

Needle of suspicion: Mole peeps out of Hole

ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ The manner in which certain sensitive information relating to the gangrape probe by the Special Investigating Team (SIT) of Andaman & Nicobar Police has come to the public domain through some individuals and Youtubers is a indicator that someone in the SIT is leaking out selective informations of the probe. It seems that the A&N Police are unable to deal with the mole in its own system for quite a long time. It may be recalled that recently the security details of Union Home

Is someone in SIT leaking sensitive information on the gangrape probe to private individuals, YouTubers?

Minister, Mr. Amit Shah was leaked by a few Police Personnel. Though the department initially took action and later reinstated all those involved in exposing the security details, the manner in which some

in the department has been leaking information has exposed the style of functioning of the Police department. Someone, this time in the SIT is once again playing this dirty game for petty gains. Minute details of SIT formed to investigate the gangrape case are being disclosed to Youtubers without any fear for the law.

While the frontline media is reporting what is already in the public domain, some Youtubers and a few individuals have been able to disclose minute details of raids done by the Forensic team on the house of some related co-accused. Now the big question is how these

private individuals and Youtubers get prior information and details of the SIT investigation. A close watch on the SIT team and their family & friends will reveal how this nexus has been working. Selective leakage makes it amply clear about the intention of SIT. If the SIT is not revamped on priority, the truth is not going to come out. The blacksheeps in the system need to be shown the door before the guilty goes unpunished. A separate team should be formed to nab the mole before the next target is chosen and fired. It is better to catch the bull by its horn and bolted before it creates havoc in the system.

MP urges LG for resolving long pending grievances of Tribal Council of Car Nicobar

PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ Highlighting some of the crucial issues of Car Nicobar Island, the Member of Parliament, Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma has requested the Lt. Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands to resolve long pending grievances of Tribal Council, Car Nicobar.

In a letter, Mr. Sharma mentioned that during his recent visit to Car Nicobar Island, he interacted with the representatives of Tribal Council, Car Nicobar and during meeting, the members of Tribal Council presented many grievances urging him to take up the issues with the Government and A&N Administration. Based on the demands, the Member of Parliament highlighted following issues in front of Hon'ble Lt. Governor. Notable issues are construction of the Sea Protection Wall at Mus. Mr. Sharma mentioned that the aftermath of earthquake/ Tsunami struck these Islands, the soil erosion is taking place at fast pace around the Mus break Water



Middle School and 05 Primary School. However, due to absence of basic infrastructures, the students are facing hardship while getting education in the schools. He highlighted shortage of furniture such as Benches/Desk in all Schools and mentioned that roofing of Govt. Sec school at Kakana needs to be replaced/ repaired. He demanded Posting of Principal/Vice Principal/Headmistress in the schools and posting of Maths and Science Teachers. The Member of Parliament also demanded posting of PGT (Computer Science), Fine Arts, Physical Education and Physics Teachers in GSSS Lapathy and repair of toilets in all Schools. The issue of the road sector and drinking water was also raised. The Member of Parliament demanded for posting of a regular Executive Engineer and filling up of existing Vacant Post and repair and maintenance of existing internal (rural road) from Chuckchucha to Mus Village. He also demanded repair/ Maintenance of old existing rural road now called

State Highway from Arong up to Kakana village and reconstruction of RCC Bridge in place of the Collapsed Bailey bridge at Old Kimious village, as most of the plantation of Villagers exist there and due collapse of the bridge, their easy movement has been disrupted. The MP also demanded improvement of water supply in all the villages by replacing old rusted pipe lines. On Electricity, the Member of Parliament pointed out that frequent power interruption especially during monsoon is occurring due to old Cables, hence new Cables are required to be laid as replacement. He also demanded filling up of existing vacant posts in Car Nicobar Division since due to non filling up of vacant posts, there are workloads over the existing staff owing to which, disposal of various complaints on account of line faults etc are getting delayed.

On the Fisheries sector: The Member of Parliament pointed out that all the outboard engines issued by the Department to the fishermen runs on Kerosene oil, due to non-availability of kerosene oil, the fishermen are unable to venture into sea and this affects their livelihood. On the issue of Permanent Shelter: The Member of Parliament demanded procurement of a Sewage Suction cleaner Truck to clean up the Septic tanks in all 4000 Permanent Shelters with Bathrooms as it is overflowing posing Health hazards.

BSNL Network connectivity. He pointed out that BSNL connectivity signal and internet data depend on power supply by Electricity Department, as they don't have power back up facility, due to which student and villagers from Chukchucha to Sawai (08 villages) are not able to use the internet data facilities. The Member of Parliament demanded to create battery backup facilities in the Car Nicobar to avoid internet interruption.

A&N Police presents march past to observe Rashtriya Ekta Diwas



PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ As part of commemoration of the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) was observed by the A&N Police on Monday. On the occasion, an exemplary ceremonial march past by as many as seven Police contingents, comprising of two platoons of Executive Police, each of Gents & Ladies, IRBN, Fire Service, Home Guard and two platoons of A&N Police Band presented march past from Dugong Guest House (PBMG) to Government Press, Port Blair in the evening. Huge gathering of the general public witnessed this function at Govt. Girls Sr. Secondary School, Port Blair. The entire function was held under the supervision of Smti. Monika Bhardwaj, Senior Superintendent of Police (AP/SAP).

National Unity Day celebration at C/Bay

CAMPBELL BAY, OCT 31/--/ On the occasion of National Unity Day-the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 31st October 2022, a pledge has been administered in the Office of Assistant Commissioner, Campbell Bay by all the employees of the office, The Tehsildar, Campbell Bay briefed about the importance of this day and the life work and struggle of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Similar functions have also been held in other offices of Administration and Govt. Schools under the Great Nicobar.



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ABERDEEN BAZAR, PORT BLAIR. Ph : 233822

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ABERDEEN BAZAR, PORT BLAIR. Ph : 237719

Isles's Chess player shines in International Chess

PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ Islands' young Chess player R KashthuriBhai, a class VIII student of GDMS Middle point, Port Blair has shined in an International FIDE Rapid Rating Chess Tournament-2022, held at Jerusalem College of Engineering, Chennai, Tamil Nadu from 29th to 30th October 2022. She played brilliantly and secured second position in the Under 14 Girls category and was awarded with a trophy and certificate. More than 350 players from India and abroad participated in the tournament that was held in rapid format for two days over 9 rounds.



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CPI demands probe on Gujarat bridge collapse incident

CHENNAI, OCT 31 /--/The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Monday sought a comprehensive probe over the sudden collapse of the recently renovated bridge in Morbi city of Gujarat that claimed at least 134 lives.

The party's national general secretary D Raja, on a visit to Chennai after he was elected to the top position at the party congress in Vijayawada this month, said the suspension bridge on the Machchhu river in Gujarat's Morbi city was recently renovated. "It is a very saddening incident. Several people have lost their lives and many have been seriously injured. I express heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the affected families on behalf of the CPI and my own behalf," he said. Speaking to reporters here, he said his party expected the Gujarat government to order a probe into the incident

immediately. The suspension bridge collapsed on Sunday evening killing at least 134 people. It was reopened for public five days ago after seven months of repair work by a private firm.

On the Coimbatore car blast case on Diwali eve, Raja said the truth behind the incident should be exposed. "The blast should be condemned. Whoever is involved in the act of terrorism should be properly investigated and punished. But this incident should not be utilised for political gains to criticise and defame the state government," he said. The party's congress in Vijayawada had discussed several issues including the latest political development, the BJP government's attempt to divide the people on religious lines and utilising the office of governors to target duly elected state governments, he

said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies have deepened the economic crisis. The nation is confronted with a weakening rupee and the country has gone down in the Global Hunger Index. "Modi can say thousand things about development but all that is nothing but wordplay and lies. Modi's policies have weakened the rupee to a historic low and India is ranked below the neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka in the Global Hunger Index," Raja said. Also, he claimed that governors, instead of discharging their functions within the constitutional framework, were conducting themselves as agents of the Central government in the non-BJP ruled states.

His party endorsed the popular view among the people that the gubernatorial

post should be wound up, he said and added that those who criticised the Centre were branded as 'urban Naxalites', terrorists, Maoists and anti-nationals, he said.


The veteran leader appealed to all like-minded secular political parties to unite and dislodge the BJP government at the Centre in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections to protect the Constitution, democracy and state rights. "Just like how the Secular Progressive Alliance is working in Tamil Nadu, secular parties, Left parties and social organisations should work together in other states to overthrow the fascist regime," Raja said. He congratulated Brazil's Lula da Silva, who emerged as the country's new president defeating Jair Bolsonaro, and said people there realised that policies of the Left parties are better and voted accordingly. (PTI)



AICC General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadara gestures to the Congress workers during the Congress party's 'Privartan Pratigya Rally', in Mandi

Sardar Patel's role in forging National unity immense: Dharmendra Pradhan

NEW DELHI, OCT 31 /--/Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday highlighted Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's contribution in creating India's political and cultural identity and said the country's first home minister took it upon himself to tie the nation in the thread of unity. The education minister said Patel played the balancing role amid people of different ideologies in the national leadership and he



Dharmendra Pradhan

is the best role model for today's leaders to take decisions in the country's interest. "We are fortunate that today our country is in front of us as a unified India because of Patel," he added. Pradhan was addressing the 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' programme organised by the University of Delhi. A 'Run for Unity' was organised by the varsity which began and culminated in front of the Gandhi Statue after passing through the institution's stadium. "It was not only Patel's responsibility to get political independence for the country, but he also took it upon himself to tie the country in the thread of unity. His contribution in creating the political and cultural identity of the country is immense," Pradhan said. He urged the university to bring Patel's work into discussion by using it in research activities. Vice Chancellor Yogesh Singh, who presided over the programme, said although Patel contributed massively, his greatest contribution was in the form of an integrated India. (PTI)

J&K: 13 Kashmiri Pandit families urge admin to register them as 'migrants'

JAMMU, OCT 31 /--/Thirteen Kashmiri Pandit families, who migrated from a village in south Kashmir amid 'targeted' killings of members of their community, demanded on Monday that the administration register them as 'migrants'.

Of the 13 families comprising 43 members, 10 had left Choudharygund village in Shopian district and reached Jammu on October 26. The remaining three had reached the city earlier. "We have submitted a joint application to the office of relief and rehabilitation commissioner at Jammu for registration of the 13 families as migrants in the wake of migration from the valley to Jammu," said V J Kaul, a representative of the families. He said they have left their village out of insecurity and it is up to the government to provide them registration. Puran Krishan Bhat was gunned down by terrorists outside his ancestral house in Choudharygund village on October 15. Monish Kumar and Ram Sagar were killed in a grenade attack by

terrorists while they were asleep in their rented accommodation in Shopian on October 18.

In the application, the families said they had migrated to Jammu following Bhat's killing in broad daylight. "The incident of brutal killing compelled us to leave our native village to save our lives. We, the residents of Choudharygund, bore the brunt of militancy and shared agonies with our brethren for the last 32 years but killing of Bhat compelled us to leave the valley," they said. They said prior to Bhat's killing, a government primary school was attacked but fortunately three teachers belonging to the minority community had a narrow escape. On the same day, a letter was circulated on social media by jihadi groups which threatened Kashmiri Pandits to leave Kashmir or face similar consequences, the families said on the application. "We are not prepared to live there in danger and shifted to Jammu with our families. Our parents,

Dilli ki Yogshala programme to be discontinued from today: Officials

NEW DELHI, OCT 31 /--/The Delhi government's Dilli Ki Yogshala scheme will be discontinued from Tuesday since Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena is yet to give a go-ahead to it, according to officials. Sources at the LG's office, however, said they have not received any file on the continuation of the programme. They said even earlier, they had not received any file and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had only written a letter demanding that the programme be continued. "How can we consider a letter as a proposal?" one of the sources asked. Sources in the city government, however, claimed that the LG has not approved the extension of the Dilli Ki Yogshala programme after October 31. The board of governors of the Delhi Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research University (DPSRU), which runs the programme, had given its nod to the continuation of the scheme at its meeting held last week. "The 'Dilli ki Yogshala' classes have been discontinued from tomorrow i.e. 1.11.22 via a government order. In the BOG meeting of DPSRU decision to continue the classes was taken, however Hon. LG has not given permission yet. We will keep you informed upon further information," said a tweet from the official Twitter page of Dilli Ki Yogshala.

Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia had met Saxena on Friday and urged him to ensure that the AAP government's flagship scheme is allowed to continue. After his meeting with the LG, Sisodia had said the former had promised that the related documents would be looked into and nothing wrong would be allowed to happen. Tagging the tweet on the closure of the programme on Monday, Sisodia alleged in a tweet in Hindi: "The board of the university wants that the yogshala should continue for the common people of Delhi, the government has also given the budget but still, an order has been issued to close the 'Yogshala of Delhi' by intimidating officers. (PTI)

Khattar administers 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' pledge

CHANDIGARH, OCT 31 /--/Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday administered the 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' pledge to a gathering of officials and others at the Haryana Civil Secretariat at a special function organised on the occasion of birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Sardar Patel's birth anniversary is observed as the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas or National Unity Day. Paying rich tributes to Patel, India's first home minister and also known as the "Iron Man of India", Khattar said his contribution to integrate more than 560 princely states into the Indian Union was immense. He also said that the leader did great work for the unity and integrity of the country. "At the time of Independence, the country was divided into more than 550 princely states," the chief minister said. Khattar said Patel integrated 562 states, but three states were left, adding that with Patel's efforts, Hyderabad and Junagad were also integrated. He said while the task for persuading Hyderabad and Junagarh to join the Indian Union was entrusted to Patel, the responsibility to include Jammu and Kashmir was given to Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Haryana chief minister also touched upon Article 370, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, "due to which full integration of J&K with the Indian Union could not happen and it was only after the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi took the decision to scrap Article 370 that the remaining task was completed". Khattar administered the 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' pledge to the gathering. "I solemnly pledge that I dedicate myself to preserve the unity, integrity and security of the nation and also strive hard to spread this message among my fellow countrymen. "I take this pledge in the spirit of unification of my country which was made possible by the vision and actions of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. I also solemnly resolve to make my own contribution to ensure internal security of my country," he added. (PTI)

TN explosion: Intention not to trouble govt or police but seek corrective measure, says Annamalai

COIMBATORE, OCT 31 /--/The BJP's intention was not to trouble the Tamil Nadu government or the state police over the October 23 fatal car explosion in the city but make them take corrective measures and also expedite the probe, the saffron party's state president K Annamalai said on Monday.

The TN BJP chief, who has raised a number of questions vis-a-vis the probe into the matter, which has since been transferred to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), alleged there was specific systematic failure in preventing the incident, despite central intelligence inputs over the movement of 'radicalised' youths. "I don't want to give trouble" to the government and police but he was raising the questions in the interest of the state and for expediting the probe, Annamalai told reporters here. Reiterating the Centre had given specific alert to three states and three cities, including Coimbatore, Annamalai said the state government and the police, instead of announcing it just as a cylinder explosion, should have described it as a terror attack or suicide attack so that the people of the city could be more alert. A man, identified as Jamesha Mubin, had been charred to death in the gas cylinder explosion in the car near a temple in the city last Sunday, with the BJP claiming it to be a terror attack and the victim as an ISIS sympathiser. "Despite the alert and also knowing that Mubin was under NIA radar since 2019, along with 96 other who were close to ISIS, police failed to trace his movement," he said adding that prevention of crime would have been better than detection.

This could be due to communication failure, as the intelligence agency and its sister agency in Tamil Nadu failed to act on the alert from the Centre on October 18, Annamalai said while displaying nails and ball-bearing allegedly found from the explosion site and appreciated the city police for rushing the spot and solving it swiftly. It was not top officials but lower level personnel, who rushed to the site and managed to solve the case, he said. Earlier, Annamalai visited the site and the temple and held discussions with the temple priteest. He along with over 100 BJP cadres squatted on the temple premises and recited Kanda Sashti Kavacham, a hymn sung in praise of Lord Muruga and offered prayers to the Kottai Eswaran, the presiding deity. (PTI)

Case against suspended Congress MLA's advocates HC lawyers boycott court

KOCHI, OCT 31 /--/Lawyers practising at the Kerala High Court on Monday boycotted work in protest against the registration of a criminal case against the advocates representing Perumbavoor MLA Eldhose Kunnappilly, who is an accused in a rape case.

Vanchiyoore police had recently registered a case against Kunnappilly and three of his lawyers for allegedly threatening the survivor in the rape case against the suspended Congress leader. Police told PTI that the case was registered upon the direction of the court which recorded the statement of the survivor saying that they threatened her. "The general body

meeting of the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association convened today at 9.45 am to discuss the issue of police excesses by registering criminal cases against lawyers who are accepting briefs for clients has resolved to abstain from court work today (31.10.2022)," the Association notice read. Kunnappilly was suspended by the Congress on October 22 saying his explanation with regard to the allegations raised by the woman was not satisfactory. A woman had recently filed a rape and attempt to murder case against the Perumbavoor MLA. He appeared before the investigating officers after a court in Thiruvananthapuram granted him anticipatory

Gola Gokarnath bypoll: Adityanath promises Kashi Vishwanath temple-like development

LAKHIMPUR KHERI, OCT 31 /--/Ahead of the assembly bypoll in Gola Gokarnath constituency, Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday said that the main temple here will be developed on the lines of Kashi Vishwanath shrine in Varanasi.

The assembly seat fell vacant after the death of BJP MLA Arvind Giri on September 6. The bypoll is scheduled for November 3 and the results will be declared on November 6. "The late MLA Arvind Giri developed the area and it was his last wish that Gola Gokarnath should be made as visible as Kashi. It is

unfortunate that today Arvind Giri is not with us, but his son Aman Giri is with us and in future, I will come here to lay the foundation stone to develop this 'Chhoti Kashi' on the lines of Kashi," Adityanath said while campaigning for the upcoming election. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has fielded Aman Giri, while the Samajwadi Party (SP) has given ticket to former MLA Vinay Tiwari.

There is a Shiva temple at Gola Gokarnath in Kheri district and this major pilgrimage centre is also known as "Chhoti Kashi". The Kashi Vishwanath Corridor was

inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, facilitating the movement of pilgrims who do not have to pass through the narrow



lanes now and can have better darshan of Baba Vishwanath.

The chief minister also said that no trader will be harmed here and the street vendors will be better adjusted and their faith will be respected.

Expressing gratitude to the people of the district for giving all the eight assembly seats in Kheri to the BJP in the 2022 assembly elections, Adityanath appealed to them to vote in favour of the party candidate in the by-election.

Targeting the opposition Samajwadi Party (SP), he said that they are saying elections are being won forcibly, but in reality, they are being won with the blessings of voters. He also

taunted the main opposition party, saying the SP has conceded defeat even before the elections and that the party got an opportunity to form its government four times, but no development took place. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Sabka Saath-Sabka Vikas' mantra, the priest-turned-politician said, "We have not seen anyone's caste, creed or religion in delivering the development plan. We have given everyone the benefit of development schemes. "I have come here to assure the farmers that every penny of your cane price will be paid," he said in a special reference to farmers. "We

have given instructions that with the start of the new session, the sugarcane price of each farmer should be paid, otherwise remember our jails are waiting for those corrupt who mess up with the sentiments of farmers and youth," he said.

Stressing that his government has a zero tolerance policy against criminals and mafia, Adityanath said go to the east or west or anywhere else in the entire state, the mafia elements are today frightened. The meeting was also addressed by other prominent speakers, including BJP state president Bhupendra Singh. (PTI)

Death anniversary of former PM Indira Gandhi observed



PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ The 38th death anniversary of Late Smt Indira Gandhi, the first woman former Prime Minister of India was observed at the Namunaghar Junction. The Congress Block President, Mr. Mohammed Ali, along with Pradhan, Gram Panchayat Mithakhari, Mr. Mohammed Safique, ex Pradhan, Namunaghar, Mr. Jagat Singh and PRI members of region and social workers were present and paid homage to the great leader. On the occasion, a five minutes silence was also observed.

Application invited from licensed Fishers & Fisheries Co-Op. Societies for purchase of fish transport vehicle & tricycle

PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ Under the devolution of powers, applications have been invited from licensed fishers and fisheries Co-Op. Societies under the area/ Jurisdiction of Zilla Parishad, South Andaman for purchase of fish transport vehicle and tricycle under the UT Plan of the Zilla Parishad, South Andaman, Port Blair. The Pattern of assistance is as follows:-

For General Fisherman	For Tribes Exclusively
50% subsidy to max of Rs. 2,00,000/- per fish transport vehicle	75% subsidy subject to max of Rs. 3,00,000/- per fish transport vehicle.

The fisherman should have the fishing and dinghy licence at least for the last two consecutive years including the current financial year and for tribes one year including the current Financial Year. The licensed fisher/ society should not have availed assistance for similar assets in the past 8 years for fish transport vehicles. In the case of Society, the society should be registered with the Registered of Co- operative Society, A & N Islands. The Society should submit its audited statement of accounts for last 3 years alongwith its bye- laws. The aim and objective of the society should be related to the fisheries development activities. The application should be submitted by the society through A & N Fisheries Co-Operative Federation alongwith a brief resume of the activity which they intend to take up by procuring the item together with a copy of resolution of the General Body/ Managing Committee of the Society for the procurement of the assets. Proforma invoice from the supplier of the purchase of fish transport vehicle should be submitted to the Zilla Parishad, South Andaman. Interested bonafide fishermen/ Tribes/ Co- Operative Societies have been requested to collect the prescribed application form and detailed terms & conditions of the programme, from the Office of the respective In- Charge of Fisheries Sub- Station, Campbell Bay, Hut Bay, Panchayat Samiti, Prothrapur and Ferrargunj, South Andaman and to submit the filled in application in the Office of the Chief Executive Officer/ Zilla Parishad or the respective Fisheries- Sub- Station latest by 15th November, 2022.

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas pledge by PBMC Staff



PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ As part of the commemoration of the birth anniversary of Late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 31st October 2022, Smti. Kavitha Udhaya Kumar, Chairperson, Port Blair

Municipal Council administrated the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas pledge to all the staff of the Municipal Council. Mr. Aziz-Ur-Rehman, Senior Vice Chairperson, PBMC elected representatives of various Wards & Officials of the Council were also present on the occasion. The occasion of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is to provide us an opportunity to reaffirm the inherent strength and resilience of our nation to with stand the actual and potential threats to the unity, integrity and security of our country.

CCS seizes 1.760 kgs of ganja, peddler nabbed

PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ Acting on a specific intelligence input received from reliable source, Police team from Central Crime Station consisting of SI M.A Rasheed, Head Constable Sanjay Kujur and Constables N.Thangaraj, K.Rajendran & Raja Rao intercepted one person namely Sujit Kumar Biswas S/o Sh. Khokan Biswas R/o Krishnapur, Diglipur now at Radhanagar, Swaraj Dweepat VSI Airport who arrived at Port Blair from Kolkata on 31/10/2022 by flight. During checking of his personnel belongings, 1.760 Kgs of Ganja which was clandestinely concealed in the bag was seized and accused person was arrested observing all codal formalities. A case under relevant sections of NDPS Act-1985 has been registered at PS CCS and investigation is on. The general public is requested to inform about any credible information pertaining to sale or possession of contrabands or any other illegal activity on the following telephone numbers- 100, 232586, 233307, 9474290250. The identity of the informer will be kept secret.

Beach cleaning drive by BSI



PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ The beach cleaning drive was organized by the Botanical Survey of India under the leadership of Dr. Lalji Singh, Joint Director and Regional Head. All officers and staff actively participated. This cleanliness drive is not only a local beach cleanliness drive but would also contribute positively towards the clean India program and to instill awareness and feeling of pride among citizens to keep their surroundings clean and waste free.

NYK Car Nicobar celebrated National Unity Day



PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ The Nehru Yuva Kendra, Car Nicobar celebrated National Unity Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on Monday in which 50 youths from various villages participated. On the occasion, a 'Run for Unity' was organized from NYK, Office to Gandhi Chowk and Back and the run was flagged off by Mr. Anand Verdhhan Mishra, Assistant Commissioner (HQ), Car Nicobar. The run was also participated by the chief guest and other guests Mr. Mickel Raj, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Car Nicobar, Mr. DN Choudhary, Training Officer, ITI, Arong and Mr. Ahmed Ali, Secretary, NAA, Car Nicobar, alongwith the participants. At the end Mr. Mickel Raj, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Nicobar District garlanded the portrait of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in presence of other guests. Earlier, Mr. Alphonse Toppo, Deputy Director (OSD), NYK, Car Nicobar highlighted the importance of the day and proposed a vote of thanks at the end.

PBMC's retiring staff accorded warm farewell



PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ At a simple function, the Port Blair Municipal Council on Monday bid farewell to four of its employees who superannuated from the service. The Chairperson, PBMC, Smti. Kavitha Udhaya Kumar in her address recalled the valuable services rendered by them to the Council and wished them happy and healthy post retired life. Mementoes were also presented to the employees. Senior Vice Chairperson, Mr. Aziz-Ur-

Rahman and section in charges / officials of the section concerned were also present during the function. The employees who retired are Smti. V. Vimlawathi (Office Superintendent, Estt Section), Mr. R. Manickam, Carpenter, JE-III (Wks), Smti. Raj Bala (Sanitary Supervisor), Sanitary Wing & Smti. Chinnakannu, Sanitary Jawabdhara Sanitary Wing. Officials and elected representatives of the Council were also present on the occasion.

MV Nalanda to sail for Vizag on 2nd Nov

PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ The MV Nalanda will sail from Port Blair to Vizag on 2nd November at 1600 hrs. Excess baggage will be loaded from 1400 Hrs to 1600 hrs on 1st November 2022 i.e. one day prior to sailing of the vessel. Embarkation of passengers will commence from 1400 Hrs to 1500 Hrs on 02.11.2022. The embarkation of passengers will be closed one hour before the scheduled time.

IGNOU exam date extended

PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ The last date for filling-up the examination forms for Term-End Examination for December 2022, session of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has been extended up to 10th November, 2022 without late fee. The students may submit the on-line exam form by clicking directly the online link: <https://exam.ignou.ac.in/> For more details, visit IGNOU Website - www.ignou.ac.in or contact IGNOU Regional Centre, Port Blair over Phone: 03192-242888, 03192-230111 or Email: rcportblair@ignou.ac.in.

MV Swaraj Dweep to arrive today

PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ MV Swaraj Dweep is expected to arrive at Port Blair on 1st November 2022 at 0600 hrs from Chennai. She has on board 130 passengers, including one foreign national with 276 MT of cargo. On arrival the vessel will be berthed at Haddo Wharf and Passengers will be disembarked immediately.

CPI(M) mourns demise

PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ The CPI (M), Andaman & Nicobar State Organising Committee has mourned the sudden demise of Mr. CM Vasanthan, Retired Office Superintendent, A & N Administration at his home town Kallambalam, Thiruvananthapuram District Kerala on 31st Oct 2022 morning. He was 79 years old. CPI (M) conveys its deepest condolences to the bereaved family members.

AIDWA for effective measures to contain liquor and drugs consumption

PORT BLAIR, OCT 31/--/ A meeting of women of Diglipur, North Andaman was held on 30th October 2022, at Diglipur in which the Diglipur Area Committee of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) was formed.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. D. Ayyappan, Vice President, CITU A & N State Committee said that the attack on women in the country is increasing in recent years. Despite enacting various laws, the harassment and victimization of women are continuing in all fields. He called upon the women to come forward to fight against the inequalities and injustice meted out to women.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. Ramjeeban Sarkar, Ex-Pradhan, Kalighat Gram Panchayat and leader of All India Kisan Sabha explained in brief the various problems being faced by women in the islands particularly in North Andaman.

Participants in the discussion pointed out various issues on which the AIDWA needs to conduct movements at Diglipur.

In a resolution adopted in the meeting, the women expressed concern over the widespread consumption of liquor and drugs in the Diglipur area and urged upon the Administration to take effective measures to contain this social evil.

The meeting also expressed concern over the unchecked price rise of essential commodities.

Smt K. Geeta who presided over the meeting proposed a vote of thanks.

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Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away
Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Lapse led to collapse

India’s infrastructure has long been marred by safety concerns, sometimes leading to major disasters on its highways and bridges. In one of the worst accidents in the country in the past decade, the century-old cable suspension bridge collapsed into a river in Gujarat on Sunday, sending hundreds plunging into the water. The 19th-century, colonial-era pedestrian bridge over the Machchuriver in the state’s Morbi district gave way because it could not handle the weight of the large crowd, as the Hindu festival season drew hundreds of sightseers to the recently opened tourist attraction. The bridge was overcrowded due to celebrations for Diwali, an annual holiday, that took place last week. The historic bridge is a popular tourist attraction. Security footage of the disaster showed the suspension bridge shaking violently and people trying to hold on to its cables and green-colored metal netting before the walkway snapped and crashed into the river. The 761-foot-long bridge had been closed for repairs for almost six months and had reopened just four days earlier for the Gujarati New Year. Visuals from the disaster site showed the bridge split in the middle and the metalcarriageway hangingdown, itsmetal cables snapped in places. Live video clips showed hundreds of others desperately clinging to the broken structure and trying to make their way to safety, as crowds onshore shouted or swam to try to rescue who had fallen in. It was not immediately clear as to exactly how many people were on the bridge when it collapsed but survivors said it was so densely packed that the crowd was unable to move to safety when the cable strings began to snap. The bridge—built by the British in late 1880 during the Victorian era and touted by the Gujarat government as an “engineering marvel” —might have been opened by the private company that runs it without a “fitness certificate.”

Gujarat will go to polls soon to elect a new Assembly and opposition parties have demanded an investigation into the collapse, saying that the bridge was reopened without having a safety clearance. The claim could not be independently verified, but the state government said it has formed a special team to investigate the disaster. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was in his home state of Gujarat on a three-day visit, said he was “deeply saddened” by the tragedy. “Rarely in my life, would I have experienced such pain,” Modi said during a public event in the state a day after the tragedy.

In the last 10 years, India’s progress has been marred with fatal bridge accidents that couldn’t find any shoulder to put the accountability on. In most of the cases, investigations remained inconclusive, or the arrested went unpunished. Sometimes, these incidents led to the death of construction workers, sometimes, it ended killing hundreds of civilians. The bridge collapse in Gujarat, that claimed over 130 lives, is Asia’s third major disaster involving large crowds in a month. On Saturday, a Halloween crowd surge killed more than 150 mostly young people who attended festivities in Itaewon, a neighborhood in Seoul, South Korea. On October 1, police in Indonesia fired tear gas at a soccer match, causing a stampede that killed 132 people as spectators tried to flee.

Court records expose ‘good conduct’ claim by govt as hollow

REFLEX ACTION

K Raveendran

A BJP legislator justified their release saying there were Brahmins with ‘good sanskar’ (culture). The remission and their hearty welcome had led to a nation-wide outcry, with social and cultural activists condemning it as a gross violation of law and natural justice. More than 130 former civil servants wrote an open letter to the Chief Justice of India against the remission and requested him to rectify the ‘horrendously wrong decision’.

Bilkis Bano herself said the release has shaken her faith in justice and left her concerned about her safety. She was 21, and five months pregnant, when she saw seven members of her family, among them her three-year old daughter, murdered while she was gangraped. Even Maharashtra deputy chief minister and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis found it revolting.

“An accused is an accused and there can be no justification for their felicitation,” Fadnavis said. The judge who sentenced the culprits 14 years ago described the conduct of the saffron elements as something that defamed Hinduism. “If one talks of Hindutva and does this type of act of felicitating the criminals who are guilty of such a heinous crime, then Hindutva is defamed. And if it is not so, if that’s not the intention of the parties, then the system which punished them, you are denying that they have not done this. You are revolting against the very judicial system,” Justice UD Salvi said. NCP chief Sharad Pawar



Devotees throng Dahighat to offer prayers & take a holy dip on the occasion of Chhatt Puja on Sunday --Arijit Ganguly

Panicky at Supreme Court’s strong remarks

FOCUS

Arun Srivastava

The leaders of the saffron brigade, RSS and BJP, are quite annoyed with the Supreme Court’s concern over hate speech and putting the simple question; “what have we reduced religion to? There cannot be fraternity unless members of community drawn from different religions or castes of the country are able to live in harmony”.

They have been politically right in expressing their anguish and disgust at the Supreme Court’s observation as in a single stroke, the court has blunted their most effective weapon to divide the society and put a check on unleashing their design to pit the Hindus against Muslims. Hate speech has been the most effective instrument to accomplish the mission of turning India into a Hindu Rashtra, the core policy of the RSS. True enough it is fear of Hindu resistance to the move to change the basic character of India that has made the RSS and BJP jittery and forced them to intensify their design of hate speech. The nurse the notion this was the most effective machination to win over the Hindus.

The RSS has been working on this line political since the time of creation of the RSS, nearly 100 years ago. All their past machinations failed to take a concrete shape as the common Hindu was not willing to subscribe their political line and do away with the core principles of Hinduism. It was only after BJP coming to power under the leadership of Narendra Modi that the move got fast-tracked. With the apex court directing the state governments and their police to take action against such persons,

the task would turn difficult and demanding.

The apex court has directed the police commissioner of Delhi and the DGPs of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh to file a report each on “what action has been taken” on “the subject matter of this writ petition”. “Ensure that immediately as and when any speech or any action takes place (that spreads hate about a community), suomotu action will be taken to register cases even if no complaint is forthcoming and proceed against the offenders in accordance with law.” The court also made it clear that the officials not carrying out its order would be held liable for contempt of court.

The written order of the court; “there cannot be fraternity unless members of community drawn from different religions or castes of the country are able to live in harmony,” is in sharp contrast to the political line of the RSS and BJP. They are not for united fraternity as it would impede their design. It is not certain whether the state and its police would follow the directives of the court which says; “issue directives to their subordinates so that appropriate action in law will be taken at the earliest. Such action will be taken

irrespective of the religion that the maker of the speech or the person who commit(s) such act belongs to, so that the secular character of Bharat as is envisaged by the Preamble, is preserved and protected”.

Primary maxim of the hate speech is to divide the society and consolidate the Hindus under the banner of the RSS. Once the Hindus rally behind RSS, the task to achieve the mission to make India a Hindu Rashtra would solemnise. To achieve this, the saffron brigade is not hesitant of turning thousands of innocent Hindu youths into mercenaries. After all they would be the tools in the hands of the leaders to implement the hate design at the ground level. It is really disgraceful that the RSS to achieve its mission is out to completely destroy the social and cultural ethics of India.

The petitioner Abdullah Shaheen has in fact alleged police inaction in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand on hate speeches delivered against Muslims last December and January, and a speech by the BJP parliamentarian from Delhi, Parvesh Verma, on October 9 this year.

Hate speech by high-ranking politicians has risen steeply, around 1130% since Modi won office in 2014. The most spiteful Hindu supremacists are the BJP’s top officials. A

senior UP minister only some time back had defended a call given by Hindu religious leaders to commit a genocide of two million Muslims. Of the 45 leaders responsible for hate speech since the Modi government came to power, only 5% of them were reprimanded or cautioned, or issued a public apology. 95% of the time, the ‘VIP hater’ faced no consequence. Cases were registered only against 11 of the 45 politicians.

Only a fortnight back the apex court had rapped the Modi government for not enacting a law against hate speech. It even sought to know from Modi government as to why it was a “mute spectator” to vitriolic speech on TV news channels. The court was quite harsh with the TV anchors. “The role of anchor (in TV debates) is very important. Mainstream TV channels still hold sway. The role of anchor is critical and it’s their duty to see that hate speech doesn’t occur..Many a time those who want to speak are muted. These speeches on mainstream media or social media that is unregulated,” the bench of Justices K M Joseph and Hrishikesh Roy said.

A recent report released by the Delhi-based socio-cultural organization, Act Now for Harmony and Democracy (ANHAD), in the form of a book entitled Hate Grips the Nation, details cases of rising hate speech and hate crime in India. The reports show, with empirical data, the upward spiralling of hate crimes against the minorities, especially Muslims (73.3%) and Christian (26.7%) communities in India. (IPA)

called the decision shocking and said it exposed prime minister Narendra Modi’s double-speak on the safety and security of women in the country. “On the one hand, the PM talks about respect for women, but in the state from which he comes, where our sister Bilkis Bano and her children suffered atrocities, where her family members were murdered, the BJP reduced the punishment of those who did that,” Pawar tweeted. “The BJP has shown to the people of Gujarat and the rest of India how it defines honour for women,” he added. The women’s wing of the Trinamool Congress held a 48-hour dharna against the release of convicts. Targeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Trinamool leaders said that the remission of sentences of rape convicts was unacceptable.

The Supreme Court has granted time to the petitioners to file their response to the Gujarat government’s affidavit and fixed November 29 to further hear the pleas challenging the remission. The apex court’s favourable response is a setback to the government, which had argued that the plea was neither maintainable in law nor tenable on facts, and that the petitioners had no locus standi to challenge the remission orders.

The court also criticised the Gujarat government response saying it was very bulky wherein a series of judgments had been quoted but factual statements were missing. “I have not come across a counter affidavit where a series of judgments are quoted. Factual statement should have been made. A very bulky counter. Where is the factual statement...?” the bench headed by Justice Ajay Rastogi observed while ordering that its copies be made available to all the parties. The court also questioned the propriety of the government reply appearing in the media before it was submitted to the court. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword						
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ACROSS		DOWN	
1	Nuisance	1	Nosegay
3	Restores to health	2	Innermost being
8	Send out	4	Snake-like fish
9	Avoid	5	Entertain
11	Showy feather	6	Capital of Peru
12	After due time	7	Paces
14	Plant juice	10	Part of a church
15	Stanza	11	Danger
18	Worth	13	Concise
19	Vegetable	16	Stupefy
21	Mean dwelling area	17	Blemishes
24	Sheeplike	18	American state
26	Back of the neck	20	Wicked
27	Fork spike	22	Labyrinth
28	Gloss	23	Repose
29	Outlet	25	Born as

SUDOKU:3682								
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Yesterday’s Solution 3681								
1	3	2	7	5	6	9	4	8
6	8	7	9	4	1	3	5	2
4	5	9	8	2	3	7	1	6
5	4	3	1	7	2	6	8	9
7	6	8	4	3	9	1	2	5
9	2	1	5	6	8	4	3	7
8	9	6	3	1	5	2	7	4
2	1	4	6	8	7	5	9	3
3	7	5	2	9	4	8	6	1

Yesterday’s Cross Word Solution 1690								
A	D	A	G	E		B	E	L
P	I	G				R	A	M
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	R		P	A	L		S	P
A	S	H		D	I	M		E
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R	O	S	E		E	X	I	L
I		P	E	N			F	E
D	E	A	L		S	H	E	D

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Morbi bridge collapse toll rises to 134, 9 arrested



Day after tragedy, people gather as rescuers search for survivors at the site where the suspension bridge collapsed in Gujarat's Morbi



Rescuers search for survivors after a suspension bridge collapsed in Morbi town in the western state of Gujarat

MORBI, OCT 31 /--/ Police on Monday arrested nine persons, including four from the Oreva group that was managing the Morbi suspension bridge, and filed a case against firms tasked with maintenance and operation of the British era structure which collapsed, killing 134 people.

Video footage emerged of the moments before Sunday' evening's deadly collapse, showing the bridge snapping in a few seconds, taking down scores of visitors seen walking on the swaying British-era structure which reopened five days ago after extensive repair but sans a fitness certificate. "Nine people have been arrested in the Morbi bridge collapse case.

They include two managers and two ticket booking clerks of Oreva group that was managing the bridge," Rajkot Range IG Ashok Yadav said, informing media of the criminal investigation into the tragedy that has shocked the country. The death toll in the bridge collapse has mounted to 134, he said.

A day after the bridge crammed with visitors came crashing down, sending people tumbling into the river below, rescue operation continued as authorities looked for survivors. Gujarat chief minister Bhupendra Patel and minister of state for home Harsh Sanghavi remained in Morbi during the night to oversee the rescue operation being conducted by

multiple agencies. The more than a century-old bridge on the Machchhu river in Morbi, located around 300 km from the state capital Gandhinagar, collapsed around 6.30 pm on Sunday. The state information department said five teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), six platoons of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), a team of the Air Force, two columns of the Army, and two teams of the Indian Navy apart from local rescue teams were involved in the operation. Sanghavi told reporters the state government has formed a committee to conduct a probe into the bridge collapse. Police have registered an FIR (first information report) on charges of culpable

homicide not amounting to murder and attempt to commit culpable homicide against agencies given the task of maintenance and operation of the bridge. In the FIR lodged at the Morbi 'B' division police station on Sunday night, police have shown "agencies responsible for maintenance and management of the hanging bridge" as the main accused.

The FIR, lodged by 'B' division police inspector Prakash Dekivadia, stated that the bridge over the Machchhu river was not in use for nearly eight months as the local administration had roped in a "private agency" for its maintenance. After completion of the maintenance, the agency opened the bridge for

the public on October 26, the FIR said. As per the FIR, the incident took place because of the "callous approach" of the agency people. The FIR further stated that persons concerned or agencies did not pay attention to the quality of maintenance as well as repair work of the bridge.

The bridge was opened for tourists by the agency despite knowing that their "callous approach" in the maintenance and management of the bridge may lead to human deaths, the FIR stated. "We have lodged an FIR and are trying to establish contact with the Oreva company's staff who were on duty at the bridge yesterday," SP Rahul Tripathi said. (PTI)

PM to visit Morbi today; Cong seeks judicial probe, says responsibility must be fixed

NEW DELHI, OCT 31 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday will visit Gujarat's Morbi where at least 134 people were killed when a suspension bridge collapsed into the Machchhu river. The Gujarat Chief Minister's Office (CMO) announced that Modi would visit Morbi on Tuesday afternoon. Rescue operations were in full swing at Morbi, around 300 km from Gujarat capital Gandhinagar, with teams of the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, Indian Air Force, Army and Navy joining local personnel in the effort. Modi, who is on a visit to Gujarat, paid tributes to those who died in Sunday's bridge collapse. "I am in Kevadia, but my heart goes out to those who died in the Morbi bridge collapse tragedy," the Prime Minister said as he got emotional. The Congress on Monday demanded a judicial inquiry into the



Morbi suspension bridge collapse in Gujarat, alleging that prima facie it seems to be a case of "criminal negligence" and "gross misgovernance". The Opposition party also sought financial and medical assistance from the government to all those affected. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge paid homage to those killed in the tragedy, and said that may God give the strength to the families who have lost their loved ones to bear the loss. Speaking with reporters here, he said the reasons for the collapse of the bridge that reopened five days ago, ought to be known. "Why were so many people allowed. There should be an inquiry headed by a retired Supreme Court or High Court judge," Kharge said. The bereaved families and those affected should be provided all assistance and given compensation by the government, he said. Those injured should be provided

all assistance in medical treatment by the government, the Congress president said. "Our (Congress) leaders have reached there. Ashok Gehlot (Rajasthan chief minister) is also reaching. We will try to help out as much as possible. We don't want to indulge in any politics over it or blame anyone at this point of time. Blame can be established only when the report of the probe is out," he said. In a statement, the party said Kharge was deeply saddened to learn that most of the dead were children, women and elderly people. After learning about the tragedy, he immediately took stock of the situation last night, spoke to senior leaders of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress and urged them to ensure that party members and frontal organisations help in the rescue and relief work in every possible way, it said. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, OCT 31 /--/ External affairs minister S Jaishankar will represent India at a virtual meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on Tuesday. The CHG meeting, which is held annually, focuses on the trade and economic agenda of the bloc and approves its annual budget. "The 21st meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government will be held on November 1 in the virtual format. External affairs minister S Jaishankar will represent India in the

meeting," the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said. It said the meeting will be attended by SCO member states, observer states, the SCO secretary general and the executive director of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS). Turkmenistan and other invited guests are expected to join the deliberations. "India remains actively engaged in various SCO activities/ dialogue mechanisms in the region as well as other multilateral cooperation within the SCO framework," the MEA said in a statement. The SCO was founded

at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Over the years, it has emerged as one of the largest trans-regional international organisations. India and Pakistan became its permanent members in 2017. The annual SCO summit took place in the Uzbek city of Samarkand last month. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and other leaders of the grouping attended it. (PTI)

Need to stand firm against attempts to break country's unity: PM

KEVADIA, OCT 31 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that enemies were trying to break India's unity and the country should stand firm against such attempts.

After paying tributes to India's first home minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary at the Statue of Unity at Kevadia in Gujarat, Modi remembered those who died in Sunday's Morbi bridge collapse incident. "I am in Kevadia, but my heart goes out to those who died in the Morbi Bridge collapse tragedy," the Prime Minister said as he got emotional. Troupes from across country had come to Kevadia to perform traditional dances, but the programme was cancelled due to the present circumstances, he said. At least 134 people were killed after the suspension bridge on the Machchhu river in Gujarat's Morbi city collapsed on Sunday evening.

The Prime Minister assured the government was standing shoulder to shoulder with the families of the victims. The state government has been engaged in the rescue work and the central government is providing every possible assistance, Modi said. Sardar Patel's birth anniversary is observed as the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas or National Unity Day. Modi said for India, its unity has never been a compulsion, but has been its uniqueness. "This unity of our country has been an eyecore for our enemies. Not just today, but from thousands of years and

even during the period of our slavery, all foreign attackers did whatever they wanted to do to break this unity," he said.

"The poison which was spread in that long period, the country is facing problems due to it today also. We saw the country's partition and enemies taking advantage of it," Modi said. Those forces are still prevalent, they want to make the people of the country fight in the name of caste, region and language, he said, adding that history is also presented in such a way that people cannot stand with each other. "We should note that these forces are not just our known enemies from outside, but many a times those forces enter into our system in the form of slave mentality, those forces present themselves sometimes to us as a selfish motive, appeasement, nepotism, greed and corruption," he said. "We have to answer them as the son of this country, we have to remain one," Modi said.

It is difficult to imagine the situation if India's integration was not led by leaders like Sardar Patel. What would have happened if more than 550 princely states were not amalgamated, the Prime Minister said. "If our princely states would have not shown a deep sense of sacrifice and faith in Maa Bharati and decided not to join us, what would have happened? This impossible task was completed by Sardar Patel," he added. Modi said Sardar Patel's Jayanti and the Ekta Diwas are not merely dates on the calendar for us, they are a grand celebrations of India's cultural strength. (PTI)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi administering pledge at the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas celebrations, in Kevadia, Gujarat on Monday

CEC wants social media platforms to play proactive role in flagging fake news

NEW DELHI, OCT 31 /--/ A proactive approach by social media platforms to counter fake news will facilitate credible electoral outcomes that will help preserve "freedoms", Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said on Monday.

Addressing an international conference of election management bodies here, Kumar said social media platforms do proclaim that they have content display policies, but they also have the "algorithm power" in play, according to a statement issued by the Election Commission (EC). "More early or deeper red flagging of fake news based on known modus operandi and genres is not an unfair expectation from the election management bodies," he underscored. Kumar said "such a proactive approach to counter fake news will facilitate credible electoral outcomes that will help preserve the 'freedoms' which the social media platforms require to thrive".

The CEC said free, fair, inclusive, accessible and inducement-free elections being a cornerstone of democratic polity are also a pre-condition to the peace and developmental dividends. "These threshold concepts embody the understanding that sovereignty belongs to and flows from the people of a country," the statement said quoting him. Addressing the conference, US Charge d'Affaires Elizabeth Jones said the India-US relationship is most consequential. According to the statement, she said the partnership is growing stronger to address global challenges and cooperate to bring peace, security and prosperity across the world. She emphasised that both India and the US have significantly contributed in building up democratic institutions. The EC has made critical achievements in fostering democratic principles while delving on challenges, Jones said.

"India's Election Commission is a testament of a well-run election management body overseeing electoral processes. The United States is gratified by your leadership and sharing your expertise with other democracies. "Administration of Indian elections has set standards for democracies worldwide," she said in her address. (PTI)

UK PM Sunak criticised for planning to skip UN climate summit

LONDON, OCT 31/--/Rishi Sunak's decision to skip the upcoming Climate Summit in Egypt and the government preventing King Charles III from attending it has been criticised by many across the world who have accused the new UK Prime Minister of washing his hands of Britain's commitment to tackle the climate crisis. COP27 will take place in Sharm el-Sheikh, in Egypt, from November 6 to November 18 -- finishing the day



after Chancellor Jeremy Hunt is due to set out the UK's tax and spending plans.

Downing Street in a statement last week has said that Prime Minister Sunak is no longer expected to attend the COP27 climate summit in Egypt due to "other pressing commitments, including preparations for the autumn statement". The UK will still be represented by other senior ministers, as well as by COP26 President Alok Sharma, at the climate summit, it said, adding that "the government is absolutely committed to supporting COP27 and leading international action to tackle climate change and protect nature". Earlier in October, UK media had reported that noted environmentalist King Charles III would miss COP27 after then-Prime Minister Liz Truss advised him to drop his plans to attend. The Egyptian government, the host of the COP27 Summit, has voiced "disappointment" at Sunak's decision. Sunak's decision to snub the COP27 talks, and to keep King Charles from attending, has angered and upset countries around the world, risking the UK's standing on the world stage and raising concerns over his government's commitment to tackling the climate crisis, the Guardian newspaper reported on Sunday.

"I can understand why the king was asked not to attend keeping him out of the fray. However, as the principal UK policymaker and the Cop26 president, the PM should have led the summit. It seems as if they are washing their hands of leadership," the report quoted Carlos Fuller, Belize's ambassador to the UN, as saying. Questioning Sunak's reason for not attending the summit, Mohamed Nasheed, speaker of the Maldives parliament and former president, said: "[It's] very worrying that the UK thought there was anything more serious than climate change. You can count the pennies but might lose the pounds." Instead of attending COP27, Sunak will speak at a reception for business and environmental leaders to be hosted by the king at Buckingham Palace on Friday, two days before the climate talks begin. The COP26 talks in Glasgow last November, headed by then UK prime minister Boris Johnson and chaired by cabinet minister Sharma ended with a global consensus on limiting temperature rises to 1.5C for the first time, a major diplomatic achievement that was widely lauded. King Charles had attended the climate change conference as Prince of Wales.

The Guardian report said Sunak's failure to attend the talks has raised concerns over the UK's stance on the climate crisis, with the government handing out new oil and gas licences and tax breaks for increasing fossil fuel production. Quoting an unnamed Commonwealth diplomat, the report said, "One hopes [Sunak's stance] is not a backsliding of the positions the UK has taken in recent years on both areas." It is unusual for the head of state of an important COP not to attend the handover. The UK still holds the presidency of the UN negotiations, until the reins are handed over to the Egyptian government at the COP27 summit in Sharm El-Sheikh.

This puts the British government in a key position in the long-running climate talks, and the prime minister would normally be expected to hold closed-door bilateral meetings with counterparts around the world, focusing on the climate but including other subjects, such as the Ukraine war and the global economic crisis, the report said. The annual UN climate summits are designed to help governments agree steps to limit global temperature rises. The UK hosted last year's summit, COP26 in Glasgow. The summit in Egypt is expected to focus on three main areas - reducing emissions, helping countries prepare for and deal with climate change, and securing technical support for developing countries for these activities, according to a BBC report. (PTI)

Lula defeats Bolsonaro to again become Brazil's president

SAO PAULO, OCT 31/--/Luiz In cio Lula da Silva has done it again: Twenty years after first winning the Brazilian presidency, the leftist defeated incumbent Jair Bolsonaro Sunday in an extremely tight election that marks an about-face for the country after four years of far-right politics.

With more than 99 per cent of the votes tallied in the runoff vote, da Silva had 50.9 per cent and Bolsonaro 49.1 per cent, and the election authority said da Silva's victory was a mathematical certainty.

It is a stunning reversal for da Silva, 77, whose 2018 imprisonment over a corruption scandal sidelined him from the 2018 election that brought Bolsonaro, a defender of conservative social values, to power.

"Today the only winner is the Brazilian people," da Silva said in a speech at a hotel in downtown Sao Paulo. "This isn't a victory of mine or the Workers' Party, nor the parties that supported me in campaign. It's the victory of a democratic movement that formed above political parties, personal interests and ideologies so that democracy came out victorious."

Da Silva is promising to govern beyond his leftist Workers's Party. He wants to bring in centrists and even some leaning to the right who voted for him for the first time, and to

restore the country's more prosperous past. Yet he faces headwinds in a politically polarised society where economic growth is slowing and inflation is soaring.

His victory marks the first time since Brazil's 1985 return to democracy that the sitting president has failed to win reelection. The highly polarised election in Latin America's biggest economy extended a wave of recent leftist victories in the region, including Chile, Colombia and Argentina.

As Lula spoke to his supporters promising to "govern a country in a very difficult situation" Bolsonaro had yet to concede the election.

It was the country's closest election in over three decades. Just over 2 million votes separated the two candidates with 99.5 per cent of the vote counted. The previous closest race, in 2014, was decided by a margin of 3.46 million votes.

Da Silva's inauguration is scheduled to take place on January 1. He last served as president from 2003-2010.

Thomas Traumann, an independent political analyst, compared the results to Biden's 2020 victory, saying da Silva is

inheriting an extremely divided nation.

"The huge challenge that Lula has will be to pacify the country," he said. "People are not only



Lula da Silva

polarised on political matters, but also have different values, identity and opinions. What's more, they don't care what the other side's values, identities and opinions are."

Congratulations for Lula and Brazil began to pour in from around the world Sunday evening, including from US President Joe Biden, who highlighted the country's "free, fair, and credible elections." The European Union also congratulated da Silva in a statement, commending the electoral authority for its effectiveness and transparency throughout the campaign.

Bolsonaro had been leading throughout the first half of the count and, as soon as da Silva

overtook him, cars in the streets of downtown Sao Paulo began honking their horns. People in the streets of Rio de Janeiro's Ipanema neighbourhood could be heard shouting, "It turned!"

Da Silva's headquarters in downtown Sao Paulo hotel only erupted once the final result was announced, underscoring the tension that was a hallmark of this race.

"Four years waiting for this," said Gabriela Souto, one of the few supporters allowed in due to heavy security.

Outside Bolsonaro's home in Rio de Janeiro, ground-zero for his support base, a woman atop a truck delivered a prayer over a speaker, then sang excitedly, trying to generate some energy. But supporters decked out in the green and yellow of the flag barely responded. Many perked up when the national anthem played, singing along loudly with hands over their hearts.

Most opinion polls before the election gave a lead to da Silva, universally known as Lula, though political analysts agreed the race grew increasingly tight in recent weeks.

For months, it appeared that da Silva was headed for easy victory as he kindled nostalgia for

his presidency, when Brazil's economy was booming and welfare helped tens of millions join the middle class.

But while da Silva topped the October 2 first-round elections with 48 per cent of the vote, Bolsonaro was a strong second at 43 per cent, showing opinion polls significantly underestimated his popularity. Many Brazilians support Bolsonaro's defence of conservative social values and he shored up support in an election year with vast government spending.

Bolsonaro's administration has been marked by incendiary speech, his testing of democratic institutions, his widely criticised handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the worst deforestation in the Amazon rainforest in 15 years. But he built a devoted base by defending conservative values and presenting himself as protection from leftist policies that he says infringe on personal liberties and produce economic turmoil.

Da Silva is credited with building an extensive social welfare programme during his 2003-2010 tenure that helped lift tens of millions into the middle class as well as presiding over an economic boom. The man universally known as Lula left office with an approval rating above 80 per cent; then U.S. President Barack Obama called him "the most popular politician on Earth." (AP)

Saudi, UAE back OPEC cuts as US envoy warns of “uncertainty”

ABU DHABI, OCT 31/--/Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates defended on Monday a decision by OPEC and its allies to cut oil production, even as an American envoy warned of "economic uncertainty" ahead for the world.

While cordial, the comments at the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference showed the stark divide between the United States and Gulf Arab countries it supports militarily in the wider Middle East. Already, American politicians have threatened arms deals with the kingdom and described it as siding with Russian President Vladimir Putin amid his war on Ukraine.

Saudi Arabia's energy minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, hinted at that in brief remarks to the event.

"We don't owe it to anybody but us," the prince said to applause, noting that upcoming UN climate change summits will be held in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. "It was done for us, by us, for our future, and we need to commit ourselves to that."

Emirati Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazrouei echoed that defence.

While saying that OPEC and its allies are "only a phone call away if the requirements are there" to raise production, he offered no suggestion such a boost would be on its way anytime soon.

"I can assure you that we in the United Arab Emirates, as well as our fellow colleagues in OPEC+ are keen on supplying the world with the requirement it needs," al-Mazrouei said. "But at the same time, we're not the only producers in the world."

OPEC and a loose confederation of other countries led by Russia agreed in early October to cut its production by 2 million barrels of oil a day, beginning in November.

OPEC, led by Saudi Arabia, has insisted its decision came from concerns about the global economy.

Analysts in the US and Europe warn a recession looms in the West from inflation and subsequent interest rate hikes, as well as food and oil supplies being affected by Russia's war on Ukraine.

"The global economy is on the knife's edge," insisted Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, the managing director of the state-run Abu Dhabi National Oil Co.

American politicians, meanwhile, have reacted angrily to a decision likely to keep gasoline prices elevated. An average gallon of regular gasoline in the US now costs USD 3.76 down from a record USD 5 a gallon in June but still high enough to bite into consumers' wallets. Benchmark Brent crude oil sat at USD 95 a barrel on Monday.

"I think at the end of the day, we are facing an economic uncertainty globally," said Amos Hochstein, the US envoy for energy affairs. "Energy prices have to be priced in a way that allow for economic growth. And if they are not ... they will rise too high and accelerate an economic downturn, which ultimately is the one thing that will be terrible for energy demand itself."

Hochstein declined to speak to The Associated Press after appearing on stage at the Abu Dhabi event.

President Joe Biden, who travelled to Saudi Arabia in July and fist-bumped Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman before a meeting, recently warned the kingdom that "there's going to be some consequences for what they've done."

Saudi Arabia lashed back, publicly claiming the Biden administration sought a one-month delay in the OPEC cuts that could helped reduce the risk of a spike in gas prices ahead of the US midterm elections November 8.

The back-and-forth between Riyadh and Washington shows how tense relations remain between the two countries since the 2018 gruesome killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi security forces.

American intelligence agencies believe the slaying came at Prince Mohammed's order.

The Soufan Center, a New York-based think tank, said on Monday that it appeared "trust and mutual respect between the United States and Saudi Arabia appear to have reached a nadir" amid the dispute.

"The US-Saudi relationship could fundamentally shift to an almost purely transactional one, characterised by strategic drift," as Riyadh continues to act against its own self-interest, a move borne of spite, not strategy," the center said. "If Saudi Arabia again votes to cut production, it will lead to a further rift with the United States and will signal Riyadh's growing drift closer to Moscow," it added. (AP)

Report: China targets 2 diplomatic allies with Pacific aid

CANBERRA, OCT 31/--/Beijing was targeting its Pacific aid to new diplomatic allies Solomon Islands and Kiribati while Chinese financial support across the region continued to decline, the Lowy Institute reported on Monday in its latest annual analysis of regional assistance.

China's aid to the Pacific has fallen from a peak of USD 287 million in 2016 to USD 187 million in 2020 the lowest level since 2008, when the Sydney-based international policy think tank began quantifying support for developing island nations in the Pacific.

At the same time, pandemic response measures drove Pacific aid to a record USD 4.25 billion in 2020, a 47 per cent increase on the previous year, Lowy's Pacific Aid Map report showed.

Only 5 per cent of Chinese aid to the Pacific was allocated to pandemic-related support, the report found.

The institute does not yet have complete data for 2021, but preliminary results suggest the decline in Chinese aid has continued.

Pacific Aid Map Project Director Alexandre Dayant said China was investing more into the Solomon Islands and Kiribati Pacific countries that switched their diplomatic allegiances from Taiwan to Beijing in 2019 than Taiwan had provided. "Chinese

aid remains a key diplomatic tool for Beijing in the Pacific," Dayant said.

"New development financing has become closely targeted to specific countries," he added, naming Kiribati and the Solomons.

While Taiwan had provided USD 8 million to USD9 million a year to the Solomons' so-called Constituency Development Funds, Beijing was now contributing USD11 million to USD 12 million, Dayant said.

The funds are allocated directly to lawmakers to spend and are criticized as a source of corruption.

Beijing has also increased the scale of infrastructure planned for the Solomons to host the regional Pacific Games next year, Dayant said, describing China's investment in the Solomon Islands as small but increasing rapidly.

China was also planning to finance an airliner for Kiribati to boost its tourism industry in a deal that would not have met Taiwan's aid program rules, Dayant said.

Australia's new government has promised greater engagement with its Pacific neighbours.

It blames neglect by its predecessor for China striking a bilateral security deal with the Solomons early this year that raised fears of a Chinese naval

base being established in the South Pacific.

Australia, the biggest aid donor to the Pacific, announced in the government's annual budget last week an additional 900 million Australian dollars (USD 570 million) in aid for the Pacific region.

Lowy researchers pointed to several reasons for China's dwindling aid in the region, including a slowing domestic economy.

Pacific leaders were becoming wary of "white elephant" Chinese infrastructure projects and of falling into potential debt traps, Dayant said.

With the United States and its allies attempting to counter China's growing influence in the Pacific, Pacific leaders now had more potential development partners to choose from.

Lowy's Pacific Islands Program Director Meg Keen noted that Papua New Guinea had not taken on a new Chinese loan in three years.

Samoa had recently decided against borrowing from China to upgrade its port. "We're seeing different assessments of risk and return, different modes of operation, but really importantly, the Pacific island countries making choices about what will serve their development interests best, and they have more choices because there's competition," Keen said. (AP)

Over 100 dead, dozens missing in storm-ravaged Philippines

MANILA, OCT 31/--/More than 100 people have died in one of the most destructive storms to lash the Philippines this year with dozens more feared missing after villagers fled in the wrong direction and got buried in a boulder-laden mudslide. Almost two million others were swamped by floods in several provinces, officials said Monday. At least 53 of 105 people who died mostly in flash floods and landslides were from Maguindanao province in a Muslim autonomous region, which was swamped by unusually heavy rains set off by Tropical Storm Nalgae. The storm blew out into the South China Sea on Sunday, leaving a trail of destruction in a large swath of the archipelago.

A large contingent of rescuers with bulldozers, backhoes and sniffer dogs resumed retrieval work in southern Kusiong village in hard-hit Maguindanao, where as many as 80 to 100 people, including entire families, are feared to have been buried by a boulder-laden mudslide or swept away by flash floods that started overnight Thursday, said Naguib Sinarimbo, the interior minister for the Bangsamoro autonomous region run by former separatist

guerrillas under a peace pact. The government's main disaster-response agency said there were at least 98 storm deaths, and seven other fatalities were later reported by three provincial governors. At least 69 people were injured and 63 others remain missing. About 1.9 million people were lashed by the storm, including more than 975,000 villagers who fled to evacuation centers or homes of relatives. At least 4,100 houses and 16,260 hectares (40,180 acres) of rice and other crops were damaged by floodwaters at a time when the country was bracing for a looming food crisis because of global supply disruptions, officials said.

Sinarimbo said the official tally of missing people did not include most of those feared missing in the huge mudslide that hit Kusiong because entire families may have been buried and no member was left to provide names and details to authorities.

The catastrophe in Kusiong, populated mostly by the Teduray ethnic minority group, was particularly tragic because its more than 2,000 villagers have carried out disaster-preparedness drills every year for decades to

brace for a tsunami because of a deadly history. But they were not as prepared for the dangers that could come from Mount Minandar, where their village lies at the foothills, Sinarimbo said.

"When the people heard the warning bells, they ran up and gathered in a church on a high ground," Sinarimbo told The Associated Press on Saturday, citing accounts by Kusiong villagers.

"The problem was, it was not a tsunami that inundated them but a big volume of water and mud that came down from the mountain," he said.

In August 1976, an 8.1-magnitude earthquake and a tsunami in the Moro Gulf that struck around midnight left thousands of people dead and devastated coastal provinces in one of the deadliest natural disasters in Philippine history.

Lying between the Moro Gulf and 446-meter (1,464-foot) Mount Minandar, Kusiong was among the hardest hit by the 1976 catastrophe. The village never forgot the tragedy. Elderly villagers who survived the tsunami and powerful earthquake passed on the nightmarish story

to their children, warning them to be prepared.

"Every year, they hold drills to brace for a tsunami. Somebody was assigned to bang the alarm bells and they designated high grounds where people should run to," Sinarimbo said. "Villagers were even taught the sound of an approaching big wave based on the recollection of the tsunami survivors."

"But there wasn't as much focus on the geo-hazards on the mountainside," he said.

There were more than 100 rescuers from the army, police and volunteers from other provinces Saturday in Kusiong, but they were unable to dig at a spot where survivors said the church lay underneath because the muddy mound was still dangerously soft, officials said.

A coast guard video provided to media on Monday showed some of its men helping search for buried bodies in Kusiong by poking long wooden sticks into the muddy, light-brown sludge.

The stormy weather in a large swath of the country hindered transportation as millions of Filipinos planned to travel over a long weekend for visits to relatives' tombs and for family



Starc and Maxwell take down Ireland despite Tucker's resistance

Finch still scratchy but took Australia over par before Australia tumbled Ireland

BRISBANE, OCT 31 /--/ Skipper Aaron Finch returned to form with an aggressive half-century as defending champions Australia revived their T20 World Cup campaign with a 42-run win over Ireland, here on Monday.

Finch, who struggled with a hamstring issue, revived Australia's innings with a 44-ball 63 as the hosts overcame a slow start to post a competitive 179 for five after being sent into bat. Chasing the imposing total, Ireland, who knocked out two-time champions West Indies and shocked England in the Super 12 stage, were dismissed for 137 in 18.1 overs. By virtue of this win, Australia, with five points from four games, jumped to second spot in Group 1 ahead of England to be in the reckoning for a semifinal spot. New Zealand are leading the group. Australia will take on Afghanistan in their last group game on Friday in Adelaide. Australia rode on their pace prowess to dismiss half of the Irish side inside four overs with the scoreboard reading 25. Wicketkeeper-batter Lorcan Tucker stood tall for Ireland with the bat as he hit a counter-attacking unbeaten 71 off 48 balls to keep his side's hopes alive.

But with little support from the other end, it was too much of an asking from Tucker and it was all over for Ireland after Joshua Little was run out in the penultimate over. Pace spearhead Pat Cummins (2/28) started it all, cleaning up Ireland's in-form opener Andy Balbirnie (6) before Glenn Maxwell (2/14) dismissed Paul Stirling (11) and Harry Tector (6) within a span



Aaron Finch scored his first fifty in T20 World Cups since 2014

Kids have a day out at the Gabba

of five balls. Mitchell Starc (2/43) then produced a sensational opening over, cleaning up Harry Tector (6) and Curtis Campher (0) in a span of five balls to reduce Ireland to 25 for five. But Tucker was in no mood to give up without a fight and stitched a 43-run stand off 33 balls with Gareth Delany to keep them in the hunt. Tucker also smashed Mitchell Starc for 12 runs, including two back-to-back boundaries in the 12th over. Luck also favoured Tucker as Cummins dropped him on 35 in the same eventful over of Starc. Earlier struggling for runs, Finch brilliantly switched gears to reach his 50 off 38 balls -- his first T20 International half-century in eight innings -- and together with Marcus Stoinis (35) shared an entertaining 70-run partnership. But the skipper, however, could not finish well and became Irish pacer McCarthy's third victim in the 17th over as the defending champions struggled to get going at the death, falling some 15-20 runs short. Left-arm spinner George Dockrell (4-0-24-0) conceded just three runs in the 18th over, while left-arm pacer Josh Little (4-0-21-2) also finished well, dismissing Stoinis and giving away just four runs in the penultimate over. McCarthy was the pick of the Irish bowlers, returning with 3/29, including the wickets of David Warner (3) and Mitchell Marsh (28) who looked ominous with a 102-metre six but only to fall for 22-ball 28. But the Aussies managed to get going in the final over with Tim David hitting two boundaries en route to 10-ball 15 to push the total. (PTI)

Bhuvi bhai's economical bowling has helped me attack:
Arshdeep

PERTH, OCT 31 /--/ Arshdeep Singh credits his success in the ongoing T20 World Cup to senior pace bowling partner Bhuvneshwar Kumar who, he feels, has been creating relentless pressure in Powerplay overs which has made it easier for him to get wickets. Arshdeep had struck vital blows in both his opening overs against Pakistan and South Africa, removing top batters like Babar Azam and Quinton de Kock respectively.

While Arshdeep has taken seven wickets in three games at an economy rate of 7.83, Bhuvneshwar, despite three wickets in as many games, has been phenomenal with an economy rate of 4.87 in the 10.4 overs that he has bowled. "We study the batters' weaknesses and myself and Bhuvi bhai try to get some swing first up and beat the batter at start. I'm able to attack the batter because Bhuvi bhai is bowling so economically that the batter is already under pressure," Arshdeep told reporters after India's five wicket defeat to South Africa on Sunday.

B h u v n e s h w a r ' s effectiveness might not reflect in the wickets' column but he has got appreciable movement in all the three games to keep batters under check.

"Credit for my success goes to him. The batters aren't taking chances against him (Bhuvneshwar) and are doing that with me. So we have forged a good partnership. A bowling partnership is as important as batting partnership," Arshdeep added. His own confidence has been boosted by the breakthroughs he has got in initial overs. "You feel confident when you get wickets first up and team also feels confident of your abilities." Arshdeep found the Perth track the paciest in his short but eventful international career. "It was great track to bowl on. It was a dream wicket for any fast bowler and perhaps the spiciest of the tracks I have bowled so far in my career," he said. (PTI)

New Zealand wary of England firepower as they bid to seal T20 World Cup Semis Place

BRISBANE, OCT 31 /--/ New Zealand can become the first team into the T20 World Cup semi-finals this week but first will need to contain England's powerful

batting line-up, said pace bowler Lockie Ferguson on Monday. Ferguson told reporters that New Zealand would need him and fellow quicks Trent Boult and Tim

Southee to be at their best to overcome England at the Gabba on Tuesday night. "What you always expect from England is that they come out very hot," said

Ferguson. "They pride themselves probably on that aggressive nature and bat very deep." New Zealand sit top of Group 1 of the Super 12 stage after two wins and

one washout and need one more victory from their last two games against England on Tuesday or Ireland on Friday to clinch a place in the final four. Boult has been superb in the tournament so far, taking six wickets including a career-best 4-13 against Sri Lanka on Saturday. Southee took 3-6 as New Zealand started with bang, routing Australia in the tournament opener.

"Tim and Trent have had a blinder in these first two games," said Ferguson. "When the ball's swinging, there's not much better in the world. So I think from that point of view, nothing needs to change too much, and we just need to adjust to the conditions on the day. "England are going to have a lot of firepower and we need to combat that." The clash against England at the Gabba is a replay of the 2021 T20 World Cup semi-final which New Zealand won by five wickets in Abu Dhabi. It is also a repeat of the 2019 50-over World Cup final, which England edged by the finest of margins, a boundary comeback, after a super over couldn't separate the sides. Ferguson said New Zealand knew that a win would seal a semi-final place, but they were not looking that far ahead yet. "Clearly, there's a long way to go for us. We need to make sure we take it game by game," he said. "It's very much one game at a time. Tomorrow is a big focus for us, after that we'll cross the next bridge when it comes." (AFP)

against New Zealand history shows you that it's always been a tightly fought game," said Collingwood, a former England all-rounder. "The bowlers are fresh, they're raring to go, and the batters have been able to do a lot of specific confidence work in the nets and understand how they can go about the task tomorrow night in what usually is a really good Brisbane wicket."

He defended under-fire Test captain Ben Stokes, who has never managed to fire in Twenty20 cricket, backing the all-rounder to come good when it matters. "The one person you want in your team when the pressure is on is Ben Stokes," said Collingwood.

"We all know what he is capable of, not just match-winning innings, but match-winning innings under serious amounts of pressure. "If it comes down to the crunch you want a man like Ben Stokes walking out. "I'm pretty confident there's an innings just around the corner." (AFP)



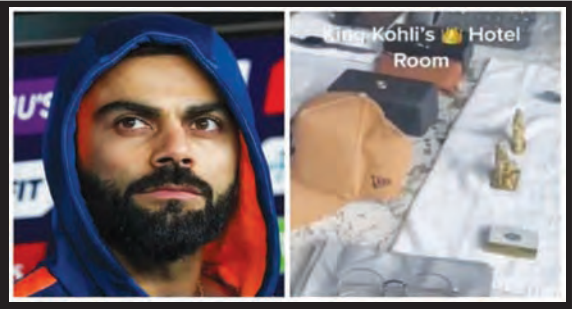
T20 World Cup: England 'almost into the knockout stage now', says Paul Collingwood

BRISBANE, OCT 31 /--/ England are now playing knockout cricket after a weather-disrupted campaign, declared assistant coach Paul Collingwood on Monday, and are targeting four wins to lift the T20 World Cup, starting with New Zealand in Brisbane. England suffered a shock defeat to Ireland on the DLS method after a rain-interrupted match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground last week, then saw their eagerly awaited Ashes clash against Australia at the same venue washed out. It leaves Group 1 wide open and they now face leaders New Zealand on Tuesday knowing that victory in their last two group games will almost certainly see them into the semi-finals as one of the top two teams. "There's a lot of excitement around because we know if we get it right in the next four games we've got an opportunity to win a World Cup," said Collingwood. "We're almost into the knockout

stage now with how we've got to go about our cricket with must-win games and this is why we play the game." Anything less than victory against New Zealand will leave England dependent on beating Sri Lanka in Sydney in their final group match on Saturday and hoping other results go their way. "It's a position you want to be in with an opportunity to win the World Cup and tomorrow kickstarts hopefully our momentum and our campaign," said Collingwood "We put in a good performance tomorrow and that will give us a lot of confidence for the last three games." England pipped New Zealand via a tie, a tied super over and a greater number of boundaries scored to win the 50-over World Cup final in 2019, and Collingwood expected Tuesday's clash with the Group 1 leaders, who have won two matches and seen one rained off, to be close again. "Going into a fixture

"Absolute invasion of privacy": Virat Kohli on leaked video Of his hotel room

PERTH, OCT 31 /--/ India batter Virat Kohli on Monday shared a horrific experience that he had to endure while his stay in Perth, and he went on to label the experience as "appalling". He also said that it made him feel very "paranoid" about his privacy. The entire incident was of someone entering the batter's hotel room with the cricketer not being present and the entire break in was filmed, and all of Kohli's accessories and wardrobe were put on display. The former India skipper was visibly shook and he requested the fans to respect the privacy of everyone and not treat them as a "commodity" for entertainment. "I understand that fans get very happy and excited seeing their favourite players and get excited to meet them and I've always appreciated that. But this video here is appalling and it's made me feel very paranoid about my privacy," Kohli wrote in his Instagram post. "If I cannot have privacy in my own hotel room,



then where can I really expect any personal space at all? I'm NOT okay with this kind of fanaticism and absolute invasion of privacy. Please respect people's privacy and not treat them as a commodity for entertainment," he added. On Kohli's Instagram post, Australia batter David Warner also left a comment, saying: "This is ridiculous, totally unacceptable. Was this @crownperth." Kohli's wife Anushka Sharma also shared his post on her Instagram story, and said: "Have experienced few incidents, where fans have shown no compassion or grace in the past but this really is the worst thing. An absolute disgrace and violation of a human being and anyone who sees this and thinks celebrity ho! Toh deal karna padega should know that you are also part of the problem." "Exercising some self control helps everyone. Also, if this is happening in your bedroom then where is the line," she added.

Karthik has back spasms, doubtful for match against Bangladesh

ADELAIDE, OCT 31 /--/ Senior wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik will be a doubtful starter for India's next T20 World Cup match against Bangladesh on Wednesday as he is suffering from back spasms which forced him to leave the field during the last five overs of the South Africa game. Karthik's injury could pave way for Rishabh Pant's entry into the playing XI. Pant kept wickets from the 16th over till the end of the game against South Africa on Sunday after Karthik was forced to leave the field due to pain. (PTI)

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