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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Weekend holiday regime shrunk to two Saturdays a month

**RUDRA KAUSHIK  
GYALSHING, 14 JAN:**

Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] today announced that only second and last Saturdays of the month would remain government holidays.

The State government, he explained, has decided to end the five-day work-week regime after realizing that some government employees were taking unnecessary advantage out of the system. The SKM Government, it may be recalled, shortly after coming to office, had declared all Saturdays as holidays to offer government servants two days off every week for "care and cure."

Six months down the line, it has had a rethink.

"The state government has decided to revoke all Saturdays as holidays keeping only two Saturdays a month [second and last] as holidays because some government employees were found utilizing the facility given in the form of the government holidays to gain unwanted advantages," he said.

The CM was speaking at a Limboo new year - 'Kokphakwa Tongnam' - celebration organized here at Lingchom Government Senior Secondary School ground on Tuesday.

He went on to claim that the SKM government has ensured secular val-

ues and provided freedom to all communities of the state to practice, propagate and promote their cultural heritage.

He went on to allege that the SDF government had politicized community-based initiatives, adding that such influence will not be encouraged or endorsed by the SKM government and communities need not ask for government permission to organize community-based events.

He informed that the state government is providing Rs 5 lakh financial support for such community-based programmes.

He went on to allege that Limboos of the State

were betrayed by the SDF government and accused it of indulging in rampant corruption in the Srijunga statue project at Hee-Gaon. The inauguration of an incomplete project by the SDF government was an eyewash prior to elections.

He assured to complete the project and announced that the harvest festival of the Limboo community, 'Chasok Tongnam', will be declared as a government holiday.

He further announced that the state government will regularize the services of MR and adhoc employees who have completed eight years of service as on 31 Dec, 2019.

Accusing the SDF government of treating MR and adhoc employees unfairly, the CM assured that under the SKM government, such employees will not have to wait in queues to clear their files in government offices.

The CM stressed that facilities meant for the underprivileged should reach to them and if the better-heeled section was siphoning away these benefits, strong action will be taken against them.

President of the festival organizing committee, Purna Bir Limboo, in his address, informed that 'Kokphakwa Tongnam' marks the beginning of the Limboo New Year.

## Former SRCs of Tadong College condemn move to return Melas to College Ground

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 14 JAN:**

Members of Students' Representative Council of Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College, Tadong, from the previous two years today condemned the Education Department's directions to the college authorities to "hand over" the college ground to unemployed youth of the area to organize a winter carnival "without any further delay."

A press communiqué issued by former SRC members condemns the move in the "strongest words" and has urged the department to withdraw it immediately.

The release details that the ground was handed over for as a Maghey Mela venue in 2016 and then again for the next two years. Despite

opposition and resistance from the students, the organizers used their access to those in power to overcome the protests "without much difficulty."

In February 2018, however, immediately after that year's Maghey mela, the then SRC, along with the students, pushed for a ban on allowing the college ground for commercial events and the department eventually issued an office order on 22 March 2018 stating: "With the approval of the competent authority, henceforth the playground of Sikkim Government College, Tadong (later renamed as NBBDC, Tadong) will not be allowed for holding melas and other commercial purposes."

This order was signed by the Director of Higher Education, HRDD.

*turn to pg 02*

*People on streets as things to be said inside Parliament were not said, says court*

**NEW DELHI, JAN 14 (PTI):** A court slammed Delhi Police on Tuesday for failing to show any evidence against Bhim Army chief Chandrashekar Azad, observing that people are out on the streets because things which should have been said inside Parliament were not said.

Delhi Police was behaving as if Jama Masjid was Pakistan, Additional Sessions Judge Kamini Lau said, adding that even if it was, one can protest there peacefully.

Pakistan was once part of undivided India, she said. The court's observations came while hearing bail plea of Azad, who was arrested in a case related to anti-CAA protests in old Delhi's Daryaganj area.

"Inside the Parliament, things which should have been said, were not said and that is why people are out on the streets. We have full right to express our views but we cannot destroy our country.

"You are behaving as if Jama Masjid was Pakistan and even if it was Pakistan, you can go there and protest. Pakistan was a part of undivided India," the judge said.

The court asked the investigating officer of the police to put on record all the evidence which showed that Azad was allegedly giving inflammatory speeches at the gathering at Jama Masjid and any law

## All options explored before filing police complaint: SIMFED MD on FIR against former CM's son

**ARPAN PRADHAN  
GANGTOK, 14 JAN:**

SIMFED Managing Director, Pawan Awasthy, insisted today that all options were explored and expended before an FIR was filed against former CM, Pawan Chamling's son, Bijay Chamling, in the case involving short-supply of laptops.

"There was no political pressure or any interference on me to lodge an FIR against Bijay Chamling. I was just discharging my duty as the MD of the organization," insists Mr Awasthy.

"When I joined as the MD in 2017, the matter was already pending there and as per my duty and responsibility I followed it up and tried to communicate with Mr Bijay Chamling and his company through letters and even phone calls regarding the incomplete supply, but no response was received from them," Mr Awasthy told SummitTimes.

He contended that SIMFED has been sending reminder letters to



Mr Bijay Chamling since 2017 and finally sent a legal notice in August 2019 after the reminders fell on deaf ears and finally lodged an FIR earlier this month when even the legal notice went unheeded.

"Mr Bijay Chamling was offered the chance to complete the supply or refund the rest of the money, but he didn't follow up," informs Mr Awasthy.

The Human Resource Development Department, for which the laptops were being procured, had been sending letters and reminders to SIMFED regarding the supply and requesting that the supply be completed at

the earliest. HRDD has even warned that a case would be filed against SIMFED if the supply was not completed, informed Mr Awasthy.

This is the reason why SIMFED was compelled to lodge an FIR against Mr Bijay Chamling, he said.

"There has been no political pressure or any kind of interference from the government's side, so people have to understand the situation before commenting on it," he added.

He explained that the Sikkim State Co-operative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd. [SIMFED] had lodged an FIR against

Mr Bijay Chamling as the owner of Jaynum India which had been awarded with the supply work of supplying computers to HRDD through SIMFED.

The supply work of Rs 1.80 crore was awarded to Jaynum India in 2013 for the supply of 364 computers.

The work was provided under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) scheme of the Government of India.

As per the supply order, Jaynum India was to supply the said number of computers to HRDD within three months.

Taking the quickness with which the order had to be completed, SIMFED had advanced Rs 1.77 crore to the company but till date, received only 95 computers against the 364 ordered.

The case is currently under investigation and senior police officials came on record recently to inform that following an anticipatory bail petition moved by Mr Bijay Chamling, the court has directed the police not to take him under custody yet.

## Nirbhaya case: SC dismisses curative petitions filed by two of four death row convicts

**NEW DELHI, JAN 14 (PTI):** The Supreme Court Tuesday dismissed the curative petitions filed by two of the four death row convicts in the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case.

A 5-judge bench headed by Justice N V Ramana rejected the curative petitions filed by Vinay Sharma (26) and Mukesh Kumar (32).

The proceedings were conducted in-chamber. A curative petition is the last and final legal remedy available to a person.

The five judges were unanimous that there was no merit in the curative petitions filed by the two condemned petitioners.

"The applications for stay of execution of death sentence are also rejected. We have gone through the Curative Petitions and the relevant documents. In our opinion, no case is made out within the pa-

rameters indicated in the decision of this Court in Rupa Ashok Hurra vs. Ashok Hurra & Another, reported in 2002 (4) SCC 388. Hence, the Curative Petitions are dismissed," the bench said.

The other members of the bench were Justices Arun Mishra, R F Nariman, R Banumathi and Ashok Bhushan.

Vinay and Mukesh had filed curative petitions on January 9.

A Delhi court had on January 7 issued death warrants against the four convicts and said they would be hanged on January 22 at 7 am in Tihar jail.

Two other death-row convicts, Akshay Kumar Singh (31) and Pawan Gupta (25), had not filed curative petitions.

A 23-year-old paramedic student, referred to as Nirbhaya, was gang-raped and brutally assaulted

on the intervening night of December 16-17, 2012, in a moving bus in south Delhi by six people before being thrown out on the road. She died on December 29 at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore.

The Supreme Court had in 2017 upheld the capital punishment awarded to them by the Delhi High Court and a trial court.

One of the six accused in the case, Ram Singh, allegedly committed suicide in Tihar Jail.

A juvenile, who was among the accused, was convicted by a juvenile justice board and was released from a reformation home after serving a three-year term.

On July 9, 2018, the apex court had dismissed the review pleas filed by three of the convicts in the case, saying no grounds had been made out by them for review of the 2017 verdict.



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 14 JAN:**

Guiding Juniors 2020 got underway today at centres across the State with around 60 volunteers sent to their respective centers after a daylong induction programme. At the centres, the volunteers were ac-

corded warm welcome by the Panchayats, parents and the concerned villagers on 10 January.

The first day started with the interaction between the volunteers from Sikkim Youth Federation, Panchayats, Parents and Students of their respective centers.

The day ended with a cleanliness drive at centres across the State.

More than 60 undergraduate, post graduate and research scholars from various colleges and universities who are staying in their respective centers as volunteers and

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# CM attends Maghey Mela at Rimbi

**GYALSHING, 14 JAN [IPR]:** Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] attended the Rimbi Maghey Mela as chief guest at the Sewaro Rock Garden, Rimbi, West Sikkim, today.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by MN Sherpa, Minister, Energy and Power; LN Sharma, Minister AHVS and IPR; BH Subba, Minister, PHE; TT Bhutia, Secretary, Tourism; Karma R. Bonpo, DC West; Tenzing L Lepcha, SP West; HODs of line departments, officials and dignitaries.

The CM, in his address, expressed gratitude and joy towards the public of Yuksam-Tashiding constituency and West Sikkim for organizing the event.

He also extended warm greetings on the occasion of Maghe Sankranti to all present.

The CM applauded



the organizing committee of Rimbi Maghey Mela for their energy and zeal in making the event successful.

He further mentioned the importance of public cooperation which is a must for overall develop-

ment of the state. He also mentioned that the State can develop only with the cooperation of all thus one needs to work together with the society in order to progress.

The CM informed that the State Government

was focusing on sports as a priority and said that the state needs to bring out new stars and sportspersons who will represent India and Sikkim. He also stressed on the importance of traffic rules and safety and

mentioned that the state government is concerned about the lives of vehicle owners and passengers.

He further stated that the Government is keen to help individuals who help themselves through their collaborative and

innovative ideas and are trying their best to be self sufficient. He also mentioned that the farmers who are hard working would be given incentives by the Government.

The CM expressed his desire to visit the remote places of Yuksam in February to assess the current situation and provide aid of development to the public.

During the program, the Tourism Department gave an amount of Rs 1.50 lakh as financial aid to the Rimbi Maghey Mela. Certificates of Gratitude were also given to the those who contributed towards the rehabilitation of Tsong Landslide victims.

The CM also attended the Kokfewa Tongnam (New Year) of the Limboo Community at Lingchom, West Sikkim prior to attending the Rimbi Maghey Mela.

## Governor greets Sikkim on Makar Sankranti



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 14 JAN:**

Governor Ganga Prasad has offered greetings and best wishes to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of Makar Sankranti.

In his message, the Governor has said, "Sikkim is land of festivals. 'Makar Sankranti' festival is a celebrated with pomp and show in all nuke and corner of Sikkim. It is also the occasion to mark own respect for the ceaseless hard work of our farmers.

This occasion reminds us bounty of nature brings the promise of further growth and progress of the State of Sikkim. These festivals symbolise the joy of sharing the new crop with one's family and community, and are intertwined in the soul of the State. All communities of Sikkim celebrate this festival with the spirit of mutual love, affection and fraternity.

Such festival has invaluable contribution in the geographical, cultural and emotional unification of the State. I am confident that this festival will help further strengthen the spirit of peaceful co-existence and unity, and further enhance the prosperity and happiness of Sikkim."

I wish the people of Sikkim, Makar Sankranti celebration all success."

## Army Day wishes from Governor

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 14 JAN:**

Governor Ganga Prasad has greetings and felicitations to all officers, soldiers, veterans, civilians, ex-servicemen and their families on the occasion of Army Day 2020.

In his message, the Governor said, "I am happy to learn that the Army Day is being celebrated

on 15 January, 2020. The Indian Army plays a pivotal role in ensuring the national security of India, whilst defending our borders across some of the most perilous terrain in the world. It provides stability during internal security challenges and is often called upon to provide assistance during natural calamities. The

Indian Army is known for its professionalism, selfless commitment and the unparalleled bravery of its rank and file.

Today, we remembered our brave hearts, who have made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. The nation is indebted to them and their families. I wish to place on record our

deepest appreciation for the dedication and devotion of our soldiers in their service to the nation.

I am confident that Indian Army will continue to acquit itself as a robust and vital instrument of national power in the coming years.

I wish the Army Day celebration all success."

## States shun imported onions; Centre fears stock may rot



**NEW DELHI, JAN 14 (PTI):** Forced to import onions to check spike in prices, the Union Government now fears that the key kitchen staple may rot in godowns as states have shown little interest in buying them despite its offer to bear transportation cost.

Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said the Centre is offering onions to states at Rs 55 per kg landed cost and is ready to bear the cost of transporting the commodity.

While the Centre alone can import onions, it depends on states for retailing them to consumers.

Retail onion prices started to rise by September-end and touched a high of Rs 170 per kg in December, forcing the Union government to import onions from countries like Turkey and Egypt. In subsequent weeks, rates started to soften with the arrival of new Kharif crop in the market.

"So far, we have contracted (import of) 36,000 tonnes of onion. Of which, 18,500 tonnes of shipment has reached India, but states have

taken only 2,000 tonne that too after much persuasion. We are worried about its disposal because it is a perishable commodity," Paswan told reporters.

"Tomorrow, someone should not go to court and say imported onions were rotting," he said.

He said the Centre is offering imported onions at an average cost of Rs 55 per kg and also bearing the entire transportation cost. Despite all, the state governments are not coming forward to buy them.

As per government data, retail onion prices average Rs 50 per kg in most markets. The data showed onion being priced at Rs 50 per kg in the national capital but local vendors were selling it for Rs 70-80 a kg.

Asked why prices are still high despite imports, Paswan said, "The imports are being done to improve the domestic supply and check prices. If state governments are not ready to take the imported onions, what can we do?"

So far, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and

West Bengal governments have taken the imported onions. Many states have withdrawn their demand, he added.

Sources said the taste of imported onions is different from the home-grown ones and consumers are not buying them when domestic onion is available at the same rate.

Stating that a shipment of 5,500 tonne was cancelled before it set on sail in the absence of demand, Consumer Affairs Secretary Avinash Srivastava said 4,000 tonne of imported onions is expected to arrive in the next two days and 14,500 tonnes by the month-end.

The government is importing onions through state-run trading agency MMTC. Imports are being undertaken from Turkey, Afghanistan and Egypt. Onion prices shot up due to 25 per cent fall in the kharif production.

Paswan also said the ministry is keeping a close watch on prices of other commodities, especially edible oils and pulses. The government will take action at appropriate time.

## Tharoor apologises for 'power without responsibility' remark on Kejriwal

**NEW DELHI, JAN 14 (PTI):** Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Tuesday apologised on Twitter after he was criticised for his remark that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal wants power without responsibility, something which has been "the prerogative of eunuchs".

On Monday night, Tharoor alleged that Kejriwal is trying to have it both ways by making statements deploring the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) but has not taken any tangible action.

"He has not even shown human compassion one expects from a chief minister from victims of violence in his state. In any other state, had students been bashed up in this manner, the chief minister would have visited them and shown them some concern," Tharoor told a TV channel.

"Mr Kejriwal really wants power without responsibility, which we all know has been the prerogative of eunuchs for ages," he said.

The remark drew sharp criticism on social media as netizens accused him of "transphobia" and asked him to apologise to the LGBT community.

"Apologies to those who found my quote about 'power without responsibility' offensive. It's an old line from British politics, going back to Kipling & Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, & most recently used by Tom Stoppard.

### Volunteers begin...

are carrying out various activities as charted by SYF. For the next fifteen days, these volunteers will be engaging with school students, currently on winter break, on topics like History of Sikkim, Article 371F, Basic English, career counseling, communication skills and personality development.

They will also be carrying out various scholastic competitions like debates, extempore, quiz, essay writing, talent hunt and many more in 20 centres across the state.

The program is scheduled to conclude on 26 January.

### People on...

which showed that the gathering there was unconstitutional.

It has put up the matter for further hearing on Wednesday.

During the hearing, police told the court they have only drone images of the gathering as evidence and no other recording.

To this, the judge said, "Do you think Delhi police is so backward that it has no tools to record anything?"

"Show me anything or any law that prohibits such gathering... Where is the violence? Who says you cannot protest...have you read the Constitution. It is one's Constitutional right to protest."

The court further observed that Azad, having a law degree, can also protest inside the courts.

It noted that Azad's Ambedkarite philosophy probably required more research.

"Azad is probably an Ambedkarite. Ambedkar was more closer to the Muslims, Sikhs and basically the repressed class of the society... He was a rebel of his own kind. Probably Azad has a vague idea of what he wants to say but probably not able to put it across. If you take up an issue, you do your research. And that is missing," the court said.

The plea, filed through advocate Mehmood Pracha, claimed that there was no evidence against the allegations made against Azad in the FIR and his arrest was illegal.

Azad's outfit had called for a protest march from Jama Masjid to Jantar Mantar against the amended Citizenship Act on December 20, without police permission.

Other 15 people arrested in the case were granted bail by the court on January 9.

### Former SRCs...

The latest missive from the Education Department directing that the ground be handed over for a Winter Carnival also comes from the same office.

"We all are aware of the various ill effects of organizing melas in a college ground. Further, the ground of NBBDC, has been maintained very recently. Thus, there is a maximum chance that its quality will degrade. Although, a very strict terms and conditions has been signed in paper but we are doubtful that it will be complied properly as it seems that the mela organizing committee is blessed by the people in power," the release states.

The release also commends the college authorities for resisting efforts to allow the ground for melas again and regrets that the "the people in power emerged victorious" again.

"We urge the present SRC, the students and all the stakeholders to stand against the mela and to raise their voice in order to preserve the sanctity of the prestigious college. No power is stronger than that of the united students," the release concludes.

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**For details contact: 9083826462**

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**For more details: 9083826462 /9832556698**

### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College. Flat Land no cutting required. Price 30 Lakhs (negotiable).

**Contact: 9800201335**

### LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Roadside just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593373387 and 9434406761

### LAND FOR SALE

An area measuring 1 acre at Sadam South Sikkim near Loretto Convent School at Gupti road. Price negotiable any one interested can contact: 78640-04501,62970-03235, 98320-48410

## Anti-CAA protest at Wankhede Stadium



**MUMBAI, JAN 14 (PTI):** A group of students held protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens during the first ODI between India and Australia here on Tuesday.

Wearing white t-shirts, the students held banners that read 'No CAA', 'No NPR' and 'NO NPC'. They, however, left before the end of Indian innings at the Wankhede Stadium.

They belonged to a group called Mumbai Against CAA.

"There were 26 persons in total and they were sitting in the Vijay Merchant Pavilion side. They themselves vacated the stadium as Indian wickets were falling

in a heap," Fawad Ahmad, who belongs to the group, said.

The social media was abuzz that people wearing black clothing were not allowed inside the stadium by security guards fearing protests, but a senior Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) Apex Council official claimed that no such diktat was issued.

"There was no diktat about any colour, no posters of any sort were permitted inside the stadium as it was the instruction from the local police," the MCA member said.

In the first game, India opener Shikhar Dhawan hit a half-century before Australia pulled things back to bowl India out for 255.



# Workshop on children-related laws and protection at Kabi

**MANGAN, 14 JAN [IPR]:** A block-level workshop on Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, POCSO (Amendment) Act, 2019 and other children-related legislations and child protection mechanisms was held today at BAC, Kabi for members of the Village-level Child Protection Committees of Kabi Block.

The program was attended amongst others by the Chairperson and members of Block Level Child Protection Committees (BLCPCs) of Kabi Block and Chairperson and members of Village level Child Protection Committees (VLCPCs) formed in the seven GPUs



of Kabi Block.

BDO-Kabi, Sonam Tshering Lepcha, introduced the members of the BLCPC in his welcome address.

The Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee(CWC), North, Mingma Doma Bhutia highlighted the role of the

CWC in handling Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP) cases and urged all the Block and Village Level Committees to produce such children before the CWC or report such cases to the proper agencies.

The DCPO, North, Wendy Lepcha highlighted the provisions of children-related legislations like JJ Act,2015, POCSO (Amendment) Act,2019, etc. , Child Protection Scheme under social justice & welfare department and the roles

of Child Protection Committees .

The program concluded with all the members of BLCPC and VLCPC taking the Child Protection Pledge and signing of the pledge.

After the programme, the Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee, DCPO, North, BDO, Kabi and members of VLCPCs inaugurated child friendly rooms in four Child friendly GPUs of the Kabi block which will be monitored by the Village level Child Protection Committees (VLCPCs) for effective implementation of the child protection mechanism in the community.

## Maghe Sankranti greetings from CM

**GANGTOK, 14 JAN [IPR]:** Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] has extended warm greetings and best wishes to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of Maghe Sankranti.

The Chief Minister, in his message, says Maghey Sankrant is one of the most auspicious occasions for the Hindu community. This sacred day marks the beginning of a propitious phase of nature's transition and the wheel of time. It also marks the beginning of warmer and longer days in the run-up to the next equinox.

Maghe Sankranti or Makar Sankranti is also a tradition marking the arrival of the spring season. The festival has a religious and spiritual significance and is celebrated in different parts of the country as per the local customs, traditions, and beliefs.

The lunar calendar of Kirat community named after their first King Yalambar is known as Yele Sambat begins from Makar Sankranti. The auspicious festival also holds special significance for the Limboo, Rai, and Sunuwar communities

as it marks their new year, known as Yele Tangbe, Yele Dong of Rais and Yele Thoche respectively which commences from Maghe Sankranti.

However the Limboo community celebrates the festival as "Kok Fung Tsongnam" termed as the welcoming of the God of prosperity and driving away the devil famine from the region.

Kok Fung in Limboo language means the blossoming of Magnolia and Rhododendron.

The festival is also celebrated for bringing together marriage aspirants through "Dhan dance" and other cultural activities.

In Sikkim, Maghe Melas are held all over the State as an integral part of the festivities. The most popular Maghe Mela is held at Jorethang in South Sikkim attracting a huge number of people and tourists.

In his message to the people of Sikkim, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has wished for happiness, good health and a renewed sense of purpose and commitment and to celebrate the festival with mutual respect and harmony.

## Transport United downs Punjab FC at CM's Gold Cup

**SUMMIT REPORT JORETHANG, 14 JAN:**

Transport United, Bhutan, has played its way into the semifinals of the 9th All India Chief Minister's Gold Cup International Football Tournament underway here at Jorethang in South Sikkim. The last quarter final match was played between Transport United and Punjab FC with the team from Bhutan emerging victorious 2-0.

MLA GT Dhungel was present as the chief guest today accompanied by the Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling, as guest of honour, Sports Secretary, Kuber Bhandari and South District Football Association (SDFA) members.

Tenzin Dorji of Transport United was adjudged "Hero of the Match."

SDFA felicitated the chief guest and the guest of honour during the event.

## INTER-CONSTITUENCY FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT Barfung beats Soreng-Chakung to enter finals



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 14 JAN:**

Barfung will take on Zoom-Salghari in the finals of the Inter-Constituency Football Tournament 2019-20 at Jorethang ground in South Sikkim on Wednesday.

In a nail-biting second semi-final match played today, Barfung edged past Soreng-Chakung in the tie-breaker to secure its

berth in the finals of the tournament.

The full time of the match ended in a 1-1 draw. In the tie-breaker through penalty shoot-out to decide the winner, Barfung won the match by 4-3.

Zoom-Salghari is already in the finals of the tournament by defeated Melli by a lone goal in the first semi-final match yesterday.

## GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM SOCIAL JUSTICE AND WELFARE DEPARTMENT GANGTOK

No: 237/SJ&WD/CPD/2019-2020

Date: 13/01/2020

### NOTICE

Applications are invited from interested local persons for appointment as members in the Sikkim Commission for Protection of Child Rights. The applicant should be a graduate degree holder having experience in the field of:

- Education
- Child health, care, welfare or child development.
- Juvenile justice or care of neglected or marginalized children or children with disabilities,
- Elimination of child labor or children in distress,
- Child psychology or sociology and
- Laws relating to children, as prescribed by section 17(2) (b) of the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005.

Retired government employees are also encouraged to apply. Upper age limit is 60 years of age. The applicant may submit their resume along with relevant documents and certificate in the above mentioned fields. For further details; they may contact Dy. Secretary (CPS)/ Under Secretary (CPS) Social Justice & Welfare Department on or before 22.01.2020 by 4.30 PM.

Honorarium of the member will be as prescribed by the rules.

This is continuation of our previous notice vide no: 40/SJ&WD/CPS/2019 dated 12/11/2019

NOTE: This Notice is also available in the departmental website [www.sikkimsocial-welfare.gov.in](http://www.sikkimsocial-welfare.gov.in).

Sd/-

R.O. No. 326/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20  
Date: 13.01.2020

Additional Secretary-cum- Director (CPS)  
Social Justice & Welfare Department

## Maghey Mela continues at Mangshila

**WANGCHUK BHUTIA**

**MANGAN, 14 JAN:**

The third day of Maghey Mela at Mangshila, North Sikkim, today had Additional Director, Animal Husbandry Department, Dr KT Bhutia, as chief guest accompanied by Joint Director Animal Husbandry Department, BB Subba and DE, Power Dept, Karma Z Bhutia, Zilla member Namok Swayem, Ongdup Bhutia as special guests.

The function started with welcome address delivered by president, Organising Committee, Ram Bahadur Limboo.

Joint Director, BB Subba highlighted the histo-



ry of Maghey Mela and Makar Sankranti while the chief guest urged that such traditional festivals should be celebrated regularly and lauded Mangshila GPU for doing well in dairy farming.

A colourful traditional culture programme was held as part of the function.

The function was also attended by panchayat members, officials and the general public.

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR PENSION, GROUP INSURANCE & PROVIDENT FUND FINANCE DEPARTMENT GANGTOK		
NO. 338 /PGIPF	Date: 13.01.2020	
<b>NOTICE</b>		
The PGIPF Division of Finance Department, Government of Sikkim is conducting Pension Adalat at the District Head Quarters as per the schedule detailed below. All Pensioners including Family Pensioners are requested to kindly attend the said Pension Adalat with their queries and grievances between 10.30 AM to 1.30 PM		
Date	District	Venue
20.01.2020	North	Conference Hall of District Collector, Mangan
22.01.2020	South	Conference Hall of Zilla Panchyat, Namchi
23.01.2020	West	Conference Hall of District Collector, Rabdentse
27.01.2020	East	Conference Hall of District Collector, Gangtok
Sd/- Deepak Kumar Pradhan Director, PGIPF State Pension Nodal Office		
<b>R.O. No. 325/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20dt. 13.01.2010</b>		

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GYALSHING, WEST	
Memo No: 581/EDN/W	Dated: 07/01/2020
<b>TENDER NOTICE</b>	
Sealed tender (two bid) are hereby invited on behalf of Government of Sikkim for supplies of groceries and related items to KGBV, Labing, West Sikkim for a period of 01(one) year for academic session 2020-21. With a provision for extension upto two years based on performance. The supplies to be made as per the supply order of the department.	
<b>Terms &amp; Condition:</b>	
1. Any local registered Grocery shop/supplier/Catering firm having following documents may apply;	
a. Sikkim Subject/COI	
b. Valid Certificate of registration of firm/trade license.	
c. Valid GST registration.	
d. Latest GST clearance from commercial taxes.	
e. Solvency Certificate of Rs.10.00 lakhs.	
2. The interested party may collect the tender form (Technical & financial) and other Terms & Conditions in Appendix - I, from the office of Addl. Director, Education Department, West Sikkim from 11 am to 2 pm on any working day w.e.f. 10.01.2020 to 17.01.2020 on production of BR of Rs.1,000 duly creited to Major Head 0202-800-other receipts.	
3. The duly filled up tender form in sealed cover should reach the office of Addl. Director, District Education Office, West accompanied by self Attested documents as mentioned in Sl.No. 1 above with TDR (refundable) of Rs. 1,00,000(one lacs only) drawn in favour of Additional Director, Education Septt., West from SBS Gyalshing before 12:00 noon of 21.01.2020 tender received after 12:00 noon of 21.01.2020 will not be entertained.	
4. The sealed tender will be opened on 21.01.2020 at 1PM in the office of DC(W) in presence of tender committee, tenderers & authorized representatives present.	
5. Incomplete tender are liable to be rejected.	
6. The department confers the right to accept or reject any or all tender without assigning any reason thereof.	
Sd/- District Collector DAC, Rabdentse Govt. of Sikkim West District.	
<b>R.O. NO. 322/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20 Dt. 9.1.2020</b>	

UFIRSTMAG PRESENTS

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MANAH KENDRA BHAWAN, GANGTOK

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**(JUDGES)** SNEHSHREE THAPA, MANOJ RAI, SUDARSHAN TAMANG

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**VENUE - JORETHANG PLAYGROUND**

### FIXTURE- III Final Round

Winner-Group-A Khamdong Singtam	09-01-2020 (10.30 AM)	Winner-Group-D Gangtok
Winner-Group-G Salghari Zoom	13-01-2020 (10.30 AM)	Winner-Group-F Berfung
Winner-Group-E Melli	11-01-2020 (10.30 AM)	Winner-Group-H Soreng Chakung
Winner-Group-C Lachen Mangan		Winner-Group-B Upper Tadong

**FINAL 15-01-2020**

Organized by:  
Department of Sports & Youth Affairs  
Government of Sikkim



## Tackle Corruption with Accountability

*Corruption should not be catergorised, it should be removed*

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission had tabled its recommendations to the Central Government a decade ago. The report covered 15 topics, of which around eleven have been “considered” by a Group of Ministers in the eleven years that have passed since it was tabled, and some, like the Right to Information and the idea of Lokpal, have already been implemented with varying degrees of success. There are several aspects that this document delved into, but it did direct special focus on ways and means to tackle corruption.

As mentioned, the Lokpal initiative was mooted in it, and although that recommendation obviously has an uphill journey to negotiate to be able to deliver with any real consequence, the recommendations had made it obvious that the administration required reforms because it has been too compromised by bureaucratic extortion. The realization was welcome, even if it had come late, because the planners are normally satisfied by the fact that India ranks lower than Pakistan in the list of most corrupt nations. The Panel on Ethics in Governance had suggested that corruption in the administration be split into two categories – coercive and collusive. The former kind covers the corruption that lay people are made to suffer on a daily basis – the need to grease palms to get even routine jobs like processing a request done. Collusive corruption, the Panel had defined as corruption that sees governance join hands with the briber and assist in the subversion of laws, dodging rules and avoiding dues which should accrue to the State exchequer. Interestingly enough, it was the latter kind of “corruption” that the Panel recommends for stricter action. Why, because it bleeds the State exchequer of its dues. But what about the internal hemorrhage that democratic principles bleed when the public is made to dance circles unless they pay up the public servants to do their jobs?

The irony cannot be missed. Penalize short-changing of revenue returns more strongly than the denial of rights! The revenue of course, some will defend, gets pumped back to the people in the form of populist measures. This can be countered with the argument that more populist measures mean even more powerful babus and even more invasive governance which will automatically lead to even more corruption. The nexus of the corrupt figures out loopholes in every new rule even ahead of its implementation since they are invariably drafting these in consultation with the sections they are in collusion with. The suggestion to approach corruption in two categories – coercive and collusive, is flawed because there cannot be kinds or grades of corruption; there is either corruption or honesty. At least in this case, there are blacks and whites. The categories and grades can be used for the purpose of understanding corruption, but not to deal with it.

The rot of corruption has set in too deep and if corruption is to be tackled, amputations are required. Since governments cannot be expected to prune their staff strength, the least they can do is prune powers and then make the powerful more accountable. There are too many desks that every request has to move through before it is decided for there to be accountability clearly defined. These can be reduced and the accountability established by setting a time limit on every process and requiring officials to provide specific explanations every time a deadline is missed or request denied. This gets everyone on record, and because it is the bureaucracy one is dealing with here, taking away anonymity from the process will ensure everyone becomes judicious. Even this experiment might fail, but given the nation’s seventy years of continuing failure in containing corruption, it is worth giving a shot.

### WRITE US:

Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence.

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# Taiwan: What Election victory For Tsai Ing-wen Means For the Island’s Future

NIKI J.P. ALSFORD  
*theconversation.com*

The re-election of Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-wen is a remarkable moment for global progressive politics in the face of continued populism, fake news and voter manipulation. Tsai, of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), won the January 11 poll with just over 8 million votes – 57.1% of the total – the highest total number of votes in Taiwan’s democratic history. Following a bitter electoral campaign marred by sexism, misinformation and cyber bullying, it was a resounding victory.

In the Legislative Yuan – Taiwan’s parliament – the DPP won 61 of the 113 seats, a drop of seven seats from the 2016 election but a majority of four seats. Tsai’s main rival, Han Kuo-yu, took 38.6% of the vote in the presidential election and his party, the Kuomintang (KMT), won 38 seats in the Legislative Yuan – gaining three seats.

With Tsai representing those who want to distance Taiwan from China, much of the analysis of the result has been on the “China factor” and the rebuke to Beijing that her victory represents. But as my own research on Taiwanese history and society stresses, it’s an injustice to Taiwan to always focus on a top-down, China-centric perspective.

The DPP is a centre-left party, which introduced same-sex marriage in Taiwan in 2019, and is a long-term member of Liberal International, a worldwide federation of progressive democratic parties. Tsai’s victory, against a new form of populism pushed by Han, is a significant one for the island and emphasises how much Taiwanese people cherish their free and democratic way of life.

### BLUE WALL REMAINS

Tsai’s success was due in part to a refusal by many Taiwanese to vote for Han as president. Most voters have two ballots, one for their local district candidate and the other for a party list. Of the 113

seats in parliament, 73 represent local constituencies and 34 are allocated from the party-list vote. A further six seats are reserved for Taiwan’s indigenous population – elected via an extra single transferable vote for people with indigenous status.

For the 2020 party-list vote, the DPP took 33.9%, while the KMT took 33.3%, with a number of smaller other parties picking up the other third. Since Tsai’s personal vote was so much more decisive, it suggests that many who voted for her in the presidential election voted for other parties in the party list vote.

A closer look at the new political map of Taiwan for both the presidential and parliamentary votes reveals there is still a clear blue wall – a reference to the blue colour of the China-leaning parties – extending across the centre and down the east coast.

### INDIGENOUS VOTES

Taiwan’s indigenous peoples make up 2.38% of the island’s population. Their ancestry predates the majority settler Han Chinese communities that began arriving from the 17th century.

The KMT has long relied on the indigenous vote, due to a combination of identity politics and entrenched community service centres in indigenous areas. The foundation of these are the fuwuzhan, a type of centre established to provide essentials such as oil and rice to indigenous communities, established by the KMT under martial law when Taiwan was ruled by an authoritarian one-party system between 1949 and 1987.

Since 2008, when the DPP lost the presidential election, the party began to establish its own fuwuzhan, but the 64 it has are dwarfed by the 383 KMT-led ones, according to official figures.

In the 2020 election, the KMT won three of the six indigenous seats, the DPP two – gaining one seat – and one went to an independent candidate. Not only is indigenous culture essential in Taiwan’s shift away from its sino-centric history, the re-

served seat system for indigenous people can also play a pivotal role in the overall result, due to the lower voter threshold. The fact that the DPP won an extra seat demonstrated a potential shift away from the traditional “iron vote” of indigenous people for the KMT.

### FUTURE FOR THE KMT AND DPP

Questions surrounding the future of the KMT will undoubtedly be raised by their second successive election defeat on a ticket campaigning for closer relations to China. That said, 5 million voters still supported Han and his populist pro-China stance – a significant bloc of voters which both the KMT and DPP must pay attention to.

After losing the 2016 and now the 2020 elections, the KMT appear rudderless. To win back power, they will need a charismatic character like Ma Ying-jeou, their former president. Although Ma had an appalling approval rating towards the end of his tenure, he won 58.5% of the vote in 2008 and 51.6% in 2012.

A potential future leader for the KMT might be Chiang Wan-an, great-grandson of former Chinese President Chiang Kai-shek, who was re-elected for Taipei City District 3. As presidential candidate, Han had moved the KMT both towards the right of the political spectrum, and further towards China. But Chiang’s credentials could see the KMT shift back to the more pragmatic engagement with China that it had in the past as a way to win back electoral support.

In her 2020 new year speech, Tsai emphasised that Taiwan is not willing to accept the “one country, two systems” relationship with China – a reference to the system currently in place in Hong Kong. The election result proves her point. As the global gaze falls upon Taiwan, it’s up to Tsai and her government to keep repeating this message.

*[the writer is Professor in Asia Pacific Studies, Director of the Asia Pacific Studies Institutes, University of Central Lancashire]*

# Why Hip-Hop Belongs in Today’s Classrooms

NOLAN JONES  
*theconversation.com*

When Cassie Crim, a high school math teacher in Joliet, Illinois, introduced herself to her advanced algebra students in 2017, she did it through a rap video.

Using a rendition of Cardi B’s “Bodack Yellow,” renamed “Codack Yellow,” Crim referenced math terms and laid down classroom expectations:

“These exponents, these is ratios, these is power rules Algebra and a lil’ trig, I don’t wanna choose And I’m quick to take a couple (points) off so don’t get comfortable”

With rap music continuing to rule as America’s most popular music genre for a second straight year in 2019, according to Nielsen Music’s annual report, it makes sense for educators to use rap music to reach students who might otherwise not find a subject relevant. And Crim is by no means the only teacher who is doing just that.

In Pasadena, California, Manuel Rustin, a social studies teacher at John Muir High School, uses rap songs to get students to make meaning of current events and history through a course entitled “Urban Culture and Society.”

At Detroit’s Frederick Douglass Academy, Quan Neloms has students search the lyrics of their favorite rap songs for “college-level vocabulary and references to key events and concepts from American history.”

Collectively, the three teachers represent part of a new generation of educators who embrace a form of teaching known as Hip Hop Pedagogy. It’s a form of teaching that takes the most popular genre of music in

the U.S. and uses it to foster success in the classroom.

### BUT IS IT PAYING OFF?

As one who has taught Hip Hop Pedagogy courses to K-12 teachers and instructors in higher ed for the last 10 years, I believe hip-hop has the potential to connect students to important subjects they might otherwise dismiss. But it all depends how it is done.

In my Hip Hop Pedagogy courses, K-12 teachers and college instructors learn how to tap into the richness of hip-hop culture to engage students in topics that range from Shakespeare to neuroscience. But I also stress the need to be authentic – in other words, don’t lie about where you are from – and steer clear of gimmicky hip-hop instructional strategies, such as parroted hip-hop lingo out of context, or showing a random rap video that has nothing to do with the course subject.

### HIP-HOP THROUGH THE YEARS

Hip-hop in America’s classrooms is not new. For the past decade or two, scholars such as Marc Lamont Hill, Chris Emdin and Jeff Duncan-Andrade have explored the impact and effectiveness of hip-hop in educational settings.

Collectively, their research has found that hip-hop can be used to teach critical thinking skills, critical literacy, media literacy skills, STEM skills, critical consciousness and more.

Hip-hop has made significant inroads into higher education as well.

### HIP-HOP IN HIGHER ED

Hip-hop academic scholarship goes back at least as far as Tricia Rose’s groundbreaking 1994 book, “Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America.”

Since then, numerous hip-hop education books have been written. More than 300 colleges and universities have offered courses on hip-hop. The University of Arizona offers a minor in Hip Hop Studies, and McNally Smith College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, offers a hip-hop diploma, which includes 45 credits and three semesters of hip-hop music production, language and history courses.

These developments are no light feat. In order for hip-hop to reach the level of prevalence that it enjoys on today’s educational landscape – at least 150 educators at the K-12 level were using hip-hop in their class in 2011, the last time a hip-hop education “census” took place – it had to overcome the skepticism of critics who questioned its validity in educational spaces. How would hip-hop explain its controversial history of glorifying violence, consumption and misogyny? Is hip-hop music appropriate for classrooms?

But hip-hop, despite what some may view as its flaws, is a mirror of the complexity of society. Hip-hop did not invent violence, excessive consumerism and mistreatment of women. What it does is provide a platform to talk about these issues.

### BREAKING IT DOWN

That’s what Rustin, the social studies teacher in Pasadena, did when he used rapper Childish Gambino’s provocative video “This is America” to get students to critically analyze the state of affairs in American society. As one student stated in an article about watching the video in class, “It relies on the shock value of violence and capitalizes on our society’s growing numbness to seeing black bodies being brutalized – it’s

exploitative.”

Drawing conclusions from hip-hop lyrics requires a certain level of critical analysis, one of the course expectations. Thus, in line with state education standards, Rustin’s course requires college-level writing, reading and critical thinking. Alums of Rustin’s class have indicated that discussions in the class not only increased their critical thinking skills but prepared them for college courses.

Other teachers who use hip-hop in the classroom have achieved similar results. For instance, Crim, the Joliet math teacher, said she noticed improved student engagement after her video, as well as “an increase in performance from one unit test to the next.”

Neloms, the Detroit educator who had his student search rap songs for college level vocabulary, did so after only 33 percent of his students passed a vocabulary exam. After he introduced his class to Rhymes with Reason, an “interactive online series that teaches college-level vocabulary and U.S. history concepts using hip-hop lyrics” rooted in African American speech, Neloms documented a “dramatic increase” in his students’ test scores.

I think similar results could be achieved by more teachers if they tap into the richness of hip-hop culture to reach today’s students. Many students are already forming their views of society and the world based on the lyrics of their favorite rap artists. It only makes sense to infuse what they’re already listening to into the class so that – at the very least – there’s a common point of reference.

*[the writer is Associate Adjunct Professor, Mills College]*



# QR code wrist bands for Gangasagar Mela pilgrims

**SAGAR ISLAND/KOLKATA, JAN 14 (PTI):** Besides providing basic amenities at 'Gangasagar Mela' in West Bengal, the South 24 Parganas district administration is also using QR code wrist bands, mobile apps and a software for crowd monitoring system to help the pilgrims, an official said on Tuesday.

Every year on Makar Sankranti day lakhs of pilgrims gather at Sagar island in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district from across the country to take a dip at the confluence of the Hoogly river and Bay of Bengal and offer prayers at the Kapil Muni Ashram.

South 24 Parganas District Magistrate P Ulaganathan said the district administration is using the QR code-based wrist bands to address the problem of missing persons and a real-time crowd monitoring system through the application of information technology for the convenience of pilgrims.

More than 30 lakh pilgrims from across the country gather here for the annual event and the challenge for the district administration is to manage the pilgrims while crossing the Muriganga river to reach Sagar Island safely and vice versa, the official said.

"This year we are expecting that more than 30 lakh pilgrims will visit Gangasagar Mela as there is no Kumb Mela this year," he said.

To reunite missing pilgrims with their kin is also a hurdle for the administration as many el-



derly persons or children who get separated from their families often fail to provide their addresses, the DM said.

"Usually, 5-6 lakh senior citizens and children come each year. About 10,000 missing cases are registered every year and of them, 2,000 are critical," he said.

For these cases, the police and district administration find it difficult to locate their families as they cannot even tell the states they have come from, he said, adding, they are provided shelters and efforts are made to send them back.

"About two lakh wrist bands with a QR code, named 'Parichay' have been distributed among elderly pilgrims and children visiting the mela free of cost to help them find their families in case they get lost in the crowd," Ulaganathan said.

Names, addresses and mobile numbers of family members of senior citizens and children are stored in the bar-coded waterproof bands and volunteer can easily fetch information about those who are lost and it will make easier to unite them with their kin, he added.

The administration has also introduced a real-time crowd monitoring software system known as 'Sagar Suraksha' for the convenience of pilgrims.

"This will help us to count the number of pilgrims in a marked area through the analysis of feed of high-resolution cameras. The software which not only gives over-crowd and trespassing alerts, but also provides forthcoming crowd gathering alert," the DM said.

High-resolution cam-

eras have been installed in different points like Lot no 8, Kachuberia, Namkhana and the 'Gangasagar mela' ground, he said.

In the year 2017 five Gangasagar pilgrims, including a woman had died in a stampede at a jetty at Kochuberia. The stampede occurred when there was a huge rush of pilgrims to board vessels to reach the mainland.

In addition to the Gangasagar mobile app, coined as 'Atithi Path', providing information about the fare, route chart, timings of tide, vessel and puja, the administration has introduced a vehicle tracking and management system for timely movement through the use of GPS technology named 'Vahan Darshan'.

"Due to the lack of physical monitoring, buses and launches some-

times become off route in intermediate lanes during their duty, so a GPS device installed in all vehicles will enable us to track their movement," another official said.

"We have taken an initiative for those who are not able to make it to Gangasagar this time can take a holy dip, right at home. They can place an order for Ganga water at our website and the water will be couriered to them along with prasad and holy tika. We have received more than 1,000 such orders, which is encouraging," Ulaganathan said.

'e-Snan', the first-of-its-kind-initiative by the administration, allow people can take a bath with the 'Ganga Jal' at their convenience while watching 'LIVE Gangasagar' via Gangasagar website and take the feel of SahiSnan, he added.

## Dolphin census in Odisha sanctuaries on Jan 19

**KENDRAPARA (ODISHA), JAN 14 (PTI):** After a five-year break, annual headcount exercise of dolphins inhabiting along brackish water bodies of the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary and Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary in Odisha will be held on January 19, a forest official said on Tuesday.

A survey of these animals is vital for the study of the growth pattern of the aquatic species living within these water

bodies and shallow sea waters of this Ramsar international wetland site.

Equipped with binoculars, GPS set and rangefinder, nine teams comprising over 40 wildlife experts will conduct the dolphin census, said Bikash Ranjan Dash, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Rajnagar Mangrove (wildlife) Forest Division.

Enumerators had sighted 270 dolphins in the sea and deltaic zones

during the last census conducted in 2015.

A total of 58 Irrawaddy dolphins, 23 Bottlenose dolphins, 123 Sousa Chinensis, 50 Sousa Plumbra dolphins, 15 pantropical spotted dolphins and one Finless porpoise were found at that time.

Headcount of dolphins could not be undertaken during the past five years because of inclement weather and rough sea, the official said.

## HC breather for BJP leader Mukul Roy in payout case

**KOLKATA, JAN 14 (PTI):** In a relief to BJP leader Mukul Roy, the Calcutta High Court on Tuesday directed the Kolkata Police not to arrest him until further orders in connection with a case of alleged payout for a railway panel membership.

A division bench of Justices S Munshi and Md Nizamuddin granted relief to Roy saying the matter will not appear in the list for hearings and directed the prosecution or the petitioner to mention the matter before it, if required.

The court directed

Roy to cooperate with the investigation in the case.

The order came after the prosecution prayed for more time to examine documents and for getting information from central agencies in relation to the case.

Roy was first granted a week-long protection from arrest by the high court on August 29 last year and it was extended from time to time.

The BJP leader moved the high court seeking anticipatory bail in a case of cheating filed by Santu Ganguly, a businessman,

against Baban Ghosh, who claims to be a local labour wing leader of the saffron party.

Ganguly alleged in the FIR that Ghosh had taken Roy's name while assuring him membership of a Zonal Railway Users Consultative Committee and took a bribe of several lakhs of rupees from him.

Following Ghosh's arrest in the case by the Kolkata Police on August 21, Roy moved the high court seeking anticipatory bail since his name had cropped up in the case.

## 95 pc work of laying tracks on Indian side of Haldibari-Chilahati railway link project complete: NFR



**HALDIBARI (WB), JAN 14 (PTI):** More than 95 per cent work of laying tracks on the Indian side of the Haldibari-Chilahati India-Bangladesh railway link project has been completed, a top Northeast Frontier Railway official said.

The distance between Haldibari railway station in West Bengal's Coochbehar district till the international border is 4.5 kilometres while that from Chilahati in northern Bangladesh till the zero point is around 7.5 kilometres.

"The completion of the entire project de-

pends on the pace with which tracks are laid on the Bangladesh side," NFR General Manager Sanjive Roy said.

Roy inspected the work on the Indian side on Monday evening and expressed satisfaction over it, officials said.

Both Haldibari and Chilahati stations were on the old broad gauge railway route between Siliguri and Kolkata that went through areas in present-day Bangladesh.

The new route passes through western parts of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar. Haldibari became a part of India while

Chilahati that of Pakistan after the partition of the country in 1947.

Nevertheless, the old Siliguri-Kolkata railway route continued to operate through erstwhile East Pakistan till the 1965 India-Pakistan war.

Both India and Bangladesh have resolved to restore railway connectivity through several routes that got snapped after the partition, one of which is the Haldibari-Chilahati one, officials said. Accordingly, missing railway tracks are being laid between Haldibari and Chilahati, officials said.

## Doctor who treated Unnao rape victim's father dies

**UNNAO (UP), JAN 13 (PTI):** A doctor who treated the Unnao rape victim's father when he was thrashed in police custody died on Monday after complaining of uneasiness here, official sources said.

Prashant Upadhyaya, 45, was rushed to the hospital after complaining of uneasiness where he died during treatment, they said.

Upadhyay had treated the victim's father in April 2018 after he was brutally thrashed in police custody, they said.

The doctor was posted in emergency ward of the district hospital and was suspended during a CBI inquiry into the matter. He was presently posted in Fatehpur.

BJP MLA Kuldeep Sengar was convicted of raping the minor girl from Unnao and is in jail in connection with the case.

Police said that Upadhyay was a diabetic and his body was sent for post-mortem.

## CAA casts shadow over 'Bhogali Bihu' festival in Assam

**GUWAHATI, JAN 14 (PTI):** 'Bhogali Bihu', a harvest festival of Assam, is likely to be a low-key affair this year as the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) has cast a shadow over the celebration to be held on Wednesday.

People across Assam seemed less enthusiastic about celebrating the festival as five people were killed allegedly due to police firing during anti-CAA protests in the state in December last year.

Activists of the Chutia Students' Union have given community feast 'Uruka', held on the eve of the festival, a miss to stage a 10-hour hunger strike at Titabor in Jorhat district from 5 am on Tuesday against the new citizenship law.

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and Cotton University students, who have been at the forefront of the anti-CAA stir, have appealed to people to burn copies of the Act in flames of 'Meji' (a structure made of bamboo, hay and wood that is set afire on the day of 'Bhogali Bihu') on Wednesday.

Traders said demand for items required in a typical Bihu feast such as fish, duck, chicken, curd, cream, milk, 'chira' (flattened rice) was less this year.

"We do not have the



excitement to buy food or share a meal with family this year due to worries that the CAA might wipe out Assamese culture and language by granting citizenship to Bangladeshi refugees," said Ratul Deka of Nalbari district. Gohpur's Dimpu Das said "imposition" of CAA on the Assamese people has dampened the festive spirit.

"How can we have the mood or desire to celebrate Bihu when five students like us were gunned down as they were returning home after participating in anti-CAA protests here on December 11?" said college-goer Binita Kalita of Guwahati.

Her sentiments were echoed by another student, Dhiman Rajkhowa.

"We are saddened by the deaths. The five families have been deprived of their sons. How can we celebrate under such circumstances?" he said.

In central Assam's Nagaon district, Anowara Begum, who was seen making 'Bihu Pittha' (rice cake) with women of other communities, said, "We do not distinguish among indigenous people as our only identity is that we are Assamese."

"This Act attempts to divide us on religious lines. We strongly oppose it and will never allow anyone to divide our society," she said.

Similar feelings were expressed by Ubedur Baruah of Sivasagar district who was seen building a 'Meji' with youths of other communities.

"Our Assam is 'Sanker-Ajanor Dex' (land of Sankar Deb and Ajan Fakir). Both taught us to live together in brotherhood. We will never allow that to be eroded," he said.

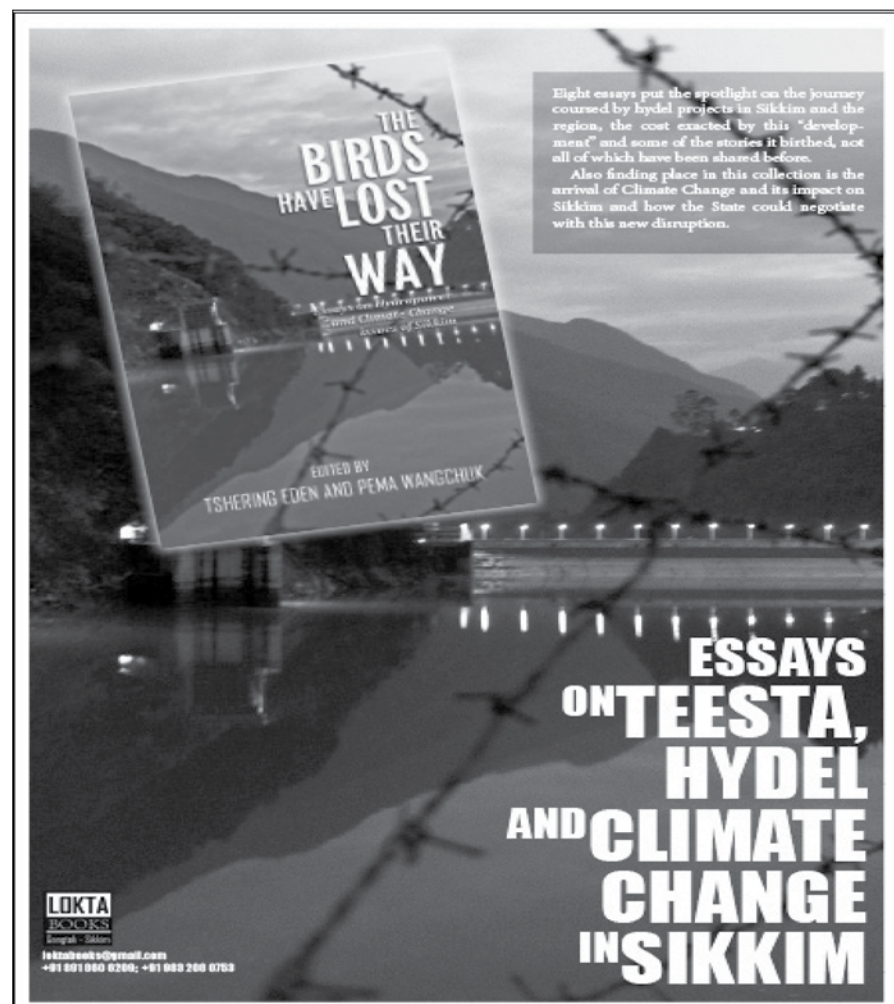
Others said though they were celebrating the festival to keep the tradition alive, they

would continue protesting against the Act till it is repealed. At the end of a successful harvest, 'Uruka' is celebrated on the eve of 'Bhogali Bihu' with people irrespective of religion, caste, ethnicity or linguistic identity come together for community feasts and merry-making.

On the day of 'Bhogali Bihu', before sunrise, 'Mejis' are set on fire with prayers to the 'Agni Devta' (fire god) for taking away negativity and blessing the land with a good harvest next year. Pitched protests were witnessed across the state after the contentious law was passed in both Houses of the Parliament.

Peaceful protests are continuing in the state with agitators demanding the repeal of the Act.

CAA seeks to grant Indian citizenship to religious minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh fleeing persecution there.



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# Smoke plays havoc as Australian Open qualifier suffers coughing fit

MIKE HYTNER & JONATHAN HOWCROFT

**SYDNEY, 14 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]:** The safety of players at this year's Australian Open has been brought into sharp focus after a day of poor air quality in Melbourne forced the abandonment of the former world No 1 Maria Sharapova's match in a warm-up event at Kooyong. Another player, Dalila Jakupovic, collapsed on court at Melbourne Park in jarring scenes at the venue for the year's first grand slam.

Jakupović was forced to retire midway through her qualifying match when she suffered a coughing fit. The match had been given the green light to go ahead by tournament organisers after the day's play had initially been delayed for an hour due to the blanket of bushfire smoke enveloping Melbourne on Tuesday.

Jakupovic, who was looking to qualify for the main draw of the tournament which is slated to start on Monday, was one set up in her match against Switzerland's Stefanie Vögele when she fell to her knees on court. Suffering breathing difficulties, the world No 180 withdrew.

She later said she had no previous respiratory issues and had never suffered from asthma. "I was really scared that I would collapse. That's why I went onto the floor because I couldn't walk any more," she said. "I don't have asthma and never had breathing problems. I actually like heat. The physio came again and I thought it would be better. But the points were a bit longer and I just couldn't breathe any more and I just fell on the floor."

Jakupović took aim at officials for allowing the match to go ahead



in the first place, saying it was "not fair". "It's not healthy for us," she said. "I was surprised, I thought we would not be playing today, but we don't have much choice."

Eugenie Bouchard, the former Wimbledon finalist, also struggled in her opening match and called several medical timeouts during the eventual win over China's Xiaodi You. "I felt like it was tough to breathe and a bit nauseous," Bouchard said. "I felt like the conditions got worse as the match went on...but I was out there for a long time. As an athlete we want to be very careful, our physical health is one of the most important things. It's not ideal to play in these conditions. Just like the heat rule, there should be an air quality rule."

At Kooyong, Sharapova said smoke from the bushfires still raging in Victoria and New South Wales was behind the decision to call time on her match late in the second set against Germany's Laura Siegemund. Organ-

isers of the tournament in the inner Melbourne suburb pulled the plug on play with Siegemund a set up and the score locked at 5-5 in the second, as the city was enveloped in a smoke haze and was rated in the morning as having the worst air quality in the world.

"I started feeling a cough coming toward the end of the second set but I've been sick for a few weeks so I thought that had something to do with it," Sharapova told SBS after the match. "But then I heard Laura speak to the umpire and she said she was struggling with it as well. We were out there for over two hours, so from a health standpoint it's the right call from officials."

Earlier, practice at Melbourne Park had been suspended and the start of the first round of qualifying delayed by an hour due to the poor air quality. But tournament organisers deemed it safe enough to start at 11am local time, once they said the air quality had sufficiently improved.

"This morning the

smoke haze was significant," said the tournament director, Craig Tiley. "And based on advice we made the decision to suspend practice and as a result to start the qualifying matches an hour later than originally scheduled. At any time we're not going to put them [players and staff] in harm's way or make any decision that's going to negatively impact their health and wellbeing."

Tom Larner, Tennis Australia's chief operating officer, indicated the situation was comparable to other delays caused by atmospheric conditions, such as extreme heat, or rain. "We're treating any suspension of play like a rain delay or a heat delay, in that we will stop if conditions become unsafe based on medical advice, and once those conditions are safe to play, players will get back on court."

Tuesday's delay lasted only one hour, as, according to Tiley, "during the period in which we suspended practice there was an improvement in

conditions". The suspension, and subsequent resumption of play was based on air quality measurements taken on-site using devices sourced specifically for this eventually, as well as advice from tournament medical staff.

Victoria's Environment Protection Authority issued a warning on Monday evening that conditions in Melbourne on Tuesday would be poor to hazardous as a consequence of the bushfires raging across the state and neighbouring New South Wales. The Victorian government's advice is for residents to "minimise the time spent in smoky conditions whenever practical to do so," and "avoid exercise". Both are considerable challenges for a major outdoor sporting event.

There has been no official response from the players about the circumstances at one of the most popular events on the circuit, but Tiley indicated the WTA and ATP Tours were supportive of the decision. "This is new for all of us," Tiley said. Novak Djokovic, president of the ATP Player Council, has already indicated competitors would have to consider their options, with delaying their participation among them, should Melbourne's air quality continue to prove hazardous.

Tiley would not be drawn on radical contingency plans, such as the steps taken earlier this month to relocate the Canberra International Challenger event from the ACT to Bendigo in Victoria to avoid hazardous playing conditions. "The expectation, because the long-term forecast, and even the short-term forecast is good. We'll just take it a day at a time."

## 'It's a moment to enjoy': Agüero hungry for more goals after hat-trick record

**JAMIE JACKSON LONDON, 14 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]:** Sergio Agüero is greedy for more goals after scoring a record-breaking 12th Premier League hat-trick that made him the most prolific overseas marksman in the competition's history.

The Argentinian's three goals in the 6-1 win at Aston Villa on Sunday took him to two clear of Thierry Henry on 177 and eclipsed Alan Shearer's record of 11 hat-tricks.

Agüero is 31 and has previously stated he will leave City in summer 2021 and return to first club, Independiente, when his contract expires. Pep Guardiola is open to Agüero reconsidering though the manager is clear it will be the player's decision.

"After this, I want to keep going and keep scoring more goals, but the most important for me is that the team keeps winning and winning," he said. "I don't know what will happen from now until the end of the season, but it's a moment to enjoy."

"I'm very happy to be breaking records. It's always nice to receive awards. I want to thank my teammates for helping me to score them in all these years. Also, I'm aware it's not easy to



score 12 hat-tricks in the Premier League, as it is such a difficult competition. I'm very proud and very happy for it.

"Of course [I became a better player under Pep]. He helped me a lot. I'm very happy to play under his command, because he helps me all the time in the training sessions. We all know how good is Pep Guardiola tactically, with this style of play we create a lot of chances so I'm focused on scoring them."

As City have another 54 league matches before he is expected to depart it seems likely Agüero will score the 23 needed to become only the third player to regis-

ter 200 goals in the Premier League. That would take him past Andy Cole, whose 187 strikes places him third in the chart.

While Agüero has a chance of beating Wayne Rooney's 207, the 31-year-old would have to extend his contract at City to have any chance of beating Shearer's record return of 260.

His teammate Riyad Mahrez said: "It's unbelievable to have him in the team. He is a top striker, a world-class player. The numbers speak for themselves. We are very happy to have him in the squad. When he is on the pitch, we know he doesn't need many chances to score a goal."

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## Neroca register hard-fought victory over Real Kashmir

**IMPHAL, JAN 14 (PTI):** Malian forward Bou-bacar Diarra scored the match-winner as NEROCA FC beat Real Kashmir 1-0 to snap their four-match winless streak in the I-League here on Tuesday.

Diarra headed home in the 62nd minute to give Neroca their second win of the season at the Khuman Lampak stadium. Neroca also jumped to the seventh spot with eight points from seven matches.

Real Kashmir slipped one spot to 10th, just above bottom-placed Indian Arrows, with six points from six matches.

Neroca head coach Gift Raikhan, seemingly desperate for a change in fortune, made a lot of changes to his line-up. Dhananjoy Singh and Roshan Singh started at the back while Imran Khan and Siam Hanghal formed the pivot in midfield. Varun Thokchom and Pritam Singh started on the flanks, with Diarra and Zico Sekle spearheading the attack.

Real Kashmir head coach David Robertson made just one change to his side, with Farhan

Ganie starting ahead of Altamash Sayed, with the remainder of his 4-5-1 system remaining unchanged. Neroca came close to scoring in the seventh minute when a Siam Hanghal set-piece on the right flank was not dealt with properly inside the Real Kashmir box, which allowed Taryk Sampson with a crack on the goal but his shot missed the target.

It was Hanghal again, in the 10th minute, when he crafted an inch-perfect cross into the box for Diarra, who had a free header on goal from barely a couple of yards out, but he missed an absolute sitter, letting Real Kashmir off the hook once again.

The visitors had their first attempt on goal in the 17th minute, when a scramble in the Neroca box led to the ball falling to Gnohere Krizo, who pulled the trigger from point-blank range, but Neroca were bailed out by a stunning save from their skipper Marvin Devon Phillip.

Real Kashmir had another golden opportunity in the 34th minute when a Mason Robertson

delivery found Krizo unmarked, but the chance went begging as he headed over the bar.

Gift Raikhan's men had another chance to break the deadlock, this time in the first minute of first-half stoppage time, when Diarra was through on goal and with only the keeper to beat, fired his shot straight at him, leaving the two teams level pegging at the break.

The 'Snow Leopards' came out in the second half with more intent and had the better of the opening exchanges. Krizo was in the mix yet again as he did well to get to the end of a Kallum Higginbotham cross and forced Devon Phillip into making an outstanding fingertip save.

However, it was Neroca who broke the deadlock in the 62nd minute, when a Pritam Singh cross was connected by a looping header from Diarra, which left Lachenpa backpedalling and helpless as the Khuman Lumpak stadium erupted in celebration.

David Robertson's side kept pushing hard and they threatened through set-pieces.

## Barcelona open record gap over Real in Deloitte Money League

**LONDON, JAN 14 (AFP):** La Liga leaders Barcelona have chalked up a victory over rivals Real Madrid after establishing a record gap between first and second place in the latest Deloitte Football Money League.

Barcelona topped the 2018/2019 earnings table with 840.8 million euros (937 million), a record 83.5 million euros ahead of Real (757.3 million euros), while Manchester United, the highest-placed British club in third, earned 711.5 million euros (7627.1 million) for 2018-19.

Reigning German champions Bayern Munich were fourth on 660.1 million euros.

Consulting firm Deloitte suggest United's grip on the number one status among English clubs is under serious threat next year from Premier League champions Manchester City and Champions League holders Liverpool.

Barcelona leading the pack is down to bringing merchandising and licensing activities in-house, according to Deloitte.

"Barca are a clear example of a club adapting to changing market conditions, reducing the reliance on broadcast revenue and focusing on growing revenues within its control," Dan Jones, partner in the Sports Business Group at Deloitte, told the Press Association news agency.

"The club's commercial operation generated 383.5m euros of revenue, which is more than the total revenue of the 12th-



placed club in this year's Money League. "With the club expecting further growth of 30 million euros in commercial revenues and total revenue of almost 880m euros in 2019-20, we expect them to retain the top spot in next year's edition."

United's place as number one English club -- a position they have held since the first Money League survey in 1996-97 -- is in peril because they are forecasting reduced revenues of between 7560-580 million for 2019-20, partly because they failed to qualify for this season's Champions League.

- 'UNITED UNDER PRESURE' -

City, who are sixth in the list while Liverpool are seventh,

trail United by just under 101 million euros (789 million).

An indication of how much ground Abu Dhabi-backed City have made up is that they were 7200 million adrift of United 10 years ago.

However, they were overtaken in the latest study by Qatari-owned Paris Saint-Germain, who moved into fifth place.

"United have been the top English club since we started the Money League but that could come under a bit of pressure when we do it in 2021," Jones said.

"That will cover this season when Liverpool are having a tremendous season on the pitch, so we think there's a possibility of United losing that number one

position. "Part of that will ride on how the rest of this season goes, if City or Liverpool go deep into the Champions League.

"If you think about where we were 10 years ago, the idea that City would overhaul United in financial terms would have seemed far-fetched."

In all there are eight Premier League clubs in the Money League top 20, more than any other country, and all the clubs hail from Europe's big five leagues of England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

Tottenham, beaten in last season's Champions League final, have achieved their highest-ever position of eighth, with revenue of 521.1 million euros (7459.3 million).



## Tens of thousands face uncertainty as Philippine volcano spews lava

Taal volcano in the Philippines could spew lava and ash for weeks, authorities warned Tuesday, leaving tens of thousands in limbo after they fled their homes fearing a massive eruption.

The crater of the volcano exploded to life with towering clouds of ash and jets of red-hot lava on Sunday, forcing those living around the mountain south of Manila to rush to safety.

Many people abandoned livestock and pets as well as homes full of belongings after authorities sounded an alert warning that an “explosive eruption” could come imminently.

“We left everything apart from what we’re wearing,” said Robert Cadiz, a 47-year-old fisherman among some 30,000 who took refuge in shelters. “We were terrified.”

Gerald Aseoche, 30, who left with his four young children and a few possessions, has missed work to stay with them as the volcano belches out lava and earthquakes tied to the eruption rattle the region. “I am hoping this won’t go on too long because I will lose my job if I can’t report to work immediately,” Aseoche, a house painter, told AFP at an evacuation centre.

Taal is one of the most active volcanoes in a nation hit periodically by eruptions and earthquakes due to its location on the Pacific “Ring of Fire” -- a zone of intense seismic activity.

Philippine Red Cross Chairman Richard Gordon warned that the group was “preparing for the worst” and urged people to away from the volcano.

“Bring your animals and livestock to evacuation centres if you must,” he added. The Taal eruption has been putting on a stunning and terrifying display, including an ash cloud illuminated with lightning bolts and shot dark-grey columns 800 metres (half a mile) in the sky.

- Eruptions have lasted months -

Renato Solidum, head of the Philippines’ seismological agency, said Taal’s previous eruptions have lasted as long as months so it was impossible to predict an end to the current activity.

However, he said the alert warning of a potentially catastrophic “explosive eruption” may remain in place for weeks, depending on developments.

“We have a protocol of waiting for several days, sometimes two weeks, to make sure that indeed... volcano activity has essentially stopped,” he told AFP. The volcano dramatically burst with activity on Sunday, shooting massive plumes of ash 15 kilometres (nine miles) into the sky that then rained down on the region.

Falling ash pushed aviation officials to temporarily shut down Manila’s main international airport, forcing the cancellation of hundreds of flights and stranding tens of thousands of travellers.

# Libya’s Haftar leaves Moscow without signing peace deal

Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar left Moscow on Tuesday without signing a ceasefire agreement aimed at ending nine months of fighting, leaving the future of a fragile truce uncertain.

The commander’s abrupt departure in the early hours of Tuesday was a setback for an international diplomatic push in recent days, though Moscow insisted it would continue mediation efforts.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan -- who first brokered the Libya truce deal with President Vladimir Putin of Russia last week -- warned he would “teach a lesson” to Haftar if his forces resumed fighting.

Haftar and his allies were in Moscow on Monday for talks with the UN-recognised government headed by Fayez al-Sarraj that is based in Tripoli.

Sarraj’s government has been under attack since last April from forces loyal to Haftar, who is based in the east of the oil-rich North African country with his own loyalist politicians.

The two sides had agreed to the ceasefire that took effect at the weekend and were in Moscow to sign a long-term agreement.

The talks raised hopes of an end to the latest fighting to wrack Libya since a 2011 NATO-backed uprising killed longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi.

But after seven hours of negotiations, only Sarraj had signed on to the agreement and Russian officials confirmed to AFP that Haftar’s delegation had left without inking the deal.



- Berlin talks -  
“We will pursue our efforts in this direction. For now, a definitive result has not been achieved,” Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said at a press conference in Sri Lanka.

Russia, European powers and Libya’s neighbours “are working in the same vein and motivating all Libyan sides to agree rather than continue sorting things out by force”, Lavrov said.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti quoted a source in Haftar’s stronghold Benghazi as saying he did not sign because the agreement did not spell out a timeline

for disbanding groups allied with Sarraj’s Government of National Accord (GNA).

Erdogan reacted angrily, saying in a televised Ankara speech: “We will not hesitate to teach a deserved lesson to the putschist Haftar if he continues his attacks on the country’s legitimate administration and our brothers in Libya”.

Erdogan said the issue would now be discussed at talks in Berlin on Sunday to be attended by European, North African and Middle Eastern countries as well as the UN, EU, Africa Union and Arab League.

“The putschist Haftar did not

sign the ceasefire. He first said yes, but later unfortunately he left Moscow, he fled Moscow,” Erdogan said.

“Despite this, we find the talks in Moscow were positive as they showed the true face of the putschist Haftar to the international community.”

- Political process -

Western powers are keen to stabilise Libya -- home to Africa’s largest proven crude reserves -- following years of turbulence since the 2011 killing of Kadhafi.

Since the start of the offensive against Tripoli, more than 280 civilians and about 2,000 fighters

have been killed and 146,000 Libyans displaced, according to the United Nations.

Putin and Erdogan made a joint call for a ceasefire, which started early Sunday and was welcomed by the United Nations.

The leaders of Turkey and France on Monday called for a more permanent truce which would pave the way for a political process, while Germany was preparing its summit on Libya.

Putin late on Monday discussed the talks in Moscow with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the Kremlin said, following her visit to the Russian capital on Saturday.

Turkey and Russia’s diplomatic initiative came despite the countries being seen as supporting opposing sides.

Ankara dispatched troops -- in a training capacity, it said -- to support the GNA in January in a move criticised by European powers and US President Donald Trump.

The GNA has signed agreements with Ankara assigning Turkey rights over a vast area of the gas-rich eastern Mediterranean, in a deal denounced by France, Greece, Egypt and Cyprus.

Russia has been accused of backing pro-Haftar forces, which are also supported by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt -- all regional rivals of Turkey.

Several hundred Russian mercenaries are reported to be in Libya supporting Haftar. Putin said any Russians in the country are not in Moscow’s pay.

## US Senate to begin impeachment trial against Trump on Jan 21

BY LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, JAN 14 (PTI):

The US Senate is likely to begin the impeachment trial against President Donald Trump on January 21 after the House of Representatives last month impeached him for pressuring Ukraine to investigate a political rival, a top Republican Senator has said.

The 435-member House of Representatives, where Democrats enjoy a majority, last month charged Trump with high crimes and misdemeanours” and impeached in vote that was based on bitter political divide.

Now, the 100-member Senate, where the Republicans are in majority, needs to put Trump on trial before he can be removed from the White House.

After holding it on for weeks, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is expected to send its impeachment to the Senate sometime this week and that could be as early as Tuesday.

The impeachment in the Senate is unlikely to pass through given that GOP has majority in the 100-member Senate.

Top Republican Senator John Cornyn, who is also Co-Chair of the Senate India Caucus, on Monday told reporters that the Senate is likely to start the impeachment trial next Tuesday, January 21.

Tuesday (January 21) is what it’s feeling like, he said.

“We’d actually be glued to our chair starting Tuesday, I think,” he said in response to a question.

According to Cornyn, after House sends its articles of impeachment, the Senate will likely take a few days to deal with logistics of the trial.

Prominent among these include Chief Jus-



tice John Roberts and all Senators and sending summons to Trump’s team. The Senate will also pass a resolution establishing the trial rules.

The New York Times reported that in the coming days, Pelosi is expected to choose half-a-dozen or so managers to argue on the Senate floor for Trump’s removal from office.

Those managers, who will be selected at least partly from the House Judiciary and Intelligence committees, form just one element of a trial full of complicated procedures, the report said.

Cornyn on the Senate floor alleged that Pelosi delaying the impeachment is hurting the Democratic presidential candidates.

The only people who seem to gain anything from this are the Democrats who are running for president but who are not United States Senators, and thus aren’t going to be tied up during the impeachment trial, he said.

Meanwhile Republican Senators Corny, Mike Lee, and Jerry Moran announced to cosponsor Senator Josh Hawley’s resolution to allow for the dismissal of articles of impeachment against Trump for failure to prosecute.

It’s been three weeks and counting since the House passed articles of impeachment, and

Speaker Pelosi is still playing games after insisting the President’s removal from office was urgent. This critical change will reinforce the Constitution and help prevent the House from using impeachment for personal political gain like the Speaker is sadly doing now, Cornyn said.

Our Constitution guarantees a fair and speedy trial to defendants, and Congress must provide these same guarantees to public officials facing impeachment. Speaker Pelosi has had three weeks to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate, but instead she is choosing to use the impeachment articles for political gain, Moran said.

Moran said the resolution requires the Senate to move forward with impeachment trials in a timely manner and helps prevent Congress from playing political games with the impeachment procedure. According to Senator Lee, the authors of the Constitution created the impeachment power to be a rarely used constitutional safeguard of the public trust.

It was never meant to be a partisan tool used to harass a sitting president. This rule change will limit the House’s ability to play partisan political games with impeachment. If a president is a true threat to the republic, articles to

impeach him should be delivered to the Senate with haste, Lee said.

Republican Senator Ted Cruz in an interview to NBC-Dallas-Fort Worth’s Lone Star Politics’ said the trial in the Senate is going to be fair and would respect due process.

It means that it is going to be very very different from the one-sided partisan show trial that we saw in the House for the last several months. The last several months House Democrats did an entirely one-sided hearing, presentation, he alleged. They did not follow the precedent from the Clinton impeachment. They didn’t follow the precedent from the Nixon impeachment. They didn’t allow the minority to call witnesses. They didn’t allow the White House to cross examine those witnesses, Cruz said.

Democratic Senator Kamala Harris, who is of Indian origin, feared that the trial in the Senate might not be fair.

The American people should expect their representatives in the Senate to seek the truth, not cover up the facts, she said in her remarks on the Senate floor.

We now face a choice: will we insist that we have one system of justice that applies equally to all? Or will we continue to have two systems of justice, in which some are above the law? [ ] This moment in our history will have consequences, she said.

The Senate is charged with deciding whether the President of the United States, with all of his power and supposed wealth, will be held accountable for his actions or whether we will finally live up to the principle: Equal Justice Under Law,’ she said.

## Philippine volcano trembles more, spews lava half-mile high

TAGATAY (PHILIPPINES),

JAN 14 (AP): A volcano near the Philippine capital spewed lava into the sky and trembled constantly Tuesday, possibly portending a bigger and more dangerous eruption, as tens of thousands of people fled villages darkened and blanketed by heavy ash.

The continuous restiveness of the Taal volcano and several new fissures cracking the ground nearby likely means magma is rising as well and may lead to further eruptive activity, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said.

The volcano was spurting fountains of red-hot lava 800 meters (half a mile) into the sky, and the massive column of ash and volcanic debris at times flashed with streaks of lightning.

The alert level since the eruption began Sunday has been 4, indicating a hazardous eruption is possible in hours to days. Level 5, the highest,

means such an eruption is underway. About 50 volcanic earthquakes were detected over eight hours Tuesday, indicating rising magma, the institute said. It also warned heavy and prolonged ashfall was possible in nearby villages.

The speed in the rise of magma is important (in determining) when the volcano will have a strong eruption and if it will slow down and freeze,” said Renato Solidum, who heads the institute. “As of now, we don’t see activities slowing down and the earthquakes still continue. The picturesque volcano in the middle of a lake in Batangas province south of Manila rumbled to life Sunday in a powerful explosion that blasted a 15-kilometer (9-mile) column of ash, steam and pebbles into the sky.

Clouds of volcanic ash blowing over Manila, 65 kilometers (40 miles) to the north, closed the country’s main airport Sunday and part of

Monday until the ash-fall eased. The government’s disaster-response agency counted more than 30,400 evacuees in Batangas and nearby Cavite provinces. Officials expected the number to swell.

Government work was suspended and schools closed in a wide swath of towns and cities, including Manila, because of the health risks from the ash. The eruption has not directly caused deaths or major damage. The death of a driver in a crash on an ash-covered road was linked to slippery conditions. The small island where the 1,020-foot (311-meter) volcano lies has long been designated a permanent danger zone, though fishing villages have long existed there.

Those villages were all evacuated, though volcanology officials have called for a total evacuation of endangered communities within a 14-kilometer (8.7-mile) radius of Taal.

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**DOLL!** The singer, Selena Gomez looks dolled up and all smiles while making an appearance at The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon for a sit down interview.

## Dave Bautista joins 'See' season two

**LOS ANGELES, JAN 14 (PTI):** "Guardians of the Galaxy" star Dave Bautista has joined the season two cast of Jason Momoa-starrer "See".

Bautista boards the show which also features Alfre Woodard, Hera Hilmar, Sylvia Hoeks and Christian Carmago, reported The Wrap. However, the details of his character are yet to be revealed.

The Apple TV Plus series debuted on the streamer's platform on November 1 last year. It was later renewed for a sophomore run. "See" is set

in a future where the human race has lost the sense of sight, and society has had to find new ways to interact, to build, to hunt, to survive. All of that is challenged when a set of twins with sight is born.

Momoa portrayed the character of Baba Voss, a fearless warrior, leader and guardian, in the eight-episode series, written by Steven Knight of "Peaky Blinders" fame.

The show hails from Chernin Entertainment and Endeavor Content.

## Julie Strain, Statuesque Star of B-Movies, Is Not Dead, Film Company Now Says



"Information we received from a trusted source of the community ... was found to be FALSE!" according to Malibu Bay Films.

Malibu Bay Films, which earlier Monday reported the death of actress Julie Strain, is now saying that the B-movie queen is still alive.

"The information we received from a trusted source of the community on the status of [Malibu Bay Films] icon #julie strain was found to be FALSE!" the film company posted on Instagram. "We deeply apologize for needlessly upsetting anyone as well as ourselves! We have asked THR for a retraction as well. Thank you and God Bless Julie & family."

Malibu Bay Films, for whom Strain, 57, appeared in several B-movies, earlier wrote on Facebook and Instagram that the actress had died Sunday. "She will forever remain in our hearts and on our screens as the mesmerizingly talented, contagiously kind and incredibly powerful

actress and heroine," a company statement said. Those posts have been deleted.

Arlene Sidaris, who owns Malibu Bay Films (her late husband, Andy Sidaris, founded the company), said she had "just spoken with Julie's partner Dave who has confirmed that she is NOT dead," an assistant to Sidaris wrote in an email to THR. Strain's condition is not known.

A familiar face on the comic-convention circuit, the statuesque Strain has been suffering from early-onset dementia caused by a traumatic head injury she incurred in her early 20s when she was thrown from a horse in an equestrian accident. The fall wiped out all of her teenage memories.

Strain took a trip to Las Vegas to help recover from the trauma. It was there, while sitting ringside at the December 1989 Sugar Ray Leonard-Roberto Duran title fight, that she was discovered by a talent scout. That led her to Hollywood.

## 'Shameless' renewed for 11th and final season at Showtime

**LOS ANGELES, JAN 14 (PTI):** Showtime has renewed its hit series "Shameless" for the eleventh and final season.

The long-running show features actor William H Macy as a patriarch of a dysfunctional family, navigating life and love in Chicago's South Side.

It is based on a British original series of the same name that also ran for 11 seasons.

The US adaptation was developed by John Wells who has steered the dramedy for its entire run, according to The Hollywood Re-

porter. "I'm unbelievably thankful for all of the years of support from (Showtime Entertainment president) Gary Levine and everyone at Showtime that's allowed us to make 'Shameless,'" Wells said.

"It's been a fantastic experience and all of us in the cast and crew have had a wonderful time following the lives of the Gallagher family and friends. It's been a pleasure," he added.

The tenth season of "Shameless" started airing from November 10 last year and will conclude on January 26.

## Spike Lee to serve as jury head of Cannes Film Festival

**CANNES, JAN 14 (PTI):** Oscar-winning filmmaker Spike Lee was on Tuesday announced as the jury head of the 2020 Cannes Film Festival, becoming the first African-American to lead the distinguished panel at the annual film extravaganza.

Lee succeeds two-time Oscar winner Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, who had also created history after becoming the first Mexican to serve as jury president, reported Variety.

The 62-year-old filmmaker has been a regular at the film gala ever since his first film "She's Gotta Have It" premiered at the 1986 edition where it won the youth prize at Directors' Fortnight.

He later returned at the French Riviera with six other films -- "Do The Right Thing" (1989), "Jungle Fever" (1991), "Girl 6" (1996), "Summer of Sam" (1999), "Ten Minutes Older" (2002) and "BlackKkklansman" (2018). For "BlackKkklansman", Lee had kickstarted his festival campaign with the Cannes, culminating with the 2019 Academy Awards where he won an Oscar for best adapted screenplay.

"To me the Cannes Film Festival (besides being the most important film festival in the world no disrespect to anybody) has



had a great impact on my film career. You could easily say Cannes changed the trajectory of who I became in world cinema," the filmmaker said in a statement. "In this life I have lived... my biggest blessings have been when they arrived unex-

pected, when they happened out of nowhere," he added.

Lee said he was "shocked, happy, surprised and proud all at the same time" when he was offered the opportunity to preside over the jury. "In closing I'm honoured to be the first person of the African diaspora to be named President of the Cannes Jury and of a main film festival," he added.

Lee's appointment as Cannes jury head comes a day after the Academy Awards were criticised for lack of diversity in its nominations. The Oscars snubbed actor Awkwafina for performance in the Chinese-American drama "The Farewell" as well as Lupita Nyong'o for horror movie "Us". Greta Gerwig, who expected to receive a nod in the best director category, was also overlooked. The 73rd edition of Cannes Film Festival will be held from May 12 to 23.

## Here's Why Mohnish Bahl, Rohit Roy Are Leaving Sanjivani

Actors Mohnish Bahl and Rohit Roy will not be continuing with the show Sanjivani that has crossed the 100-episode milestone. Its creator Siddharth Malhotra is now looking for fresh faces to take the story forward.

The medical drama originally ran from 2002 to 2005. The show got a fresh look last year with new actors and some from the original show too.

In the show, one of its main characters Shashank Gupta (Mohnish) recently died in an accident.

Asked why Mohnish quit Sanjivani, Mr Malhotra told IANS: "I believe in doing justice to every character in the show and having Dr. Shashank any longer would not be fair to him. We felt as a team that his character was being stretched now and that never adds to the big picture."

"Mohnish is a friend of the family and we have always been transparent with each other. He understood what we were saying and took it very well. It never makes sense to have such a senior actor for just a few scenes here and there, without giving him an active part."

Along with Mohnish, Rohit will not be continuing with the show. "We are still planning the story-line so we may have some additions later on," said Siddharth Malhotra, who also revealed that they have planned a three-year leap.

Who is the new protagonist?

"There are a couple of top contenders from the TV industry who we are in talks and we should be able to give you a name soon. He will have an amiable personality and we

feel he will be very well received, especially by the women," said Siddharth Malhotra. Are these changes, which will take place towards the end of the month, due to a drop in TRPs?

"Actually, as per our contract, our show



was to wrap by January 25, 2020 but we've got an extension because of how well it has been received by the channel's audiences. TRPs have been growing and the channel felt that we should continue the show for more episodes. That is also one of the reasons behind the leap we have planned, we want to continue to provide fresh matter to our viewers," he shared.

Actors Surbhi Chandna and Namit Khanna will continue to be part of the show that is aired on Star Plus.

## Rachel Bloom to star in PopTV pilot 'Mother Mary'



**LOS ANGELES, JAN 14 (PTI):** "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend" star Rachel Bloom will be portraying Christa Anton, the mother of the Antichrist, in PopTV's new comedy pilot "Mother Mary". According to Variety, the network announced the pilot on Monday at the Television Critics Association winter press tour in Pasadena, California.

Described as "a modern twist on one of the most famous stories ever told", the pilot will also feature actor Betsy Sodaro as a reimagined version of the Virgin

Mary. "The show asks: What would happen if the most irresponsible and laziest human on Earth was impregnated by immaculate conception?" the official logline of the show read.

The pilot, which hails from CBS Television Studios, will be written and executive produced by Casey Feigh, Dan Gregor and Sodaro. Gregor will direct the pilot.

Bloom will also serve as executive producer alongside Tony Hernandez and Brooke Posch. The pilot will start production in February.

**ARIES:** Who's the one person in your life who gives sound financial advice? Turn to them in times of distress, Aries. Let 2020 be the year your money works for you instead of the other way around. Today is also a good today to prioritise self-care. It's not about getting fancy treatments or investing in beauty products that break the bank.

Tip: Focus on small, simple rituals.

**TAURUS:** If and when you find yourself at odds with somebody you love, ask yourself if the matter at hand is worth going to war for. In moments of silence, you will find the answers you seek. Remember, it's okay to make mistakes. We are human, after all! The true test of your wokeness: your ability to admit where you have erred.

Tip: Operate from a space of higher wisdom.

**GEMINI:** Today is a good day to admit your feelings to yourself and the other. You've never been one to follow the rule book. So don't feel the need to 'adjust' your behaviour according to what others deem

as appropriate, or take the duration of your relationship into consideration here. The truth will set you free, Gemini.

Tip: The truth will set you free.

**CANCER:** It's a count-your-blessings kinda day, Cancer. What the cards are urging you to do: give thanks for all that you have and all that is yet to come. So, what's the big deal about gratitude and how does it change your life? If the new-age gurus and self-help books are to be believed, the practice boosts positive emotions, improves health, empowers us to deal with adversity, and helps us build stronger relationships.

Tip: Give thanks.

**LEO:** It's easy to go about your day with the poise of a Zen master when everything in your reality is picture perfect. The true test of your wokeness: how you manage to stay in your centre when everything around is falling apart. Leo, be warned. Your buttons are going to be pushed in more ways than one. Some of you may even question

the foundation on which you have built your life so far.

Tip: Let it go.

**VIRGO:** When was the last time you watched the sunset or drove to your favourite cafe to relive the memories of your first date? The cards are asking you to plan an adventure together—one that you will remember for months to come. Word of advice for those who spend too much time planning and organising: a spontaneous vacation isn't such a bad thing after all.

Tip: Virgos just want to have fun.

**LIBRA:** The thing about anger and resentment is that they block the flow of love. How and where are you unwilling to let go, Libra? Are you constantly dwelling on the things that didn't work out in the past? Reality check: there's nothing you can do to change things now. What you do have dominion over is the present.

Tip: Let the anger and resentment go, Libra.

**SCORPIO:** The trouble is, we are always

in a rush to fast forward the film. To get to a certain destination that we believe will make us happy. But, what if the present is where the magic is at? Scorpio, allow things to progress at their own pace. Remember, at any point of time, you have two options—to vibrate at the frequency of love or let fear sabotage the game.

Tip: The present is where the magic is at.

**SAGITTARIUS:** The trouble is, we think we can make drastic changes overnight. You may or may not be gifted with that kind of strength and resilience. Word for the wise: set small, realistic goals for yourself. For instance, if you wish to adopt a plant-based diet, consider joining the Meatless Monday bandwagon. Want to get fitter and healthier but fear putting your entire salary on a gym membership?

Tip: Set small, realistic targets.

**CAPRICORN:** The people in our lives are not obliged to continuously please us or live their lives in accordance with our rules.

Let go of your expectations, Capricorn. It is your own mind that is causing unrest within.

Tip: Focus on rest and recovery.

**AQUARIUS:** It's not your burden to bear, Aquarius, nor your wound to heal. The cards are reminding you of the importance of boundaries. Draw lines wherever necessary so you don't get affected by somebody else's energy. Love does not equal codependency. Some of you may feel like you are struggling with a host of responsibilities at this point.

Tip: Understand the need for boundaries.

**PISCES:** Your love story is anything but ordinary. It boasts of passion and commitment in equal measures—a commitment that is rare to find in these modern times. Let your Rock of Gibraltar know exactly how loved they are. Pisceans who have been in the 'may be' and 'let's see' territory are likely to crave something deeper. Bring out your inner romantic and talk about the long-term future.

Tip: How deep is your love?