

Quote of the day



This is going to be our new normal. The effects that we're seeing from climate change are the crisis of our generation. We do see tornadoes in December, that part is not unusual, but at this magnitude I don't think we've ever seen one this late in the year. But it's also historic.

US EMERGENCY CHIEF DEANNE CRISWELL WARNS AFTER TORNADOES HIT SIX STATES



Workers survey tornado damage after extreme weather hit the region in Mayfield, Kentucky, US on Sunday. Dozens of devastating tornadoes roared through six US states, leaving more than 93 people dead Saturday in what President Joe Biden said was "one of the largest" storm outbreaks in history. Inset, Charlene Stanley of Central City, Kentucky holds dog Gus as they search the debris that once was her sister-in-law's home after the tornado in Bremen.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

TERRORIST ATTACK IN J&K

Two cops killed, 12 others hurt

NDTV ONLINE

Two Jammu and Kashmir armed police personnel have died, and 12 have been injured after two terrorists attacked a police bus near a police camp at Zewan on the outskirts of Srinagar yesterday evening, police said.

One of the fallen policemen is an assistant sub-inspector and another a section grade constable.

The injured have been shifted to the hospital where the condition of some is said to be critical.

Terrorists resorted to heavy firing on the bus in the highly secure area that houses several camps of various security forces.

The incident took place in the Zewan area.

The area has been cordoned off and a search operation launched to track down the assailants.

This attack comes days after two policemen were killed after terrorists opened fire at a police team in Kashmir's Bandipora district.

Two policemen were critically injured and were shifted to a hospital where the doctors declared them dead on arrival.

The incident took place in Bandipora's Gulshan Chowk on December 10.

This is the second major terrorist attack in the valley after the recent spate of targeted attacks on migrant workers and members of the minority communities in Kashmir.

All the terrorists behind the target killings have been killed in a series of encounters in the last two months, the police had said.

The Indian-ruled part of Kashmir is India's only Muslim-majority region, and more than 30 people have been killed in a rise in violence in recent weeks, including minority Hindus and Sikhs and migrant workers.



MORE NEWS

Miss India wins Miss Universe held in Israel

Miss India Harnaaz Sandhu was crowned Miss Universe in the Israeli city of Eilat early yesterday, with several contestants defying pressure to boycott in support of the Palestinians. The 70th edition of the annual pageant, held in Israel for the first time, has also faced complications from the coronavirus pandemic. Sandhu took the top prize in the Red Sea resort with Paraguay's Nadia Ferreira first runner-up and Miss South Africa Lalela Mswane taking the second runner-up spot.

HK activists get up to 14 months in prison

Eight Hong Kong pro-democracy activists were sentenced to up to 14 months in prison yesterday for organising, taking part in and inciting participation in a banned vigil last year for victims of China's 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. The former British colony, which returned to Chinese rule in 1997 with the promise of wide-ranging freedoms, traditionally holds the largest June 4 vigil in the world, but police have rejected applications for the last two vigils, citing coronavirus restrictions. Critics said authorities used the pandemic restrictions as an excuse to block the commemoration. The sentencing is the latest blow to the city's democracy movement, which has seen dozens of activists arrested, jailed or flee the Chinese-ruled territory since Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law last year.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

COVID OMICRON VARIANT

First person dies in UK: PM Johnson

Warns 'a tidal wave is coming'

AGENCIES

At least one patient has died in the United Kingdom after contracting the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said yesterday.

"Sadly at least one patient has now been confirmed to have died with Omicron," Johnson told reporters.

"So I think the idea that this is somehow a milder version of the virus - I think that's something we need to set on one side - and just recognise the sheer pace at which it accelerates through the population."

Since the first Omicron cases were detected on November 27 in the United Kingdom, Johnson has imposed tougher restrictions, and on Sunday he urged people to get booster shots to prevent the health service from being overwhelmed.

Health Secretary Sajid Javid said the Omicron coronavirus variant was spreading at a "phenomenal rate" and now accounted for about 40% of infections in London, reports Reuters.

"A tidal wave of Omicron is coming," Johnson said in a televised statement on Sunday evening. "And I'm afraid it is now clear that two doses of vaccine are simply not enough to give the level of protection we all need."

Johnson added that with Omicron known to be much more transmissible than other variants, the National Health Service would struggle to cope with hospitalisations if the variant were to tear through an un-boosted population.

The Omicron variant, reported in more than 60 countries, poses a "very high" global risk, with some evidence that it evades vaccine protection but clinical data on its severity remain limited, the WHO said.



End to the Korean War agreed to 'in principle'

Says Moon Jae-in

AGENCIES

South and North Korea, China and the US have agreed "in principle" to declare a formal end to the Korean war, almost 70 years after the conflict ended in a shaky truce, the South Korean president, Moon Jae-in, has said.

But Moon conceded that talks on the 1950-53 war were being held back by North Korean objections to present-day "US hostility".

Speaking in Canberra yesterday during his four-day visit to Australia, Moon said he believed the four main parties agreed in principle to a peace declaration.

But he added that North Korea had made an end to US hostility a precondition for talks, reports The Guardian. "And because of that, we are not able to sit down for a negotiation on the declarations between South and North Korea..." he said.

INDIA'S CLASS TEN BOARD EXAMS QUESTION PAPER

'Misogynist' passage dropped after Sonia Gandhi flags it

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) yesterday dropped a passage from its Class ten board exams question paper soon after Congress President Sonia Gandhi termed it as "blatantly misogynist" and asked the Education Ministry to apologise.

Raising the issue in the Lok Sabha yesterday, Sonia demanded a review of the gender sensitivity standard in CBSE curriculum as she flagged the "blatantly misogynist" passage from a question paper of a Class 10 exam last week.

Quoting from the controversial passage, Sonia told the Lok Sabha that "this contains atrocious statements such as 'women gaining independence is the main reason for a wide variety of social and family problems'."

She further quoted a passage that said "wives stopped obeying their husbands is the main reason why children and servants

are indisCIPLINED" and stressed on the words "children" and "servants" as she spoke.

Soon afterwards, CBSE issued a statement saying the question has been dropped because it was "not in accordance with the guidelines of the Board."

The matter was referred to a committee of subject experts.

As per their recommendations, it's been decided to drop the passage No. 1 and its accompanying questions of the question paper series JSK/1.

"Full marks will be awarded for this passage to all students concerned," said CBSE controller examination

Sanyam Bhardwaj.

Sonia said there was a "nationwide outrage regarding a shockingly regressive passage" in the comprehension section of a CBSE exam held on December 11.

"The entire passage is riddled with such condemnable ideas and the questions that follow are equally nonsensical," she said.



3 killed in shooting at Palestinian camp

REUTERS, Gaza

Three members of the Islamist group Hamas were killed and others injured in a shooting on Sunday in the Palestinian camp of Burj al-Shemali in Lebanon, the group said, blaming the bloodshed on rival forces loyal to the Palestinian Authority.

Two Hamas officials told Reuters earlier four people had been killed. The statement issued by Hamas said members of the National Security Forces, who belong to the Palestinian Authority, carried out the attack.

Palestinian Authority officials condemned the attack, rejected Hamas' allegation and urged all sides to wait for the results of an investigation.

The Palestinian Authority and Hamas have been bitter rivals since the 2007 brief civil war in the Gaza Strip, which ended up in Hamas' control, while the Palestinian Authority continued to have limited control of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

The shootings took place during the funeral of a Hamas supporter who was killed in an explosion on Friday night in the camp in the southern Lebanese port city of Tyre.

'I slept soundly' Japan PM on 'haunted' official residence

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said yesterday he's sleeping soundly after becoming the first premier in nine years to inhabit the official residence, which is reputedly haunted by ghosts.

The prime piece of real estate in central Tokyo stood empty during the terms of Kishida's most recent predecessors, Yoshihide Suga and Shinzo Abe.

The residence was the site of a 1936 attempted coup, in which several senior officials including a finance minister were assassinated by young military officers.

For years, the ghosts of some of those who were involved in the incident were reported to have haunted its hallways, but Kishida said Monday he was feeling fresh after the first nights in his new digs. "I slept soundly yesterday," he told reporters, who asked whether he had spotted any of the residence's famed spooks. "I haven't seen any, yet."



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