



# SummitTIMES

Vol 03 | Issue 02 | Gangtok | Thursday | 04 January 2018

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

**Meghalaya signs host city contract for 39th National Games**

**SHILLONG, JAN 3 (PTI):** Meghalaya today signed the Host City Contract with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) today for hosting the 39th National Games in 2022, officials said.

The tripartite contract was signed between the IOA, the Meghalaya State Olympic Association and the state government here.

Meghalaya had made the bid to host the 39th National Games after successfully co-hosting the South Asian Games last year, they said.

State sports director Matsiewdor W Nongbri said the masterplan of the 39th National Games will be submitted by January 2019.

She said a working group, headed by Sports Minister Zenith Sangma, has been formed apart from a Land Bank Committee and Team Preparation Committee.

A cheque of Rs 4.5 crore was handed over to the IOA as bid money for the Games. The state government had earlier paid Rs 50 lakh. The cost of the bid is Rs 5 crore, the officials said.

Urban Affairs Minister R V Lyngdoh, congratulating the team behind the signing of the contract, said it was befitting to celebrate the state's 50th year by hosting the National Games.

IOA secretary general Rajiv Mehta said the signing of the host city contract will ensure that the Games go as planned and on time.

An estimated 14,450 athletes and officials are expected to visit the state during the Games, the officials said.

## Horti Deptt and stakeholders discuss year-round vegetable production

**NITESH R PRADHAN  
GANGTOK, 03 JAN:**

In light of the impending ban on the import of vegetables from March, the Horticulture and Cash Crops Department today conducted a coordination meeting with stakeholders regarding round-the-year vegetable production.

The meeting was chaired by Agriculture and Horticulture Minister, Somnath Poudyal, who, in his address, assured of all support from the state government to the farmers and stakeholders towards ensuring adequate preparedness.

While crediting the farmers for taking upon the mission, he urged them to focus on improving the production of organic vegetables.

The Minister reiterated that the government was working towards



establishing infrastructure such as vegetable markets at sub-division and district levels, cold storage units, collection centres, and has provided vehicles for transportation of agricultural

produce from farms to the markets.

"Organic farming should be perceived and practiced as a social business where everybody - the producers, traders and consumers - bene-

fits," he stated.

The program also included sharing of suggestions in this coordination meeting," assured the Minister.

"Department will take action systematically on all issues discussed in this coordination meeting," assured the Minister.

Reiterating organic farming as a "social busi-

ness" he stated that it is such a profession which not only benefits the farmers but also the traders and consumers.

He also credited the State leadership for paving the way for a sustainable form of agriculture in the state.

He appealed to traders and hotel owners to support the farmers and buy organic produce of Sikkimese farmers at reasonable rates so that even their efforts get rewarded aptly.

Secretary Agriculture and Horticulture Department, Khorlo Bhutia in his opening remarks stated that this meeting has been organised to create a link between farmers/producers, traders and other stakeholders so that there is proper coordination and the economy of farmers and the State as a whole is enhanced.

He touched upon the multiple benefits of organic farming and the reputation earned by Sikkim in the organic movement at the global level. He called for active participation from all stakeholders in the second phase of Organic Mission.

Many farmers who attended the meeting stressed on the need for more awareness in methods and mechanism one can access from the government to take active part in the organic mission.

"It's a positive decision and we are here to know more about organic farming practices," said a farmer, Mani Rai.

"After the ban it is up to the consumers to make us (organic farmers) feel appreciated," said a young farmer, Tashi Bhutia.

[with additional inputs from IPR Deptt, GoS]

## NSR Subramani takes charge as Black Cat GOC, calls on Governor and CM

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 03 JAN:**

Incumbent General Officer Command, Black Cat Division, Major General Tej Bir Singh, accompanied by GOC [Designate], Black Cat Division, Major General NSR Subramani called on the Governor, Shrinivas Patil at Raj Bhavan today, a press release informs.

It was a courtesy call by Major General Singh upon completion of his term in office as GOC, Black Cat Division and by Major General, NSR Subramani, on the eve of his assumption of charge as GOC Black Cat Division. He is scheduled to assume his office from 05 Jan, reads the release.

The Governor extended best wishes to both incoming and outgoing GOCs for their new assignments and career ahead. He also extended season's greetings and wished the officers,



family and ranks of Black Cat Division along with all personnel of Armed Forces a very fruitful year ahead.

The generals also met Chief Minister Pawan Chamling at his official residence in the capital. The Chief Minister assured

to extend all possible support to the newly appointed GOC from the state government in the interest of the nation.

## Never acknowledged existence of Arunachal Pradesh: China

**KJM VARMA**

**BEIJING, JAN 3 (PTI):**

China today said it had "never acknowledged" the existence of Arunachal Pradesh as it kept mum over a media report that its troops intruded into the Indian side of the border in the frontier state.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang's response came after a media report said that Chinese troops intruded into the Indian territory in Arunachal Pradesh for about 200 meters close to a village in upper Siang district.

"First of all on the border issue our position is clear and consistent. We never acknowledged

the existence of so called Arunachal Pradesh," Geng told a media briefing.

"For the specific situation you mentioned, I am not aware of it," Geng said.

China claims Arunachal Pradesh is part of South Tibet.

The India-China border dispute covered 3,488 km along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

According to the report, the Chinese troops who reportedly crossed over with the construction machinery last month were stopped by Indian soldiers. The Chinese troops reportedly left the construction turn to pg03

## Banks await Rs 15000-cr MTM loss on surging bond yields: Report

**MUMBAI, JAN 3 (PTI):** Continuing surge in the benchmark bond yields, which rose as much as 67 bps in Q3, will leave banks with a big hole in their treasury portfolios and result in mark-to-market (MTM) losses of Rs 15,500 crore for the December quarter alone, warns a report.

As much as 80 per cent of this over Rs 15,000-crore dent is slated to be absorbed by state-run lenders, further eroding their core capital, and government may have to rework its recapitalisation math because of it.

In the H1 of FY18, state-run banks had a pre-tax loss of Rs 5,624 crore and 80 per cent of the projected loss of Rs 15,000 crore will be borne by them, says an Icra report.

Banks had booked a whopping Rs 1 trillion profit between the six quarters ending Q2 of FY18 follow-

ing a steady decline in bond yields after RBI cut interest rates.

Concerns over higher fiscal deficit for FY18, wherein government has used 112 per cent of fiscal deficit target by November itself, has had the bond yields on fire for quite some time. This had the average Q3 yields at 7.33 per cent and peaked at 7.4 per cent in the last week of December.

"The 67 bps surge in yields on the 10-year government security in Q3 on the back of higher-than-budgeted fiscal deficit, is likely to result in MTM losses to banks on their investment portfolios in Q3 to the tune of Rs 15,000 crore for the system," Icra said in note.

According to the agency, this is because banks have much lower cushion to absorb interest rate shocks, following the recent surge in

bond yields on the available for sale portion of their G-Secs portfolio, the report said.

As of Q2, public sector banks had a larger share of the AFS book with longer duration compared to their private sector peers, accordingly, they are likely to account for 80 per cent of overall MTM losses of Rs 15,000 crore, he said.

This comes on back of the state-run banks making pre-tax losses of Rs 5,624 crore in H1, and this projected MTM losses will further erode their capital ratios. In contrast, private sector players are relatively better placed to absorb the MTM losses with pre-tax profit of Rs 30,994 crore during the same period.

It also said with this unexpected surge in yields and resultant losses, government may have to increase the capital it intends to frontload

into the banks through recap bonds.

It can be noted that the steady decline in bond yields had resulted in windfall profits for banks, especially in the six quarters between Q4 of FY16 and Q2 of FY18, when banks booked a whopping Rs 1 trillion from treasury gain, much higher than their total pre-profit of Rs 51,105 crore.

While a part of treasury gains were also due to sale of non-core assets by banks given the profitability pressures, however the same is estimated to be under Rs 20,000 crore in overall treasury gains, which means that a large share of the gains is coming from their bond portfolios.

Of this Rs 1-trillion treasury gains, state-run banks had booked 74 per cent of or Rs 74,300 crore, thanks to their excess G-sec holdings. But, despite these sizeable

gains, they reported pre-tax losses of Rs 48,020 crore during the period.

As banks gradually booked profits on their investment portfolios, yields on their investments declined to 7 per cent in Q2 from 7.9 per cent in Q4 of FY16, reducing the cushion to absorb MTM losses against adverse interest rate movements.

Decline in 10-year G-sec yields during Q4 of TY16 and Q2 of FY18 was supported by improved fiscal conditions and yields bottomed out at 6.2 per cent in Q3 of FY17 due to the surplus liquidity from note-ban.

Bond yields were but continued to remain below 7 per cent in H1. But, with the rise in crude prices and concerns on fiscal slippages, yields started to harden from September and continued throughout the December quarter and touched 7.4 per cent in the last week of December.

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## 20-yr-old booked under POCSO in West

GANGTOK, 03 JAN:

A 20-year-old boy from Rinchonpong, West Sikkim has been arrested and booked by the police under Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 on 02 Dec. The accused reportedly ran away with his minor girlfriend to Soreng without informing any of their respective family members. The matter was reported to the police who brought in the accused along with the victim for proper interrogation. The accused reportedly confessed to the police that he had a physical relationship with the minor victim. The victim was then sent to the hospital for medical examination. The accused on the other hand was arrested and brought in police custody.

## Golay accepts SPCC proposal to unite opposition

SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 03 JAN:

A delegation of Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee led by its president, Bharat Basnet met Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president, PS Tamang [Golay] at Rongyek State Jail today.

The delegation extended New Year wishes to the entire SKM party from the SPCC and All India Congress Committee president, Rahul Gandhi, informs an SPCC press release.

The release informs that during the meeting, the delegation presented a proposal of uniting opposition parties in the interest of the people of Sikkim. It is informed that the SKM president accepted the proposal of the SPCC.

SPCC also talked about the issue with Sikkim Sangram Parishad president, DK Bhandari a few months back, the release adds.

# SDF approves Hishey Lachungpa as Rajya Sabha candidate

VISHNU NEOPANEY

GANGTOK, 03 JAN:

Sikkim Democratic Front candidate for the Rajya Sabha election, Hishey Lachungpa, will file his nomination papers on Friday later this week seeking a second term in the Parliament.

Last evening, SDF



legislators met at Ming-

tokgang, the official residence of the Chief Minister, and approved the sitting MP, Hishey Lachungpa's name and the same was approved today by the parliamentary board of the party headed by the Chief Minister, who is also chairperson of the board to give final

shape to their party's candidature, it is learnt.

Mr Lachungpa, a three-time Minister since 1994 to 2009, is among the influential leaders of North Sikkim. His nomination for the second term can be seen as proof of his clout within the party even

as speculations had run around that the ticket would go someone else this time.

Sikkim has the practice of sending members from the Bhutia-Lepcha community for the Rajya Sabha and Sikkimese Nepali members for Lok Sabha.

## Master plan for arsenic free water in WB

KOLKATA, JAN 3 (PTI):

The West Bengal government has drawn up a master plan for providing arsenic free water to all the affected areas but the people need to be sensitised on the issue, experts said at a discussion on dwindling freshwater resources.

The plan has been drawn up in consultation with the Arsenic Task Force, they said.

President of the Institute of Public Health Engineers K J Nath said at the discussion that most advanced and latest technologies have been used in the arsenic removal units attached to approx-

imately 400 tubewells installed by the state government as part of the masterplan.

But many of these tubewells have various kinds of operational problems like damage to mega piped water schemes fed from arsenic free surface water sources (mostly the Hooghly river) by miscreants who cut pipe lines and steal valves. The locals have to be sensitised to take care of the projects, he said at a discussion 'Dwindling Freshwater Resources and Challenges of Fluoride and Arsenic Mitigation of Ground Water : Role of Innovative Technology' in

collaboration with Lehigh University, USA.

He advocated strict vigilance by the law enforcing authorities and effective mass awareness campaign to sensitize the people.

Nath said the progress in implementing the master plan has been slow because of financial crunch caused by drop in Central assistance and the resource crunch.

Delivering the keynote address, Arup K Sengupta of Lehigh University said to combat the problem of arsenic contamination in water, we must look at alternative sources of water for villages and districts

where the arsenic level is high.

"Transforming wastewater into useful water through appropriate technology could be implemented as a solution," he said.

Recent epidemiological studies in the state, sponsored by the Arsenic Task Force and supported by PHED/UNICEF, show that in South 24 Parganas district of the 7683 people examined in 57 arsenic-affected villages, the prevalence of arsenical skin lesion was found to be 4.6 per cent.

The study said in Nadia district, the same is found to be 15 per cent.

The Arsenic Task Force is an advisory body set up by the state government and comprise experts from different academic and research institutes of West Bengal and representatives of various state and central government departments like pollution control board, health and family welfare, surface water investigation, GSI, Department of Science and Technology and the referral state-run SSKM Hospital.

It coordinates and interacts with various other sectors for successful implementation of arsenic removal programmes in the state.

## BKYT thanks CM for nominating Hishey Lachungpa to RS

SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 03 JAN:

Bhutia Kayrab Yargay Tshogpo (BKYT) has welcomed news of nomination of Hishey Lachungpa as the Sikkim Democratic Front candidate for the Rajya Sabha election.

In a press release issued today, BKYT has said that it "welcomes the decision made by the council of legislators chaired under the tenacious leadership of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling for nominating the current Member of Parliament [Rajya Sabha], Hishey Lachungpa for the second time at the upcoming MP election

scheduled to take place on 16 Jan."

"Mr Lachungpa has been a pillar of support to the Tshogpo which is a parent organization to all Bhutia literary and cultural development across the State of Sikkim since 1983. Delivery and result oriented work are more valued in today's world than ever and the nomination of the Mr Lachungpa for his second executive term is a testament to this fact," reads the release.

The organization has further extended its gratitude to Mr Chamling for the nomination and has wished him 'a very good and healthy New Year'.

## SDF using LT issue for political gain alleges BJP

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 JAN:

Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim Pradesh has accused Sikkim Democratic Front of 'playing' with the rights of Limboo-Tamang communities of Sikkim. The party has further alleged that the ruling party has been using LT Assembly seat reservation issue just to get votes.

A press release from BJP state-unit spokesperson, JB Darnal mentions that the statement of Minister NK Subba

wherein he said that the Assembly seat reservation is in the hands of the Centre is irresponsible.

The state government is not taking the matter seriously and is keeping it pending for the 2019 election so that SDF can use it to get votes, BJP has alleged.

The party has further said that Limboo MLAs of the ruling party should not spread misinformation among the people but ensure that the Assembly seat reservation is provided.

## Aadhaar not compulsory for rail bookings, but incentivising its usage voluntarily: Railways

NEW DELHI, JAN 3 (PTI): The Railways has said Aadhaar is not compulsory for booking tickets for rail journey, but it is encouraged by the transport behemoth by promoting it on a voluntary basis by incentivising it.

In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Railways Rajen Gohain said there is no proposal to make Aadhaar number compulsory for booking tickets. However, as of January 1, 2017, requirement of Aadhaar verification for booking concessional railway tickets for senior citizen has been introduced on voluntary basis, he said.

The minister said in order to incentivise the

passengers for linking their Aadhaar ID and mobile number for booking of tickets, the present ceiling of number of tickets to be booked by individual users every month on the website of Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has been revised to 12 tickets.

This, he said was for those individual users whose accounts are verified through Aadhaar ID subject to condition that one of the passengers in the ticket to be booked is verifiable through Aadhaar.

"A reward scheme has also been introduced by IRCTC to incentivise linking of Aadhaar with user ID of IRCTC," the minister said.

# Chinese personnel enter one km inside Arunachal: Sources

ITANAGAR/NEW DELHI, JAN 3

(PTI): Chinese road-building teams entered around one kilometre inside Indian territory in Tuting area of Arunachal Pradesh last week but returned after being confronted by Indian troops, government sources said today.

The sources said the civilian teams came for track alignment activities and returned when confronted by the Indian troops, leaving behind various road building equipment including excavators. According to local villagers in Arunachal Pradesh, the Chinese team members included civilians as well as uniformed personnel.

The incident took place on December 28, nearly four months after the end of the 73-day long Doklam standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in the Sikkim sector.

The sources said on December 28, Indian border patrolling personnel observed few Chinese civilians undertaking track alignment activity one kilometre inside the Indian territory in Tuting area.

They maintained there was "no face off" between the two sides and that the issue is being resolved through an established mechanism.

The government sources said the road building equipment are lying on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control



(LAC).

According to local villagers in Arunachal Pradesh, Chinese soldiers were involved in road construction work in the area and that Indian security personnel intercepted them near Bising village under Tuting subdivision.

The villagers said Indian soldiers confronted their Chinese counterparts and seized their road construction machines including two excavators.

Nyomin Tekseng of Zido vil-

lage near the frontier and Pema Nyisir of Gelling village said that two excavators have been confiscated.

"The road cutting is also clearly visible from the right bank of Siang river at Gelling which is about 7-8 km by aerial distance from the site.

Indian and Chinese troops had pitched tents at the freshly cut road and had erected a Boulder wall," Nyisir said.

The villagers informed a local policeman, who in turn alert-

ed the ITBP deployed in Medog, near Bishing.

The ITBP personnel reached the spot and asked the Chinese personnel to return.

There was reportedly an exchange of words but the Chinese refused to yield.

The Indian Army also sent a patrol to the faceoff site, where it continues to stay.

Though the site is part of the ITBP's area of responsibility, there is a heavy deployment of the army in the region.

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## SAIL FA CONDUCTS TRIALS IN NAMCHI

SUMMIT REPORT

NAMCHI, 03 JAN:

Steel Authority of India Limited Football Academy (SAIL FA)

of Bokaro, Jharkhand, conducted a two-day football selection trial for the first time in South Sikkim here today which received 50

hopefuls registering. Two official from SAIL FA, Subash Rajak (chief coach ) and Sarajit Sarkar, ex-International football play-

er of India and selector of SAIL Football Academy conducted the trials. Also present was Shyam Lama, a former international.

**Gangtok on  
Thursday,  
04 Jan**

**Temp:** 17°C /03°C

**Forecast:** Mostly cloudy with occasional rain and drizzle in the afternoon.

**Sunrise:** 06:26 AM

**Sunset:** 4:55 PM

## Never acknowledged existence of Arunachal...

contd from pg01

equipment behind.

"I want to mention that between China and India there is a well-developed mechanism for border related affairs. Through this mechanism, China and India could manage the border affairs. Maintaining peace and stability at the border suits both China and India," he said.

Asked whether there is another standoff between India and China similar to the one in Doklam area, Geng said the "standoff which happened last year has been resolved properly".

The Chinese intrusion in Arunachal Pradesh reportedly took place around the same when National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi held the 20th round of border talks in New Delhi on December 22, the report said.

"Both sides made clear that the two countries will work together for the continuous improvement of China-India ties.

The Doklam standoff began on June 16 after the People's Liberation Army's troops began building a road in an area claimed by Bhutan. The Indian troops intervened to stop it, saying it posed a security risk to the Chicken Neck, the narrow corridor connecting India with its northeastern states.

# Sports Deptt felicitates Indira Gandhi NSS awardee Naresh Chettri

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 03 JAN:**

State Department of Sports and Youth Affairs felicitated Indira Gandhi National Service Scheme (NSS) Awardee, Naresh Chettri at the conference hall of Paljor Stadium today.

Naresh Chettri is the first Sikkimese NSS volunteer to have been awarded with Indira Gandhi NSS Award 2016-17 on 21 Dec at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. The award was presented by Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, Colonel Rajyavardhan Rathore. Naresh was among 30 recipients from various States of India to receive this award.

18-year-old Naresh hails from Lower Rakdong-Sokpey in East Sikkim. He got selected for



the award last year when he was a NSS volunteer of Dikchu Senior Secondary School. Presently, he is pursuing his bachelor's degree in Social Work from Indira Gandhi National Open University.

The felicitation programme was attended

by Advisor of Sports and Youth Affairs, TB Basnet as the chief guest accompanied by Chairperson of Youth Development Board, Khem Prasad Dahal, Sports Department Secretary, SD Dhakal and other officials. The chief guest

congratulated Naresh Chettri for the prestigious award and his contribution towards the society through NSS and bringing laurels for the State.

"We have to encourage our young children to work for the develop-

ment of the State as well as our country. Our country desperately needs young NSS volunteers who would inspire more youth to work for the betterment of nation," said Mr. Basnet.

Chairperson of Youth Development Board,

Khem Prasad Dahal and Sports Department Secretary, SD Dhakal also lauded Naresh for his achievements.

Likewise, SYA Department Secretary mentioned that out of 40 lakh NSS volunteers in the country only 30 were selected for this prestigious award.

"It is a proud moment for us that Naresh was the youngest among 30 recipients to receive this award," he said. He informed that presently the State has 16400 NSS volunteers.

Naresh Chettri while addressing the function said the award is in recognition for the work done under the NSS in varied social spheres right from introducing organic garden in schools to construction of footpaths, organizing

health camps and cleanliness drive including Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, conducting awareness programme on various key issues and plantation works through innovative programmes.

Speaking to media persons, Naresh expressed his happiness and satisfaction to receive the award. "This award is a big achievement but this is just the beginning and I will continue to work for the society and to create awareness among youth in different issues. NSS not only helped me build my confidence and personality but also made me work selflessly for the society," he said.

He also thanked NSS Programme Officer of Dikchu SSS for continuously supporting and guiding him.

## Ghatani chairs meeting with Health officials on improving health services

**GANGTOK, 03 JAN [IPR]:** Minister for Health Care, Human Services and Family Welfare, Arjun Kumar Ghatani called a coordination meeting of departmental officials at European Commission Hall, STNM Hospital today.

The objective of the meeting was to pass down the directives of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling pertaining to the working mechanism of the Health Department and how the department could improve its workings for the overall benefit of the State.

The coordination meeting was attended by Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Vishal Chauhan, Principal Director, Special Secretary, Medical Superintendent STNM Hospital, Directors, Additional Directors, Senior Officials, Programme Officers and other representatives from various sections of health department.

Addressing the gathering, he instructed concerned heads of the departments to submit detailed report on recruitment of manpower in re-



spective sections, white paper having record of numbers of doctors who have undergone MBBS / PG and higher studies since 1994. He instructed the engineering cell to maintain proper record of infrastructure development, ongoing construction works, repairing and renovation works under health centres, purchase of equipments, maintenance and supply of power and street lights within its jurisdiction. Further, he instructed to clear all pending bills and to expedite the ongoing con-

struction works of the departmental projects like Pharmacy college.

He highlighted the importance of CATCH programme and stressed on the dire need to cover the entire population of the state. He urged concerned heads to be informed regarding technical aspects of ongoing construction of their respective units in Multi Specialty Hospital at Sichey.

He also suggested installing television sets in every waiting hall of OPD section in health centres and display of

governmental schemes like Mukhya Mantri Jivan Rakshya Kosh (MMJRK), Chief Minister's Comprehensive Annual and Total Check-up for Healthy Sikkim (CATCH), referral procedures so that people will be aware about all facilities and schemes provided by the State Government.

Further, the Minister also suggested the strengthening of State Health Information, Education Communication Bureau (IEC).

Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Vishal Chauhan

stressed upon rejuvenation of working mechanism of various sections along with digitalization of data storage under Health Department.

He also instructed the concerned officials to accomplish all the directives and instructions at the earliest. He coordinated the interactive session wherein brief report was presented by heads of departments like Reproductive Child health, Blindness control, Immunization, IDSP, Microbiology, Biochemistry, Drugs and Cosmetics, Non Communica-

ble Disease, NPCDCS, Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme, IEC, Treatment Outside State, TB and Respiratory, Dialysis, National Leprosy Eradication Programme, CATCH & AYUSH, Nursing Institute, Dental departments and Administrative sections and others.

Mr Ghatani also urged officials for collective effort to succeed health based Arogya fair and CATCH programme during upcoming State Level Jorethang Maghey Mela 2018 to provide medical check up to all visitors.

Likewise, Mr Ghatani who is also the Minister for Information and Public Relations and Printing and Stationery Department held another coordination meeting at IPR where he streamlined the directions of the Chief Minister and how it should be carried forth. He also went in detail over the working mechanism of both the Departments for the upcoming Maghey Mela and urged for coordinated efforts with full vigour to make the mela a grand success.

## SGSS thanks SHSC for football camp at Golitar



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 03 JAN:**

Shantinagar Gaon Sudhar Samiti has extended its gratitude towards Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club for conducting a month long winter football coaching camp which concluded on 02 Dec at Golitar ground in

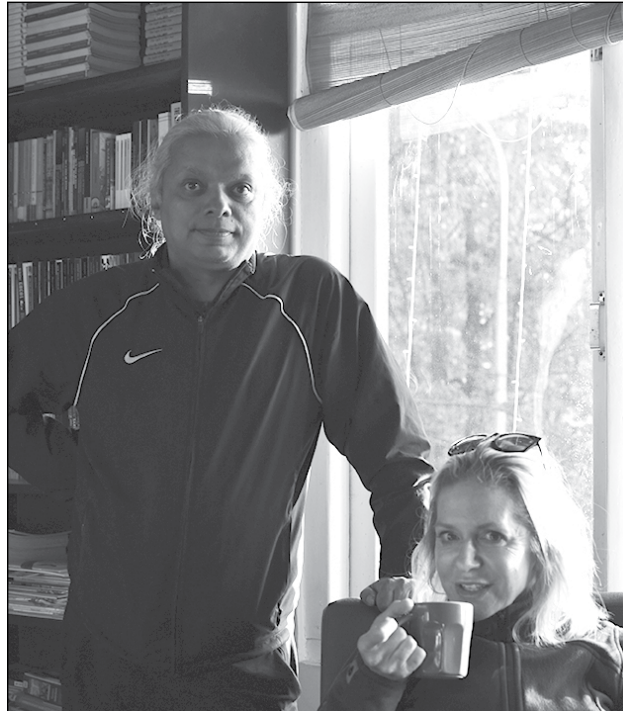
Singtam, East Sikkim, informs a press release.

The camp had kicked off on 10 Dec and 102 students participated in the camp. During the period the students learned the basics of football like proper rules of the game, injuries and its prevention and mea-

surement of the playing ground.

SGSS president, Krishna Chettri presented a certificate of appreciation to SHSC for organising the camp.

SHSC in return also thanked the residents and the samiti for supporting the camp.



## Jazz duo Silverchops to perform at Rachna Books

**DAVID LALHMACHHUANA**

**GANGTOK, 03 JAN:**

Pune-based jazz duo, 'Silverchops', will be performing live at Rachna Books, Development Area at 05:30 p.m on 06 Jan.

The duo comprises of Jayant Sanhriyayana and Rosemarie Eilert. They will be performing in two sessions broken up into Jazz and Western Classical mu-

sic along with some of their original compositions.

"Our idea is to promote original music," said proprietor of Rachna Books, Raman Shrestha. He further said that plans for this particular event had been in development for the past three years.

It is a dedicated music event organized in collaboration with Audio Scape (Gangtok) and Revolver (Darjeeling).



### Anthyesthi Kriya

We are deeply overwhelmed and indebted to all our dear friends and well wishers who have been so supportive and forth coming in our time of bereavement; the sad demised of our beloved father **late, Nageshwar Singh** who left for his heavenly abode on 26 December. Once again in all humility we request for your benign presence in offering prayer for the departed soul (the 13 day Anthyesthi Kriya) scheduled to be held on **8 January** at our residence at Singh Bhawan, Dikchu Bazar East Sikkim.

**Family members:**

*Pankaj Singh, Abhay Singh, Raj Singh, Pritam Singh, Amant Singh*

Contact: 7407812240, 9593781730, 9733052560, 7797885264, 7797582013



**TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM  
GANGTOK  
NIT NO: 143/TD  
INFORMATION TO THE BIDDERS**

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Government of Sikkim invites bids through E-procurement system of Government of Sikkim vide E procurement Portal [www.sikkimtender.gov.in](http://www.sikkimtender.gov.in) to be upload on 05.01.2018 for tender of tourism project "Development of tourist infrastructure at Phurchachu [Tatapani] in South Sikkim" sanctioned under State Plan. Tender dates and all other relevant documents details will be available on the above mentioned website.

Sd/-  
**SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER [S/W]  
TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT, GANGTOK.**

R.O. No. 482/IPR/PUB/CLASS/17-18 DL 03/01/2018

# SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

## Pending Issues

### Difficult Delhi or poor follow-up?

Any time the Chief Minister or other leaders, whether from the government or outside of it, visit Delhi and call on Ministers and leaders there, they submit memorandums which reiterate a substantial list of "pending issues" with the Centre. The list of demands has remained unchanged for a while, and this not because Sikkim is unimaginative, but because the demands have remained pending and hence continue to be petitioned for. Delhi has acquiesced to Sikkim's demands/ requests in too piecemeal a fashion – IT exemption for the Sikkimese and ST status for Limboos and Tamangs – are the only major demands that have been granted in a long while now, and these too after too many years of dithering and delaying. The list of demands and its follow-up has been so static that one does not even need to await an official communiqué any more before putting out a report on what Delhi was reminded about and received a patient hearing against. That is how routine the pending nature of Sikkim's demands has become!

One understands that the wheels turn slow in Delhi, and now that the current dispensation in office there is trying to reinvent the wheel itself, Sikkim will need to learn afresh how to get things moving in the Capital. But even as Sikkim and its representatives try and find their way around the new Delhi, a question that still needs to be asked is why Sikkim needs to keep returning to Delhi with "pending issues". At one level, the reason is simple - because Delhi needs to be constantly reminded about them since concerns of a State that sends only one MP each to the two Houses of Parliament are rarely a priority. There is nothing that Sikkim can do about that "tyranny" of slim representation. But there must be more reasons behind Delhi's easy amnesia on Sikkim's pending issues, for one the possible fact that Sikkim still does not have officers diligent enough to follow up on proposals which have even the PMO's backing. Once the politicians raise a demand with Central leaders and the same gets forwarded to the respective ministries, the bureaucracy comes into play and the files start moving. Files don't however move if there is no one pursuing them, and experience bears out that Sikkim officials rarely do so. What is worse, sometimes, they don't even respond to queries from the Centre. There have been enough instances even in the recent past when recalcitrance has underlined follow-up from Sikkim's departments.

Sikkim should have figured out by now that Delhi lacks the capacity and the time to figure out Sikkim's "issues". Most of the pending issues, however, need to be resolved by Delhi which lobs the ball back to Sikkim's court and expects a neatly packed and formatted solution to be recommended by Sikkim for enforcement by Delhi. In complicated matters, the State also needs to provide the supporting arguments and watertight justifications and a ready reckoner on Sikkim's special status and the leeway it allows. For more routine issues, sometimes it is as simple as placing the right proposal on the right table. Since this is clearly not happening as fluidly and as professionally as is required for new demands to be framed (since the old have been granted), what else can the elected representatives do but keep trooping down to Delhi to raise issues that are still pending even after everyone has cleared them in principle? Sikkim needs a bureaucratic machinery at home to troop through the doors that its leaders open in Delhi. Till that happens, an annual Delhi pilgrimage with a dusted list of pending demands will remain and constant feature.



## Why we shouldn't be too quick to blame migratory animals for global disease

ALICE RISELY, BETHANY J HOYE & MARCEL KLAASSEN  
*theconversation.com*

Have you ever got on a flight and the person next to you started sneezing? With 37 million scheduled flights transporting people around the world each year, you might think that the viruses and other germs carried by travellers would be getting a free ride to new pastures, infecting people as they go.

Yet pathogenic microbes are surprisingly bad at expanding their range by hitching rides on planes. Microbes find it difficult to thrive when taken out of their ecological comfort zone; Bali might just be a tad too hot for a Tasmanian parasite to handle.

But humans aren't the only species to go global with their parasites. Billions of animals have been flying, swimming and running around the globe every year on their seasonal migrations, long before the age of the aeroplane. The question is, are they picking up new pathogens on their journeys? And if they are, are they transporting them across the world?

### MIGRATORY ANIMALS ARE THE USUAL SUSPECTS FOR DISEASE SPREAD

With the rate of zoonotic diseases (pathogens that jump from animals to humans) on the rise, migratory animals have been under increasing suspicion of aiding the spread of devastating diseases such as bird flu, Lyme disease, and even Ebola.

These suspicions are bad for migrating animals, because they are often killed in large numbers when considered a disease threat. They are also bad for humans, because blaming animals may obscure other

important factors in disease spread, such as animal trade. So what's going on?

Despite the logical link between animal migration and the spread of their pathogens, there is in fact surprisingly little direct evidence that migrants frequently spread pathogens long distances.

This is because migratory animals are notoriously hard for scientists to track. Their movements make them difficult to test for infections over the vast areas that they occupy.

But other theories exist that explain the lack of direct evidence for migrants spreading pathogens. One is that, unlike humans who just have to jump on a plane, migratory animals must work exceptionally hard to travel. Flying from Australia to Siberia is no easy feat for a tiny migratory bird, nor is swimming between the poles for giant whales. Human athletes are less likely to finish a race if battling infections, and likewise, migrant animals may have to be at the peak of health if they are to survive such grueling journeys. Sick travellers may succumb to infection before they, or their parasitic hitchhikers, reach their final destination.

Put simply, if a sick animal can't migrate, then neither can its parasites.

On the other hand, migrants have been doing this for millennia. It is possible they have adapted to such challenges, keeping pace in the evolutionary arms race against pathogens and able to migrate even while infected. In this case, pathogens may be more successful at spreading around the world on the backs of their hosts. But which theory does the evidence

support?

### SICK ANIMALS CAN STILL SPREAD DISEASE

To try and get to the bottom of this question, we identified as many studies testing this hypothesis as we could, extracted their data, and combined them to look for any overarching patterns.

We found that infected migrants across species definitely felt the cost of being sick: they tended to be in poorer condition, didn't travel as far, migrated later, and had lower chances of survival. However, infection affected these traits differently. Movement was hit hardest by infection, but survival was only weakly impacted. Infected migrants may not die as they migrate, but perhaps they restrict long-distance movements to save energy.

So pathogens seem to pose some costs on their migratory hosts, which would reduce the chances of migrants spreading pathogens, but perhaps not enough of a cost to eliminate the risk completely.

But an important piece of the puzzle is still missing. In humans, travelling increases our risk of getting ill because we come into contact with new germs that our immune system has never encountered before. Are migrants also more susceptible to unfamiliar microbes as they travel to new locations, or have they adapted to this as well?

### GUTS OF MIGRANTS RESISTANT TO MICROBIAL INVASION

To investigate the susceptibility of migrants, we went in a different direction and decided to look at the gut bacteria of migratory shorebirds – grey, unassuming birds that for-

age on beaches or near water, and that undergo some of the longest and fastest migrations in the animal kingdom.

Most animals have hundreds of bacterial species living in their guts, which help break down nutrients and fight off potential pathogens. Every new microbe you ingest can only colonise your gut if the environmental conditions are to its liking, and competition with current residents isn't too high. In some cases, it may thrive so much it becomes an infection.

We found the migratory shorebirds we studied were exceptionally good at resisting invasion from ingested microbes, even after flying thousands of kilometres and putting their gut under extreme physiological strain. Birds that had just returned from migration (during which they stopped in many places in China, Japan, and South East Asia), didn't carry any more species of bacteria than those that had stayed around the same location for a year.

Although these results need to be tested in other migratory species, our research suggests that, like human air traffic, pathogens might not get such an easy ride on their migratory hosts as we might assume. There is no doubt that migrants are involved in pathogen dispersal to some degree, but there is increasing evidence that we shouldn't jump the gun when it comes to blaming migrants.

[Alice Risely is PhD candidate in Ecology, Deakin University; Bethany J Hoyer is Lecturer in Animal Ecology, University of Wollongong; Marcel Klaassen is Alfred Deakin Professor and Chair in Ecology, Deakin University]

## Three reasons to get your stress levels in check in 2018

STEPHEN MATTAROLLO & MICHAEL NISSEN  
*theconversation.com*

It's difficult not to get stressed in our fast-paced lives. Whether you're working overtime, battling exams, or caring for a sick relative, chronic stress has become commonplace.

When we're acutely stressed, the fight-or-flight system jumps into action, sending a surge of adrenaline through the body. This product of evolution dramatically increases our reaction speed and once allowed us to escape or fight a predator.

But our bodies are not designed to cope with ongoing activity of these stress pathways.

The psychological effects of stress – such as irritability, loss of appetite, and difficulty sleeping – are obvious to anyone who has been under pressure. But stress also has subtle, underlying effects on almost every part of the body, including the heart, gut and immune system.

Here are just three reasons to get your stress levels in check this year.

**1. YOU'RE AT RISK OF A HEART ATTACK**  
When activated, the fight-or-flight system causes blood pressure to spike and redirects blood flow away from non-essential parts of the body and into the muscles.

Consistently high blood pressure or frequent spikes strain the coronary arteries serving the heart. Higher blood

pressure with each beat causes arteries to slowly stiffen and become clogged, which impedes blood flow to the heart.

One study found people who were chronically stressed, either in their work or home life, were more than twice as likely to have a heart attack than those who weren't.

Another effect of stress on the cardiovascular system is hyper-responsiveness. When a person is suffering low but persistent levels of stress, their response to an added source of stress is much more intense than normal, leading to larger spikes in heart rate and blood pressure.

Again, the increased blood pressure damages blood vessels and increases the chances of blockages and heart attacks.

### 2. YOUR BATHROOM HABITS ARE UNPREDICTABLE

The same systems that increase blood pressure and heart rate during stress also cause food to be digested more slowly.

The chemicals produced by the stomach and intestines change when you're stressed. Food gets broken down in different ways and the body may have difficulty absorbing the nutrients from it. This can lead to constipation, diarrhoea and general intestinal discomfort.

Chronic stress has also been linked to

more serious diseases such as irritable bowel syndrome and inflammatory bowel disease. While the reasons for this still aren't clear, it's thought that chronic stress causes bowel disease by increasing inflammation from intestinal immune cells called mast cells.

Treatment for these diseases usually revolve around managing the painful and uncomfortable symptoms instead of addressing the underlying cause. However some therapies, such as the hormone melatonin, work by reducing the effects of stress on the gut.

### 3. YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO GET SICK

We've long known that stress makes people more vulnerable to catching minor illnesses but we've only begun to understand how stress affects the immune system over the past few decades.

The best examples of this come from a study of chronically stressed carers who look after patients with Alzheimer's disease, and another of medical students in the middle of their exam period.

When given the flu vaccine, the stressed caretakers had a lower immune

response to the vaccine than normal.

Conversely, when the medical students in the middle of their exam periods were vaccinated against hepatitis, the students with better social support and lower levels of stress and anxiety had a much better immune response to the vaccine than other students.

In other words, when the participants were stressed, their immune system didn't function as it should to recognise and defend against the virus. The same occurs for colds and flu, other viruses, bacterial infections and even cancer.

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infections and even cancer.

This finding was applied in a 2008 study, where researchers took newly diagnosed breast cancer patients and enrolled them in a mindfulness-based stress-reduction program that focused on breath awareness, meditation and yoga.

After eight weeks of participation in the program, the immune systems of the women had all made a remarkable recovery, and were functioning just as well as a healthy person's immune system. The women also reported feeling much more optimistic about their future, as well as feeling more connected with their family and friends.

Interestingly, short bursts of acute stress can be beneficial to immune function, particularly of that associated with exercise. While solid evidence is still lacking in humans, mice received a huge benefit from frequent exercise while fighting off melanoma.

In the end, it comes down to being aware of your stress levels, and what works for you to get your stress in check. You might be surprised at just how many of your bodily functions benefit from you being a bit more relaxed.

[Stephen Mattarollo is NHMRC Career Development Fellow, Diamantina Institute, The University of Queensland; Michael Nissen is PhD Candidate in Immunology, The University of Queensland]



Indefinite bandh begins in Tseminyu area in Nagaland

**KOHIMA, JAN 3 (PTI):** An indefinite bandh began today in Tseminyu area in Nagaland to press the demand for upgradation of Tseminyu into a full-fledged district headquarters.

The bandh, which began at 6 AM, has been called by the Rengma Naga frontal organizations in Kohima district, the bandh organisers said.

Tseminyu, which is the residents of the Rengma Nagas, is presently a sub-divisional headquarter under Kohima district of Nagaland, official sources said.

Nagaland Home Minister Kuzhuluzo Nienu had yesterday said that the state government would have no option but to grant the demand of the Rengmas if they fulfilled the criteria for upgradation of a sub-division into district headquarters.

Cab approves Indo-Myanmar agreement on land border crossing

**NEW DELHI, JAN 3 (PTI):** The Union Cabinet today approved an agreement between India and Myanmar on land border crossing which the government said would enhance economic interaction between people of the two countries.

There are already free movement rights for people ordinarily residing in the border areas of both countries.

The agreement will also facilitate movement of people on the basis of valid passports and visas which will enhance economic and social interaction between the two countries, a statement said.

It is expected to provide connectivity and enhance interaction of the people from north-eastern states of India with those of Myanmar.

The agreement will safeguard the traditional rights of the largely tribal communities residing along the border which are accustomed to free movement across the land border, the statement read.

No need to worry if name not in first NRC draft: Sonowal

**GUWAHATI, JAN 3 (PTI):** Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today said all those excluded in the first National Register of Citizens draft should not worry as no one will be discriminated against on the basis of caste and community and will be given opportunities to prove citizenship.

Sonowal also said that a mechanism has to be devised “humanely” by the central government on what to do with those who are found to be illegal immigrants after finalisation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), a list of the state’s citizens.

“There is no question of discriminating against anyone whether he or she is a Hindu, Muslim, Bengali or Nepali,” Sonowal told PTI.

No one will be victimised on the basis of caste and com-



munity, he asserted.

“All will be treated equally and given opportunities to prove their citizenship so that their names could be incorporated in the subsequent drafts of the NRC,” Sonowal said.

The chief minister said the NRC has given an opportunity to segregate the bona fide citizens from illegal immigrants and it is a “win-win situation”

ernment on what to do with them,” he said.

The part draft of the NRC was published on the intervening night of December 31 and January 1 where names of 1.9 crore people out of the 3.29 crore applicants were incorporated.

The massive exercise aimed at identifying illegal immigrants in the state that borders Bangladesh is being carried out in Assam following a decision in 2005 after a series of meetings between the central and state governments and the influential All Assam Students’ Union (AASU).

Assam, which faced influx of people from Bangladesh since the early 20th century, is the only state having an NRC, first prepared in 1951.

The current exercise, started in 2005 under the then Congress regime, got a

major push only after the BJP came to power in the state with illegal immigration from Bangladesh as a poll plank.

The Supreme Court, which is monitoring the entire process, had ordered that the first draft of the NRC be published by December 31 after completing the scrutiny of over two crore claims along with that of around 38 lakh people whose documents were suspect.

Of the 3.29 crore applications submitted, there was confusion over the inclusion of 29 lakh people who had submitted certificates issued by ‘gram panchayats’ as proof of identity, after a Gauhati High Court order in February had deemed ‘panchayat’ certificates invalid, an official said.

The Supreme Court set aside the High Court order and upheld the validity of the

certificates as identity proof if they were followed up with proper verification.

The apex court also asked authorities to stick to the original deadline for the publication of the draft NRC and include names of those whose claims were verified.

When the NRC was first prepared in Assam way back in 1951, the state had 80 lakh citizens then.

The process of identification of illegal immigrants in Assam has been debated and become a contentious issue in the state’s politics.

A six-year agitation demanding identification and deportation of illegal immigrants was launched by the AASU in 1979. It culminated with the signing of the Assam Accord on August 15, 1985, in the presence of then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Centre conspiring to drive out Bengalis from Assam: Mamata

**AMODPUR (WB), JAN 3 (PTI):** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today accused the BJP-led central government of “hatching a conspiracy” to drive out Bengalis from Assam by “excluding” their names from the first draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

The NRC of 1951 is being updated in Assam under the supervision of the Supreme Court to identify original residents of the state in order to check illegal migration.

Its first draft was published on December 31 midnight.

Banerjee cautioned the Centre on the issue, saying it should not “play with fire”.

“People have gone there (Assam) to work. In the name of NRC, they are planning to drive them out. I warn the BJP govern-



ment at the Centre not to play with fire. They should not follow the divide and rule policy,” she said while addressing a meeting here.

“This is a conspiracy of the central government to drive out

ing and staying in West Bengal,” she said.

She claimed that the Trinamool Congress is the only party which speaks for the cause of the people.

“We will continue speaking for the people and if anything happens to them, we will not keep silent,” she said.

The chief minister said that if trouble breaks out in Assam, it will have an effect on Bengal, but added “we will keep the Assamese residing in Bengal close to our bosom”.

The first draft of the NRC has listed 19 million people out of the 32.9 million applicants as legal Indian citizens, in a massive exercise aimed at identifying illegal immigrants in the state that borders Bangladesh.

Nepal govt for Upper House polls on Feb 8

**SHIRISH B PRADHAN KATHMANDU, JAN 3 (PTI):** The Nepal Cabinet has proposed February 8 as the date for conducting polls to the National Assembly to pave the way for formation of the new government after recent provincial and parliamentary polls.

A Cabinet meeting headed by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba yesterday took the decision on the date for polls to the upper house.

Deuba had proposed February 8 as the date for the election, during a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Ayodhee Prasad Yadav.

Yadav expressed his readiness to conduct the election for the Upper House on that date.

Out of 59 members of the National Assembly, 56 will be elected by an electoral college comprising the chiefs and deputy chiefs of the 753 local units and members of the provincial assemblies. The remaining three will be nominated by the president on the recommendation of the government.

The EC has been maintaining that it could not allocate the seats under proportionate representation for the Lower House before conducting the election to the Upper House.

It is necessary to conduct the election to the Upper House to allocate seats for women and eth-

nic minorities, including Dalits, Yadav said.

The election of the new prime minister can take place only after the formation of the full house, which includes the House of Representatives and the Upper House, as per the constitutional provision.

However, the victorious Left alliance, comprising CPN-UML and CPN-Maoist Centre, has been demanding Deuba quit the top post at the earliest so as to pave way for election of the prime minister.

Deuba, has, however, maintained that he would not resign before the Upper House election takes place.

The president last week endorsed the ordinance related to the election of the Upper House that paves the way for the election of the prime minister.

CPN-UML chairman and former premier KP Oli is likely to be again elected to the top executive post with the support of CPN-Maoist Centre as the Left Alliance secured 174 seats in the 275-member Parliament.

The Left alliance won 116 seats out of a total 165 under the first-past-the-post system while Deuba’s Nepali Congress bagged just 23 seats in the country’s recently-concluded historic polls that many hope will bring much-needed political stability to the Himalayan nation.

India, China committed to seeking mutually acceptable solution to boundary dispute: Govt

**NEW DELHI, JAN 3 (PTI):** India and China are committed to seeking a fair and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary dispute through negotiations, the government said today when asked whether a “high degree of mistrust” prevails between India and its neighbours mainly due to border issues.

In a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs V K Singh gave a detailed response on India’s border disputes with neighbouring countries, including Pakistan.

Singh said there was no question of a “high degree of mistrust” mainly due to border

disputes with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka and the issue was also not applicable in case of Nepal.

Singh said as far as China is concerned, the two countries have agreed to appoint Special Representatives to explore the framework for a boundary settlement from the political perspective of the overall bilateral relationship.

He also noted that the 20th round of the Special Representatives-level talks were held here on December 22, 2017.

The minister said that Pakistan has launched attacks on India in 1948, 1965, 1971 and 1999.

“Pakistan also supported insurgency and terrorism in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and also aids and abets cross-border terrorism targeted against India which endangers security and stability not only of India but of the entire region. Pakistan covets territory of J-K which is an integral part of India,” he asserted.

The minister’s reply was to a question posed by senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge about the details of border disputes between India and its neighbouring countries, including China and Pakistan, and also whether a “high degree of mistrust” continues between India

and its neighbours mainly due to border disputes.

Singh also said that the government’s consistent policy has been that it desires good neighbourly relations with Pakistan. “However, this necessarily requires an environment free from terror, hostility and violence.”

Government desires good-neighbourly relations with Pakistan and it is for Pakistan to honour its publicly stated commitment not to allow any territory under its control to be used against India in any manner and take effective and credible action to put an end to cross border terrorism, he said.

Nagaland saw a ‘musical chairs’ game on the CM issue in 2017

**NARAYAN BAHADUR KOHIMA, JAN 3 (PTI):** Nagaland witnessed violence in 2017 over the issue of urban local bodies with women quota, high political drama over leadership in the ruling Naga People’s Front (NPF) and simmering tension along the border with Assam.

Besides regular programmes of the government along with official functions, the year did not witness any major developmental activities.

Following the announcement of election to ULBs with 33 per cent women reservation in the bag end of 2016, various tribal organisations resorted to threatening women candidates and also damaging their houses starting January 2, 2017.

Nonetheless, angered over the state government’s decision to go ahead with women reservation in ULBs, menfolk took to the streets on January 31 night in Dimapur, resulting in killing two youths in alleged police firing, the SIT investigation report of which is yet to be

made public.

This was followed by vandalism and arson in Kohima and Mokokchung district where government offices were burnt on February 2 while the state was in prolonged period of bandh.

Subsequently, the state government had to declare the February ULB elections as null and void but the unspecified public under the aegis of Joint Coordination Committee and Nagaland Tribes Action Committee, constituted specially to speak for the general public demanded Chief Minister Zeliang to step down from the chair.

Zeliang left with no option vacated the chair while the NPF brought in former minister and party president Shurhozelie Liezietsu to mitigate the burning tension in the state and he was sworn in as chief minister on February 22. However, despite a majority of MLAs preferring Liezietsu, his takeover was queered when Lok Sabha MP Neiphiu Rio’s name was propped by section of NPF MLAs.

Thereafter, Liezietsu led the government smoothly.

But leadership crisis within NPF legislators cropped after four months, when Liezietsu announced his willingness to contest the bye-election under 10-Northern Angami-I seat, which was vacated by his son Khriehu Liezietsu for him to become MLA and continue the chief ministership.

Zeliang along with 36 NPF MLAs camped at Keziranga in Assam to stake claim to form his government on July 8. While Governor PB Acharya gave an opportunity to Liezietsu to prove his majority in the assembly on July 19, but the latter did not make any move resulting in the dismissal of his government and installation of Zeliang as the chief minister for the second time.

Zeliang proved his majority in the Assembly on July 21 but the internal crisis deepened with Liezietsu expelling and suspending 36 NPF MLAs supporting Zeliang and Rio.

The NPF dram continued even in the court of law and also the assembly Speaker seeking legal proceedings against each other, even to the extent of disqualification from Assembly.

While on the other hand, the dissident legislators claiming to have the majority of the Central Executive Council of the party declared Rio as the new president of NPF.

They also held the NPF general convention in Dimapur on September 20 and submitted claims of party nomenclature and election symbol with the Election Commission.

However, the Election Commission wrote back to NPF led by Liezietsu informing about the claims of Rio-led NPF and that the matter be solved through a general convention as per the provisions of the party constitution, which was complied on November 22.

Nonetheless, with onset of festive season and also state assembly elections scheduled for early next year, Zeliang and Liezietsu while leaving behind Rio, signed a mem-

orandum of reconciliation on December 8 to give up the bitterness but come together considering the fast approaching solution of Naga political issue and also complying with the directive of ECI.

The change of guard for two times and also the final reconciliation also witnessed frequent reshuffle in the council of ministers and also sacking of some unfavoured ministers and parliamentary secretaries. This not only hampered the functioning of government departments but all the developmental activities for the year were brought to a standstill.

Amid the NPF crisis, a new political party under the banner of Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) erupted in the state in May with members comprising most of retired bureaucrats and headed by former Lok Sabha MP Chingwang Konyak.

The year gone by also witnessed simmering tension between Nagaland and Assam on the border issue.

NSCN (K) ‘chairman’ SS Khaplang’s death in June was deeply mourned by the state. He was replaced by the banned group’s ‘vice chairman’ Khango Konyak.

On the long cherished aspiration of the people of the state for an early resolution of the Naga political issue, the Nagas and the state government renewed hope that solution is fast approaching to conclusion. The Centre’s interlocutor R N Ravi during his visit to the state in July declared that solution of the decades old crisis is close by.

With assembly elections approaching, Naga civil societies and tribal organisations have been demanding “solution, not election” while the state government passed in the assembly a resolution appealing the central government to resolve the Naga political issue before the next general elections.

In the technology era, Nagaland became the first state in the country to introduce and implement Radio Frequency Identity (RFID) based file management system.

# Govt extends compulsory jute packaging for foodgrains, sugar

**NEW DELHI, JAN 3 (PTI):** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) today extended the mandatory packaging of foodgrains and sugar products in jute bags for the year ending June 2018.

The move will help sustain the core demand for the jute sector and support the livelihood of the workers and farmers dependent on the sector in eastern and north-eastern regions of the country particularly in West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura.

"The CCEA has extended the mandatory packaging norms under the Jute Packaging Material (JPM) Act, 1987," as per the official statement.

As per the norms, it is compulsory to pack 90 per cent of foodgrains and 20 per cent of sugar products in jute bags.

The decision also mandates, in the first instance, the entire requirement for packing of foodgrains would be placed in jute bags thus, making a provision for 100 per cent packing of foodgrains in jute bags subject to the ability of the jute industry to meet the requirement, the statement added.

Jute industry is predominantly dependent on government, which purchases jute products worth more than Rs 5,500 crore every year. Considering nearly 3.7 lakh workers and approximately 40 lakh farmers are dependent for their livelihood on the jute sector, the government said it has been making concerted efforts for the development of the jute sector.

With a view to boost demand in the jute sector, government has imposed Definitive Anti Dumping Duty on import of jute goods from Bangladesh and Nepal with effect from January 5, 2017, which has provided scope for additional demand of 2 lakh MT of jute goods in the domestic market for the Indian jute industry.

# Quick-fire City back in the groove, Llorente fires Spurs

**LONDON, JAN 3 (AFP):** Raheem Sterling scored the fastest goal of the Premier League season as leaders Manchester City got back on track with a 3-1 win against Watford, while Fernando Llorente put Tottenham on course for a 2-0 victory at his former club Swansea.

Sterling struck after just 38 seconds before Christian Kabasele's first-half own goal put Pep Guardiola's side in control at Eastlands.

Sergio Aguero made it three as City gave the perfect response after their 18-game winning run was ended in a goalless draw at Crystal Palace on Sunday.

Unbeaten City are 15 points clear of second-placed Manchester United as they continue to turn the title race into a lengthy coronation party.

Guardiola had complained that the hectic festive fixture schedule was a "disaster" after City striker Gabriel Jesus suffered a knee ligament injury at Palace.

But Guardiola was able to replace the Brazilian with Sergio Aguero, while David Silva returned from a two-game absence.

City, playing their fourth match in 11 days, were ahead inside a minute as Sterling met Leroy Sane's cross with a near-post finish for his 18th goal this season.

Having won 6-0 at Watford in September, City looked on course for another rout in the 13th minute when Watford's Kabasele sliced an attempted clearance into his own net from Kevin De Bruyne's cross.



Yet they had to wait 50 minutes to score again as Argentine forward Aguero netted from close-range for his 16th goal of the season.

Andre Gray's 82nd minute goal for Watford came way too late to avoid a sixth defeat in their last seven league matches.

"We played really well. After dropping two points, we spoke about our reaction because big teams drop points but not too much," Guardiola said.

With Harry Kane only fit enough for a place on the bench after illness, former Swansea striker Llorente made his first league start for Tot-

tenham at the rain-lashed Liberty Stadium.

Llorente marked the occasion with a 12th minute goal, the Spaniard powering home a header from Christian Eriksen's free-kick despite Swansea's appeals for offside.

Puddles all over the pitch made it hard for Tottenham to establish their smooth-passing game and Kane, who finished 2017 with consecutive hat-tricks, was sent on for Llorente after 68 minutes.

## DRAMATIC WINNER

Kane made his presence felt with a perfect pass to Dele Alli and the Tottenham midfielder finished at

the second attempt to wrap up the points in the 89th minute.

Tottenham move above Arsenal into fifth place and sit four points behind fourth placed Liverpool with a game in hand.

"The weather was horrible but we dominated and tried to play football. Overall I think we were better and deserved the three points," Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino said.

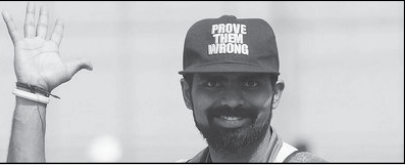
Swansea remain bottom of the table as new boss Carlos Carvalhal was beaten for the first time in his second match since replacing the sacked Paul Clement.

# Hockey India names 33-member squad for 2018 season

**BENGALURU, JAN 3 (PTI):** Fit-again PR Sreejesh made a return after recovering from a long-injury lay-off as Hockey India (HI) today announced a 33-member squad for the first national camp beginning here tomorrow.

Sreejesh will be is vying to find top form after nearly eight months of break due to a knee injury. He had suffered a medial collateral ligament (MCL) injury during the Azlan Shah tournament earlier last year. After ending the year with a bronze medal at the Odisha Hockey World League Final, Indian men's hockey team will report for the 10-day camp at the Sports Authority of India here to prepare for the busy hockey calendar this season.

Goalkeeper Krishan B Pathak, part of the winning team of 2016 Junior World Cup, finds himself in the group along with Akash Anil Chikte and Suraj Karkera who had promising



outing at the Asia Cup and contributed to India's success at the Hockey World League Final.

Nilam Sanjeep Xess, the young defender from Sundargarh, Odisha who led the Indian team to U-18 Asia Cup win in 2016, has been elevated to the Senior Core Group. He will train alongside stalwart Sardar Singh, Harmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Dipsan Tirkey, Varun Kumar, Rupinder Pal Singh, Birendra Lakra, Surender Kumar, Gurinder Singh in the back line.

The line-up of midfielders remains unchanged with Manpreet Singh, Chinglensana Singh, SK Uthappa, Sumit, Kothajit Singh, Satbir Singh, Nilakanta Sharma,

Simranjeet Singh, Harjeet Singh in the group. Young forward Sumit Kumar, who featured in the Indian Junior Men's Team in 2016, has been included for the camp with seniors' SV Sunil, Akashdeep Singh, Mandeep Singh, Lalit Upadhyay, Gurjant Singh, Ramandeep Singh, Armaan Qureshi, Affan Yousuf, Talwinder Singh.

The 2018 schedule includes Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in April followed by the Champions Trophy at Netherlands in July, the Jakarta Asian Games in August, Asian Championships Trophy in October and the much-awaited Hockey World Cup in Bhubaneswar starting in November.

India, however, will begin the season with the Four Nations Invitational Tournament in Tauranga and Hamilton, New Zealand which will see Belgium, Japan and the hosts in fray.

"The camp will be short and we need to deal with the players who just played domestic matches which means we need to be careful in training considering we play eight matches in New Zealand," said Chief Coach Sjoerd Marijne.

"Like always, the evaluation of the previous tournament needs to come from the players so that's the first thing we do when we meet for this camp. I would like to understand what their experience was of the tournament and what they think needs to improve.

"For me, Hockey World League Final gave an insight into what is necessary to improve when we play higher ranked teams and I cer-

tainly believe we can do better in our 1 vs 1 defending. In the next tour this will be one of the key areas we would like to improve," added the 43-year-old Dutchman.

Core Group: Goalkeepers: Akash Anil Chikte, Suraj Karkera, PR Sreejesh, Krishan B Pathak.

Defenders: Harmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Dipsan Tirkey, Varun Kumar, Rupinderpal Singh, Birendra Lakra, Surender Kumar, Gurinder Singh, Nilam Sanjeep Xess, Sardar Singh.

Midfielders: Manpreet Singh, Chinglensana Singh, SK Uthappa, Sumit, Kothajit Singh, Satbir Singh, Nilakanta Sharma, Simranjeet Singh, Harjeet Singh.

Forwards: SV Sunil, Akashdeep Singh, Mandeep Singh, Lalit Upadhyay, Gurjant Singh, Ramandeep Singh, Armaan Qureshi, Affan Yousuf, Talwinder Singh, Sumit Kumar.

# UP govt cuts holidays allotted to madrassas in new calendar

**LUCKNOW, JAN 3 (PTI):** The BJP-led Uttar Pradesh government has reduced the number of holidays allotted to state-recognised madrassas in the calendar for the year 2018, drawing flak from Islamic institutions.

According to the calendar issued by UP Madrassa Board Registrar Rahul Gupta, the holidays during several non-Muslim festivals like Christmas, Diwali, Dusshera, Mahavir Jayanti, Buddha Purnima and Raksha Bandhan have been increased.

On the other hand, 46 holidays given on Ramazan have been reduced to 42. Besides, 10 holidays at the discretion of madrassa managers have also been scrapped.

With the new arrangement, number of holidays in madrassas

have now been reduced to 86, as compared to 92 earlier.

Protesting against the decision, the Teachers' Association of Madaris Arabia today wrote a letter to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, demanding that he reconsider the move.

"As per the new calendar, holidays will be given two days before the start of Ramzan. Earlier, it was given 10 days before Ramzan. It will create difficulties for madrassa students and teachers to reach their homes in time for the festivities," Diwan Sahab Jaman, general secretary of the association, said.

Contending that the new move would send a wrong message, he said, cancellation of 10 discretionary holidays given by madrassa managers should be reconsidered.

# Cattle slaughter ban, GM & pollution issues kept environment ministry busy in 2017

**TUHIN DUTTA**  
**NEW DELHI, JAN 3 (PTI):** The Union environment ministry grappled with controversies triggered by its notification banning sale and purchase of cattle from animal markets for slaughter and a recommendation for commercial use of GM mustard besides high air pollution levels during 2017.

The ministry, which saw Harsh Vardhan taking over its charge in May from Anil Dave who died in office, also steered itself through the controversy that erupted when Tamil Nadu insisted on holding the jallikattu (bull-taming) event against opposition by animal rights activists.

Tamil Nadu was brought to a standstill for almost a week in January due to protest by students, youths and other sections demanding immediate staging of jallikattu

in Alanganallur, epicentre of the sport, and other places.

Decks were finally cleared for an ordinance on jallikattu and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act, 2017 finally received presidential assent on January 31.

In May, and the ministry was again hit by another controversy when it banned the sale and purchase of cattle from animal markets for slaughter. It also prohibited practices cruel to animals including painting of horns and decorative materials on them.

The environment ministry notified the stringent Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules, 2017 under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

Amid growing protests, Harsh Vardhan said the new rules are very "specific" and

aim to regulate animal markets and sale of cattle.

Reacting to the ban, the CPI(M)-led LDF government and the Congress-led UDF opposition in Kerala, where beef is consumed widely, attacked the Centre with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan saying it is "not right that a government decides the choice of food of the people".

He also said that the Centre was destroying a sector which employees thousands of people while Mohammed Saleem, vice president of All India Jamiat-ul-Quresh said if the government brought this law, they won't follow it. Amid these protests, the government finally said that it was "considering" making certain changes to the notification to make it more "acceptable" but animal rights body PETA termed it a "dark day" for animals.

The year gone by also

witnessed large-scale protests from anti-genetically modified crop activists after India's GM crop regulator recommended the commercial use of GM mustard in a submission to the environment ministry.

In its submission, the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), the nodal regulator for Genetically Modified (GM) crop, has given a "positive" recommendation but "with certain conditions".

RSS-affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) criticised the move saying allowing the commercial use of GM mustard would impact allied agri-activities while some other anti-GM activists asserted that in okaying the commercial use of GM mustard, the GEAC has "yet again proved" to be "unscientific and uncaring" to the health of citizens.

The Centre for Genetic

Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP), Delhi University South Campus, had submitted an application to the GEAC for the environmental release of GM mustard (Brassica juncea) hybrid DMH-11 and the use of parental events (varuna bn 3.6 and EH2 mod bs 2.99) for the development of a new generation of hybrids.

After widespread protests, the ministry said that it was open to suggestions.

On the climate change front, India also took part in the Conference of Parties -23 at Bonn in Germany which took place under the shadow of the announcement of US withdrawal from the "historic" Paris agreement, which was agreed by more than 190 nations.

President Donald Trump last year had announced that the US would withdraw from the Paris Agreement on cli-

mate change and renegotiate the deal arguing that countries like China and India are benefiting the most.

However, despite the US's exit from the Paris agreement, India said that it is committed to the deal "irrespective" of the stand taken by any other country.

At the Bonn climate change conference, India called for early time-bound ratification of second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (KP II) by developed countries to ensure the highest possible mitigation efforts under the UN Convention by all countries.

India also said that it considers climate change a "major threat" and will play a "constructive" role in combating it.

Air pollution also played its bit in keeping the environment ministry busy this year. Delhi was faced with a

complex set of meteorological factors in early November, when pollution levels peaked, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Air pollutants touched calamitous levels in Delhi, as a thick grey smog hung low across the region, prompting the government to declare schools closed till Sunday, halt construction activity and ban the entry of trucks in the city.

A high-level task force headed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's principal secretary formulated a draft air action plan and invited suggestions to make it more "effective and practical".

Coordinated action to combat stubble burning, commissioning studies and launch of a hotline and an app to report violations are some of the measures suggested in the 12-point draft plan.

US accuses Pak of playing double game on fighting terrorism

WASHINGTON/UNITED NATIONS, JAN 3 (PTI): Pakistan has been playing a “double game” for years on fighting terrorism, the US has said and made it clear that Islamabad will have to “earn” American aid worth millions of dollars by taking decisive action against militants operating from its soil.

The tough message from the US came after an angry tweet from President Donald Trump on New Year’s day that America had been rewarded with “nothing but lies and deceit” by Pakistan in return for its over USD 33 billion aid in the last 15 years.

Soon after the president’s tweet, the White House confirmed that the US had suspended its USD 255 million military aid to Pakistan.

US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley defended Trump’s decision to block aid to Pakistan and said, “There are clear reasons for this. Pakistan has played a double game for years.”

“They (Pakistanis) work with us at times, and they also harbour the terrorists that attack our troops in Afghanistan.

That game is not acceptable to this administration,” Haley told reporters at the UN headquarters in New York yesterday.

The Trump administration expects far more cooperation from Pakistan in the fight against terrorism, she said.

“Trump is willing to go to great lengths to stop all funding for Pakistan as they continue to harbour and support terrorism,” Haley said.

The Indian-American diplomat said the aid issue was connected solely to Pakistan’s harbouring of terrorists.

State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert, speaking at her daily news conference, described Pakistan as an “important partner” and said Islamabad must do more to combat terrorism.

“The United States expects Pakistan to take decisive action against the Haqqani Network and other militants who are operating from its soil,” said Nauert.

“Pakistan is an important partner. We have a lot of issues in that region. Pakistan knows that, we all know that, and we try to work carefully together on some of those issues. I don’t want to say that Pakistan can do more, but Pakistan knows what it needs to do,” she said.

Speaking about the US’ decision to withhold USD 255 million military aid to Pakistan, Nauert said the decision was taken in August and Pakistan would need to “earn” such assistance through sincere action.

“They need to earn, essentially, the money that we have provided in the past in foreign military assistance, they need to show that they are sincere in their efforts to crack down on terrorists,” she said.

India cancels \$500 ml defence deal, says Israeli arms firm

HARINDER MISHRA JERUSALEM, JAN 3 (PTI): A top Israeli arms firm has confirmed that India cancelled a USD 500 million deal to develop Spike anti-tank guided missiles and expressed “regret” over the decision just ahead of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s first visit to the country.

“Rafael has now received an official notification from India’s Ministry of Defence

concerning the cancellation of the Spike deal,” Ishai David, a spokesman for the Rafael Advanced Defence Systems Ltd, told PTI here.

Spike, in use by 26 countries around the world, is said to have been selected by India after a long and rigorous process and after complying with all the defence procurement regulations.

“It should be emphasised that the cancellation was

made prior to the signing of the contract and despite Rafael’s compliance with all the demands,” the company said in a statement.

“Rafael regrets the decision and remains committed to cooperating with the Indian Ministry of Defence and to its strategy of continuing to work in India, an important market, as it has for more than two decades, to provide India with the most advanced and inno-

vative systems,” it added.

The company did not give a reason for the cancellation of the deal.

The cancellation comes days before Netanyahu’s four-day visit to India starting January 14 and is likely to be taken up for discussion. Rafael’s CEO would also be accompanying Netanyahu.

The company recently inaugurated its facilities in Hyderabad where the project

was to be executed but company sources said that it is “designed to accommodate a number of other projects Rafael is engaged in with its Indian partners”.

As per the original proposal, India had planned to acquire the ATGMs for the Army at a cost of USD 500 million.

The Indian defence ministry has been strongly pushing for transfer of technology in procuring various weapons and other

platforms from foreign defence majors as part of its broad policy initiative to encourage domestic defence industry.

Official sources in New Delhi had earlier indicated that the proposal to acquire the missile system faced hurdles when Israeli side apparently expressed reservations in ensuring full transfer of technology as per the provisions of the ‘Make in India’ initiative.



Donald Trump has threatened to cut aid to Palestinians in his latest Twitter posts, accusing them of not showing the US any respect. The President had been firing off a series of angry tweets in which he warned North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that he has a nuclear button which is “much bigger”. Mr Trump then turned his focus to the Middle East, tweeting: “It’s not only Pakistan that we pay billions of dollars to for nothing, but also many other countries, and others. “As an example, we pay the Palestinians HUNDRED OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS a year and get no appreciation or respect. They don’t even want to negotiate a long overdue peace treaty with Israel. “We have taken Jerusalem, the toughest part of the negotiation, off the table, but Israel, for that, would have had to pay more. But with the Palestinians no longer willing to talk peace, why should we make any of these massive future payments to them?”

Action against JuD, FIF not taken under US pressure: Pak Min

M ZULQERNAIN LAHORE, JAN 3 (PTI): Pakistan has acted against Hafiz Saeed-led Jamaat-ud Dawa and Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation not under “pressure” from the US but after “serious deliberations”, Defence Minister Khurram Dastgir Khan said today.

Pakistan has banned Saeed-led JuD and FIF from collecting donations on Monday, after President Donald Trump accused Islamabad of giving nothing to the US but “lies and deceit” and providing “safe haven” to terrorists.

The government has banned companies and individuals from making donations to the JuD, the FIF and other organisations on the UNSC sanctions list.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) issued a notification prohibiting the collection of donations by the JuD, the front organisation of banned outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba, as well as several other such organisations named in a list of banned outfits by the UN Security Council.

“We have taken action against the JuD and the FIF not on the pressure of the Trump administration. We have initiated action against Saeed’s organisations after ‘serious deliberations’. It is not taken in haste,” Khan told BBC Urdu.

He said the action was part of the ‘Operation Radul Fasaad’, launched in February last year by the Pakistan military to disarm and eliminate the hidden terrorist sleeper cells across the country with support of local law enforcement agencies.



“We have taken action against the organisations which are on the UNSC sanctions list, so that our children remain safe in schools. We do not want that one day they (people associated with these organisations) attack their own country with guns,” the minister said.

The PML-N government is also considering taking over the control of charities run by the JuD and the FIF. If action is taken, the JuD may lose its headquarters in Muridke, near La-

hore, to the government.

The FIF is a Pakistan-based organisation that is closely connected to banned terrorist group LeT and JuD. It is also said that FIF is JuD with a new name, designed to evade scrutiny and sanctions.

Yesterday, the JuD and the FIF activists held a rally outside its headquarters in Muridke near Lahore in protest against the government action and also blocked a road.

Addressing the rally, JuD

leader Hafiz Abdur Rehman Maki alleged that the action against the JuD and the FIF has been taken on the pressure of the US and India.

“Those trying to strangle the JuD and the FIF will soon be in the grip of Allah. We are not committing any crime to serve the humanity,” he said.

Maki also said that any move by the government to take the control of ‘Markaz-e-Taiba’ (the JuD headquarters) and charity would not be accepted.

High-tech ship en route to resume hunt for MH370

KUALA LUMPUR, JAN 3 (AFP): A high-tech vessel run by a US exploration firm is en route to resume the hunt for flight MH370 in a new bid to solve one of aviation’s greatest mysteries.

The Malaysia Airlines jet disappeared with 239 people on board in March 2014 en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing after diverting from its flight path.

No sign of the plane was found in a 120,000 square kilometre (46,000 square mile) zone selected by satellite analysis of the jet’s likely trajectory and the Australian-led hunt - the largest in aviation history - was called off in January last year.

But it looks set to resume soon. Research vessel Seabed Constructor, leased by exploration firm Ocean Infinity, has set off from South Africa for the Indian Ocean with the aim of arriving in the search zone by mid-January, a source familiar with the matter said.

It is hoped by this time the Malaysian government and Ocean Infinity will have finalised a deal for the hunt to resume.

Malaysia’s Deputy Transport Minister Aziz Kaprawi said negotiations for the firm to restart the hunt on a “no find, no fee” basis were in

the final stages.

“They (Ocean Infinity) know we are very serious in taking their offer,” he told AFP.

A spokesman for the company added: “The company are awaiting final contract award before the search recommences.”

Ocean Infinity was one of three companies which had bid to resume the hunt.

The source, who declined to be identified, said that the firm had decided to send the Seabed Constructor, a Norwegian research vessel, to the southern Indian Ocean so that it was ready to start searching in a window of good weather expected in January and February.

The vessel is carrying several autonomous submarines which can be launched from the boat to scour the seabed for fragments of the jet.

Australia’s national science body CSIRO released a report in April suggesting the doomed plane was “most likely” north of the former search zone in an area of approximately 25,000 square kilometres.

Only three confirmed fragments of MH370 have been found, all of them on western Indian Ocean shores, including a two-metre wing part known as a flaperon.

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DEAR FAITHFUL MORNING	DEAR VALUABLE
Draw Time: 11:55 am onwards Draw No:5 DrawDate on:03/01/18 1st Prize Rs.26 Lakhs/- 871 33414 (Including Super Prize Amt)	Draw Time: 04:00 pm onwards Draw No:5 DrawDate on:03/01/18 1st Prize Rs.26 Lakhs/- 808 11626 (Including Super Prize Amt)
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NAGALAND STATE LOTTERIES	
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JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE ANNOUNCES NEW ALBUM ‘MAN OF THE WOODS,’ REVEALS RELEASE DATE

Justin Timberlake fans, the wait is finally over. More than four years after the release of JT’s album The 20/20 Experience - 2 of 2, the “Sexy-back” singer has revealed that his next LP is on the way -- and soon.

The 36-year-old unveiled a minute-long teaser trailer for the record on Twitter Tuesday morning (Jan. 2), which disclosed that Timberlake’s fifth studio album, titled Man of the Woods, is set to arrive Feb. 2.

“This album is really inspired by my son, my wife, my family, but more so than any other album I’ve ever written, where I’m from,” Timberlake says in the video. “And it’s personal.” Showing clips of Timberlake in various landscapes -- with glimpses of his wife, Jessica Biel and



son, Silas -- the video also features audio of the singer’s album collabo-

ration Pharrell. “It feels so earthy,” he says. “It’s just where you are in your life right now.”

The video also features a clip of what sounds like the first bit of music fans will be hearing from Man of the Woods, the end sees Pharrell and Timberlake in the studio with Pharrell exclaiming, “That is a smash.”

Man of the Woods’ Feb. 2 release is perfectly timed for Timberlake’s much-anticipated Super Bowl halftime show performance on Feb. 4. Whether he’ll be performing songs from the album is still unclear, but JT fans will likely be finding out more in the coming weeks -- starting Friday (Jan. 5), as hinted in the video’s caption.



THIS WEEK’S TOP 10 SONGS ON BILLBOARD HOT 100

- 1. Ed Sheeran Duet With Beyonce- Perfect
- 2. Post Malone Featuring 21 Savage- Rockstar
- 3. Camila Cabello Featuring Young Thug- Havana
- 4. G-Eazy Featuring ASAP Rocky and Cardi B- No Limits
- 5. Imagine Dragons- Thunder
- 6. Lil Pump- Gucci Gang
- 7. Migos Featuring Cardi B and Nicki Minaj- MotorSport
- 8. Sam Smith- Too Good At Goodbyes
- 9. Halsey- Bad In Love
- 10. Cardi B- Bodak Yellow [Money Moves]



THIS DAY IN HISTORY

04TH JANUARY

**1923:** A surprise attack by members of the Ku Klux Klan on a black residential area of Rosewood, Fla left 8 people dead. Over the next few days, white mobs attacked and killed African Americans, and burned most of the buildings in the town including the local black church in Rosewood. The all-black town of Rosewood, a north Florida community of 120 people, was burned to the ground

**1936:** Billboard Magazine publishes the first pop music chart that is based on national record sales. Today, Billboard is still the leading publication for various charts throughout many different musical

genres.

**1948:** Burma became an independent nation no longer under control of the British. Independence to Burma was originally granted by Japan in 1943 after Japan had temporary control over it. However, this land area was primarily turned into a Japanese military base at this time. Since then, this country has undergone quite a few changes-one of which is a name change in 1989. As of this date Burma was referred to as the Union of Myanmar.

**1958:** Sir Edmund Hillary, first man to conquer Mt. Everest, reached the South Pole, at the bottom of the world Friday.

**2010:** The world’s tallest building Burj Khalifa 2,716ft high with 160 floors opens in Dubai dwarfing the previous record holder, Taipei 101 1,666ft high in Taiwan.



**MOTHER OF SMILES:** Game of Thrones actress Emilia Clarke is all smiles as she arrives in Los Angeles.

RANBIR KAPOOR & ALIA BHATT BEGIN PREPPING FOR BRAHMASTRA IN ISRAEL



The dream of watching two of the finest young actors of Bollywood – Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt in a film together is finally coming true. The two stars will be seen together for the first time in their next sci-fi – Brahmastra. After all the wait, Ranbir and Alia are finally starting the first shoot schedule of the film in Israel this month. After having a dreamy vacation with her girls in Bali, Alia Bhatt returned to Mumbai on 30 Dec and flew the next day for Israel. Joining her were Ranbir Kapoor and his good friend and filmmaker Ayan Mukerji.

Brahmastra, which also stars Amitabh Bachchan, is slated to release on August 15, 2019. Not much is known about the Ayan Mukerji-film but we can get an idea about Ranbir Kapoor’s character, who started prepping for his role in November. In Instagram videos, he was spotted taking DJ lessons at New York’s The Foxgrove. Talking

about the film’s storyline, the director had told PTI: “In its core it has romance as an element but it has got a new flavour to it.”

He also said: “It’s a huge project and lot of people have faith in it and in me so I need to deliver for my own career, for the producer, the actors and the entire crew.”

Brahmastra marks Karan Johar’s fourth collaboration with Ranbir and Ayan’s third with the actor. Previously, Ranbir has headlined the cast of Karan-directed Ae Dil Hai Mushkil and Ayan-directed Wake Up Sid and Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani - all films produced by Dharma Productions.

Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt’s Brahmastra will be made as a trilogy, the first part of which is expected to be ready for release in 2019.

LOCKHORNS

- HOEST & REINER



ARCTIC CIRCLE

- HULLATT



BABY BLUES

- KIRKMAN & SCOTT



CARDI B MAKES HISTORY, AGAIN, WITH THREE SINGLES IN THE BILLBOARD TOP 10

Cardi B has done it again. Just months after becoming the first solo female rapper in 19 years to top Billboard’s Hot 100, she’s back and breaking more records.

As Billboard points out, the Bronx native joins the



ranks with the Beatles and Ashanti as the third artist to chart her first three sin-

gles simultaneously within the Hot 100’s Top 10, making her the first rapper to do so.

As it stands, her features on G Eazy’s “No Limit” and Migos’ “Motorsport,” sit at No. 4 and No. 7 respectively, while her commercial single “Bodak Yellow” rises back to the top ten after 25 weeks on the charts.

Her latest entries aren’t too far behind either, as “Bartier Cardi” trails behind at No. 14, with her feature with Ozuna, “Lo Modelo,” picking up steam at No. 52. She’s already made history twice since her first entry in June, would we be surprised if she dominated half of the top ten? Either way, she’s in great company.

**ARIES:** While you may feel the urge to put on a pair of boxing gloves and duke it out with your family, Aries, try putting on an oven mitt instead. Cooking a meal or performing other domestic chores will help take your mind off your troubles with your family. If you aren’t the domestic sort, exchange the mitt for some reading glasses and bury yourself in your work. These tensions on the home front will pass quickly enough.

**TAURUS:** You have an urge to hop on a plane and leave the country, Taurus. It seems that this is the only way to free yourself from the mountain of professional and social obligations that are piling up. How can you ever hope to attend

all of them, or even half? Have you considered that you may not need to? Send someone else in your stead, perhaps, or simply respond that you can’t make it. You wouldn’t be the first to say no. You are entitled to some downtime.

**GEMINI:** Finally, all of your efforts are being recognized, Gemini. That’s not to say that you can now sit back and rest on your laurels - quite the contrary! Now is the time to put your original ideas to the test. But this time you have the backing of the higher-ups. Don’t be nervous; just do what you had planned to do all along. If you work hard, you’re likely to see tremendous professional and financial rewards.

**CANCER:** You have a wonderful,

nurturing nature, Cancer. Those around you reap tremendous benefit from your caring soul. Just as you are receptive to the needs of others, so too should you be aware of your own needs. You deserve to be on the receiving end of your own gentle touch. Don’t hesitate to turn to others for help if you need to. You might be surprised how mere acquaintances pitch in to lend a hand.

**LEO:** In case you do any writing or artwork today, it will seem to come from a source outside of yourself, Leo. Is this the divine muse you’ve heard others talk about? Possibly, or perhaps it’s just your own natural talent shining through at last. Today is also auspicious for relationships, so be

sure to take time for friends and loved ones both old and new.

**VIRGO:** Put that book down and get out of the house, Virgo! You’ve been by yourself long enough; it’s time to start interacting with other people. In addition to having heaps of fun, you’re likely to have some encounters that will prove beneficial in the long run. Group situations are great, but don’t overlook the pleasures of an intimate one-on-one encounter.

**LIBRA:** Your hard efforts to improve your life are finally showing results, Libra. And this is just the boost you’ve needed, as some people set your self-confidence a bit on edge. Just don’t let others destroy your vision of happiness.

Continue to walk toward your goal and don’t hesitate when small obstacles appear left and right.

**SCORPIO:** The people you meet today could be of tremendous benefit to you later on, Scorpio. You have especially keen vision today, so make sure to take note of everything of interest that you observe. What you discover today, along with the people you meet, could combine in a powerful way at some future date. Your work also benefits from your attention to detail.

**SAGITTARIUS:** This is a time of new beginnings, Sagittarius. Whether you are aware of it or not, you are more than ready to take on some new challenges. You have allowed yourself to become

complacent about your career. You have the ability to make a major step up, so why not do so? All that is required is a bit of effort on your part. Figure out what your ideal job would be and then pursue it. Or better yet, create it!

**CAPRICORN:** Romance is in the air today, Capricorn. It’s the perfect time to make yourself look your best and invite that certain someone to dinner. Even if you’re already happily married, why not take advantage of the auspicious mood and plan a special date with your spouse? Even old married couples are entitled to romance now and then!

**AQUARIUS:** Today, you crave a little style. Sensible shoes and

practical clothes get the boot in favor of fashionable shoes and luxurious fabrics. Your passion and sense of romance are at an all-time high, Aquarius, so you might as well take advantage of it for all it’s worth. You can expect to reap a tremendous payoff as a result of the extra efforts you have been making with your appearance.

**PISCES:** It isn’t just royalty who gets to live happily ever after in fairy tales, Pisces. You have this right as well. The conditions are ripe for attracting a special person into your life. There is no need to rely on “expert” advice for attracting a soul mate. It’s your own unique qualities that will beckon to the right one.