

Residents rue “dead” mortuary service at GBPH

Non-functional freezer boxes leave two infant children body getting decayed for days

ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/The dead bodies of at least two infant unidentified children kept in the electric dead body freezer boxes at the mortuary unit of GB Pant Hospital have decayed and emanating rotten smells. According to reports, the freezer boxes kept in the mortuary unit have gone defunct. Despite having knowledge of non-functional freezer boxes, the health authorities have no option but to keep the dead bodies of the

infant children in the non-operational freezer in boxes. As a result of non-functioning of the freezer boxes in the mortuary unit of GB Pant Hospital, the bodies of dead people decayed and the entire areas emanated foul smells. The mortuary unit of this hospital has capacity to keep about eight dead bodies in the freezers, but due to non-functional freezers, kin of the dead are compelled to keep the body in the mortuary without the freezers and have to rush to take the body before the

decomposition starts. The hospital authorities are tightlipped and are not informing the relatives of the dead persons about non-functional freezers in the mortuary. They quickly dispose of the bodies. Generally, the kin of the dead person keep the body in the mortuary unit for a night and take the body to their homes for cremation on the next day. But with non-functional morgue, the health authorities are befooling the kin of the dead by not disclosing the information about non-functional morgue.

People believing that the morgue is functional keeps the dead bodies in the mortuary. As most families take away the bodies on the very next day, they don't have an idea on non-functional morgue at GB Pant Hospital. But the health authorities look for excuses when asked to keep the unclaimed bodies. A morgue staff on the condition of anonymity told EOJ that bodies are getting decayed due to non-functional freezers and air-conditioning system, but this fact is hidden from the kin of the dead.



1ST HOISTING OF NATIONAL FLAG ON INDIAN SOIL

Union Minister, LG hoist tricolor at Flag point

PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ The Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare Dr. Bharati P. Pawar, along with the Lt. Governor, Admiral D. K. Joshi (Rtd.) & Vice Chairman, Islands Development Agency hoisted the National Flag at Flag Point, Port Blair on Friday. It was on this day on 30 December 1943, that the National flag was hoisted by Netaji Subash Chandra Bose for the first time on Indian soil, at Port Blair, registering the event in golden letters in the saga of the nation's freedom struggle.



Free dental check-up camp by Inner Wheel Club, Dr. Arora Dental Clinic



PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ A free dental check-up camp was held at Pranab Kanya Sangha, Port Blair on 23rd December 2022. The camp was organized by Inner Wheel Club in collaboration with Dr. Poonam Arora (Dr. Arora Dental Clinic), Port Blair. The Secretary of the Inner Wheel Club, Mrs. Bakhtawar Noble also graced the event.

As part of a comprehensive dental examination, about 35 ashram children underwent dental checkups to raise awareness of oral hygiene. The team of dentists led by Dr. Sharmila Patil and Dr. Diksha examined the children, apprised them of their dental problems, and gave relevant solutions. During the examination, fifteen children were found to be in need of advanced treatment which will be provided free of cost at Dr. Arora Dental Clinic under the

supervision of the doctors.

This programme is an ongoing endeavour to improve oral hygiene and help raise awareness about the importance of oral health with the objective to reach out to the underprivileged and underserved sections of the society.

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- Health Minister assured to make health accessible, affordable to every citizen in ANI — PAGE 3
- First flag hoisting day at Diglipur — PAGE 3
- Amid Personal Loss, PM Sticks To Duty
Modi's mother Hiraben passes away at 99 — PAGE 6
- Brazilian football legend Pele dies aged 82 — PAGE 8
- Adeus the King of the beautiful game, a titan of 20th century — PAGE 8
- Pele's passing, glory for Messi and an unprecedented FIFA ban for India sum up year — PAGE 8



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Will not compromise on national security for good relations with our neighbours: Defence minister

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DEC 30 /--/ Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said India wants to have and maintain friendly relations with its neighbours, but it will not be done at the cost of national security.

Speaking at the 90th annual pilgrimage of Sivagiri Mutt here, Singh recalled former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's remark that we can change friends but not our neighbours. "Therefore, we need good and friendly relations with our neighbours. However, we will not compromise on national security to maintain good relations. We do not want good relations with anyone at the cost of our national security," the defence minister said.

Singh also spoke about Kerala-based social reformer Sree Narayana Guru's teachings, like 'prosperity through industry' which is the basis of the Indian's government's 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' policy. As a result

of the same we are considered as one of the top 5 economies in the world and our military is seen as a force to be reckoned with, he contended.

Singh further said that while he was working to protect the "body" -- boundaries -- of India with the help of the armed forces and under the guidance of PM Modi, the saints of the Mutt were working to protect the soul of the country. "I appreciate the work you are doing. We can survive as a nation only when both the body and soul are safe," the minister said and expressed confidence that this year's annual pilgrimage would also be a success.

In January 1928, Vallabhasserry Govindan Vaidyar and T K Kittan jointly requested

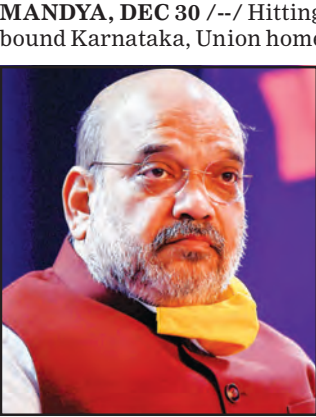
Guru to have a Sivagiri pilgrimage as all the higher classes and others had their own pilgrim centres, but 'avarnas' had nowhere to go, according to the Mutt website.

Guru gave his consent to the proposal and fixed a date of first of January of every year for the pilgrimage, prior to which pilgrims have to maintain a 10-day long austere life and wear only yellow clothes, the website said.

The defence minister, at the event, also condoled the death of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother - Hiraben. Singh said that when he learned about the tragic news he was contemplating returning to Delhi, but the PM told everyone that all should fulfill their official



Cong and JD-S are both corrupt and 'parivaarvadi' parties: Shah



both the Congress and JD-S as 'parivaarvadi' (dynastic politics) and corrupt and urged the people of Mandya and Old Mysuru region to support the BJP and bring it to power with a majority in the state.

The BJP is considered to be weak in the Vokkaliga-dominated Old Mysuru region, and is focusing on this belt to gain complete majority in 2023 Assembly polls. "Enough of JD-S-Congress, Congress-JD-S. This time Mandya, the Mysuru region should make BJP win with full majority. Congress and JD-S are both parivaarvadi (dynastic politics) parties, they are corrupt parties," Shah said. Addressing a massive public meeting as part of the ongoing Janasankalpa Yatra of the state BJP, he said: "We have seen administration of both parties, when Congress comes, Karnataka will become Delhi's ATM and when JD-S comes it becomes ATM for a family. Repeatedly these two parties have through corruption have stopped Karnataka's progress."

Stating that the time has come to get free from 'parivaarvadi' and corruption, Shah asked people to give BJP an opportunity to form the government with full majority once, and bring a "double engine" government. "In the next five years under the leadership of Modi we will take Karnataka much forward in the path of progress," he said, accusing both Congress and JD-S of being "corrupt, communal and also protectors of criminals".

Karnataka chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, Union minister Pralhad Joshi, state BJP chief Nalin Kumar Kateel, party's national General Secretary C T Ravi among other leaders were present at the event. Reminding that he had begun campaigning for the 2018 Assembly polls from Mandya, he said, the people of Karnataka gave the BJP an opportunity to form the government making us the single largest party.

Then again in 2019 Lok Sabha polls under the leadership of Modi with 52 per cent vote-share, Karnataka got 25 out of 28 seats for the BJP, he added. (PTI)

Post-recess budget session in new Parliament building

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 /--/ The new Parliament building is likely to be inaugurated in March, when the House convenes for the second part of the Budget Session. Officials said work was going on in full swing on Parliament building and is expected to be completed by February. The second part of the Budget session is likely to be held in the new Parliament building, sources said. The Budget session is conventionally held in two parts -- the first part usually commences on



January 30 or 31 with the address of the President to the joint sitting of the two Houses. The Union Budget is tabled on February 1. The first part usually concludes on February 8 or 9. The second part of the session usually commences in the second week of March and continues till early May.

Parliamentary sources said the part two of the session is likely to be held in the new Parliament building which has come up adjacent to the present structure. Last month, Union housing and urban affairs minister Hardeep Singh Puri had said construction work of the new Parliament building is going on at a very fast pace. The new Parliament building is part of the redevelopment of the Central Vista, the nation's power corridor. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone of the new Parliament building in December 2020. The new building, being constructed by Tata Projects Limited, will also have a grand Constitution Hall to showcase India's democratic heritage, a lounge for members of Parliament, a library, multiple committee rooms, dining areas and ample parking space. (PTI)

Delhi LG issues notification to fight off cyber attacks against power infra

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 /--/ In view of a potential cyber attack threat to the power system in the national capital, LG VK Saxena has approved a notification to declare critical information infrastructure (CII) of power utilities and associated computer resources as 'protected systems.' The person authorised in writing by the power utilities to access these 'protected systems' will also be notified through the notification. "This will ensure that critical power infrastructure in the city will be protected from any kind of attack or breach," said a statement from the LG office.

In 2020 2021, cyber security monitoring agencies of the Centre had observed some cyber attack attempts aimed at disrupting the power system operations. The ministry of power had on March 8, 2021, written to the chief secretaries of all states and UTs for precautionary steps. Cyber attackers are increasingly targeting the power sector, hence taking preventive measures and mitigating threats to protect the Indian Power System needs the special attention of all power sector holders, the ministry had then pointed out.



LG VK Saxena

The notification approved by the LG would help put into place certain checks, including information security practices and procedures, and access control. They will ensure that the computer resources of the

power utilities Delhi Transco Ltd (DTL), State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC), and discoms TPDDL, BRPL, and BYPL will be secured against any incapacitation or destruction, the statement said.

The computer resources of these utilities fall in the category of the 'Critical Information Infrastructure,' or CII, the destruction or incapacitation of which, will have a debilitating impact on national security, economy, and public health, it said. The notification to be issued now will authorise persons specifically identified by these utilities and be approved by the power department of the Delhi government. Any person who secures access or attempts to secure access to these protected computer systems, in contravention of the provisions of the laid down procedures, will be punished with imprisonment for up to 10 years and also be liable for a fine, it said.

The National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) had in March asked the Delhi government and the city's power utilities to identify the CIIs and people who would access them for notification. Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, Unified Real Time Dynamic State Measurement (URTDMS) system, and Web-Based Energy Scheduling (WBES) system were identified as CIIs in June this year. (PTI)

Oppn Legislators stage demonstration seeking Maharashtra Gov's removal

NAGPUR, DEC 30 /--/ Legislators of Opposition parties on Friday staged a demonstration in the Vidhan Sabha complex here demanding the ouster of Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari for his alleged remarks about icons of the state. The

Legislators led by Leader of Opposition Ajit Pawar, LOP in Legislative Council Ambadas Danve, state Congress chief Nana Patole, Rohit Pawar, among others raised slogans outside the House on the last day of the winter session. The Opposition Legislators

holding black caps and a banner shouted slogans demanding Koshyari's removal.

The Opposition has been seeking the ouster of the governor since his recent remark that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was a "hero of the past". (PTI)

BJP maintained its dominance in 2022 as disjointed Oppn proved no match

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 /--/ Its rivals hoped 2022 would ask some difficult questions of the BJP in a year of many important electoral battles. But as the year comes to an end, it has instead presented the Opposition with more than a few posers while the ruling party raced ahead in the sweepstakes for the Lok Sabha polls in 2024.

The BJP under its charismatic helmsman in Prime Minister Narendra Modi is looking to become the first party in over five decades to win three back-to-back Lok Sabha polls. The Congress had won a majority in five consecutive elections from 1952 to 1971, first three under Jawaharlal Nehru and two under Indira Gandhi. As the year 2022 signs off, the BJP hopes of achieving the feat were boosted. It further consolidated its sway in strongholds with big victory in Uttar Pradesh, the lynchpin to its 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha triumphs, and a record-breaking win in Gujarat while the Opposition camp was marred by division, a lack of coherent national narrative and the rise of the Aam Aadmi Party. The Congress's Bharat Jodo Yatra under Rahul Gandhi might have added some heft to his ideological

counterpunch to take on the BJP and drew constant scrutiny from the ruling party but if this has had any electoral impact, there is no clear sign of it so far.

The only notable reverse the BJP suffered in the year was its loss of power in Himachal Pradesh where its gap with the Congress was less than one per cent of the total votes cast. However, the fact that its defeat to the Congress in a state that has traditionally voted out the incumbent party was seen as a mild surprise only attests to the political dominance it maintained in the year. In the five state Assembly polls held through February-March, it retained power in the four states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur while the Aam Aadmi Party swept Punjab, where the BJP has never been a big player, as the internecine factional battles within the ruling Congress helped the regional party's surge. As has been the case since Modi ushered in a rigorous work regime for the party's organisation since 2014, the BJP's formidable 'sangathan' went methodically about its outreach and expansion plans through the year, a strategy

which has paid it rich dividends.

Modi himself was holding a roadshow in Gujarat a day after the party notched up spectacular wins in Uttar Pradesh and three other states in March and when Gujarat was polling in the last phase on December 5, top BJP leaders from across the country were brainstorming in Delhi over the next round of state polls. The BJP also scored a point by having the country's first tribal President in Droupadi Murmu while its vice-presidential candidate Jagdeep Dhankhar, who comes from the politically significant caste of Jats, had a facile win over his opposition rival. Issues like inflation and

unemployment might have agitated a section of voters but one poll after another showed that most people, including a chunk of otherwise unhappy electors, continued to repose their trust in the BJP and rejected the alternative offered by a disjointed and uninspiring Opposition, as seen in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat.

If 2022 brought a bagful of happy outcomes for the BJP, it was, however, also not without its share of food for thought for the party.

The win of an enfeebled Congress down on resources and star power in the hill state of Himachal Pradesh underscored the old woes of the BJP when local factors overshadow its familiar national narrative built around Hindutva, nationalism, 'vikas' and the pull of Modi. The AAP's success in ending its 15-year reign in Delhi municipal corporation and in fetching close to 13 per cent votes in Gujarat on its plank of populist schemes while refusing to join ideological issues with the BJP indicate some reconfiguration of battlelines in the coming polls. That the AAP has largely occupied the space left out by a

shrinking Congress suggests more churning in the Opposition in the next year where the BJP is likely to face organisationally a more robust Congress in states like Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh while the Arvind Kejriwal-led party will continue to look for an opening in new territories.

The BJP succeeded in ousting the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra by splitting Shiv Sena, it lost a major ally and power in Bihar where chief minister Nitish Kumar-led JD-U walked out on it. Formidable in its own strength, the party is also without any major ally now. But its win in two Assembly by-polls in Gopalganj and Kurhani in the eastern state against the combined might of the ruling coalition highlighted its strong social base and promised a fascinating political battle for one-upmanship in future there. As the saying goes, a week is a long time in politics and the next Lok Sabha polls are still a good 15 months away. But as the New Year arrives, what is clear is that the BJP's stars continue to shine the brightest while its rivals search for a way to dim their glow go on. (PTI)

Amid bereavement, back to business as usual for PM

BJP leaders praise 'karmayogi' Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairing the 2nd National Ganga Council Meeting via video conferencing hours after attending his mother's funeral in Ahmedabad

AHMEDABAD, DEC 30 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not let his mother's demise on Friday overshadow his official engagements. Within a couple of hours after performing the last rites of his mother Hiraben, who died at 99 in a hospital at Ahmedabad, Modi inaugurated the Vande Bharat Express connecting Howrah and New Jalpaiguri, and other development projects in Kolkata via video link from Raj Bhavan here.

The Prime Minister was scheduled to visit West Bengal to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for projects worth more than Rs 7800 crore, but had to rush to Ahmedabad after the demise of his mother, who was hospitalised on Wednesday. The PM arrived in Ahmedabad, performed the last rites of Hiraben, also called Hiraba, around 9.30 am and addressed the programmes in Kolkata via VC around 11.30 am.

The Prime Minister was scheduled to flag off Vande Bharat Express, inaugurate Joka-Tatatala stretch of Kolkata Metro and inaugurate various railway projects at Howrah railway station and chair the second meeting of the National Ganga Council in Kolkata at 12 noon. After rushing to Ahmedabad, Modi attended these programmes virtually and also flagged off the trains via video link. The Prime Minister's decision to carry on with his official engagements on a day he lost his mother drew praise from his ministerial colleagues and other BJP leaders who

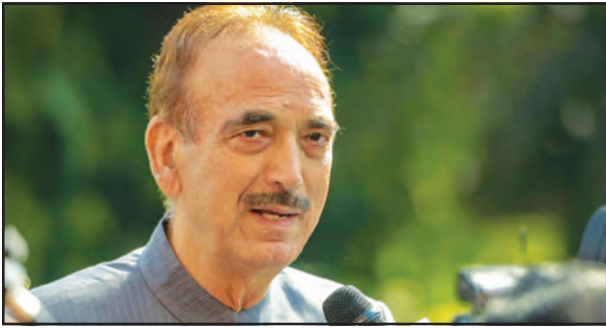
lauded his commitment and described him as a "karmayogi".

Defence minister Rajnath Singh said at an event in Kerala that the Prime Minister told them (ministers) to not cancel their scheduled programmes and return to Delhi only after completing their work. Home Minister Amit Shah also went ahead with his programme in Karnataka. BJP leaders shared pictures of the Prime Minister attending the official events in Bengal virtually as they heaped praise on him for putting the "country first". Union minister Anurag Thakur said: "Grief-stricken, but country first!! An only too well-known characteristic of our Prime Minister." "He continues to participate in pre-scheduled events, just hours after performing the last rites of his mother. A true Karmayogi veritably. Hats off! Countless workers like us are inspired and energized by your supreme efforts and commitment," Thakur said.

Another Union minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia, praised Modi's dutifulness, dedication and sacrifice.

Praising the Prime Minister's commitment, his Cabinet colleague Giriraj Singh said it is not possible for a man to have so much dedication. Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai tweeted, "Nation first, Self last. My PM, My Pride!" BJP national general secretary C T Ravi said, "Nothing, not even personal loss will stop PM Narendra Modi from discharging his duties for Bharata Mata." (PTI)

No plan to return to Cong: Azad



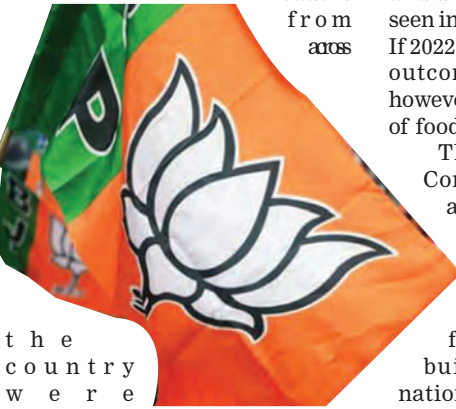
NEW DELHI, DEC 30 /--/ Senior politician and chief of the newly-formed Democratic Progressive Azad Party Ghulam Nabi Azad on Friday said there was no move to return to Congress with which he had snapped his 52-year-old association earlier this year.

Talking to news agency PTI, the veteran politician who has been former Union

minister and chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, said reports suggesting his return to the grand old party are planted by some vested leaders in the Congress and there was no truth in them. "I have never spoken to any Congress leader and neither has anyone called me. So I wonder why these kinds of stories are planted in the media," Azad said. The

former Union minister said these attempts were made by the Congress leaders to create a sense of uncertainty within his party cadres and to demoralise them.

"Come whatever may, we will emerge stronger," he said. Azad, who has served as leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha, said "I have not indulged in any mudslinging with anyone. Whatever I had to say, I made it clear in my resignation letter. After this I am on my own path to serve the people who have given me their trust." Asked whether he would be joining the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra when it enters Jammu and Kashmir next month, Azad said: "I have no such plan. My hands are full with my own work." (PTI)



the country were brainstorming in Delhi over the next round of state polls. The BJP also scored a point by having the country's first tribal President in Droupadi Murmu while its vice-presidential candidate Jagdeep Dhankhar, who comes from the politically significant caste of Jats, had a facile win over his opposition rival. Issues like inflation and

Health Minister assured to make health accessible, affordable to every citizen in ANI



ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ Dr.BharatiPawar,MinisterforHealth & Family Welfare, Govt of India on Friday expressed satisfaction over the health care delivery system in the Islands. The Union Health Minister said this while speaking to the local Journalists in a press meet at DHS today. She informed that with 21 Primary Health Centres, five Urban Health Centres under Health & Wellness centre, aAyush hospital and a medical college, the Andaman & Nicobar administration is doing reasonably in providing quality health care facilities to its citizens.

She informed that over 60 % work for the construction of the medical college has been completed and an amount of Rs 11. 30 crores sanction to complete the remaining work of the medical college building and related services. She also appreciated the health professionals, the ASHA workers and Anganwadi workers for working on grassroot level. Presently, 49 ambulance services are provided in various health centres across the islands and under the National Health Mission (NHM) more ambulance vans will be put into services in the years ahead. The NDA government under the leadership of Prime Minister, Mr. NarandraModi is

striving to provide quality health-care facilities to each and every citizen in the country. As part of effective delivery of health care services, screening for patients above the age of 30 for diabetic care has been made compulsory in health centres. A budget of Rs 41crores have been sanctioned under the NHM of which Rs 22 crore are left over which will be spent by March 2023. 700 patients in the islands have so far availed the Ayushman Bharat scheme costing to the tune of Rs one crore. About 10 Jan Aushadhi Kendra centers for Sr.Citizens and tourists have been set up. 300 TB active cases have been registered in Port Blair and 278 NikshayMitras are providing their support to deal with these cases. The Health Minister expressed happiness over achieving cent percent Covid vaccination in the islands. She further informed that she visited GB Pant Hospital and witnessed the mock drills and Covid preparedness and appealed to the citizens to follow the Covid protocols as a precautionary measure. The Minister assured to fill-up all vacancies in the health department.

First flag hoisting day at Dilgipur

Students take part in large number in flag hoisting event

EOI CORRESPONDENT

DIGLIPUR, DEC 30/--/To commemorate the historical day of 30th December 1943, various programmes were conducted at Diglipurtoo, along with the Nation. The school students of Diglipur Senior Secondary School took out 'Prabhatpheri' from the school in the morning, which went through the different routes of Subhash gram bazar, and culminated at Vivekanand stadium. The Assistant commissioner of the region, ShriAnuj Kumar Bharti hoisted the National flag at the stadium. The students presented patriotic songs of 'Azad Hind Fauj', beautiful dances depicting the message of unity in diversity and a skit. The students of Sitanagar Middle School also presented patriotic songs. Addressing the gathering, the Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Anuj Kumar Bharti said that this day is written in golden letter in the history of our



freedom struggle as this was the day in 1943, when our great freedom fighter NetajiSubhashChandraBose had hoisted the National flag at Port Blair, for the first time in the country. He said that it's very inspiring to see students' turnout for the program in such a large number. He said Netaji was a passionate freedom fighter for whom the freedom of the country was the aim of his life. He had promised to himself while forming the

Indian National Army in abroad, that he would hoist the National flag by the end of the year 1943, and he had succeeded in accomplishing that, when he had hoisted the flag in Gymkhana ground Port Blair, liberating Andaman Nicobar from British Rule. He had appointed the INA General A.D. Loganathan the first Governor of these Islands. "Nation First" should be the motto of every individual, ShriBharti said.

He called upon the students to study more about the life of the great NetajiSubhash Chandra Bose and adopt his philosophy in their lives. The Deputy Education officer, Mr. R.P. Pandey in his address said that, on the call of Netaji that - "Give me blood, I shall give you freedom", thousands of freedom fighters joined the newly formed Indian National Army, and made sacrifices for the freedom of the country. The Pradhan of the Subhash gram Panchayat, Mr. P.R.Singaram urged the students to always remember the contribution of the great freedom fighter Netaji and work for the solidarity of the society and country. The Principal of the Subhashgram School Shri M Nehru and MrPradeep Das, ZilaParishad Member also spoke on the occasion.

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NGO (WITH YOU) extends helping hands to elderly woman



PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ NGO (WITH YOU) identified an elderly woman, SmtiParvatiamma at Haddo who doesn't have her own home. The homeless lady begs in the street for food to survive and has nobody else to take care of her. Here, the President WITH YOU requested the Director of the Social Welfare department to provide accommodation for the poor lady in the old age home for women at

Attampahad. Responding to the request made by the NGO, the department asked them to shift the lady to the old age home. Ms V.K. MariyamBibi, President, along with members of WITH YOU (NGO) after informing the Police shifted the lady to the old age home, along with some items of her basic needs. MsMariyamBibi has expressed her gratitude towards the Social Welfare department for providing shelter to the lady.

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STRAIGHT PANT SETS
SHARARA & PLAZZO
CROP-TOP LEHENGAS
Special Plus Size Collection. Sizes Upto 3XL

Aberdeen Bazaar, Port Blair, Andamans

Depend not on another, but lean instead on thyself... True happiness is born of self-reliance
The laws of Manu

Another pharmaceutical selling ‘killer’ syrup

India's image of being a pharmacy to the world is getting dented, and quite frequently at that. After Maiden Pharmaceutical company was accused by Gambia for the deaths of 70 children due to the consumption of its contaminated syrups which caused kidney failure, Uzbekistan has raised the red flag against another Indian drug manufacturer Marion Biotech whose syrup Doc-1 Max had allegedly caused the death of 18 kids. Like Maiden's cough syrup, Marion's Doc-1 Max was also found to be contaminated with ethylene glycol which is an illegal, toxic adulterant used by drug manufacturers to cut down the cost of their product. Any action against the two companies can be initiated only after the completion of a proper investigation despite the toxic adulterant used in cough syrups. It is surprising that the Drug Controller of India does not have strict and effective regulations to keep in check liberal use of ethylene glycol. While the government awaits clinical details from Gambia, in Uzbekistan the syrup was administered without a doctor's prescription and the dose also was more than the prescribed limit.

The manufacturing of Marion Biotech's Dok-1 Max has stopped "for now" as the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation began a probe in connection with the death of 18 children in Uzbekistan allegedly linked to the cough syrup. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said further action would be taken based on the inspection of the pharma company, under a cloud after the Uzbekistan health ministry's allegation that the children died after consuming Dok-1 Max. Marion Biotech does not sell Dok-1 Max in India and its only export has been to Uzbekistan, an Uttar Pradesh government official said as inspection began at the company office in Noida on the outskirts of the national capital. Samples of the cough syrup have been taken from the manufacturing premises in Noida and sent to the Regional Drugs Testing Laboratory (RDTL) in Chandigarh for testing. The CDSCO has been in regular contact with the national drug regulator of Uzbekistan regarding the matter since December 27. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said India is in touch with the Uzbek authorities and has sought details of their investigation into the matter. MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi also said consular assistance is being provided to some linked to the company who are facing legal action there. Before Uzbekistan's claims, there were reports linking the deaths of 70 children in Gambia to cough syrups manufactured by Haryana-based Maiden Pharmaceuticals earlier this year. According to the Uzbek ministry, the chemical ethylene glycol was found in a batch of Dok-1 Max syrup during laboratory tests. The Drugs Controller General of India claimed the WHO drew a premature link. The DCGI has sought more information from the Uzbek regulator regarding the latest allegation which had a political fallout back home. The Congress asked the government to stop boasting about India being a pharmacy to the world and take strictest action, while the ruling BJP accused it of deriding India in its "hate" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

2022 began on optimistic note, ends with ominous signal

India's 2022 began with hopes of a rebound from covid-induced downturn, which materialized to a large extent as the year progressed, but is winding down to a close with dark clouds beginning to appear on the horizon over threats of a return to the pandemic environment.

The government hasn't yet enforced covid protocol, but from the speed at which new variants of the virus are spreading in China, the US and other western countries, it appears that it is too early to pronounce that the pandemic has been seen off. Air travel restrictions are slowly coming back, with passengers required to carry covid-free certificates, compulsory as well as random checks as well as quarantine, depending on the port of origin. Although the country has achieved significant progress though appropriate responses to post pandemic economic shocks with fiscal policy measures, new headwinds are emerging, which are clouding the outlook. There are also signs of new external risks as any sharp slowdowns in global growth are expected to affect India through trade and financial channels. The threat of intensified spill-overs from the war in Ukraine can continue to cause disruptions.

The post-pandemic rebound was unmistakable. Real GDP grew by 8.7 percent in financial year 2021-22, bringing total output above pre pandemic levels. Growth has continued this year, supported by a recovery in the labour market and increasing credit to the private sector. Policies were put in place to address new economic headwinds, such as inflation pressures, tighter global financial conditions, the fallout from the war in Ukraine and associated sanctions on Russia, and significantly slower growth in China and advanced economies. Monetary policy accommodation has been gradually withdrawn and the main policy rate has been increased by 190 basis

REFLEX ACTION

K Raveendran

points so far in 2022. Timing with the year-end, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has just concluded its 2022 Articles IV consultations with India and the Fund officials have commended the achievements, while at the same time noting the risks that lie ahead. Growth is expected to moderate reflecting the less favourable outlook and tighter financial conditions. Real GDP is projected to grow at 6.8 percent and 6.1 percent in 2022-23 and 2023-24 respectively. Reflecting broad based price pressures, inflation is projected at 6.9 percent in 2022-23 and is expected to moderate only gradually over the next year. The current account deficit is expected to increase to 3.5 percent of GDP in the current financial year as a result of both higher commodity prices and strengthening import demand.

Another cause of worry is inflation, which has been at or above the RBI's tolerance band of 4 plus or minus 2 percent since January 2022, in the context of growing domestic demand, commodity and food price shocks and supply chain disruptions. Headline consumer price inflation rose slightly to 7.4 percent in September, led by a pickup in food inflation to 8.4 percent. Core inflation, excluding food and fuel remained high at 6 percent. Long-term inflation expectations remain relatively well anchored. However, the risk of second-round effects from fuel and commodity price shocks remains high, according to IMF.

More notably, the vulnerability of weaker sections continues to be unduly high. Women, youth, those

with less skills and education, and daily wage and migrant workers are among those who bear the brunt. Access to education and training continues to be a problem for the vulnerable sections and has adversely impacted human capital accumulation. While there has been broad-based post-pandemic recovery in employment, it is uneven across sectors. The sluggish recovery in real earnings weighs on consumption. While government policy measures have helped significantly, the pandemic has temporarily disrupted gains in human development.

Current account surpluses and large capital inflows helped the RBI replenish its international reserves during the pandemic. In 2021-22, however, the current account returned to a deficit of about 1.2 percent of GDP, reflecting the domestic demand recovery and rising commodity prices. IMF has assessed the current account gap at 1 percent of GDP, after accounting for transitory impacts of the covid shock.

While the adverse impact of higher imported oil prices was mitigated by importing oil from Russia at a discounted price, the pressures on the exchange rate of the rupee. Notwithstanding steady FDI inflows, portfolio investment outflows in the first half of 2022 also put pressure on the rupee's exchange rate. Reflecting both valuation losses as well as RBI intervention, forex reserves have fallen and are currently at about 7 months of prospective imports requirement.

The Fund has cautioned that the emergence of more contagious covid variants can dent confidence and force new mobility restrictions, with impact on trade and growth. Tightening financial conditions can weaken asset quality and result in financial sector stress, limiting credit provision and negatively impacting long-term growth. (IPA)



A vendor sells local bakery made cakes for the New Year celebrations in Kolkata--Arijit Ganguly

Conventional Crossword																													
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ACROSS														
1	Polite term of address													
4	Unruly crowds													
7	Period of time													
8	Spanish nobleman													
9	Devil													
12	Expensive													
13	Shellfish													
15	Filled pastry													
16	Incite													
18	Perform													
19	Mineral spring													
21	Estate agent (US)													
24	Faithful													
26	Depart													
27	Passing craze													
28	Female swan													
29	Space													
30	Surrender													
DOWN														
1	Table-shaped hill													
2	Language													
3	Facts given													
4	Fashion													
5	United													
6	Small branch													
10	High mountain													
11	Clamour													
14	Himalayan state													
17	Be meanly servile													
18	Sacrificial table													
20	Drink													
21	20 quires													
22	Ribbon													
23	Tear													
25	Flying saucer													

SUDOKU:3742

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Yesterday's Solution 3741

8	7	1	4	9	2	3	5	6	
9	4	6	1	3	5	2	8	7	
3	5	2	8	7	6	4	9	1	
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5	3	9	6	8	4	7	1	2	
6	2	5	3	4	9	1	7	8	
7	8	4	2	5	1	6	3	9	
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Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1750

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

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An uncertain future for Argentine Progressives

Earlier this month, Argentina was rocked by a story so big that it broke through the country's jubilant anxiety over the World Cup — the vice president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (or CFK, as she is commonly called in the Argentine press), was found guilty by a judicial tribunal in a massive corruption scandal over money laundering during her term as president from 2007-2015 and sentenced to six years in prison.

The prosecutorial tribunal's formal verdict is that CFK knowingly funneled over \$1 billion to a construction company owned by businessman Lázaro Báez, a friend and ally to her and her husband, former president Néstor Kirchner, during their presidencies. During their leadership of the state of Santa Cruz as well as their presidential terms, Báez laundered more than \$55 million from the provincial and federal governments for construction, including for Néstor Kirchner's mausoleum. Báez is already serving a twelve-year sentence for this scandal, having been convicted in February 2021. CFK's recent sentencing is an outgrowth of these same investigations. But CFK isn't just a politician — she's the central representative of the populist movement that currently holds the presidency. Her sentencing therefore has massive political ramifications for the people and the politics of

Argentina. In her video response to the decision, CFK argued that "they [the tribunal] aren't coming for me. They're coming for you." In other words, CFK is claiming that the scandal is a hoax designed to stymie progressive Peronists and the coalition that holds them together, pointing to connections between the judges who sentenced her and Argentina's right-wing opposition.

Because in Argentina criminal sentences are issued before judges present their arguments for them, we have relatively few details about the judges' rationale for their decision besides the charges they've brought, other than that there were chats among people in her government about "cleaning up" their corruption before the end of her presidency. CFK denies that any money laundering took place and maintains that she and her allies are the targets of an unfair system of legal persecution. Still, most independent observers agree that CFK has more money than she can reasonably account for, even if the case brought against her is dubious at best. It is reasonable to criticize the case against CFK, which is clearly politically motivated. But it is also reasonable to

criticize her for corruption — and for unnecessarily leaving herself and her movement vulnerable to attack by the Right. CFK has been a powerful figure for over twenty years in Argentine politics, first as an ally of her husband, Néstor, who was president from 2003 to 2007. Néstor stepped aside in 2007 to allow CFK to run for president, but remained her close adviser during her presidency, leading the two to draw comparisons to the Clintons as a paradigmatic power couple.

Néstor's unexpected death in 2010 left CFK as the leader of progressive populist forces in the country, as she was reelected to the presidency in 2011. CFK was defeated in 2015 by the neoliberal candidate Mauricio Macri, but returned to the executive branch as the ally of current Argentine president, Alberto Fernández (no relation to CFK), both as members of the Frente de Todos (Everyone's Front) party, the current manifestation of Argentina's Peronist movement.

Peronism has always been a complex coalition that blends elements of the Left and the Right, from its foundation under Juan and Eva Perón in the 1940s to the present. Peronists

have adopted political stances ranging from fascism to socialism, always with an anti-elitist, populist edge. CFK and her late husband represent a center-left populism, and she spent much of her presidency legislating against US "imperialist" capitalism and passing protectionist economic policies. They made headlines for implementing the most protectionist trade measures in the world and for limiting access to dollars in an effort to stabilize the country's economy and protect the livelihoods of the poor. The Kirchners identified themselves as politicians directly concerned with the economic prospects of the country, just as Perón himself had done.

But Peronism is bigger than the Kirchners. The Frente de Todos, CFK's current party, is a Peronist unity party designed to unite CFK's progressive formation with more centrist and right-wing Peronists. President Fernández himself is a go-between for these factions, and brokered an alliance with one of the Kirchners' biggest Peronist rivals, Sergio Massa, to join the government to defeat then president Macri.

The last few years have been difficult for CFK and her coalition. Despite being members of the same party and, ostensibly, both Peronists, CFK and Fernández have had many very open disagreements and are now barely on speaking terms. (IPA/To be continued)

Vishal
condolence
message

PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ Mr. Vishal Jolly, National Executive Member BJP & Former State President BJP - A &N Islands has deeply mourned the sad demise of HeerabenModi, Mother of our beloved Prime Minister Shri Narendra ModiJi. In his message Shri Jolly prayed to the Almighty to give peace to her eternal soul departed for heavenly abode and give strength to her bereaved family member to bear this irreparable loss.

Condolence
Message

PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ The Andaman & Nicobar VidyutShramikSangh, Port Blair has expressed their deepest condolences on the sudden demise of SmtHeerabenModi, Mother of Prime Minister, Mr. Modi. The State President, Mr. N. PeddiRaju, National Executive Committee Member, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyut Mazdoor Maha Sangh, State Secretary, Mr. M. Hemanth Rao and State Committee Member of Andaman & Nicobar VidyutShramikSangh have expressed their deepest condolence on the sad demise. They have prayed to the almighty to give strength to the bereaved family members to bear this irreparable loss.

Motorbike theft solved within 3 hours, one held



PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ The team of PS Mayabunder & Diglipur once again cracked a theft case within 03 hours of registration and arrested the accused & recovered the stolen bike. A criminal case was registered at PS Mayabunder on the complaint of Shri A.J. Ajay

18th round of HIV sentinel surveillance-2023



PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ The 18th Round of HIV Sentinel Surveillance (HSS) 2022-23 shall be carried out in Andaman & Nicobar Islands from 1st January, 2023 to 31st March 2023, with the rest of the countries. Surveillance is an ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data regarding a health related event for the use in public health action to reduce morbidity and mortality and to improve health. The ANC sites are as follows:
1. Antenatal Clinic, G.B. Pant Hospital, Port Blair
2. Antenatal Clinic, CHC Rangat (Composite Site)
3. Antenatal Clinic, BJR Hospital, Car Nicobar (Composite Site)
4. Antenatal Clinic, PHC Garacharma, Port Blair (Composite Site)
The 18th Round of HIV Sentinel Surveillance shall be conducted throughout the A&N Islands under the supervision of three teams, i.e., Central, Regional & State level which comprises of

expertise from WHO, UNAIDS and other National & International agencies who will provide continuous support and guidance.
For successful implementation of surveillance system, capacity building of facility level staff was conducted the Two Days State Level Training for HSS Site Personnel of ICTC Medical Officer Incharge, Counsellors, Laboratory Technicians and other facility Staff at Conference Hall, Directorate of Industries, Middle Point, Port Blair on 27th - 28th December, 2022. The Training Programme was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Dr. Munni Singhania, Director of Health Services (DHS), A & N Administration by lightening of lamp. Mr K. Sankar Rao, AD (M&E), Focal Person HSS welcomes the gathering & brief the objectives of HSS. Dr. Shahina Mustaqim (Microbiologist) and Dr. P. K Sikdar also address on the

occasion.
The chief guest Dr. Munni Singhania, DHS, in her key note address pointed that HIV Sentinel Surveillance has been the basis for tracking of HIV/ AIDS since its inception and it has been the mainstay of epidemic monitoring among ANC, High Risk Group and Bridge population under the National AIDS and STD Control Programme.
The training was provided by resource person Dr. Subrata Biswas, Project Coordinator (HSS), NICED-ICMR, Kolkata; Dr. Shahina Mustaqim, Sr. Microbiologist, ANIIMS, GB Pant Hospital, Port Blair and the training was moderated by Mr. K. Sankar Rao, AD (M&E)/Focal Person HSS, ANACS. Certificates were presented to the trainees by Dr. Subrata Biswas & Dr. Shahina Mustaqim and vote of thanks given by Mr. S. Senthil Nathan, AD (CST), ANACS. This programme was conducted under the leadership of the DHS-cum-Vice Chairperson, ANACS.

Condolence Message

Deeply saddened to hear about the demise of Smt. HeerabenModi, Mother of Prime Minister, Mr. NarendraModi. Our heartfelt condolences to MananiyaNarendraModi on the loss of his beloved mother. The loss of a mother is like the collapse of a main pillar in life, which leads to emptiness in life. Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire family in this hour of grief.

Sd/-
AjoyBairagi
State President
BJP,A&N Islands

ICAR-KVK conducts training
on balanced nutrition

PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ The ICAR-KrishiVigyan Kendra, South Andaman, conducted a three-days training programme on "Importance of Balanced Nutrition for Women and Children" for Extension Functionaries from 27th to 29th December, 2022 at its campus. The objective of the programme was to upscale the knowledge of Anganwadi workers regarding Food and Nutritional needs of Women and Children. Dr. B.K. Nanda, SMS (Agri. Engg.) and I/c KVK, South Andaman explained about the crucial role of Anganwadi workers working at grassroot level in spreading awareness among the rural women regarding the importance of consuming a healthy chemical free diet throughout life. He also explained about Recommended Dietary Allowances for different age groups and gender. Dr. N. Bommayasamy, SMS (Agronomy) highlighted about the functions of Nutrients in human body. He also emphasised about the importance of consuming Millets for better health. Dr. PoojaKapoor, SMS (Home Science), Course Director of the programme explained the benefits of consuming a well-balanced diet and ways of mitigating malnutrition among children and women. The training programme also included demonstration on preparation of low cost locally available recipes for infants, children and pregnant women. A total of 34 Anganwadi workers from different villages of South Andaman District are benefitted from the programme. The programme was organized under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Y. Ramakrishna, Pr. Scientist & Head, KVK and Dr. Eaknath B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI, Port Blair.

79th anniversary of 1st flag
hoisting by Netaji

Vishal hoists flag at GPKanyapuram



PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ The flag hoisting function was organized at Gram Panchayat Kanyapuram on Friday to commemorate the 79th anniversary of first flag hoisting by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in A & N Islands on 30th December 1943 for the first time on Indian Soil, in which a large number of local people enthusiastically participated.

Mr. Vishal Jolly, National Executive Member of the Bharatiya Janata Party was the chief guest on the occasion and Mr. MK Hussain, Pradhan, Gram Panchayat Stewartgunj was graced the function as guest of honour.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Vishal Jolly talked about the importance of freedom struggle and said that the name of A & N Islands should be written in golden words in the saga of the nation's freedom struggle. Further he reminded us that our forefathers suffered the oppression of both British and Japanese but did not bow down in front of them.

Mr. Abdul Basheer, Pradhan Gram Panchayat Kanyapuram said that a similar event was held last year and this year also we have conducted the event to make people remember the sacrifices of our forefathers.

Mr. Jaydeep Kumar Dey, Ex-Adhyaksh Z.P. South Andaman, Shri Shiv Chandar More, Pradhan Banbooflat, Shri Ram Babu, Pradhan, Wimberlygunj Shri V.K. Abdul Aziz, Zilla Parishad Member, Brindaban Constituency and Shri J.L. Tak, Prominent Social Worker were other special invitees on the occasion.

Tunishadeath: Sheezan Khan's
police custody extended by 1-day

PALGHAR, DEC 30 /--/ A magistrate's court on Friday extended the police custody of actor Sheezan Khan, arrested for allegedly abetting the suicide of his co-actor Tunisha Sharma, by one day. Khan was produced in the court at Vasai in Maharashtra's Palghar district after his earlier remand ended.

They needed more time to probe fresh allegations made by Sharma's mother; police told the court. Sharma's mother alleged that Khan had slapped her daughter on the set of a TV show they were part of. He was teaching Sharma Urdu and wanted her to wear hijab, her mother claimed. Khan (27) was arrested by Valiv Police in Palghar district on December 26 for allegedly abetting Sharma's suicide. Sharma (21), who was acting in the TV serial Ali Baba: Dastaan-E-Kabul, was found hanging in the washroom on the set of the show near Vasai on December 25. Her mother alleged after her death that Khan cheated and "used" her daughter. (PTI)

Registrar, SRD of IGNOU
interacts with staff of RC



PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ Dr. Himanshu Kumar Bose, Registrar, Student Registration Division (SRD), IGNOU, New Delhi paid a courtesy visit to Regional Centre Port Blair on 30th December, 2022 and interacted with staff. In his address Dr. Himanshu Kumar Bose informed the gathering that the admission cycle of January, 2023 has already been announced and hopes that like last year, this year too IGNOU will experience exponential growth in admission. Further he stated and exhorted that IGNOU has the mandate to be a world largest University to offer ODL and Online courses. Dr. Himanshu Kumar Bose, Registrar, SRD, IGNOU attended all the queries of the staff and was motivated to work tirelessly for the overall growth of the university. Earlier Dr. RVR Murthy, Regional Director, RC, Port Blair welcomed the guest and appraised about the activities of Regional Centre, Port Blair.

Swachhtha pakhwada
by ICAR-CIARI



PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ ICAR-CIARI, Port Blair, along with its KVKs at Sippighat, Nimbudera, and Car Nicobar, and Regional Station at Minicoy, Lakshadweep, organised a fortnightly programme under Swachhtha Pakwada from December 16th to December 30th, 2022. Various activities were conducted by involving the staff, their families, and farmers from nearby villages. At the outset, all staff took the Swachhtha Pledge and planted various tree saplings on the Garacharma Research Farm. All office records were sorted out, and old files, furniture, and junk materials were disposed of. A scientific team visited the farmers at Creekabad village and gave agro-advisories on how to maintain hygiene and sanitation in a fish pond and goat and pig sheds. A biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste management awareness programme was held for fishermen at the Junglighat fish landing centre and fish market. On December 23, 2022, on the occasion of Kisan Diwas, a live streaming was set up in which Mr. Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, addressed farmers via video conference. A painting competition on cleanliness was conducted for the school students. Massive community mobilisation for plastic waste shramdaan was conducted at Bathubasthi, in which the public was urged to curb the use of

single-use plastic and discourage the use of plastic in the workplace, compost kitchen and home waste materials, and promote clean and green technologies and organic farming practices. All the staff of CIARI went on a rally through the residential area to create awareness about efficient waste disposal mechanisms, rainwater harvesting, sewage maintenance, and cleaning the drainage lines. They also visited the waste disposal site at CIARI and learned about how to segregate household waste into biodegradable and non-biodegradable materials and how to convert waste into compost. On December 30, 2022, PBMC Chairperson Smt. U. Kavitha participated in the Swachhtha activity along with all the staff of CIARI at the Garacharma campus and appreciated the efforts to keep the campus neat and clean.

Delegation of ANYSS
meets Health minister



PORT BLAIR, DEC 30/--/ A delegation of Andaman & Nicobar VidyutShramikSangh and All India Executive Committee Member of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyut Mazdoor Maha Sangh met the Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare Dr. Bharati P. Pawar and submitted a presentation raising various issues concerning the Electricity department.

Centre effects joint
secretary-level reshuffle

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 /--/ Nineteen bureaucrats have been appointed to different central government departments as part of a senior-level bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre on Friday.

Padam Lal Negi has been appointed as joint secretary & financial advisor, ministry of Civil Aviation, Sanjeev Kumar Kassi will be joint secretary, Coal Ministry and Gangadhar Panda, as additional director of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), according to an order issued by the Personnel Ministry. Jitendra Srivastava, a 2000-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Bihar cadre, has been named joint secretary, Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation and K Manicka Raj as joint secretary, Department of Economic Affairs. Preet Pal Singh has been appointed as joint secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Rina Sonowal Kouli as joint secretary in the Department of Higher Education, Lokhande Prashant Sitaram will be joint secretary in the

Ministry of Home Affairs, and Chittaranjan Dash and Ravi Shankar have been appointed as principal commissioners, Delhi Development Authority (DDA).

Deepika Kachhal will be joint secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Manish Kumar Kanojia will be financial advisor, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Mumbai, Suren Mehra as adviser, NITI Aayog and Sanjiv as joint secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, said the order. Lucas Laiconsing Kamsuan has been appointed as joint secretary, Department of Public Enterprises, Anshu Manish Khalkho will be director (A&P), National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL), A Dhanalakshmi as joint secretary, Department of Science & Technology, Mebanshailang R Synrem will be joint secretary, Ministry of tourism and Preetam B Yashvant as joint secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development, the order said. (PTI)

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Jafar Ali Laskar, S/o Harun Rasid Laskar, R/O Deltamil, Manickpur, Delta Mil, Howrah-711309, W.B. declare that my father's actual name is Harun Rasid Laskar and the same name i.e. Harun Rasid Laskar, also mentioned/ written in my father's own Voter Id . being no. WB/24/169/264090, Pan card (no. BPYPL2887J) etc. due to inadvantage in my passport being No. M5916976 dt. of issued 27.01.2015 issued from Kolkata, where my father's name written only Harun in place of my father's name as Harun Rasid Laskar . As per affidavit before the Notary Public Kolkata on 30.12.2022 both Harun and Harun Rasid Laskar is one and same identical person.

National Cooperative Development Corporation
(A statutory body under an Act of Advertisement)

ADVT. No. 2/2022
Applications are invited for engagement of Young Professional-I (Marketing) on contract basis for Regional Office Kolkata (West Bengal, Sikkim and Andaman & Nicobar Islands). Detailed advertisement indicating eligibility criteria of age, educational qualification, experience etc. is available on www.ncdc.in. The applications with relevant enclosures should be sent only by mail to ro.kolkata@ncdc.in. Last date for submission of application is 21 days from the date of publication of the Advertisement.

CBC-66102/12/0012/2223

Amid Personal Loss, PM Sticks To Duty

PM virtually flags off Howrah-NJP Vande Bharat express, launches Joka-Taratata metro services



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee speaks with Governor C V Ananda Bose as Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw looks on, during the flagging off ceremony of Vande Bharat Express, at Howrah station — Photo : Subham Dutta

KOLKATA, DEC 30 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday virtually flagged off the Vande Bharat express connecting Howrah and New Jalpaiguri in the presence of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Also present on the occasion were Governor C V Ananda Bose and railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. The seventh Vande Bharat express started its journey at 11.45 am from platform number 22 of Howrah Station to travel to New Jalpaiguri, the gateway to the North-East. The blue-and-white train, which covers a distance of 564 km in 7.45 hours, will save three hours of travel time compared to other trains on the route, officials said. It will have three stoppages at Barsoi, Malda and Bolpur. The Vande Bharat express with modern passenger amenities is likely to be preferred both by regular passengers, tea industry executives and tourists travelling to the Himalayas in North Bengal and Sikkim. The state-of-the-art train has 16 coaches, including two for drivers.

The Prime Minister also virtually flagged off metro services on the Joka-Taratata route in the western part of Kolkata. The six metro stations from Joka to Taratala were decked up with flowers, balloons and streamers on the occasion. Besides, a brand new rake that was used for the inaugural run was also

decorated. In his virtual address after the launch, the PM said: "The Joka-Taratata metro train services will ensure ease of living for residents of Kolkata. Work on the rest of the route till Esplanade is underway." The 6.5-km metro stretch will be extended to Esplanade in central Kolkata, connecting the east-west

and north-south lines of the city. The inaugural train made a trip from Joka to Taratala and returned with many people, including students of various schools, enjoying the ride. Once the train completed its round trip to Joka, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw paid a visit there. Accompanied by metro rail officials, the Union minister took a ride on the train from Joka to Taratala, and inspected the route. Vaishnaw said the PM gifted the long-demand metro service to the people of Kolkata even during difficult times. The Joka-Taratata metro corridor has been constructed at a cost of Rs 2,477.25 crore. "The service will decongest the busy Diamond Harbour Road, reducing travel time between Joka and Taratala. Using this route, commuters will easily have access to IIM Joka, Thakurpukur Cancer Hospital, Vivekananda College, Thakurpukur and ESIC Medical College. They can commute to Sarsuna, Dakghar and Muchipara areas in just 15 minutes," a Metro Railway official said. (PTI)



A metro train runs on the newly inaugurated Joka-Taratata route, in Kolkata. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the metro service — Photo : EOI

Rahul to be Oppn's Prime Ministerial face in 2024

polls: Kamal Nath

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 /--/ Senior Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath on Friday said Rahul Gandhi will be the opposition's prime minister candidate for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. In an email interview with news agency PTI, Nath lauded Gandhi for leading the Congress' countrywide Bharat Jodo Yatra, saying he is not doing politics for power but for the common people of the country. "As far as the 2024 Lok Sabha election is concerned, Rahul Gandhi will not just be the face of the Opposition but will be its Prime Ministerial candidate too," he said. Nath also said that no one in the history of the world has undertaken such a long 'padayatra'. No family other than the Gandhi family has given so many sacrifices for the country, the Congress leader said. "Rahul Gandhi does not do politics for power, but for the people of the country who make anyone sit in power," Nath stated. (PTI)

Cricketer Rishabh Pant suffers injury in car crash at Haridwar

NEW DELHI/DEHRADUN, DEC 30 /--/ India's star cricketer Rishabh Pant had a miraculous escape when his luxury car crashed into a road divider and caught fire after he dozed off at the wheel on the Delhi-Dehradun highway in the early hours of Friday. The 25-year-old, who was on his way to his hometown Roorkee to surprise his mother, suffered injuries on his head, back and feet but is in a stable condition following the accident that took place in Manglaur in Uttarakhand's Haridwar district around 5.30 am, police said. The driver and other staff of a Haryana Roadways bus passing by helped the cricketer get out of the burning Mercedes Benz, said Haridwar Senior Superintendent of Police Ajai Singh. The car was completely charred and

reduced to a mangled heap. Pant, who was alone in the car, dozed off and the car hit the divider before bursting into flames, he said. As concerns mounted about the extent of his injuries and whether they could impact his game, Dr Sushil Nagar, who treated Pant at the Emergency department of the Roorkee hospital where he was initially taken to, said there was no fracture but a ligament injury to the knee that would require further investigation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among those who sent in their best wishes for his speedy recovery. "Distressed by the accident of noted cricketer Rishabh Pant. I pray for his good health and well-being. @RishabhPant17," the Prime Minister said on Twitter. India's cricket board BCCI said in a statement that Pant has two cuts on his forehead, a ligament

tear in his right knee. The cricketer has also hurt his right wrist, ankle, toe and has suffered abrasion injuries on his back. He was rushed to Saksham hospital in nearby Roorkee from where he was referred to Max Hospital, Dehradun, about three hours away. "When he was brought to our hospital, he was fully conscious and I spoke to him. He wanted to surprise his mother and was going back home," Dr Nagar of Saksham hospital told news agency PTI. Pant had two lacerations (blunt trauma) on his head but there were no stitches, Dr Nagar said. "Reports of X-rays conducted at our hospital suggest that there are no bone injuries. Yes, there is a ligament tear on his right knee. How serious it is can only be detected after further investigation and a detailed MRI done." (PTI)



(L) Cricketer Rishabh Pant receives treatment at a hospital after his car (R) collided with a road divider on the Delhi Dehradun highway

Modi's mother Hiraben passes away at 99

Condolences pour in from all parts of country, abroad



Prime Minister Narendra Modi performs last rites of his mother Heeraben Modi, in Gandhinagar

AHMEDABAD/ NEW DELHI, DEC 30 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Hiraben passed away at a hospital in Ahmedabad on Friday at the age of 99.

A bulletin from the UN Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre, where she was admitted on Wednesday after her health deteriorated, shared the news of her demise. "Hiraben Modi passed away on 30/12/2022 at 3.30 am during the treatment at U N Mehta Heart Hospital", the medical bulletin said. She is survived by five sons - PM Modi and his brothers Somabhai, Amrutbhai, Prahladbhai and Pankajbhai - and daughter Vasantiben. Her last rites were performed at a crematorium in Gandhinagar around 9.30 am in the presence of the Prime Minister, his brothers and other family members.

Gujarat chief minister Bhupendra Patel, former chief ministers Vijay Rupani and Shankersinh Vaghela, business tycoon Gautam Adani, writer and religious leader Swami Sachchidanand, Assembly Speaker Shankar Chaudhari, Rajya Sabha member Jugali Thakor, former speaker Ramanlal Vora and Gujarat BJP president C R Paatlil were present for the cremation ceremony. Following her death in the early hours, the Prime Minister landed in Ahmedabad from Delhi in the morning and went to the residence of his brother Pankaj Modi at Raysan village on the outskirts of Gandhinagar, where the mortal remains of their mother were kept. He offered floral tributes to his mother there and bowed down at her feet. Later, the Prime Minister and his brothers shouldered her mortal remains for some distance before placing them in a mortuary van. Modi also boarded the mortuary van, which reached a crematorium in Sector 30 in Gandhinagar city to perform the last rites of his mother. The Prime Minister and his brothers performed the last rites and lit the funeral pyre of their mother. A family member told reporters that a condolence meet would be organised a few days later at Modi's native place Vadnagar. Notably, PM Modi was scheduled to visit West Bengal on Friday to launch various developmental projects, including a stretch of Kolkata metro and also to flag off the Howrah-New Jalpaiguri Vande Bharat Express. Since he could not remain present in West Bengal, the PM attended those programmes in West Bengal via video conferencing from Raj Bhavan in Gandhinagar. Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister tweeted that "a great journey of 100 years" has ended with his mother's demise. "A great journey of 100 years has come to an end. I have witnessed three qualities in mother, a journey like that of a tapasvi (saint), a selfless worker and life dedicated to values," Modi tweeted. President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar and leaders cutting across the political spectrum on Friday condoled the death of Prime Minister's mother, recalling her simple and compassionate life that was an inspiration for all. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi,

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee were among the host of leaders from the ruling party and others who mourned the death. "Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's mother Hiraba's hundred years of struggle is a symbol of Indian ideals. Shri Modi imbibed the spirit of 'Matradevobhav' and the values of Hiraba in his life. I pray for the peace of the holy soul. My condolences to the family!" the president said in a tweet in Hindi.

The vice-president said the Prime Minister's mother exemplified simplicity and sublimity reflecting the virtuosity of motherhood. Expressing condolences, Union home minister Amit Shah said a mother is the first friend and teacher of a person's life and the pain of losing a mother is undoubtedly the biggest pain in the world. "The struggles faced by Hira Ba to nurture the family are a role model for all. Her sacrificial ascetic life will always be in our memory. The entire nation stands with Prime Minister Modi and his family in this hour of grief. The prayers of crores of people are with you (Modi). Om Shanti," he said. Defence minister Rajnath Singh said a mother's demise creates a void that is impossible to fill. BJP president J P Nadda said her life will always serve as an inspiration. Her affection and commitment to truth gave the country a glorious leadership, he said. Veteran BJP leader LK Advani recalled that the Prime Minister often spoke about the special bond that he shared with his mother, about her simplicity and her caring persona, and said, these will always be remembered and missed by all. Congress president Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi said they were deeply saddened to hear about the demise of the prime minister's mother. "... In this difficult time, I express my deepest condolences and affection to him and his family members," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. "Your mother is also our mother," Mamata Banerjee told Modi at the Vande Bharat train launch he attended virtually. Her Tamil Nadu counterpart Stalin also sent in his condolences. Several world leaders too condoled the demise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother. Taking to Twitter, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida wrote: "PM Modi @narendramodi, I would like to express my deepest condolences for the passing of your beloved mother. May her soul rest in peace." Israel's newly-elected Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also tweeted his condolence message to his friend, Prime Minister Modi. Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" said he is deeply saddened to learn about the passing away of Modi's loving mother. Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe also offered his condolences to prime minister Modi. Sri Lanka's former President Mahinda Rajapaksa also expressed his "heartfelt condolences" to Modi on the loss of his beloved mother. In a tweet, Nepal's former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba also expressed his heartfelt condolences to Modi and his family "at the passing away of his venerable Mother. May her eternal soul attain Moksha". (PTI)

World reacts to death of Brazilian soccer king Pele

SAO PAULO, DEC 30 /--/ Reactions poured in from around the world to the death of Brazilian soccer legend Pele. He died of cancer in Brazil at age 82. His grace, athleticism and mesmerising moves transfixed players and fans. "A simple goodbye to the eternal King Pel will never be enough to express the pain that hits the entire world of football at this moment. An inspiration for so many millions, a reference of yesterday, today, always. The affection he has always shown for me was reciprocal in every moment we shared, even at distance. He will never be forgotten and his memory will last for

ever in each and everyone of us football lovers. Rest in peace, King Pel" Portuguese soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo wrote. "Your place is on God's side. My eternal king. Rest in peace." 1970 World Cup winner Roberto Rivellino and teammate of Pele on the Brazilian national team said. Brazilian star of the present generation Neymar wrote: "Before Pel, '10' was just a number. I read that somewhere at some point in my life. But that line, beautiful, is incomplete. I would say that before Pel football was just a sport. Pel changed everything. He transformed football into art, entertainment. He gave voice to the poor,

to the Black and above all he gave Brazil visibility. Football and Brazil elevated their standing thanks to the King! He is gone, but his magic will endure. Pel is eternal!" "With the death of Pel, soccer has lost one of its greatest legends, if not the greatest. Like all legends, the King seemed immortal. He made people dream and continued to do that with generations and generations of lovers of our sport. Who, as a child, didn't dream of being Pel? The King will remain the King, forever," wrote Didier Deschamps, former player and manager of the French national team. Chelsea Football

Club expressed their grief saying: "Farewell to the King. The master of the beautiful game." "Manchester City are saddened to learn of the passing of Brazil legend Pel, one of the all-time greats who did so much for the beautiful game. May he rest in peace" wrote Manchester City Football Club. The stadium where the Brazilian soccer great played some of the best matches of his career will also hold his funeral on Monday and Tuesday. Santos, the club where Pele played in Brazil, said in a statement the public will be able to pay their final respects at Vila Belmiro Stadium, outside Sao Paulo. (PTI)

(MORE NEWS ON PAGE-12)



PM Modi condoles soccer king's demise

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday condoled the demise of soccer king Pele, saying his outstanding sporting performances and success will keep inspiring the coming generations. "The passing away of Pel leaves an irreplaceable void in the world of sports. A global football superstar, his popularity transcends boundaries. His outstanding sporting performances and success will keep inspiring the coming generations," the Prime Minister wrote on Twitter. "Condolences to his family and fans. RIP (rest in peace)," Modi said. (PTI)

Attack kills 10 in Syria, Kurdish forces arrest 52 militants

BEIRUT, DEC 30 /--/ A militant rocket attack in eastern Syria on Friday targeted a bus with oil industry employees, killing at least 10, the government said. To the north, Syrian Kurdish-led forces announced they arrested 52 militants in an operation against the Islamic State group's sleeper cells. According to Syria's petroleum ministry, the rocket struck in the Al-Taym gas field in eastern Deir el-Zour province. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitoring group, said IS was behind the attack. The Observatory also reported a higher death toll from the rocket attack, saying at least 12 workers were killed. Also Friday, the US-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said their raids had reportedly thwarted an attack planned for New Year's Eve. The IS militants were hiding in residential areas and farms, a statement from the forces said. The years long US-backed campaign had succeeded in crushing the militants' territorial control in Iraq and Syria, but IS fighters maintain sleeper cells and have staged attacks that have killed scores of Iraqis and Syrians in the past months. On Thursday, the Syrian Kurdish-led forces announced their operation, citing a surge in IS attacks and saying that "Operation Al-Jazeera Thunderbolt" aims to target sleeper cells in al-Hol and nearby Tal Hamis areas. Since 2011, Syria has been mired in a bloody civil war that has drawn in regional and global powers. Syrian President Bashar Assad has mostly regained control of the country, but parts of its north remain under the control of rebels, as well as Turkish and Syrian Kurdish forces. Also, some 900 US troops in Syria support the Kurdish-led forces' fight against IS and have frequently targeted IS militants, mostly in parts of northeastern Syria under Kurdish control. The US Central Command on Thursday reported conducting some 313 operations against IS in 2022 in Syria and Iraq, mostly in cooperation with Kurdish-led forces. According to a CENTCOM statement, 215 militants from the Islamic State group were arrested and 466 were killed in Syria. (AP)

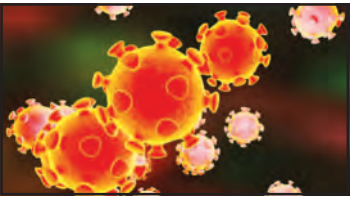
Indonesia lifts all Covid curbs, shifts to endemic approach

JAKARTA, DEC 30 /--/ Almost three years after officials announced the first confirmed case of Covid-19 in Indonesia, the country's leader said on Friday they are lifting all coronavirus-related restrictions nationwide. President Joko Widodo said Indonesia's Covid-19 situation is under control after observing improvements over the past 10 months, allowing the country to abandon the large-scale social restrictions on crowds and people's movement it had adopted in April 2020. However, Widodo called on people to remain careful and alert as "the pandemic has not ended completely." He told a news conference at the presidential palace in the capital, Jakarta, that the use of masks in crowds and closed spaces should continue, though it wouldn't be required. During the pandemic, instead of implementing a nationwide lockdown, his administration applied two systems: PSBB, which refers to large-scale social restrictions, and then PPKM, a tiered system to curb public mobility. Both policies were critical in the government's pandemic response. The PSBB was first imposed in the world's fourth-most populous nation in April 2020, a month after the first case was recorded, as a compromise to growing calls for a stringent lockdown. It was reworked into the emergency PPKM scheme in July 2021, when the delta variant-fuelled second wave of infections swept the country. The emergency status was then replaced by the four-level PPKM system, which Widodo announced would be abandoned immediately. A study found that almost all Indonesians have developed antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, boosting confidence that an explosion of cases in Southeast Asia's largest economy could be avoided. In July, researchers with the Health Ministry and the University of Indonesia examined blood samples from 20,501 individuals in 100 cities across the archipelago and found that 98.5 per cent of the respondents had antibodies against the virus, due to either vaccination or past infection. Based on the World Health Organization criteria, Indonesia's risk assessment status is at "Level One." "Nationally, that means COVID-19 in Indonesia has reached the endemic stage," said Hartarto, who is also Coordinating Minister for Economy. He said the Health Ministry's upcoming serology survey would be used as the basis for future mitigation policies. Indonesia had largely recovered from its delta surge, which was among the worst in Southeast Asia. In July 2021, a then-record of about 56,700 daily new cases saw the delta variant overwhelming hospitals on the main island of Java. In February, omicron set a new high of over 64,700 new infections. (AP)

Japan tests all China arrivals for Covid amid surging cases

TOKYO, DEC 30 /--/ Japan on Friday started requiring Covid-19 tests for all passengers arriving from China as an emergency measure against surging infections there and as Japan faces rising case numbers and record-level deaths at home. Japan reported a record 420 new coronavirus deaths on Thursday, one day after reaching an earlier single-day record of 415 deaths, according to the Health Ministry. The numbers are higher than the daily deaths at the peak of an earlier wave in August, when they exceeded 300. Experts say the reason for the latest increase is unclear but could be linked to deaths from the worsening of chronic illnesses among elderly patients. Japan tightened its border measures on Friday, making the antigen test that was already conducted on entrants suspected of having Covid-19 mandatory for all people arriving from mainland China. Those who test positive will be quarantined for up to seven days at designated facilities and their samples will be used for genome analysis. The measures began

ahead of the New Year holidays marked by travel and parties. Direct flights between China and Japan will be limited to four major Japanese airports for now, government officials said. Flights from Hong Kong and Macao will be allowed to land at three other airports New Chitose Airport in Hokkaido, Fukuoka Airport and Naha Airport in Okinawa provided there are no passengers who have been to mainland China within seven days prior to the flight. Hong Kong authorities called the restrictions "unreasonable" and requested Japanese authorities to withdraw them. Prior to adding the three airports for flights from Hong Kong and Macao, authorities said that 60,000 travellers and some 250 flights would be affected between December and January 2023. Japan earlier this year stopped requiring Covid-19 tests for entrants who had at least three shots part of the country's careful easing of



JERUSALEM, DEC 30 /--/ Several world leaders on Friday condoled the demise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Hiraben, who passed away in Gujarat at the age of 100. Hiraben passed away at a hospital in Ahmedabad in the early hours of Friday. Her mortal remains were consigned to flames by PM Modi and his brothers at a crematorium in Gandhinagar. Taking to Twitter, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida wrote, "PM Modi @narendramodi, I would like to express my deepest condolences for the passing of your beloved mother. May her soul rest in peace." Israel's newly-elected Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also tweeted his condolence message to his friend, Prime Minister Modi. "My dear friend @narendramodi, Prime Minister of India, please accept my deepest condolences on the passing of your beloved mother. May she rest in peace and may you find solace in her memory and the rich heritage she bequeathed to you and many

Israel indicts soldiers for trying to bomb Palestinian home

JERUSALEM, DEC 30 /--/ Israel's military said its prosecutor has filed indictments against two soldiers who allegedly hurled an explosive device at a Palestinian home in the occupied West Bank, a rare instance of Israeli troops facing serious charges over an offence against Palestinians. Prosecutors charged the two soldiers with making an explosive device, aggravated intentional assault, intentional harm to property and impeaching the investigation, the army announced late Thursday. The court ordered the soldiers to remain in detention until a hearing next month. They were arrested on November 28. The indictment said the two defendants acted out of revenge for the abduction of the body of an Israeli schoolboy in the flashpoint West Bank city of Jenin on November 22. Palestinian militants in Jenin had snatched the body of 17-year-old Tiran Fero, a member of Israel's Druze Arab minority, from a local hospital where he was receiving treatment after a car crash. Fero's father accused the militants of removing his son from his life-support machine while he was still alive. The Israeli military had said he was already dead when the militants took him. The seizure of the boy's body spread alarm among Israel's Druze community. As anger rose, videos circulated on social media of Druze men threatening to take revenge against

Palestinians. Police said Druze villagers even attacked and tied up three Palestinian labourers in northern Israel. Amid the standoff over Fero's body, the two defendants reportedly Druze soldiers teamed up with another soldier to assemble an explosive device, the military said on Thursday. The soldiers identified a Palestinian home near the West Bank city of Bethlehem as their target and lobbed stones at it. A few days later, they threw the explosive into the crowded house "with the intent of starting a fire in the home," the military added. The extent of the damage or any casualties was unclear. There were no details about the targeted family in Palestinian media. The military said it would issue an indictment against the third soldier in the coming days. The three soldiers were not named. The military did not immediately respond to the request for comment on the penalties they could face. Such a swift military prosecution is highly unusual and underscored the seriousness of the case. Rights groups long have alleged that Israeli military investigations into the killings of Palestinians reflect a pattern of impunity. Earlier this month, Israeli human rights group Yesh Din reported that Israeli soldiers accused of harming Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip over the last



others," Netanyahu wrote. Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" said he is deeply saddened to learn about the passing away of Modi's loving mother. "At this hour of grief, I express heartfelt condolences to PM Modi ji and the family members and pray for eternal peace of the departed soul," he tweeted. Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe also offered his condolences to prime minister Modi. "Deeply

saddened by the passing of the beloved mother of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. My heartfelt condolences to Prime Minister Modi and the family in this hour of grief," he said in a statement. Bhutan's Prime Minister Dr Lotay Tshering tweeted, "My prayers and condolences to Prime Minister @narendramodi on the demise of his beloved mother early today. The grief of losing one's parent is inconsolable. I wish you

Putin, Xi hold talks as Russia fires another Ukraine barrage

KYIV, DEC 30 /--/ Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping vowed on Friday to deepen their bilateral cooperation against the backdrop of Moscow's 10-month war in Ukraine, which weathered another night of drone and rocket attacks following a massive missile bombardment. Putin and Xi made no direct mention of Ukraine as they held bilateral talks via video conference. But they hailed strengthening ties between Moscow and Beijing amid what they called "geopolitical tensions" and a "difficult international situation." "In the face of increasing geopolitical tensions, the significance of the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership is growing as a stabilising factor," Putin said. He invited Xi to visit Moscow in the spring. In Ukraine, authorities reviewed the toll from a widespread Russian missile attack on power stations and other vital infrastructure on Thursday that was the biggest such bombardment in weeks. Four civilians were killed during the barrage, according to Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office. The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said in its Friday morning update that Russian forces had unleashed a total of 85 missiles and 35 air strikes on Ukrainian targets in the previous 24 hours. Russia also launched 63 attacks from multiple launch rocket systems, the military report said. Following the first waves of missiles on Thursday morning, Russian forces attacked Ukraine with Iranian-made Shahed-131/136 drones on Thursday night and early on Friday, all of which were shot down, the Ukrainian air force said. Some were aimed at Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said Friday. Of seven kamikaze drones launched against the Ukrainian capital, two were shot down on the approach to the city and five over Kyiv itself, according to Klitschko. Windows in a residential building and one non-residential building were damaged as a result of falling debris, but no casualties were reported, he said. Further east, the Ukrainian military reported its forces shot down 10 attack drones in the central-eastern Dnipropetrovsk province and southeastern Zaporizhzhia provinces. Almost 30 Russian shells were fired at Marhanets in Dnipropetrovsk province on Thursday night, according to regional Gov. Valentyn Reznichenko. Marhanets is located directly across the Dnieper River from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Europe's largest nuclear power station. The city of Bakhmut in Donetsk province continued to be a key target of Russia's grinding offensive in the industrial east, Ukrainian Defence Ministry spokesperson Oleksandr Shtupun said. Other populated places in Donetsk, neighbouring Luhansk province, northern Ukraine's Chernihiv, Sumy and Kharkiv provinces, and Zaporizhzhia and Kherson provinces in the south all came under attack. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address that Russia hasn't abandoned plans to capture all of Donetsk, aiming to accomplish the goal by New Year's Day. Zelenskyy also warned Ukrainians there could be another widespread air assault. "There are two days left in this year. Perhaps the enemy will try once again to make us celebrate the New Year in the dark. Perhaps, the occupants are planning to make us suffer with the next strikes on our cities," he said. "But no matter what they plan, we know one thing about ourselves: we will survive. We will. We will drive them out. No doubt about it. And they will be punished for this terrible war." Putin, during his call with Xi, noted that military cooperation has a "special place" in the relationship between their countries. He said the Kremlin aimed to "strengthen the cooperation between the armed forces of Russia and China." Xi, in turn, said through a translator that "in the face of a difficult and far from straightforward international situation," Beijing was ready "to increase strategic cooperation with Russia, provide each other with development opportunities, be global partners for the benefit of the peoples of our countries and in the interests of stability around the world." Ties between Moscow and Beijing have grown stronger since Putin sent his troops into Ukraine on February 24. Just last week, Moscow and Beijing held joint naval drills in the East China Sea. China, which has promised a "no limits" friendship with Russia, has pointedly refused to criticize Moscow's actions in Ukraine, blaming the US and NATO for provoking the Kremlin, and has blasted the punishing sanctions imposed on Russia. Russia, in turn, has strongly backed China amid the tensions with the US over Taiwan. Russia and China are both facing domestic difficulties. Putin is trying to maintain domestic support for a war that has lasted longer than anticipated, while a surge in Covid-19 cases has overwhelmed hospitals in China. (AP)

EAM Jaishankar visits Konark Wheel in Cyprus

NICOSIA, DEC 30 /--/ External affairs minister S Jaishankar on his first official visit to Cyprus visited the "Konark Wheel" here which symbolises a strong friendship between the two countries. Jaishankar is on a three-day visit to Cyprus as India and Cyprus celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations. Jaishankar visited the "Konark Wheel" here on Thursday, which was gifted to Cyprus by India in 2017. "Visited the Konark wheel installed in the Cyprus Foreign Ministry with PM @IKasoulides and Interior Minister @NourisNicos," Jaishankar tweeted along with pictures. "A gift from India in 2017, it symbolises the strong friendship between our nations," he tweeted. The two countries released commemorative stamps on Thursday on the occasion of 75 years of India's Independence and 60 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations. On Thursday, Jaishankar also met Annita Demetriou, the President of the House of Representatives of Cyprus and both leaders joined to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi. "His universal message of peace and harmony continues to guide us all," Jaishankar tweeted. The minister also met his Cypriot counterpart Kasoulides and signed an agreement on defence and military cooperation, another Letter of Intent on immigration and mobility, as well as the agreement on Cyprus joining the International Solar Alliance. (PTI)

Shehbaz Sharif to convene NSC meeting to discuss growing militancy

ISLAMABAD, DEC 30 /--/ Top civil and military leaders of Pakistan are set to meet in a National Security Committee (NSC) meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday to discuss the strategy to counter the rising threat of militancy in the country. The NSC meeting would also be attended by all service chiefs, key cabinet ministers, and other high officials. The decision to convene the meeting was taken after Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir called on Prime Minister Sharif on Thursday to brief him about professional as well as national security matters, according to government officials. Director General Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt Gen Nadeem Anjum will brief the meeting on the recent terror wave in Pakistan and the Pakistan-Afghan border situation, while an integrated strategy against terrorism would be formulated. The News International newspaper reported. Official sources said that the meeting would discuss the modalities to counter the latest threat by the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) that has increased the attacks on security forces since November when they ended a months-long cease-fire with the Pakistan government. It would also look into the cross-border attacks from Afghanistan in the wake of the failure of the interim Taliban government to eliminate the use of its soil for terrorist activities. The meeting comes days after the 254th Corps Commanders' Conference in which the top military brass vowed to defeat terrorism. A comprehensive review of professional and organisational matters of the army was undertaken by the commanders in the meeting, the Army said in a statement after the meeting. (PTI)





BRAZILIAN FOOTBALL LEGEND PELE DIES AGED 82



SAO PAULO, DEC 30 /--/ Brazilian football icon Pelé, a three-time World Cup winner who is widely regarded as the greatest player of all time, died on Thursday at the age of 82 — triggering a wave of tributes from the sports world and beyond.

His death after a long battle with cancer was caused by “multiple organ failure,” the Albert Einstein hospital in Sao Paulo said in a statement, confirming the news from the legend’s family. “We love you infinitely. Rest in peace,” daughter Kely Nascimento wrote on Instagram. The football world — from his former teammates to current stars — came together to honor “O Rei” (The King), who transformed the sport during a long professional career that began when he was still a teenager. Brazil star Neymar said Pelé “transformed football into an art,” France’s Kylian Mbappe said his legacy “will never be forgotten,” and Portugal’s Cristiano Ronaldo called him an “inspiration to millions.” Argentina’s World Cup-winning captain Lionel Messi simply wrote: “Rest in peace.” Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro declared three days of national mourning, while president-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who is due to take office Sunday, tweeted: “Thank you, Pelé.” Pelé is the only footballer in history to have won three World Cups — in 1958, 1962 and 1970. He scored a world record 1,281 goals in 1,363 matches during a 21-year career. He had been in increasingly fragile health, battling kidney problems and colon cancer — undergoing surgery for the latter in September 2021, followed by chemotherapy. A wake will take place on Monday, followed by a funeral on Tuesday in Santos, the southeastern city where he played most of his



career, his former club said. The city declared seven days of mourning, as fans flocked to the team’s stadium to leave flowers. Emotional Brazilians also descended on the hospital where Pelé died — even running 1.5 kilometers (almost a mile) to get there, in the case of Antonio Perera, 46, and his son Luis Eduardo, 12. “He’s our greatest idol, the greatest footballer of all time,” Perera told AFP. In a testament to Pelé’s influence, international figures including US President Joe Biden and former leader Barack Obama, Brazilian music legends Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, and International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach also paid tribute. “As one of the most recognisable athletes in the world, he understood the power of sports to bring people together,” Obama wrote. Born on October 23, 1940 in

the southeastern city of Tres Coracoes, Edson Arantes do Nascimento — named for American inventor Thomas Edison — grew up selling peanuts on the street to help his impoverished family get by.

He was soon given the nickname Pelé, for his mispronunciation of Bile, the name of a goalkeeper at Vasco de Sao Lourenco, where his footballer father once played. Pelé dazzled from the age of 15, when he started playing professionally with Santos. He led the club to a flurry of titles, including back-to-back Intercontinental Cups in 1962-1963. He epitomized the Brazil national team’s sublime style of play, called “samba football.” Pelé set his scoring records playing for Santos (1956-74), the Brazilian national team, and the New York Cosmos (1975-77). But beyond the many

benchmarks he set, he will be remembered for revolutionizing the sport, his ever-present number 10 on his back as he tapped into his preternatural athleticism. The first global football star, he played a lead role in making the game a sporting and commercial powerhouse. He also played with heart, visible in the iconic black-and-white footage of the 17-year-old bursting into tears after helping Brazil to its first World Cup title, in 1958. Eight years earlier, seeing his father cry when Brazil lost the 1950 World Cup final on home soil to Uruguay, Pelé had promised to bring the trophy home one day. (AFP)



Pelé
BORN : Edson Arantes do Nascimento
23 October 1940
Três Corações, Minas Gerais, Brazil
DIED 29 December 2022 (aged 82)

Association football career

Position(s) :Forward, attacking midfielder

YOUTH CAREER

1953–1956 Bauru

SENIOR CAREER*

Years	Team	Apps	(Gls)
1956–1974	Santos	636	(618)
1975–1977	New York Cosmos	64	(37)

Total 700 (655)

INTERNATIONAL CAREER

1957–1971	Brazil	92	(77)
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Adeus the King of the beautiful game, a titan of 20th century

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 /--/ They say Ali was arguably the greatest sports personality of all time. Pelé was that and more. In his pomp, Pelé was Muhammad Ali from the ‘Rumble in the Jungle’, Jesse Owens in Hitler’s Olympics. He was Rafael Nadal at Roland Garros, Tiger Woods at Augusta, Usain Bolt and Michael Phelps in Beijing, London and Rio. All rolled into one, many times over, through a glittering career headlined by three World Cup title triumphs, and more than 1200 goals, though only 784 of them are recognised by FIFA. He was one of the first global sporting superstars who transcended continents, admired for his wizardry with football and sometimes vilified for his political stance, or the lack of it. Born Edson Arantes do Nascimento in 1940, Pelé was the embodiment of the commercialization of football underwrote since the first world cup television broadcasts in the 1950s, something -- besides his extraordinary skills -- that

played a part in taking him to all corners of the world, including India’s Kolkata (then Calcutta) in 1977, when Mohun Bagan pulled off a coup of sorts. That would be his first of the three visits to the country, the latter two coming in 2015 and 2018. Born in a country battling corruption, military coups, censorship, and repressive and regressive governments, 17-year-old Pelé transformed Brazil’s image with his stunning show in his very first World Cup, in 1958.

In the tournament in Sweden, he scored six goals in four games, including two in the final, to lead Brazil to a 5-2 win over the hosts and give more than a peek into what was to come over the next decade and a half. Labelled the “greatest” by world football governing body FIFA, he was also the apolitical who seemed happy to appease anyone in power. Ahead of the 1970 World Cup, Pelé was also the man who was seen sharing the stage with President Emílio Garrastazu Médici, one of the most

ruthless members of the country’s authoritarian regime. This was after the military took over Brazil following a bloodless coup in 1964. Brazil won the 1970 tournament with Pelé leading one of the greatest teams of all time to their third World Cup triumphs, climaxing the black person of working-class background’s spectacular rise to fame against the backdrop of Brazil’s politics, which was dominated by the military regime from 1960s to the 1980s. He was the national treasure who once managed to bring about a 48-hour ceasefire between two warring factions during the Nigerian civil war in the 1960s, just so they could watch Pelé play in an exhibition game in Lagos. He was also the person who played a big part in Mohun Bagan hosting him and the New York Cosmos during its tour of Asia in 1977. Pelé played in that game at Eden Gardens for about half an hour, in the winter of his career and far from his best, but still left a turnout of 80,000 mesmerized. (PTI)

'Pele transformed football into art': Neymar leads tributes to Brazil legend



LONDON, Dec 30 /--/ Neymar led football’s emotional tributes to Pelé after the Brazil legend’s death on Thursday as the Paris Saint Germain star said his iconic compatriot had transformed the sport “into an art”. Pelé passed away aged 82 after suffering “multiple organ failure” following a long battle with cancer and football’s current and former stars were quick to salute arguably the sport’s greatest ever player. Nicknamed “O Rei” (The King), Pelé scored more than 1,000 goals before retiring in 1977. Brazil forward Neymar hailed Pelé, the only man to win three World Cups, in a social media post alongside two pictures of himself with the legend. “Before Pelé, ‘10’ was just a number,” the heir to Pelé’s famed shirt number wrote on Instagram. “But that beautiful sentence is incomplete. I would say that before Pelé, football was just a sport. He transformed football into an art, into entertainment... Football and Brazil gained status thanks to the King. He has gone, but his magic will remain. Pelé is ETERNAL!” (AFP)

Pele's funeral and burial to take place in hometown Santos

SAO PAULO, DEC 30 /--/ The stadium where Brazilian football great Pelé played some of the best matches of his career will also hold his funeral on Monday and Tuesday. Santos, the club where Pelé played in Brazil, said in a statement the public will be able to pay their final respects at Vila Belmiro Stadium, outside Sao Paulo. Pelé, whose full name was Edson Arantes do Nascimento, died Thursday after a long battle with cancer. He was 82. Santos said the coffin carrying the three-time World Cup champion will leave Albert Einstein hospital in Sao Paulo early Monday morning and will be placed in the center circle of the field.

Visitation will start Monday at 10 a.m. and finish the next day at the same time. Pelé’s casket will be carried through the streets of Santos and will pass in front of the home of his 100-year-old mother, Celeste. Recent reports in Brazilian media say Pelé’s mother cannot leave her bed and is not lucid. The burial will take place at the Memorial Necrópole Eumênica, a vertical cemetery in Santos. Only family will attend. Pelé has a home in Santos, where he lived most of his life. He spent his last years in the city of Guarujá. Pelé had a colon tumor removed in September 2021. Neither his family nor the hospital have said whether it had spread to other organs. He returned to the Albert Einstein hospital on Nov. 29 with COVID-19 and a respiratory infection. Last week, the hospital said in a statement his cancer had advanced. Pelé led Brazil to World Cup victory in 1958, 1962 and 1970 and remains one of the team’s all-time leading scorers with 77 goals. Neymar tied Pelé’s record during this year’s World Cup in Qatar. (AP)

Pele's death leaves irreplaceable void in world Of sports: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, DEC 30 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday condoled the demise of soccer king Pelé, saying his outstanding sporting performances and success will keep inspiring the coming generations. Born Edson Arantes do Nascimento in 1940, Pelé died on Thursday. He was 82. Named athlete of the century by the International Olympic Committee in 1999, Pelé is the only footballer in history to win three World Cups -- 1958, 1962 and 1970. “The passing away of Pelé leaves an irreplaceable void in the world of

sports. A global football superstar, his popularity transcends boundaries. His outstanding sporting performances and success will keep inspiring the coming generations,” the prime minister wrote on Twitter. “Condolences to his family and fans. RIP (rest in peace),” Modi said. Nicknamed “O Rei” (The King), he scored more than 1,000 goals in one of the most storied careers in sport, before retiring in 1977. He had been in increasingly fragile health, battling kidney problems and colon cancer -- undergoing surgery for the latter in September 2021, followed by chemotherapy.

Pele's passing, glory for Messi and an unprecedented FIFA ban for India sum up year

New Delhi, Dec 30 /--/ Pelé’s demise just two days before the world prepared to welcome the new year and Lionel Messi-led Argentina lifting the World Cup trophy were undoubtedly the two epochal moments, which will be remembered for decades to come even as Indian football made more noise for its administrative mess than the on-field achievements in 2022. If Messi worked his magic to guide Argentina to its third World Cup triumph on December 18, Pelé’s legion of fans kept praying as he battled cancer in a Sao Paulo hospital before he departed the world on December 29. Fans in India shed tears of joy when Messi lifted the World Cup trophy, and cried inconsolably when Pelé left, given their connect with the ‘Beautiful Game’. However, on the home front, things are far from

hunky-dory even though global football icons are revered here and millions in the country tune in when the World Cup, Euros or the UEFA Champions League are beamed on the television screens.

The year saw Indian football go into a downward spiral with the All India Football Federation (AIFF) being banned by the world governing body FIFA for the first time in its 85 years history after it failed to conduct elections on time due to the callousness of the office-bearers, led by former union minister Praful Patel, who was ousted from office by the Apex Court. The ban, which came a day after the country’s Independence Day, was brief -- just 11 days -- and the women’s Under-17 World Cup, which the FIFA had threatened to take away, was finally held in the country. (AP)



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