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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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INDEF holds annual council meeting of NE Region in Gangtok



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 10 NOV:

The Annual Council Meeting of Indian Engineers Federation [INDEF], North East Region, was hosted by State Engineers' Service Association [SESA] today at Chintan Bhawan here.

SESA is affiliated to INDEF, a national organisation with 3.5 lakh members.

Engineers from all the eight Northeastern States are attending the Annual Council Meeting being held in Sikkim after a long gap.

The meeting had the presence of Education Minister KN Lepcha as chief guest, Roads & Bridges Minister Samdup Lepcha as guest of hon-

our, INDEF office-bearers including the chairperson and secretary general, engineers and delegates.

In his inaugural address, the chief guest mentioned that the Sikkim government stands with the engineers and understands their problems. He highlighted that engineers were the pillars of the nation's development and that the State government will work with engineers for the development of the State.

On the occasion, SESA felicitated the ministers and INDEF delegates.

SESA president CK Basnet, in his address, said

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Mohammedan Sporting to face Sikkim Himalayan for Governor's Gold Cup

EXHIBITION MATCH FEATURING LEGISLATORS AND FELICITATIONS TO EMBELLISH FINALS

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 10 NOV:

Mohammedan Sporting Club today set up what should be a riveting final clash for the Governor's Gold Cup on Tuesday when it takes on local team Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club, the first local team since 1979 to make it to the Gold Cup finals.

In the tightly played second semifinal match on Sunday afternoon, one that carried the potential to treat the state to an all-Sikkim final, Mohammedan SC dashed the hopes of Sikkim Police to join Sikkim Himalayan on Tuesday.

Sikkim Police played hard and fast, but the Kolkata team was up for the challenge and edged past by a solitary goal in a match that lived up to

its billing and gave those who showed up at the ground, an afternoon of some top-notch soccer.

The only goal of the match came from the boots of Charls Atcha in the first half. That one goal was enough to see Mohammedan SC to its tenth final of the All India Governor's Gold Cup Football Tournament and the chance to lift the prestigious cup for a third time.

Mohammedan SC has won the tournament twice - in 1980 and 2016.

Sikkim Police played its heart out throughout the match but could not breach the strong defence line of Mohammedan SC.



Mohammedan SC players also got some good opportunities to extend their lead but could not finish strong enough.

The final match is scheduled to kick off at 1:30 PM on 12 November. A highlight will be

the exhibition match between Chief Minister's XI and Chief Secretary's XI scheduled for 11:30 PM before the final match. It is informed that Chief Minister's XI is likely to be captained by Chief Minister PS Tamang.

On Tuesday, Sikkim Football Association will also be felicitating ISL players from Sikkim, Bikash Jairu and Robin Gurung and football promoters of yesteryears, the late Balchand Sarada [posthumously] and

Lhendup Lepcha. SFA has also decided to felicitate former footballers, Karma Loday Bhutia, Hem Raj Cintury, B Tshering and Sonam Doma Lepcha on the occasion.

Singbel meets to launch up-cycling of plastic wrappers

SINGTAM, 10 NOV: Responding to the disturbing increase in plastic waste generation and subsequent problems in disposal, a meeting was held at Singbel here East Sikkim to discuss strategies regarding the possible "Up-Cycling" of plastic wrappers of Lays, Kurkure and other eatables.

The meeting was attended by Durga Prasad Sharma and KB Pradhan from Sagar Samaj (Rangtu-Ralap Ward), and Gokul Oli of Oli Printing Press [Singtam] as resource persons.

It may be mentioned here that a Plastic Collection Centre was established at Singbel in



October where plastic wrappers from the area are collected.

Five SHGs of Singbel - Ajambari, Udaan, Smarika, Ujjwal and Chandni - have so far gathered around 12,000 pieces. They are working under the guidance of Lomas Dhungel from the Hariyo Makha group to make book covers out of the wrappers.

Back in 2017, Lomas Dhungel had successfully

experimented this idea and upcycled 55,000 plastic pieces and the revenue earned was used to help a student take a course with IGNOU.

The idea had also earned him a National Innovation Award from the Sri Aurobindo Society in August this year.

DC visits Old Age Home, informed of issues being faced

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 10 NOV:

District Collector, East, along with the ADC visited the Old Age Home at Ranipool and interacted with the inmates and the caretaker there today, an IPR Deptt press release informs.

The caretaker, it is informed, listed out issues being faced by the Home and it was then decided that the adhoc Management Committee of the Home meet on 12 November and take necessary action on these matters.

Some of the issues

highlighted by the caretaker were the requirement for 20 more beds for inmates, need to paint the building and install a truss roof. It was suggested that these may be explored with companies based in the area to be taken up as part of the corporate social responsibility initiatives.

The visiting officials were also informed about the dilapidated structure behind the Home which was now posing a threat to the property.

The DC decided



that necessary orders under Disaster Management Act will be passed to dismantle the structure. Rs 2,00,000 was also sanctioned for

land development and stabilisation of the area. The need for a computer and printer was also addressed and the same are to be handed

over on 12 November. The caretaker also requested for grant of materials for setting up a green house and poultry farm at the Home.

Temple town buzzes with activity a day after top court's Ayodhya verdict

ARUNAV SINHA

AYODHYA, Nov 10 (PTI): Ayodhya buzzed with activity on Sunday as devotees flocked various temples to offer prayers amid tight security arrangements, a day after the Supreme Court's landmark judgement over the century-old Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute.

The areas near Hanumangarhi and Naya Ghat were busy from the morning, as people from different walks of life arrived here to pay obeisance to Lord Ram and his ardent devotee Hanuman.

As the sun set, bhajans and kirtans echoed in the temple town. There was no let up in the security arrangements, with police personnel keeping a strict vigil. Intensified patrolling, frisking and searches continued in

full swing.

Priest of Ram Lalla, Acharya Satyendra Das said Lord Ram was adorned with a new set of clothes offered by a devotee to mark the day.

People in the Rikabganj area of the city and other parts could be seen going through newspapers to understand the nuances of the Supreme Court judgement, and also ascertain, what people in other parts of the country feel about the Ayodhya verdict.

Sandeep Singh, who works as a manager at a hotel in Ayodhya, said, "This Sunday holds special significance for us, as we woke up to a new and transformed Sunday, with a feeling of relief that the lingering issue of Ayodhya dispute has been resolved once and for all."

turn to pg 02

THEME : "TAKE THE LEAD, KNOW YOUR HIV STATUS"

FOR REGISTRATION CONTACT :
9832034252 / 9593781887
7797896515 / 9733166099

RED FEST

MULTI MEDIA CAMPAIGN

2019-2020

CASH PRIZE:
1st PRIZE- Rs 70,000
2nd PRIZE-Rs 50,000
3rd PRIZE- Rs 30,000

REGISTRATION CLOSING ON 12TH NOVEMBER 2019

RULES AND GUIDANCE

- The competition is only for local bands of Sikkim and the language should be English.
- All Genres of music, except Death Metal.
- Bands should prepare two songs. One original on the theme "Take the Lead, Know your HIV status" and the second can be a cover song.
- Participating bands should mail the bio-data, original lyrics and contact details of the band to iecsikkimsacs@gmail.com
- The bands will be provided Travel Allowance (TA) for the District level audition & the Grand Finale.
- The winner will represent the State in the 2nd North East Multi Media Competition scheduled on 18th December 2019 at Imphal, Manipur.

TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HIV DIAL 1097

You can also follow us on:

[sikkimsacs](https://www.facebook.com/sikkimsacs) iecsikkimsacs@gmail.com [sikkimsacs](https://www.instagram.com/sikkimsacs)

Partners: NACO, CBONGO PARTNERS, eun, FREEDOM FACILITY, serenity home

CM returns



GANGTOK, 10 Nov [IPR]: Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] and his wife, Sarada Tamang, arrived at Bagdogra Airport this evening after concluding a 5-day official tour of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and New Delhi.

During the visit, the Chief Minister at-

tended the Global Investors Meet in HP which had Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the chief guest.

The Chief Minister also met top CEOs of blue chip companies and entrepreneur giants during the Global Investors Meet and invited them to Sikkim to explore investment opportunities.

ABP anchor Dibang calls on CM



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 Nov: Senior news anchor with ABP News, Dibang, called on Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay], at Sikkim House, New Delhi, today, an IPR Deptt press release informs.

The two discussed

various issues regarding Sikkim and the CM also requested Mr Dibang to promote Sikkim through news items, the release informs. Dibang in return congratulated the Chief Minister on his historic victory in the recently concluded by-elections, the release adds.

Minister inspects Stairway to Heaven project



GYALSHING, 10 Nov [IPR]: Minister for Sikkim Public Works (Buildings & Housing) and Transport Departments, Sanjit Kharel, along with Power Minister MN Sherpa, who also happens to be the area MLA, visited the

construction site of Stairway to Heaven at Daramdin today.

During the visit, the Ministers met with officials from the concerned department and made a joint inspection of the works being carried out at



the site.

The stakeholders and workers were advised to maintain proper coordination to ensure a positive outcome.

Thereafter, Minister Kharel along with area MLA and the officials from Buildings &

Housing Department also made a site visit to Buriakhop. During the visit, they enquired after the status of work in progress at the ethnic village project there and discussed the next plan of action to expedite the work.

Soreng teachers complete NISHTHA training



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 Nov: The first batch of 130 teachers, including 12 school heads, of Soreng Sub Division completed training under the National Initiative for School Heads'

Teachers' Holistic Advancement [NISHTHA] programme at Chakung Senior Secondary School on Friday.

The teachers were from schools in the three BACs of Chumbong, Soreng and Da-

ramdin and had begun their training on 04 November.

The training programme was launched by MHRD in August 2019 and aims at improving the education system by taking into

account the methods of teaching and other pedagogical processes including generic issues in order to ensure that the students are engaged in the learning process and attained the desired learning objectives.

Now you can whatsapp Summit TIMES @

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Temple town buzzes...

Shops selling utensils, puja items, idols and pictures of gods and goddesses were open, as were the eateries.

Owners of a sweets shop in the vicinity of Hanumangarhi temple, Anoop Saini and Vaibhav Gupta, were seen sifting through pages of newspapers and discussing the outcome of Saturday's judgement.

"After the judgement in favour of Ram Lalla, we knew that we will fall short of garlands, so we had ordered additional garlands from Varanasi and neighbouring cities," Anoop Saini said.

He added that Ayodhya will now grow in the right direction. "I am sure that Ayodhya will see its golden era in coming days. This is the best example of Satyamev Jayate," he said.

Jaipur residents Awadhesh Sharma and Kajormal Sharma said they felt proud and blessed to have been in Ayodhya when the Supreme Court delivered its judgment.

Settling the fractious issue that goes back more than a century, the Supreme Court on Saturday backed the construction of a Ram temple by a government trust at the disputed site in Ayodhya, and ruled that an alternative five-acre plot must be found for a mosque in the Hindu holy town.

Delivering a unanimous verdict on a case that has long polarised the country and frayed the secular tapestry of Indian society, a five-judge bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi said the faith of Hindus that Lord Ram was born at the site was undisputed, and he is symbolically the owner of the land.

Ganesh Tare, who along with a group of 55 tourists, arrived here from Bhiwandi (Maharashtra) on Sunday, said that he felt joyed by the verdict.

Rampujan and Ramvati were also "feeling happy" as they arrived in Hanumangarhi temple area after 'mundan' of their son Jankaran.

Sunday was a busy day for 58-year-old newspaper hawkers Ram Shankar Yadav. "I have been distributing newspapers in nearly 11 localities of the district since 1994. On a normal Sunday, I distribute 500 to 525 newspapers, but on this Sunday, I distributed 750," he said.

"This is a new morning, a new Sunday. As barriers have been put up at various parts of Ayodhya, the number of devotees coming here at this point of time is a bit less. However, in the next couple of days, it is likely to go up. There is absolute normalcy," senior priest of Hanumangarhi temple, Mahant Raju Das, told PTI.

Later, Raju Das, along with local Muslim leader Babloo Khan, took a round of the workshop of the Sriramjanmabhoomi Nyas in Ayodhya.

"This is not just a win for Hindus or Muslims, this is a win for the Janmabhoomi," Das said.

"I have been following the Quran in letter and spirit. If Kaba is sacred for the Muslims, then the Ramjanmabhoomi is equally sacred for the Hindus. This is the city of Lord Ram. We welcome the Supreme Court judgment, and each and every citizen should welcome it," Khan said.

Both were seen clicking selfies together, apparently to send a message of communal harmony.

People were seen visiting the workshop which has almost turned into a studio for various news channels hosting debates from there.

"Lord Ram is the eventual truth in life. I am feeling extremely happy," said Mahant Pawan Kumar Das of Ayodhya and Baba Bhawani Das.

Traffic on the national highway linking Ayodhya to neighbouring cities of Basti, Barabnaki, Azamgarh and Ambedkarnagar and to state capital Lucknow was normal.

BSNL mulls biz continuity measures amid VRS plan rollout; talks on with DoT

NEW DELHI, NOV 10

(PTI): With the current VRS plan expected to cut BSNL's staff by almost half, the DoT has instructed the corporation to put in place measures to ensure business continuity and smooth transition, particularly for manning telephone exchanges in rural areas.

At present, various options are being discussed for the transition period.

A source in Department of Telecom (DoT) told PTI said the matter requires urgent focus, and meetings are on to find a solution to ensure there is no impact on day-to-day manning of exchanges and other operations, once the VRS plan concludes.

On Friday evening, barely four days after the scheme was rolled out, the number of BSNL employees opting for VRS had swelled to 57,000, and the figures when combined with those of state-owned MTNL had exceed 60,000.

In all, nearly one lakh BSNL employees are eligible for the VRS out of its total staff strength of about 1.50 lakh. BSNL's internal target for VRS

is pegged at 77,000 employees, which essentially means that if the VRS reaches full target, the staff strength will come down by half. The effective date of voluntary retirement under the present scheme is January 31, 2020.

When contacted, BSNL Chairman and MD P K Purwar confirmed that discussions have been initiated on the issue and said the corporation is planning business re-engineering and business continuity.

"We have to work meticulously because we have now started taking the data, which SSA, which unit, how many people are taking VRS... We will still be left with about 80,000 people. So, the numbers are not less...but it will be almost half. The work culture will also have to change," Purwar said.

The DoT source said that even outsourcing certain operations will require time, including transition period of 2-3 months after finalisation of tender, and given that the VRS will come into effect from January, a solution

will have to be arrived at soon.

Several options are on the discussion table, the source said one such solution being debated is whether some of the personnel opting for VRS can be roped in as consultants at a lower cost.

The other options include tendering or outsourcing some of the work or roping in retired officers of the telecom department who are already familiar with the tasks. BSNL will have to choose which option it wants to go with, the source said.

The 'BSNL Voluntary Retirement Scheme - 2019' that was rolled out last week, will remain open till December 3. BSNL is looking at savings of about Rs 7,000 crore in wage bill, if 70,000-80,000 personnel opt for the scheme.

According to the scheme all regular and permanent employees of BSNL including those on deputation to other organisations or posted outside the corporation on deputation basis, who attended the age of 50 years or above are eligible to seek voluntary

retirement under the scheme.

The amount of ex-gratia for any eligible employee will be equal to 35 days salary for each completed year of service and 25 days salary for every year of service left until superannuation.

Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL) too has rolled out a VRS for its employees. The scheme, based on Gujarat Model, will be open for employees till December 3, 2019.

The Union Cabinet last month had approved the plan to combine MTNL - which provides services in Mumbai and New Delhi - with BSNL that services the rest of the nation.

The rescue package

approved by the government includes infusion of Rs 20,140 crore for purchase of 4G spectrum, Rs 3,674 crore for GST to be paid on spectrum allocation, companies raising Rs 15,000 crore in debt on the sovereign guarantee and government funding Rs 17,160 crore VRS and another Rs 12,768 crore towards retirement liability.

The two firms will also monetise assets worth Rs 37,500 crore in the next three years. MTNL has reported losses in nine of the past 10 years and BSNL too has been ringing in loss since 2010. The total debt on both the companies stood at Rs 40,000 crore, of which half of the liability is on MTNL alone.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

Roadside plots for sale at Adampool, Ranipool-Rumtek highway.

For details contact: 9083826462

FLAT FOR RENT/LEASE

Fully furnished 3BHK flat available for rent/lease at Church Road near DPH. Roadside and five minutes walking distance from MG Marg.

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

SSB-sponsored driving and comp education training concludes



SUMMIT REPORT

RONGLI, 10 Nov:

A two-month long Motor Driving and Computer Education training organized by the SSB 69th Battalion under its civic action programme for border areas concluded here today at the Rongli community hall, a press release informs. The training was taken by 20

local youth.

The training was imparted at Hi Tech Computer Education Institute of Rongli.

The valedictory function had DIG, SSB Head Sector, Gangtok, BK Pal, as chief guest accompanied by SSB Rhenock Deputy Commander Jeet Singh, Medical Officer Dr Doma Lepcha.

Iran announces discovery of massive oil field

TEHRAN, Nov 10 (AFP):

Iran has discovered a massive new oil field, President Hassan Rouhani said Sunday, a find that would boost its proven reserves by about a third in a rare piece of "good news" for an economy battered by US sanctions.

In a speech aired on state TV, Rouhani said the country's economy had stabilised despite punishing US measures against its senior leaders, banking and finance sectors.

The vast field in the southwestern province of Khuzestan holds an estimated 53 billion barrels of crude, he said.

The 80-metre deep reservoir stretches nearly 200 kilometres from Khuzestan's border with Iraq to the city of Omid-ye.

"This is a small gift by the government to the people of Iran," he said in a speech from the central city of Yazd.

"We announce to America today that we are a rich nation, and despite your enmity and cruel sanctions, Iranian oil industry workers and engineers discovered this great oil field." The find would add around 34 percent to the OPEC member's current proven reserves, estimated by energy giant BP at 155.6 billion barrels.

Iran, a founding member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, sits on what were already the world's fourth-biggest oil reserves.

The new reserves, if proven, would lift it to third place, just before regional arch-rival Saudi Arabia.

But it remains to be seen how much the country can benefit from the new field.

Iran has struggled to sell its oil since US President Donald Trump withdrew from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal last year and reimposed unilateral sanctions.

In May, Washington ended temporary sanctions waivers it had granted to the eight main buyers of Iranian oil, ratcheting up the pressure on holdouts China, India and Turkey to find other suppliers.

Tehran does not report exact figures, but says some crude is still exported via "unconventional" means.

It has hit back at the US with a series of countermeasures,

PIB-Gangtok's Shovan Kr Mitra conferred certificate of appreciation



RANGPO, 10 Nov: In-

formation & Broadcasting Ministry, North East Zone, has felicitated Shovan Kumar Mitra, a Press Information Bureau official posted in Gangtok, for his service and dedication to shoulder responsibilities beyond the mandate of his service.

Mr Mitra was among nine such officials from the North East Zone to

receive Certificates of Appreciation.

The Governor of Assam, Prof Jagdish Mukhi, presented the certificate to Mr Mitra during the inaugural ceremony of the multimedia exhibition on Guru Nanak Dev at Nagao in Assam.

Mr Mitra, barring a year and a half stint in Kolkata, has spent his entire three decades of service with PIB in Sik-

kim, developing a special bonhomie and rapport with local scribes.

His role has been more conspicuous during visits of officials and leaders from the Centre when he liaisons with the local journalists and ensures that all necessary resources are made available to them for wider publicity.

[from SANJAY AGARWAL]

No claimants for dormant Swiss accounts of Indians; some may get liquidated soon

NEW DELHI/ZURICH, Nov 10 (PTI): No claim-

ants have come forward for about a dozen dormant Swiss bank accounts linked to Indians, leaving the funds lying in these accounts at the risk of getting transferred to the Switzerland government.

The Swiss government began making details of dormant accounts public in 2015 to allow their claimants submit necessary proof to get access to those funds, which included at least 10 accounts linked to Indians.

These included some accounts linked to Indian residents and nationals from the British rule era, but ironically not a single dormant account linked to an Indian has been successfully claimed in the last six years, as per the records available with the Swiss authorities.

The claim period for some of these accounts would expire next month, while a few others can still be claimed till the end of 2020.

Incidentally, some of the accounts linked to Pakistan residents have been claimed since then, as is the case with several other accounts linked to residents from other countries including Switzerland itself.

The list included close to 2,600 dormant accounts when it was first made public in December 2015, which had around 45 million Swiss francs (over Rs 300 crore) lying unclaimed since at least 1955. There were also nearly 80 safety unclaimed deposit boxes when the list was first made public for claims from the real owners or their heirs.

More accounts are being added every year since then after they become dormant under the Swiss banking laws

Internet services suspended in 4 MP districts

BHOPAL, Nov 10 (PTI): Internet services in four districts in Madhya Pradesh's Bundelkhand region were suspended from midnight on Sunday after people there wanted to take out processions to mark Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi despite a ban by authorities, police said.

Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi, the birthday of Prophet Mohammed, is being celebrated across the country on Sunday.

and the list now includes nearly 3,500 accounts.

While Swiss bank accounts have been a matter of heated political debate for many years in India due to suspicion that they were being used to hoard alleged black money, it has also been suspected that people linked to the erstwhile princely states had stashed some funds in banks in Switzerland.

Under global pressure over recent years, Switzerland has opened its banking system for regulatory scrutiny from abroad and it has also entered into pacts for automatic exchange of information on financial matters with a large number of countries, including India.

The first batch of details about accounts held by Indians in Switzerland-based financial institutions was given to India recently under this automatic information exchange information and the next such exercise would take place in September 2020.

In the meantime, the claims for dormant accounts are being managed by the Swiss Banking Ombudsman under cooperation from the Swiss Bankers Association.

As per the details available with the ombudsman, the dormant accounts linked to Indians that are waiting for their claimants include those included to at least two persons from the erstwhile Calcutta (now known as Kolkata), one from Dehradun, two from erstwhile Bombay (now known as Mumbai) and also some Indian settled in France and the UK.

The claim period for two such accounts -- which are in the names of Leila Talukdar and Prmatha N Talukdar -- would end next month

on November 15, while the assets can be claimed till December this year for accounts in the names of Chandralata Pranalal Patel, Mohan Lal and Kishore Lall.

In case of two Bombay-residents -- Rosmarie Bernet and Pierre Vachek -- the claim period would expire next year in December 2020, while similar is the case for the account of Chandra Bahadur Singh from Dehradun and Yogesch Prabhudas Suchah, whose last recorded residence was in London.

Under the Swiss laws, a bank account is declared dormant after there is no customer contact for 60 years ago and details are made public for inviting claims for all such accounts having at least 500 Swiss francs or assets of unknown value.

These assets will be liquidated and transferred to the Swiss federal government if no beneficiary has submitted a justified request within a given time-frame and the same procedure applies to safe deposit boxes with a value of more than CHF 500 or unknown value.

Generally, the deadline for submitting requests is one year from the date of such dormant accounts being made public, but a larger time-frame of five years has been given for accounts that had the last customer contact in 1954 or earlier.

The claims can be submitted by the original account owner as also by his or her legal heir.

If no requests are received within the deadline, or if the bank finds the claims unjustified, the bank needs to hand over the assets to the Federal Finance Administration of Switzerland, thus making all rights of former customers null and void.

Permissions for all types of rallies and processions till November 30 have been denied by district authorities in the state, officials said.

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Jashn E Eid Milad Un Nabi observed in Jorethang



JORETHANG, 10 Nov:

A rally was taken out through town here to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad.

The rally started

from the Fountain Corner and moved towards Akkar Bridge, through Jorethang Bazaar and concluded back at the Fountain Corner. The

procession was organised by the Bharatiya Garib Nawaz Sunni of Jorethang.

[from JEEWAN SUBBA]

Guj govt gives nod for CNG port terminal at Bhavnagar

AHMEDABAD, Nov 10 (PTI): The Gujarat gov-

ernment on Sunday gave its approval for a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) terminal in Bhavnagar with a proposed investment of Rs 1,900 crore, an official said.

A state government release said the facility, approval for which was given by the Gujarat Infrastructure Development Board headed by chief minister Vijay Rupani, would be the world's first CNG port terminal.

It will be developed jointly by UK-head-

quartered Foresight Group and Mumbai-based Padmanabh Mafatlal Group, the release added.

The Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) had signed an MoU with Foresight Group to set up this port terminal at Bhavnagar in the Vibrant Gujarat Summit held in January this year, said the release.

Apart from the CNG terminal, the investors would also develop a Ro-Ro terminal, liquid cargo terminal and container terminal at Bhavnagar port with a cumulative investment

of Rs 1,900 crore, said the release.

The proposed CNG port terminal will have a capacity to handle 1.5 million metric tonne per annum (MMTPA).

The GMB manages the existing port at Bhavnagar, having a capacity to handle three MMTPA cargo, and the new terminals would take the overall capacity to nine MMTPA, the release said.

While the consortium would invest Rs 1,300 crore in the first phase, Rs 600 crore will be invested in the second phase.

CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED FOR AMBA SCHOOL LIBRARY UPGRADATION

Wandering Souls of Sikkim is excited to announce our plan to upgrade the school library of Govt. Secondary School, Amba, East Sikkim. This will be fourth such upgradation of school libraries by WSOS.

We have successfully upgraded 3 school libraries so far with the support and contributions of our generous patrons and are looking forward to receive more such contributions.

We request all to kindly contribute books either old or new or cash for the upgradation of school library at Amba.

Our Library Initiative is aimed at upgrading School libraries specially in rural areas of the state and for laying a foundation for better future of our young minds studying in these schools.

To Contribute Contact WSOS at 7384639193.



PRESENTS

**INSTALLATION OF
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A FOUNDATION FOR
BETTER FUTURE**

AT

**GOVT. SEC. SCHOOL
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Activate Democracy

Time has come for a more participatory democracy

Sikkim has been enjoying representative democracy for more than forty years now and it is time that this structure was strengthened further with a more participatory version of it. It is time not only because democracy has matured in the nine Assembly elections the people have participated in as a democracy thus far, but also because these are now very divisive times of quick paranoia and disturbing parochialism. There are too many conflicting ideas being thrown around, too much reckless opportunism which can be addressed only if the people deepened their involvement in democracy. This requires for the engagement to continue even after they have cast their votes. But what is participatory democracy all about?

Essentially, it involves noticing, informing, discussing and listening.

These are actually prerequisites of a democracy, but the people tend to end their participation with the ballot, rather the EVM nowadays. While elected representatives are fine to deliver governance, when tricky issues need to be resolved, the people have to increase their involvement, participate more, demand it even. It is however not easy for the people to set up such engagements on their own. This is where the role of the elected representatives becomes more important. They have to initiate the process of participatory democracy. It serves their purpose also because then they can truly understand the aspirations of the people and act accordingly. By doing so they not only serve the people well, but also secure their own political futures by helping reinforce consensus. This task is not easy though. The public does not and will not speak in one voice, but with many voices, making different demands, even impossible ones. Within any area there are many communities and with every issue, there are many lines of conflict. What the mediator has to look for is the other common factor – the lines of cooperation and begin the process from there. The development of participatory democracy, if successful, would extend the range of voices beyond those normally heard.

The importance of discussion in a participatory democracy is to establish awareness of different positions, to test them against other, much wider concerns and to see whether, through discussion, new positions can be reached which can reconcile differences, or at least explore how far they can be reconciled. It is the responsibility of elected representatives to aid that process and in the end, if required, balance, mediate and judge the differing views.

The process, however, has to be consistent because no matter how pressing the issue, the people cannot be expected to sustain a continuing involvement. They should be called in for a limited period for a particular commitment and made to hear the issues in depth, given an opportunity to question and challenge and then asked to give their views. Ideally, this process is safest in the hands of a civil society, but we have none in Sikkim. The process of mediation and initiation will have to be started by the elected representatives at their respective levels. One hopes that they stand up to the calling.

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The forgotten mass destruction of Jewish homes during ‘Kristallnacht’

WOLF GRUNER
THECONVERSATION.COM

Every November, communities around the world hold remembrances on the anniversary of the Nazis’ brutal assault on the Jews during “Kristallnacht.”

Also known as “the Night of Broken Glass,” it’s one of the most closely scrutinized events in the history of Nazi Germany. Dozens of books have been published about the hours between Nov. 9 and 10, 1938, when Adolf Hitler and his propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, decided to unleash violence against Jews across Germany and the annexed territory of Austria with the aim of driving them out of the Third Reich.

Most accounts tend to emphasize the attacks on synagogues and shops, along with the mass arrests of 30,000 men. A few note the destruction of Jewish schools and cemeteries.

Attacks on Jewish homes, however, are barely mentioned.

It’s an aspect of the story that has rarely been researched and written about – until now.

A PATTERN EMERGES IN SURVIVOR ACCOUNTS

In 2008, when I arrived at the University of Southern California from Germany, I had been researching Nazi persecution of the German Jews for 20 years. I had published more than six books on the topic and thought I knew just about everything there was to know about Kristallnacht.

The university happened to be the new home of the Shoah Foundation and its Visual History Archive, which today includes over 55,000 survivor testimonies. When I started to watch interviews with German-Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, I was surprised to hear many of them talk about the destruction of their homes during Kristallnacht.

Details from their recollections sounded eerily similar: When Nazi paramilitary troops broke the doors of their homes, it sounded as though a bomb had gone off; then the men cut into the featherbeds, hacked the furniture into pieces and smashed everything inside.

Yet none of these stories appeared in traditional accounts of Kristallnacht.

I was perplexed by this disconnect. Some years later, I found a document from Schneidemühl, a small district in the East of Germany, that listed the destruction of a dozen synagogues, over 60 shops – and 231 homes.

These surprising numbers piqued my interest further. After digging into unpublished and published materials, I unearthed an abundance of evidence in administrative reports, diaries, letters and postwar testimonies.

A fuller picture of the brutal destruction of Jewish homes and apartments soon emerged.

For example, a Jewish merchant named Martin Fröhlich wrote to his daughter that when he arrived home the afternoon of that fateful November day, he noticed his door had been broken down. A tipped-over wardrobe blocked the entrance. Inside, everything had been hacked into pieces with axes: glass, china, clocks, the piano, furniture, chairs, lamps and paintings. Realizing that his home was now uninhabitable, he broke down and – as he confessed in the letter – started sobbing like a child.

A SYSTEMATIC CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION

The more I discovered, the more astonished I was by the scale and intensity of the attacks.

Using address lists provided by either local party officers or city officials, paramilitary SA and SS squads and Hitler Youth, armed with axes and pistols, attacked apartments with Jewish tenants in big cities like Berlin, as well as private Jewish homes in small villages. In Nuremberg, for example, attackers destroyed 236 Jewish flats. In Düsseldorf, over 400 were vandalized.

In the cities of Rostock and Mannheim, the attackers demolished virtually all Jewish apartments.

Documents point to Goebbels as the one who ordered the destruction of home furnishings. Due to the systematic nature of the attacks, the num-

ber of vandalized Jewish homes across Greater Germany must have been in the thousands, if not tens of thousands.

Then there are devastating details about the intensity of the destruction that emerge from letters and testimonies from postwar trials.

In Euskirchen, a house was burned to the ground.

In the village of Kamp, near the Rhineland town of Boppard, attackers broke into the house of the Kaufmann family, destroyed furniture and lamps, ripped out stove pipes, and broke doors and walls. When parts of the ceiling collapsed, the family escaped to a nearby monastery.

In the small town of Großauheim, located in the state of Hesse, troops used sledgehammers to destroy everything in two Jewish homes, including lamps, radios, clocks and furniture. Even after the war, shards of glass and china were found impressed in the wooden floor.

‘EVERYTHING RAVAGED AND SHATTERED’

The documents I found and interviews I listened to revealed how sexual abuse, beatings and murder were commonplace. Much of it happened during the home intrusions.

In Linz, two SA men sexually assaulted a Jewish woman. In Bremen, the SA shot and killed Selma Zwiernicki in her own bedroom. In Cologne, as Moritz Spiro tried to stop two men from destroying his furniture, one of the intruders beat him and fractured his skull. Spiro died days later in the Jewish hospital.

In a letter dated Nov. 20, 1938, a Viennese woman described her family’s injuries to a relative:

“You can’t imagine, how it looked like at home. Papa with a head injury, bandaged, I with severe attacks in bed, everything ravaged and shattered... When the doctor arrived to patch up Papa, Herta and Rosa, who all bled horribly from their heads, we could not even provide him with a towel.”

The brutality of the attacks didn’t go unnoticed. On Nov. 15, the U.S. consul general in Stuttgart, Samuel

Honaker, wrote to his ambassador in Berlin:

“Of all the places in this section of Germany, the Jews in Rastatt, which is situated near Baden-Baden, have apparently been subjected to the most ruthless treatment. Many Jews in this section were cruelly attacked and beaten and the furnishings of their homes almost totally destroyed.”

These findings make clear: The demolition of Jewish homes was an overlooked aspect of the November 1938 pogrom.

Why did it stay in the shadows for so long?

In the immediate aftermath of Kristallnacht, most newspaper articles and photographs of the violent event exclusively focused on the destroyed synagogues and stores – selective coverage that probably influenced our understanding.

Yet, it was the destruction of the home – the last refuge for the German Jewish families who found themselves facing heightened public discrimination in the years leading up to the pogrom – that likely extracted the greatest toll on the Jewish population. The brutal attacks rendered thousands homeless and hundreds beaten, sexually assaulted or murdered.

The brutal assaults also likely played a big role in the spate of Jewish suicides that took place in the days and weeks after Kristallnacht, along with the decision that tens of thousands of Jews made to flee Nazi Germany.

While this story speaks to decades of scholarly neglect, it is, at the same time, a testament to the power of survivor accounts, which continue to change the way we understand the Holocaust.

[the writer is Shapell-Guerin Chair in Jewish Studies and Professor of History; Founding Director, USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research, University of Southern California – Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences]

Why the UN’s financial crisis will hurt Africans more than anyone else

GARY WILSON
THECONVERSATION.COM

The United Nations might run out of cash to meet its commitments by November. The organisation is facing a US\$1.7 billion shortfall because a third of its member states are in arrears with their annual contributions to the UN budget.

As a consequence, it has been unable to fill some of its vacant positions. It faces the prospect of having to make cuts to its expenditure and scale back on the activities it is currently involved in.

These financial problems are not new. The challenge of adequately funding the UN has been a long-running saga which can be traced back to its early years. The term ‘financial crisis’ has been applied to the UN in discussions dating back to the 1960s.

But the financial crisis became particularly dire in the 1990s. This period coincided with a huge expansion in UN peacekeeping activities, necessitated by the explosion of internal conflicts around the world at that time. The activities were made possible by a new-found cooperation between the major powers. This saw a decline in their use of vetoes within the Security Council. The increase in peacekeeping placed greater financial strain on the UN.

Its debts reached US\$2.3 billion as America’s arrears mounted. At the time, the United States (US) was the biggest budget contributor to the UN despite the fact that its contribution was a tiny share of its federal domestic spending. While the situation improved somewhat into the millennium, the financial well-being of the organisation has remained heavily contingent upon the US’ compliance with its budgetary obligations.

The US has remained the biggest contributor to the UN, currently carrying 22% of the general budget, and has continuously sought to use that as leverage to extract concessions from the world body. It has managed to negotiate a reduction in its contribution, while at the same time pushing for efficiency reforms and cost-cutting measures within the organisation.

As the years have gone by, a situation where a significant number of member states are in arrears with their assessed contributions to

the UN budget has become the norm rather than an exception. This is despite the fact that the vast majority of members individually contribute less than 1% of the total budget. The UN budget is set by the General Assembly, which is also responsible for determining the proportion of the burden to be borne by each member state. These assessments take into account the economic capacity of every state.

While most states may pay up on time, if the US is not fully paid up the effects can be catastrophic because most of the deficit can be attributed to it defaulting. Various critical programmes have been axed or reduced due to these financial constraints, most recently the UN’s humanitarian programmes in Yemen.

MONEY FOR PEACEKEEPING

The UN has a separate peacekeeping budget in addition to its operational costs. The US contributes an even larger share to that kitty (28%).

So, understanding the UN’s financial woes requires an appreciation of the strain which peacekeeping places on its overall budget, and the unique ability of the US to influence the world body’s capacity to function.

Peacekeeping represents the UN’s biggest cost, as well as being its most prominent and robust activity within the peace and security arena. The current peacekeeping budget is US\$6.5 billion a year, about US\$1 billion more than the UN’s overall costs.

The effects of a significant shortfall in funding for peacekeeping should be of great concern. To undermine peacekeeping is to undermine the preservation of peace itself, particularly in light of the UN’s increased role in protecting civilians against the worst effects of conflict.

Cuts to peacekeeping will likely prove more harmful to the African continent than any other single region. Large budgetary cuts during 2017 fell heavily on the operations deployed within Darfur, with other African missions also affected. The UN has 13 active peacekeeping operations and seven of these are in Africa. African nations provide nearly half of the peacekeepers deployed worldwide,

including almost two thirds of all women peacekeepers, and the majority of UN police officers.

Current operations are deployed in Western Sahara, Darfur, Abyei, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Mali, and DR Congo. With the exception of the mission in Western Sahara, these are all sizeable operations consisting of thousands of personnel. Indeed, a majority comprise between 15 000 and 20 000 personnel, underlining the huge contribution to the promotion of peace and security in the region. Most of these operations have been deployed for several years.

WHAT NEXT?

The current UN financial crisis can be mitigated if member states pay their dues but it is difficult to imagine it disappearing completely. There will always be a danger that shortfalls in funding will compromise some of its most important activities. For that reason, regional bodies would be well advised to continue to develop their own capacities to act in response to crises which arise within their regions.

African states, through the African Union and regional bodies like the Economic Community of West African States, have made great efforts to strengthen the capacity of local actors to tackle problems arising close to home. Given the uncertain state of UN finances moving forward, this can only be a good thing.

While the UN has been forever plagued by financial problems, the fact remains that it needs to be placed on a sounder footing if it is to properly discharge its responsibilities. Its remit to maintain or restore international peace and security essentially means that its financial needs are endless.

There is always something more it can do, another initiative it can launch to address this or that problem. While there is some scope to trim some of its expensive bureaucratic activities, these are relatively low cost already. Therefore, member states, and the US in particular, must commit to supporting its budget.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer in Law, Liverpool John Moores University]

Guv hails WB govt, central agencies for cyclone preparedness

KOLKATA, Nov 10 (PTI): West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday hailed the “directional” efforts of the state government and other central agencies to minimise the impact of cyclone ‘Bulbul’.

Dhankhar also lauded the India Meteorological Department (IMD) for its timely forecast of the severe cyclonic storm, which barrelled through the coastal districts of West Bengal on Saturday evening.

“The directional efforts of the state government, its agencies as also central outfits National Disaster Response Force, National Disaster Management Authority, Coast Guard, Navy and others have minimised the damage due to ‘Bulbul’...” the governor was quoted as saying in a Raj Bhavan release.

“I would seek to connect with the Hon’ble Chief Minister (Mamata Banerjee), who has been keeping a diligent watch, after she made aerial survey of the affected areas around Namkhana and Bakkhali as projected in media,” it added.

Banerjee had said in a tweet that she would conduct an aerial survey of the two affected coastal areas in South 24 Parganas on Tuesday.

Appreciating the efforts of the weatherman that contributed to the preparedness of the agencies, Dhankhar said the “accurate and timely prediction by IMD is indicative of the scientific skills the nation now possesses”.

The governor also urged NGOs to come forward and assist in the relief and rehabilitation measures.

In an earlier tweet, Dhankhar said while in all the coastal districts, the Indian Navy, West Bengal Police and Coast Guard have been monitoring the situation and the state has taken measures, “there has been suffering”.

Cyclone ‘Bulbul’ has claimed at least seven lives in different parts of West Bengal, official reports said on Sunday.

Cyclone ‘Bulbul’ disrupts normal life in Bengal; 4 killed

KOLKATA, Nov 10 (PTI): Cyclone ‘Bulbul’, which made landfall between Bengal and Bangladesh coasts, brought in its wake heavy rain coupled with strong winds till early Sunday, affecting normal life in several parts of the city and the coastal districts of the state.

At least four people were killed in rain-related incidents in Kolkata and North 24 Parganas since Saturday, according to official reports.

An employee of a renowned club in the city was killed when a branch of a cedar tree fell on him, police said.

In Basirhat, North 24 Parganas, three persons died in separate incidents.

According to a senior police officer, Suchitra Mandal (70) died at Purba Makala village in the district when a tree fell on her.

Similarly, at Gokhna village, several tress were uprooted, one of which claimed the life of Reba Biswas (47).

Manirul Gazi (59) was the third casualty in the district. He was electrocuted to death after coming in contact with a lamp post, the officer added.



Torrential rain lashed the metropolis throughout Saturday, forcing people to remain indoors. Gale wind with gusts up to 135 kmph prevailed over the coastal districts of South 24 Parganas and East Midnapore and its adjoining areas in North 24 Parganas as the cyclone made landfall around midnight on Saturday.

Hundreds of uprooted trees blocked roads in parts of the city, even as people braved the weather and came out of their homes on Sunday.

The NDRF, along with the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), police and fire personnel, is working on a war footing to clear road blockades caused by fallen trees and

branches.

“We have already engaged workers to clear the roads and pump out water from low-lying areas. We are hopeful our work will be over by tonight,” said a KMC official.

State Disaster Management minister Javed Khan said all emergency services have been put in place to ensure uprooted trees are removed at the earliest.

According to the IMD, the very severe cyclonic storm had weakened into severe cyclonic storm before making landfall close to Sunderban Dhanchi forest.

“Yesterday’s very severe cyclonic storm ‘Bulbul’ over northwest Bay of Bengal (BoB) moved northeastwards,

weakened into a severe cyclonic storm and crossed West Bengal coast close to Sunderban Dhanchi forest during 8.30 to 11.30 pm with a maximum sustained wind speed of 110-120 kmph gusting to 135 kmph,” it said in an official release.

The Met department also predicted light to moderate rainfall over the next six hours from 12.30 pm in North and South 24 Parganas, East Midnapore and Nadia districts.

In a tweet, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she would conduct an aerial survey of the affected areas around Namkhana and Bakkhali in South 24 Parganas.

“Due to the severe cyclonic storm ‘Bulbul’,

I have decided to postpone my North Bengal visit in the coming week. Instead, tomorrow I would take an aerial survey of the affected areas around Namkhana and Bakkhali.

“Later I would take a meeting at Kakdwip with administration to review relief and rehabilitation measures of the cyclone-affected people. I am also planning to visit the cyclone-affected areas of Basirhat of North 24-Parganas on 13 November, 2019,” Banerjee tweeted.

State power minister Sovande Chatterjee said measures were being taken to restore power supply in areas, where electric cables have been torn apart due to the cyclone.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee about the situation arising out of the cyclone and assured the state of all assistance to deal with the calamity.

“Reviewed the situation in the wake of cyclone conditions and heavy rain in parts of Eastern India,” the prime minister wrote on Twitter.

Ayodhya verdict to give BJP political heft in Bengal

PRADIPTA TAPADAR KOLKATA, Nov 10 (PTI): On the back foot since the NRC in Assam left out over 12 lakh Hindus, mostly Bengalis, the Supreme Court verdict on Ayodhya land dispute has provided the BJP in West Bengal fresh ammunition to polarise the state’s electorate ahead of the crucial 2021 assembly polls.

The apex court on Saturday cleared the way for construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya, and directed the Centre to allot a 5-acre plot to Sunni Waqf Board for building a mosque.

The BJP which stormed into Mamata Banerjee’s fortress earlier this year by bagging 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats --- riding on issues of TMC’s alleged partisan approach and the promise to filter out illegal immigrants --- faced immense flak when the

final NRC in Assam left out Bengali Hindus in large numbers.

Shortly after, panic gripped people in Bengal, with the Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) employing the “anti-Bengali” rhetoric against the BJP and tilting the scales in its favour to an extent.

At least 11 people reportedly died or committed suicide in the state due to fear of exclusion from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) --- a document containing names of genuine Indians.

With Saturday’s apex court verdict, however, the Bengal BJP hopes to consolidate Hindu votes before the 2021 assembly elections.

According to state BJP sources, it was the Ram Mandir issue in early nineties that had helped the saffron party, for the first time in Bengal, to bag around 16 per cent votes.

“During the nineties, we failed to keep up the momentum and vote share dropped to 4-5 per cent. But now the political ground is fertile for us, having bagged 18 seats and 40.5 per cent votes in Lok Sabha polls. The Ayodhya issue will further strengthen our mass base,” a senior state BJP functionary told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

Pointing out that the promise of Ram Mandir was the only constant in BJP’s manifesto from 1996 to 2019, another state leader said the party had been committed to cause of Hindus and Hindu religion.

“After NRC was published in Assam, some opposition parties like the TMC tried to brand us as ‘anti Bengali’ and ‘anti-Hindu’. We were on a back foot for a while, but this Ayodhya case victory has provided us with much-needed am-

munition to secure votes in the state,” he claimed.

West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh said the Sangh parivar’s three-decade-old fight for the Ayodhya site finally ended in its victory.

“We do not want to get into politics over Lord Ram.

But the fact is that the BJP and the Sangh parivar have been fighting for a cause over the last three decades. So if there are brownie points to be made, it is quite natural that the BJP will earn it,” Ghosh maintained.

A section of saffron camp leaders felt that the silence of the TMC on the issue provided the party with a fresh opportunity to charge the TMC as a “pro-muslim party”.

“Why is that neither the TMC nor Mamata Banerjee have said anything on the matter? They should clear their stand.

Actually they are apprehensive that welcoming the verdict might anger their Muslim vote bank -- their mainstay,” state BJP general secretary Sayantan Basu claimed.

The apex court judgment on Ayodhya’s disputed site brought back memories of the decades-old Ram Janmabhoomi movement which propelled the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from the fringes of national politics to becoming a dominant political force as it used the deeply emotive issue to mobilise Hindus.

Struggling to find a space in the country’s politics, dominated by secular parties, the BJP under LK Advani hitched its bandwagon to the temple cause in its Palampur resolution in 1989, giving a defining Hindutva edge to its politics which until then had lacked a popular cause celebre.

Never talked of quitting Grand Alliance, says Manjhi

PATNA, Nov 10 (PTI): Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) National President Jitan Ram Manjhi on Sunday asserted that he never said his party would pull out of the five-party Grand Alliance in Bihar.

The former Bihar chief minister, however, said that a coordination committee should be formed for taking decisions regarding the Grand Alliance and for better coordination among its partners RJD, Congress, RLP, HAM(S) and Vikasheel Insan Party (VIP).

Speaking to reporters after HAM(S) youth wing meeting convened at his residence here, Manjhi said, “I never said my party will come out of the Grand Alliance... I will remain in it... Though, I firmly spoke about the formation of a coordination committee for taking decisions of the alliance.”

Manjhi had on November 7 announced at the national executive meeting of HAM(S) that his party would go it alone in the upcoming Jharkhand Assembly elections, where it has not contested any poll so far.

He also announced that his party will field candidates in all the 243 Assembly segments of Bihar during Vidhan Sabha elections next year, giving rise to speculations that the Dalit leader may quit

the Grand Alliance.

“I had joined the Grand Alliance on the condition that there will be a coordination committee and every decision of alliance will be taken through the committee alone,” he told reporters on Sunday.

When pointed out that RJD heir apparent Tejashwi Prasad Yadav had said that Manjhi had made up his mind to quit the alliance, the HAM(S) supremo refused to comment on it.

Asked whether he would suggest Tejashwi Yadav for constituting the coordination committee, Manjhi said he had spoken to both Tejashwi and his father Lalu Prasad Yadav about it on several occasions.

“If they (Grand Alliance leaders) think that Jitan Ram Manjhi has no role to play in the alliance, then it is alright. I will remain in the alliance and continue politics,” he said.

Manjhi asserted that if the alliance wants to defeat the NDA, then it has to be strengthened for which a coordination committee is a must.

“We can fight Nitish Kumar and defeat the NDA only through the coordination committee. But, if any party leader shows reluctance in forming such committee, then I will consider him as a supporter of NDA,” he said.

Northeast region land of unexplored potential: Singh

NEW DELHI, Nov 10 (PTI): Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday described the northeastern region as a land of unexplored potential and unsaturated avenues, which has something to offer to every start-up.

He also said there has been a constant effort by the Narendra Modi government in the last five years to bring the rest of India closer to the northeastern region so that all states get to know what all the area has to offer.

“The northeast is a land of unexplored potentials and unsaturated avenues,” the Union Minister for Development of the North Eastern Region (DoNER) said.

Singh said the importance of the north-

eastern region is that, as of today, it has something to offer to every young start-up.

On the sidelines of an event which showcased the region’s art, culture, dress and cuisine, the Union minister said the response to the three-day event has been good.

Singh said he was keenly observing as to how many visitors to the event are from among those who belong to Delhi or other parts of India besides the northeast.

The minister said that he was delighted to note that all stalls and sections at the venue were thronged by crowds of people, mostly youngsters, belonging to different parts of India including Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and even NRIs.

Think deep, write simple is my mantra: Irshad Kamil

MANIK GUPTA BHOPAL, Nov 10 (PTI): Rockstar’s soulful ‘Kun Faya Kun’, ‘Tamasha’ or the recent smashing hit ‘Bekhyali’, the new love-sick youth anthem from Kabir Singh, it is poet and lyricist Irshad Kamil’s mantra of “deep thoughts and simple words” that makes his songs stick with the audience.

“Main halke mein baat karta hoon, par halki baat nahi karta hai (I speak casually but I don’t speak cheap words). My intention is always to try and write deep thoughts in simple words.

Speaking at the sidelines of the inaugural edition of Tagore International Literature and Arts festival, “Vishwa Rang” at Minto Hall here, Kamil said that he writes to communicate what the character feels.

“So you would notice that I have never used big words when it is not required. See, I am not

writing to boast about my knowledge of the language, I am writing to communicate a point which the character feels... and making that thought reach across to my audience is my only priority,” Kamil told PTI.

While having a fan-following pan-India and pan-categories -- youth or elderly, classy or massy-- Kamil is clear in head that he mainly writes for youth who he said reciprocates and relates with his songs like no one else.

“You write a song and next you know there are letters and feedback by them in hundreds and thousands. Like I recently wrote ‘Bekhyali’ and found that the whole nation was singing Bekhyali only.

“I guess they feel that this is the person who talks about us and that he is giving words to what even they have been thinking in their heads for

some time now,” said the lyricist, whose upcoming works include Imtiaz Ali’s ‘Aaj Kal’ and Vidhu Vinod Chopra’s Shikara: Love Stories from Kashmir”.

Not of the opinion that any Indian language -- Urdu as well as regional languages -- is dying a slow death, he said literature festivals like ‘Vishwa Rang’ along with ‘Jashn-E-Rekhta’, ‘Jashn-E-Adab’ and Lucknow Literature festival are examples that all Indian languages are here to stay.

“In more than 90 per cent of households in India, people don’t speak English but Hindi, Urdu or other regional languages. Also, a host of publishing companies who are coming from foreign countries are not coming to India to publish Indian English writers. They are coming to publish Hindi, Urdu and other Indian language writers.

“Now why would they take all this trouble if it is not minting them money, and people are not reading and liking works coming out of Indian vernacular languages,” asked Kamil, whose last book was “Kaali Aurat Ka Khawab”.

The 48-year-old poet also dismissed the argument that there is an imminent dip in the graph of lovers of poetry in India and in fact went on to blame the poets for not doing enough to reach out to their audiences.

“Mohabbat kabhi ek tarfa nahi hoti hai, dono taraf aag barabar lagi wali mohabbat ka hi mazza hai (Love is never one-sided, it has to be a mutual thing to make for a love-story). The poets who say that their work is not reaching out to their target audience, should come out and work for it to make it happen,” he said.

He had come to the festival to perform with

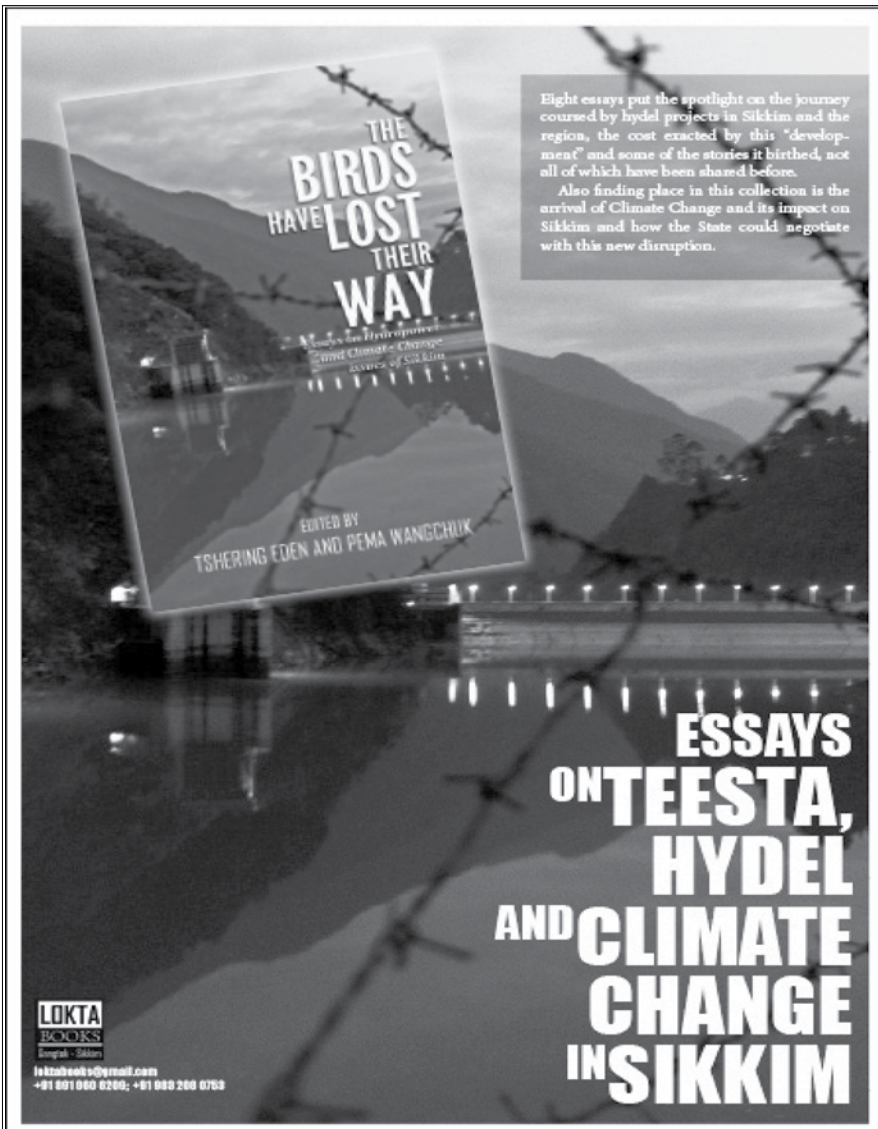
his brain-child band, ‘Ink Band’, touted as India’s first “poetry band”.

He said unlike Rock and Hip-hop bands where there is a lot of “head banging and vigorous guitar strumming”, his band is one where “words and poetry” takes over the driving seat from music.

The aim of his band is to connect his “audience with themselves” rather than the outside world, and with that give them the “high”, one that stays with them for a longer period than what they get from a performance by other regular conventional bands, he added.

Featuring over 500 national and international authors and artists, the four-day festival, organized by the Tagore International Center for Arts and Culture, aims to promote literature in Hindi and other Indian languages.

The event will come to an end on Sunday.



Messi's dead-ball hat-trick puts Barca back on top

MADRID, NOV 10 (AFP): Lionel Messi delivered an incredible dead-ball hat-trick to steer Barcelona to a 4-1 victory over Celta Vigo and ease the pressure on his coach Ernesto Valverde.

Messi scored with a penalty and then a pair of sumptuous free-kicks either side of half-time after Lucas Olaza had briefly pulled Celta level with a free-kick of his own at Camp Nou on Saturday. Sergio Busquets drove home to make sure of the win late on.

A 34th treble in La Liga puts Messi equal with Cristiano Ronaldo, while a much-needed win sends Barca above Real Madrid on goal difference and back to the top of the table at the end of a testing week.

"It is impossible not to depend on Messi, he illuminates everything," said Valverde.

"We depend on him like any team would depend on him. He unlocked the game."

Madrid had briefly claimed first place after continuing their own goal-surge by hammering Eibar 4-0, a game in which Karim Benzema scored twice and Eden Hazard exploded into life.

But while Madrid appear to be hitting their stride, Barcelona's momentum had stalled. After losing to Levante and failing to break down Slavia Prague in the Champions League, scrutiny had again turned on Valverde and his future as Barcelona coach.

Barcelona's disgruntled fans had whistled their team against Slavia in midweek and when Olaza equalised for Celta, that tension and restlessness threatened to return.

Instead, Messi took command, this hat-trick taking his tally to nine goals in seven games, 612 in total for his club.

"Obviously when it's tight we have the advantage of having the



best player in the world and the best free-kick taker in the world," said Busquets.

Yet his precision from free-kicks is a skill the 32-year-old has worked on and improved in recent years, his conversion rate currently at four goals from his last seven attempts in the league.

The last time a player scored a hat-trick from set-pieces in La Liga was when Messi himself achieved the same feat in 2012 against Espanyol, albeit with two penalties and one free-kick.

There was good news for Barcelona too in the return of Luis Suarez, who came off the bench after recovering from a



calf strain.

Messi scored his penalty in the 23rd minute after Joseph Aidoo had blocked Nelson Semedo's cross with his hand.

It was Messi that conceded the foul for Olaza's curling free-kick that was well-hit enough

to beat Marc-Andre ter Stegen, even if the goalkeeper might have been

disappointed not to be able to get across.

There was little Celta keeper Ruben Blanco could do about Messi's efforts, the first in stoppage time before the interval and the second three minutes after the restart.

They were almost carbon copies of each other, bending over the

wall and nestling in the top right-hand corner.

Celta, under their new coach Oscar Garcia, never looked like mounting a comeback and Busquets put the result beyond doubt with a low shot five minutes from the finish.

Real's players might have been watching on their way home from Lp-urua, where they went three up inside 29 minutes, Sergio Ramos scoring a penalty between two Benzema strikes, the second also a spot-kick after Ramos delegated to his teammate. Fede Valverde added a fourth in the second half.

Benzema's double takes him to 157 goals for Real Madrid, above Ferenc Puskas into sixth in the club's all-time list, but his excellent display was trumped by a creative masterclass from Hazard.

"His first half was very impressive," said coach Zinedine Zidane.

"We are happy and he will be a huge player for Madrid, for sure."

- HAZARD'S VINTAGE PERFORMANCE -

Benzema latched onto Hazard's pass in the 17th minute and after Valverde and Luka Modric missed, the ball spilled back to the Frenchman, who found the corner from an acute angle.

Three minutes later it was two, Hazard the creator again, his feet too quick for Pablo De Blasis, who caught his opponent's right leg. Ramos slid the penalty home.

Hazard sparked, with a brilliant nutmeg, a 'rabona' cross and too many glides past defenders to count.

Ramos passed on the second Madrid penalty, awarded for a foul on Lucas Vazquez, to allow Benzema to make it three before Valverde had added a fourth, cracking in Modric's pass for his first goal in La Liga.

England defeated but unbowed in front of record Wembley crowd

SEAN INGLE LONDON, 10 NOV [THEGUARDIAN]: Something strange happened as England's players trudged off the Wembley pitch after their worrying Women's World Cup hangover continued with a late kick in the teeth. The crowd rose up to cheer. Pretty much all 77,768 of them – the biggest home attendance for the national team.

A 2-1 defeat to Germany was not what the supporters – or England's manager, Phil Neville – had come for. But this match, the Lionesses first at Wembley since 2014, was as much about winning hearts and minds. And even on an icebox of a day, in which the damp seeped into every bone and sinew, it was clear that the dizzying momentum of women's football is showing no sign of abating.

This attendance galloped past the previous home record for an England team, the 45,619 who saw them lose to Germany in 2014. It also exceeded the 70,584 who watched Great Britain beat Brazil at Wembley during the London 2012 Olympics.

It is also a good deal more than the England men are likely to attract against Montenegro on Wednesday – although the comparison is not entirely fair given that tickets for the Lionesses were £10-£15 for adults, and a quid for kids, compared with between £20 and £100 for the men.

But make no bones

about it: this was another sign that the women's game is on the right track, and an indication that some of the 11.8 million people who viewed England's World Cup semi-final defeat by the USA have become paid converts.

As Neville put it afterwards: "I think if we had a game in three months' time at Wembley we would have the same crowd after what they saw from both teams. It was a fantastic spectacle, an amazing occasion."

Many fans were clearly making their first visit to a football match – and were intent on enjoying themselves whatever the result. That much was obvious along Wembley Way, hours before kick-off, as sellers of vuvuzelas and half-and-half scarves did brisk business and parents photographed their excited kids posing with the arch in the background.

That energy sustained itself despite a fitful England performance that for long periods lacked the electricity and dynamism of the World Cup campaign. Much of their play was crabby and disjointed, particularly in the first half as they deservedly went behind when the Germany captain, Alexandra Popp, nodded a deft header past Mary Earps.

Not that it bothered the youthful crowd. Every time Ellen White, who received the Fifa bronze boot before the match in recognition of scoring six goals in France during the sum-



mer, touched the ball the crowd cheered in delight. And not since Last Night of the Proms have so many St George flags been waved in union.

England gradually got into the game, and probably deserved a draw after White equalised having evaded the offside trap just before half-time. But a late sucker punch by Klara Buhl meant Neville's team have won only one of their last seven matches.

Still, the loud cheering and applause from so many fans at the end were a vivid reminder of how far things have come. A century ago, women's football was rapidly gaining in popularity, with some games drawing tens of thousands of spectators, only for its aspirations to be blocked by the Football Association, which in 1921 banned it in the wake of claims that the game was "unsuitable for women's frames" and "caused infertility".

It took half a century for that ban to be lifted in 1971, and several more decades for the game to regain such life and lustre again. At half-time here, when dozens of former Lionesses were introduced to the crowd,

Gill Coulter – who played in England women's first game at Wembley in 1989 – admitted it had been played in front of "about 500 people".

Also in the crowd were England players who represented their country in front of crowds of 80,000 at the unofficial Women's World Cup in Mexico in 1971, having been reunited by the academic Jean Williams and invited to the game by Uefa.

Among them were Christine Lockwood, who was 15 in Mexico, and Leah Caleb and Gillian Sayell, who were just 14. Really these women should be revered as trailblazers; instead their stories have largely been lost to history.

Caleb, for instance, realised at an early age she was good enough to compete with boys, having spent hours honing her skills. She also remembers asking her headmaster to ask the local authority to let her play with the boys' school team – only to be told no, because football was "not for girls". After what we have seen in these past few months, who would dare to be stupid enough to say that now?

Shafali, Smriti secure India's 84-run win over WI in first T20I

GROS ISLET, NOV 10 (PTI): Opening duo of Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana hammered scintillating half-centuries as the Indian women's team notched up a comfortable 84-run win over hosts West Indies in the first T20I here.

The 15-year-old Shafali and Mandhana shared a record 143-run opening partnership as India posted 185 for 4 in their stip-

ulated 20 overs at the Darren Sammy National Cricket Stadium here.

The visitors then returned to restrict West Indies for 101 for 9 to complete the win on Saturday.

Pacer Shikha Pandey (2/22), spin duo of Radha Yadav (2/10) and Poonam Yadav (2/24) claimed two wickets each, while both Deepti Sharma (1/15) and Pooja Vas-trakar (1/21) account-

ed for one wicket.

Put into bat, Shafali, playing only her fifth T20I, smashed six boundaries and four sixes to notch up her maiden international half-century.

Mandhana too matched her younger partner, smashing 11 fours in her 46-ball innings as India cruised to 102 for no loss in 10 overs.

The duo recorded the highest partnership for

any wicket by an Indian pair in T20Is, bettering the 130 amassed by Thirush Kamini and Punam Raut against Bangladesh in 2013.

Shafali was the first to go when she was dismissed by Shakera Selman in the 16th over.

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur then produced a 13-ball 21, while Veda Krishnamurthy provided the late charge with a 7-ball 15 to take India to a challenging score.

Australian boxer Ritchie dies in sparring accident

SYDNEY, NOV 10 (AFP): Australia's boxing community was in shock Sunday after middleweight Dwight Ritchie collapsed and died aged just 27, reportedly while sparring.

Sydney's Daily Telegraph said he took a body shot on Saturday, walked back to his corner and collapsed. He could not be revived.

It said he was sparring in Melbourne with Michael Zerefa, who is preparing for a rematch with Jeff Horn, a former WBO welterweight champion.

Ritchie's promoter Jake Ellis confirmed the news on Facebook.

"It is with great sadness and shock to announce that the fighting cowboy Dwight Ritchie sadly passed away today doing what he loved," he

How Fabinho struck the right notes to lead Liverpool's rhythm section

BARRY GLENDENNING LONDON, 10 NOV [THEGUARDIAN]:

Of all the stellar contributions Roberto Firmino has made to Liverpool's success under Jürgen Klopp, perhaps the most invaluable came on an occasion he was on international duty. Renowned for his unselfishness, the modest Brazilian, who once claimed: "I would even play in goal if it helped the team," could scarcely have done more to help the collective cause than persuade one of his compatriots to join the club. "Fabinho spoke to me when we played at the national team," he recalled. "Later on he had a good chat with me about Liverpool and immediately I pressed the buttons."

And how. The correct combination entered, a £43m move from Monaco was agreed in May 2018, Fabinho choosing Liverpool over Manchester United and Arsenal, among other suitors. "Bobby played an important role in me coming here," he revealed. "I'd spoken to him about what it is like at the club and what the city is like, as well as good areas to live."

His recruitment work done, Agent Firmino was free to focus on his own game while Liverpool's coaching staff



said.

"As Dwight's promoter and friend it's unbearable to accept the tragic news that's just surfaced." Ritchie, nicknamed "The Fighting Cowboy", held a 19-2 record.

He last fought in August, losing to Tim Tszyu by a unanimous decision for the IBF Australasian super welterweight title.

"I am truly saddened

by the passing of Dwight Richie," Tszyu said on Instagram.

"Only fighters understand the bond shared between them, especially those who shared a ring together. Rest In Peace to a true champion."

Ritchie's death comes less than a month after American boxer Patrick Day died after suffering a serious brain injury during his knock-

out defeat to Charles Conwell in Chicago.

He was the third boxer to die from injuries sustained in the ring this year.

Argentina's Hugo Santillan died in July following a bout in San Nicolas, just north of Buenos Aires. His death came just two days after Russian fighter Maxim Dadashev died from brain injuries sustained in a fight in Maryland.

football jam.

In the beginning I needed to be patient," he said. "I constantly looked to learn from my coaches and the players who had been playing here longer. I also think it was important that there were players from my country here who helped me to communicate." As well as Firmino, there was Allison, who had joined at the same time.

Finding his feet was a gradual process but since doing so Fabinho's contribution to the cause can scarcely be overstated. Liverpool have not lost any of the 30 Premier League games he has started after becoming the first player to make the club's holding midfielder role his own since Javier Mascherano more than a decade ago. Tall and rangy, cool and elegant, his ability to cover ground, win possession and use it wisely is considered so imperative that he was left out of the Liverpool team that laboured to victory over Aston Villa last Saturday, as he was just one yellow card away from having to sit out the City game. It was a sensible decision by Klopp, albeit one that would have been used as a stick with which to beat him were it not for Sadio Mané's late, late intervention at Villa Park.

Romania votes for president with liberal incumbent favoured

BUCHAREST, Nov 10 (AFP): Romania voted in the first round of a presidential election on Sunday, with pro-European incumbent Klaus Iohannis the favourite to win, potentially adding to a liberal fightback against the region's prevailing nationalism.

Iohannis of the centre-right National Liberal Party (PNL) repeatedly clashed with the beleaguered government of the left-wing Social Democrat (PSD) party, which collapsed last month.

His main rival in the presidential vote, the PSD's Viorica Dancila, served as prime minister for the government, which took power in 2016.

The PSD's government had engaged in a long battle with Brussels -- and Iohannis -- over allegations it was trying to push through controversial judicial reforms in order to neuter the judiciary and benefit PSD politicians.

"Today Romanians are deciding on the future of their country," Iohannis, 60, told reporters as he cast his ballot at a school in the capital Bucharest.

After casting her own ballot, Dancila told supporters she voted "for a safe and dignified Romania".

He has made rule of law a central plank of his campaign which has mirrored that of Slovakian anti-corruption activist Zuzana Caputova, who won the presidential election in that country in March.

In Hungary too, the nationalist government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban suffered a rare setback last month when centre-left candidate Gergely Karacsony united the opposition to wrest the mayoralty of the capital Budapest from Orban's Fidesz party.

While nationalism has been less present in Romanian politics than in Hungary or Poland, the PSD had tried to frame its clashes with EU institutions as evidence that the party was standing up for Romania.

However, as the German magazine Osteuropa pointed out in a recent editorial, at May's European elections "while Fidesz and (Poland's ruling) PiS party won on the back of anti-Brussels campaigns, Romanian voters pun-

ished the government and sent a pro-European signal".

The heavy losses in the European polls added to a series of travails for Dancila's government which eventually saw it brought down by parliament in a no-confidence vote last month.

Sociologist Vasile Dancu said the PSD would be "seeking a new identity after three years in power".

Earlier this week MPs gave their backing to a government led by the PNL's Ludovic Orban.

Iohannis, a member of the country's ethnic German minority, was first elected in 2014 and is widely expected to win a second five-year term in the run-off vote on November 24.

The former physics teacher and mayor of the city of Sibiu has warned that a PSD win would pose a threat to democracy.

The left-wing party is seen as the successor of the elite which dominated the country before the overthrow of communism in 1989 and is accused of harbouring corruption in its ranks.

Some four million Romanians have moved abroad in recent years and the diaspora, which predominantly votes for liberal candidates, could play a key role in the election.

Voting opened at many locations abroad on Friday and by Sunday morning more than 300,000 diaspora Romanians had already voted, a record for the first round of a presidential election.

The election could mark the end of an era. For the first time since the return to multi-party democracy the PSD -- increasingly reliant on an ageing, rural voter base -- can't be sure of making it through to the second round.

Polls indicate Dancila will face a tough fight for second place with 44-year-old Dan Barna standing for the recently formed pro-European Save Romania Union (USR) party.

In total 14 candidates are standing and 18.2 million people are eligible to vote.

Polling stations opened at 7:00 am (0500 GMT) and will close at 9:00 pm, with two exit polls expected shortly afterwards.

Sharif's travel to London for treatment in limbo as his name figures in no fly list

M ZULQERNAIN

LAHORE, Nov 10 (PTI): Ailing former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif may not travel to London on Sunday for treatment as government delayed removal of his name from the no fly-list.

The 69-year-old Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo agreed on Friday to go to the UK for the treatment, heeding doctors' advice and accepting his family's request. He was scheduled to leave for London on a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight on Sunday morning.

"The government could not remove Sharif's name from the no fly-list (Exist Control List-ECL) as the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman was not available to issue

no objection certificate in this case," a government official told PTI.

He said the officials of the NAB have also sought Sharif's medical reports.

The official said that as a special case, the government may remove his name from the ECL enabling Sharif to catch his flight at 9am on Sunday, otherwise this matter will be taken up on Monday.

On Saturday, a senior PML-N leader told PTI that Sharif is leaving for London on the PIA flight on Sunday morning along with his brother Shehbaz Sharif for treatment.

The PML-N leader chided Prime Minister Imran Khan for backing out of its commitment in which he said that he had no objection on Sharif's travel abroad for treat-

Hong Kong police watchdog unequipped to probe protest response: Experts

HONG KONG, Nov 10 (AFP): Hong Kong's police watchdog is currently unequipped to investigate the force's handling of months of pro-democracy protests, a panel of international experts appointed by the city's own government has found.

The international finance hub has been upended by five months of huge and increasingly violent rallies, but Beijing has refused to give in to most of the movement's demands.

One of the core demands, alongside fully free elections, is an independent inquiry into the police, who have been left to battle protesters for 24 consecutive weeks and are now loathed by large chunks of the deeply polarised population.

City leader Carrie Lam has repeatedly dismissed an independent probe, saying the current

watchdog -- the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) -- is up to the job.

Protesters argue the IPCC lacks adequate investigatory powers, is stacked with pro-establishment figures and has previously been toothless when it comes to holding police to account.

In September, Lam appointed a panel of independent experts to advise the watchdog.

Chaired by Sir Dennis O'Connor -- who was tasked by the UK government to look at police tactics following the 2011 London riots -- it includes policing specialists from Britain, New Zealand and Canada.

It has now issued a damning assessment of the IPCC's ability to do the job it has been tasked with and suggested a fully independent inquiry would be better suited for the task.



The report, dated November 8, found "a shortfall in IPCC powers, capacity and independent investigative capability necessary to match the scale of events and the standards required of an international police watchdog operating in a city that values freedoms and rights".

The panel said if resources were enhanced, the IPCC might be able to issue an interim report "with limited, but sufficient facts" on the

cause of the protests and the handling by authorities.

But it said there was "a compelling case" for a "deeper more comprehensive inquiry... by an independent body with requisite powers".

The report was not available on the IPCC's website.

But it was posted on Twitter late Saturday by one of the panel members, UK-based academic Clifford Stott.

The Hong Kong government and police did

not respond to a request for comment.

The panel's conclusion is an embarrassment for Lam as she battles record low approval ratings and tries to face down calls for an independent inquiry.

"This panel of international experts was hand-picked by the government and presumably had been expected to endorse the IPCC's work," Antony Dapiran, a Hong Kong-based lawyer who wrote a book about the city's pro-de-

mocracy movement, told AFP.

"For them to come out with a statement effectively saying that IPCC is not up to the task is quite damning and only reinforces the urgency of an independent inquiry," he added.

Beijing and Lam appear determined to wait out the protests.

While crowd numbers are smaller than earlier this summer when millions marched, rallies and increasingly violent clashes are still happening on a weekly basis.

Tensions soared this week when a 22-year-old student died from a fall during clashes with police in unclear and disputed circumstances.

Tens of thousands of people attended a peaceful vigil on Saturday evening, one of the few large gatherings in recent months to be granted police permission.

Amnesty calls for urgent end to 'bloodbath' in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Nov 10 (AP): Iraqi security forces put up concrete barriers in central Baghdad Sunday, trying to hamper and block protesters' movements a day after forcefully clearing three flashpoint bridges in a security operation that killed six anti-government protesters and left more than 100 wounded.

Since the unrest began last month, more than 260 protesters have been killed by security forces who have used live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas in an effort to quell the protests.

Amnesty International called it a "bloodbath" and said Iraqi authorities should immediately rein in security forces.

"The government of Iraq has a duty to protect its people's right to life, as well as to gather and express their views. This bloodbath must stop now, and those responsible for it must be brought to justice," said Heba Morayef, Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Director.

The widening security crackdown reflects government intransigence and narrowing options for protesters who have been on the

streets of Baghdad and the mainly Shiite south's cities for weeks. Authorities shut down internet access and blocked social media sites several times amid the demonstrations.

The leaderless, economically driven protests are targeting Iraq's entire political class and calling for the overhaul of the sectarian system established after the 2003 US-led invasion.

More immediately, they are calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi's government, who has held the post for just over a year. He has refused to step down.

"All government promises of reforms or investigations ring hollow while security forces continue to shoot and kill protesters," Morayef added.

On Sunday, security forces closed roads near the Khilani Square with one-meter high concrete barriers, trying to block protesters from reaching Baghdad's landmark Tahrir Square, the epicenter of the protests, and the Sanak bridge.

In the southern city of Nasiriyah, security and medical officials said



31 people were injured in confrontations outside the education directorate as security forces tear-gassed protesters trying to block employees from reaching the building in the city center. Among those wounded were two school students, they said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

On Saturday, Iraqi security forces killed six anti-government protesters and wounded more than 100 others,

pushing them back from three flashpoint bridges in central Baghdad, medical and security officials said. The Iraqi officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

The deaths occurred as the protests intensified in the afternoon, when demonstrators tried to reach the three bridges spanning the Tigris River to the heavily fortified Green Zone, the seat of government. Protesters have tried to

force their way across on an almost daily basis.

The demonstrators complain of widespread corruption, lack of job opportunities and poor basic services, including regular power cuts, despite Iraq's vast oil reserves. They have rejected government proposals for limited economic reforms, and instead called on the country's political leadership to resign, including Adel Abdul-Mahdi.

"We consider the peaceful protests of our

people as among the most important events since 2003," Abdul-Mahdi said in a statement Saturday that vowed to meet the protesters' demands for wide-ranging reforms.

He added that electoral reforms would be put forward soon along with "an important government reshuffle" in response to the protests against the sectarian system imposed in 2003, though the statement didn't provide further details.

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How Adil Hussain became a part of ‘Star Trek: Discovery’

RAVI BANSAL

DHARAMSHALA, Nov 10 (PTI): Actor Adil Hussain, who recently joined the cast of CBS All Access series “Star Trek: Discovery” for its upcoming third season, says he had a memorable time working on the show.

The actor said it all started when he was shooting for his upcoming film “India Sweets and Spice” and during that time, he received a call from his agent who told him the makers are looking for a person for the role of a “human and South Asian”.

“She said, You fit the bill and do you mind auditioning for it?” So I recorded my audition and sent it. Two weeks later, I got to know that they all loved it. Next thing I know I’m shooting for the show in “Toronto,” Adil told PTI in an interview.

The actor, who is currently attending the Dharamshala International Film Festival (DIFF) here, said the show’s cast and crew was a group of thorough professionals.

“Some of them were Oscar-nominated. Most of my scenes were with actor Sonequa Martin-Green. The initial eight days were used only for costume trials.”

Adil said the first day of the shoot was the most memorable.

“On the day of the shoot, everyone, including the actors, gathered around and made a circle. They formally introduced me, ‘Adil Hussain from India. We welcome you to the family of Star Trek.’ They all clapped and then looked at me.

“I said, ‘Do I have to speak?’ They said yes.



I didn’t know what to say because I didn’t prepare. But I said, “The only thing coming to my mind right now is that I was born in a small town in Assam where newspapers used to come three days late. And now I’m here today, crossing the galaxies. So thank you for letting me into your family”, the actor reminisced.

Adil said the show’s lead star, Martin-Green, gave him a hug after his little speech and whispered something in his ear.

“She hugged me and whispered into my ear, ‘I’m so looking forward and happy to be working with you.’”

The actor said in that moment, it felt like all the boundaries have been immediately broken. “We had a great time there. It was like clockwork and yet flexible and relaxed. No hierarchy and no-nonsense about being a star. They don’t care about anything. They just knew that I acted in ‘Life of Pi’.

“It’s a pure human connection. You are an actor and you have been chosen by the director means you’re good. So efficiency has immense value, no matter who you are, where you come from, it doesn’t matter. And, they strive for excellence.”

Youtuber KSI beats rival Logan Paul in boxing rematch



Britain’s KSI has won his six-round cruiserweight boxing fight against fellow YouTube personality, the American Logan Paul, in Los Angeles.

The fight at the Staples Centre was won by the Watford man in a split decision by 55-56, 57-54, 56-55. The pair first fought last year in Manchester but a “majority draw” was declared after six rounds.

“Last time I was scared to fight,” KSI, whose real name is Olajide Olayinka Williams JJ Olatunji, said after the match. “This time I just went in. I just kept going and going. He couldn’t deal with my jabs. I got him.”

KSI – who has more than 20 million YouTube subscribers – was earlier forced to clarify comments he made ahead of the highly anticipated match. In pre-fight banter at a press confer-

ence on Thursday, he said to his rival: “You’re going to fucking die.”

“I don’t intend to kill Logan physically tomorrow, I only intend to kill his YouTube career and spirit,” he tweeted. “After this fight, I still want Logan to be alive and well.”

Paul – who has 19.9 million YouTube subscribers – did not touch gloves with his rival at the end of the match.

Their bout at Manchester Arena last year sold out to 20,000 fans and drew an audience of 2.5 million live viewers and more than 19m subsequent views, making it the biggest internet event in history. It was also named the most popular white-collar boxing match of all time.

Saturday’s fight had been expected to attract 1 million viewers on the London-based pay-per-view service DAZN.

‘Fresh Off the Boat’ to end with season 6

LOS ANGELES, Nov 10 (PTI): Family comedy “Fresh Off The Boat” is ending after six seasons.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the ABC series will wrap production after 15 episodes this season, with the final two serving as the series finale.

A date for the finale is yet to be decided but it will likely air early next year.

Created by Nahnatchka Khan, the show, fronted by Randall Park and Constance Wu, depicts the life of a Taiwanese-American family in Florida in the 1990s. It is based on Eddie Huang’s autobiographical “Fresh off the Boat: A Memoir”.

Sources said the decision was a creative one, with the show’s producers pulling the plug. The writers will have time to craft a “big” finale and finish the series on their own terms, the insiders added.

The current season has featured eldest son Eddie (Hudson David Yang) starting to contemplate his future as the end of high school approaches for him.

“We couldn’t be prouder of this game-changing show and the impact it has had on our cultural landscape.

The success of ‘Fresh Off the Boat’ has helped pave the way for inclusion throughout the industry. Nahnatchka Khan and her brilliant creative team have created an unforgettable series



with an Asian-American family front and centre, something that hadn’t been done in two decades.

“The cast, led by Randall Park and Constance Wu, is one of the finest and funniest on television. We’ll miss the Huang family, and are eternally grateful for the incredibly heartfelt stories they have told these past six seasons,” said ABC Entertainment president Karey Burke.

Khan said she was proud of the show and what the team accomplished over the past six seasons.

“Thank you to everyone at ABC and 20th Century Fox Television for going on this ride with us. It was truly a special experience and hopefully will forever be a reminder of all the stories out there that deserve

to be told. Like BIG said, ‘And if you don’t know, now you know,’” the creator said.

The decision comes months after Wu’s tweet expressing disappointment over the show’s season six renewal in May.

“So upset right now that I’m literally crying. Ugh. F**k,” the actor, who plays the matriarch Jessica Huang, said in a tweet, which she later deleted.

Wu later explained that she was upset that the renewal meant having to give up another project, and has since said her costmates were supportive when they began filming the current season.

“Fresh Off The Boat” cast also includes Forrest Wheeler, Ian Chen, Lucille Soong, Chelsey Crisp and Ray Wise.

Crystal Reed to star in ‘Escape the Field’

LOS ANGELES, Nov 10 (PTI): Crystal Reed is set to lead the cast of thriller “Escape The Field”.

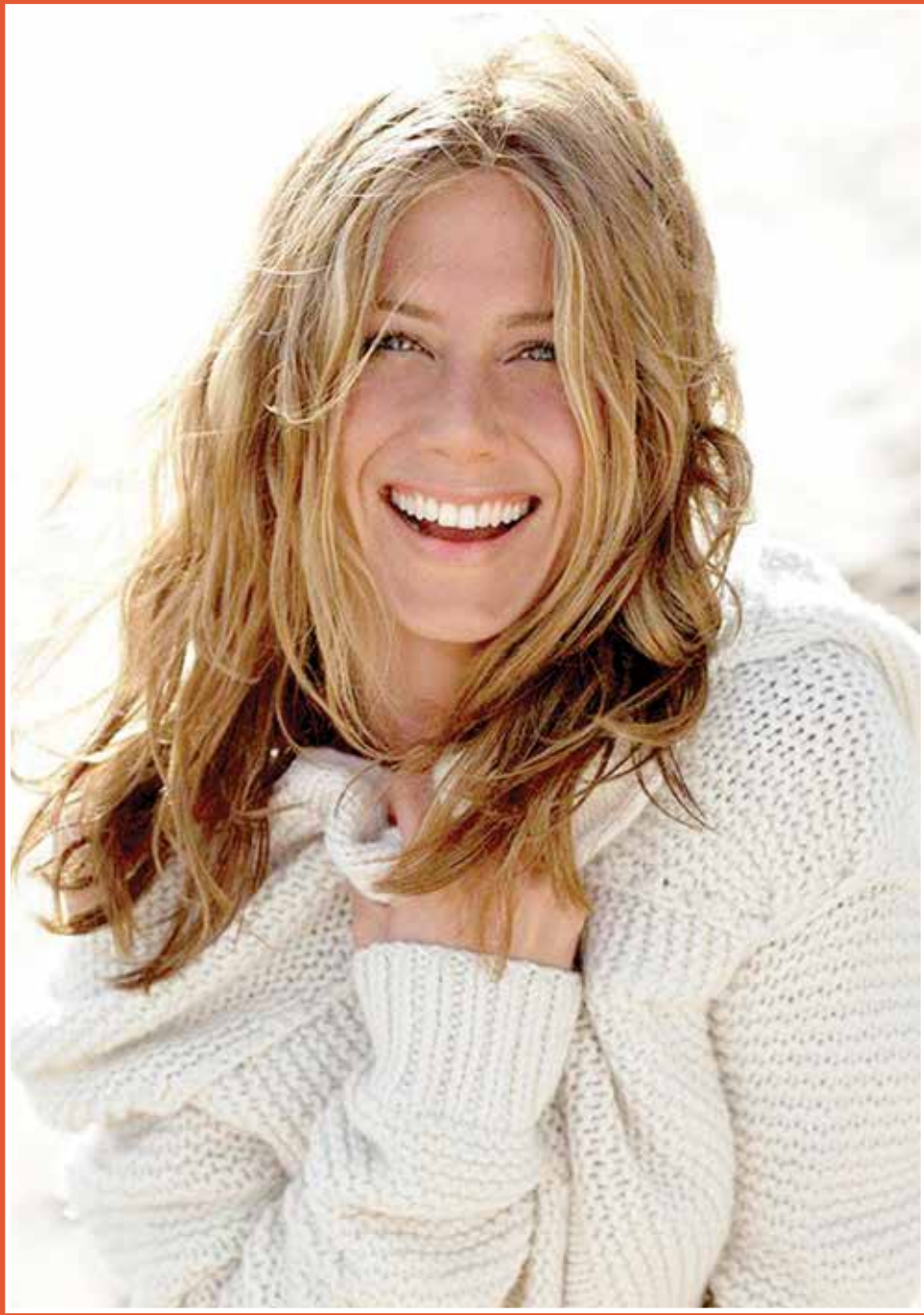
The story follows six strangers who wake up trapped in an endless cornfield only to discover something mysterious is hunting them, reported Deadline.

Emerson Moore is attached to direct from a screenplay co-written by him, Sean M Wathen and JD Dobkin.

DDI’s Jason Moring and Michael Philip will produce under their Cr8tiv Universe banner.

“With ‘Escape The Field’ we are tapping into the massive popularity of escape rooms, with an elevated concept,” said Moring.

Reed’s acting credits include Warner series “Swamp Thing”, MTV’s “Teen Wolf” and Fox’s “Gotham”.



JENNIFER ANISTON IS PEOPLE’S ICON OF 2019: If this were an episode of Friends, it would be The One Where Jennifer Aniston Receives the People’s Icon Award! On Wednesday, E! announced that the actress would be the second-ever recipient of the title and will receive the honor at the 2019 E! People’s Choice Awards on Sunday, Nov. 10. Last year, Melissa McCarthy accepted the trophy for the inaugural award.

THE DAY AHEAD

ARIES: There’s no such thing as TMI for you today, Aries. With the moon in your sign, you’re in your live-out-loud element. Don’t feel bad about being so...overt. Your bold authenticity will actually create a safe space in which others can open up. Own your past, Ram! Those “embarrassing” mishaps birthed golden lessons that you can pass on to others who are struggling with the same issues.

TAURUS: You’re in an emo groove today, Taurus, so just go with it. This is one of those days when you’d benefit from setting aside that intense work ethic so you can bond with the people in your environment. Power down your laptop and go have lunch with a colleague. You could even have a chance to pass along some of your sage wisdom to someone who is struggling with an issue you’ve overcome. Reach up to mentors too, especially a powerful woman who’s been in your corner in the past.

GEMINI: Lighten up about love today, Gemini. With the moon in your “the more the merrier” eleventh house, you could turn

that table for two into a table for six or eight. If your entourage has yet to meet your amour du jour, this would be the perfect day for a getting-to-know-you gathering. Single? Sparks could fly with a friend of a friend.

CANCER: Be more “purpose-driven” in your personal life today. People adore you, and there are plenty of friendships you COULD cultivate. But since each one requires an investment of time, you want to reserve your energy for folks who fill your cup—not a bunch of small-talking randos. Have you been loading up your calendar with “meh” events out of fear of being lonely?

LEO: Bigger, stronger, faster: Well, why not, Leo? Today’s moon in your expansive ninth house could bring rapid expansion to one of your goals. Take your foot off the brake, but keep your hands on the wheel. You of all people know that progress CAN happen at supersonic speed. People from other parts of the globe could be involved, so get ready to fire up Skype or Zoom and brainstorm away! To accelerate the process, you might have to take a risk. Make sure it’s a

calculated leap instead of a impulsive gamble.

VIRGO: Got secrets? One of those skeletons is rattling the closet door, begging to be freed. Time for a confessional conversation, Virgo—the truth will liberate your soul. Connect with a trusted confidante tonight, over the phone or huddled in a private corner. If you just want them to listen without offering advice, make that clear up-front.

LIBRA: Forget all those parental advisories about the dangers of talking to strangers. Today, your usual people-watching could erupt into a fascinating dialogue when you see someone at a coffee shop who’s reading a book that changed your life or who’s wearing an indie-label designer that only a few insiders know about.

SCORPIO: You’re back! On March 5, expressive Mercury turned retrograde in your passionate fifth house. You may have felt like you were missing the love boat. Or perhaps you couldn’t get a clear read on a romantic interest. Get ready to shake off the confusion and insecurity today, as the communication planet powers forward and calls forth your most radiant self!

SAGITTARIUS: Put a little luxe in your life. Today’s decadent fifth-house moon gives you a hall pass to be a little hedonistic. This doesn’t have to be harmful to your health or the Earth. Skip the avocado toast and sip a smoothie made with young coconut milk, which requires less water to produce. Looking for a signature accessory for spring? Find a sustainable jeweler who repurposes gold and gems from antique pieces. This romantic lunation can turn up the heat with a love interest. Slip off for a lunch date, and don’t be surprised if it turns into a spicy nooner. Though it’s a weeknight, do what you can to lure friends out for some cultural activities—or at least happy hour!!

CAPRICORN: Bless this mess? Not today! With the Aries moon percolating in your domestic fourth house, tidying up your spaces could lead to sharper thinking. As within, so without, right? Now, here’s the rub: The piles in your space might be a metaphor for situations you’ve been avoiding. As you’re folding laundry and deleting junk mail, you may become acutely aware of emotions that you

swept under the rug.

AQUARIUS: The Aquarius social butterfly is bursting out of the cocoon thanks to today’s lunar lift in your communication corner. Since you won’t have much patience for desk work, rejig your schedule so you can handle the people-oriented tasks on your to-do list. A spontaneous lunch date with a coworker could turn into an amazing brainstorming session that leaves you buzzing with inspiration. With the moon in active Aries, slip out for fresh-air breaks. Who says you can’t listen in on a conference call while walking the trail of an urban park?.

PISCES: Would you care to upgrade, Pisces? With the moon beaming into your sensual (but sensible) second house, you’re willing to splurge on quality. Review your financials: Is there room to indulge? As long as it’s practical and functional, you can consider it an investment. Funds too tight for that go-with-everything Celine bag or the cold-pressed juicer? Create a special savings account and make your first deposit today. This will motivate you to keep on hustling, even if your gratification is delayed.