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Narrow escape for patient ‘due to power outage’

Back-up facilities at RP Hospital ‘non-existent’ over a month

KARTIK

PORT BLAIR, DEC 4/--/ For 48 years old SmtSavatri Devi (Name Changed), it was a narrow escape. She has expressed her sincere gratitude to the experienced Surgeon ofRP Hospital, Mayabunder for giving her a second life. As per reports, Savatri Devi was undergoing a complex gall bladder stone removal surgery at the hospital. While the surgery process was half done, all of a sudden power failed and the surgical lights in the OT blacked out. Due to power failure, the anesthesia machine lost its ability to function to its full capacity and the Surgeon could not complete the critical surgery process. Since the woman was administered anesthesia before the start of the surgery and without power supply and anesthesia machine losing its ability to function, the chances of the woman coming out of anesthesia was looming large. The Surgeon immediately informed the Electricity department about the power failure and requested for quick restoring the power supply keeping in mind the condition of the woman. Despite all efforts, the power supply was restored only after 40 minutes with the intervention of the Assistant Engineer of Electricity department. It was here the Surgeon played smart and managed the process tactfully.

Providing adequate oxygenation, ventilation, anesthesia level monitoring are not possible without power. Power failure during the process of critical surgeries can be disastrous as it is a matter of life and death for the patient. Power backup facility is essential for every hospital. With lives at stake, even one



power failure can put the lives of the patients at risk. Relatives of the patients are angry at the irresponsible management

generatorfacility; patients have to face such danger on a regular basis during critical operations. Sources have informed that the

generator set repaired. “It is the sole responsibility of the Chief Medical Officer of this hospital to ensure that power backup systems are in place when critical surgeries are performed in the hospital. The hospital management has failed in repairing the generator in the hospital for the past one month. Due to official apathy, the hospital is risking the lives of the patients”, said the relative of the patient.

PROVIDENTIAL HAND IN SAVING LIFE

of RP Hospital, Mayabunder which is a District hospital. The most shocking part is despite the district hospital having a

generator set of RP Hospital, Mayabunder has gone defunct for over a month and no efforts are being made to get the

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Calcutta High Court to hold circuit bench

PORT BLAIR, DEC 4/--/ Justice RajasekharMantha and Justice BibhasRanjan De, Judges of the Calcutta High Court shall be sitting/holding Circuit Court at Port Blair from Dec.12 to 23, 2022 (both days inclusive).

Karmatang-9 residents protest contractor’s ‘greed’

**Accusations alive of not dismantling temporary
sheds after project completion**

KARTIK

MAYABUNDER, DEC 4/--/You might have seen that civil contractors before starting any government project construct a temporary shed near the construction site for storing cements, rods and other construction material as well as serve as rest room for labourers. In Andaman & Nicobar Islands, most contractors prefer to construct the temporary sheds at a place close to the roadside near the construction site for easy transportation of the materials. It has become a way of life for such contractors never to ensure dismantling of temporary sheds after the project is over. Most contractors deliberately keep the temporary shed intact so that the area can be encroached upon. There are scores of temporary sheds constructed by the contractors for government projects which have not been demolished and later encroached upon. Even after completion of the project and clearing of all pending bills, the contractors keep the shed intact and after a few

**NEGLIGENCE:
‘STANDARD
OPERATING
PROCEDURE’ FOR
CONTRACTORS**

more interested in getting their commission rather than getting the temporary shed dismantled. Scores of temporary sheds constructed by the contractors are being encroached, all across the islands. In one such glaring example, a temporary shed constructed at Karmatang-9 in front of a solid liquid waste management unit is still standing even after three years. This shed was constructed for storing of cement & other construction materials but even after the completion of the project, the shed has not been dismantled. Local residents are raising questions as to why the shed has not been demolished and cleared by the appropriate authority.



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Gujarat Assembly elections phase-2: Polling in 93 seats today

AHMEDABAD, DEC 4 /--/ Voting will be held on Monday in 93 Assembly seats across 14 central and northern districts of Gujarat during the second phase of the state polls.

In the 2017 Assembly polls, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 51 of these seats, Congress 39, while three seats went to independent candidates. In central Gujarat, the BJP had bagged 37 seats, outnumbering the Congress which got 22. But in north Gujarat, the Congress had won 17 seats while the saffron party got 14. The high-voltage campaigning by different parties for the second phase of polls ended on Saturday evening. The first phase of voting for 89 seats in Saurashtra, Kutch and south Gujarat regions was held on December 1, when an average voter turnout of 63.31 per cent was recorded.

The Gujarat Assembly has a total of 182 seats. In the second phase, voting will be held in the remaining 93 seats, for which 833 candidates are in the fray from 61 political parties, including the BJP, Congress and the new poll entrant Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The nominees also include 285 independents, as per the state election body. The BJP and the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP are contesting in all the 93 seats. The Congress is contesting in 90 seats and its alliance partner Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has fielded candidates in two seats. Among other parties, the Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP) has fielded 12 candidates and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) 44. The 93 Assembly segments which will go to polls on Monday are spread across Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Gandhinagar and other

districts.

Some of the important constituencies in the second phase include Ghatlodia (in Ahmedabad district) of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, Viramgam seat (also in Ahmedabad) from where Patidar leader Hardik Patel is fighting on the BJP's ticket and Gandhinagar South from where Alpesh Thakor is fighting as the saffron party candidate. Besides, Dalit leader Jignesh Mevani is contesting as the Congress candidate from Vadgam seat in Banaskantha district, and Leader of Opposition in the Gujarat Assembly Sukhram Rathva is the nominee from Jetpur in Chhota Udepur district. BJP rebel Madhu Shrivastav is contesting as an independent candidate from Vaghodia seat in Vadodara district. Prime Minister Narendra Modi conducted a whirlwind campaign for the BJP

candidates on December 1 and 2, including two back-to-back road shows in Ahmedabad.

During the last leg of the campaign, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held rallies in Dholka, Mahudha and Khambhat towns, while Union minister Smriti Irani held roadshows in Modasa and Siddhpur towns of north Gujarat. AAP leader and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann also held road shows for the second phase of elections. A total 2.51 crore voters are eligible to exercise their franchise for the second phase of elections, including 1.29 crore men and 1.22 crore women. There are 5.96 lakh voters in the age group of 18 to 19 years, according to the Election Commission. The poll body has set up 14,975 polling stations for which 1.13 lakh election staffers have been deployed. (PTI)

Four-day G20 Sherpa meet begins in Udaipur; tech transformation, green development being discussed

UDAIPUR, DEC 4 /--/The first Sherpa meeting under India's G20 presidency began here on Sunday that would give New Delhi the opportunity to put the agenda of developing countries before the leaders' summit next September.

India's Sherpa Amitabh Kant set the tone for the meeting by flagging issues such as charting the path for inclusive, resilient and sustainable growth, accelerating the pace of creating better livelihood and improving healthcare and quality of life as the world recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic. "We are passing through massive geopolitical crisis. We have seen the breakdown of global supply chains, countries suffering from rising debt and the huge crisis of climate action and climate finance," Kant said addressing a side-event on Sustainable Development Goals at the first G20 Sherpa Meeting here.

Earlier, in an informal chat with reporters Kant said the presidency of G20 has given an opportunity to India to place the issues of the developing countries on the agenda of the multilateral forum. "Earlier, we used to get agenda items from the developed world. Now, we get to set the agenda for the G20 meeting. We will tell the world that we are the mother of democracy," Kant said. The discussion during the four-day meeting will focus on economics and finance with the International Monetary Fund making a presentation on the global economic scenario, Kant sharing India's priorities before his G20 counterparts, Department of Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth highlighting the priorities of the finance track. Leaders of G20 member nations, nine guest countries -- Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain and the UAE -- and representatives of international organisations are attending the four-day meeting in this scenic lake city. Issues such as technological transformation, green development, spotlighting women-led development, accelerating implementation of SDGs, and facilitating inclusive and resilient growth have been flagged by India as part of its agenda for the G20 presidency.

The Sherpa meetings will work towards building consensus on key cross-cutting issues, which will be discussed in the various G20 work streams for inclusion in the Leaders' Declaration, which will be tabled at the G20 Summit in New Delhi next year, Kant said. The Sherpas, personal emissaries of the G20 leaders, will oversee the negotiations to arrive at a consensus on key issues facing the world. There are 13 different working groups identified as Sherpa Tracks including the one on Disaster Risk Resilience and Reduction introduced by India for its presidency. The working group on Disaster Risk Resilience and Reduction is important as G20 countries have a high level of exposure to disaster risk. The working group is expected to encourage collective work by the G20, undertake multi-disciplinary research and exchange best practices on disaster risk reduction. During the meeting, India will introduce broad priorities of all Working Groups and hear views from G20 countries, guests, and international organisations, an official statement said. Discussions during the meet will focus on five overarching thematic areas of technological transformation, green development & LIFE, accelerated, inclusive and resilient growth, multilateralism and food, fuel and fertilizers, women-led development, tourism and culture. A 'Chai pe Charcha' will also be held to foster deeper conversations and strengthen ties among G20 member countries and their Sherpas. The first Sherpa meeting under India's presidency plans to offer delegates a unique 'Indian experience' through cultural performances, art exhibitions, and excursions to various destinations including locations such as the Kumbhalgarh Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and the Ranakpur Temple Complex. (PTI)

Youth are growth engine of India: Union minister Anurag Thakur

HISAR, DEC 4 /--/Union information and broadcasting minister Anurag Thakur on Sunday dubbed the youth the growth engine of the country and called upon them to be proactive and innovative and embrace new technology to upskill and reskill themselves.

Thakur was delivering the convocation address at Om Sterling Global University in Hisar. He also inaugurated a community radio station, 90.0 'Bhavyavani', established at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of the university. Haryana Urban Local Bodies Minister Kamal Gupta and Lok Sabha MP from Hisar Brijendra Singh were also present. Addressing the gathering, Thakur said, "The whole world is looking at India's youth with hope because you are the growth engine of the country and India is the growth engine of the world." "India is celebrating 75 years of its Independence and we need brain gain to make India a fully developed nation by 2047," he said. To make India a developed nation, there should be immense possibilities of education, he said.

Thakur stressed upon holistic learning experience through multidisciplinary approach under the National Education Policy (NEP). "As they say, education is the great leveller, our government gives immense importance to it. You are well aware that it took more than 34 years to come out with NEP. I can say today that it was formulated with an emphasis on the multidisciplinary nature of studies to provide a holistic learning experience." "You can here every year, there are new IIT, IIM and medical college which have been opened up enabling young people to skill themselves and become industry ready because education is the backbone for the growth of any country and its people," he said. Touching upon another issue, Thakur said India has the third largest start-up ecosystem in the world. He stated that 110 start-ups have gained unicorn status. There are more than 85,000 start-ups in the country, he said and lauded the Narendra Modi government for its start-up programme.

He lauded the daughters of Haryana for bringing laurels for the country by winning medals in various disciplines. He called upon universities and educational institutions to upgrade sports infrastructure and the youth to actively participate in 'Fit India Movement' stressing upon 'Fitness Ka Dose, Aadha Ghanta Roz' to be fit and healthy. The minister congratulated the students who graduated and got degrees in the first ever convocation of the university. He also interacted with the youth on this occasion. The minister later visited the Doordarshan Kendra of Hisar. (PTI)



President Droupadi Murmu, paid floral tributes to R. Venkataraman, former President of India, on his birth anniversary at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday

Prez Murmu speaks glowingly of AP's role in nation's development

AMARAVATI, DEC 4 /--/ President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday hailed the contribution of people from Andhra Pradesh towards the country's development, and advised students to tread a fine balance between following traditions and embracing the modern world.

Murmu addressed a gathering after being welcomed at a reception hosted here on her first visit to the state upon becoming President. "In line with the National Education Policy-2020, our students should earn an eminent place in the modern world while continuing our traditions. Eminent scientist Dr Yallapragada Subba Rao did this a century ago," she noted. The President recalled the life of Dr Subba Rao who went to the Harvard Medical School in 1922 to pursue pharmacy and biochemistry. "He made great contributions in this field. His research led to discovery of many life-saving medicines. Hewas also interested in Ayurveda," the President said. She pointed out that Andhra Pradesh had a leading role in the development of modern science and technology in independent India. "People of Andhra Pradesh have enhanced the country's reputation in science and technology, especially information technology. The

Telugu diaspora has an influencing role across the world, with majority of them being technology professionals," she said.

The President hoped people of AP would continue their extraordinary contribution in the nation's development and wished them a golden future. Murmu pointed out that AP was one of the states that had a sensitive outlook towards women. She recalled freedom fighter Durgabai Deshmukh of the state who worked for the uplift of women and the role of Sarojini Naidu, "daughter-in-law of AP", in the Salt Satyagraha. "When I became Governor of Jharkhand, I always bore in mind the ideals set by Sarojini Naidu to continue to work in public service," she added. The President quoted former president and distinguished scholar Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan to commend the Telugu people's "progressive and liberal" outlook towards women and their empowerment. She also noted that people of AP "must be feeling proud" celebrating the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' as the national flag was designed by the son of the soil, Pingali Venkaiah.

The President made a mention of the Buddhist tradition of AP, the classical dance form Kuchipudi, writer Molla whose Ramayana became famous by her name. She also referred to the

Sriharikota High Altitude Range of ISRO that stood as a symbol of the scientific advancement of the state. "Am fortunate to be visiting the land of Balaji (Sri Venkateswara Swamy). I will pray to him for the welfare of the people of the country," Murmu said. The President, as part of her two-day trip, will visit the holy hill shrine of Sri Venkateswara Swamy on Tirumala Hills on Monday.

Earlier, Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, Union Tourism and Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy and Chief Secretary K S Jawahar Reddy accorded a warm reception to the President on her arrival in the Vijayawada airport at Gannavaram. Harichandan and Jagan Mohan Reddy felicitated the President at the civic reception hosted by the state government. The Governor presented the President a wood-carved statue of 'Telugu Talli' while the Chief Minister presented a portrait of Sri Venkateswara Swamy. Union Minister Kishan Reddy, High Court Chief Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra and other dignitaries attended the event. After the civic reception, the Governor hosted a banquet in the President's honour at Raj Bhavan. (PTI)

BJP demands probe into leak of list of Kashmiri Pandit employees

SRINAGAR, DEC 4 /--/ The BJP on Sunday demanded a probe into the leak of a list of Kashmiri Pandit employees posted in Kashmir Valley which was circulated on social media after being published by a blog linked to a terrorist outfit.

BJP spokesman Altaf Thakur expressed concern over the blog linked to The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist group, publishing the list of 56

Kashmiri Pandit employees working under the prime minister's rehabilitation package (PMRP). Thakur requested the police to probe how the list was leaked and asked the administration to ensure safety and security of the Kashmiri Pandit employees in Kashmir. He said it was surprising to see the fresh list being leaked and reaching TRF's blog Kashmir Fight. "This is a security breach as terrorists have

clear idea who is posted where," he said.

Thakur said that government must take strong note of it and find out who has leaked the list at a time when targeted killings are taking place in the valley. A fresh list of Kashmiri Pandit employees was being circulated on WhatsApp and other social media platforms with a warning from TRF to non-locals and Kashmiri Pandit employees. (PTI)

Freedom of religion does not include right to convert people: Gujarat in SC

NEW DELHI, DEC 4 /--/ The Gujarat government has told the Supreme Court that freedom of religion does not include the right to convert others, and requested the top court to vacate a High Court stay on the provision of a state law that mandates prior permission of the district magistrate for conversion through marriage.

The Gujarat High Court had through its orders dated August 19 and August 26, 2021 had stayed the operation of section 5 of the state government's Freedom of Religion Act of 2003. In its affidavit submitted in response to a PIL by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, the state government said it has filed

an application seeking the HC stay be revoked so that the provisions to prohibit religious conversions in Gujarat by force, allurement, or fraudulent means be implemented. "It is submitted that the right to freedom of religion does not include a fundamental right to convert other people to a particular religion. The said right certainly does not include the right to convert an individual through fraud, deception, coercion, allurement or other such means," it said.

The state government said the meaning and purport of the word 'propagate' in Article 25 of the Constitution was debated in great detail in the constituent assembly,

and its inclusion was passed only after the clarification that the fundamental right under Article 25 would not include the right to convert. It said the constitutionality of Madhya Pradesh Dharma Swatantraya Adhiniyam, 1968 and the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act, 1967 which are pertinently pari materia (on the same subject) with Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act, 2003, was challenged before a Constitution Bench in 1977. This Court had held that fraudulent or induced conversion impinges upon the right to freedom of conscience of an individual apart from hampering public order and, therefore, the State was well within its power to regulate/restrict

the same. "It is, therefore, submitted that the enactments like Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act, 2003, which seeks to control and curb the menace of organized, sophisticated large scale illegal conversions in the State of Gujarat have been upheld to be valid by this Court," the state government said.

It added that the High Court while passing the orders had failed to appreciate that by staying the operation of section 5 of the Act of 2003, the whole purpose of the Act effectively stands frustrated. "It is humbly submitted that the Act of 2003 is a validly constituted legislation and more particularly the provision

of section 5 of the Act of 2003, which is holding the field since last 18 years and thus, a valid provision of law so as to achieve the objective of the Act of 2003 and to maintain the public order within the State of Gujarat by protecting the cherished rights of vulnerable sections of the society including women and economically and socially backward classes," it said. The state government said the appeal against the orders of the High Court also primarily pertains to the issue of religious conversions by force, allurement, or fraudulent means as is PIL filed by Upadhyay.

It said the High Court vide the impugned interim

orders has stayed the operation of Section 5 of the Act of 2003, which is in fact "an enabling provision enabling a person" to get converted from one religion to another religion on his own volition. It said, "At the same time, the exercise of taking prior permission also obviates the forcible conversion and protects the freedom of conscience guaranteed to all the citizens of the Country." It is submitted that the steps stipulated in Section 5 are the precautions to ensure the process of renouncing one religion and adopting another is genuine, voluntary and bona fide and free from any force, allurement and fraudulent means. (PTI)

UPCM hears grievances of people, directs officials to take action against land grabbers

LUCKNOW, DEC 4 /--/ Chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday heard the grievances of nearly 200 people and ordered officials to take strict legal action against land grabbers.

While addressing Janata Darshan' in front of the Mahant Digvijay Nath Smriti Auditorium at the Gorakhnath temple, Adityanath also instructed the officials to get houses built for the poor and needy. On the complaints of land grabbing, the chief minister said that strict legal action would be ensured in such cases and those involved in such acts should be given appropriate lessons. A woman spoke about the problem of housing during 'Janata Darshan' on which Adityanath promptly instructed the district magistrate to provide a house to her as per the norms.

"Keep the work of public welfare on priority and ensure that the problem of every victim is resolved quickly," Adityanath said. He said that no treatment would be discontinued because of a lack of funding for it. (PTI)

Qatar's cursed money

BHOPINDER SINGH

Football is easily the most popular and watched sport in the world, with an estimated 5 billion people from across the globe expected to watch the 29-day football World Cup in Doha. This popularity for the sport ensures that its governing body i.e., Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) remains immensely powerful and financially loaded with an estimated cash reserve of approximately \$3 billion. This is also ripe turf for many credible accusations of sovereign manipulations, corruption and malpractices like vote-rigging, bribery, racketeering, wire fraud etc., So much so, the previous President of FIFA, Sepp Blatter, has been banned from participating in FIFA activities as a result of corruption cases and will remain banned until 2027. Allegations of bribes having 'bought' the hosting rights by the cash rich Gulf Sheikdom of Qatar have remained at the center of recent debate, investigations, and convictions. Once a tiny British protectorate from 1916 to 1971 (with a population of 2.7 million out of which only 320,000 are Qataris), the State of Qatar has emerged as one of the richest countries in the world

with staggeringly deep pockets. Its untamed shopping spree in just the land of its former colonists includes the iconic Shard in the London skyline, Hotels like Ritz Carlton, Savoy, Connaught, Berkeley, Grosvenor House, Churchill, ultraluxury retailer like Harrods and substantial stakes in Barclays Bank, Sainsbury, Heathrow, British Airways etc.! When Qatar 'won' the bid to host the World Cup in 2010, it had some disconcerting statistics to trigger concerns – it had never played in the World Cup before and was ranked 114 in FIFA rankings (below regional countries like Syria, UAE, Jordan, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, Bahrain and many more, in the impoverished Sub-Saharan region). But it does have the financial muscle to have three of the top four earning football players in the world to be playing for a team owned by Qatar i.e., Paris Saint Germain with Lionel Messi, Neymar and Kylian Mbappe! Unsurprisingly Qatar has dished out a record breaking \$200 billion to build up the infrastructure towards 2022 World Cup, an unbelievable 20 times the amount that went behind the previous edition of the World Cup in 2018, in Russia. Yet interestingly money does not buy happiness in the ultra-affluent

Sheikdom run by hereditary monarchy of the House of Thani. Empirical data as per the Cantril Ladder (which is a measure of happiness) shows that the wealthiest country in the Gulf has a lower recorded score on happiness quotient than other peer countries in the region like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and even Oman (which has a per capita GDP, that is one-third of Qatar!). Today, as it hosts the biggest sporting extravaganza ever, the pall of gloom shaped by the questionable means of 'winning' the bid, creation of mammoth infrastructure that is believed to have been paid for in blood by desperate workers, filling of 'spectators' a la North Korean style, and multiple reneging on earlier commitments has lingered on, incessantly. Clearly, Qatari money has not been able to whitewash the taints, despite unprecedented investments involved. Battling valiantly on behalf of Qatar has been disgraced Sepp Blatter's successor and current FIFA

President, Gianni Infantino. With the Department of Justice having indicted over 50 FIFA officials for bribery and secured 27 convicts – it was hoped the FIFA under Gianni Infantino would be more transparent and progressive.



Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be the case and the handling of the event remains as opaque, murky and illiberal, as initially feared. The issues underlying the dissonance are a lot more serious than the much-discussed reneging on the sale of beer in stadiums. Gianni has led an incredulous counter-defense by attacking the 'racist' and 'hypocritical' West and saw much wrong with societal issues in Switzerland's cantons than with the autocracy in Qatar. He chastised what he called, 'moral lessons' from the West and instead suggested introspection, "for what we Europeans have done over the past 3,000 years we should apologise for the next 3,000 years before starting to give moral historical machinations of the West are indeed a reality, especially in the Middle East,

one set of historical wrongs cannot be the justification for another set on ensuing wrongs – especially, if it pertains to issues of poor migrant workers (mostly from the Indian subcontinent), gender-orientation concerns and issues pertaining to amorality of financial misdoings and whitewashing. Even Sepp Blatter confessed and admitted belatedly that, "Qatar is a mistake. The choice was bad". However, mercurial Qatar has defied many assumptions to lead an asymmetric narrative, powered by its coffers. From managing to offend co-Sunni Sheikdoms like Saudi and UAE (who even cut-off diplomatic ties for a few years) to warming up to traditional sectarian rivals, Iran. Doha has simultaneously hosted the strategic US military at Al-Udeid air base, even as it cozied up to Tehran.

It has hosted and bankrolled various insurgent groups from the Taliban, Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas to other anti-West factions, and stayed away from joining the Saudi-led war in Yemen. Qatari media house Al-Jazeera has unleashed its own discomfiting dynamics for the other neighbouring Sheikdoms, especially imagined during the 'Arab Spring'. It remains a stout US ally but its biggest importer of liquified natural gas (LNG) is China.

While this befuddling running-with-the-hare-and-hunting-with-the-hound strategy (greased with tons of money) helped Qatar to punch above its weight in terms of optics, postulated audacity and imagination, it seems to have run out of success in the hosting of what ought to have been the nadir of its efforts i.e., Football

World Cup 2022 – from construction workers behind the infrastructural wonder, sponsors, bemused 'spectators' filling up stadiums, spoilt Qatari natives, to fans from across the world seem to have a grudge or two at the event, the brave diatribe of Gianni Infantino notwithstanding. Money has historically brought much fame and attention to Qatar, but it is unable to shrug away the griminess that invariably came with it. 'Sportswashing' that will naturally accrue as the focus shifts from accusations to the real magic called football, as the race heats up for the 18-carat solid-gold trophy, will

yet again deflect from the real reasons as to why money has not, and cannot, lead to happiness or credibility behind Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Tamim. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

Varshik Adhivesan of ANIIMS Karmachari Sangh (AKS) held

PORT BLAIR, DEC 4/--/ The day-long Varshik Adhivesan of ANIIMS Karmachari Sangh (AKS) was held on Sunday at Saraswati Shishu Mandir, Prothrapore. In the inaugural session, Mr. M. Veeranna, State President, BMS, Mr. Sunil Ghosh, State General Secretary, BMS, Mr. Jaydeep Kumar Dey, President, Andaman Nicobar Rajya Karmachari Mahasangh (ANRKM), Mr. S. Biju Pillai, General Secretary, ANRKM were also present, along with Mr. Vivekanand Singh President, AKS and Mr. Shivraj, Secretary, AKS.

Mr. Veeranna in his address appealed to bring unity among the co-workers and unitedly we can



achieve any goal. Mr. Sunil Ghosh recited the theme song of BMS and created awareness on the aim of BMS. Mr. Shivraj, Secretary presented the report on the activity of AKS and Mr. Vivekanand Singh welcomed all in the inaugural session. In the

second session, Mr. Biju Gurudasan, Zilla Adhyaksha, Baratang, Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and Dr. Kandimuthu, Vibhag Pramukh, ABVP addressed the gathering as resource personS on Sangathan and it's strengthening. Lastly, Mr. G.

Anoop, Organising Secretary, ANRKM, addressed on Organisation setup. In the last session, Mr. Jaydeep Kr. Dey, President, ANRKM informed about the activities of organisation and cooperation required to strengthen the Association. Before winding up, session of interactive, resolution was adopted on the issues of employees which is mainly on regularisation of service, sanction of Bonus to all, granting Paternity leave as per eligibility to male employees as sanctioning to female employees, the resolution passed with the slogan of Bharat Mata ki Jai which was read out by Mr. S. Biju Pillai, GS, ANRKM. At the end, Mr. Vasant proposed the vote of thanks.



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BJP State President seeks hostel accommodation facilities for students of JNRM

PORT BLAIR, DEC 4/--/ The State BJP President, Mr. Ajoy Bairagi has taken up the issue of non-availability of hostel accommodation to the students coming from rural areas of N & M Andaman and Nicobar District with the Chief Secretary. In his letter, the State BJP President said it is very unfortunate that the administration is not in position to provide hostel accommodation to the poor and downtrodden children who are coming to Port Blair for their higher education with lots of hope and aspiration.

He requested for resolving the issue by making temporary arrangements in the available vacant government accommodation of different departments. He said that the entire infrastructure for ANIIMS and ANCOL was made on war footing by making and converting various buildings of different departments on temporary basis to establish the institutions. Since ANIIMS has already created permanent infrastructure, the temporary infrastructure created for ANIIMS is probably under-utilized and lying vacant.

The issue can resolve by providing accommodation to the poor students by taking over the vacant / under-utilized government buildings with ANIIMS, Disaster Management Department (New Building) & Hostel Facilities available with other colleges like DBRAIT, TGCE and Girls School Hostel etc and also taking over the completed hostel building at JNRM itself.

International Day of Disabled Persons observed

PORT BLAIR, DEC 4/--/ Together with the rest of the country, 'International Day of Disabled Persons' was observed on Saturday by Directorate of Social Welfare in coordination with NGO PANKH at Divyang Home, Abhyudaya Complex, Ferrargunj. Smti Smitha R, Secretary (Social Welfare) was the chief guest on the occasion. In her address, she expressed her happiness for organizing such a colourful programme befitting the occasion. She also interacted with the inmates of Old Age Home and Children Home. The cultural and musical programme was organized by Smti Komal Anand, Founder President (PANKH). Prizes and gifts were presented to the inmates of Divyang Home. Earlier, Shri AK Biswas, In-charge, Abhyudaya Complex, Ferrargunj welcomed the gathering. The programme concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by Smt. Ramya Bibi, PO.



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Marcus Aurelius Antoninus

Canada immigration policy to benefit Indian professionals

Canada's decision to expand its work permit eligibility to the family members of Open Work Permit (OWP) holders from next year could benefit thousands of Indian professionals and other foreigners in the North American country. The major move is intended to address acute labour shortages. The OWP allows foreign nationals to work in Canada for any employer and any job. Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Sean Fraser has announced that his department is extending work permits to family members of temporary foreign workers. "Canada is expanding work permits for family members! Starting in 2023, spouses and children of a principal applicant will be eligible to work in Canada," Fraser tweeted. Expanding the eligibility for work permits to family members accompanying the principal applicant to Canada will help address labour shortages by assisting employers in finding the workers they need. Employers across the country continue to identify a lack of workers as their biggest obstacle.

The new measure will help employers find the workers they need to fill their labour gaps by expanding work permits to family members at all skill levels, resulting in family members of over 200,000 foreign workers being able to work in Canada. Prior to this announcement, spouses were only eligible for a work permit if the principal applicant was working in a high-skill occupation. The new measure aims to improve the emotional well-being, physical health and financial stability of workers by keeping families together. As a result, it is expected that the worker will better integrate into their overall work environment and community. Starting in January 2023, through a temporary two-year measure, Canada will expand eligibility to work in the country to spouses and working-age children through a phased approach for workers at all skill levels. As a result of this new approach, it is estimated that family members of more than 200,000 foreign workers could begin working in Canada, offering a greater opportunity for both foreign workers seeking to work in Canada and for employers addressing their labour needs. The measure will be implemented in three phases to ensure its successful implementation.

Canada and India have long standing bilateral relations built upon shared traditions of democracy, pluralism and strong interpersonal connections. Canada is home to one of the largest communities of Indian origin, with approximately 4% of Canadians being of Indian heritage (1.4 million people). The deep cultural and political ties between Canada and India are strengthened by a growing network of official dialogues, agreements, memoranda of understanding and working groups. Since 2018, India has been the largest source country for international students in Canada. Engagement with India in education is a priority for Canada, with a focus on enhanced education and skills training through greater collaboration between Canadian and Indian educational and technical skills institutions.

Lowering voting age to include ‘I-Gen’ Voters

REFLEX ACTION

K Raveendran

The 61st Constitution amendment of 1988 that brought down voting age in India from 21 to 18 had reasoned that the present day youth were literate and enlightened and therefore deserved the opportunity to give vent to their feelings. It was also observed that ‘they were very much politically conscious’. The amendment was brought to include the unrepresented youth in the country’s political process.

The amendment took care of millennials, understood to mean those who were born between 1981 and 1996 and partly generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012. But there is a new generation of ‘I-Gen’, the name derived from i-phone, whose members are perhaps even more enlightened and devoted so social causes than those targeted by the 61st amendment. It is 34 years since the voting age was lowered to 18 and the biggest difference is that today’s I-Gen are born in the internet era, which is a milestone in human history, impacting every aspect of life on this planet. Pre- and post-internet youth have so much to differentiate between them and today’s adolescents have been exposed to a lot more of experiences that have influenced their thinking. They have no idea of life without mobile technology and social media, both unknown to the previous generations.

Studies have shown that today’s super-connected kids are more environment conscious, tolerant, respectful and inclusive of diversities, but more individualistic. Of course, they have their own problems related to mental health, social interaction and less experience in interacting with others as they spend more time texting and other activities on social media as well as games. But they have all the attributes that merited the inclusion of millennials

and Gen-Z in universal adult franchise. It is, therefore, high time for further lowering of voting rights to cover at least the 15-17 age group.

I-Gen members have shown that they are ambitious, dreaming and daring as well as endowed with more problem-solving capabilities than those belonging to the previous generations. There are at least a dozen successful Indian entrepreneurs who made it big before they attained the present voting age.

OYO founder Ritesh Agarwal was only 17 when he set out building his empire, valued at over \$10 billion. With a personal worth of more than \$1 billion, he is supposed to be the second youngest self-made billionaire in the world. Similarly, Nithin Kamath of Zeroda, the third biggest stock trader of the country after ICICI and HSFC, began his stock trading when he was just 17. Today Zeroda has over 7 million users, a large number of them belonging to Gen-Z and I-Gen.

There are many more successful teenage entrepreneurs in India, such as Advait Thakur, who heads a global technology and innovation company specialising in IoT related services and products; Tilak Mehta, one of the youngest Forbes panelists and a TEDx speaker, whose Paper N Parcels won him an youngest entrepreneur award; Akhilenda Sahu, recognized as the world’s youngest serial

entrepreneur; and Farrhad Acidwalla, whose Rochstah Media success prompted CNN to interview him at the age of 17. The first time when the age group 15-17 got highlighted was during the covid pandemic when the vaccination drive was extended to cover the members of this group. It was estimated that there were 7.4 crore people falling into this age group for the purposes of vaccination. This is a substantially big age group, which needs to be considered for inclusion in adult franchise. Their inclusion could bring a new dimension to the country’s electoral politics, as they have significant clout in determining the outcome of elections.

A back of the envelope calculation shows that the addition of 7.4 crore new voters to the electorate would mean addition of over a lakh votes on an average to every Lok Sabha constituency. A large number of candidates elected to the Lok Sabha had margins of less than 50,000 to 1 lakh votes and such largescale addition to the voters list can tilt the balance in any constituency. Given that the new voters are given more strongly to social causes and inclusive traits, IGen could turn out to be the decisive factor in future elections.

Prime Minister Modi keeps talking about ‘yuvashakti’ and the qualities of today’s youth. “Today’s youth does not want to walk on the pre-decided road. They want to step into the unknown world. Their destination is new, their goal is new, their path is new and their desire is new. Once our youth gets determined, they work hard to achieve that goal. They start working day and night on it.”

It is high time that these young people get their well-deserved right to participate in the most crucial decision making process in running the country. (IPA)



Shops are being decorated eyeing sales in view of upcoming Christmas and New year festival,In Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday

Qatar World Cup produces soccer upsets, politics and sensitive situations

Barely out of the starting blocks, the Qatar World Cup has already produced a fair share of upsets as well as politically and personally sensitive situations and incidents.

Qatar's 2:0 loss to Ecuador in the tournament's opening match will have reinforced critics' conviction that the Gulf state should never have been awarded World Cup hosting rights, among other things, because of its alleged lack of a soccer legacy. Leaving aside the merits of the allegation and Qatari disappointment, the jury remains out on what Qatar's return on its massive investment in organising the World Cup will be regarding reputational capital. For Qatar, the ultimate evaluation of the return will largely depend on how it manages the tournament and potential flare- and hick-ups as dissidents try to turn Iranian matches into venues of protest, activists seek to capitalise on the opportunity to campaign for their cause, and fans refuse to play to Qatari soft power objectives, let alone possible incidents of intoxication, rowdiness, and LGBT-related issues. So far, the picture constitutes a mixed bag.

Addressing Iranian concerns, Qatar refused to accredit for the World Cup, Iran International, a Saudi-backed, London-based satellite television broadcaster, that the Islamic republic accuses of fomenting months-long anti-government protests that security forces have been unable to squash. Similarly, to prevent matches from turning into platforms for protest, Qatar stopped Iranian fans from bringing Iran's pre-revolutionary flag into the country's first World Cup match against England. The flag, dating from the time of the shah, toppled in the 1979 Islamic revolution, is viewed as a symbol of protest against Iran's

theocratic government. That didn't halt fans holding up signs in the stadium demanding freedom in Iran and pictures of demonstrators killed by security forces. However, there was little Qatar could do when the Iranian national team refused to sing the country's national anthem at the beginning of the game.

"I would like to express my condolences to all bereaved families in Iran. They should know that we are with them. And we support them. And we sympathize with them regarding the conditions," the team's captain, Ehsan Hajsafi, told journalists hours before the match. While Qatar's state-run domestic broadcaster avoided showing female supporters with their hair uncovered in the stadium, Iranian state television interrupted its live broadcast as the Iranian and Ecuadorian anthems were played. For weeks, footballers have signalled support for the protesters by not celebrating Iranian League goals, wearing black wristbands, and expressing support for the Iranian people without mentioning the protests to evade government retaliation. Nevertheless, current and former players have been questioned by authorities, detained, or charged with "acting against national security."

The refusal to sing the national anthem and the team's embarrassing 6:2 loss to England fed the Iranian government's worst fear that the World Cup would turn out to be a global platform for dissent rather than a moment of unifying national

celebration. The national team was emboldened by their manager, Carlos Queiroz, who, breaking with FIFA's fictional separation of politics and sport, insisted that "players are free to protest as they would if they were from any other country as long as it conforms with the World Cup regulations and is in the spirit of the game." Overall, Iran has lost in more ways than just on the pitch.

At the start of the year Iran, which sits across the Gulf, had hoped to attract World Cup tourists like the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Oman, and proposed the crafting of a joint tourism plan with Qatar. Tehran even agreed to forgo the visa requirement for World Cup visitors. That hope was dashed by the anti-government protests, the failure to revive the 2015 international agreement that curbed Iran's nuclear program, and Iran's inability to complete necessary infrastructure on its Kish Island.

The match against England could prove to have been a cakewalk compared to potential friction when Iran meets the United States on the Qatari pitch on November 29 in what is likely to be one of, if not the most politically charged match of the World Cup. Similarly, Arab fans, reflecting sentiments among some Qataris, made clear that the World Cup would not be a bridge-building event, at least not when it came to relations with Israel and Israelis. Arabs largely refused to be interviewed by Israeli media. Footage circulating online showed two Saudi fans, a Qatari shopper,

and three Lebanese fans walking away from Israeli reporters in a demonstration of the limitations of soccer as a vehicle to build bridges. In another incident, Palestinians chanted "go home" when approached by Israeli reporters.

Qatari media published some videos of sharp encounters between Arab fans, Qatari nationals, and visiting Israelis with the caption: "No to normalization." Qatar, like Saudi Arabia, has made the conversion of informal ties into formal relations conditional on a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Under FIFA rules, Qatar was obliged to grant entry to fans irrespective of whether the Gulf state recognizes the country issuing a supporter's passport.

In line with the rules, authorities allowed Israeli channels to broadcast from Doha, but unlike other major foreign networks did not provide them with a formal studio. Protest was not the preserve of Iranians and pro-Palestinian Arabs. Prominent Qataris made statement of their own by wearing a pro-Palestinian armband at the Germany-Japan match after being told that German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser would sport a One Love pro-LGBT band. Ironically, Ms. Faeser was sitting in the stadium's VIP section next to FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who had just banned players from wearing the One Love band on the pitch in support of LGBT rights.

In response, Germany's players covered their mouths for the team photo before their opener against Japan. Infantino, unmoved by Ms. Faeser's gesture, apparently saw no contradiction between his ban and FIFA's opening days later of disciplinary proceedings against Ecuador over homophobic chanting by their fans in the match against Qatar. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword												
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6				7		8		9				
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	27							28				
					29							

ACROSS						DOWN					
1	One affecting	6	Belonging to us	10	Silly	1	Rests in equilibrium	2	Crickets score	3	Planet
2	extreme modesty	7	Flowers	11	Declare	4	Hermit	5	Speed up an engine	8	Sorrowful
3		12	Wanderer	13	Single thing	9	Alone	11	Negating prefix	14	Reduce to fine spray
4		15	Fabled monstrous bird	16	Distress signal	16	Withdraw	17	Clusters	19	Was indebted
5		18	Large volume	20	Send money	21	Central	22	Corded fabric	24	Greyish brown
6		21	Yield	22	Distinct style	23	Deceives	25	Sharp blow	26	Rowing implement
7		23	Deceives	24	Sharp blow	26	Rowing implement				
8		25	Water pitchers								
9		26									

SUDOKU:3716												
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Yesterday's Solution3715												
3	7	1	8	9	4	5	2	6				
9	4	2	6	1	5	7	3	8				
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6	1	3	4	8	9	2	7	5				
2	5	4	3	6	8	9	1	7				
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Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1724												
A	F	A	R		S	H	O	D				
S	A	P	E	X		O	R	E				
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Punjab farmer gives wings to his childhood passion, ventures into a

CHANDIGARH, DEC 4 /-- / A farmer from Punjab's Bathinda gave wings to his childhood passion for flying by venturing into the field of aeromodelling a few years back and has now tied up with a number of universities to teach nuances of aeronautics to students.

Yadwinder Singh Khokhar (49) has been making models of various aircraft from high-density thermocol. He has also received various awards for his creativity and innovation. Khokhar hails from Sirywala village in sub-Tehsil Bhagta Bhai Ka in Bathinda district. He says as a child he wanted to fly like a bird. "I wanted to fly like a bird. Somewhere this desire, this passion remained even when I took up farming in 1996 after completing my studies," he says. Khokhar did his initial schooling at schools in Bathinda and Muktsar and passed higher classes at the Punjab Public School, Nabha. He graduated from DAV College, Jalandhar, and later did a diploma in computer application from Bathinda. "After 1996, when I completed my studies, I started farming in my village. In 2007, there was a wedding in the family when I went to the UK. I saw these aero models in a flying club there. "I brought two small aero models from there. As I developed more interest in aeromodelling, I started surfing the internet for

more information on the subject. Later, I did a course in aeromodelling from an institute in Delhi, which some retired Army and Air Force officers then ran. "They also used to publish a monthly magazine in which various aspects of the subject like flying theory, electronic set-up, engine set up, how planes fly, everything used to be explained in detail," he said.

Khokhar later started making his own aero models. At his farmhouse in his village, he has built a runway over an acre of land, a workshop, and an aeromodelling laboratory. He makes models of various aircraft and flies them over his fields. "There is proper take-off and landing of these aero models. These are remotely piloted aircraft," he said. "I make thermocol models in big sizes. It is a high-density special thermocol. "Recently, I have made a model of C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, which is the largest handmade aircraft model in India and has been recognised so by the India Book of Records in August 2022," he said. He has also made models of other aircraft too including the Sukhoi jet. Now, he is making a model of another transport aircraft--Antonov-An 225 model, its wing span will be 12 feet. Khokhar informs that whatever work he is doing is within the guidelines prescribed by the Directorate General of

Civil Aviation including those pertaining to the height to which such aero models can fly. He says he has also tied up with three universities--Chandigarh University, Maharaja Ranjit Singh Punjab Technical University, Bathinda and GNA University, Phagwara.

Khokhar teaches students some nuances of aeronautics and feels that building model aircraft is a great way to familiarize youngsters with scientific principles and introduce students to the principles of aeronautics and the technicalities of aeromodelling. For their practicals, he organises various workshops regarding aeromodelling. The students get to visit his farm where they are shown how working models of various aircraft are made, and given lessons about basic designing and training on how these are operated. He has also registered a detailed syllabus on aeromodelling with Maharaja Ranjit Singh Technical University and students will be taught this as part of the course subject.

Many universities and many regiments of the Army have felicitated him, he says. He says he is also doing some projects for the defence forces. Khokhar feels proud of the fact that his elder son also drew inspiration from his hobby and become an aeronautical engineer. (PTI)

Five accused of killing gangster Raju Theht nabbed in Rajasthan

SIKAR, DEC 4 /-- / Five persons have been nabbed for their alleged involvement in the killing of gangster Raju Theht in a hail of bullets at the gate of his house in Sikar district of Rajasthan, a police official said.

Theht was shot dead on Saturday. A man, Tarachand Kadwasara, who had gone to meet his daughter studying in a coaching institute there was also hit by bullets and died. The accused fired at him thinking that he was Theht's aide. After the murder, a man identifying himself on Facebook as a member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, claimed responsibility for the killing but later deleted it and posted a new one, saying he has no regrets. According to the police, Theth, who had more than 30 criminal cases against him, had a rivalry with the dreaded criminal Anandpal Singh, killed in a police encounter in June 2017. Out on bail, he used to live a luxurious life and had political ambitions. Director General of

Police (DGP) Umesh Mishra said in Jaipur that the police have caught Sikar residents Manish Jat and Vikram Gurjar, and Haryana's Satish Kumhar, Jatin Meghwal and Navin Meghwal. The police personnel who caught the accused will be rewarded, the police chief said.

In a tweet, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said, "Five accused of yesterday's murder case in Sikar have been arrested along with recovery of their weapons and vehicles. Speedy trial of all these accused will be ensured by the court to give them severe punishment at the earliest." The assailants had snatched the keys of Kadwasara's car and escaped, police said.

Hours after the murder, a speeding car, believed to be carrying the accused, was spotted in Jhunjhunu district by some locals who claimed that the occupants opened fire at some labourers repairing the road to get the way cleared, police said. After

Theht was shot dead on Saturday, a man named Rohit Godara, who introduced himself as a member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang on Facebook, claimed responsibility for the killing, saying it was to avenge the death of Anandpal Singh and Balbir Banuda.

A CCTV footage has surfaced on the Internet in which the accused are seen present with Theth at the gate of his house. Shortly after, a tractor-trolley also reached in front of the house and it was stranded when the assailants opened fire at Theth. Officials suspect that the tractor driver was also involved in the crime. In another video clip, the accused were seen fleeing after killing Theth.

Family members and relatives of Theht and Kadwasara sat on dharna in front of the mortuary of the district hospital in Sikar on Saturday demanding the arrest of the accused. Congress MLA Mukesh Bhakar from Ladnu in Nagaur was also present at the dharna. (PTI)

MoU delay holds up translocation of South African cheetahs to India

12 big cats in quarantine since July

BHOPAL, DEC 4 /-- / A dozen cheetahs quarantined in South Africa for more than four months have lost fitness in their wait to be flown to Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park (KNP) as a formal signing of an agreement is holding up their inter-continental translocation, wildlife experts have said.

They said prolonged quarantine is taking a toll on the health of these big cats, who are slated to join the eight cheetahs imported from Namibia and released in KNP in Sheopur district in mid-September. In fact, the 12 South African cheetahs seven males and five females - have not hunted for themselves even once after being kept in bomas (small enclosures), said wildlife experts in know of India's cheetah reintroduction plan. Though there has been some forward movement in implementation of Project Cheetah with South Africa in recent days, Pretoria is yet to ink a memorandum of understanding

(MoU) with the Indian government for transfer of the spotted cats to KNP. Three of them have been kept in Phinda quarantine boma in KwaZulu-Natal Province and nine in Rooiberg Quarantine boma in Limpopo Province since July 15, said the experts. "They have lost considerable fitness as they have not hunted even once since July 15," one of the experts told PTI. They might have put on weight like humans sitting idle, he said, adding a running animal has toned up muscles and fitness. Asked about the delay in inking an MoU, the expert said South African Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries Barbara Creecy last week cleared the Indian proposal on translocation of cheetahs.

Now, the South African president will clear the proposal for a formal agreement to be signed between the two countries, he added. Another expert said a South African delegation visited KNP in early September to see

arrangements at the wildlife sanctuary for housing the world's fastest land mammals. "Everything is positive about the project, but the MoU has not been inked yet. The delegation was satisfied with arrangements at KNP. I think the MoU between New Delhi and Pretoria will be signed this month," said the second expert. When contacted, Madhya Pradesh Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) J S Chauhan said they are ready to receive South African cheetahs. "I think that the MoU will be signed shortly," added the senior forest officer.

Fitness of the South African cheetahs is a matter of concern given that when they come to India they will have to be watchful of robust leopards in KNP, said Ajay Dubey, wildlife expert and founder-secretary of Prayatna, an NGO working for tiger conservation.

In Africa, leopards are known to attack adult cheetahs. "Leopards account for 9 per cent

of cheetah mortality in South Africa," he said. However, he pointed out that leopards and cheetahs had co-existed in India for centuries before the latter became extinct in the country. Forest department officials said there were 70 to 80 leopards in KNP, which is spread over an area of 1,200 square km, including the buffer zone. "South African cheetahs coming to India were born and raised amongst leopards. They know how to avoid them," said wildlife experts.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on his 72nd birthday on September 17, had released eight cheetahs flown in from Namibia into KNP with a lot of fanfare, setting the ball rolling for revival of their population in India where these distinctively spotted cat species became extinct seven decades ago. These wild animals from Namibia - five females and three males - are currently in hunting enclosures at the park before their full release in the wild. (PTI)

J&K to create pool of cyber security analysts to tackle cyber terrorism, other internet crimes

JAMMU, DEC 4 /-- / Jammu and Kashmir is planning to create a pool of cyber security analysts under the recently launched Cyber Security Policy (CSP) to combat cyber terrorism and cyber-attacks.

The CSP also talks about setting up computer energy response team (CERT), a nodal agency which will ensure safer and stronger internet by responding to major incidents, analysing threats and exchanging critical cyber security information with trusted partners. According to the official document, the government is also mulling over establishing a think tank for policy and

decision inputs, an information security management system to manage sensitive data and a Centre of Excellence to combat modern-day security threats. Further, the Union territory administration is working towards introducing cyber insurance.

The CSP along with a digital vision document was launched by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on the concluding day of the two-day national conference on e-governance in Katra on November 27. "The Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir is committed to create and sustain a safe and resilient cyber space to promote well-being of its

citizens and to ensure protection and sustainability of its infrastructure in the cyber security sector," the policy document read. It mentioned equipping professionals with requisite cyber security skills and knowledge, promoting Jammu and Kashmir as an ideal destination for businesses that work on develop cyber security products and encourage inter-institutional partnerships to promote collaborative research efforts to tackle cyber-attacks. "The Union territory shall create a pool of cyber security analysts to work as part-time security specialists of the government, advising it in

combating cyber terrorism, protecting from cyber threats, simulating cyber-attacks to help find security loopholes, and assisting CERT on the ground in case of a cyber-security incident," the document read. However, it said the government will encourage full time jobs to the analysts so that talent remains within the region.

The document said the primary mandate of the CERT is to provide cyber security related actionable information to the government, critical infrastructure agencies, private industries and general public through advisories and alerts; provide cybersecurity protection through

intrusion detection and prevention capabilities and develop a cyber crisis management plan (CCMP) in line with the national CCMP. "Understanding the importance of business continuity in case of an incident, accident or disaster, the government shall mandate an agency to develop a business continuity plan. In addition, Jammu and Kashmir shall strive to ensure a culture of issuing and procuring cyber insurance," the document said. To facilitate cooperation and collaboration against cyber threats, the document said the government will create a think tank for policy and decision inputs. (PTI)

Rajasthan govt to organise folk art festivals from panchayat to state level to boost tourism

JAIPUR, DEC 4 /-- / As the tourism industry is recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Rajasthan government has planned to organise folk art festivals from the panchayat to the state level to give a boost to the sector.

These festivals will also conserve arts and culture of different regions of the state and work toward uplifting artists. Currently, Rajasthan has 22 types of folk festivals, but now the state government is planning to hold festivals from the panchayat to the state level, according to an official. The tourism department is preparing a detailed plan for it and cultural competitions will be held with a budget of Rs 27 crore, he said.

"The Rajasthan folk art festival organised from the panchayat to the state level will increase the arrival of domestic and foreign tourists in the state. Major local tourist places would be selected on priority for organising the festival," the official said. He said that the protection of folk arts and culture of different regions of Rajasthan will be done through the

festival. At the same time, the platform will also be used to promote local folk artists who faced a hard time during the pandemic, he added. "It will not only assist folk artists but also promote local folk art and tourist destinations among visitors," the official said.

Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot has directed officials to prepare the plan at the earliest. Most tourists visit places such as Jaipur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Alwar, Sawai Madhopur but there are many other unexplored tourist sites in other districts where there is a huge potential to promote tourism, he has said.

"The festival is planned in such a manner that all such destinations can be prominently highlighted among tourists so that they have new choices for planning their trips and spend a few more days in Rajasthan," Gehlot said. He said that Rajasthan has seen a 90.4 per cent increase in the number of domestic tourists compared to last year as tourist movement has increased after the pandemic. (PTI)

Conversations on Partition literature at Jashn-e-Rekhta

NEW DELHI, DEC 4 /-- / Recollecting novels and stories written in the backdrop of Partition till as late as 2018, journalist-writer Shazi Zaman and Urdu author Khalid Jawed on Sunday sent across the point that the memories of the "unfortunate event" will live on for years through literature.

Speaking at a session during the seventh edition of Jashn-e-Rekhta here, they cited writer Yashpal's 'Jhutha Sach' (1960), Bhishm Sahni's 'Tamas' (1973), Kamleshwar's 'Kitne Pakistan' (2000), and Geetanjali Shree's 'Ret Samadhi' (2018) -- books on the subject of Partition -- to say that a "terrible moment in history lives on in one way or another".

Jawed gave the example of Jhumpa Lahiri's 'Interpreter of Maladies' and Salman Rushdie's 'Midnight's Children'. "That terrible moment may find an end in our lives but it survives through fiction. It deposits itself as a drop of blood and doesn't let go. If you look at Manto's stories,

even if they weren't written in the context of the Partition, they would still be relevant through the existential dimensions they depict," the 2022 JCB Prize winner said. He added that in Manto's stories like 'Khol Do' and 'Thanda Gosht' the Partition is just a context. "After becoming part of a story, history becomes dynamic and we can feel it living and breathing," he said. However, Jawed added that only those stories survive the test of time that go beyond imbibing the theme of that history. "If you are putting history into fiction through the act of documentation then it may have some immediate value. But in a different time and space only those stories and fiction survive that go beyond that theme despite having absorbed it," the author of "The Paradise of Food" said.

Zaman added that Partition is a 'living calamity'. "Yashpal's 'Jhutha Sach' was the first big novel written on Partition after it had happened. 15 years later Shaani's 'Kala Jal', then Rahi

Masoom Raza's 'Adha Gaon' and 50 years later Kamleshwar's 'Kitne Pakistan'. At that point I thought this series had ended. "But it is not something that happened and ended. It was a calamity that happened and continued happening. 70 years after Partition, Geetanjali Shree wrote 'Ret Samadhi' and she hasn't even seen Partition," Zaman said. He added that Kamleshwar in 'Kitne Pakistan' has said Partition is a "symbol" that is far bigger than the change in a map.

"Those who witnessed it and those who didn't like Geetanjali Shree Partition and what happened after remains a wound. That symbol and that tragedy has survived and grown. It had never disappeared from the conscience. "Our generation didn't see Pakistan, but we saw what has happened. Those who didn't witness it are still writing about it. And I believe even a 100 years later people will still be writing about Partition," the author of "Akbar" concluded. (PTI)

Constable exam paper leak: CBI takes over probe from Himachal Pradesh Police

with the leak at Gaggal (Kangra), Arki (Solan) and CID police station in Bharari (Shimla). As many as 1,87,476 applications were received for 1,334 constable posts and 75,803 candidates qualified the physical efficiency and physical standard tests. Of these, 26,346 candidates cleared the written

examination held at 81 centres across 11 districts on March 27. So far, 253 people, including owner of a printing press, a paper cutter who leaked the question papers, owners of coaching centres, kingpins, agents, candidates and their family members have been arrested by the SIT. (PTI)

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NIHFW/WS/37 – 7/2022 NOTICE FOR INVITING TENDER	
Tender is invited on behalf of Director, NIHFW for the "Functionalization, Operation & Maintenance of Newly Constructed International Hostel and Operation & Maintenance of Existing old Hostel at the NIHFW". The pre-bid meeting for the same will be held on 12/12/2022 at 11:00 AM and the last date & time of receipt of Bid is 23/12/2022, 3:00 PM. For more details, including Hindi version the Institute's website www.nihfw.org & https://eprocure.gov.in may be visited.	
CBC-17153/12/0012/2223	Director (Additional Charge)

That fight in me lives on': Mamata on anniversary of 26-day fast against Singur project

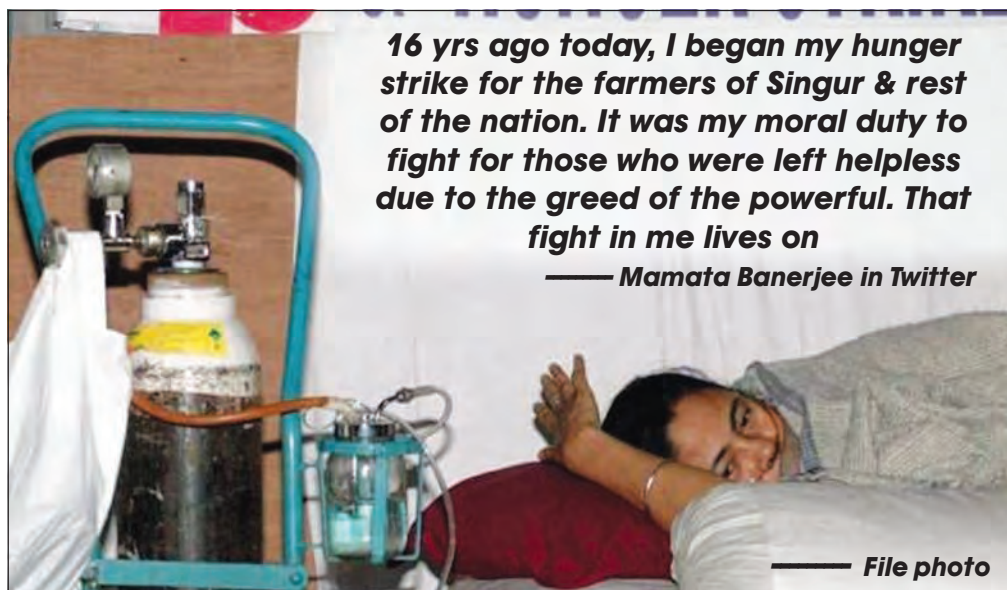
KOLKATA, DEC 4/--/ Reminding people of her 26-day hunger strike which she started on this day 16 years ago to oppose "forcible acquisition" of farmland in Singur for a car factory, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday claimed she still has that fight in her. Banerjee, also the Trinamool Congress supremo, said in a Twitter post that she would never sit silent if the rights of the people are threatened. The CM tweeted: "16 yrs ago today, I began my hunger strike for the farmers of Singur & rest of the nation. It was my moral duty to fight for those who were left helpless due to the greed of the powerful. That fight in me lives on." Singur in Hooghly district, once known for multiple

crop farming, first came into the limelight after Tata Motors selected the area for its Nano car factory in 2006. The then Left Front government had acquired 997.11 acres along National Highway 2 and handed it over to the company for setting up the plant. Banerjee started a hunger strike on December 4 of that year demanding the return of 347 acres that was forcibly acquired. She ended the fast on December 29 after receiving a letter from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The agitation, however, continued and Tata Motors left Singur in 2008. Anti-land acquisition movements at Singur and Nandigram in Purba Medinipur district are considered to have catapulted the TMC to power by defeating

the 34-year-old Left Front regime in 2011. After Banerjee's tweet on Sunday, her political rivals blamed her for failing to get any major industry in the state. Senior BJP leader Rahul Sinha claimed that Banerjee's agitation not only did a blunder to the people of Singur, but also harmed the economy.

"If Tatas could have started the factory here, the entire picture of the state would have changed. Millions of people could have got jobs... Now, after Tatas left, no other industry house has invested here. That means, the people in Singur not only lost the opportunity to get a factory, but also their agricultural lands," Sinha told PTI. After a long-drawn legal battle between the TMC

government and the Tatas, the farmers got back their land in 2016. However, the land could not be used for agriculture. CPI(M) Rajya Sabha MP Bikas Ranjan Bhattacharjee, when contacted, referred to Banerjee's claims that it was not her, but the Left party who was responsible behind the Tatas leaving Singur. "The other day she blamed the CPI(M) for Tata Motors leaving Singur. Today, she is saying this... She hardly speaks the truth. She is a pathological liar," Bhattacharjee said. During a rally in Siliguri in October this year, Banerjee had said she returned the land to the people that were forcibly acquired, while claiming that it was the CPI(M) that drove Tata Motors away and not her. (PTI)



16 yrs ago today, I began my hunger strike for the farmers of Singur & rest of the nation. It was my moral duty to fight for those who were left helpless due to the greed of the powerful. That fight in me lives on

— Mamata Banerjee in Twitter

— File photo

Gujarat Assembly polls: PM Modi, Amit Shah to cast votes in Ahmedabad in second phase

AHMEDABAD, DEC 4/--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Ahmedabad on Sunday evening for exercising his franchise in the second and final phase of the Gujarat Assembly elections on December 5.

The prime minister will cast his vote at a polling station set up at a high school in Ranip locality in Ahmedabad city on Monday morning, an official said. Union Home Minister and BJP MP Amit Shah will cast his vote at a municipal sub-zonal office in Naranpura locality of the city. After landing at the Ahmedabad airport in the evening the prime minister proceeded to meet his centenarian mother Hiraba at her residence in Raisan area of Gandhinagar and sought her blessings. He spent around 45 minutes with her before leaving for the state Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters "Kamalam" in Gandhinagar where he was received by Amit Shah, state BJP president CR Paatil, and other senior leaders. "PM Modi will exercise his franchise at a polling station set up at Nishan high school in Ranip locality in Ahmedabad city on Monday morning," said collector Dhaval Patel. Modi is a registered voter from Ranip area and had cast his vote in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and previous polls. The polling station falls under the Sabarmati Assembly constituency in Ahmedabad city. Voting for 93 seats spread across central and north Gujarat districts in the second and final phase of polls will be held



on Monday. 833 candidates are in the fray. Polling for the first phase for 89 constituencies in Saurashtra, Kutch and south Gujarat regions was held on December 1 with an average voter turnout of 63.31 per cent. The counting of votes for all 182 constituencies in Gujarat will be taken up on December 8. (PTI)

Day after diktat of TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee, panchayat head quits

KOLKATA, DEC 4/--/ The head of a panchayat in Purba Medinipur district on Sunday resigned from her post following the directive of Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, but claimed that the senior leader was misled by her rivals in the party. TMC sources said that two other office bearers of Marisda gram panchayat also quit as asked by Banerjee who is considered number two in the party. While going to a rally site at Contai in the district on Saturday, Banerjee suddenly made a detour and visited Marisda. After talking to some aggrieved people, he directed Jhumurani Mondal, the pradhan of the gram panchayat, and two of her deputies to resign within 48 hours for alleged discrimination against poor SC/ST villagers. "They (villagers) told me that they don't even have a roof over their heads, and when it rains, the accumulated water stays for months. They had complained to the pradhan and her deputies, but their problem was not addressed," the Diamond Harbour MP had said.

Asserting that development took place in the area during her tenure, Mondal blamed her "rival group" within the party for misleading Banerjee. "It was a conspiracy by some people to frame me," she told reporters adding that it was not the panchayat pradhan who prepared the list of beneficiaries of state and central projects. Mondal asked, "How can I allot money to those who are not included in the list?" Senior state BJP leader Rahul Sinha described Banerjee's outburst as an "eyewash." "If Abhishek Banerjee interacts with a cross-section of people across West Bengal, he will have the same experience. With panchayat polls round the corner, he has resorted to this eyewash as people have turned against the TMC leaders," Sinha said. The Panchayat election is due in the state early next year. Countering Sinha, TMC state spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, "Our leader Abhishek Banerjee has shown that the party will not hesitate to take strong action when it comes to the issue of coming to the service of common people, the poor and needy." Ghosh also alleged that Mondal was nominated as a panchayat election candidate when Suwendu Adhikari was in-charge of Purba Medinipur district. Adhikari, the BJP's Nandigram MLA, was with the TMC before joining the saffron camp in December 2020 ahead of last year's assembly election. (PTI)

France ease past Poland 3-1 to qualify for quarter-finals



A few topsy-turvy moments for both France and Poland in the FIFA World Cup Round of 16 match but it was Olivier Giroud who eventually put Les Bleus in front. In the process, Giroud also became France's all-time top-scorer, overtaking Thierry Henry who had 51 goals to his name. In the second-half, Kylian Mbappe doubled France's lead with his 4th goal of the tournament. Mbappe doubled the lead with a terrific strike in the top-corner to make it 3-0 for France. A late Robert Lewandowski penalty saw Poland salvage some pride but it's France who qualified for the quarter-finals.

Giving election tickets to women against Islam, says Shahi Imam of Ahmedabad Jama Masjid

AHMEDABAD, DEC 4/--/ The Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid in Ahmedabad on Sunday said allotting tickets to women in elections is a rebellion against Islam and weakens the religion. Talking to reporters here on the eve of the second and final phase of polling for the Gujarat Assembly elections, the Shahi Imam, Shabbir Ahmed Siddiqui, said women are not allowed to offer Namaz (prayer performed by Muslims) because they have a certain position in Islam. "If you talk about Islam...Do you see even a single woman offering Namaz? Namaz has great importance in Islam. Had it been justified in Islam for women to come before people, they (women) would not have been

stopped (from entering) the mosque. "Women are stopped from visiting mosques because they have a certain status in Islam. Whoever (whichever party) gives tickets to (Muslim) women rebels against Islam. Don't you have men (candidates) that you are bringing in women? This will weaken our religion," the Shahi Imam said. Voting for 93 out of 182 Assembly seats will be held across 14 central and northern districts of Gujarat on Monday. The first phase of voting for 89 seats in Saurashtra, Kutch and south Gujarat regions was held on December 1, when an average voter turnout of 63.31 per cent was recorded. The counting of votes will be taken up on December 8. (PTI)

Navy discover vintage cannons from Hooghly river bank in Kolkata

KOLKATA, DEC 4/--/ It was not a treasure hunt but Indian Navy personnel did hit upon a jackpot of a different kind while clearing a piece of land on the banks of the Hooghly river. Five cannons, probably of World War I vintage, were discovered by the Navy from the river bank in Kolkata, a senior official at its Bengal area headquarters said. Two of these British-era cannons were refurbished and painted in black, white and red motifs, and mounted at the INS Netaji Subhas, the Indian Navy's Bengal area base headquarters here. Captain Joydeep Chakraborty said that they came across the cannons while clearing a



piece of land on the left bank of the Hooghly. "The cannons are probably of World War I vintage and meant for being mounted on ships," he told PTI. Four of the five canons, discovered in mid-2021, were retrieved this year from the land, which earlier was part of the river bed. The last one is in the process of being lifted from the ground where it is embedded, he said. Captain Chakraborty said that the land at Daighat near Kidderpore docks earlier belonged to the Kolkata Port, and was taken from them by the Navy for the construction of a facility there. While clearing the land of weed and rubbish, the workers came across a British-era cannon when the spade of one of them made a metallic sound

on hitting the ground. "Upon clearing the place, a cannon was discovered and further search led to the discovery of four more," he said. Four of the cannons were excavated and brought to the Navy House, with two of these having been mounted there, Commander Sudipto Moitra, the chief spokesperson of the Bengal area, said. These did not bear any manufacturing marks, making it difficult to trace their origin. These may have been manufactured here for British warships, Captain Chakraborty said. Plans are on to refurbish and mount the other cannons at the Navy's other establishments here, Commander Moitra said. (PTI)



Elderly voters leave after casting their votes for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) elections, at a polling station in Old Rajinder Nagar area, in New Delhi

Jewel-encrusted crown moved from Tower of London for King Charles

LONDON, DEC 4 /--/ A jewel-encrusted crown kept in the Jewel House of the Tower of London has been removed to be re-sized ahead of King Charles III's coronation next year.

The St. Edward's Crown, described as the "historic centrepiece" of the country's Crown Jewels, has been removed from the world-famous tower to allow for "modification work" to begin in time for the crowning ceremony on May 6, 2023, the Buckingham Palace said on Saturday. As per tradition, the King will be crowned with St. Edward's Crown during the Coronation Service at Westminster Abbey in London. Charles, who succeeded his late mother Queen Elizabeth II in September, will also wear the Imperial State Crown during the formal service to mark his reign. "St. Edward's Crown is the crown historically used at the moment of Coronation, and worn by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth at her Coronation in 1953," the palace said. "It was made for Charles II in 1661, as a replacement for the

medieval crown which had been melted down in 1649. The original was thought to date back to the eleventh-



century royal saint, Edward the Confessor the last Anglo-Saxon king of England," it said. The crown, commissioned from Royal Goldsmith Robert Vyner in 1661, is made up of a solid gold frame set with rubies, amethysts, sapphires, garnet, topazes and tourmalines.

The crown has a velvet cap with an ermine band. Although it is not an exact replica of the medieval design, it follows the original in having four crosses-patee and four fleurs-de-lis, and two arches, the palace said. According to reports, the coronation ceremony will be an Anglican Christian service

but is expected to be more inclusive of multi-faith Britain than past coronations, with Queen Consort Camilla crowned alongside Charles. There has been some speculation over the crown she would wear, with reports indicating that she is unlikely to use the late Queen Mother's crown which is encrusted with the famous Koh-i-Noor diamond seized from India by the East India Company during the colonial period in 1864 and presented to Queen Victoria before becoming part of the Crown Jewels at the Tower of London. Back in October, The Daily Telegraph' quoted a spokesperson for the BJP as saying that the use of the crown jewel Koh-i-noor would bring back "painful memories of the colonial past". The crown fitted with the Koh-i-Noor was made especially for the 1937 coronation of Queen Elizabeth II's mother. The palace is yet to confirm the crown Camilla would be anointed with, but according to officials public sentiment and international mood is likely to determine the choice. (PTI)

Ready for war with India if attacked: Pak's new Army Chief Munir

ISLAMABAD, DEC 4 /--/ Pakistan's newly-appointed Army chief General Asim Munir on Saturday said that if his country is attacked, the Pakistani armed forces will "not only defend every inch of our motherland, but to take the fight back to the enemy."

Munir made the remarks during his first-ever visit to troops in the frontline areas in Rakhchikri Sector of the Line of Control (LoC) on Saturday. "We have noticed highly irresponsible statements from Indian leadership on Gilgit Baltistan and Jammu and Kashmir recently. Let me make it categorically clear, Pakistan's armed forces are ever ready, not only to defend every inch of our motherland, but to take the fight back to the enemy, if ever, war is imposed on us," he said. General

Munir on November 24 replaced General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who retired after serving two consecutive three-year terms as the Army chief in the coup-prone country, where the military wields considerable power in matters of security and foreign policy. During his visit to the frontline areas, Chief of Army Staff Gen Munir was briefed on the latest situation along LoC and operational preparedness of officers and soldiers, appreciating

their high morale, professional competence and combat readiness while performing their duties in challenging conditions. He also talked about some recent statements by Indian officials about Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. "A n y misconception resulting into a misadventure will always be met with the full might of our armed forces backed by a resilient nation," he said. Earlier on arrival at the LoC, Lieutenant General Shahid Imtiaz, Corps Commander Rawalpindi,



General Asim Munir

received the Army chief. Relations between India and Pakistan have been strained over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. India's decision evoked strong reaction from Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties and expelled the Indian envoy. Trade ties between Pakistan and India have largely been frozen since then. India has told Pakistan that the entire Union Territory of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh were and will always be an integral and inalienable part of the country. (PTI)

US intel chief thinking “optimistically” for Ukraine forces

KYIV, DEC 4 /--/ The head of U.S. intelligence says fighting in Russia's war in Ukraine is running at a "reduced tempo" and suggests Ukrainian forces could have brighter prospects in coming months. Avril Haines alluded to past allegations by some that Russian President Vladimir Putin's advisers could be shielding him from bad news for Russia about war developments, and said he "is becoming more informed of the challenges that the military faces in Russia."

"But it's still not clear to us that he has a full picture of at this stage of just how challenged they are," the U.S. director of national intelligence said late Saturday at the Reagan National Defense Forum in Simi Valley, California. Looking ahead, Haines said, "honestly we're seeing a kind of a reduced tempo already of the conflict" and her team expects that both sides will look to refit, resupply, and reconstitute for a possible Ukrainian counter-offensive in the spring. "But we actually have a fair amount of skepticism as to whether or not the Russians will be in fact prepared to do that," she said. "And I think more optimistically for the Ukrainians in that timeframe."

In recent weeks, Russia's military focus has been on striking Ukrainian infrastructure and pressing an offensive in the east, near the town of Bakhmut, while shelling sites in the city of Kherson, which Ukrainian forces liberated last month after an 8-month Russian occupation. In his nightly address on Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy lashed out at Western efforts to crimp Russia's crucial oil industry, a key source of funds for Putin's war machine, saying their 60-per-barrel price cap on imports of Russian oil was insufficient. "It is not a serious decision to set such a limit for Russian prices, which is quite comfortable for the budget of the terrorist state," Zelenskyy said, referring to Russia. He said the 60-per-barrel level would still allow Russia to bring in 100 billion in revenues per year. "This money will go not only to the war and not only to further sponsorship by Russia of other terrorist regimes and organisations. This money will be used for further destabilisation of those countries that are now trying to avoid serious decisions," Zelenskyy said.

Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan, the United States and the 27-nation European Union agreed Friday to cap what they would pay for Russian oil at 60 per barrel. The limit is set to take effect Monday, along with an EU embargo on Russian oil shipped by sea.

Russian authorities have rejected the price cap and threatened Saturday to stop supplying the nations that endorsed it. In yet another show of Western support for Ukraine's efforts to battle back Russian forces and cope with fallout from the war, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland on Saturday visited the operations of a Ukrainian aid group that provides support for internally displaced people in Ukraine, among her other visits with top Ukrainian officials. Nuland assembled dolls out of yarn in the blue-and-yellow colors of Ukraine's flag with youngsters from regions including northeastern Kharkiv, southern Kherson, and eastern Donetsk. "This is psychological support for them at an absolutely crucial time," Nuland said. "As President Putin knows best, this war could stop today, if he chose to stop it and withdrew his forces and then negotiations can begin," she added. (AP)

State news: Iran executed 4 people it says spied for Israel

TEHRAN, DEC 4 /--/ Iranian authorities Sunday executed four people accused of working for Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, the state-run IRNA news agency said. Three others received lengthy prison sentences.

IRNA said the country's powerful Revolutionary Guard announced the arrests of a network of people linked to the Israeli agency. It said the members had previous criminal records and tried to disrupt the country's security. Israel and Iran are regional arch-enemies and Iran occasionally announces the detention of people it says are spying for foreign countries, including the United States and Israel. Iran does not recognize Israel and supports anti-Israeli armed groups across the region, such as Hezbollah and Hamas. Network members stole and destroyed private and public property and kidnapped individuals and interrogated them, according to the report. It said the alleged spies had weapons and received wages from Mossad in the form of cryptocurrency. IRNA identified the executed prisoners as Hossein Ordoukhanzadeh, Shahin Imani Mahmoudabadi, Milad Ashrafi and Manouchehr Shahbandi.

Three other members of the group received sentences of five to 10 years in prison, according to the news agency, but they were not identified. Iran and Israel have long accused each other of spying. Israel views Iran as its greatest threat and has repeatedly threatened to take military action to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Iran denies it is seeking such weapons and has vowed a harsh response to any Israeli aggression. In January, Israel said it had broken up an Iranian spy ring that recruited Israeli women via social media to photograph sensitive sites, gather intelligence and encourage their sons to join Israeli military intelligence. (AP)



Members of the UN Security Council observe a minute of silence in memory of former Chinese President Jiang Zemin at the UN headquarters in New York

Pentagon Chief: US faces pivotal years in countering China

SIMI VALLEY, DEC 4 /--/ The US is at a pivotal point with China and will need military strength to ensure that American values, not Beijing's, set global norms in the 21st century, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said Saturday.

Austin's speech at the Reagan National Defence Forum capped a week in which the Pentagon was squarely focused on China's rise and what that might mean for America's position in the world. On Monday it released an annual China security report that warned Beijing would likely have 1,500 nuclear warheads by 2035, with no clarity on how China would seek to use them. On Friday in a dramatic nighttime rollout, Austin was on hand as the public got its first glimpse of the military's newest, highly classified nuclear stealth bomber, the B-21 Raider, which is being designed to best the quickly growing cyber, space and nuclear capabilities of Beijing. China "is the only country with both the will and, increasingly, the power to reshape its region and the international order to suit its authoritarian preferences," Austin said Saturday. "So let me be clear: We will not let that happen."

The Pentagon is also concerned about Russia and remains committed to arming Ukraine while avoiding escalating that conflict into a US war with Moscow, he said at the forum, held at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. "We will not be dragged into Putin's war," Austin said. "These next few years will set the terms of

our competition with the People's Republic of China. They will shape the future of security in Europe," Austin said. "And they will determine whether our children and grandchildren inherit an open world of rules and rights or whether they face emboldened autocrats who seek to dominate by force and fear." Still, between the two nuclear power threats, China remains the greater risk, Austin said. To meet that rise, "we're aligning our budget as never before to the China challenge," Austin said. "In our imperfect world, deterrence does come through strength."

The bomber is part of a major nuclear triad overhaul underway that the Congressional Budget Office has estimated will cost 1.2 trillion through 2046. It includes the Raider serving as the backbone of the future air leg of the triad, but it also requires modernizing the nation's silo-launched nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles and its nuclear submarine fleet. The Defense Department has the largest discretionary budget of all the federal agencies, and it may receive up to 847 billion in the 2023 budget if Congress passes the current funding bill before this legislative session ends. However, defense advocates argue it is still not enough to modernize and keep up with China because much of that spending goes to military personnel. The CBO estimates that about one-quarter of the defense budget is spent on personnel costs such as salaries, health care and retirement accounts. (AP)

Israeli aircraft hit Gaza after rocket fire



File Photo

GAZA CITY, DEC 4 /--/ Israeli aircraft struck several military sites in the Gaza Strip early Sunday, hours after Palestinian militants fired a missile into southern Israel in a move apparently linked to rising tension in the occupied West Bank, Israel said.

The Israeli military said the airstrikes targeted a weapons manufacturing facility and an underground tunnel belonging to Hamas, the militant group that has controlled Gaza since 2007. The military said more projectiles were fired over the border while warplanes were hitting the Gaza sites. No Palestinian group claimed responsibility for the Saturday evening rocket, which landed in an open area near the Gaza-

Israel fence. The border has been quiet since August's three-day blitz between Israel and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a powerful Gaza group that is smaller than the dominant Hamas. Hamas and other factions have largely honored the unofficial understandings that have kept the situation in the impoverished territory calm in exchange for thousands of Israeli work permits. Israel and Egypt maintain a blockade on Gaza to prevent Hamas from stocking up weapons. "The strike overnight continues the progress to impede the force build-up" of Hamas, the Israeli army said. Critics of the blockade say it is a form of collective punishment that harms Gaza's 2.3 million people.

While Gaza remained quiet, tension has been boiling for months in the West Bank, where the Palestinian Authority exerts limited self-rule in parts of the territory. Israel carried out near daily raids that it says targets wanted Palestinians involved in planning or taking part in attacks, prompted by a spate of Palestinian attacks on Israelis in the spring that killed 19 people. The military says the raids are meant to dismantle militant networks and thwart future attacks, but the Palestinians say they entrench Israel's open-ended occupation, now in its 56th year. A recent wave of Palestinian attacks on Israeli targets killed an additional nine people. More than 140 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli-Palestinian fighting this year. The Israeli army says most of the Palestinians killed have been militants. But stone-throwing youths protesting Israeli army incursions and others not involved in confrontations have also been killed. (AP)

Palestinians say killing caught on video was unjustified

HAWARA, DEC 4 /--/ A makeshift sidewalk memorial with a Palestinian flag and a mourning notice paid tribute Saturday to a 22-year-old Palestinian whose death at the hands of an Israeli border police officer four pistol shots from close range was captured on widely shared amateur video.

A day after the shooting in the occupied West Bank town of Hawara, Palestinians pushed back against Israeli police claims that Ammar Adili was shot in self defense after he attacked Israelis, including a border policeman, and resisted arrest. They said the officer killed Adili without justification, and that Israeli security forces prevented Palestinian medics from trying to save the gravely wounded man as he lay on the sidewalk of a busy thoroughfare. The 38-second video

begins with a tussle between the border police officer and three Palestinians, including Adili, on the sidewalk as traffic rushes by. The officer pulls Adili away in a choke hold and they exchange blows after Adili frees himself. He tries to grab the officer's assault rifle, which drops to the ground behind the officer, out of Adili's immediate reach. The officer then pulls his pistol and fires four shots as an unarmed Adili drops to the ground.

Immediately after Friday's fatal shooting, police alleged that Adili had carried a knife and tried to attack two Israelis in a car, and then tried to break into the locked vehicle with a rock. It said the driver shot and wounded Adili, who then charged a group of border policemen, stabbing one in the face, police said. The border police officer tried to arrest Adili,

who resisted and tried to grab the officer's weapon, police said. The officer who shot him was not hurt. Hawara mayor Moein Dmeidy and others on Saturday cited second-hand accounts that there had been an altercation between Adili and an Israeli motorist after a car accident, but Associated Press journalists were unable to find witnesses to the events that led up to the shooting. Dmeidy said the officer had no justification to kill Adili after he had already overpowered him. Adili was "killed in cold blood," said the mayor, who arrived at the scene moments after the shooting.

In a second video, Adili is seen moving and rolling over on the ground after being shot, and it's not clear at what point he died. Dmeidy said a Palestinian ambulance arrived minutes after the shooting, but that security

forces prevented the medics from administering aid. Dmeidy said Israel has not handed over Adili's body for burial. Tor Wennesland, the special UN envoy to the Middle East peace process, wrote on Twitter that he was "horrified" by the shooting and sent "heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family." He called for a thorough investigation and said those responsible must be held accountable. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon accused the envoy of distorting reality. "This incident is a terror attack, in which an Israeli policeman was stabbed in his face and the life of another police officer was threatened and consequently he shot his assailant," Nahshon wrote on Twitter.

On Saturday, shops along Hawara's main road were

shuttered in protest over the shooting. A makeshift memorial marked the spot where Adili died, consisting of a Palestinian flag on a short pole and a death poster leaning against it. The poster, with a photo of Adili, said the Fatah party of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas mourns its son "who was killed at the hands of the Zionist occupation." The video of Adili's final moments was a rare documentation of one of the increasingly common violent incidents involving Israeli security forces and Palestinians, including attackers. Meanwhile, Israeli aircraft struck several sites linked to Hamas in the Gaza Strip early Sunday, hours after Palestinian militants fired a missile into southern Israel in a move apparently linked to rising tension in the occupied West Bank, Israel said. (AP)



TODAY'S MATCH
(Round of 16)
Japan vs Croatia
- 8.30 PM IST
Brazil vs South Korea - 12.30 AM IST

DOHA, DEC 4 /--/ Lionel Messi produced a moment of trademark quality to score the opener in a 2-1 win over Australia and send Argentina into the quarter-finals of the World Cup on Saturday. Messi's 789th goal in his 1,000th career appearance — but first in the knockout rounds of the World Cup — helped set up a last-eight clash with the unbeaten Netherlands on Friday. Julian Alvarez scored the other in the 57th minute after some calamitous Australian defending, before Enzo Fernandez's 77th-minute own goal set up an unexpectedly nervy finale. Now 35, one of the best players of all time is seeking to win the tournament for the first time in what will surely be his final World Cup.

Messi's classy first-half goal, bending the ball into the bottom corner, broke the resistance and ultimately the hearts of a gutsy Australian side who defied all expectations in Qatar and went down fighting. Australia's yellow-shirted fans were vastly outnumbered among the packed crowd at the 45,000-capacity Ahmad bin Ali Stadium and were drowned out by Argentina's boisterous, bellowing and bouncing supporters. Back in Australia, where fans had a sunrise start if they wanted to catch the game live on television, the Sydney Opera

House was lit up in green and gold. Their side were huge underdogs — few at home had expected them to get even this far at the tournament — but this has been a World Cup of shocks. Two-time champions Argentina were the victim of arguably the biggest shock in Qatar when they went down 2-1 to Saudi Arabia in their opening match. But there would be no repeat here. Graham Arnold's Socceroos set out to unsettle their opponents. Keanu Baccus left one on Messi and Jackson Irvine was booked for crunching into left-back Marcos Acuna. Argentina had Australia pinned back but the Socceroos were resolute and growing in confidence as an uninspiring first half wore on. Messi was getting frustrated, tussling with Australian defender Aziz Behich on the sidelines. Argentina and their coach Lionel Scaloni badly needed something special and in Messi they got it 10 minutes from the break. Alexis Mac Allister fed defender Nicolas Otamendi, who was still in the box for an Argentina free-kick, and he miscontrolled it into the path of Messi who bent the ball left-footed along the ground into the corner. It was Argentina's first shot on target. Australia had only got this far once before, in 2006, and they needed to come out and attack in the second half. Instead, they self-destructed. Goalkeeper and captain Mathew Ryan tried to play out

under fierce pressure in his box from hard-running Rodrigo De Paul just before the hour and was dispossessed by Alvarez. The Manchester City striker, 22, nipped in, stole the ball from Ryan and swivelled to slot into an empty net for his second goal in as many games. Arnold thumped his dugout in frustration. The Socceroos looked dead and buried but substitute Goodwin latched onto a loose clearance and his shot hit Fernandez and ricocheted in with 13 minutes left.

Behich then went on a superb mazy run from left-back, beating three Argentina players before Lisandro Martinez made a vital last-ditch challenge.

Teenager Garang Kuol then forced Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez into a desperate save deep in injury time before the massed ranks of South American fans celebrated a big win. (AFP)

GAME NOTES

Japan have 'heart and courage', not star names, says Croatia's Lovro Majer

DOHA, DEC 4 /--/ Croatia midfielder Lovro Majer hailed World Cup surprise package Japan for having "heart and courage" ahead of their last 16 confrontation on Monday. The Asian side remarkably topped Group E ahead of Spain, who finished second, leaving four-time champions Germany and Costa Rica eliminated. Japan came from behind to beat both former World Cup winners Germany and Spain in remarkable upsets, up against teams filled with star players. Majer said he did not expect Japan to finish top of the group but that they deserved their achievement. "I have to be honest, I didn't expect that, no one expected them, in the world of football," Majer told a press conference Saturday. "But kudos to them, they showed that in football they don't just play with names, but with heart and courage. They deserved this."

Gabriel Jesus and Alex Telles ruled out of tournament due to injuries

DOHA, DEC 4 /--/ Gabriel Jesus and Alex Telles have been ruled out of the rest of the World Cup with knee injuries, the Brazil team announced on Saturday. The South American team said the pair, who were hurt during Friday's 1-0 defeat to Cameroon, both underwent tests on Saturday morning that "confirmed their injuries and the impossibility of them recovering for the rest of the World Cup in Qatar". Brazil, who face South Korea in the last 16 on Monday, have problems in defence as Telles' fellow full-backs, Danilo and Alex Sandro, have also had injury problems. Arsenal forward Jesus featured in all three of Brazil's Group G games but the five-time world champions have a wealth of attacking talent. (AFP)

Olivier Giroud puts France 1-0 up with record-breaking goal

DOHA, DEC 4 /--/ A few topsy-turvy moments for both France and Poland in the FIFA World Cup Round of 16 match but it was Olivier Giroud who eventually put Les Bleus in front. In the process, Giroud also became France's all-time top-scorer, overtaking Thierry

Henry who had 51 goals to his name.

Brazil sweat on Neymar Jr. return ahead of Last 16 clash against South Korea

DOHA, DEC 4 /--/ Brazil sweat on Neymar Jr. return ahead of Last 16 clash against South Korea. Doha, Dec 4 /--/ Brazil head into Monday's World Cup last-16 tie against South Korea preoccupied with the health of the great Pele and with coach Tite wondering whether to recall Selecao's current number 10 Neymar after an ankle injury. Tite used his press conference prior to Friday's final group game against Cameroon to wish Pele a speedy recovery after the all-time great was admitted to a hospital in Sao Paulo during the week. The three-time World Cup winner, now aged 82, has been undergoing a "re-evaluation" of

the chemotherapy he had following surgery to remove a colon tumour in September last year. Brazil fans also unfurled a banner with a get well soon message for Pele ahead of the Cameroon game, which the Selecao lost 1-0 as they went down to their first defeat in the group stage since 1998. There would be no better way for Brazil to pay tribute to their greatest ever player than by going on to win a record-extending sixth World Cup on December 18, and the draw appears to have opened up favourably for them. They topped their section despite scoring just three goals in three games in Qatar,

their worst showing in front of goal in the group stage of a World Cup since 1978. Brazil have a fearsome range of attacking options, even with Gabriel Jesus having gone home injured, but they have scored just once since Neymar came off with a sprained ankle in their opening 2-0 win over Serbia on 24 November. He watched the Cameroon game from just behind the Brazilian bench at the Lusail Stadium and on Saturday he was back training with his teammates, raising hopes he would be on the field against the Koreans. "I feel good, I knew that I would now," he wrote on Instagram on Saturday with a reference to James Brown. (AFP)



Mehidy Hasan Miraj pulls off great win for Bangladesh, edge past India in thrilling 1st ODI

DHAKA, DEC 4 /--/ Bangladesh's last wicket pair of Mehidy Hasan Miraj and Mustafizur Rahman pulled off an absolute heist with a thrilling 51-run stand as India choked during final half an hour to lose a low-scoring opening ODI by one wicket in Mirpur on Sunday. While India produced yet another poor batting show which saw them get all-out for 186 in 41.2 overs, the bowlers did a splendid job to reduce Bangladesh to 136 for 9 in the 40th over. However KL Rahul, who was entrusted with keeping duties to fit him and another veteran Shikhar Dhawan in the same XI, dropped an aerial sitter when Bangladesh still needed 32 runs. Washington Sundar also didn't go for an easy catch at third man earning the wrath of skipper Rohit Sharma as Miraj (38 not out off 39 balls) along with Mustafizur (10 not out) got the team past the finishing line in exactly 46 overs. The 51-run stand between Miraj and Mustafizur was Bangladesh's highest 10th wicket partnership and the fourth-highest 10th wicket partnership in a successful ODI chase. On a track that assisted both seamers and spinners, Indian top-order barring KL Rahul (73 off 70 balls) flopped badly to be bowled out for a

score below 200. But the total that looked eminently gettable at the break turned into a sizeable one due to lion-hearted efforts from Mohammed Siraj (3/32), Shardul Thakur (1/21) and Washington Sundar (2/17). Debutant Kuldeep Sen's (2/37) pace was used to hit him for three sixes -- two of them during the slog overs while Deepak Chahar (1/32) despite providing a first-ball breakthrough looked pedestrian towards the end when there was no nip in the air. In the end, Miraj ensured that hosts didn't suffer a setback in a game which should have been won with their bowling effort alone. Earlier, Rahul struck 73 off 70 balls on a day when the others struggled to get going and when the side was packed with all-rounders. Rahul hit five fours and four sixes. India's innings lasted 41.2 overs with left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan (5/36) doing most of the damage. Opting to field, Mustafizur Rahman started the proceedings with a maiden, before India skipper Rohit Sharma opened the visitors' boundary count by smashing Hasan Mahmud through the gap between point and cover. Shikhar Dhawan went down the ground and got his first boundary by sending the ball over cover. (PTI)



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