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2 more bodies found; Army deployed in Imphal

INTERNAL SECURITY



CONTEXT: A day after violent protests rocked Imphal after three of six abducted people were found dead, the bodies of a 61-year-old woman and a two-year-old boy were found floating in a river at Lakhipur in Assam on Sunday. At least 20 people have been killed in violence in the State since November 7. Five bodies were found so far, including of an eight-month-old baby, likely of a Meitei family abducted by armed militants during an encounter with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

and Manipur Police in Jiribam on November 11. A 25-year-old woman, the mother of the two children, remains missing. The body of a 27-year-old man from the Kuki-Zo community was recovered in Jiribam late on Saturday.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah reviewed the security situation with senior officials of the Home Ministry. Earlier in the day, Union Home Minister Amit Shah cancelled four election rallies in Maharashtra. Another security review meeting is scheduled for Monday. Amid a curfew and Internet shutdown, the Army and Assam Rifles were deployed in Imphal to “strengthen the security situation”.

Lieutenant-General Abhijit S. Pendharkar, General Officer Commanding (GOC), 3 Corps, and Anish Dayal, CRPF Director General, also arrived in Imphal. Lt. Gen Pendharkar is expected to visit Jiribam, the new epicentre of violence, on Tuesday. On November 14, the Ministry had re-imposed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in Jiribam, bordering Assam and the limits of five other police stations, to aid the Army in conducting security operations without waiting for the arrival or permission from a magistrate and the local police.

Targeting politicians

The Manipur unit of the Congress asked Chief Minister N. Biren Singh to seek an appointment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On Saturday, the homes and properties of at least 13 political leaders, cutting across party lines, were vandalised or burnt down by angry protestors in the valley districts.

Irate mob

Eight people had been injured on Saturday night. The Manipur Police resorted to tear gas shelling to disperse the “irate mob”. On November 16, “irate mobs have targeted various houses and properties of public representatives, including Ministers and MLAs of the State in Imphal. Police have resorted to firing tear gas shells etc. to disperse the mob. The Manipur Police arrested 23 people who were part of the mob and indulged in arson and ransacking of properties have been arrested from the Imphal East, Imphal West, and Bishnupur districts.



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India and Nigeria will join hands to tackle terrorism, piracy, says Modi

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



CONTEXT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Sunday at the Presidential Villa. Mr. Modi arrived in Abuja early on Sunday on the first trip to the country by an Indian Prime Minister after 17 years.

India accords high priority to its strategic partnership with Nigeria and it will work towards boosting ties in a range of areas, including defence, energy and trade. Mr. Modi identified terrorism, separatism, piracy and drug trafficking as major challenges, and said the two countries would continue to work together to deal with them.

Key pillar of ties

Mr. Modi described the nearly 60,000-strong Indian expatriate community as a key pillar of India-Nigeria relations, and thanked Mr. Tinubu for ensuring their welfare. The Prime Minister announced that India was sending 20 tonnes of relief supplies for Nigerian people affected by last month's floods.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to the African Union becoming a permanent member of the G-20 at the India-hosted summit of the grouping last year and described it as a significant outcome. Both sides are likely to ink a number of agreements following the delegation-level talks.

Mr. Modi is in Nigeria as part of a three-nation tour. From Abuja, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Brazil to attend the G-20 summit. His last destination will be Guyana. Nigeria has been a close partner of India for over six decades. The visit comes amid a renewed push by both India and Nigeria for permanent representation on the United Nations Security Council.

Centre aims to make Andaman and Nicobar Islands a tuna export hub

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT



CONTEXT: The Centre is exploring waters around Andaman and Nicobar Islands to source tuna.

According to the Department of Union Fisheries, the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands can emerge as a hub of tuna export. The global tuna market is worth \$ 41.94 billion. The Indian Ocean is considered the second largest tuna region, producing 21 % of world's tuna. The Exclusive Economic Zone around the Andaman & Nicobar Islands is home to a range of tuna species, with substantial untapped fishery resources.

The total potential domestic tuna yield is estimated to be 64,500 tonnes of tuna annually. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands primarily harvest neritic tuna, which is caught closer to the shore, while small quantities of oceanic species, including

skipjack, big-eye, and yellowfin tuna, are also landed. The Centre expects a stock of 24,000 tonnes of yellow fin tuna, which has a steady market across the world annually from the islands. Similarly, 22,000 tonnes of skipjack tuna, 500 tonnes of bigeye tuna, and 18,000 tonnes of neritic tuna may also be available for exports from the islands annually.

According to the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), India exported 51,626 tonnes of tuna in 2023-24 worth \$ 87.96 million, an increase by 31.83 % in, export value by 2023-24. Despite the high demand for these species, the region's tuna fishery is still underdeveloped and remains underutilised due to a combination of challenges, including lack of infrastructure, limited access to modern fishing technologies, and inadequate fish processing and storage facilities.

The Centre expects increased networking among the business communities and relevant stakeholders involved in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the Union Territory, other parts of India, and the Southeast Asian region. The Centre sees that technological limitations such as a lack of modern fishing technologies hamper the ability to optimise tuna catch rates.

India conducts 'historic' flight test of hypersonic missile with a range of 1,500 km

INTERNAL SECURITY



CONTEXT: India announced the successful flight test of its maiden long-range hypersonic missile with a range of 1,500 km. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted the flight test late on Saturday from Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Island, off Odisha coast, the latest in a series of missile tests in the past two months.

Hypersonic weapons are manoeuvrable weapons that can fly at speeds of at least Mach 5, five times the speed of sound. Hypersonic missiles travel within the atmosphere and can perform manoeuvres midway which combined with their high speeds makes their detection and interception extremely difficult. The radars and air defences cannot detect hypersonic weapons till they are very close and get little time to react.

The long-range hypersonic missile is designed to carry various payloads for ranges greater than 1,500 km for all the services of Indian armed forces. The missile was tracked by various range systems, deployed in multiple domains. The flight data obtained from down-range ship stations confirmed the successful terminal manoeuvres and impact with high degree of accuracy.

India has achieved a major milestone by successfully conducting flight trial of long-range hypersonic missile. This is a historic moment and this significant achievement has put our country in the group of select nations having capabilities of such critical and

advanced military technologies. This missile has been indigenously developed by the DRDO.

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COP-29 discussions flagging, no progress made on issues critical to developing countries: India

ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT



CONTEXT: At COP-29 in Baku, India has expressed frustration with developed countries for not seriously discussing supporting climate action in developing nations, saying it is impossible to tackle climate change without financial and technological help.

At the closing plenary of a meeting of subsidiary bodies on the Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) on Saturday, India highlighted that developed countries had historically contributed the most to Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and had more resources and ability to act on climate change, had repeatedly delayed climate action and continuously shifted goalposts.

The Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) was meant to help, not punish, and must respect each country's right to set its own climate goals based on its unique needs. If there were no means of implementation — financial support, technology, and capacity-building — developing and low-income economies could not cut greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to its effects.

The Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) was created two years ago at COP-27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, to help support mitigation. Consultations on it have remained tense, with developing countries saying that it is meant to help nations share ideas, experiences, and solutions. They argue that it is not supposed to create new targets or force any country to take specific actions. On the other hand, developed countries want the MWP to push for stronger, more immediate action from all countries.

India, Bangladesh have maintained relations despite changes, says High Commissioner

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: India's High Commissioner to Dhaka Pranay Verma in a conference organised by the Centre for Governance Studies on Sunday noted that India and Bangladesh maintained their ties despite "turbulent changes" and changes in the "political wind" in the country, referring to the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5 and the violence that followed in India and Bangladesh.

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh's interim Government in an address on Sunday to the nation to mark 100 days in government asked India to "send back" Ms. Hasina, who has been living there, a demand that could become a sore point between New Delhi and Dhaka in the future.

In his first such major speech, since the interim government led by Mr. Yunus took over, the India's High commissioner highlighted that bilateral project on transport and energy, including this week's inauguration of a power supply line from Nepal to Bangladesh via India, as well as the continuation of trade in the past few months demonstrated how inter-linked the two countries are, and that ties cannot be reduced "to a single issue".

Multifaceted ties

India's High Commissioner to Dhaka Pranay Verma in an address highlighted multi-faceted relations - trade and economic ties, transport and energy connectivity, and people-to-people engagements have sustained a positive momentum, despite the turbulent changes in Bangladesh, shows that our relations are truly multifaceted, and cannot be reduced to a single agenda or issue.

Referring to Bangladesh's decision to shut down terror camps in 2009, and curb anti-India activities in the past two decades, Mr. Verma said that the country's "zero-tolerance on terrorism" proved vital for bilateral cooperation and prosperity. "It will remain an important factor in the future development of our two countries, our region and our relationship."

India has thus far maintained that Ms. Hasina had come to India on “a short notice” in August given the security situation in the country. Bangladesh has thus far not formally requested her extradition. India and Bangladesh have seen a strain in ties after Ms. Hasina’s move to India as well as amid India’s concerns over the targeting of minorities including the 13.1 million-strong Hindu community in the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a call with Mr. Yunus in August raised the issue. Last week, India urged the Yunus government to take “strong measures” to ensure the safety of Hindus, after reports of attacks on the homes of the minority community in Chittagong. While Mr. Yunus attended a virtual summit of the Global South hosted by Mr. Modi virtually, the two leaders have not met so far, and missed being in New York on the same days during the UN meet in September.

There are irritants but they have not restricted the overall forward movement in our relations, adding that the inter-dependence between both countries and mutual benefit will keep reasserting itself again and again, regardless of changes in the political wind”. Bangladesh is India’s largest trading partner in South Asia and the fifth largest in the world, and that India had given Bangladesh “duty-free, quota-free access” for more than a decade under the regional SAFTA agreement.

Ahead of polls, Centre eases norms for soya bean procurement

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Centre has relaxed the norms for procuring soya bean, ahead of the crucial Maharashtra election.

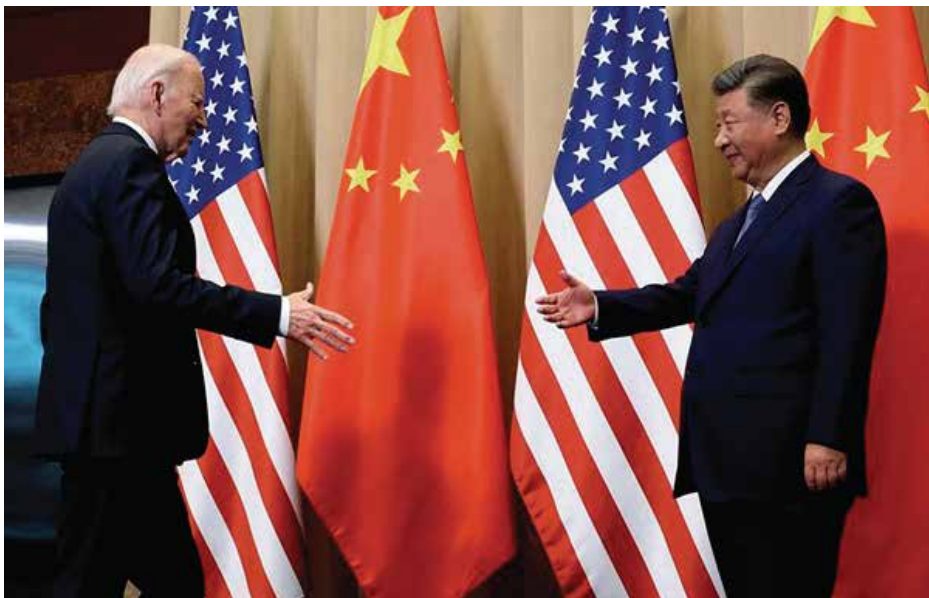
The soya bean with moisture content up to 15 % can also be procured by the States. Relaxing the earlier norm that soya bean with a moisture content of less than 12 % can be procured under the Price Support Scheme (PSS) during the last kharif season.

Farmers in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra protested for steady crop procurement. In response, the Centre directed the Chief Secretaries of several states, including Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh, to implement a one-time measure allowing the procurement of crops with moisture content up to 15 %. The decision was based on representations received, and the Union Agriculture Ministry had no objections. However, the states were required to bear any expenses or losses incurred due to the procurement in the “larger interests of farmers.”

Central agencies, NAFED and NCC, are instructed to pay state-level procuring agencies the price adjusted for the relaxed moisture percentage. Meanwhile, state-level agencies and governments must ensure full payment of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) to registered farmers for the procured soybean stocks under the Price Support Scheme (PSS).

U.S.’s support for Taiwan is a ‘red line’ in ties, Xi tells Biden

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



CONTEXT: U.S. President Mr. Biden and Chinese President Mr. Xi met on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Peru, two months before Mr. Trump takes office and amid concerns of new trade wars and diplomatic upheaval.

Chinese President Xi Jinping warned the U.S. on Saturday not to cross a “red line” in support for Taiwan. China claims Taiwan as its own territory and has refused to rule out using force to seize it, while the U.S. is the self-ruled island’s main security backer even though it does not recognise Taipei diplomatically.

Mr. Xi Jinping told President Biden that China’s four “red lines”—the Taiwan issue,

democracy and human rights, political systems, and development interests—must not be challenged. He emphasized

that these are key guardrails for China-U.S. relations. Xi also stated that actions supporting "Taiwan independence" conflict with peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry accused China of military provocations near Taiwan, calling them the primary threat to regional peace and global economic stability. Meanwhile, Mr. Xi told Mr. Biden that the U.S. should avoid intervening in bilateral disputes and should not support provocative actions in the South China Sea.

NPP withdraws its support for Biren-led Manipur govt.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



CONTEXT: The National People's Party (NPP) has withdrawn support to the BJP-led government in Manipur.

Meghalaya Chief Minister and NPP president Conrad K. Sangma wrote a letter to BJP president J.P. Nadda, stating that the Manipur government under Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh had failed to resolve the ongoing crisis and restore normalcy. Sangma criticized the deteriorating situation and the loss of innocent lives, leading the NPP to withdraw its support from the Biren Singh-led government. Despite the NPP's seven MLAs in the 60-member assembly withdrawing support, the BJP government remains unaffected as it holds a majority with 32 MLAs, along with support from the NPF and JD(U).

Pressure to resign

On Sunday, Manipur Congress president Keisham Meghachandra Singh offered to resign as an MLA, stating he would step down if the people of the state wanted a new mandate to restore peace. He represents the Wangkhem constituency and is one of five Congress MLAs. This offer came amid mounting pressure from social organizations in Imphal Valley for legislators to resign following the recovery of the bodies of five women and children abducted by extremists. On Saturday night, mobs set fire to the homes of at least 15 legislators, including Congress MLA Thokchom Lokeshwar Singh from Khundrakpam.

Growing epidemic

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: A Lancet publication noted India also topping the list of countries with 133 million people over the age of 30 years with untreated diabetes as against 78 million in China.

The global number of people with diabetes has surged from around 200 million in 1990 to over 800 million in 2022, with the global prevalence among adults rising from 7% to 14%. India now has the highest number of people with diabetes, at 212 million, compared to China's 148 million. This steep increase is partly due to the updated methodology used in data collection, which includes individuals on diabetes medication or those with a fasting plasma glucose of 7.0 mmol/L or higher, or an HbA1c of 6.5% or more. This new approach, supported by the WHO and the NCD Risk Factor Collaboration, differs from previous studies that relied primarily on elevated fasting plasma glucose or other single biomarkers.

The study highlights that relying solely on elevated fasting plasma glucose, without considering elevated glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c), overlooks many people with diabetes, especially in South Asia. While there may be debates over exact figures, it is clear that diabetes prevalence in India has increased over the past three decades.

Unhealthy eating and a sedentary lifestyle are major risk factors for diabetes, the role of tobacco, particularly smoking, has been underrecognized. A WHO report from November 2023 states that smoking increases the risk of developing diabetes by 30 % - 40 %. Nicotine, the addictive substance in tobacco, impairs insulin-producing beta cells and induces insulin resistance, both of which contribute to the onset of diabetes.

Avoiding tobacco in all forms not only reduces the risk of diabetes but also lowers the risk of cardiovascular disease and mortality in people with diabetes. Managing gestational diabetes is crucial in preventing future diabetes in both mothers and children. In India, with 133 million undiagnosed cases, there is an urgent need to scale up diabetes diagnosis to meet the WHO's 2030 target: diagnosing 80 % of people with diabetes and ensuring 80 % of diagnosed individuals have good glycaemic control.

Why is Germany headed for snap polls?

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



CONTEXT: On November 6, Germany's ruling 'traffic light' coalition, composed of the Social Democrats (SPD), the Greens and the Free Democrats (FDP), collapsed when Chancellor Olaf Scholz fired his Finance Minister, FDP's Christian Lindner. A no-confidence motion against the government will be initiated on December 16, which Mr. Scholz is sure to lose without the support of the FDP. Therefore, Mr. Scholz has agreed to hold snap elections on February 23, 2025 ahead of the scheduled election in September 2025.

What happened?

Germany's ruling coalition, in power since 2021, has been marked by infighting and dysfunction, with disagreements over key issues such as the budget, the war in Ukraine, defence spending, and energy policy. The SPD and Greens advocate for heavy state investment and increased government borrowing, while the FDP, led by Finance Minister Lindner, opposes this, citing Germany's debt brake rule and pushing for tax cuts for the wealthy and austerity measures. The coalition is also facing a

looming multi-billion-dollar budget gap, further complicating governance.

What is Germany's debt brake rule?

Germany's "debt brake" rule, enshrined in the Constitution, limits government borrowing to 0.35% of GDP, requiring the government to balance its budget each fiscal year by spending only what it collects in taxes and levies. Introduced in 2009 after the 2008 economic crisis to control public finances, the rule was designed to prevent excessive borrowing that could burden future generations with high interest payments. Despite opposition from the Greens and other parties at the time, the rule became legally binding for the federal government in 2016 and for states in 2020. No other EU country has such strict borrowing limits.

Germany's debt brake rule includes an exception allowing the Bundestag (Parliament) to suspend it by a simple majority in cases of natural disasters or extraordinary emergencies. This exception was used from 2020 to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war, which triggered an energy crisis. As a strong supporter of Ukraine, Germany committed approximately 7.1 billion euros for Ukraine's security in 2024. However, this support led to Germany reducing its reliance on Russian energy, contributing to an ongoing energy crisis with lasting economic effects.

What about the budget?

To bypass the debt brake, Germany has used off-budget "special funds" for various economic needs, such as the climate and transformation fund, the economic stabilization fund, and the federal armed forces fund. The ruling coalition relied on these funds to meet increased commitments to climate initiatives and defence spending. However, on November 15, 2023, a constitutional court ruled that transferring unused pandemic-era debt of around 60 billion euros to the climate fund was unconstitutional. This ruling created a significant budget shortfall, further straining the already divided coalition.'

What next?

Friedrich Merz, leader of the CDU/CSU opposition alliance, is currently leading in opinion polls with 33% support, compared to just 16% for the SPD. Meanwhile, the far-right AfD party is gaining influence, with approval ratings at 17%, surpassing the SPD. The AfD recently won its first state election in Thuringia and has been accused of links to neo-Nazi groups. A former AfD member is in custody for allegedly planning a coup, and there are discussions about banning the party. Although the AfD is unlikely to lead the government, it could secure a larger share of seats in the Bundestag. The party opposes arms shipments to Ukraine and supports strict anti-migration policies, similar to U.S. president-elect Donald Trump's stance.



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