



SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Second Kanchendzonga Marathon next month

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 OCT:**

More than 40 runners from across the country and abroad are set to participate in the second edition of the strenuous Kanchendzonga Marathon 2017 to be held on 06 Nov on the Dzongri trail in West Sikkim.

The event is being organised by Sikkim Mountaineering Association and Kanchenjunga Marathon Committee with support from Tourism Department. This high altitude run was first hosted in 2015, a press release informs.

So far, 40 runners from different States of the country and one from Nigeria have registered for the marathon, informs the organizing committee director, Kunzang Gyatso.

He further informed that preparations for the marathon have reached the final stages.

It is informed that the participants and the organizing committee members are scheduled to leave on 30 Nov from Yoksom to Goechala. The marathon will be flagged off on 06 Nov from Goechala at the height of 15,700 feet and the runners will have to run 42 KMs at the scheduled time of 08 hours and complete the half marathon of 21 KMs from Phedang to Yoksom in 04 hours.

The winner will receive a cash prize of Rs One lakh while the first runner-up and second runner-up will receive Rs 75,000 and 50,000 respectively along with medals, mementos and certificates.

LJP demands PM's intervention to stop attacks on NE people

NEW DELHI, OCT 28 (PTI): Citing a rise in the number of cases involving racial discrimination and attacks on those from the north-east in the national capital, the Manipur unit of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) today demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention in the matter.

In a memorandum submitted to the prime minister, the party also urged him to implement the recommendations of the Bezbaruah Committee in letter and spirit.

The committee was formed in 2014 under the chairmanship of M P Bezbaruah, a member of the North-Eastern Council.

It had recommended that the government took special police initiatives to ensure the safety and security of the north-eastern people living in Delhi-NCR and other parts of the country.

The memorandum also suggested that the government should form a new panel if the Bezbaruah committee's report was "not satisfactory".



NE COMES TO TOWN! Gangtokians would have noticed the youthful spring which has descended on the capital just as the winter is setting in. This, thanks to the three-day 5th North East Youth Festival which Gangtok is hosting and which was declared open by Chief Justice of the High Court of Sikkim, Justice Satish Kumar Agnihotri, at Paljor Stadium on Saturday. Over the three days, delegations from the eight states which make up the North East Council will celebrate and compete in various disciplines spread out across the length of Gangtok. Walk anywhere from Paljor Stadium to Mannan Bhawan to MG Marg to Janta Bhawan to even Burtuk, and you are guaranteed to run into an entertaining introduction to the North Eastern milieu.

997 students receive degrees at SMU's 17th Convocation

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 OCT:**

997 STUDENTS OF SIKKIM Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT), Medical graduates and Post Graduates from Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Science (SMIMS), Nursing Graduates from Sikkim Manipal College of Nursing (SMCON), Physiotherapy graduates and post graduates from Sikkim Manipal College of Physiotherapy (SMCPT), Master of Hospital Administration and Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts graduates from Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, SMU received their graduation degrees today at the 17th convocation ceremony of the university.

The convocation ceremony was attended by



founder and chairperson of Mu Sigma Inc, Dhiraj Rajaram, as chief guest along with Governor Shrinivas Patil who is also the Sikkim Manipal University

Chancellor.

In his address, Mr Patil said that in order to accomplish and usher-in the much-needed performance culture, "it is

important that we learn about shared purpose, teamwork, partnerships and building relationships."

"Since 1995, guided

by the vision to achieve Global Leadership in Human Development and Excellence in Education and Healthcare, Sikkim Manipal University has achieved a lot and have crossed several milestones. The vision of the University to keep the choice of students, faculty and industry at the core of its objectives has reaped dividends in its remarkable journey of over two decades.

However, we must not rest on our laurels. Dynamics of the Global Economy are fast changing. To keep up with the pace of this rapid change, we require leadership that can transform our Corporates into a learning organization. We need learning institutes that are flexible, agile and **turn to pg03**

Labourer crushed to death dismantling building in Pakyong

**REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 28 OCT:**

Subir Roy, 44, was crushed to death today when a portion of the building he was engaged as a labourer to dismantle collapsed on him in Pakyong.

He, along with six others, was at work dismantling a building rendered inhabitable by the airport construction when, at around 4 p.m. a portion of the building collapsed on him.

His body was eventually extracted from the unstable section by a team of NDRF personnel later in the evening. The dead body has been sent to the STNM Hospital for post mortem and will then be handed over to the bereaved family. Subir Roy hailed from Jalpaiguri in West Bengal.

The Airports Authority of India which is developing the airport had handed over the task of dismantling the said building to the Buildings & Housing Department which had tendered it to a local contractor, it is informed.

The building in question is one of five earmarked for demolition. The same crew, it is informed, had dismantled the other buildings as well without any mishaps.

England thrash Spain 5-2 to win 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup



Kolkata, Oct 28 (PTI): England produced a memorable come-from-behind performance to crush Spain 5-2 and win the FIFA U-17 World Cup final, here today.

England have now done a FIFA double in the same year, having won the FIFA U-20 World Cup in June.

It was a sweet revenge as England lost to La Rojas juniors in the U-17 European Championship, earlier this year.

It was a night to remember at the Salt Lake Stadium as England came back from a two-goal deficit to pump in five in front of a capacity

crowd of 66,000 plus.

This was after Spain went ahead 2-0 at the stroke of half an hour with striker Sergio Gomez bang on target.

If the first was a backheel capitalising on a defensive lapse, the second was an inch perfect left-footed angular volley.

However, England's goal-machine Rhian Brewster's powerful header in the 44th minute saw his team go into half-time down by two goals to one. Brewster won the 'Golden Boot' with 8 goals to his credit.

However, things changed differently in **turn to pg03**

FIFA U-17 WC 2017 becomes most attended in event's history



**PHILEM DIPAK SINGH
KOLKATA, OCT 28 (PTI):**

The 17th edition of the FIFA U-17 World Cup in India today turned out to be a milestone event as it became the most attended in the history of the tournament.

After the third-place match between Brazil and Mali here on Saturday, the total number of spectators who turned up at the six host venues across the country went past the earlier record attendance of 1,230,976 set in the first edition of the tournament in China in 1985.

With 56432 spectators turning up at the Salt Lake Stadium to watch the Brazil versus Mali match, the total

attendance of the FIFA U-17 World Cup reached 1280459.

Before this match, a mere 6949 attendance was needed to break the record.

The 2011 edition in Mexico had also attracted a total of 1,002,314 spectators, becoming the third one to have more than one million attendance.

The attendance for matches had breached the million mark in the last Round of 16 match on October 18.

In terms of the number of spectators per match, this edition is second behind the inaugural edition in China (which was 38,469) as the number of participating teams and matches were

lesser at that time.

Sixteen teams competed till the 2005 edition in Peru (when the tournament was known as FIFA U-17 World Championships) before the number of participating countries was increased to 24 from the 2007 edition in South Korea. The number of matches was also increased from 32 to 52 from 2007 onwards.

Understandably, Kolkata's Salt Lake Stadium has the highest attendance per match. The venue has so far logged a total of 542125 spectators from 10 games, at a staggering average of 54212 per match. The stadium has a total capacity of 66,600.

State's best in the performing arts selected at Kala Utsav

GANGTOK, 28 OCT [IPR]: The state-level Kala Utsav 2017 kicked off with much exuberance and enthusiasm here at the auditorium of the Sikkim Government College in Tadong today.

After conducting selection process at Block and Districts Levels, 112 students from 15 schools had been selected to participate in this state-level event in four areas of arts, namely music, dance, theatre and visual arts.

The four best teams [one from each discipline] will go on to represent the State at the National Level Competition to be held at the Regional Institute of Education [RIE] in Shyamla Hills, Bhopal from 02-06 Jan.

During the competition held today, performances by students of Kalzang Gyatso Senior Secondary School, Kabi, Mangan Senior Secondary School, Jorethang Senior Secondary School, and Sudung Lakha Secondary School were adjudged the best performances in art forms namely visual arts,



theater dance and music respectively.

Sikkim has been paired with Delhi and will be performing a dance forms in col-

laboration. The cash award for first, second and third position at the National level will be Rs 5 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and 2 lakh, respectively.

Organised by the Human Resource Development Department, under the aegis of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan [RMSA], the

programme was attended by Additional Chief Secretary-HRDD, GP Upadhyaya, as chief guest.

Mr Upadhyaya, during

his address, appreciated the efforts of the participating students and accompanying teachers in bringing together art forms and e-projects. Emphasizing the importance of art and culture in a student's life, he urged the students to overcome all challenges and shine with their performances at the national level.

Special Secretary cum SPD-RMSA, MT Sherpa, gave a brief overview and objective of Kala Utsav. While addressing the function, he focused on the rules and regulations of Kala Utsav competition for the participating students. Students' participation is a great contribution for the State, he added. He also highlighted about the selection process of the National Level Competition.

The District, State and National Level Kala Utsav was structured as an art festival which includes performances and display of exhibits along with an online art project [E-Project]. Abiding by the theme "Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat", the secondary level

students along with special needs students will also have an added platform to showcase their hidden talents.

The State Level Kala Utsav has been succeeded by district-level competitions which was competed in four realms of Arts, namely music, dance, theatre and visual arts. All the four districts of Sikkim had conducted a district level competition for selection of one team each from the four domains and the top four performing teams from each domain participated in today's State.

Kala Utsav is an initiative of the Ministry Of Human Resource Development (MHRD) under the RMSA Scheme to highlight and promote arts in educational practices by fostering and showcasing the artistic talents of school students at the secondary level all throughout the country. Kala Utsav was started in 2015 and is now being regularly organized every year as a celebration of art forms in the school system.

HP: CBI court rejects bail plea of IGP in custodial death case

SHIMLA, OCT 28 (PTI): A CBI court today rejected the bail plea of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Z H Zaidi in the case of custodial death of an accused in the rape-and-murder of a teenage girl in Kotkhai in Himachal Pradesh.

The court extended the judicial remand of Zaidi, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Manoj Joshi and six other policemen by two weeks up to November 12 in the case.

Zaidi, the then Theog DSP Joshi, the then Staton House Officer of Kotkhai, one Assistant Sub-Inspector, three head constables and one constable were arrested by the CBI on August 29.

Suraj Singh, an accused in the rape-and-murder case, was killed allegedly by another accused in the case at Kotkhai police station on the intervening night of July 18 and 19, triggering a massive public outrage.

Suraj Singh, a 29-year-old labourer from Nepal, was among six people arrested by the local police.

The remaining five accused in the rape-and-murder case have been released on bail as the CBI failed to file the charge sheet within 90 days.

Zaidi was heading a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case of rape-and-murder of the minor school girl in Kotkhai area of Shimla in early July.

The case was later transferred to the CBI on the orders of the Himachal Pradesh High Court.

The Class X student had gone missing on July 4 and her naked body was recovered from Haliala forests in Kotkhai on July 6.

The CBI has so far submitted six status reports and the high court has directed the CBI to file the charge sheet in the custodial death case by November 30.

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Rangpo Senior Secondary School wins State Level Science, Mathematics & Environment Exhibition

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 OCT:**

State Council of Educational Research & Training [SCERT], Sikkim in collaboration with National Council Of Educational Research And Training [NCERT], New Delhi organized a three-day State Level Science, Mathematics & Environment Exhibition for Children 2017-18 [SLSMEE] from 26-28 Oct at Tashi Namgyal Senior Secondary School in Gangtok, an SCERT press release informs.

The event was inaugurated by Additional Chief Secretary-HRDD, GPU Upadhyaya, and was



attended by various Section Heads of the HRDD Department.

In his address, Mr

Upadhyaya called on the gathering to inculcate curiosity, creativity and innovation which will lead

to inventions and discoveries for a better world.

A mobile app "SLSMEE-2017" designed by

SCERT was also launched for the event.

Fifty three Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools of the State participated in the programme. Two students and their escort teacher from each school displayed their exhibits for a competition with the theme "Innovations for Sustainable Development" with six sub themes namely Health & Well-being, Resource Management & Food Security, Waste Management, Transport & Communication, Digital & Technological solutions and Mathematical modeling.

The judges for the competition were Dr D

Purohit [Associate Professor, Sikkim Government College], Dr LP Sharma [Senior Technical Director NIC], Dr Indira Chhetri [Health & Family Welfare], Dr Ashish Yadav [Senior Scientist ICAR] and Priyadarshini Shrestha [Team Leader, WWF-Sikkim Unit].

Nineteen schools from East District comprising of 50 students each were also invited to visit the stalls and download the app to vote for the most popular exhibit.

The teams to win by unanimous decision were Rangpo SSS taking the first place with TNS SS securing the second

position while the third, fourth, fifth and sixth positions were secured by Deorali Girls SSS, Namchi SSS, Darap SSS and Lingee SSS, respectively. Modern SSS, Singtam SSS, Tadong SSS and Sadam SSS secured the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth positions, respectively.

These 10 schools will be representing the State in Eastern India Science Fair at Birla Institute of Technological Museum [BITM] Kolkata scheduled to be held next year from 09-30 Jan 2018.

Tashi Namgyal SSS's exhibit was voted the best exhibit by polling from SLSMEE App.

'Story extension' comptt at Phalaichadara JHS



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 OCT:**

With the aim to hone creative and divergent thinking among students, Phalaichadara Junior High School, East Sikkim,

organised a story extension competition as a house activity.

Each house was given a story from their textbook which they needed to extend further according to their imagination and creativity, a press release informs.

Fambong Lho [Green] house stood first with Hemanta Thatal being adjudged as the best participant. Teachers, TB Chhetri and MR Limboo, were the judges for competition.

Recreational harbour comes up near Chilika Lake

BHUBANESWAR, OCT 28 (PTI): The tourists visiting Odisha can now avail a multi-purpose recreational harbour at Satapada near Chilika lake in Puri district.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the harbour through video conferencing from the secretariat here last evening.

The harbour, built at an estimated cost of Rs 19 crore with berth availability of 200 boats at a time, is expected to

boost tourism in the area and create more employment opportunities, Patnaik said.

The harbour has a main jetty, one approach jetty and 20 finger jetties.

Patnaik also launched the 'Sahid Baji Rout Noujatra Suraksha Yojana' for the safety of boat passengers in the state.

Under the scheme, life jackets, fire extinguishers and other facilities will be available to the people.

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE:

Roadside plots (general land) available for sale at Adampool, east Sikkim. Contact 9434117687 for further details and to arrange site visits.

EVM commissioning process completed for West dist

GYALSHING, 28 OCT [IPR]: As per the information received from the Office of the Returning Officer-West, it is to be informed that the Electronic Voting Machines [EVMs] commissioning process has completed on 27 Oct at the Kyongsa Auditorium Hall in Gyalshing, West Sikkim.

499 EVMs were commissioned to go to the

polling stations along with 70 other reserve EVMs.

A total of 211 EVMs have been kept at Gram Panchayat Ward's Strong-Room and 288 EVM are at Zilla Strong-Room. The Strong-Rooms were properly checked and sealed by the Returning Officer, Kapil Meena, along with the other officials.

The Returning Officer-West also informed

that the dispatch of polling parties to all 305 polling stations will be done on 02 Nov from 9am onwards.

Moreover, all of the uncontested candidates have been asked to visit the District Collector's Office on 30 Oct to collect their election certificates from the Returning Officer for all uncontested Zilla and Gram Panchayat wards.

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Gangtok on Sunday, 29 Oct

Temp: 22°C /08°C

Forecast: Some sun with a stray thundershower

Sunrise: 05:43 AM

Sunset: 4:56 PM

PNGS to take on Holy Cross for basketball glory

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 OCT:

Paljor Namgyal Girls Senior Secondary School will take on Holy Cross School, Tadong in the finals of Inter-School Basketball Tournament here at PNGSSS basketball court on 29 Oct.

In the first semi-final played today, the hosts, PNGS, edged past St Xavier's School 18-17, while Holy Cross School thrashed West Point Senior Secondary School 25-09 in the other semi-final played today itself.

The final match will be starting at 12 noon.

Also on Monday, St Xavier's School will take on West Point School for the third place.

LJP to contest Meghalaya

Assembly election

SHILLONG, OCT 28 (PTI): The Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) today said it would contest at least 30 seats in the 2018 Meghalaya Assembly election.

"We have plans to contest in at least 30 seats depending on the availability of suitable candidates," LJP Meghalaya unit president Jamil Ahmed told reporters here.

He said, as a beginning, the party has already announced names of candidates for two seats - Pynursla in East Khasi Hills district and Selsella in West Garo Hills district.

While Arelitha K Sangma will contest from Selsella, Denis Tynsiar will contest against Prestone Tynsong.

Tynsiar was a former minister in the Meghalaya United Alliance government led by Chief Minister Mukul Sangma.

England thrash Spain 5-2...

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the second half as Morgan Gibbs White tapped home an inch-perfect cross to make it 2-2.

Phil Foden then found the target in the 69th minute and the winners literally sealed the issue in the 84th minute with the fourth goal scored by Marc Guehi.

The Young Lions were not over as Fodden rounded off the tally in the 88th minute.

LOST: I, Utkarsha Rai, s/o of Ranjan Rai and Beena Moktan, have lost my ICSE Class X 2017, St Joseph's Convent, Kalimpong, Migration Certificate in Namchi. The Migration Certificate bears Index Number 1172851/104.

Students expect unifying role from leaders after Student Representative Council elections

NITESH R PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 28 OCT:

Sikkim's higher education centres like colleges and universities now have a vibrant system of democratically held student body elections to ensure that the voice of the student is given its due legitimate space in a democratic State.

With elections to the Students Representative Council [SRC] elections due on 09 Nov, the colleges across the State are witnessing a close contest between many candidates.

While interacting with students

in Sikkim Government Colleges of Tadong and Namchi, many students have expressed their hopes and expectations from the new representatives and the future activity of the student body.

Many students were of the opinion that the leader should play a unifying role in the college.

"The President should be such that he or she should have the quality to play the role of a unifier where there may be various opposite thoughts and ideas," said a college student residing in Tadong, Manish Sharma.

Some students also raised the is-

ssue of infrastructure in colleges that need upgradation.

"First and foremost, when we come to college there should be a healthy, clean and beautiful environment to learn along with proper infrastructure in place," said another student, Asha Rai.

She further adds that the student representatives should take up all matters related to these "basics of an educational institute seriously".

Some students of Sikkim Government College have opined that in spite of having facilities like a proper ground and indoor auditorium, the utilisation is to the minimum

due to lack of other activities like sports or arts.

"These student bodies should form various clubs of sports, arts and other hobbies so that there is a vibrant culture in college atmosphere," said a former student of the college, Anisha Lama.

Other issues that came up prominently with the students include lack of hygiene & sanitation and availability of larger canteens and mess in the college area.

Similar views were also echoed by students of Namchi Government College.

A student, Uma Rai, said that the

leader should be someone who can take everyone along and also guide the new students in a proper way.

With successful successive student elections in all government colleges and in Sikkim University-where its student body, Sikkim University Students' Association's [SUSA] active work in the campus has made many positive impact in the University- the elections this year has not only strengthened the roots of democratic values in the State but has also made students actively participate and be aware of the education system they are in.

U-19 Girls' Cricket Camp gets team ready for challenge in Dhanbad

SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 28 OCT:

A Sikkim Cricket Association [SCA] training camp for Under-19 Girls concluded today at Sikkim Armed Police ground in Pangthang, East Sikkim.

The 13-day training camp, which had commenced on 16 Oct, was organised in joint contribution by the players and SCA, informs an SCA press release.

The release informs that a 15-member squad was also selected on the conclusion of the camp for the upcoming U-19 Girls Tournament in Dhanbad.

The team members are: Saraswati Limboo, Nima Yanki Lepcha, Tshering Yangden Lepcha, Simran Gurung, Nur Pandi Lepcha, Archana Limboo, Anita Karki, Pretika Chettri, Darmit Lepcha, Sangkit Lepcha, Yoshna Rai, Lyangrip Lepcha, Sesome Limboo, Tshering Chokey and Bidya Gurung. The team will be accompanied by Kikam Bhutia as team coach, Jyoti Rai as man-



ager, Pranita Chettri as physiotherapist and Susan Dhungel as trainer.

The release further informs that the squad will be playing matches in the BCCI-approved new zone of Bihar and North

East states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland and Sikkim in Women Under-19 Tournament from 01 Nov at Dhanbad.

The SCA has thanked the Chairperson of Yar-

lam Hotel, Sonam Topgay, for generously contributing to the camp and also expressed gratitude towards the SAP Commandant for providing ground and accommodation to girls.

Bullock cart owners block Pune-Nashik Highway

PUNE, OCT 28 (PTI): Bullock cart owners today blocked the Pune-Nashik Highway near Chakan here demanding lifting of the ban on bullock cart races in Maharashtra.

They also sought a ban on the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), an NGO which has been campaigning against such races.

The blockade disrupted traffic on the busy highway for three to four hours.

The Bombay High Court on October 11 refused to lift its ban imposed on bullock cart races

in Maharashtra. The order came ahead of Diwali festivities when bullock cart races are organised across the state.

"The Maharashtra government passed a bill to resume bullock cart races and the President of India, too, approved it. However, a petition was filed against the bill in the High Court and the court banned bullock cart races," said Ramkrushna Takalkar, an office-bearer of the All India Bullock Cart Owners' Association.

"Several cases have been registered against the PETA in other countries as they are involved in malpractices. We demand that

government ban the PETA and initiate an inquiry against it," he said.

He said the state government should approach the Supreme Court and put forth their side strongly so that the ban on races is lifted.

The 'rasta roko' (road block) disrupted traffic on the highway near Talegaon Chowk for three to four hours.

Police detained several members of the association and leaders, including Shirur MP Shivajirao Adhalrao Patil, MLAs Mahesh Landage and Suresh Gore, and several others. They were later released.



Singtam MEO sweeps for Swachhhta Mission

YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 28 OCT:

Municipal Executive Officer of Singtam Nagar Panchayat, Himmat Rai, headed the streets of Singtam with a broom to spread awareness on cleanliness and national mission "Swa-

chha Bharat". He believes that since the State of Sikkim has acquired the status of being the cleanest State of the country, it was the responsibility of each and every citizen here to maintain the national status that Sikkim has already achieved.

Govt in consultation with MCI taking steps to revise MBBS syllabus: DGHS

BHUBANESWAR, OCT 28 (PTI): Director General of Health Services, Prof Jagdish Prasad today said the Central government, in consultation with the Medical Council of India (MCI), was taking steps to revise the syllabus of the MBBS course.

He said the step is being taken to ensure that the MBBS students do not require to study in great detail many aspects of medical science in which they would specialise subsequently.

"The new syllabus may be ready in another one and half years," Prasad told reporters after addressing a public lecture on 'National Health Programmes' at the SOA University.

"What is the need to teach a student at MBBS level 10 different surgeries when all they need is to acquire a good knowl-

edge as to how to treat common diseases," he said and urged students to take great care in studying the subjects of anatomy, physiology and pathology for a strong foundation.

While interacting with doctors and faculty members, Prof Prasad said the issue of antibiotic resistance was a raging topic world over and the government had requested MCI to make it mandatory for every medical college to have a pharmacovigilance committee to monitor use of antibiotics.

"Antibiotic resistance is worse than cancer as it cannot be treated and will kill," he said.

On certain diseases, Prasad said though leprosy eradication had been largely successful in most states, the problem persisted in the states of Odisha, Chhatisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand besides

the Union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

"The government has launched a door to door campaign to identify leprosy cases and 40,000 cases had been detected after health workers had visited 40 crore houses in these identified areas," he said while delivering the lecture.

"In Odisha, 5100 new cases had been identified," he said.

Prasad said Odisha, along with Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand and Meghalaya, accounted for 80 per cent of malaria cases even as the government had drawn up a plan to eliminate the vector-borne disease in the country by 2025.

"Odisha accounts for 40 per cent of the malaria cases and we aim to reduce the incidence in the country by one-third this year," he said.

997 students receive degrees at SMU's 17th Convocation

contd from pg01

open to change. Equally significant are the efforts at modernising our workplace. In order to accomplish and usher in the much needed performance culture, it is important that we learn about shared purpose, teamwork, partnerships and building relationships," the Governor stressed.

"Today, being its Chancellor, I can share the pride in saying that SMU, to a large extent, has achieved these vision, mission and objectives. In doing so SMU has emerged as one of the important centres of learning in the higher education landscape of not only in the State of Sikkim, but of the entire country. I congratulate all of you for the progress made so far and hope that the momentum of its remarkable growth and enhanced prestige will be sustained in future as well," the Governor said.

"Over the years, the SMU alumni have produced some of the best in both engineering as well as medical fields. I am confident that Sikkim Manipal University and its constituent colleges

will continue to strive towards excellence and set a new benchmark of quality human resource output adapting to the changing needs," he added.

SMU pro-chancellor, Rajen Padukone, in his address, talked about the accomplishments of the university since its inception.

"We started with a modest strength of 130 students in 1997; today, on campus, we are over 4,500 students. More than 10,000 students have graduated from this University. I can proudly say that Sikkim Manipal University has proved, beyond doubt, that it has the academic capacity and knowledge, and the research capability to meet the higher education aspirations of students from across our country," he said.

The chief guest in his address talked about the need the need to fundamentally rethink the problem solving approach of students.

"Ask better questions in life, it's not what you know that becomes important, today you are celebrating all the better things you know, what you know is less important than what you

don't know, and knowing what you don't know, and having a perspective not towards knowledge but towards learning is going to become very important in life," he told the graduates.

Emphasizing on the importance on team work and collaborative efforts Mr Padukone said, "Until now you have been tested as an individual. But in life, you will be tested on who can come up with better questions, on who can collaborate well with the person next to them. Be a team player."

Presenting the university highlights, SMU Vice Chancellor, Lieutenant General MD Venkatesh said that, SMU has contributed immensely to the growth of Sikkim and the North East region especially in medical and engineering education.

"SMU is has become the gateway of learning for the North East especially for professional education. Around 50% of the students enrolled in SMU and its various constituent units are from the North East region. 20% seats are reserved for Sikkim students with 75% con-

cession in tuition fees, and scholarships for deserving students. We have excellent placement records with placements for NE students in TCS, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Cap Gemini, Ericsson, Sony, L&T, Wells Fargo, ANZ etc. SMU has also provided employment opportunities for local personnel in the University at all levels," he said.

SMU will continue to strive in its efforts to support the Sikkim government and be a partner to its development," he added.

The annual report of SMU was also released on the occasion.

Chairman Manipal Education & Medical Group, Dr Ranjan Pai and Additional Chief Secretary cum Principal Secretary, Human Resources Development Department, Government of Sikkim, G.P Upadhyaya also attended the ceremony along with different department officials and university heads.

Gold and silver medal winners were also awarded during the convocation.

Lose the Jokes, Break the Spine

Humour is necessary in a democracy

So, now we are country where a Prime Minister who is expected to a somber statesman can make crude jokes but comedians whose job it is to mock and poke need to hold their tongues if they slip a punch-line which could offend the powerful. Here one may recall the tasteless remark that the PM made in Japan at around this time last year when he sniggered that many a marriage reception in India had been burned because of demonetization. The bhakts had laughed along at the time. Even applauded. And now, we learn of a comedy show which censored a skit, dropped it completely in fact, when a mimicry artist aped the PM (and Rahul Gandhi as well). This was by Star Plus. The story would have never come out had the recording of the performance not gone viral on social media. We were not even done shaking our heads in disbelief over the easy fearfulness that has become us that news arrived that an FM channel had been bullied by the online mob of bhakts into discontinuing its sarcasm-laced public interest message which called for safer travel for tourists. The two episodes come on the heels of the thin-skinned and hard-nosed intolerance with which attempts were made to have a Tamil film drop sarcastic references to GST, yes, the same Goods and Services Tax which Rahul Gandhi famously threw up as Gabbar Singh Tax. Before all this, media houses have been stared down into taking down reports on crony capitalism and journalists seen as unfriendly to the regime forced out of their jobs and stories. These are not one-off incidents, but a steady progression of suppression of independent thought. It started with mainstream platforms and “regular” news, and after they had been cowed down or co-opted, it was the turn of the jesters. This should not have surprised us because those with an inflated sense of self and/or blinkered by rigid ideologies have traditionally been quick to take offence and fast and furious with the pushback.

We make matters worse with self-censorship, as was displayed by Star Plus which did not even air the performance for fear of protests. Anyone who has seen the skit will wonder what the fuss was about because even Akshay Kumar found it inoffensive enough to laugh along and applaud. The artist mimics Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi to tell a set of jokes, he does not ridicule their policies or positions. The FM channel promo was also more commentary on the society at large and its inability to understand the “atithi devo bhava” jumla and less a criticism of the powers that be. But who will explain these obvious positions to click-bait bhakts? And so we embarrassed ourselves some more.

But all of this is about more than just getting embarrassed or scared, it's also about what we are allowing ourselves to become. Laughter, those among the readers who still remember the Reader's Digest will recollect, is the best medicine. It is the salve that helps maintain sanity when there is too much madness around. The moment people have to look around before they crack a joke or laugh to one, you know that their spine has been broken. Who wishes that in a democracy? Societies which lose their sense of humour and their ability to laugh at themselves also lose their optimism, faith and democratic instincts and few places prove this better than neighbouring Darjeeling which has allowed its funny bone to fracture and is now calcified with easy aggression and a perpetual victimhood syndrome. Come on, even monarchs realized the effectiveness of humour as a safe release for festering discontent and allowed jesters to mock and joke even in their presence. Force this out of the system and resentments will fester and harden into spite and hate to eventually explode because release valves have been too tightly shut.

WRITE US:

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A Rohingya woman takes cover with her child after crossing into Bangladesh.

The Rohingya horrors and Aung San Suu Kyi's whitewash

ELLEN WILES
theconversation.com

It was a bright autumn morning, and I had just dropped off my two children at nursery and was scrolling through Twitter, when I spotted a video of another mother's two children.

The youngest was a one-year-old boy, the same age as my own youngest; the other, his nine-year-old sister, had been carrying him for miles. She was weeping, the tears from her terrified eyes indistinguishable from the rain pouring off her short black hair and drenched clothes. A Rohingya child, she had fled from the one of the many scenes of horror inflicted by the Myanmar military on Muslim areas across the country's beleaguered Rakhine state, where hundreds of villages have been burned to the ground and where fleeing people have been killed by landmines and children beheaded. As I struggled to get my front door key into the lock, I found I was crying too.

The UN has called the Myanmar military's campaign against the Rohingya, involving the burning of hundreds of Muslim villages in Rakhine State and targeting people with landmines as they ran, a “textbook example of ethnic cleansing”. More than half a million people have fled into Bangladesh – many of them children who saw their parents murdered. The UN has warned of a further influx.

For those fairly unfamiliar with Myanmar, the situation is not just horrific, but bizarre. Myanmar was supposed to be firmly on the road to democracy, and yet now the military is out murdering again. Buddhism has an international reputation as a peaceful religion – and yet the vicious violence is being perpetrated by the military in the name of Buddhist nationalism.

And then there's the sight of Nobel Peace Prize-winning human rights icon Aung San Suu Kyi, the head of government in all but name, publicly whitewashing the situation. She has failed, not just to condemn, but even to recognise the atrocities. She has declined to acknowledge the existence of the Rohingya except as part of a terrorist movement or to call for UN investigators to be allowed in to observe the situation. While she has now proposed that anyone “verified as a refugee” would be accepted back, it is hard to see what reassurance this might offer to Rohingya people who are not considered citizens in Myanmar and when no guarantee has been offered for their future safety.

All this has been happening in a country I was living in just four years ago, when the world was full of hope for its peaceful, democratic future. I only wish I was surprised.

DECADES OF REPRESSION

Myanmar's military has a five decade-long track record of inflicting violence upon civilians in the name of Buddhist nationalism, a principle written into the country's constitution. In Rakhine state, the military has twice before attempted “ethnic cleansing” of Rohingya Muslims, first in 1992 and then in 2012. Many of the country's other ethnic and linguistic minorities have been similarly targeted.

During the decades of repressive military rule, the government-run newspaper, The New Light of Myanmar, would regularly feature articles about one of the military leaders opening yet another bright, golden pagoda for the local population to worship in and be grateful for, even as terrible events were unfolding in other regions. I have seen some of the results first-hand: ten years ago, I was living and working in Thailand in a refugee camp where 40,000 Karenni people were trapped after fleeing from burning hill villages and mass killings in Myanmar.

Then, almost out of the blue, the regime announced in 2010 that Myanmar would begin a transition towards democracy. Suu Kyi was released from house arrest and other notable political prisoners freed. Onlookers were astounded but sceptical – they

remembered the 1990 election, in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) party won 81% of seats, only to see the results disregarded. But remarkably, this time, the military appeared to follow through. In 2012, it permitted a by-election in which Suu Kyi was allowed not only to run for office, but to win it. A general election was promised within three years.

Keen to lend a hand in this exciting new phase, and to finally see inside this secretive country, I moved to Myanmar at the start of 2013 to work on a human rights legal project, training local lawyers in Yangon, the former capital. And almost as soon as I stepped off the plane, I was entranced.

HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY

On the one hand, arriving in Yangon was like stepping back in time. Life bubbled busily and fragrantly on the streets, men and women alike wore colourful longyi wrap-arounds rather than jeans and there was barely a mobile phone in sight. The air seemed to vibrate with happy anticipation of the future. The junta was still in control of parliament, but a full general election was promised before long. Most people I spoke to expressed adulation for “The Lady” and felt freer to express themselves than ever.

I was so captivated by those I met in Yangon that I ended up writing a book about them. Myanmar's writers were particularly fascinating to me, initially

waved to her with a mechanical smile.

From then on, I began to notice an uptick in news articles about Muslims, and the hate speech directed against them. A notorious nationalist Buddhist monk, Ashin Wirathu, had recently been released from jail for inciting violence against Muslims and had promptly resumed his activities as leader of a nationalist campaign called 969, which aimed to “defend” the Buddhist values of Myanmar against what was said to be an expanding Islamic presence. The campaign discouraged relationships between Buddhist women and Muslim men and sought to persuade businesses not to deal with Muslim customers; shopkeepers around town were busy putting signs up behind their counters. It all felt sinister to say the least.

WITNESS TO VIOLENCE

A few months later, my husband and I decided we'd do some travelling to see more of the country, and would head almost as far north as we could legitimately go. Some regions were still closed to visitors, including most of Rakhine State, where there had been clashes between Muslims and Buddhists the year before. Other states were off-limits too, among them Shan and Karen, where populations had their own languages and cultures and wanted to preserve them, contrary to the regime's preference for uniformity.

Just before we left, news broke of more violence involving Muslims, this time starting in a little town called Meikhtila. It all started with a dispute between a shopkeeper and a Muslim customer over a gold hairpin, which attracted attention and escalated until a mob formed and destroyed the shop. Later that day, a Buddhist monk was doused in petrol and burned, sparking violence that killed 40 people and injured more than 60, most of them Muslims.

The BBC posted a video showing police apparently standing by as rioters, including Buddhist monks, torched houses and killed Muslim students in Meikhtila in central Myanmar. About 9,000 people were displaced before military

troops were sent in to calm the situation. There were rumours flying around that the military had started burning down Muslims' houses, even that troops had incited violence deliberately. One person told me that they had seen a horde of men dressed in black ride motorbikes around one night while the internet was suspiciously down.

Whatever the truth, the situation seemed to calm down, and we reckoned it was safe to proceed.

We took a snail-like but stunning train journey up to Pyin Oo Lwin, which had been a colonial hill station retreat, then headed to Mandalay, where we dined on delicious dhal in the street. Our final stop on this trip was going to be the picturesque Inle Lake in the Shan hills, which required us to change trains and stay overnight in a town called Thazi. We hadn't quite clocked how close that was to the epicentre of the recent violence.

We arrived shortly after sunset and got off the train to darkness and eerie silence. A couple of people who looked like locals got off at the same station, but scuttled away. There were no taxis waiting, and

nobody trying to sell anything at all to these tourists. It was clear that there were hardly any buildings near the station and that the centre of the town must be some way off down the only visible road. But weirdly, there were no lights to be seen in the distance. We had booked a room in the only guesthouse in town which was supposedly on the main street. There would be no more trains until the next day. We

turn to pg05



because it was so difficult to get access to their work. In my first few days in the country, I searched bookshops for fiction in translation to help me get a better sense of the place, but found hardly any. When I finally met some writers in person, they uncovered a trove of true stories about creating and informing and surviving under one of the world's most repressive regimes. Several I met had spent time in prison for daring to cross invisible lines. Almost all of them were passionate about literature and free expression, as well as about human rights, liberty and democracy more widely.

But one day, in the course of a friendly chat, I got a shock, a glimpse of the darkness behind the country's bright, gold-flecked surface.

I had been having lunch with one of my new friends, a gregarious writer, in one of her favourite cafes on the edge of an urban lake. She had just been telling me vivid stories about her experiences under censorship, including her time in prison, and how she intended to use the life ahead of her to tell stories and speak up against oppression, particularly against women. I was impressed and inspired.

We were saying our goodbyes, and in maternally hospitable mode she insisted on flagging down a taxi for me. One duly pulled up, but she shook her head violently, frowning, and waved it on again. I looked at her, confused. “Never get in with a Muslim driver,” she told me. “Filthy.” I was momentarily lost for words. She promptly flagged down another one. A Buddhist driver, apparently. I got in obediently and

As Suu Kyi will be well aware, the majority of people who elected her party to power are not in support of the Rohingya. Fear clearly plays a part in this, but so does hatred.

Bus plunges into river in Nepal; 19 killed

SHIRISH B PRADHAN
KATHMANDU, OCT 28 (PTI):

At least 28 people, including an Indian woman, were killed today after an overcrowded bus veered off a road and plunged into a river in central Nepal's Dhading district, police said.

The Kathmandu-bound bus from Rajbiraj fell into the Trishuli River while negotiating a turn at Ghatabesi, 70 km west of Kathmandu, around 5:00 am, said Superintendent of Police, Dhading, Dhruva Raj Raut.

Security personnel, including those from the Nepal Army and Armed Police Force, rescued 16 injured passengers who had fallen into the river along the Prithvi Highway.

The rescue teams have pulled out 28 dead bodies so far and the search was on for other missing passengers, according to The Kathmandu Post.

According to the police, most of the deceased were from Saptari district and 12 of them have been identified.

One Indian, Mamata Devi Thakur, also died in the accident, the report said.

All injured passengers were taken to nearby hospitals, but two of them who suffered serious injuries were rushed to Kathmandu for treatment, the police said.

According to preliminary reports, the accident occurred because the driver failed to take the high speed bus under control at the turning point due to poorly visibility, the police said.

Altogether 52 passengers were travelling on the bus, police said.

While the police prima facie blamed visibility for today's accident, such mishaps are not uncommon in the Himalayan nation and occur mostly due to poor infrastructure and reckless driving.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

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1,000 delegates begin celebration of northeastern diversity at NE Youth Fest in Gangtok

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 28 OCT: The fifth edition of North East Youth Festival got underway here today in grand fashion. The inaugural function of the festival was held at Paljor Stadium this morning with Chief Justice of the High Court of Sikkim, Justice SK Agnihotri, present as the chief guest to declare the Festival open.

The three-day festival has around 1,000 participants from all the eight North Eastern States who will be participating in various competitive and non-competitive events. The inaugural function also featured colourful cultural presentations by the participant states.

In his address, the chief guest remarked that the North East Region has not only been



blessed with natural resources and beauty but also cultural and traditional richness.

He encouraged the youth to interact more and celebrate

the cultural exchange that this event has made possible.

He said that such festivals also provide an opportunity to participants to learn about

the language, lifestyle, foods and other aspects of other communities of the region.

Justice Agnihotri also south the contribution of the

youth in economic, educational, social and political areas of the society. He advised them always to move ahead, facing all challenges in life with confidence and self-belief.

The SYA Minister mentioned that Sikkim has been leading in cleanliness and sanitation for a decade now.

He informed that Gangtok was the cleanest city and West Sikkim the cleanest district of the country.

He spoke about development and transformation in the educational sector under the leadership of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling and added that Sikkim has become an educational hub and was all set to become a 100% literate State.

Mr Subba stated that the youth of Sikkim have also been doing well in sports in

the national and international arenas. He also urged participants from other States to learn about the organic farming adopted by Sikkim.

The function was also addressed by Youth Affairs Ministry Secretary, Mr Dubey. He encouraged youths to continue with creative and innovative works.

The inaugural function was followed by commencements of various activities in different venues across the capital.

The inaugural function was also attended by Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs, RB Subba, Secretary Youth Affairs Ministry, AK Dubey, Sikkim High Court Judge, Justice Menakshi M Rai, SYA Secretary, SD Dhakal, Gangtok Mayor Shakti Singh Chaudhary among other dignitaries.

Once a week Agartala-Delhi Rajdhani flagged off

AGARTALA, OCT 28 (PTI): The much-awaited Agartala-Anand Vihar Rajdhani Express was flagged off from here today by Minister of State for Railways Rajen Gohain.

The train would formally start its operations from November 6.

The Rajdhani would leave the Agartala station for Delhi on Mondays and embark on its return journey from Anand Vihar on Wednesdays. The 2457-km-long journey would be covered in 40 hours and 50 minutes, a Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) official said.

Flagging off the train, Gohain said the Centre had plans to extend Rajdhani services to Imphal by 2020. "We have no dearth of money for extending railway services

in the region and we also do not depend on the party in power in a state for our projects," Gohain said, adding that most states in the northeast would be connected by a broad-gauge railway network in the next two years.

After Guwahati and Dibrugarh in Assam, Agartala was the third city in the northeast to get a Rajdhani.

"The 14-coach train, with one AC first-class, two AC two-tier, eight AC three-tier coaches, one pantry car and two power-cum-luggage vans, will stop at 16 stations," the NFR official added.

Tripura Governor Tathagata Roy, state PWD Minister Badal Chowdhury, Transport Minister Manik Dey, Lok Sabha MPs Jiten Chowdhury

and Shankar Prasad Datta, and local MLA Dilip Sarkar were also present at the inauguration ceremony.

The MPs and the ministers sought a railway division in Tripura on this occasion.

Gohain, however, said setting up a railway division in the state was not possible at the moment.

The minister also spoke about the Centre's plans to establish a rail network to connect Chittagong in Bangladesh with Tripura.

"A feasibility analysis of laying down tracks between Chittagong with Tripura and another line between Agartala and Dharmanagar (North Tripura) was going on," Gohain added.

Curtains go up for first Guwahati Int'l Film Festival

GUWAHATI, OCT 28

(PTI): The first edition of Guwahati International Film Festival was kicked off on a grand note today

with the screening of Oscar-winning movie 'The Salesman', a joint collaboration of Iran and France.

As many as 78 films from 35 nations would be showcased at the fest over the next six days.

Turkey being the "focus country" this year, cine lovers would be treated to five gems from the land,

including 'Ember' directed by Zeki Demirkubuz, 'Yarim' by Cagil Nurhak Aydogdu and 'Toz Bezi' by Ahu Ozturk.

Inaugurating the festival, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said, "Cinema is a strong medium that reflects the philosophy of life... It also plays an important role in transforming the society."

The government has decided to make the festival an annual event, the chief minister said.

"Assamese film industry is plagued with various problems. The government is preparing a roadmap to strengthen infrastructure to give the industry a major impetus," Sonowal said.

He also announced the establishment of a State School of Drama on the lines of the National School of Drama for preserving theatrical traditions here.

The inaugural function was attended by a host of dignitaries, including Iranian Ambassador to India Gholamreza Ansari, Czech Republic Ambassador to India Milan Hovorka and other eminent film personali-

ties such as Jahnu Barua and Shaji N Karun.

"Despite many similarities between Iran and India, a potential for joint film productions has not been explored much," Ansari said.

The fest has been organised by state government-owned Jyoti Chitran (Film Studio) Society in association with Dr Bhupen Hazarika Regional Government Film and Television Institute.

Besides films from Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Argentina, Poland, Croatia, Serbia, Belgium, and the US, six Iranian films that have made a mark would also find screen time at the fest.

The GIFF would also showcase Indian Panorama, Retrospectives and films from the northeast, including four films by Jahnu Barua - 'Hkhagoroloi Bohu door', 'Ajeyo', 'Halodhiya Choraye Baodhan Khai' and 'Konikar Ramdhenu'.

The six-day extravaganza would come to a close with Estoian film 'Perekonnaveled', directed by Valentin Kuik and Manfred Vainokivi.

India and B'desh to restore snapped rail lines: Haque

AGARTALA, OCT 28 (PTI): Bangladesh Railway Minister Mujib Haque said an initiative has been taken to reconnect railway lines with India in 12 places, which were snapped after partition of the country in 1947.

"We want to restore all the railway lines which existed before the partition of India. Now the initiative is on to restore rail connectivity in twelve places between Bangladesh and India. Both the governments are cooperating with each other in this regard," he told reporters here last evening.

Haque was in the capital to attend a conference of Rotary Clubs of both the countries. Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar inaugurated the conference.

The Bangladesh minister said the second rail bridge on the Titas and the Bhoirab rivers in Brahmanbaria district of his country was completed with funding from India, and that it would be inaugurated soon.

Apart from the 'Moitree Express' which runs between Dhaka and Kolkata, he said another train 'Bandhan Express' to run between Khulna in Bangladesh and Kolkata, was likely to be launched next month.

"There is also a proposal from Bangladesh side to launch a train to connect Rajshahi in Bangladesh and Kolkata," he said.

Haque noted that the progress of the 15-km long ongoing Agartala-Akhaura project was

satisfactory and land acquisition for the purpose in Bangladesh side was complete.

Land acquisition for the project in Indian side has also been completed, West Tripura District Magistrate and Collector, Milind Ramteke told reporters earlier.

The central government has released Rs 97.63 crore to acquire the land, he said.

The process of laying railway tracks to connect Agartala with Akhaura in Bangladesh would be completed next year, Haque said.

Out of the 15-km track, five km would be on Indian side and the rest in Bangladesh.

Ramteke stated that the North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) was the nodal agency for implementa-

tion of the project in Indian side.

Former railway minister Suresh Prabhu and Haque had jointly laid the foundation stone of the project here on July 31 last.

A flyover of 3.7 km will be constructed on the Indian side to save cultivable lands and the entire project cost will be borne by the central government.

New Delhi is keen to establish the rail link as it will connect West Bengal and Tripura through Bangladesh.

The 1,700 km distance between Agartala and Kolkata, which goes through the chicken neck in Siliguri, would be reduced to 350 km if passengers could move through Bangladesh, officials said.

The Rohingya horrors and Aung San Suu Kyi's whitewash

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would just have to find it on foot.

As we set off, a man appeared out of the shadows, looking worried and pointing to his rickshaw. He whispered the price to take us to town. We nodded in eager relief, handed over the money and climbed aboard. He cycled silently down the deserted road, then pulled up at a junction, got off and took our bags from us, putting them down by the side of the road. "I have to leave you here," he whispered hoarsely. Surprised, we got off and thanked him. "Do you know where the guesthouse is?" I asked. He shook his head and was gone.

We walked slowly along the main street. It was only 7.30pm, but nobody was around. No pedestrians, no bikes, no cars, no lights visible except through cracks around doors and shutters – we were utterly alone. We walked silently on down the street, hoping that a door would be thrown open and a welcoming, illuminated face would call out, saying he'd be waiting for us. Nothing.

Finally, we spotted an old sign nailed above a door saying "guesthouse". Relief! We knocked, and knocked again: silence. There was definitely light around the window shutters. We called out, "Hello? Is anyone there?": still silence. We began to panic. What was going on, and what on Earth were we going to do if we weren't going to be let into the only legal place to stay in town?

But then we heard footsteps. The lock jiggled, and the front door opened. A man stared out at us, and then past us. His face was not welcoming; it was scared, and not of us. "You booked to stay?", he whispered. We nodded, and he beckoned us in.

He led us upstairs into an ancient, peel-

ing box room where he took down our passport details. We asked him what was going on and he stopped writing and looked at us. "There is a curfew," he said. "Because of the violence. Just down the road. You didn't hear about it?" It was only then that we realised quite how close to the violence we were. We hadn't thought to check about curfews. "Nobody is allowed to have any lights on after sunset in this region, or be outside at all," he said. "I am a Muslim myself. We Muslims are very scared. Bad, bad things are being done to us. We have nobody to help, nothing."

We nodded, then crept up to sleep in our filthy, filthy single beds in a room that couldn't have been done up in any way for the past 50 years. So much for the transition, for the racing economy of the next "Asian Tiger", for the hope of peace and freedom from fear.

Shortly after we returned to Yangon, an orphanage attached to a mosque was set on fire in the centre of the city, just around the corner from where we were living. Thirteen children were killed. When a police officer speaking at the scene said the fire was triggered by an electrical short "and not due to any criminal activity", he was jeered by the crowd. Nobody was arrested, and after a few days the street opened again.

CONSTITUTIONAL FAILURE

When I left Myanmar, I still held out hope that the general election in 2015 would improve things and that Suu Kyi would speed up the transition and usher in reforms to prevent violence and hate speech from escalating. But as the campaign got underway, it became clear there were major obstacles.

Chief among them was the constitution, which the military government made clear

it would not amend in the foreseeable future. One of its clauses prohibits any candidate with a foreign spouse or foreign-born children from becoming president, a measure designed specifically to bar Suu Kyi from taking the helm. Another provision guarantees the military enough seats in parliament to give it a veto and to exert control over security and border affairs. Still others protect the primacy of Buddhism over other religions and deny rights to those deemed to be non-citizens – notably the Rohingya.

During the course of her election campaign, Suu Kyi lobbied in vain to change the presidential eligibility clause, but the constitution remains intact today. By taking power once elected, she effectively acquiesced to it (she settled for the new title of "state councillor").

SUU KYI'S SILENCE

Given that military violence against Rohingya Muslims is worse than it has ever been – which is saying something – why has Suu Kyi offered no words either to condemn that violence or to support the protection of their rights? Of course, she is in a tight spot. Because of the control the military retains, there is little she can do practically to stem their violence – she has no authority to command troops. As for what she could say, she probably believes that to admit publicly that Rohingya civilians have been attacked by the military – not to mention that they are the targets of ethnic cleansing – would be enough to trigger a coup.

Suu Kyi almost certainly believes that to effect badly needed democratic change she needs to remain in government, at any cost. But there comes a point where democratic legitimacy is completely lost. Ethnic cleans-

ing is undoubtedly past that point.

A further flaw with this notion of Suu Kyi's role is the idea – held on to not only by her but by many in international governments – that the future of Myanmar's democracy depends on her personally retaining office.

In truth, a democratic party is needed; not one person. And judging by her performance so far, she may in fact be more hindrance to her party than help. Rather than nurturing or empowering her colleagues, she has earned a reputation as a dictatorial micro-manager. No other policymakers have been allowed in her cabinet, and those working with her have said that, under her reign, the "government has become so centralised, there is complete fear of her". It's hard to miss irony of her own oft-quoted words: "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it."

Then there's the matter of her personal beliefs. It is by no means clear that even if she could, she would speak out in support of Rohingya Muslims as deserving equal rights in Myanmar. Her party's spokesperson, Win Htein, has stated on the record that she has no sympathy for the Rohingya. She blocked Muslims from running for parliament in 2015 and was silent when a prominent Muslim adviser and friend of hers was assassinated ten months into office. She has voiced no concern over the explicit primacy of Buddhism in the constitution and, on her watch, Buddhist nationalism has increased, not diminished.

As she will be well aware, the majority of people in the country who elected her

party to power are not coming out in support of the Rohingya. Fear clearly plays a part in this, but so does hatred.

When her supporters turned out in force to support her recent speech, they were not clamouring for her to speak up for the Rohingya – quite the opposite. Burmese Buddhists have assembled to block aid deliveries to fleeing Muslims.

Endemic racist attitudes underpinning the violence against the Rohingya must be tackled from the top if the situation in the country is to improve, and if Myanmar's transition towards democracy is to get back on track.

Suu Kyi needs to be brave and speak out. As Desmond Tutu said in his open letter to her, "silence is too high a price". If necessary, she must accept that her attempt to work alongside the military has failed, and resign. That would at least remind her electorate that a genuine democracy cannot tolerate this kind of violence and hatred. Whether their leader stays or goes, the younger generation of NLD politicians and activists must find a way to redeem their party's reputation and make their democracy viable. This is a mountain to climb, but there are talented younger people capable of scaling it. I have met several of them.

In the meantime, the horror of the situation has made me think twice about going back to Myanmar. I have been invited to speak at the Irrawaddy Literary Festival in November, of which Suu Kyi is a patron. If I still go, I anticipate some tense conversations. I might even have to point certain people in the direction of that video.

[the writer is PhD Candidate, University of Stirling]

Brazil finish third with 2-0 win over Mali

PHILEM DIPAK SINGH
KOLKATA, OCT 28 (PTI):

A goalkeeping howler and Yuri Alberto's opportunistic late strike were enough for Brazil to beat Mali 2-0 in an uninspiring match and finish third in the FIFA U-17 World Cup here today.

Mali goalkeeper Youssouf Koita gifted Alan a goal in the 55th minute against the run of play and then second-half substitute Alberto scored in the 88th minute as Brazil hit their more attacking opponents on the counter in a match that never rose to great heights.

The Brazil-adoring 56432 Kolkata fans turned up at the Salt Lake Stadium to make the FIFA U-17 World Cup the most attended tournament in its history but the team, who was defeated by England in the semifinals, did not come to the party and did not play the kind of beautiful football it is known for.

In the whole match, Brazil had just three shots on target while Mali, who showed more attacking intent, had 10 hits. The scoreline did not show the whole story but Mali were also to blame as their strikers lack finishing while Brazil goalkeeper Gabriel Brazao made some fine saves to keep them off the score sheet.

After the match, the fans reciprocated the Brazilians' acknowledgement of their support, but they also appreciated with loud cheers when Mali threatened.

Nonetheless, the three-time



champions Brazil ended the tournament in third position after beginning as the favourites. This was the second time they finished third since the inaugural edition in China in 1985.

Mali, meanwhile, went outside a podium finish after ending runners-up in the last edition in Chile.

Mali made two changes with captain Mohamed Camara coming in for Cheick Oumar Doucoure and Mama-di Fofana replacing Abdoulaye Diaby as central defender in the starting XI. Brazil did not make any changes from the line-up that started in their semifinal loss to England on

Wednesday.

The first half was a battle of the midfield between the two sides. Both waited for the other to commit mistakes. Brazil had slightly more possession but Mali attacked more with the action mostly in Brazil half. Mali played with a defensive high

line while Brazil played deeper and looked to hit on the break and attempted to beat the offside trap with defence splitting passes.

In the 16th minute, Brazil's overlapping left back Weverson had a left-footed shot after a fine work by Lincoln, but missed the target.

Mali skipper Camara had a shot in the 26th minute and Brazil goalie Gabriel Brazao had to dive to his left to save it. In the 40th minute, Victor Bobbin's defensive mistake led to Salam Jiddou taking a fierce shot from inside the box, but Brazao reacted in the nick of time to tip it over.

The pattern of the match did not change much in the second half with Mali looking the side likely to score.

But out of nothing, Mali goalkeeper Youssouf Koita gifted Brazil a goal in the 55th minute. Alan snatched the ball from a defender and his poking shot was weak and harmless, but Koita let it slipped towards his left and into the net to the horror of his team-mates.

There was no other way out for Mali than press for the equaliser with more man upfront. But Brazil exploited the gaps at the back to the hilt and Alberto, who replaced an off-colour Lincoln in the 74th minute, fired in a low shot past the goalkeeper with just two minute left in the match.

Mali made last-ditched efforts to salvage some pride with efforts from Boubacar Haïdara, captain Camara, and Jiddou, but to no avail.

India lose to Great Britain, fail to reach for Johor Cup final

JOHOR BAHRU (MALAYSIA) OCT 28 (PTI): The Indian Junior men's hockey team lost 1-2 to Great Britain in a hard-fought encounter, thereby failing to qualify for the final of the 7th Sultan of Johor Cup, here on Saturday.

India will play bronze medal play-off match against Malaysia on Sunday. Raushan Kumar's goal in the 25th minute was not enough for India to win the match as Tom Sorsby (20th minute) and Jack Waller (52nd minute) helped Great Britain in qualifying for the final of the tournament.

Going into their last round robin match, India needed a win in order to qualify for the final of the tournament, whereas Great Britain only required a draw.

In the second quarter, it was Great Britain, who took the initiative as they were awarded three penalty corners in the 20th minute, the first two of which were well defended by India.

But Great Britain were third time lucky when Tom Sorsby scored when he shot past India's Pan-kaj Rajak.

Best digital content award for Harper Broadcast

NEW DELHI, OCT 28 (PTI): Harper Broadcast, the news channel produced by publisher HarperCollins India, has been adjudged the best for its content in a digital campaign at the Drivers of Digital Award 2017.

The award was given in the media category at a ceremony held in Mumbai on Thursday.

Harper Broadcast was launched in October 2016. Billed as a first-of-its kind in India, it is a free subscription publisher-hosted news channel presented in text and video format of all things related to books published by HarperCollins and some by other publishers.

It showcases celebrated authors, book reviews, plot trailers, videos, cover reveals, interviews, and even awards won.

Speaking on the win, Sonali Singh, head (marketing) at HarperCollins India, said, "Harper Broadcast is the vision of our CEO Ananth Padmanabhan and a dedicated team of select senior editorial colleagues who work closely with our digital team to bring out an edition every month and even special editions."

"We feel humbled and take this as a great motivator to continue spreading the joy of books, reading, and celebrating talented authors," she added.

Subhashree Das, HCI's Digital Manager, received the award.

"This award is special to all of us who love books and love to read. It is knowledge sharing in a cool and interesting way! Thank you so much for this appreciation of our unique platform," Das said.

HarperCollins publishes approximately 10,000 new books every year in 17 languages, and has a print and digital catalogue of more than 200,000 titles.

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India aim to ride momentum in series decider

BHARAT SHARMA
KANPUR, OCT 28 (PTI):

India will aim to play with the same grit and gumption they displayed in the second match in Pune when they square off against New Zealand in the ODI series-decider here on Sunday.

Faced with tremendous pressure after a long time following their loss in the first ODI of the three-match series, the Indian players showed a lot of character as they put up a near flawless performance in the second game to level the series 1-1. Captain Virat Kohli and his team thrive on challenges and they will back themselves to win their seventh ODI series in a row, when they take the field at the Green Park Stadium, which will be hosting its first ever 50-over game under lights.

"We look forward to challenges. We spoke about bouncing back, and we have bounced back here (in Pune). We would look to play a similar sort of game in Kanpur as well," said Kohli after the six-wicket win

over the Kiwis in the second ODI.

Both teams arrived here on Thursday, giving themselves enough time to get used to the cooler conditions in the northern part of India.

The Indian team executed its plans perfectly in Pune, especially on the bowling front with in-form pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Jasprit Bumrah doing the job early on as well as in the death overs.

The spinners bounced back well after an off-day in Mumbai. Yuzvendra Chahal, who failed to pick up a wicket in the first game, struck twice while Axar Patel, replacing chinaman Kuldeep Yadav, found the stumps of the in-form Tom Latham. Part-timer Kedar Jadhav bowled eight overs, conceding just 31 runs.

Kohli may not want to tinker with a winning combination, therefore, it remains to be seen whether Yadav gets a chance to play in front of his home crowd on Sunday.

On the batting front, a big

positive for India in Pune was Dinesh Karthik delivering at No.4 with an unbeaten 64. The team management has tried as many as 11 players at the number four spot since the 2015 World Cup and Karthik certainly did enough to stake his claim in that position going forward. He had batted at number five in the series opener but he himself said that four is his preferred spot.

Shikhar Dhawan getting a fifty plus score after six innings was also good news for India. The stylish southpaw struck the ball beautifully and would be hoping to give his team another good start in the must-win game on Sunday.

However, his opening partner Rohit Sharma is due for a big score after making 7 and 20 in the earlier games.

Just like the home team, the Black Caps would look to get back to winning ways on Sunday as they remain within touching distance of winning a rare series in India.

Apparel exporters flag post-GST issues before Par panel

NEW DELHI, OCT 28 (PTI): Apparel exporters have brought up the problems faced by them post GST before a parliamentary panel, signalling the "strong likelihood" of a decline in garment shipments from India and possibility of job losses.

The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPCC) made a presentation to the Parliamentary Standing Committee (Rajya Sabha) on Commerce chaired by Naresh Gujral earlier this week.

The body pressed for early consideration of tax refunds blocked on the purchase of ginned cotton (agricultural inputs such as agricultural machinery, seeds, fertilisers, power, diesel and the like) and miscellaneous central or state levies like power cross subsidy, stamp duty, property tax and other levies for refund under Rebate of State Levies.

The council also drew the attention of the committee members to the issue of extension of exemption of ICGT on import under EPCG (Export Promotion Capital Goods) or Advance Authorisation from March 31, 2018 to December 31, 2018, in order to provide a longer window for investment decisions.

It also asked for allowing utilisation of MEIS (Merchandise Exports from India Scheme) scrips for use in payment of CGST, SGST and ICGT to ease the challenges of working cap-



ital blockage and other procedural issues.

To arrest the decline in exports, the AEPCC suggested that the competitive exchange rate and rupee appreciation be stabilised to protect the interest of exporters.

"The positive impact of GST is yet to be felt by garment industry where input costs have not come down. Overall effect of GST on apparel exporters, especially small and medium exporters, is burdensome and

stressful due to substantial increase of working capital and higher transaction cost," AEPCC Chairman Ashok Rajani said. "It has not only impacted the production of apparel adversely, but has also led to pressure on margins for exporters due to lowering of drawback rates."

The council, according to him, has informed the parliamentary panel that under the prevailing circumstances, there is a strong likelihood of exports from India dipping in the near future, as the global garment industry is very competitive.

"Further, competing countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam have cost advantages on account of preferential trade agreements with major export markets, and buyers are moving to these destinations for sourcing. This could have a cascading effect on the job scenario as exporters will be forced to shed jobs," Rajani added.



For starters, they would have to put up a much better batting effort than what they managed in the previous game.

Ross Taylor and Latham had bailed them out in Mumbai with a match-winning 200-run stand after New Zealand had lost their top three for 80 runs.

The top three did not do much either in Pune but with Taylor and Latham also not firing on that occasion, they ended up with a below par 230.

There can't be a better time for captain Kane Williamson to lead from the front after a couple of failures.

With the batting letting the team down, the potent bowling line-up comprising Trent Boult and Tim Southee did not have enough runs to defend.

Three hundred has not been crossed in the series so far but that could well be the case here on Sunday. South Africa had posted 303 in the last ODI, played at Green Park two years ago and India fell short by five runs.

India also lost the T20 International played against England here in January this year.

Squads:

India: Virat Kohli (captain),

Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, Ajinkya Rahane, Manish Pandey, Kedar Jadhav, Dinesh Karthik, MS Dhoni (wk), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Shardul Thakur.

New Zealand: Kane Williamson (captain), Trent Boult, Colin de Grandhomme, Martin Guptill, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Adam Milne, Colin Munro, Glenn Phillips, Mitchell Santner, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, George Worker and Ish Sodhi.

Match Start: 1:30 pm IST.

Indian women score sensational 10-0 win over Singapore

KAKAMIGAHARA (JAPAN), OCT 28 (PTI): Indian eves

got off to a roaring start at the Women's Asia Cup 2017 with a dominating 10-0 victory over Singapore here on Saturday.

Navneet Kaur (3rd & 41st minutes), Rani (15th & 18th) and Navjot Kaur (30th & 50th) netted the ball twice, while Lalremisiami (18th), Deep Grace Ekka (25th), Gurjit Kaur (41st) and Sonika (45th) scored once each to ensure India notched up winning points in their opening match of Pool A.

India began with positive intent by attacking Singapore's circle constantly, looking for an opportunity to score.

The effort worked as the team won back-to-back penalty corners in the first quarter. Though the first PC was saved by Singapore goalkeeper Felissa Lai, it hardly dented India's spirit as they were precise in their counter.

It was Navneet and Rani's goals in the 3rd and



15th minute that gave India a 2-0 lead in the first quarter itself.

India continued their fine run in the second quarter as well, adding four more goals, to go into the 10-minute half-time break with an imposing 6-0 lead.

After Grace scored off a PC in the 25th minute, dragflicker Gurjit was fierce in her strike to score India's seventh goal through another PC in the 41st minute.

India stayed resolute as they continued to put pressure on Singapore's

defense, pumping two more goals in the third quarter through Navneet and Sonika.

The final 15 minutes saw India win back-to-back PCs but Singapore defense averted conceding goals.

However, a quick-thinking Navjot scored a field goal in the 50th minute to earn her team a 10-0 lead. India's defense, meanwhile, put up a strong display throughout the match.

Earlier in the day, China beat Malaysia 5-4 in a closely fought encounter.

Spain takes control of “independent” Catalonia

MADRID, OCT 28 (AFP): Spain today moved to seize direct control of Catalonia, sacking its police chief a day after the Catalan regional parliament's independence declaration sent shock waves through Europe.

The firing of Josep Lluís Trapero, the highest-ranking officer of the Mossos d'Esquadra regional police, follows yesterday's dismissal of Catalonia's president, his deputy, all ministers, and the entire parliament.



Moving to quash what he termed an “escalation of disobedience”, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy called December 21 elections in the region under sweeping powers granted by the Senate in response to Catalan lawmakers voting to declare an independent republic.

The dismissal of Trapero, seen as an ally of his region's separatist leaders, was an-

nounced in today's official government gazette. Madrid accuses Trapero of disobeying court orders to block a banned October 1 independence referendum.

Instead, the ballot was disrupted, violently in some cases, by officers from Spain's national police and Guardia Civil paramilitary forces. All

eyes this weekend will be on whether Catalonia's separatist executive, led by Carles Puigdemont, will willingly step aside for caretaker envoys from Madrid.

Spain's Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria is due to meet later with secretaries of state who will likely take charge of Cat-

alonia's regional ministries. Tens of thousands celebrated in Barcelona and other Catalan cities after yesterday's independence declaration, which analysts say the region has no legal power to execute.

But anti-secession rallies have been called for the capital, Madrid, today, and for Barcelona tomorrow. The move to quash Catalan powers under Article 155 of the Spanish constitution is likely to anger many in a region of some 7.5 million people that enjoyed considerable autonomy, with control over education, healthcare and police.

It is the first time the central government has curtailed autonomy in the region since dictator Francisco Franco's repressive 1939-75 rule. Independence supporters have warned they will resist the temporary measure, implemented under a constitutional article devised to rein in rebel regions.

“We won't cave in to Rajoy's authoritarianism nor to 155,” the far-left CUP party, an ally of Puigdemont, tweeted.

A motion to declare Catalonia a “republic” was passed yesterday with 70 votes out of 135 in the regional parliament, where pro-secessionists hold sway. Catalan leaders point to the “Yes” vote in the deeply-divisive October 1 referendum as a mandate for independence, even though less than half of voters took part.

Echoing widely-held fears, Federico Santi, Europe analyst at political risk consultancy

Eurasia Group, warned the crisis could become violent, with “more serious clashes between national police and pro-independence activists.”

Speaking after the parliament's proclamation, Puigdemont urged activists to “maintain the momentum” in a peaceful manner. The Spanish government has received unwavering support from the United States and its allies in the European Union.

The bloc is increasingly wary of nationalistic and secessionist sentiment, particularly after Britain's dramatic decision last year to leave the bloc. EU President Donald Tusk insisted Madrid “remains our only interlocutor” in Spain, but urged it to exercise restraint.

“I hope the Spanish government favours force of argument, not argument of force,” he tweeted.

US keen to move forward on key defence pacts with India

WASHINGTON, OCT 28 (PTI): The US is keen to move forward on some important defence agreements with India that will make it easier for the Trump administration to share classified data and facilitate the sale of F-16 and F-18 fighter jets to New Delhi, a top American diplomat has said.

The Trump administration last month told Congress that it “strongly supports” the sale of F-18 and F-16 fighter jets to India and asserted that the proposals have the potential to take the Indo-US defence ties to the next level. There are important defence agreements that the two countries can move forward on, Alice G Wells, acting assistant secretary of state for the South and Central Asian Affairs, told reporters yesterday.

The agreements will make it easier for the US to share classified data and that will facilitate sales like the F-16 or the F-18 fighter jets and will help create a defence technology partnership, which is what India is seeking, but which will also create jobs for Americans at home, she said.

“This is a dynamic relationship which really hasn't begun to see the potential yet,” Wells said.

Wells had accompanied US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on his just concluded trip to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

“This was an extremely friendly, very wide-ranging dialogue on how we can partner together on the strategic relationship that we think is going to define the rest of the 21st century,” Wells said.

While there was a bilateral component to the visit, they talked about how the two countries with shared values - a respect for democracy, transparency, freedom of navigation, for economic development - can inculcate these values in the broader Indo-Pacific region, working with important partners like Japan and Australia.

Protest by AIIMS resident doctors enters 3rd day

NEW DELHI, OCT 28 (PTI): A protest by resident doctors of the premier AIIMS against “improper implementation” of the Seventh Central Pay Commission's recommendations entered its third day today.

The protesting doctors continued to work while fasting.

The doctors alleged that revised allowances under the 7th Central Pay Commission (CPC) had been implemented in other central government hospitals including RML Hospital and Safdarjung Hospital and autonomous institutes such as the Chandigarh-based PGIMER, but doctors at the AIIMS were yet to get the benefits.

Around 2,000 resident doctors taking part in the fast held a peaceful protest from 1 pm to 2 pm in front of the hospital main gate and announced that they would not break their fast until their demands were fulfilled.

They were joined by the nurses' union, officers' association, society of young scientists, students' union and karamchari union among others.

“The health minister is not at all interested in the problems of the staff of the AIIMS and there is complete apathy to our de-

mands. This (protest) will continue till we get approval for the release of our revised pay according to the 7th CPC recommendations from the health ministry.

“The government should realise the risk of working without food in hospital settings,” AIIMS resident doctors' association president Harjit Singh Bhatti said.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the AIIMS Resident Doctors Association (RDA) said even one-and-a-half years after the implementation of the commission's recommendations and four months of allowance approval in other medical institutes, the AIIMS doctors here still did not get the revised pay because of administrative lapses.

“We have remained silent for a long time, hoping for a response from the health ministry. But there has been a complete lack of constructive steps taken by the ministry.

“Being a responsible citizen and a doctor we will not hamper the facilities for patients. In our further action to put our demands forward we will work continuously without consuming food,” former AIIMS RDA president Vijay Kumar said.

NKorea nuclear weapon use will meet ‘massive military response: Mattis

SEOUL, OCT 28 (AFP): US Secretary of Defence Jim Mattis warned today that North Korea would face a “massive military response” if Pyongyang ever used its nuclear weapons.

“Make no mistake -- any attack on the United States or our allies will be defeated,” he said at a press conference on his trip to Seoul.

“Any use of nuclear weapons by the North will be met with a massive military response, effective and overwhelming.”

Tensions have been running high on the Korean peninsula, with the North conducting its sixth nuclear test last month and test-launching multiple missiles capable of reaching the US mainland. The North's ruler Kim Jong-Un and US President Donald Trump have also traded verbal threats of war and personal insults that have sparked global alarm.

Mattis maintained that diplomacy remained a “preferred course of action” to solve the current crisis but stressed, “our diplomats are most effective when backed by credible military force”.

He urged Pyongyang to “harbour no illusion”, saying the isolated state is militarily “overmatched” by the US and South Korea -- a key ally of Washington that hosts 28,500 US troops.

Trump's recent remark that “only one thing will work” with the North fuelled concerns of a potential conflict on the divided peninsula where the 1950-53 Korean War had left millions dead.

But even some Trump advisers say US military options are limited when Pyongyang could launch an artillery barrage on the South's capital Seoul -- only about 50 kms from the border and home to 10 million people.



Two people have been shot dead by police in Kenya as violence continued over the country's presidential election. It brings the total number of people killed in two days of clashes to eight. In Nairobi's Kawangware slum, one man was shot dead as unrest erupted between ethnic groups. And another man was fatally shot during a confrontation with police in the western town of Bungoma. The latest deaths came as protesters who support opposition leader Raila Odinga clashed with police who fired tear gas and water cannon as they looted shops and set fire to a street kiosk. Some rioters belong to the ethnic group Luo, while others belong to the Kikuyu community.

Around 2.9 mn children in India without vaccination against measles: Report

NEW DELHI, OCT 28 (PTI): Around 2.9 million children in India do not get vaccinated against measles, a highly contagious viral disease that claims nearly 90,000 lives globally every year, a new report published by leading health organisations said.

The world is still far from reaching regional measles elimination goals as around 20.8 million children are still missing their first measles vaccine dose, it said.

More than half of these unvaccinated children live in six countries -- Nigeria

(3.3 million), India (2.9 million), Pakistan (2.0 million), Indonesia (1.2 million), Ethiopia (0.9 million) and Democratic Republic of the Congo (0.7 million), the report said yesterday.

In 2016, an estimated 90,000 people died from measles, recording an 84 per cent drop from more than 5,50,000 deaths in 2000.

“Saving an average of 1.3 million lives per year through measles vaccine is an incredible achievement and makes a world free of measles seem possible, even probable, in our lifetime,” said Robert

Linkins of the Measles and Rubella Initiative (MR&I). Linkins is also the branch chief of the Accelerated Disease Control and Vaccine Preventable Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

M&RI is a partnership formed in 2001 of the American Red Cross, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United Nations Foundation, UNICEF and WHO.

This marks the first time global measles deaths have fallen below 1,00,000 per year, said the report by the World Health Or-

ganisation, United Nations Children's Fund, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Gavi-The Vaccine Alliance.

“We have seen a substantial drop in measles deaths for more than two decades, but now we must strive to reach zero measles cases,” said Jean-Marie Okwo-Bele, Director of the WHO's Department of Immunisation, Vaccines and Biologicals.

“Measles elimination will only be reached if measles vaccines reach every child, everywhere,” Bele added.

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