



Eight old mortar shells were found during excavation in a field in the border areas of Jammu district, on Saturday. (PTI)

## British ~~Royal Navy ship~~ downs attack drone over Red Sea

LONDON, Dec 16 (AP)

**ROYAL** Navy warship has shot down a suspected attack drone targeting commercial ships in the Red Sea, Britain's defence secretary said on Saturday.

Grant Shapps said that HMS Diamond fired a Sea Viper missile and destroyed a drone that was "targeting merchant shipping". The overnight action is the first time the Royal Navy

has shot down an aerial target in anger since the 1991 Gulf War.

Shapps said attacks on commercial ships in the global trade artery by Yemen's Houthi rebels "represent a direct threat to international commerce and maritime security".

"The UK remains committed to repelling these attacks to protect the free flow of global trade," he said in a statement.



# Presidential run

Putin supporters formally nominate him as independent candidate

MOSCOW, Dec 16 (AP)

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**RUSSIAN** President Vladimir Putin's supporters on Saturday formally nominated him to run in the 2024 presidential election as an independent candidate, State news agencies reported.

The nomination by a group of at least 500 supporters is mandatory under Russian election law for those not running on a party ticket. Independent candidates also need to gather at least 3,00,000 signatures in their support. The group that nominated Putin included top officials from the ruling United Russia party, prominent Russian actors and singers, athletes and other public figures.

"Whoever is ready to support the candidacy of Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin for the post of President of Russia, please vote. Who's in favour?" Mikhail Kuznetsov, head of the executive committee of the People's Front, asked those gathered. The People's Front is a political coalition, founded in 2011 by Putin. After the vote, Kuznetsov announced that the group had voted unanimously to nominate Putin. According to Russian election laws, candidates put forward by a party that isn't represented in the State Duma or in at least a third of regional legislatures have to submit at least 1,00,000 signatures from 40 or more regions.

# Tributes paid to fallen heroes of 1971 war

NEW DELHI, Dec 16 (PTI)

PRESIDENT Droupadi Murmu on Saturday led the nation in paying tribute to the fallen heroes of the 1971 war that led to redrawing of the political map of South Asia and ended the horrific violence unleashed by the Pakistani Army on millions of Bangladeshi people.

The remarkable victory in the war following the surrender of more than 90,000 Pakistani soldiers on December 16, 1971, resulted in the birth of Bangladesh as an independent country.

India commemorates December 16 as Vijay Diwas.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, paying his heartfelt tribute to the brave soldiers, said their sacrifice and unwavering spirit will forever be etched in the nation's history. "Today, on Vijay Diwas, we pay heartfelt tributes to all the brave heroes who dutifully served India in 1971, ensuring a decisive victory. Their valour and dedication remain a source of immense pride for the nation," he said in a post on X. "Their



Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Chief of Army Chief General Manoj Pande, Chief of Naval Staff R Hari Kumar and Vice Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Amar Preet Singh pay tribute at the National War Memorial on the occasion of Vijay Diwas in New Delhi on Saturday. (PTI)

sacrifices and unwavering spirit will forever be etched in the people's hearts and our nation's history. India salutes their courage and remembers their indomitable spirit," Modi said.

President Murmu said, "The nation remembers with gratitude the selfless sacrifice made

by our armed forces during the 1971 war. On Vijay Diwas, I pay homage to the brave hearts who displayed unparalleled courage and achieved historic victory."

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also recalled the "indomitable courage and valour" of armed forces person-

nel in the war. "We are proud of our Armed Forces who have fearlessly protected our country in every circumstance. Their sacrifice and service will forever be etched in our hearts," he said. The Defence Minister also laid a wreath and paid homage to the fallen heroes.



# Women's Quota Bill to come into force after 2024 Census: Nirmala

MANGALURU, Dec 16 (PTI)

THE Centre will initiate steps to enforce Women's Reservation Bill after 2024 Census, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said. Speaking after releasing a commemorative postal stamp in the name of Rani Abbakka at Moodbidri in Dakshina Kannada district on Friday, Sitharaman said, the women's bill became a reality as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always believed in the role of women in nation building.

Lauding the courage and heroics of Rani

Abbakka, the 16th century queen of Ullal who fought against the Portugese, Sitharaman said, the Union Government has taken steps to document the contributions of many unknown fighters who fought against imperial forces.

As part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Government has compiled a digital district repository with 14,500 stories, highlighting places linked with the freedom struggle, she said. The Union Ministry of Culture has also tied up with Amar Chitra Katha to bring out three books on the role of women in freedom struggle.

# Kuwait's ruling emir Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad no more

DUBAI, Dec 16 (AP)

KUWAIT'S ruling emir, the 86-year-old Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Sabah, died Saturday.

Kuwait state television broke into programming with Quranic verses just before a somber official made the announcement.

"With great sadness and sorrow, we — the Kuwaiti people, the Arab and Islamic nations, and the friendly peoples of the world — mourn the late His Highness the emir, Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, who passed away to his Lord today," Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al Sabah, the minister of his emiri court, read the brief statement.

Authorities gave no cause of death.

Kuwait's deputy ruler and his half-brother, Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber, now



83, is believed to be the world's oldest crown prince. He is in line to take over as Kuwait's ruler.

In late November, Sheikh Nawaf was rushed to hospital for an unspecified illness. In the time since, the tiny, oil-rich nation had been waiting for news about his health. State-run news previously reported that he travelled

to the United States for unspecified medical checks in March 2021.

The health of Kuwait's leaders remains a sensitive matter in the Middle Eastern nation bordering Iraq and Saudi Arabia, which has seen internal power struggles behind palace doors.

Sheikh Nawaf was sworn-in as emir following the 2020 death of his predecessor, the late Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah.



# India, Oman adopt vision document to **EXPAND TIES**



NEW DELHI, Dec 16 (PTI)

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**PRIME** Minister Narendra Modi and Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Saturday adopted a vision document to shore up bilateral engagement in 10 key areas and agreed to push for  
*(Contd on page 5)*

# INDIAN NAVY counters ~~HIJACKING~~ incident in Arabian Sea

Indian Navy monitored movement of the vessel with its surveillance aircraft. On Saturday, Navy warship intercepted the MV Ruen in the Gulf of Aden.

NEW DELHI, Dec 16 (PTI)

**THE** Indian Navy has swiftly responded to a call for help following a hijacking incident involving a Malta-flagged cargo vessel with 18 crew on board in the Arabian Sea, officials said on Saturday.

The Indian Navy swung into action after receiving a Mayday message (distress call) on the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operation (UKMTO) portal on December 14.

The vessel MV Ruen indicated that six 'pirates' persons had illegally boarded it, the officials said.

The Navy's maritime patrol aircraft undertook surveillance missions in the area and its warship on

*(Contd on page 5)*



MV Ruen with 18 crew onboard sent a distress signal which was intercepted by the Indian Navy, which promptly launched a rescue mission. (PTI)