







Plea

Bolivian former President Evo Morales appealed for his supporters to attend a rally on the border between Argentina and Bolivia on Dec. 29 to choose a candidate for election early next year



Spirit of Christmas



Climbers wearing Santa Claus outfits take part in an event to wish mountaineers safe climbing and to commemorate Christmas on the Buchkan mountain in Seoul on Sunday.



A woman dressed as Santa Claus takes part in the annual Christmas city race on Sunday, in Skopje.

Aussies are fair-minded to understand when you make a promise to your kids you try and keep it

— Scott Morrison Australian PM

BRIEF

Apartment fire in Las Vegas kills 6

Las Vegas: A fire in a three-story apartment building in downtown Las Vegas where residents were apparently using their stoves for heat killed six people and forced some residents to jump from upper-floor windows to escape the heavy smoke. Investigators reported that the fire started around a first-floor unit's stove and that residents had told them that there was no heat in the building, which sits a few blocks from downtown Las Vegas' touristy Fremont Street District. Residents reported awakening to pounding on doors. Firemen arriving at the scene began treating injured and using ladders to rescue numerous people already jumping or hanging from windows.

Three buses catch fire at LA airport

Los Angeles: At least three unoccupied passenger buses caught fire on Saturday night at Los Angeles International Airport, the Los Angeles fire department said. Shortly after 9 p.m., LAX Airport said on its Twitter account that "There is a significant fire emergency at the LAX-it lot. Emergency responders are on scene. More to come. No immediate reports of injuries." About 10 p.m., the airport said that the fire had been put out, and there were no injuries. The lot emergency and ride-share services resumed. The photos of the blaze were on social media.

Flights cancelled over cyber attacks

Alaska: RavnAir canceled at least a half-dozen flights in Alaska on Saturday night, the peak of holiday travel — following what the company described as "a malicious cyber attack" on its computer network. The cancellations affected around 260 passengers, according to company spokeswoman Debbie Reinwand. The regional carrier cancelled all flights involving its Dash 8 aircraft until noon "because the cyber attack forced us to disconnect our Dash 8 maintenance system and its backup" the company said. The airline serves more than 100 communities in Alaska, many of which are not accessible by road.

WOMAN DROPS TIFFANY RING AT CHARITY

Annapolis, Dec. 22: Salvation Army leaders in Maryland say a donor recently dropped thousands of dollars worth of jewelry in a red kettle. Capt. Ryan Vincent is commander of the Salvation Army in Annapolis. He tells the Capital Gazette event was so shocked to find out the ring and two bracelets were real. One of the bracelets, a yellow-gold piece by Tiffany & Co., has been sold for \$1,500. A gemologist will soon examine the ring and second bracelet that features diamonds and rubies to determine their value.

Pearl Eldridge is the ringer who collected the donation. She called the donor a "quiet spirit," and said the woman told her the pieces were sentimental but had been lying around. Other unusual donations have been reported in Salvation Army kettles around the country, including a gold bar in Kentucky and a more than century-old gold coin in North Carolina. Vincent says the Salvation Army has a policy for dealing with jewelry donations. Pieces found in a kettle are kept for 30 days, but if someone acknowledges leaving a piece with the bell ringer, it's immediately considered donated.

Wildfires deepen in Oz, firemen slug it out

After public apology, Aussie PM Morrison defends climate policies in the wake of heatwave

Sydney, Dec. 22: Firefighters battling wildfires in Australia made the most of cooler weather on Sunday to access badly burned towns and contain blazes before the expected return of hotter conditions. "We've got the devastating during this year's fire season. Not all of those would be homes lost, he said. Near the town of Lithgow, about 140 km west of Sydney, one man who had been unaccounted for early on Sunday was later found safe. Lithgow is also home to the Rural Fire Service (RFS) headquarters in Sydney after returning on Saturday night from a holiday that drew sharp criticism as the wildfires crisis deepened. After the deaths of two firefighters on Thursday night, Morrison announced he would return home early, and on Sunday he acknowledged his holiday had caused anxiety. "I get it that people would have been upset to know that I was holidaying with my family while their families were under great stress," Morrison said. Nearly 100 fires were still burning across New South Wales late on Sunday afternoon, though none were rated as emergencies. Conditions are expected to remain favourable over coming days allowing firefighters to work to contain fires encroaching on communities, particularly in the Capital Mountains region to the west of Sydney. But authorities stated the large fires would continue to burn for weeks. "That's still a way to go," state Rural Fire Services said.



NSW Rural Fire Service crews fight the Gopspers Mountain Fire as it impacts a structure at Bilpin.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison defended both his government's climate change policies and his decision to go on holiday to Hawaii last week. The leader of New South Wales, Gladys Berejiklian, said "catastrophic" fire conditions on Saturday in parts of the prime minister's home state had destroyed communities. "We've got the devastating during this year's fire season. Not all of those would be homes lost, he said. Near the town of Lithgow, about 140 km west of Sydney, one man who had been unaccounted for early on Sunday was later found safe. Lithgow is also home to the Rural Fire Service (RFS) headquarters in Sydney after returning on Saturday night from a holiday that drew sharp criticism as the wildfires crisis deepened. After the deaths of two firefighters on Thursday night, Morrison announced he would return home early, and on Sunday he acknowledged his holiday had caused anxiety. "I get it that people would have been upset to know that I was holidaying with my family while their families were under great stress," Morrison said. Nearly 100 fires were still burning across New South Wales late on Sunday afternoon, though none were rated as emergencies. Conditions are expected to remain favourable over coming days allowing firefighters to work to contain fires encroaching on communities, particularly in the Capital Mountains region to the west of Sydney. But authorities stated the large fires would continue to burn for weeks. "That's still a way to go," state Rural Fire Services said.

Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said on Sunday. "We're still talking four to six weeks at best before we start to see a meaningful reprieve in the weather." Fitzsimmons said Saturday's fire conditions may have added another hundred buildings to the tally of those already destroyed during this year's fire season. Not all of those would be homes lost, he said. Near the town of Lithgow, about 140 km west of Sydney, one man who had been unaccounted for early on Sunday was later found safe. Lithgow is also home to the Rural Fire Service (RFS) headquarters in Sydney after returning on Saturday night from a holiday that drew sharp criticism as the wildfires crisis deepened. After the deaths of two firefighters on Thursday night, Morrison announced he would return home early, and on Sunday he acknowledged his holiday had caused anxiety. "I get it that people would have been upset to know that I was holidaying with my family while their families were under great stress," Morrison said. Nearly 100 fires were still burning across New South Wales late on Sunday afternoon, though none were rated as emergencies. Conditions are expected to remain favourable over coming days allowing firefighters to work to contain fires encroaching on communities, particularly in the Capital Mountains region to the west of Sydney. But authorities stated the large fires would continue to burn for weeks. "That's still a way to go," state Rural Fire Services said.

Amazon forest growth slows

London, Dec. 22: The regrowth of Amazonian forests following deforestation may happen at a much slower rate than previously thought, according to a new study. The research, published in the journal Ecology, monitored forest regrowth over two decades, and shows that climate change, and the wider loss of forests, could be hampering regrowth in the Amazon. The states of South Australia and Victoria have also faced extreme fire conditions in recent days, with authorities in the former saying on Sunday that 72 homes had been destroyed by one fire. Morrison addressed his conservative Liberal-National coalition's climate policies on Sunday, which his government has been forced to defend following the severity of this year's bushfires. Morrison said there was no argument that there is a link between climate change and weather events around the world but said it was not credible to make a direct connection to any single fire event and climate change. — AFP

Notre Dame fire sparks fears of lead dust

Paris, Dec. 22: It took a blaze that nearly destroyed Paris' most famous cathedral to reveal a gap in global safety regulations for lead. A toxic building material found across many historic cities. After the Notre Dame fire in April spewed dozens of tons of toxic lead-dust into the atmosphere in just a few hours, Paris authorities discovered a problem with the city's public safety regulations. There was no threshold for them to gauge how dangerous the potentially-deadly pollution was from the dust that settled on the ground. The reason, they say, is that although there are lead regulations, no one contemplated a conflagration on a lead-laden building the scale of Notre Dame — whose spire towered nearly 100 metres (330 feet) high. Poisoning from lead dust can cause permanent loss to cognitive ability, seizures, coma, or death — and exposure is of greatest risk to pregnant mothers and to young children, who can easily transfer toxic dust into their mouths. After 250 tonnes of lead on Notre Dame's spire and roof was engulfed in flames in central Paris and authorities alerted Parisians to an environmental health risk, they were forced to cobble together disparate and incomplete research to set a makeshift safety level in an attempt to reassure the public. "After the Notre Dame fire, we didn't have any threshold for what represented dangerous lead levels outdoors. It was a wake-up call, the amount of lead that was burned was unprecedented," an official said. — AFP

Greek wine resists climate change

Thessaloniki, Dec. 22: Growers in northern Greece, one of the country's top wine-producing areas, have been among the first nationally to be interested in the consequences of rising temperatures. Consequently, it has been a good year — possibly the best this decade, according to a recent statement from their local association. With the rise in temperatures, grape maturity "has accelerated by two to three weeks," says Gerovassiliou, whose vineyard is located 25 kilometres south of Thessaloniki, on the northern shores of the Aegean Sea. "We used to harvest at the beginning of September, now the harvest takes place around August 10 or 15," he adds, shortly before leading prospective buyers from Germany on a site tour. For over four decades, the oenologist and wine producer has worked with Malagousia, a long-forgotten Greek grape variety that he strives to bring up to date. Greek local grape varieties "do not undergo global warming — they adapt," he notes. "Local grape varieties, like Xinomavro or Limnio, which have existed for 3,000 years, resist very well," argues Gerovassiliou. The grapes ripen more slowly than "foreign" grape varieties like Merlot, whose early maturity causes an undesirable increase in alcohol content he says, adding, "Climate change constitutes a defeat for imported varieties." It is also the path favoured by Angelos Iatridis. When this oenologist decided to invest in a vineyard in the mid-1990s, he first set his sights on Amyntaia near the town of Florina, a few kilometres from the border with North Macedonia. At an altitude of between 620 and 710 metres, his vineyards are surrounded by three mountains and two rivers. Harvesting earlier and better adapting the choice of grape varieties are similar to effective solutions in the face of global warming. — AFP

Hong Kong protesters rally in support of China's ethnic Uighurs

Hong Kong, Dec. 22: Hong Kong riot police relative pepper sprayed protesters to disperse crowds in the heart of the city's financial district on Sunday after a largely peaceful rally to support China's ethnic Uighurs turned chaotic. Dozens of police marched across a protest site overlooking Hong Kong's harbour to face off with protesters who hurled glass bottles and rocks at them. Earlier in the afternoon more than 1,000 people had rallied calmly, waving Uighur flags and posters, as they took part in the latest demonstration in over six months of unrest. A mixed crowd of young and elderly people, dressed in black and wearing masks to shield their identities, held up signs reading "Free Uighur, Free Hong Kong" and "Fake autonomy" in China's

China's strong hand in Xinjiang and the relative silence of Muslims in response. "I think basic freedom and independence should exist for all people, not just for Hong Kong," said a 41-year-old woman surnamed Wong who attended the protest with her husband. United Nations experts and activists say at least 1 million Uighurs and members of other largely Muslim minority groups have been detained in camps in Xinjiang since 2017 under a campaign that has been condemned by the United States and other countries. Beijing says it is providing vocational training to help stamp out separatism and to teach new skills. It denies any mistreatment of Uighurs. Protests in Hong Kong are now in their seventh month, albeit in a relative year-end lull. — Reuters



Protesters attend a rally in Hong Kong on Sunday to show support for the Uighur minority in China.







Days after he was snapped up by Mumbai Indians in the IPL auction, hard-hitting Australian batsman Chris Lynn smashed 94 off just 35 balls for Brisbane Heat in BBL



Tendulkar and Ganguly faced tougher opponents than Kohli and Rohit do today.

— Ian Chappell, former Australian captain

SHORT TAKES



Virat Kohli with his fan Pintu Behera.

A fan inks 16 tattoos of Kohli

Cuttack: Pintu Behera, an ardent fan of Virat Kohli from Berhampur, has inked 16 permanent tattoos of the skipper, including his jersey No. 18 on his body. Behera said that he has spent over ₹1 lakh over these tattoos.

BCCI selectors to pick teams today

New Delhi: The focus will be on pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah's fitness status as the current selection committee will have its final meeting here on Monday to pick the teams for three T20 Internationals against Sri Lanka and as many ODIs against Australia.

captain Marvel

Kohli spearheads yet another chase as India end year on a high with series win

Cuttack, Dec. 22: The nerves... Shardul Thakur did what the peerless Virat Kohli could not, his most defining cameo powering India to a series-clinching four-wicket victory over the West Indies in the third ODI here on Sunday.

job. In the last five years this is the first time Kohli has got out in the 80s or 90s in an ODI chase.

Earlier, skipper Kieron Pollard saved his best and, along with a savage Nicholas Poonar, helped the West Indies post 116 for five.

The Indian bowling attack that looked steady during the first 40 overs, knocked 116 in the last 10 overs to get past 300-run target.

The Windies skipper smashed seven sixes and three fours en route to his unbeaten knock while Poonar stepped it up, hitting three sixes and 10 fours in his knock from 64 balls.

Drafted into the side in place of injured Deepak Chahar, the lanky 27-year-old from Delhi grabbed his maiden ODI wicket when he dismissed the in-form Hetmyer, who looked desperate to break free after the Windies were tied down to less than four runs an over midway into their innings.

Coming into the side on the back of a five-for in the Ranji Trophy, Saini impressed with his pace and aggression as he also cleaned up Roston Chaze (36) with a yorker for his second wicket in successive overs in a fine second spell of 3-0-10-2.

Table: HIGHEST SUCCESSFUL RUN CHASE AGAINST WEST INDIES. Columns: Score, Overs, Opponents, Venue, Year.

Stats: S.PERVEZ QAZI/PTI

SCORECARD

West Indies: Evin Lewis c Saini b Jadeja 21, Shai Hope b Shami 42, Roston Chaze b Saini 38, Shimron Hetmyer c Kuldeep b Saini 37, Nicholas Poonar c Jadeja b Thakur 89, Kieron Pollard (not out) 74, Jason Holder (not out) 7. Extras (lb-4, w-3) 7. Total (for five wickets in 50 overs) 315.

Virat Kohli stats table: R 85, B 81, 6s 0, 4s 9



Virat Kohli during the third and final ODI against West Indies at Cuttack on Sunday.

Shami reminds me of Marshall: Sunny

Cuttack, Dec. 22: Batting great Sunil Gavaskar on Sunday said Mohammed Shami often reminds him of the legendary pacer Malcolm Marshall, thoughts of whom still "wakes him up from deep sleep."

Shami's name. "He reminds me of Malcolm Marshall, who still wakes me up from deep sleep," Gavaskar said while commenting during the third and final One-Day International between India and the West Indies here.



Mohammed Shami reminds me of Malcolm Marshall, who still wakes me up from deep sleep. —SUNIL GAVASKAR

Rohit breaks Sanath's 22-year-old record

Cuttack, Dec. 22: India's Rohit Sharma on Sunday broke Sanath Jayasuriya's 22-year-old record for most runs in a calendar year by an opener across formats.

scored 10 hundreds across formats and as many half centuries in the year, averaging 53.08 in 47 innings.

IPL captancy has transformed Iyer



Hemant Kenkre Silly Point

It was early March 2016. The Mumbai team had won the Ranji Trophy for the 41st time, beating Saursashtra by an innings and 21 runs at Pune and were contesting for the Irani Trophy at the Brabourne Stadium, Mumbai.



dropped from the side in the next Test match at Port of Spain, Trinidad. The Indian opening pair replaced by Gavaskar and his senior Mumbai teammate, Ashok Mankad.

Gavaskar then described how Sobers had muffed a simple chance he had offered early in his debut innings while the West Indian legend had taken a blinder that came of the edge of Jayantilal's blade.

His recent tally in ODIs, scoring 259 runs in four innings with consecutive 50 plus scores has fixed his place in the team. The icing on the cake being moved up one notch in the batting order to number four.

Tons for top four as Pak close in on series victory

Karachi, Dec. 22: Sri Lanka opener Oshada Fernando struck a maiden century to help Pakistan's victory over the home team's top four all scored hundreds in the second Test in Karachi on Sunday.

Set a daunting 476 runs to win, Sri Lanka were tottering at 97 for five before Oshada and the team halted the slide with a resolute 104-run stand for the sixth wicket.

BRIEF SCORES

Pakistan 191 & 555/5 dec. (Abid 174, Masood 135, Azhar 118, Babar 100 n.o., Kumara 2/139) vs Sri Lanka 271 and 210/7 (Oshada 102 n.o., Dickwella 65, Naseem Shah 3/31).

Mohammad Abbas had Karunaratne caught behind in the tenth over of the innings before Naseem Ahmad snatched up in the slips.

