of the Poltava

region Dmytro Lunin said "an optimistic scenario" suggested that electricity will come back to residents of his central Ukrainian region on Thursday. "In the next few hours, we will start supplying energy to critical infrastructure, and then to the majority of household consumers," Lunin said on Telegram, noting that power has already been restored for 15,500 people and 1,500 legal entities in the region. Lunin added that water supplies resumed in several parts of the city of Poltava, and four boiler stations have started to heat regional hospitals.

The Kirovohrad and the Vinnytsia regions were reconnected to the power grid early on Thursday, adding to more than a dozen other regions that were reconnected on Wednesday night, according to Deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office Kyrylo Tymoshenko. In the southeastern Dnipropetrovsk region, power has been restored for up to 50 per cent of consumers, Gov Valentyn Reznichenko said, but noted that "the situation with energy is complicated."

As Russia continues to assail Ukraine's power network, Ukrainian authorities started opening what they call "points of invincibility" heated and powered spaces where people could go for hot meals, electricity to recharge their devices and to connect to the internet.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office, said on Thursday morning that a total of 3,720 such spaces have been opened across the country. According to the initiative's website, various venues have been converted to such points including government buildings, schools and kindergartens and emergency services offices. (AP)

Long-time reformist leader Anwar sworn in as Malaysian PM

KUALA LUMPUR, NOV 24/--/ Long-time opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim was sworn in as Malaysia's prime minister Thursday, in a victory for political reformers locked in a battle with Malay nationalists for days after the divisive general election produced a hung Parliament.

Broadcast live on national television, Anwar took his oath of office Thursday evening in a simple ceremony at the national palace.

Malaysia's king, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, named Anwar, 75, as the nation's 10th leader after saying he was satisfied that Anwar is the candidate who is likely to have majority support.

Anwar's Alliance of Hope led Saturday's election with 82 seats, short of the 112 needed for a majority.

An unexpected surge of ethnic Malay support propelled Former Prime Minister Muhyiddin

Yassin's right-leaning National Alliance to win 73 seats, with its ally Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party emerging as the biggest single party with 49 seats.

The stalemate was resolved after the long-ruling bloc led by the United Malays National Organisation agreed to support a unity government under Anwar. Such a tie-up was once unthinkable in Malaysian politics, long dominated by rivalry between the two parties.

Other influential groups in Borneo island have said they will follow the king's decision.

"His Royal Highness reminds all parties that the winners do not win all and the losers do not lose everything," a palace statement read. The monarch urged Anwar and his new government to be humble, and said all opposing parties should reconcile to ensure a stable government and end Malaysia's political turmoil,

which has led to three prime ministers since 2018 polls.

The statement gave no details on the government that will be formed.

Muhyiddin, 75, has refused to accede defeat. At a news conference, Muhyiddin challenged

Anwar sworn in as Malaysian PM

Anwar to prove that he has the majority support of lawmakers to deflect doubts over his leadership.

Police have tightened security nationwide as social media posts warned of racial troubles if

Anwar's multiethnic bloc wins. Anwar's party has urged supporters to refrain from celebratory gatherings or issuing sensitive statements to avoid risk of provocation.

Anwar's rise to the top caps his roller-coaster political journey and will

One in eight older adults developed depression for the first time : Study

TORONTO, NOV 24/--/ Approximately one in eight older adults developed depression for the first time during the pandemic, according to a study conducted in Canada. For those who had experienced depression in the past, the numbers were even worse, the study said. By the autumn of 2020 almost half (45 per cent) of this group of 20,000 older adults reported being depressed.

The researchers from University of Toronto analysed responses from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, which collected data from participants for an average of seven years, the study said. "The high rate of first-onset depression in 2020 highlights the substantial mental health toll that the pandemic caused in a formerly mentally healthy group of older adults," said first author Andie MacNeil, University of Toronto.

While the surge in prevalence of depression among older adults during the pandemic is well known, few studies prior to this have identified the percentage of people who experienced it for the first time or the percentage of people with a history of the disorder who experienced a relapse, the study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health said.

"The devastation of the pandemic which upended so many aspects of daily life hit those with a history of depression particularly hard," said co-author Sapriya Birk. "Health professionals need to be vigilant in screening their patients who had mental health problems at an earlier time in their life," said Birk.

The researchers identified several factors that were associated with depression among older adults during the pandemic, including inadequate income and savings, loneliness, chronic pain, trouble accessing healthcare, a history of adverse childhood experiences, and family conflict, the study said.

Older adults who, prior to the pandemic perceived their income to be inadequate for satisfying their basic needs, and those who had fewer savings were more likely to develop depression during the pandemic, the study said. "These findings highlight the disproportionate mental health burden borne by individuals with low socioeconomic status during the pandemic." Many of these socioeconomic risk factors may have been exacerbated by the economic precarity of the pandemic, particularly for individuals with fewer resources," said co-author Margaret de Groh.

According to the study, individuals who experienced various dimensions of loneliness, such as feeling left out, feeling isolated, and lacking companionship had approximately 4 to 5 times higher risk of both incident and recurrent depression. "It is not surprising that the lock-down was particularly difficult for older adults who were isolated and lonely during the pandemic." Social connections and social support are essential for well-being and mental health. Better support and outreach are needed for those who are isolated," said co-author Ying Jiang.

Older adults in chronic pain and those who had trouble accessing their usual healthcare, medication or treatments were more likely to be depressed during the autumn of 2020, the study said. "This finding underlines the importance of streamlining service provision to ensure less disruption of medical services when future pandemics arise," said co-author Professor Paul J. Villeneuve.

Also, according to the study, individuals with a childhood history of adversity were more likely to be depressed during the Autumn of 2020. Older adults who experienced family conflict during the pandemic had more than triple the risk of depression compared to their peers who did not. "Family conflict is a major stressor that can impact mental health even in the best of times."

"With the enforced close quarters of lockdown and the stress of the pandemic, there was considerable strain on many family relationships. The ensuing conflict was a major risk for depression," said senior author Professor Esme Fuller-Thomson, University of Toronto. (PTI)



Uruguay and South Korea play out a pulsating 0-0 Draw



South Korea goalkeeper Kim Seung-gyu catches the ball during a World Cup game with Uruguay in Qatar

DOHA, NOV 24 /--/ Uruguay hit the post twice but couldn't break down South Korea's defence as both teams played out a pulsating 0-0 draw in a Group H clash at the Education City Stadium. Diego Godin rattled the post with his header in the first-half, before Federico Valverde's effort crashed the crossbar. South Korea, too, had plenty of openings but couldn't find the back of the net. South Korea started the game with plenty of pressing in the first 45, before Uruguay started to dictate tempo after the break. Hwang Ui-jo had the biggest opportunity for Korea but he had blazed his effort just over the bar. Darwin Nunez had a couple of cracks in front of the goal but dragged his effort wide. In the second-half, South Korea heavily relied on the counters but failed to create something major.

"Going to be one of the stars of world football": Spain coach Luis Enrique on Gavi

Teen talent Gavi is set for global stardom after he became the youngest World Cup scorer since Pele in Spain's 7-0 thrashing of Costa Rica on Wednesday

DOHA, NOV 24 /--/ Teen talent Gavi is set for global stardom after he became the youngest World Cup scorer since Pele in Spain's 7-0 thrashing of Costa Rica on Wednesday, his coach Luis Enrique said. Gavi scored Spain's fifth goal with a first-time finish from Alvaro Morata's cross that crashed in off the inside of the post to become the third youngest scorer in the tournament's history at 18 years and 110 days. "It's the best of my dreams, I never imagined this," said Gavi. "I'm delighted to be achieving this." It capped a man-of-the-match display from the Barcelona youth product who linked brilliantly in midfield with fellow Camp Nou-based teenager Pedri, 19. And Luis Enrique is sure he has on his hands a player who will become one of the best in the world. "He's a unique player, a very different player because ... he's 18 years old but he has the personality of an experienced player," he said. "We're happy to have him in the team and we think he's going to be one of the stars of world football." And the demanding coach still expects Gavi to improve. "I hope he will go and play every time better and try to be aggressive with the ball and without the ball," said Luis Enrique, who added that Gavi "needs only a bit of poise and calm at

times." Gavi was the pick of a bunch of supremely gifted young players who contributed to a stunning performance in which Spain did not give up a single corner or shot on goal while enjoying more than 80 percent possession. He linked up particularly well with Pedri, who provided



the pass for the opening goal by Dani Olmo. "I'm very happy to win it and delighted to be MVP. We played a great game, well done everyone," said Gavi. "Pedri and I are very good friends off the pitch and on the pitch there is not much to say, he's a spectacular player and it's very easy to play alongside him." (AFP)

Embolo goal helps Switzerland beat Cameroon

DOHA, NOV 24 /--/ witzerland edged past Cameroon 1-0 courtesy of a goal against the run of play by Cameroon-born Breel Embolo on Thursday for an opening win in World Cup Group G. Embolo, born in Yaounde but raised in Basel, struck three minutes after the restart from a Xherdan Shaqiri cutback to put them top of Group G. The 25-year-old refused to celebrate the goal as the small group of Swiss fans cheered wildly at Al Janoub Stadium. Serbia plays Brazil in the other group match later on Thursday. The Swiss goal came after Cameroon, without a win in the World Cup for 20 years, had dominated the first half, missing several good chances to take the lead. The Indomitable Lions, who eliminated Algeria in a playoff to qualify for the tournament, had outplayed the Swiss in the first 45 minutes with quick combinations, speed and power as their opponent remained toothless up front. They carved out their first chance after



Embolo puts up his hands apologetically after scoring Switzerland's first goal

10 minutes with Bryan Mbeumo testing goalkeeper Yann Sommer before Karl Toko Ekambi sent his rebound over the bar. The Swiss were in trouble again a little later with in-form forward Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting snatching the ball from an opponent to charge into the box only for Sommer to block his effort. In search of its first win at a World Cup in 20 years, Cameroon was bolder, taking on its opponent in one-on-one situations, while the Swiss rarely managed to get into their opponents' box. Switzerland, which reached the round of 16 in the two previous World Cups, struck at the start of the second half with Xherdan Shaqiri cutting into the box and Embolo tapping in what proved to be the winner. An almost identical move just past the hour almost saw the Swiss score again, but Ruben Vargas's shot was pushed wide by keeper Andre Onana who kept his team in the game. The Swiss next play Brazil on Monday with Cameroon taking on Serbia. (AP)

GAME NOTES

Kevin de Bruyne 'does not know why' he was named player of the match after Belgium beat Canada

DOHA, NOV 24 /--/ Belgium star Kevin De Bruyne was left confused after being named man of the match in his team's World Cup win over Canada on Wednesday, saying he "didn't know why" he was given the trophy. De Bruyne struggled to get into the game and was often left throwing his arms in frustration as Belgium scraped to a 1-0 victory thanks to Michy Batshuayi's first-half goal. "I don't know why I played a great game. I don't know why I got the trophy. Maybe it's because of the name," said the Manchester City midfielder. "We didn't play well enough as a team, we didn't find any solutions and we started really bad. "In the second half, when we started to get through their pressing there was more space but I don't think we played a good game today, me included, but at least we found a way to win." Canada wasted numerous chances, including a missed Alphonso Davies penalty, in their first World Cup match since 1986. Belgium are next in action against Morocco on Sunday, when Canada take on 2018 runners-up Croatia. (AFP)

'World star' Gavi becomes youngest scorer since Pele

DOHA, NOV 24 /--/ Teen talent Gavi is set for global stardom after he became the youngest World Cup scorer since Pele in Spain's 7-0 thrashing of Costa Rica on Wednesday, his coach Luis Enrique said. Gavi scored Spain's fifth goal with a first-time finish from Alvaro Morata's cross that crashed in off the inside of the post to become the third youngest scorer in the tournament's history at 18 years and 110 days. "It's the best of my dreams, I never imagined this," said Gavi. "I'm delighted to be achieving this." It capped a man-of-the-match display from the Barcelona youth product who linked brilliantly in midfield with fellow Camp Nou-based teenager Pedri, 19. And Luis Enrique is sure he has on his hands a player who will become one of the best in the world. "He's a unique player, a very different player because ... he's 18 years old but he has the personality of an experienced player," he said. (AFP)

TODAY'S MATCH

- GROUP B Wales vs Iran - 3:30 PM IST
- GROUP A Qatar vs Senegal - 6:30 PM IST
- GROUP A Netherlands vs Ecuador - 9:30 PM IST
- GROUP B England vs United States - 12:30 AM IST

Not hurt that captaincy was taken away from me for Zimbabwe tour: Dhawan

AUCKLAND, NOV 24 /--/ Shikhar Dhawan has a lot of faith in God's plans and purely for that reason it "didn't hurt him" when he was asked to hand back the India captaincy to KL Rahul during the tour of Zimbabwe. Dhawan, who usually leads the India ODI team in the absence of Rohit Sharma, was named captain for the three-match ODI tour of Zimbabwe in August this year but later was demoted by the former national selection committee once KL Rahul was declared fit and available. "I wasn't hurt as I believe certain things are pre-destined and

whatever happens is for our own good," said Dhawan, who is back in the captain's saddle for the ODI leg of New Zealand tour. "And if you look at it, after Zimbabwe, I again captained against SA at home and the same selection committee handed me the leadership reins. So I am not at all hurt by what transpired in Zimbabwe. There must be something good hidden somewhere (in God's design)," the veteran opener said. In fact, he believes in counting his blessings. In the twilight phase of his career, he got a chance to lead the national team. "I am very

fortunate that at this juncture of my career, I have got a chance to lead India," he said. He also explained how he rationalised Rahul's elevation in Zimbabwe and he was kept as his deputy. "Look in Zimbabwe, KL was made the captain because he is the vice-captain of the main team. And since he was going to Asia Cup (after that series) and in case Rohit got injured over there (in UAE) and Rahul had to captain, it was better that he captained in Zimbabwe and remained ready on leadership front. (PTI)

Fans in Qatar pay homage to Diego Maradona with shirts and chants

DOHA, NOV 24 /--/ Javier Maluf will quietly put on a shirt worn by Diego Maradona against England, but other fans at the World Cup have more noisy plans for Friday's second anniversary of the death of the flawed genius. Argentina's legion of supporters may also be praying to the sporting gods that the late football great can still inspire his country to victory over Mexico on Saturday to keep their hopes in Qatar alive. Maluf is like many Argentina fans who have never fully recovered from Maradona's death from a heart attack at the age of 60. The shirt that Maradona wore during a game against England at Wembley in 1980 is the prized item in Maluf's collection of 1,000 game-worn football jerseys that he estimates is worth \$1 million. "I will put it on for a while as a sign of respect," he told AFP at his Doha home, where the shirts and other souvenirs are kept.

"We all know his story but we all know his impact on the game." A respected memorabilia sleuth, Maluf, 56, also has a blood-stained Argentina shirt worn by Mario Kempes in a 1978 World Cup game against France. That is folded near a River Plate shirt worn in 1931 by Carlos Peucelle, who played in the first World Cup a year earlier. Memorabilia is now big business, with Maradona items much sought after. In May, a shirt worn by the Argentina forward when he scored his infamous 1986 World Cup "Hand of God" goal against England sold at auction for \$9.3 million. The ball that he fisted into the England net sold this month for £2 million (\$2.4 million). The shirt is on display at the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum during the World Cup but Maluf is among fans who believe that it belongs in Argentina. "It would be good if it goes to Argentina one day, so that all the public can see

it and feel the importance," he said. More than 30,000 Argentina fans are in Qatar for this year's tournament and while many worship current number 10 Lionel Messi, Maradona's name still carries an almost mystical force. Argentina fans hold a picture of legend Diego Maradona prior the World Cup match between Argentina and Saudi Arabia at the Lusail Stadium. AP Many have been on a pilgrimage to a giant Maradona mural near the Khalifa stadium in Doha. At Argentina's first game — a shock 2-1 defeat by Saudi Arabia — there were Maradona masks, banners and shirts on display in the stadium. And aficionados say there will be many public tributes to Maradona on Friday. One group plans a march to the Maradona FanFest at Doha's international airport. The main attraction there is a hologram of the player plus a "tribute jet" bearing images of



Diego Maradona's presence is unmissable at the FIFA World Cup

Maradona that will be auctioned, with a chunk of the proceeds going to charity. Diego and Churi Veliz went to Monday's game wearing headgear emblazoned with Maradona sitting on a camel. They took countless selfies with Arab football fans. Gonzalo, a 32-year-old Buenos Aires lawyer, recalled the shock of finding out about Maradona's death. "I was on the beach, my girlfriend told me and I said we had to grab our things and go straight back to Buenos Aires." They were among thousands who waited outside Maradona's house. Claudio carried a flag showing Maradona embracing Messi, which will be seen again when Argentina take on Mexico. Laura Valero, who borrowed \$8,000 to make the trip to Qatar, said she was "recovering" from the defeat. "I will be wearing a Maradona shirt because you have to believe in something," she said of the looming anniversary and game. (AFP)