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Raising Awareness: Observing World Pneumonia Day

World Pneumonia Day, observed every year on November 12, highlights the global fight against pneumonia, a preventable yet deadly respiratory infection that claims millions of lives annually, especially among children and the elderly. The day aims to raise awareness about prevention, timely diagnosis, and treatment, while advocating for better healthcare access and vaccination coverage worldwide. Health organizations, governments, and communities come together to educate the public, promote hygiene practices, and encourage immunization. Observing this day serves as a reminder of the importance of respiratory health and the collective effort needed to reduce pneumonia's impact globally.

राष्ट्रदूत
THURSDAY
12 November 2026
A-B

#JOHN MCGINTY

32 Marines vs. an Entire Regiment

Without waiting for orders, McGinty ran through heavy machine-gun and mortar fire to reach them





War often produces stories of extraordinary courage, where a single leader and a small group of soldiers stand against overwhelming odds. One such story comes from the Vietnam War, when a young Marine named John James McGinty III led 32 Marines against an entire enemy regiment.



On July 18, 1966, in Quang Tri Province in South Vietnam, McGinty was a 26-year-old Staff Sergeant serving with the United States Marine Corps. His platoon of 32 Marines had been assigned a dangerous task: to act as the rear guard while their battalion withdrew after three days of intense fighting. Suddenly, a large force of North Vietnamese soldiers attacked them with small arms, machine guns, and mortars.

For four hours, wave after wave of enemy soldiers charged the small Marine platoon. Despite being greatly outnumbered, McGinty rallied his men and encouraged them to hold their ground. His leadership kept the Marines fighting even as the situation became more desperate.

During the battle, two squads of Marines became separated from the rest of the platoon. About twenty Marines were cut off, surrounded by the enemy, and nearly all of them were wounded. Their medic had already been killed. Without waiting for orders, McGinty ran through heavy machine-gun and mortar fire to reach them. Even after being wounded in his left eye by shrapnel, McGinty refused to stop. He crawled from Marine to Marine, reloading their weapons and placing rifles back into their hands so that they could continue fighting. He shouted encouragement and directed their fire while enemy soldiers closed in. At one point, when enemy troops tried to flank their position, McGinty confronted them directly and shot five of them at close range with his pistol. The battle was still not over. As the enemy prepared another massive assault that could have destroyed his platoon, McGinty made a risky decision.

He called in artillery and air strikes to within just fifty yards of his own position. This was extremely dangerous, because even a small error could have killed his own men. The strikes hit the attacking forces and forced them to retreat. When the battle ended, it was estimated that about 500 enemy soldiers had been killed. McGinty's small group of Marines had held their ground against overwhelming numbers.

For his extraordinary courage and leadership, McGinty received the Medal of Honor from U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968. His actions saved the lives of many Marines and became one of the most remarkable stories of bravery during the Vietnam War.

Despite the recognition, McGinty remained humble. According to his family, he often said that he had simply done what any Marine sergeant would have done to protect his men. The story of John McGinty reminds us that leadership, courage, and determination can change the course of a battle, even when the odds seem impossible.



ISRAEL'S INCONCLUSIVE MANDATE



From now on, it will be horse-trading a ritual, not unusual in Israeli politics. Eisenkot has three likely routes. First, he can invite Arab parties into his government, which is unlikely as his allies, namely Avigdor Liberman and Naftali Bennett, have ruled out direct Arab participation.



Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (RETD)

Israel's election ended without a clear winner. Neither Benjamin Netanyahu's bloc, with 53 seats, nor Gadi Eisenkot's, with 48 seats, reached the magic number of 61 or more to form the next government. But the Arab parties, running under the Joint List and the United List, or Ra'am, have together won a historic 19 seats in the 120-seat Knesset.

This is the largest Arab representation in Israeli history, up from 10 seats presently held and above the 15 seats they won in 2020. With 19 seats, the Arab parties have emerged as this election's surprise upset, and possibly, kingmakers.

The historic surge in Arab voter turnout has placed Israel's Arab-majority parties in a position to determine the next government, putting the Zionist opposition's long standing refusal to rely on their support to a potentially decisive test.

The Arab Vote

"Probably, the most important phenomenon of this election is the rise and the revival of the Arab vote," Daniel Shek, a former Israeli Ambassador, has said. "The statement is clear: You cannot disregard such a large portion of the electorate in the calculations for Israeli politics." Though, both Netanyahu and Eisenkot have rejected the idea of partnering with them, citing a lack of shared values.

Analysts at the Israel Democracy Institute once described the long slide in Arab turnout in Israeli general elections as seemingly irreversible: from about 75 percent in 1999 to 44.6 percent in 2021, then 53.2 percent in 2022. This week, the turnout was about 80 percent, above the national figure of 77.7 percent; a number that is significant across the Israeli political scene, especially since Palestinian citizens of Israel make up about a fifth of



#GOVERNING



Israel's population. Several factors explain this popular mobilization. The first is anger at Netanyahu's far-right government, which is perceived as ideologically anti-Arab, with far-right racist ministers openly inciting against their community. In a September Israel Democracy Institute poll, 54 percent of Palestinian citizens of Israel named rising crime their top voting issue.

The second factor is same-day backlash. Netanyahu spent Election Day fearmongering and warning that Palestinian citizens of Israel were flooding polling stations and accused them of trying to steal the election. Media reports say Likud and Religious Zionism sent nearly 2,000 activists to Arab polling places, which Arab parties say was meant to scare voters.

The third possible factor is the efforts especially by right-of-centre parties and the left, to get rid of Netanyahu after October 2023 and what followed. Many Palestinian citizens of Israel blame Netanyahu, for the atrocities committed in Gaza and the wave of terror being carried out in the West Bank.

Horse Trading

While neither Zionist camp expected the Arab parties to do so well, their win has blocked Netanyahu's path to forming a government on his own. His bloc is eight seats short of 61, Eisenkot's is thirteen short. High Arab turnout denied both a majority.

From now on, it will be horse-trading a ritual, not unusual in Israeli politics. Eisenkot has three likely routes. First, he can invite Arab parties into his government, which is unlikely as his allies, namely Avigdor Liberman and Naftali Bennett, have ruled out direct Arab participation. The second possible route is a quid-pro-quo deal in which Arab parties back him from outside, providing parliamentary support. Joint List leader Yousef Jabareen has offered exactly that to any government seeking to oust Netanyahu. At the same time, Ra'am's Mansour Abbas wants a real partnership and says he is talking to both blocs.

A third route, which is reportedly backed by the Donald Trump administration, is a unity government between Netanyahu and Eisenkot. It is possible on paper, but question marks remain about whether everyone involved would accept it, especially the opposition bloc, where Eisenkot and Liberman have vowed not to serve under Netanyahu under any circumstances.

For an Arab party to join an Israeli government, there is precedent. In 2021, Abbas signed a coalition deal with Bennett and Yair Lapid worth billions of dollars for the Arab community, which also led to the recognition of several Bedouin villages. Incidentally, the Standing Together group has said that rallies will be held across Israel to support a Jewish-Arab government by the so-called change bloc. "The Jewish-Arab majority that voted for change must also be reflected in the next government. Now is not the time to abandon our partnership, but to turn it into a political force that changes reality," the organisers have said.

For Netanyahu, any partnership between Eisenkot and the Palestinian citizens of Israel means derailment of his chances and his political comeback. He has dismissed any partnership with Arab parties as treasonous and said a government working with them would endanger Israel.

On 28 October, Likud also claimed that the Arab parties stole the election and demanded an investigation into vote rigging in Arab polling stations, but these are allegations. While his rivals try to resolve their differences, Netanyahu can use his political connections, maintain his partners' loyalty, and examine who in the opposing camp might prefer a compromise to another election. Some analysts also believe that Netanyahu will try to force a new election if his efforts to form a new government fail.

The surprise of this election is that Palestinian citizens of Israel showed up to vote in historic numbers. The test now is to see what they can get for it. There is also an irony. Arabs have voted in a democratic election in Jewish Israel, but in most Arab countries, there is no voting.

Yet, while the Arab parties have signaled their willingness to help bring about a change of government, Eisenkot and several of his prospective coalition partners would have to reverse their pledges not to rely on Arab lawmakers to form a government. As without the Arab parties' support, the opposition cannot secure a parliamentary majority. For the present, Netanyahu is likely to remain in office without a majority, while Eisenkot must overcome opposition divisions to form a government or face another election. The fact is that anyone looking to form a government will need to bring partners willing to sit together to the table.

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The Dance Class

#EDGAR DEGAS



Degas's genius lies in how he balances intimacy with distance: we are close enough to notice exhaustion, yet never invited into sentimentality



Bulbul Joshi

The Dance Class is one of Degas's most incisive works, not because it romanticises ballet, but because it quietly dismantles the myth of effortless grace. What we see here is not performance, but preparation: a room full of young dancers caught between discipline and fatigue, elegance and strain.

Degas constructs the composition like a candid observation, almost as if the viewer has stepped into the studio unannounced. The space is asymmetrical, crowded, and alive with interruption, figures stretch, wait, adjust their costumes, or drift into private moments of distraction. Classical harmony is present, but deliberately unsettled, broken open by cropping, diagonals, and the sense of movement continuing beyond the frame.

The ballet master stands to the side, not theatrical but authoritative, reminding us that this world is governed by repetition and control. Degas's genius lies in how he balances intimacy with distance: we



are close enough to notice exhaustion, yet never invited into sentimentality. The whiteness of the tutus becomes almost architectural, catching light like fragile shells, while the muted green walls and wooden floor ground the scene in something ordinary, even workmanlike. Ballet here is labour as much as beauty. Ultimately, *The Dance Class* is Degas at his most modern, revealing art not as spectacle, but as process: imperfect, human, and relentlessly real.

#THE RIBBON EEL

A Mysterious Creature of Colour and Gender

At first glance, the Ribbon Eel's vibrant hues may seem purely ornamental, but they serve a deeper, functional purpose





The Ribbon Eel (Rhinomuraena quaesita) is a strikingly beautiful and enigmatic species of moray eel found in the coral reefs of the Indo-Pacific. Known for its vibrant and ever-changing colours, this eel goes through a remarkable transformation throughout its life. Perhaps, one of its most intriguing features is its ability to change gender and colour as it matures, making it a living example of the fluidity of nature. From black to blue to yellow, the Ribbon Eel's transition reflects not only physical change but also an extraordinary biological adaptation.

The Ribbon Eel's Colourful Life Stages

At first glance, the Ribbon Eel's vibrant hues may seem purely ornamental, but they serve a deeper, functional purpose tied to its life stages and gender changes. The Ribbon Eel's life cycle involves three distinct colour phases: black, blue, and yellow.

1. **Black (Juvenile Stage)**

When Ribbon Eels first hatch, they are a striking jet-black, with long, slender bodies and a yellowish dorsal fin. This stage of life, in which the eel is entirely black, is marked by a shy, reclusive nature. As juveniles, Ribbon Eels are solitary creatures, typically hiding in burrows or crevices in the coral reefs. They are primarily found in deeper waters and tend to be very cautious, avoiding potential threats. Their black colour serves as camouflage in their environment, helping them blend into the shadows of the reef.

2. **Blue (Adult Male Stage)**

As the Ribbon Eel matures, it undergoes a dramatic colour change, turning from black to a brilliant blue. At this stage, the eel has become male, and the blue colouration is most commonly associated with the adult male Ribbon Eel. This stage is often seen in mature eels as they begin to move into more visible areas of the reef, where they establish territories and begin searching for mates. The blue colouration in males is vivid, and it plays a role in attracting females. However, despite their striking appearance, males remain quite reclusive by nature, often staying hidden among rocks or coral.

3. **Yellow (Female Stage)**

The most dramatic and surprising transformation occurs when the Ribbon Eel transitions into its final and most recognizable form: the bright yellow female. The transformation from blue to yellow marks a shift in gender, as the eel moves from being male to female. This colour change is believed to be tied to a complex hormonal mechanism that is triggered by age, environmental conditions, and possibly, the presence of other eels. The yellow female Ribbon Eel is the most visible and prominent in the reef environment, often observed during mating periods. Yellow females are larger than their blue male counterparts, and their appearance signifies their readiness to breed. Once they reach this stage, they are usually seen in the company of males, engaging in a unique mating ritual.

A Shy and Solitary Nature

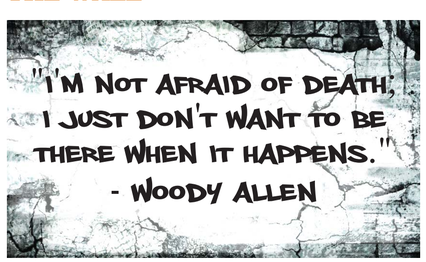
Throughout their life stages, Ribbon Eels maintain a shy and elusive nature. Even as adults, they tend to be solitary creatures, avoiding interaction with other eels and remaining hidden in crevices or burrows. This behaviour is partly a survival tactic, as Ribbon Eels are vulnerable to predation by larger fish and other marine creatures. Their shy nature is also linked to their need for a controlled and secure environment, where they can feed and reproduce without the threat of predators.

The Ribbon Eel's solitary and reclusive behaviour contrasts sharply with its vivid, attention-grabbing colouration. Despite their beauty and bright hues, Ribbon Eels are not aggressive or overtly social. Their primary concern is their own safety and the pursuit of food, typically consisting of small fish and invertebrates.

The Ribbon Eel is a remarkable creature that showcases the incredible diversity and adaptability of nature. Its ability to change colour and gender throughout its life is a fascinating example of how species evolve to meet the demands of their environments. From its shy, reclusive juvenile stage to its bold, colourful adult phases, the Ribbon Eel embodies the mystery and beauty of the underwater world.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

