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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Demand in RS for better wages for tea workers

**NEW DELHI, DEC 9 (PTI):**

A demand to provide better wages and facilities for tea workers, checking police harassment of goldsmiths and ensuring better reach of maternity benefits under the National Food Security law were raised in Rajya Sabha on Monday. During the Zero Hour, Shanta Chhetri (AITC) said many tea factories have closed down due to high labour costs and fall in tea prices.

While the West Bengal government has gradually increased wages of tea workers to Rs 176 per day from Rs 67 per day in 2011, Chhetri urged the Union Government to implement the Minimum Wages Act in tea gardens.

She also demanded the government provide subsidy for modernisation

and replantation, set up centrally located hospital for tea workers besides ensuring scholarship for children of tea workers pursuing higher studies.

The member also demanded that the Centre take action against those wrongly misrepresenting the brand 'Darjeeling tea' as 'Nepal tea'. With regard to maternity benefits of Rs 6,000 under the National Food Security Law, Congress leader L Hanumanthaiah said this should be rolled out on a national basis as a report says two out of three children die due to malnutrition.

Demanding the government protect goldsmiths, BJP leader Kailash Soni said traders of gold and silver are in distress due to "police harassment".

## Govt gives private schools till 31 Mar to complete paperwork and meet prescribed guidelines

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 09 DEC:**

Additional Chief Secretary, GP Upadhyaya, today chaired a meeting with Directors and other senior officers of Education Department to "take a call" on directions passed Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] regarding privately-operated schools in Sikkim, an official press release informs.

The CM, it may be recalled, in his address on Children's Day recently, had announced that private schools which do not fulfill NCTE norms, or do not have qualified and trained teachers, or lack facilities required as per the Right to Education Act or have curriculum as per the National Curriculum Framework and NCERT guidelines, will be closed down.

The meeting of the Education Department took note that many of the private schools were running with-

out registration, recognition or whose registration's with the Department had lapsed and did not meet criteria required under the norms of National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE), Right to Education Act (RTE Act) of 2009, Sikkim Education Act, 2005 and Sikkim Education Rules, 2008.

The meeting decided to serve a notice to all such private institutes/schools in Sikkim to get themselves registered, recognized or renewed with the Registration Cell of Education Department by 31 March, 2020. Institutions which fail to meet the deadline will invite penal action, including closure and fines as per the legal provisions of the RTE Act, 2009.

It is also noted that there are also many registered private schools which have not obtained recognition from the Education Department even though it is stipulated under the RTE Act, 2009 and do not meet the require-

ments such as recruitment of only professionally trained teachers.

These schools are also being given time till 31 March to meet the requirements stipulated under Acts and Rules in operation. All private institutions which are still not recognized and found to be in operation after the 31 March deadline will be liable for stringent action which could include closure, the release warns.

Section 18 of the RTE Act, 2009 stipulates that 'No school to be established without obtaining certificate of recognition.'

Further, the meeting also discussed the announcement of the CM regarding ICDS Centres operating from rented accommodations and of how they need to be shifted to schools for proper transition. In this matter, the meeting was informed that the Department has already been working on the matter and soon it will map

schools and ICDS Centres operating from private houses for co-location with the schools. This will be done in convergence with the Department of Social Justice and Welfare.

The Department is also in the process of notifying the Directorate of Primary Education [created in 2013] as Directorate of Elementary Education in order to meet and conform with the requirements and carry out the provisions of the RTE Act.

The meeting also decided to organise an education conclave for the recognised private schools and their teachers to orient them about examination and assessment systems, textbooks, school bag policy, school safety plans, syllabus & curriculum as per the National Curriculum Framework 2005, and especially on the provisions of the Right to Education Act and the concept of Education as a Fundamental Right.

## National Senior Chess Championship begins today at SMIT



**SAGAR CHHETRI**

**GANGTOK, 09 DEC:**

National Senior Chess Championship 2019 is scheduled to begin here at Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology [SMIT] on Tuesday. The championship is being organized by the Sikkim Chess Association [SCA] on behalf of All India Chess Federation [AICF].

192 top-rated players from all States, Union Territories and PSUs will be participating in this 10-day championship.

The participating players include 20 Grandmasters and 25 International Grandmasters along with FIDE Masters, Women International Masters and top-rated players of the country.

All participants arrived here this evening.

A nine-member Sikkim Chess Association team will also be in the contest. The State team members are Rahul Gurung, Rakesh Gurung, Thendup Ta-

mang, Rohit Gurung, Sushmita Lama, Rick Gupta, Abhiraj Parajuli, Sahil Chhetri and Priyansh Yagnick.

Apart from their regular daily practice, the State team also underwent a special two-month long training under SCA general secretary, Mahendra Dhakal.

Mr Dhakal underlined that it was a big honour for Sikkim to host such a prestigious championship. The championship is being

held in the northeast for the first time.

About the State team, he mentioned that the players were all set to give their best at the championship.

"The championship is also a big exposure and good opportunity for local players to improve their rating. It is also a rare opportunity to host such many GMs and IMs in the State," he said.

The championship carries a total prize money of Rs 20 lakh.

## Denzong Sherpa Assoc discusses issues pertaining to the community



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 09 DEC:**

An executive meeting of Denzong Sherpa Association was held here on Sunday to discuss various issues pertaining to the Sherpa community.

Among the issues discussed were those relating to language, affiliation of kyidus [com-

munity organizations], traditional dresses, ornaments and amenities procurement, and collection of the Sherpa traditional artifacts for the state museum and State Archives. Various sub-committees were formed to take these issues forward.

Further, the executive meeting unanimously

decided to pursue the demand seeking a Bharat Ratna for Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, the first Everest summiteers along with Edmund Hillary, with the State and Central governments.

The evaluation report and account details of Global Sherpa Day 2019 were also placed at the

meeting. The meeting also decided to hold a general election for the Executive Committee of Denzong Sherpa Association in March 2020.

The meeting also congratulated MT Sherpa and PN Sherpa on their recent promotion to the post of Secretaries to the Government of Sikkim.

## Citizenship Bill against Constitution: Congress

**NEW DELHI, DEC 9 (PTI):**

The Congress on Monday opposed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill (CAB) in Lok Sabha saying it is against the Constitution as it discriminates against refugees on the basis of religion.

Initiating the debate on the Bill, Congress member Manish Tewari said the government has come up with the measure for a political motive "which everyone knows", but did not elaborate.

Referring to the provisions in the Constitution, he said, the Bill was violative of the provisions of Articles 14, 15, 21, 25 and 26.

These Articles mainly deal with right to equality and equal protection of law to everyone irrespective of caste, colour, creed or religion.

"The bill is against the Constitution, against the spirit of Constitution and against the ideology propounded by Babasaheb Ambedkar," Tewari said.

Discrimination on the basis of religion, he further said, was not in tune with the Preamble of the Constitution which specifically mentions the word 'secularism'.

"Secularism is embedded in the Constitution," he said.

As per the UN Convention, he said, the government cannot discriminate against refugees on the basis of religion.

Refuting the contention that the Congress was responsible for partition of the country, Tewari alleged that it was Savarkar who propagated the idea

of partition at a Hindu Mahasabha meeting in 1935.

DMK member Dayanidhi Maran claimed the government has not taken a single step to win the hearts of minorities and the bill was against the spirit of India's age-old ethos of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (world is a family).

"You are preoccupied with Pakistan," he said, and added that Amit Shah has failed to realise that he is the Home Minister of entire India and not just of North India.

TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee said that his party's idea of India was "inclusive" unlike the ruling party's idea of a "divisive" nation.

"Our India smiles. Your idea of India is based on mob lynching.

Let me tell you whatever may happen there wouldn't be any NRC in West Bengal," Banerjee said.

According to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019, members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities, who have come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014, facing religious persecution there will not be treated as illegal immigrants but given Indian citizenship.

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## Chhattisgarh Minister calls on CM



**GANGTOK, 09 DEC [IPR]:** Chhattisgarh's Food & Culture Minister, Amarjeet Bhagat, called on Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay], at Samman Bhawan here in the capital this evening.

The Minister, who is on an official tour of Sikkim, extended an invitation to the Chief Minister for the All India Adivasi Nritya Mahatshov to be held at Raipur from 27 to 29

Dec.

The Chief Minister accepted the invitation.

The Chhattisgarh Minister, who was accompanied by Secretary, Culture Department, Government of

Chhattisgarh, Special Secretary and other officials, was all praises for Sikkim and also congratulated Mr Tamang on his massive win in the recently concluded by-elections.

## Dedicated kids' section soon at National Gandhi Museum

**NEW DELHI, DEC 9 (PTI):** A dedicated section for children and facilities for physically challenged people are being planned at the National Gandhi Museum (NGM) in Delhi and they are expected to be ready by January 30, according to its officials.

The museum at Rajghat sees an average footfall of around a thousand children daily with a lot of them coming from various schools, NGM Director A Annamalai said.

"There is a lot of literature, audio and

visual aids, memorabilia related to Mahatma Gandhi which attracts people from all parts of India and globally. But somehow, we have felt the need for a dedicated section for children where they can be introduced to the life and lessons of Gandhi," he said.

"Gandhi was born in 1869 in Porbandar into a well-to-do family that had a three-storey house but eventually he moved into ashrams in South Africa and then lived a simpler life upon returning to India. Children will learn that

material accumulation and building big houses should not be the goal but a life dedicated to the service of others should be," he told PTI.

The museum is planning to have interactive models like Gandhi's native home and subsequent chapters from his life installed in a dedicated section and it is expected to be unveiled by January 30, Annamalai said.

He added that facilities for Divyangs are also being planned at the two-storey museum, located opposite

Gandhi's memorial at Rajghat, in order to facilitate their movement across all sections of the building.

"We are working towards making movement of wheelchairs easier and install a lift within the main building in order to make the sections accessible for all. Work on this would also be completed soon," the NGM director said.

January 30 is observed as Martyrs' Day to pay homage to the father of the nation, who was assassinated on this day in 1948.

## Jamie Vardy strikes twice as Leicester beat Aston Villa to keep up title chase

**PAUL DOYLE**  
**ASTON, 09 DEC [THEGUARDIAN]:** It is a good thing for Jürgen Klopp that Liverpool keep winning, because so do their most impressive rivals. Leicester swept to their eighth league victory in a row – their best ever run in the top flight – to move back to within eight points of the league leaders. An insurmountable gap? Probably, but only a fool would completely discount this fearsome Leicester team.

Brendan Rodgers insisted he has no target in mind and is not bothered that many people still consider Manchester City to be Liverpool's most serious challengers. "You saw after Manchester United won at Manchester City, the caption comes up [on television] about how far City are away from Liverpool," he said. "We respect that, we just get on with our work and try to improve our performances, just keep developing. I don't think anyone expects us to be anywhere near the top. We'll take it game by game and try to improve in our training and see where it takes us. We're a team that finished ninth over the last two seasons but I thought [at Villa Park] we looked like a top team."

They sure did. Naturally, Jamie Vardy scored, the eighth game in a row in which he has done so. He struck twice to bring his tally to the season to 16 and close in on his own Premier League record of 11 consecutive matches

with a goal. Kelechi Iheanacho and Jonny Evans also found the net, with Jack Grealish offering only fleeting hope to the hosts. Villa may be out of the bottom three on goal difference only, but no one else this season has beaten them as emphatically as this.

Before kick-off there was a warm ovation in tribute to Ron Saunders, the former Villa manager who died on Saturday at the age of 87. Saunders was the inspiration behind some of Villa's greatest achievements, turning them from a second-tier side into English champions before leaving with the club on course for European coronation in 1982. Those are feats any football supporter can appreciate, though it was perhaps fitting that Leicester were the visitors here, as their rise in recent years is vaguely comparable to the one led by Saunders, so long as allowance is made for the differences in eras.

Vardy, meanwhile, is a phenomenon that everyone can celebrate. Five years ago, on the only previous occasion that Leicester won eight league matches in a row – in the Championship – he scored the decisive goal at Birmingham City. Here, in a different part of the second city, he showed his enduring deadliness by opening the scoring in the 21st minute. It was not his surest finish,

as, after going around the goalkeeper, he initially miskicked. But Ezri Konsa slipped, allowing Vardy to recover and prod in the net from close range.

The chance had been created by a loss of possession in midfield by Wesley and an astute through-ball by Iheanacho. Rodgers had decided to award the Nigerian a first league start of the season after being impressed by his performance off the bench against Everton last week.

Iheanacho further justified that decision by notching Leicester's second goal from close range in the 41st minute. Konsa may have got a touch as he tried to deflect it out of the striker's path but the goal was fair reward for a slick move that started with Caglar Soyuncu striding out of defence before James Maddison pinged a low cross to the near post.

Things were looking ominous for Villa, who lost Tyrone Mings to a hamstring injury after the first goal and cursed an 11th-minute miss by Anwar El Ghazi, who shot against the crossbar from six yards.

Leicester, however, had threatened even before that, with Iheanacho forcing a decent save from Tom Heaton in the third minute after being slipped in by Maddison.

Maddison thrived at the tip of the midfield diamond that Rodgers chose to deploy for this game instead of his usual 4-3-3. Den-

nis Praet sent Vardy racing clear down the right just after the half hour. The striker tried to feed Iheanacho but Bjorn Engels, who had replaced Mings, made a key interception.

Villa were having little joy in attack, where Wesley struggled to make an impact. But so long as they have Grealish, they have a threat. He underlined that in stoppage time at the end of the first half. After Leicester for once failed to clear a corner, the ball broke to Grealish, who, from about 16 yards, swept a superb shot in off the far post.

That proved to be no more than an irritant to Leicester. They regained their two-goal lead shortly after half-time. Maddison floated in a corner and Evans guided an expert header into the net. Dean Smith complained that Evans had found space only because of a block on Ahmed Elmohamady. "VAR should be disallowing it, that's what their role is," Smith said. "I don't know why it wasn't"

What struck most after that was Leicester's relentlessness. They craved more goals. Vardy got one thanks to a crisp finish after another pass by Praet. Maddison, Harvey Barnes and Yuri Tielemans nearly made the toll heavier, and Heaton had to make a brilliant save to foil Soyuncu. Villa fans streamed out long before the end for fear of witnessing something embarrassing. But for neutrals this Leicester team are a pleasure to watch.

## BJD voices concern over slash in Centre's share to SDRF

**NEW DELHI, DEC 9 (PTI):** The issue of slash in the central share to the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to 75 per cent from the 90 per cent recommended by the 14th Finance Commission was raised in Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour in the Upper House, Biju Janata Dal (BJD) member Prashanta Nanda said as per the recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission, states are required to contribute 10 per cent to SDRF, while remaining 90 per cent by

the Union government.

However, the Centre -- in the explanatory memorandum accepted by recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission with modification -- said the percentage of share will continue to be as before in the ratio of 75:25 per cent once GST is in place, he said.

"Now, since GST was implemented with effect from July 1, 2017, the sharing pattern of SDRF ought to have been in the ratio of 90:10 per

cent ratio from 2017-18 onwards. But the Government released the central share for the SDRF for 2017-18 fiscal in the ratio of 75:25 per cent instead of 90:10 per cent," Nanda said.

Subsequently, a central minister in 2018-19 had informed the Upper House during Question Hour that the central share in SDRF for all states have been enhanced from 75 per cent to 90 per cent. About Rs 1690.35 crore in 2017-18 and Rs 1734.07 crore in 2019-20 was allocated.

"It has now been intimated that since GST has not been stabilised, the competent authority has decided that during 14th Finance Commission award period, the central share for SDRF shall remain in the same ratio as it was in the 13th Finance Commission," Nanda said.

The BJD leader urged the Union Finance Minister to take steps to revert back to the sharing pattern of 90:10 per cent in SDRF in line with the recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission.

## Amit Shah assured ILP will be introduced in Manipur: CM

**IMPHAL, DEC 9 (PTI):** Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Monday said he had been assured by Union Home Minister Amit Shah that Inner Line Permit (ILP) system would be introduced in the state.

Singh urged people to thank the central government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for its initiative "to protect the indigenous communities" of the state.

The state home department has announced half-day holiday at all government offices on the occasion. ILP is an official

travel document issued by the government to grant inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period.

The contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, tabled in Lok Sabha, has exempted tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and areas covered under The Inner Line, notified under Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.

"Our constant apprehension that influx of outsiders will marginalise the indigenous

communities has now been put to rest," the chief minister said.

With ILP implementation in the state, protests against the citizenship bill would also end, he hoped.

Taking to Twitter, the CM said, "People of Manipur has come out on the street to thank Hon'ble PM @narendramodi ji and Home Minister @AmitShah ji in advance expecting announcement of ILP extension to Manipur state & thus excluding from any CAB fallout."

The ILP regime is currently applicable in

Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram.

Meanwhile, MAN-PAC, an organization that has been vehemently opposing the legislation, expressed surprise over the CM's announcement, claiming that it was too early to rejoice as Shah had only given verbal assurance.

"It isn't time yet for the state to celebrate... We will rejoice once the Parliament gives its approval," Ningthouja Lancha, the spokesperson of Manipur People against Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, said.

## Russia banned from Tokyo Olympics and football World Cup

**PAUL MACINNES**  
**LONDON, 09 DEC [THEGUARDIAN]:** The World Anti-Doping Agency has voted unanimously to ban Russia from international sport for four years for doping offences.

Russia now have 21 days to appeal against the sentence, which would see the country banned from participating at next summer's Olympics in Tokyo and the Qatar 2022 World Cup.

They will, however, still be able to compete in next year's European football championships, where they will also be one of the host countries. Individual Russian athletes will furthermore be able to compete under a neutral banner at the Olympics, providing they can prove they are drug free.

The punishment was agreed at a special meeting convened at the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee in Lausanne, Switzerland. It is the most severe sanction yet

against the country, which has been accused of running a systemic doping programme and deleting crucial laboratory evidence.

Evidence of widespread Russian doping was first revealed by Wada four years ago with a report claiming that at least 643 positive tests had been hidden by authorities. That resulted in the suspension of the Russian Athletics Federation (Rusaf) and 111 individual athletes being banned from the 2016 games in Rio.

Last year Wada made the controversial decision to reinstate the Russian anti-doping agency (Rusada) on the condition that it complied with requests to share its laboratory results. Those results were subsequently found to have been tampered with, and led to renewed calls for punishment.

If Russia, as is likely, does choose to appeal the punishment, it will subsequently be referred to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

## Dhoni to back show on army officers

**MUMBAI, DEC 9 (PTI):** Former Indian cricket team captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni will co-produce an anthology series chronicling stories of decorated army officers.

Dhoni holds the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army unit of the Parachute Regiment. The show, currently being

scripted, will be made by Studionext in collaboration with Dhoni.

"The show will bring forward the unique anthology of episodic stories of the brave Param Vir Chakra and Ashok Chakra awardees," a production source said.

The collaboration of Sony Pictures Network is slated for a 2020 release.

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## India ranks 129...

ly affecting women and girls. While East Asia and the Pacific ranks second highest on the gender development index, Republic of Korea stood first in the region.

Yet worldwide among regions, South Asia has the widest gender gap on the HDI. Singapore has the region's lowest incidence of intimate partner violence against women.

The report stated that a staggering 31 per cent of women in South Asia have experienced intimate partner violence.

India is only marginally better than the South Asian average on the gender development index (0.829 vs 0.828), and ranks at a low 122 of 162 countries on the 2018 gender inequality index.

According to the report, more Indian men and women were showing biases in gender social norms, indicating a backlash to women's empowerment.

As the gap in basic standards is narrowing, with an unprecedented number of people escaping poverty, hunger and disease, the necessities to thrive have evolved, it said.

"The next generation of inequalities is opening up, particularly around technology, education, and the climate crisis. These inequalities in human development are a roadblock to achieving the 2030 agenda for sustainable development," the report stated.

For example, in countries with very high human development, subscriptions to fixed broadband are growing 15 times faster and the proportion of adults with tertiary education is growing more than six times faster than in countries with low human development, it added.

Among others UNDP Development Economist Swastik Das and UNDP Adviser, Gender and Social Inclusion Alka Narang highlighted the key points of the report.

## ~ 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



## Satara team in Sikkim to adopt organic model

**GANGTOK, 09 DEC [PIB]:** Inspired to adopt the Sikkim Organic Farming model in Satara, Maharashtra, the Education & Finance Chairperson of Satara Zilla Parishad, Rajesh Pawar, along with nine members and officers visited the ICAR-National Organic Farming Research Institute here at Tadong on Monday.

Joint Director, ICAR-NOFRI, Dr RK Avasthe, welcomed the team from Satara and apprised them about the various research, capacity-building and skill development works undertaken by the ICAR-NOFRI and KVK-East Sikkim over the last five years especially in efforts towards doubling farmer incomes by March 2022 and securing



livelihood improvement through organic farming.

He also gave a brief introduction to the importance of organic farming under changing climate scenario and explained the importance of the integration of different

components of IOFS.

He also detailed the benefits of the integrated organic farming systems (IOFS) model for marginal and small farmers for livelihood and nutritional security in the state.

Later, Mr Pawar ex-

plained the purpose of his team's visit to Sikkim and appreciated the work carried out by ICAR-NOFRI.

The Satara team then visited the ICAR Research Farm and instructed the officers to develop a similar model to showcase to

farmers of Satara. They also interacted with the scientists at ICAR-NOFRI regarding the technologies developed at the research farm.

They were interested in the management of insect-pest and diseases through organic options.

## ATMA Field Day on Quality Seed Production of Finger Millets

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 09 DEC:**

A "Field Day on Quality Seed Production of Finger Millet" was conducted by ATMA-East at Khimshithang under Martam Block on Sunday. Around 50 farmers attended the programme which had Panchayat President, Namli GPU, as chief guest.

Joint Director (IPM) was present as a resource person and spoke on Integrated Pest Man-

agement.

The main problem raised by the farmers was of fruit drop in citrus. The Joint Director (IPM) explained that the problem could be due to fruit fly infection during early fruiting and suggested that a clean and hygienic farming system be maintained.

In the afternoon session, crop cutting experiment of Finger Millet was conducted in Gyanandra Subba's farm.



## SRM Univ and Black Cat Div sign MOU for Project Samiksha



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 09 DEC:**

SRM University Sikkim and Black Cat Division stationed here signed an MOU to offer various Diploma degrees under the "Samiksha" project recently, a press release informs.

SRM Univ Vice Chancellor, Prof Ch Sathish Kumar, Associate Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Manisha Thakuri, and Associate Dean of Faculty of IT, Sundarajan N, Management and Commerce from SRM University; GOC, Major General RC Tiwari, Dy GOC,

Brigadier Harsh Vardhan Singh, Col GS Kunal Shirma, Col NK Sharma, Col Vikram Singh Sankhla and Naib Subedar/AEC (Coordinator), Harvinder Singh from the Black Cat Division were present for the MOU signing event.

The project seeks to create certification for employment opportunities for the jawans after their service in the Indian Army and also for the promotion of the various cadres while serving in Indian Army.

Started as a pilot project in the year 2016, the project has attended to 1,000 jawans thus far.

## Currency in circulation rises to Rs 21 lakh cr as on Mar'19: Thakur

**NEW DELHI, DEC 9 (PTI):** Currency in circulation peaked to over Rs 21 lakh crore at the end of March 2019, having dipped to a mere Rs 13 lakh crore at the end of fiscal 2016-17, Parliament was informed on Monday.

The value of total notes in circulation as at end of March 2019 stood at Rs 21,109 billion, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

In the preceding fiscal 2017-18 (fiscal ended March 2018), the notes in circulation were Rs 18,037 billion; while it stood at Rs 13,102 billion at the end of 2016-17.

The value of total notes in circulation in the Indian economy stood at Rs 16,415 billion as on March 31, 2016.

Thakur was responding to a query whether currency notes in circulation increased post-demonetisation compared to pre-demonetisation levels.

Prime Minister Na-

rendra Modi had announced banning high value Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes on November 8, 2016 with the aim to curb black money, check terrorism and further digital economy.

On asked if the government proposed total elimination of cash from the market, Thakur said, "No such proposal regarding total elimination of cash from the market is under consideration of the government."

To a question whether government has taken note of the fact that non-availability of Rs 1,000 currency causes problems to the citizens, Thakur said the economy has already adjusted itself to the new scenario where the earlier series of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 had ceased to be a legal tender.

Fresh series of Rs 500 were issued and a new denomination of Rs 2,000 has been introduced, he added.

As per the RBI's much-delayed report on how much of the junked currency was

returned by public, it was found that 99.3 per cent of the invalid Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes returned to the banking system.

The RBI data on return of junked currency notes was published in its Annual Report for 2017-18.

Of the Rs 15.41 lakh crore worth Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes in circulation on November 8, 2016, currency notes worth Rs 15.31 lakh crore were returned.

To a question if the government has assessed any impact for past one year on digital adoption of currency, Thakur said no formal assessment to measure the impact of Digital India programme has been conducted by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. "However, the statistics of e-transactions on e-Taal platform gives an indication of increase in digital penetration and usage of e-Government tools in India. More than 1,454 crore e-transactions have been recorded for 3,702 services since January 2019," the minister said.

## 20 kg onion looted from state-run store in Birbhum

**SURI (WB), DEC 9 (PTI):**

Around 20 kg onion was allegedly looted from a state-run store in West Bengal's Birbhum district on Monday, an official said.

The incident happened at a Sufal Bangla store at the Bolpur bus stand area of the district, where onions at subsidised price were being sold, he said.

The shopkeeper alleged that as sale of onions began in the morning a large number of people gathered in front of the store, during which

the loot took place.

The state government has begun selling onions at Rs 59 a kg through fair price shops and Sufal Bangla stores, with each family getting a maximum of 1 kg on producing ration cards.

Retail price of onions has touched Rs 164 per kg mark in the state, as per market sources.

Meanwhile, locals alleged that the shopkeeper is hoarding the onions and no loot took place.

No complaint has been filed in the incident, the official said.

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## GREF cleanliness drive at Melli



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**MELLI, 09 DEC:**

A cleanliness drive was carried out by 87 Road Construction Company [GREF] around their camp at Melli along NH-10 in a bid to generate wid-

er awareness against plastic waste as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Assistant Engineer (Civ), VN Chaudhary, 2nd-In-Command of 87 RCC [GREF], informs that a major ini-

tiative towards "Plastic Se Raksha - Swachhta Hi Suraksha" was undertaken.

Around 60 GREF personnel participated in the drive and collected plastic waste littered along the road and drains.

## GATC starts North East tour



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 09 DEC:**

Girish and The Chronicles [GATC] began the first leg of their North East tour with a performance at the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland today.

The band rocked the crowd at the festival with their originals from Back on Earth and

singles released over the years, a press release informs.


Hornbill Festival has now evolved towards only featured bands and has excluded the long tradition of band competitions this year.

GATC is scheduled to perform next in Manipur on the 13 Dec,

2019.

They will be finishing the year as the headlining act at the Highlands Festival to be held on 31 December at Sakekeshpur, Karnataka.

Celebrating 10 years of the band's official formation, GATC will release its second album in April 2020.



PRESENTS

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## Hill People and Their Day

*The plainsfolk need to be involved in deliberations about the mountains*

11 December is International Mountain Day. Maybe there will be some special observation of the day. May be there won't. Either way, one hopes that a day arrives when the plains-folk and the policy makers, whose ears they have, but who sit too removed from the mountains and still make decisions which affect the hills and the hill people start an actual conversation with the region. Past events dedicated to Mountain Days have celebrated diversity and sought to strengthen identity and that gets one thinking. The mountain folk know of their diversity, but are routinely forced to adapt because of decisions taken in places which require air-conditioners to weather the summers and air purifiers to survive the winter air. Identity, too, is as much a personal and community experience as it is about how the others recognize it. Any deliberation of the mountains, its people, their diversity or identity is thus incomplete unless stakeholders physically and emotionally removed from the mountains are involved in the discussions.

Pressures of modernity put too much stress on mountain lifestyles, and what is worse, the 'development' model of the plains is being increasingly imposed on hill people. This strains the careful balance that hill communities have evolved over generations of living with the environment as against the mainstream civilisation's exploitation of natural resources. The demand for resources abundant in the mountains has always been there, but the pressure has increased in the past half a century or so; a coercive pressure which the mountain communities have not been able to resist or manage too effectively. The disintegration of mountain environments has accelerated with the steamroller model of development in the plains which requires resources from the mountains – the runaway slew of hydel projects which have scarred the hills are required to slate the thirst for energy in the plains, not the domestic consumption of the mountain people, for instance. Of course, what cannot be denied either is the stress caused as more and more hill communities convert to lifestyles which distance them from the land which was earlier integral to their livelihoods and survival. This is not to suggest that hill societies should be discouraged from aspiring for and acquiring modern luxuries and amenities and slotted away as museum pieces, or for the plains to take a hands-off approach. The rush of modernity does however need to be measured and balanced. Unfortunately, however, the exploitation has been too quick and the rootedness to the land which defines all rural populations [which most hill societies were until very recently] was snapped too suddenly in the hills. The crossover not being smooth, the communities find themselves maladjusted and this is obvious in the crumbling urban infrastructure and desolate rural scapes which define mountains at least in our country. The diversity of the mountain-folk which was celebrated on 11 December is thus under extreme pressure to become uniform and indistinguishable. But all this is about more than just lifestyle changes or loss of culture and strikes much deeper, because if the mountains lose their diversity and balance, everyone, including the plains, will suffer.

Come to think of it, observing International Mountain Day on a theme that celebrates diversity and strengthens identity is always a good idea, presenting an apt opportunity not only for the plains-folk to learn about how things are in the mountains, but also for the Hill People to begin the process of anchoring their identities and responsibilities with more purpose.

About a decade a half ago, the International Year of Mountains as designated by the UN, and IMD was projected to "achieve a stronger engagement of actors/ institutions and the civil society in sustainable mountain development". This approach, tied with the theme for the day this year, would have been best served if sustainable mountain development programmes were based more on traditional arrangements of the hill people instead of the power-point presentations by resource persons speaking in generalisations which strike no resonance with the 'stakeholders'. Although mountains cover approximately one-quarter of the world's surface, it is home to barely 12% of the human population. The voice of the hill people does not thus carry very far when it comes to framing policy and establishing priorities. Thus far, they have been spoken on behalf of, sometimes by well-meaning and informed well-wishers and sometimes by opportunistic issue mongers. If the world body accepts that Mountain Life is worth celebrating, it is perhaps time that the mountain people were allowed direct access, a voice that is truly representative of what is at risk not only for them but also the rest of the world if the mountains, its ecological balance and its people are allowed to crumble away...

# From Depression to Parkinson's Disease: The Healing Power of Dance

ADRIANNA MENDREK  
theconversation.com

"When a body moves, it's the most revealing thing. Dance for me a minute, and I'll tell you who you are." Mikhail Baryshnikov

Why do we stop dancing when we grow up? Why do we disconnect and alienate ourselves from the body? It is surprising to me that dance/movement therapy (DMT) is not more popular within the fields of psychology and psychotherapy globally.

For a couple of decades, I devoted my attention as a researcher in behavioural neurobiology and psychiatry almost exclusively to the brain and mental health, neglecting the rest of the body.

I was trained in the late 1990s, the decade of the brain. I have been mesmerized by the complexity of the brain, completely forgetting that it is part of the entire organism, intimately connected and reciprocally interacting with the entire body.

Interestingly, in my personal life my body has played a central role. My way to deal with any mental health problems has been through long walks, dancing and yoga.

This is partly why in the past few years, as a professor in psychology at Bishop's University, I have started incorporating bodywork in my teaching and research, and why I entered a dance/movement therapy training program in Canada this summer.

UNDERSTANDING THE BODY IN MOTION

Dance/movement therapy goes beyond simply dancing. DMT uses dance and movement to promote insight, integration and well-being, as well as to diminish undesirable symptoms in various clinical populations.

Unlike mainstream talk therapies, DMT uses the entire body to approach the client primarily on a non-verbal and creative level. The body in motion is both the medium and the message. DMT recognizes the moving body as the centre of the human experience, and that body and mind are in constant reciprocal interaction.

Just like with more traditional psychotherapies, DMT can be applied in a wide range of ways. It may involve talking, different types of music or no music at all. It can be done in groups, with individuals or with couples. Therapists sometimes dance with their clients and at other times



observe.

A group therapy session may involve a warm-up and check-in as to where we are at emotionally, mentally and physically. It may be followed by the development of a theme, which emerges spontaneously or has been prepared by a therapist (for example, working with difficult emotions). It ends with grounding (reconnecting with our bodies and our selves in the present moment) and closure (for example, a gesture, a sound, a word).

All of this is done with our bodies in motion or stillness, but some verbal sharing, journaling, drawing and other elements may be added.

Dance/movement therapy has been around for several decades but it has never become widely popular, possibly due to a lack of well-designed research studies. This has changed and I would like to highlight here a few recent studies supporting the benefits of dance and DMT on emotional regulation, cognitive function and neural plasticity.

A POSITIVE EFFECT ON DEPRESSION

One of the main reasons people dance is to modify their emotional state; typically, they strive to feel more joy and happiness and to reduce stress and anxiety. Since its inception dance therapy, similar to somatic psychotherapies, has emphasized the reciprocal interaction between body and mind, and the ability to regulate emotions via changes in body postures and movements.

The exploration of new movements can evoke novel perceptions and feelings. It may also facilitate seeing a wider range of possibilities

in a given situation. Some new or old movement patterns may evoke repressed material and enhance better understanding of oneself and one's environment and history.

One of the most compelling studies supporting this idea examined complex improvised movements, and identified unique sets of movement components that can elicit the feelings of happiness, sadness, fear or anger. The associations between emotions and specific motor components have been used in the past for diagnosis or emotion recognition. This study goes further and proposes specific techniques for modifying emotions.

A recent systematic review of research on dance/movement therapy specifically found it to be effective in the treatment of adults with depression.

IMPROVEMENTS IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Dance typically involves learning sequences of steps and movements in space, in coordination with music. In other words, it requires substantial physical and cognitive engagement and, as such, it should improve not only muscle tone, strength, balance and coordination, but also memory, attention and visuospatial processing.

When comparing relatively long-term dance interventions (of six and 18 months) to conventional fitness training, several studies have found improvements in attention and verbal memory and neuroplasticity in healthy older adults. Researchers also found improvements in memory and cognitive function for older adults with mild cognitive impairment after a 40-week dance pro-

gram.

In addition, a recent meta-analysis of seven randomized controlled trials comparing the effects of dance therapy to non-dance interventions in Parkinson's disease found that dance was especially beneficial for executive function, the processes that help us plan, organize and regulate our actions.

CHANGES IN BRAIN STRUCTURE

Dancing engages extensive areas of the cerebral cortex as well as several deep brain structures.

A recent descriptive systematic review included eight well-controlled studies, all of which demonstrated changes in brain structure following dance intervention. These changes included: increased hippocampal and parahippocampal volume (involved in memory), increased gray matter volume in the precentral gyrus (involved in motor control) and white matter integrity in the corpus callosum (involved in communication between the two hemispheres).

Overall, these studies are compatible with the idea of using dance and DMT in various neurological and psychiatric disorders — such as Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and mood disorders — as well as in the general population.

NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR FEELING AND PERCEIVING

It is clear that dance has a powerful effect on the human body and psyche.

DMT from its inception emphasized that the body is inseparable from, and in constant reciprocal interaction with, the mind. As such, sensations, perceptions, emotions and thinking affect our body and the way we move. By observing the body we can deduce mental states.

Conversely, our posture and our movements have the power to transform our mental states, to evoke repressed memories, to release spontaneity and creativity, to reorganize our brains. New ways of moving and dancing may produce new ways of feeling and perceiving the world.

This is one of the most exciting and profound aspects of DMT and it is shocking that the body, movement and dance have been almost entirely ignored by mainstream psychotherapy. It is time to change that!

[the writer is Professor, Psychology Department, Bishop's University]

## Deadly Bugs Found in Nine Out of Ten Makeup Bags

AMREEN BASHIR  
theconversation.com

We recently tested 467 makeup products, donated by people in the UK, for bacterial and fungal contamination and found that 90% contained potentially deadly germs. These products, which included lipstick and mascara, could pose a significant health threat.

We found E coli and Staphylococci in used eyeliner and mascara. These bacteria can cause irritation and conjunctivitis (pink eye). Although the symptoms of conjunctivitis tend to be mild – itchy, watery eyes – in extreme cases it can lead to sight loss. And the germs causing conjunctivitis can spread to other parts of the body, which can trigger a more serious secondary infection.

The lipsticks and lip gloss in our sample contained Staphylococci and various bacteria associated with faecal matter. These bacteria could cause redness, swelling and inflammation of the lips, which can be treated with antibiotics or antibacterial creams. But if the germs spread to the blood or deeper tissues of the body, the infection can become life threatening.

Also, some strains of Staphylococci, such as Staphylococcus aureus, have become more resistant to antibiotics. S aureus is fairly contagious and can cause skin infections, including impetigo.

The makeup products we examined (lipstick, lip gloss, eyeliners, mascaras and beauty blenders) had between 100 and 1,000 individual bacteria, except for beauty blenders which had an average of a million bacteria. As few as 100 cells of some bacteria can cause infection.

BEWARE THE BEAUTY BLENDER

Previous studies have investigated microbial contamination in makeup in other countries, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Italy. They have reported high levels of disease-causing bacteria, including E coli, Salmonella, Klebsiella and Citrobacter, but little research has been conducted in the UK.

Our research is the first to look at beauty blenders – a popular foundation blending and contouring sponge. (Over 6.5m beauty blenders have been sold worldwide.)

We found that these products are particular-



ly susceptible to contamination as they are often left damp after use, which creates an ideal breeding ground for harmful bacteria. Most (93%) of the beauty blenders we tested had never been cleaned, despite two-thirds (64%) of those we surveyed admitting that they'd dropped them on the floor.

It's actually easy to avoid germs from cosmetics. Beauty blenders can be cleaned with warm, soapy water. For lipstick, simply turn the lipstick tube up slightly and wipe off the top layer of lipstick with a tissue, then pour a small amount of rubbing alcohol and dip the exposed lipstick into the alcohol for 30 seconds. Remove it and gently dab the alcohol off and allow it to dry. This won't affect the lipstick but will keep it clean.

Mascara pots can harbour bacteria, but they can't be cleaned, so it's best to replace your mascara monthly or use disposable wands.

CHECK EXPIRY DATES

All cosmetics are made under strict conditions to control the growth and accumulation of microbes during use. Preservatives are used to

stop bacteria from growing, but they have a finite shelf life. All cosmetics have expiry dates, which are calculated based on the length of time the preservatives in the product are able to control contamination.

If the expiry date is printed on the packaging, it is displayed in the form of a symbol resembling an opened pot with either 3M, 6M, 12M, 18M, 24M, or 36M printed in the middle, corresponding to the number of months the product can be used. Most products have an expiry date of three to 12 months, providing the user has not had an infection, such as conjunctivitis. However, our latest study shows that people are using products beyond the expiry dates and allowing microbial contamination to build up.

To avoid contamination, make sure you discard makeup that has passed the expiry period, don't apply makeup if you have an infection or broken skin, never share cosmetics with friends, and definitely avoid using makeup samples in stores.

[the writer is Lecturer in Biomedical Science, Aston University]



## Fieldwork Reflections

## Anthropologist As a Story Teller

RAKCHA RANA

Anthropology as a subject, which deals with human study in a holistic way. A popular definition of Anthropology gives an insight on the subject - "the science of human beings especially: the study of human beings through time and space and in relation to physical character, environmental, social relations and culture".

It is "the science of humanity" in totality. This is the basic understanding of Anthropology as a subject it roams around the human being. As a subject, Anthropology is not so popular in India and many people still ask us what this subject is about, only few of them having heard about it. Some have a vague idea and very few colleges and universities offer this subject and even fewer students take it further as a career. Anthropology needs more time to flourish and the Government should take initiatives to make more students aware of this subject.

As Anthropology is all about human beings, let's look at Anthropologist - what they do when they are among people they are doing their research on. As Carole McGranahan says in an essay, Anthropology is 'a discipline engaged in explaining, understanding and interpreting cultural worlds as well as in developing theoretical paradigms large and small for making and making sense of cultural world'.

Being an Anthropologist, I have come across many people who wonder what the

subject is about and become curious after I have explained the bare-bones to them. As an Anthropologist, I think I'm growing with a sense of humanity, with a sense of not judging, with a sense of looking at each of them individually, with a sense of uniqueness, difference etc.

I had read an article when I was pursuing my M.A/ M.Sc at Sikkim University recommended by one of the faculty member's of the department, Dr Charisma K. Lepcha. Admittedly, we did not always read everything that was suggested, but this article, "Anthropology as Theoretical Storytelling," by Carole McGranahan, although it did not make complete sense when I read it, is clear to me now that I'm engaged in fieldwork pursuing my Ph.D. A line from this article reflects very well what it is that we do as Anthropologists: "We tell stories: other's stories, our own stories, stories about other's stories."

The present essay and even its title is inspired and influenced by that article which encouraged me to write about Anthropology as a subject and the work of an Anthropologist. Storytelling's theoretical powers are not neutral. They are important conceptually and cognitively and always need to be situated in specific contexts- historical, ideological, political and cultural.

Whenever I went for fieldwork, I came across many stories, some unspoken stories, unwritten stories, stories of the un-

known etc. As Anthropologists we just act as mediators to these stories. As Anthropologists we reveal facts to a world which have remained hidden for too long. I feel fortunate that I got an opportunity to a world of mystery; I get a chance to present evidence to a world about people who have remained unexplored.

The Anthropologist as a storyteller also because we don't filter and present things as they are; we present their words, their sentences, their emotions like they are presented to us. Sometimes we fail because of mistranslation, but never intentionally. We used the method of emic perspective means their perspective, rather than putting our thoughts. When we write, we don't just write but share stories, bring material, data, belief, theories to life; we bring the world into the togetherness.

As an Anthropologist we love our people but that doesn't mean we have bias. We gather data by living among people in their surroundings, spend time with them, look at them in their own environment, travel to them and participate in every task. We establish rapport and soon they invite them to their homes and open up... it's like winning an award then. That's why we call them our people. As Anthropologists we are recipients of stories and mediators for them. We connect different group of people to the world.

*[the writer is Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology, Sikkim University]*

## NCP to oppose Citizenship Bill in Parliament: Malik

MUMBAI, DEC 9 (PTI):

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill is "anti-Constitutional" and the BJP-led Union government is pushing it only for political benefits, Nationalist Congress Party chief spokesperson Nawab Malik said here on Monday.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill (CAB) seeks to grant Indian citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan escaping religious persecution there.

The bill to amend the six-decade-old Citizenship Act was introduced in Parliament on Monday.



Speaking to reporters, Malik said, "NCP's official stand on CAB is that it is anti-Constitutional and BJP is trying to reap political benefits from it."

"We are going to oppose the CAB in Par-

liament. As the NRC (National Register of Citizens) was implemented haphazardly in Assam, the BJP has come up with CAB to offer citizenship to certain communities, except Muslims. We

are against it," Malik said.

Malik alleged the CAB was aimed at regularising the 16 lakh Hindus who were omitted from NRC (in Assam).

The BJP had been

campaigning in Assam that problem of migrants there was mainly due to Muslims, but its claim fell flat with the NRC findings, Malik claimed.

"If you include Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure as prime minister to the current one, the BJP has been in power for some 12 years. We want to know how many illegal immigrants the BJP-led government has deported so far," he asked.

He said the BJP's plans to have the NRC exercise nationwide would be "a bigger blunder than demone-

## Art exhibition held jointly by India and China

NEW DELHI, DEC 9 (PTI):

An art exhibition was held jointly by India and China here on Monday to strengthen bilateral ties and promote understanding between the nations.

Speaking at the exhibition, Chinese envoy's wife Bao Jiqing emphasised on the importance of strengthening people to people contact between India and China as envisaged by the leaders of the two countries -- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

To warm up the 70th anniversary of the In-

dia-China diplomatic ties next year, the exhibition was jointly held by the women's group of the Chinese embassy and the O P Jindal University, Bao said.

"Chinese people appreciate Indian culture and the leaders of our countries reached a consensus to promote people to people contact between the two age-old civilisations during their informal summit in October," she said.

"The two leaders also agreed to jointly celebrate the 70 years of anniversary of estab-

lishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in the upcoming year which will help promote mutual understanding and enrich humanistic exchanges between the two countries," Bao added.

Cultural connect can play a very important role in strengthening bilateral ties and through people to people contact, the two nations can be brought closer to each other, she said.

Twenty Chinese and Indian artists presented 70 paintings and calligraphy pieces at the exhibition.

## No proposal for education loans waiver, says govt

NEW DELHI, DEC 9

(PTI): The government on Monday said there is no proposal under consideration for waiver of education loans.

In the last three years from 2016-17 to March 2019, the amount of outstanding education loans rose from Rs 67,685.59 crore to Rs 75,450.68 crore in September 2019, as per data provided by public sector banks.

More than 90 per cent of these accounts are standard as on March 31 this year, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told the Lok Sabha.

The minister also said that as reported by public sector banks, no case of suicide by students due to unbearable pressure from banks to repay education loans has been reported.

In a written reply, she said banks have been sensitised to adopt a non-coercive strategy for recovery of education loans.

"Further, there is no proposal under consideration for waiver of education loans," she noted.

According to her, data linking education loans sanctioned by banks with securing of jobs is not centrally maintained.

## Thiruvananthapuram's women journalists take out march demanding ouster of Secretary



Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 9 (PTI): Women journalists took out a march from the Secretariat here to the Thiruvananthapuram Press club on Monday morning, demanding the removal of club secretary M Radhakrishnan, who was arrested for an alleged moral policing incident against a woman colleague.

Raising slogans and holding placards, media personnel, including men, took out the march.

Radhakrishnan was arrested on December

5 on the complaint of a woman journalist of alleged moral policing and assaulting her and her male friend recently.

He is presently out on bail.

The women scribes, who are members of the Network of Women in Media, Kerala, had also lodged a complaint with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the state Women's Commission, demanding stern action against him.

The woman journalist, in her police complaint, had stated that her male friend had vis-

ited her residence on November 30 and soon after he left, Radhakrishnan had barged into her house with some people and allegedly assaulted her.

He also forcibly brought her friend there, questioning why he had visited her so late.

Police had booked him on charges of wrongful confinement, house-trespass and voluntarily causing hurt.

The Kerala Women's Commission had also registered a case against Radhakrishnan and some others.

## 2.39 lakh people visit Hornbill Festival

KOHIMA, DEC 9 (PTI):

More than 2.39 lakh people have visited the on-going 'Hornbill Festival', a major annual function showcasing the culture, arts, artefacts, handicrafts and food of Nagaland at the Kisama village here, an official said on Monday.

The 'Hornbill Festival' is held every year from December 1 to 10 at the Kisama village here.

Till December 8 (Sunday) 2,39,901 visitors including 2,799 foreigners have visited the festival ground at Kisama here, Assistant Director of Tourism Department, Toka E Tuccumi said.

Last year 2,702 foreigners and 37,500 domestic tourists had vis-



ited the festival while this year already 2,799 foreigners and 49,674 domestic tourists had visited till Sunday, Tuccumi said.

A total of 76,645 visitors, including 192 foreigners, 22,464 domestic tourists and 54,989 locals thronged the picturesque village to witness the festivi-

ties on Sunday, the official said.

Union Ministers Jitendra Singh and Kiren Rijiju had visited the 'Hornbill Festival' on Saturday.

Singh said participation of such a large number of people has not only boosted the economy but also enthused young Start-Up groups

from across India to explore avenues of entrepreneurship and livelihood in this region.

Singh attributed the huge success of the event to the personal outreach of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "who had brought Northeast to national focus in the last five years".

Singh, the Union Min-

ister of Development of North Eastern Region hoped that Nagaland through the Hornbill festival will become the "torchbearer" of the new cultural journey of North East.

Union Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju had also visited the festival ground on Saturday. He said the festival depicted the rich cultural heritage of Nagaland.

"People across the world have started to study the Hornbill festival," he said, adding that the Hornbill festival is a rare occasion where everyone can enjoy the ethnicity of the Nagas at one place.

## West Bengal one of the least corrupt states: Mamata

KOLKATA, DEC 9 (PTI):

West Bengal has emerged as one of the least corrupt states in the country, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Monday citing a recent survey conducted in 20 states.

Banerjee said this on the International Anti-Corruption Day citing the 'India Corruption Survey 2019' which was conducted by the Transparency International India and Local Circles.

"Today is the International Anti-Corruption Day. You will be happy to know that as per the

India Corruption Survey 2019, conducted by Transparency International India and Local Circles, #Bangla has emerged as one of the least-corrupt States in India. My best wishes to all," Banerjee tweeted.

The 'India Corruption Survey 2019', which received 1,90,000 responses from people in 248 districts, stated that 51 per cent Indians paid bribe in the last 12 months.

People in Delhi, Hary-

ana, Gujarat, West Bengal, Kerala, Goa and Odisha reported low instances of corruption, while Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand and Punjab had higher occurrences of corruption, the survey report said.

The Day is observed annually on December 9, since the passage of the United Nations Convention against corruption on October 31, 2003 to raise public awareness against anti-corruption.

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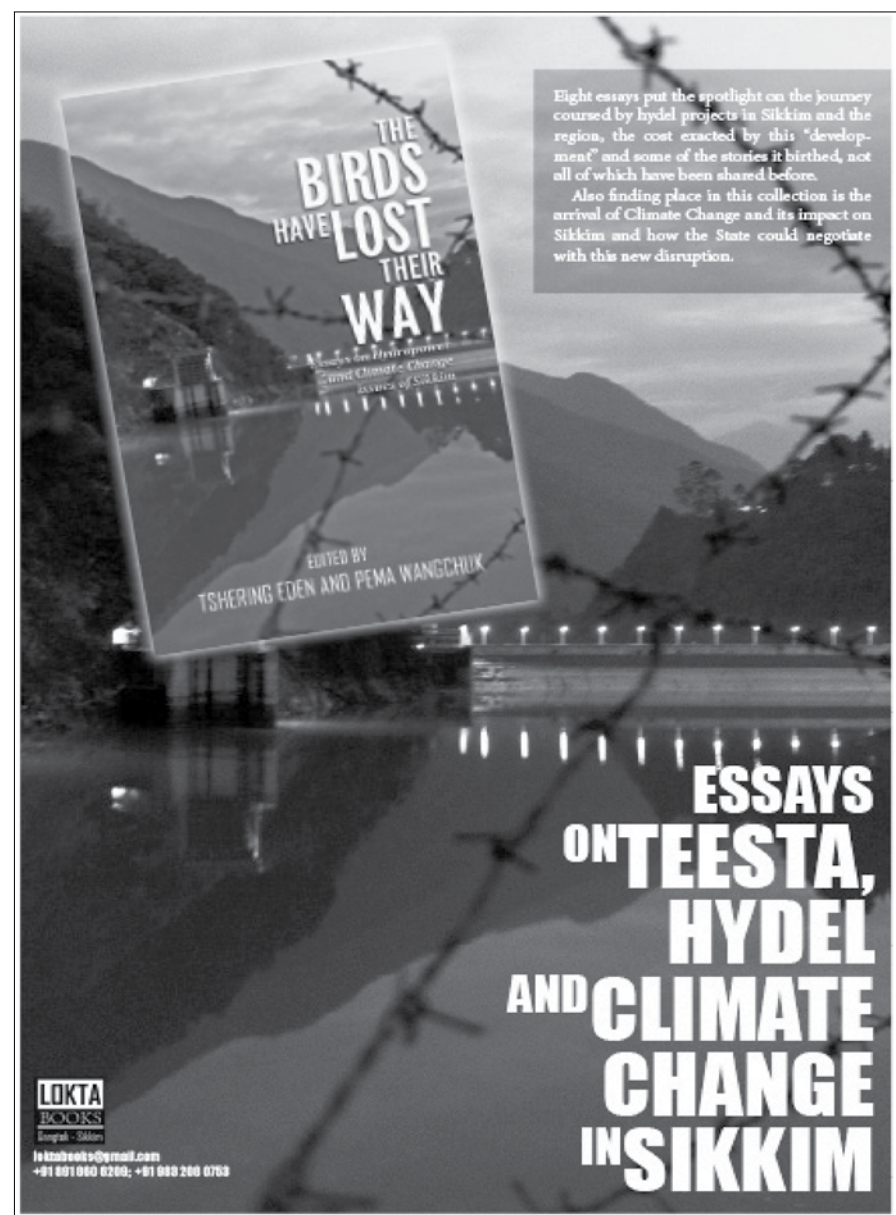
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Gladbach dare to believe after stirring win over Bayern in the ‘real Klassiker’

ANDY BRASSELL  
THEGUARDIAN

This, the more gnarled of Bundesliga followers would tell you, is the real Klassiker. Years of mere intermittent threats to Bayern Munich’s dominance have made Borussia Dortmund, Germany’s most visible other club and the champions’ most frequent irritants, the default opposition for a showpiece. More than 40 years have passed since Borussia Mönchengladbach were champions for a fifth and as yet final time, an era in which the mantle of top dogs was a real back-and-forth. In the 1970s, Gladbach’s first two titles and last three were split by a Bayern run of three in succession.

It may be way too early to declare a similar state of suspense but something has changed, and not only because the last time Gladbach were top for this long was that 1976-77 season in which Jupp Heynckes, Rainer Bonhof, Allen Simonsen and company swept Die Fohlen to the Meisterschale. Bayern were here and worse at this time last year, trailing Dortmund by nine points. It does, however, feel “different” this time around, as Joshua Kimmich remarked in the corridors of Borussia-Park as Saturday evening drew in.

It was hard to think any other way, or even to think at all, after this whirlwind of an occasion. This was the sort of afternoon on which Bayern’s motto of Mia San Mia – we are who we are – seems meaningful and not just a marketing buzzphrase. Whatever their issues in terms of leadership, personnel and team identity, they always show up for occasions such as this. Having arrived four points behind Gladbach they spent the first half pinning their hosts back, and it was exactly what we expected. Their dominance over Marco Rose’s team continued after the break, until the twists that turned this from an engrossing contest into something which felt even more significant.

The sense of throwback lasted into the night as ZDF, whose Sportschau broadcasts free highlights on Saturday evenings, received a raft of complaints after the presenter Matthias Opdenhövel accidentally let the result slip before the programme started, not realising his microphone was on. The idea that, in late 2019 and with the ubiquity of social media, viewers can genuinely avoid the result of a Saturday afternoon fixture until the evening is a heartwarming one and fed into the feeling of this being a special day, the suspense of which should be fully embraced.

Still, it was one of those rare matches that will continue to bear repeated viewing, even if you know what’s coming – a version of The Usual Suspects among football matches, if you like, offering finer detail and greater nuance on each watch. It was, improbably, Gladbach who ended triumphant after spending most of the match’s

first hour hanging on. Their stirring comeback “left a whole region in jubilation”, as Westdeutsche Zeitung’s Achim Müller put it, and the celebrations were full of meaning, even if it’s too soon to talk about pivotal events.

As fans in the Nord Kurve behind the goal celebrated with their delirious players Marcus Thuram, a pest for Bayern all afternoon who had won the late penalty which was the game’s decisive moment, wandered over to the corner flag, put Ramy Bensabaini’s shirt on it and waved it in triumph at the fans.

The pair were both playing in France last season, Thuram’s efforts failing to keep Guingamp up while Bensabaini played his part in the Coupe de France triumph for Rennes. Here, in entirely another dimension of heat and adrenalin, they played crucial roles. Bensabaini’s towering header on the hour from Jonas Hofmann’s corner equalised Ivan Perisic’s opener and wrested his team back into the game. As stoppage time kicked in Thuram, a revelation in his debut Bundesliga season, improbably found another burst of pace to tear behind Bayern’s back line. Javi Martínez stretched and hauled him over, with the referee Marco Fritz pointing to the spot and showing Martínez a second yellow card.

As Bayern came to terms with Fritz’s adjudication and struggled to retain their composure, Gladbach had to scrabble to find theirs. It took a reminder from the bench – and specifically the reserve goalkeeper Tobi Sippel – that Bensabaini was the nominated penalty taker. After Breel Embolo missed against Freiburg last week the Algerian defender, a regular and confident spot-kicker in training, volunteered to step up for the next one, not for a second thinking that it would end up being a kick of such magnitude. “I honestly forgot [having volunteered] when it was given,” he said with a smile. The surety with which Bensabaini struck it home defied the confusion. Manuel Neuer read it, but still couldn’t stop it. Gladbach had their sixth home win in a row, and Bayern were beaten.

For Hansi Flick it was “just like last week against Leverkusen”, he told Sky. His team had played well but failed to take advantage. Both Kimmich and Neuer, meanwhile, talked about Bayern having dropped their intensity after they took the lead. “We deserved to take the lead,” said Kimmich, “but then we stopped playing brave football.” Gladbach, on the other hand, rode their luck on occasion but reaped the reward for their show of guts. Rose had thrown on the hero of last week, Embolo, for the midfielder László Bénéš just before Bensabaini’s first, and never looked back. “After the equaliser we didn’t try just to manage the game, but to win it,” he said. “Thankfully, the game has two halves.”

# Duncan Ferguson’s timing and tactics are spot-on for Everton win

ANDY HUNTER  
THEGUARDIAN

Duncan Ferguson wore a trademark blue sweatband on his left wrist. On his right was an old Armani watch, broken and stuck at 8.15. It was not the sign of a managerial novice forgetting to use a stopwatch but another reminder, not that any more were required after a tumultuous defeat of Chelsea, of how much Everton means to the man in temporary charge.

“It’s Howard Kendall’s watch,” said Ferguson, the adrenaline still flowing an hour after Everton’s 3-1 win. “Lily [Kendall’s widow] came down and gave it to me to put on my wrist and wear it. Lily gave it to my wife this morning. She said she wanted me to wear it on the bench for Howard. I loved him. He was a diamond, wasn’t he? It was



very emotional. It doesn’t work but there you go, it’s nice. It’s an amazing feeling. To get the result and you could just feel it in the stadium, couldn’t you? Everyone was so happy, everything went well.”

Everything went perfectly from an Everton perspective as Ferguson oversaw a passionate, committed display that hauled the club out of the

relegation zone. The Scot maintains he is not in the frame to replace Marco Silva on a permanent basis but a first-team coach helping Everton out of the mire for as long as his employers want him. What everyone inside Goodison Park on Saturday would want is more of the same.

The Everton hierarchy will step up their search for Silva’s suc-

cessor this week and hope to speak to several candidates. The former Bayern Munich manager Niko Kovac was in the Goodison crowd on Saturday but only as part of a fact-finding mission on English football, according to his agent. Vitor Pereira and David Moyes are on the shortlist, along with Marcelino, the former Valencia and Villarreal coach, Leonardo Jar-

dim of Monaco and Ralf Rangnick. Carlo Ancelotti is another whom Everton would like, although they accept prising him from Napoli will be difficult.

In the meantime Ferguson will continue in charge, and the tactical acumen he showed in devising a game plan to beat Chelsea with goals from Richardson and two from Dominic Calvert-Lewin should not be overlooked. Everton’s win was not fuelled on passion alone. Ferguson’s decision to deploy two up top – something Silva claimed was ineffective against the likes of Sheffield United – was among several fine calls.

The Scot said: “I knew 4-4-2 would work well. We wanted to press the ball. With two strikers you can shuffle across midfield and screen their midfield. We did that well enough. We were wor-

ried about the ball over the top because we have been done by that a few times, but in the main it worked well. We blocked the middle of the pitch and, when it went out wide, we pressed it hard. That worked well, too.

“I think 4-4-2 can get a bad name but we needed to make sure we were defending. We were not going to play pretty patterns because we did not have time to work with the players. 4-4-2 is the default position for me. It’s all about personnel as well. We were really short on players. [Djibril] Sidibé was unbelievable. He had not been well in the hotel but he kept on there for the whole game. Yerry Mina has a hamstring, then Mason Holgate goes down and I am thinking we are going to have to play Morgan [Morgan] Schneiderlin as a central defender. He was incredible as well.”

## Football faces calls for action on racism in wake of Manchester derby

AMY WALKER  
THEGUARDIAN

The arrest of a man on Sunday in connection with alleged racist abuse directed towards Manchester United players in a televised derby has led to renewed soul searching about the extent of the problem in the game.

In the immediate aftermath of the match at the Etihad, in which Manchester United beat rivals City 2-1, former player turned pundit Gary Neville blamed politicians including Boris Johnson for creating a climate where racism was more acceptable.

Sky’s cameras appeared to show a home fan making monkey chants directed towards Manchester United’s Brazilian midfielder Fred during the second half of the match in a clip that quickly went viral on social media. The player said on Sunday that the incident demonstrated that we were living in a “backward society”.

The man has been named in reports as Anthony Burke, who, according to his since-removed Facebook page, works for the construction company Kier Group. In now-deleted posts on his Facebook page, Burke denied that he was racist.

Having tweeted on Saturday evening to say it was aware of the video, Kier announced on Sunday that an employee had been suspended.

“Kier has a zero-tolerance policy towards any racist and discriminatory behaviour. We can confirm an employee has

been suspended pending an investigation,” said the company in a statement on Twitter.

Earlier the same day a referee was forced to halt a League Two match at Forest Green Rovers’ stadium midway through the second half after reports of a racist comment directed towards Scunthorpe defender Jordan Clarke. There has been a string of events in recent months that have underlined the persistence of racism in football.

Piara Powar, executive director of Fare network, which works against discrimination in football, condemned the incident but said it was unsurprising.

“There is a contagion,” said Powar. “This is happening everywhere unquestionably because of a few things. One of those is mimicry – people are seeing others doing it and they think that they can follow and it’s legitimate to do it.”

He added that the idea of clubs facing sanctions if incidents of racial abuse committed by their fans were frequent should be debated.

“I think focusing on an individual is a good way to make that individual accountable, but sometimes we need to look wider than that and frame people as a collective.”

Speaking on Sky in the aftermath of the Manchester derby, Neville linked Boris Johnson’s rhetoric on immigration during election campaigning with the number of racist incidents in



British society and sport.

“You are watching the prime minister’s debate where he is talking about migration to this country and people having to have certain levels. It fuels it all the time,” he said. “It has got worse over the last few years in this country and not just in football.”

He suggested English football has a greater responsibility after Gareth Southgate’s England team were racially abused in Bulgaria this year. “We always judge other countries on how they deal with racism but we are poor with dealing with it ourselves,” he said.

Powar, whose organisation works with Uefa to monitor racism across Europe, agreed

with Neville.

“There are things being said within a political domain that four or five years ago were just not acceptable,” he said.

“Whether it’s Boris Johnson and his well-known comments about Africans or Muslim women wearing burkas, or whether it’s the National Front in France. The poisonous discourse is everywhere. What is said by politicians is followed up by the media, some of whom give it legitimacy.”

Greater Manchester police said a 41-year-old had been arrested on suspicion of a racially aggravated public order offence and remained in custody on Sunday for questioning.

Supt Chris Hill of the City of Manchester divi-

sion said the force was taking the matter extremely seriously. “Racism of any kind has no place in football or our society”, he said. “We will continue to work with Manchester City and Manchester United football clubs on this incident and will investigate any other lines of enquiries.”

Manchester City said that it operated a zero tolerance policy and anyone found guilty of racist abuse would be banned for life.

As United prepared to take a corner, Fred also appeared to have been hit by a cigarette lighter hurled from the crowd.

“Fred and Jesse [Lingard] were in the corner, taking a corner, and I’ve seen the video, heard from the boys,” said the team’s manager, Ole Gun-

nar Solskjær.

“We keep talking about it every bloody week. But he’s been caught on camera. He should in my opinion never be allowed into a football ground again. Unacceptable.”

It is understood that the team reported the incident to City and referee Anthony Taylor, with more than one player feeling they had been subjected to racist abuse.

The Football Association will also launch an investigation and will speak to Taylor, the clubs, the police and other relevant parties. In a statement, the Premier League said it would not tolerate discrimination in any form and that racism was not welcome at games.

Fred said the alleged abuse showed that we were still living “in a backward society”. “On the field, I didn’t see anything. I saw it only in the locker room afterwards,” he told ESPN Brazil. “Unfortunately, this is happening in some stadiums. It happened here, it happened in Ukraine with some friends. It’s sad, but we have to keep our heads up and forget about that.”

“We are all the same regardless of skin colour, hair and gender. We came from the same place and we all go to the same place when it’s all said and done. Thank God I have a lot of friends here in the locker room who hugged me, like Lingard. I don’t want to think about it. I just want to move on.”

### MCG curators ‘went a bit too far’ in adding life to Sheffield Shield pitch

**SYDNEY, 09 DEC [AP]:** Cricket Australia’s head of operations Peter Roach says MCG curators went too far in their attempts to create more movement in the wicket. The MCG has come under heavy scrutiny following the abandonment of the Sheffield Shield match between Victoria and Western Australia on Sunday due to fears over player safety.

Warriors duo Shaun Marsh and Marcus Stoinis had to undergo concussion tests after balls spat

up dangerously from the pitch on Saturday and hit them on the head.

Roach says the aim is to create unique characteristics at each Australian cricket ground, but concedes MCG head curator Matt Page and his staff went a little bit too far in their attempts to produce more movement off the deck. But he says Page and his ground staff now know what they can and can’t do ahead of Australia’s Boxing Day Test against New Zealand.

He made contact with New Zealand officials af-

ter the match was abandoned to reassure them that the pitch will be of a high standard for the match, which will take place on a strip that has not been used in the Shield this season.

“We want to see more movement in that wicket and more action in those early days of the Test match,” Roach told SEN on Monday.

“They (the curators) have gone on the path to try to do that. This time they went a little bit far, but the learning

from that is that they now know what they can and can’t do. We’ve got confidence for the Test match on Boxing Day and we look forward to 26 December.” “We don’t tailor (pitches) to our own teams’ needs. What we want our grounds to do is to produce their own unique characteristics. With the MCG, what we’ve highlighted is that we want it to have some pace and bounce and some sideways movement.”

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## Mexico rejects US trade deal proposals on steel, aluminum



Mexico's foreign minister said Sunday the country would not accept a US proposal for steel and aluminum production under the new trade deal, saying it would leave Mexico at a disadvantage.

During a meeting with senators to discuss details of negotiations for the United States-Mexico-Canada treaty (USMCA), Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard said the US proposed that 70 percent of steel for automobile production come from the North American region.

The proposal would put Mexico "at a very great disadvantage," said Ebrard, because cars produced in Mexico also use components made in Brazil, Japan and Germany.

Ebrard said the Mexican delegation will ask at the next meeting of treaty representatives that the provision come into effect "more than five years" after the start

of the trade pact, rather than immediately.

Mexico will also not accept "any term" for aluminum provisions, Ebrard said, because they do not have the resources to produce aluminum.

Mexico is one of the world's largest automobile exporters due to multiple brands -- including General Motors, Nissan, Fiat-Chrysler and Volkswagen -- building facilities in the country.

Ebrard's comments come just a few days after Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he would not accept a US proposal for supervisors to oversee the implementation of Mexico's labor reforms under the USMCA.

Mexico is the only country so far to ratify the new deal, negotiated at US President Donald Trump's behest to replace the 25-year-old North

American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which he considers "a disaster" for the United States.

In a bid to comply with its commitments under the new deal, which was signed in November 2018, Mexico has raised its minimum wage and passed labor reforms to give unions more power and workers more say in running them.

But US labor groups and opposition Democrats in the House of Representatives have voiced skepticism over the Mexican government's ability to enforce the new rules.

That has led to a drawn-out ratification process in the United States, where the trade deal now risks getting mixed up in Trump's ongoing impeachment drama and electoral politics heading into his 2020 re-election campaign.

Canada has said it will ratify the deal in tandem with the US.

## Trump: Giuliani wants to take information to Barr, Congress

**WASHINGTON, DEC 8 (AP):** President Donald Trump indicated Saturday that his personal attorney Rudy Giuliani wants to take the information he has gathered from his investigations in Ukraine to the US attorney general and to Congress.

Trump said Giuliani had not yet told him what information he has gathered, though the president said he's heard it was plentiful.

"He's going to make a report, I think, to the attorney general and to Congress," Trump told reporters outside the White House before he departed for Florida.

"He says he has a lot of good information. I have not spoken to him about that information."

Giuliani, the former New York City mayor, has been traveling to Ukraine to pursue investigations into Trump's potential 2020 Demo-

cratic rival Joe Biden and Biden's son, as well as a discredited conspiracy theory that Ukraine, not Russia, interfered in the 2016 US election to help Trump's Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton.

Trump's push to undermine special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election which led to a determination that Russia meddled to help Trump win has ultimately landed him facing down articles of impeachment, which House Democrats are drafting at House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's request.

Trump is accused of pressuring Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy into announcing investigations into the Bidens while the White House held back crucial security aid for the country that had been approved by Con-

gress.

Joe Biden's son Hunter was on the board of a Ukrainian energy company while his father was vice president, and Trump has alleged without evidence that the father got a Ukrainian prosecutor fired because the prosecutor was looking into the company.

In fact, the US and many other Western governments had pushed for the prosecutor's ouster, believing that he was soft on crime.

Trump said he believes Giuliani wants to present his information to congressional investigators and to the Justice Department.

"I think he wants to go before Congress ... and also to the attorney general and to the Department of Justice," Trump said.

"I hear he's found plenty.

## Trapped gold miners found dead in South Africa

**JOHANNESBURG, DEC 8 (AFP):** Four gold miners trapped underground after a tremor caused a rockfall in northeast South Africa have been found dead, their union said Sunday.

A fifth miner was rescued with serious injuries on Friday after the accident at the Tau Lekoa Mine in the town of Or-

kney, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said.

"The four mineworkers were found dead," a union statement said after the rescue team lost contact with the four men deep underground early Saturday.

"The last person we talked to said: 'We are suffocating please, bring

us some oxygen," said NUM president Joseph Montsetse.

Deadly accidents involving miners are common in South Africa, which has the deepest mines in the world.

Last year 81 people died in the country's mines, according to the department of mineral resources.

# Five dead, many injured after New Zealand volcano eruption

Five people were killed, 18 were injured and several more were left stranded after an island volcano popular with tourists erupted unexpectedly in New Zealand on Monday.

Police said some 50 people were visiting White Island when it exploded suddenly in the early afternoon -- hurling ash and rock high into the air.

Two dozen people made it off the island, five of whom have since died. The rest are being treated for injuries, including severe burns.

Nothing is yet known about a group -- now estimated to number in the double digits -- who are still trapped on the island.

"We're unsure of the exact numbers on there and we're unsure of their wellbeing," said deputy commissioner John Tims.

As night fell, he said volcanic activity made a rescue attempt too dangerous.

"The island is unstable, there's a danger of further eruptions, it is physically unsafe for us to return to the island"

"I've got to consider the safety of our people and emergency services staff."

The eruption occurred at 2:11pm (0111 GMT), thrusting a thick plume of white ash 3.6 kilometres (12,000 feet) into the sky.

Seconds before, live camera feeds showed a group of more than a half dozen people walking on



the crater floor. Then the images went black.

A "considerable number" of those caught up in the disaster are believed to be Australian, according to officials in Canberra.

As many as 30 people are also believed to be cruise passengers on a day trip from the vessel Ovation of the Seas, Kevin O'Sullivan, chief executive officer of industry body the New Zealand Cruise Association told AFP.

The ship's operator Royal Caribbean -- who had billed the trip to White Island as "an unforgettable guided tour of New Zealand's most active volcano" -- said "a number of our guests were touring the island" but did not confirm that number.

The ship has a capacity of around 4,000 people and set sail from Sydney last week on a 12 day voyage.

- Scene of terror -  
Tourist Michael

Schade, made it off the island just in time and was able to capture footage of the devastation.

His videos showed groups of startled tourists clustered by the shoreline, waiting to be evacuated as the ground around them smouldered, the sky filled with white debris. An ash-caked helicopter lies damaged nearby.

As his ship hurtled away, the caldera became virtually invisible, shrouded by a thick bank of ash.

Volcanic Air said they had landed a helicopter on the island shortly before the eruption carrying four visitors and one pilot. All were now accounted for.

"It had landed on the island. What happened after that we don't know, but we know that all five made it back to Whakatane on one of the tourist boats," a company spokesman told AFP.

Guillaume Calmelet,

White Island -- also known as Whakaari -- is about 50 kilometres (30 miles) offshore in the picturesque Bay of Plenty and is popular with adventurous tourists willing to don hard hats and gas masks.

It is New Zealand's most active volcano cone and about 70 percent of it is underwater, according to government-backed agency GeoNet.

Around 10,000 people visit the volcano every year. It has erupted frequently over the last half-century, most recently in 2016.

In August of that year the New Zealand Defence Force airlifted a 2.4-tonne shipping container onto the island to serve as an emergency shelter in case of an eruption.

"Sudden, unheralded eruptions from volcanoes such as White Island can be expected at any time," said University of Auckland volcanologist Shane Cronin.

"The hazards expected from such events are the violent ejection of hot blocks and ash, and formation of 'hurricane-like' currents of wet ash and coarse particles that radiate from the explosion vent."

"These can be deadly in terms of causing impact trauma, burns and respiratory problems. The eruptions are short-lived, but once one occurs, there are high chances for further, generally smaller ones as the system re-equilibrates."

## French strike chaos deepens in crucial week for Macron

France's transport chaos deepened Monday on the fifth day of a nationwide strike over pension reforms, ramping up tensions at the start of a crucial week in President Emmanuel Macron's battle with trade unions.

With only two of the Paris metro's 16 lines running as normal and suburban trains also heavily disrupted, many commuters slipped behind the wheel to try to get to work in torrential rain, causing major gridlock.

By 9 am, the tailbacks in the Paris area ran to 600 kilometres (370 miles), twice the normal level, the Sytadin monitoring website said.

Large queues formed at bus stops following an announcement that one out of two buses would be running but striking workers blocked seven out of 25 bus depots, leaving more travellers stranded.

With many having opted to work from home last week and only now returning to the workplace, this week will test public support for the strike.

A poll Sunday in the Journal du Dimanche newspaper showed 53 percent of the French supporting the strike or expressing sympathy for their demands, up six points in a week.

Unions have called a second day of mass protests for Tuesday, a

day before the government unveils the full details of its plans for a single points-based pension scheme that does away with dozens of more advantageous plans enjoyed by train drivers, sailors, lawyers and other professions.

- 'A monstrosity' -

Critics argue that the shake-up will require people in both the public and private sector to work longer for a smaller retirement payout.

Teachers are expected to walk out again for the second time in a week Tuesday, leading to widespread school closures.

Firefighters, electricity workers and "yellow vest" anti-government demonstrators have also joined railway workers in the streets in recent days.

The government's pensions envoy Jean-Paul Delevoye, who drafted the reforms, and Health Minister Agnes Buzyn will meet with trade unions on Monday to try to negotiate an end to the deadlock.

But the unions have sounded an uncompromising note.

"I will not negotiate over the implementation of what I describe as a monstrosity which endangers tomorrow's pensioners," said Yves Veyrier, the head of the militant Force Ouvriere union.

The strike has

squeezed retailers in the run-up to Christmas, raising the prospect of another bleak year-end after the unrest caused by the yellow vests in late 2018.

The first day of the stoppage already caused an average 30 percent drop in sales, according to the Alliance of Commerce, which represents 27,000 supermarkets and clothing and shoe stores with almost 200,000 workers.

A hotel association said reservations in the larger Paris region dropped by 30 to 40 percent on the first day of the strike.

Regional and international trains, including

the Eurostar to London and Thalys to Brussels, have also been hobbled by the unrest, and several flights were cancelled on the first days of the strike.

- Fairer system for all? -

Over 800,000 people took to the streets when the strike was launched on December 5, many accusing Macron of trying to weaken France's generous social safety net.

The president, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe and senior cabinet ministers met late Sunday to discuss the changes, which they argue will ensure a fairer and more sustainable system for all.

"If we do not carry out a far-reaching, serious and progressive reform today, someone else will do a really brutal one tomorrow," Philippe told Le Journal du Dimanche.

The strike has drawn comparisons with late 1995 when three weeks of strikes forced the then centre-right government to withdraw its pension reforms.

Adrien Quatennens, a lawmaker from the far-left France Unbowed party, acknowledged on LCI radio that the strike was hard on businesses and commuters, but said: "It's better to endure a few weeks of hassle than... years of hardship" in retirement.

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## ‘Chilling Adventures of Sabrina’ season three to premiere on Jan 24



**LOS ANGELES, DEC 8 (PTI):** The third season of “Chilling Adventures of Sabrina” is set to start streaming on January 24, Netflix has announced.

The streamer shared an update about the supernatural horror series, fronted by Kiernan Shipka, on Saturday during a panel at Argentina Comic Con.

The sophomore season ended with Sabrina and her friends successfully trapping Lucifer in Nick’s body and sending him back to Hell.

According to Entertainment Weekly, the teenage witch has more problems in store for her in the upcoming chapter.

The official synopsis of part three finds Sabrina “reeling from the harrowing events of Part Two. Though she defeated her father Lucifer, the Dark Lord remains trapped within the human prison of her beloved boyfriend, Nicholas Scratch. Sabrina can’t live with herself, knowing that Nick made the ul-

timate sacrifice and is suffering, burning in Hell under Madam Satan’s watchful eye.

“So with an assist from her mortal friends, ‘The Fright Club’ (consisting of Harvey, Rosalind, and Theo), Sabrina makes it her mission to free him from eternal damnation and bring him back into her arms. However, the Dark Lord’s unseating has sent shockwaves through the realms and, with no one on the throne, Sabrina must assume the title of ‘Queen’ to defend it against a challenger, the handsome Prince of Hell Caliban.”

Meanwhile, in the town of Greendale, a mysterious carnival rolls into town, bringing with it a threat to the Spellmans and the coven: a tribe of pagans looking to resurrect an ancient evil.

The show also stars Ross Lynch, Lucy Davis, Chance Perdomo, Michelle Gomez, Jaz Sinclair, Tati Gabrielle, Adeline Rudolph, Richard Coyle, and Miranda Otto.

## BTS teases new music

**LOS ANGELES, DEC 8 (PTI):** South Korean pop group BTS has announced that a new music is on the way and an album will be out soon.

The seven-member boy band, which stands for ‘Bangtan Sonyeondan’ or ‘Beyond the Scene’, is one of a number of K-pop groups with massive fanbases.

BTS, consisting of singers RM, Jin, Suga, j-hope, Jimin, V and Jung-

kook, was named Variety’s group of the year at the Soho House in West Hollywood on December 7.

In the acceptance speech, RM thanked their fans and revealed that a new project was in the works.

“We have to say thank you and that we love you to all the Armies all over the world who always sends us the greatest love and support.

“The great news is that we are

currently working on our new music and new album and can’t wait to share them with you guys in the near future. I hope you guys are so excited to discover what BTS has in store in 2020,” RM said.

The group was among several others honourees at the Hitmaker awards, including Billie Eilish for hitmaker of the year and Megan Thee Stallion for breakthrough artist of the year.

## Long way to go: Sonakshi on having a female ‘Dabangg’

**MUMBAI, DEC 8 (PTI):** Actor Sonakshi Sinha says not enough producers are willing to take risks with female oriented films mounted on the same budget as that of the male superstars.

In her career of nearly a decade, Sonakshi has featured in big blockbusters headlined by stars, from Salman Khan’s “Dabangg” franchise, to Akshay Kumar’s “Rowdy Rathore” and Shahid Kapoor’s “R...Rajkumar”.

The actor has also balanced these ‘masala’ movies with films like “Akira”, “Noor” and the recent “Khanadaani Shafakhana”, where she was the lead.

She is now geared up for the third film in “Dabangg” franchise.

When asked, if the makers are reaching a possibility of a female “Dabangg” film, mounted on the same scale as the original, Sonakshi told PTI, “No. There’s still a long way to go.

“I’ve done so many solo lead films but the budgets are nowhere closer to what they are for the male superstars. Of course, that’s also because the returns that they get but then that depends on the audience.”

Sonakshi feels the change will have to begin from the audience if they become as receptive to female-led films as they are to the movies of male superstars.

“If the audience supports solo heroine films the way they support the male lead films, things would be different. I think we have a while to reach that stage.”

When asked if there are people ready to take that risk, Sonakshi said, “No there aren’t enough people to take that risk. Which is why it’s not happening.”



With “Dabangg 3”, Sonakshi returns to play Rajjo, a character she made her debut with in 2010.

“Rajjo will always be special to me because I began my career playing her. I can play Rajjo in my sleep. I just have to wear the saree, put on those flowers in my hair and I become her. I know the beats of Rajjo so well.”

While the character had a lot of spunk in the first installment, Rajjo appears to have become tamer over the years after she married Chulbul Pandey, the Robin Hood-styled cop.

“That’s what marriage does you,” Sonakshi quipped on the changes of her character and added that every character in the franchise has undergone transformation.

“The changes happen according to the story, the franchise and how it’s taken forward. But that’s natural and exciting for me as an actor,” she adds.

The film is scheduled to release on December 20.

## Nawazuddin Siddiqui’s sister dies after long cancer battle

**MUMBAI, DEC 8 (PTI):** Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui’s sister, Syama Tamshi Siddiqui, passed away after a long battle with cancer, family sources said on Sunday. She was 26.

Syama, who died on Saturday, was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 18 and was battling the disease for eight years.

During the time of her death, Nawazuddin was shooting in the US for “No Land’s Man”, the insider told PTI.

The funeral will take place at the actor’s ancestral village Budhana in Uttar Pradesh on Sunday.

The actor had opened up about Syama’s diagnosis last October on Twitter.

“My sister was diagnosed of advanced



stage #breastcancer at 18 but it was her will power and courage that made her stand against all the odds.

“She turns 25 today and (is) still fighting...” he had written alongside a picture with Syama.



**SHE’S BEAUTY AND SHE’S GRACE! Introducing the winner for 2019 Miss Universe, Zozibini Tunzi from South Africa in tears and smiles as the tiara is placed unto her on stage.**

Aries:

Setting goals is only the first step. Periodically reviewing how far you have come is an integral part of the evolution process. This will not help you learn from your past mistakes but also stay motivated. Start this week by looking into the rearview mirror. Think about your current ETA and figure out the best way to get there. Then, dedicate all your efforts in pursuing your dreams in the direction you have chosen.

Taurus:

Think of a farmer eyeing his fields at a distance, trying to understand the bigger picture. He has done all the work, and every once in a while, he stands at a height and reviews his progress. This is how he learns what is working and what is not. Before you go any further, do the same with all of your projects. Pay attention to both your successes and failures.

Gemini:

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” These wise words by Confucius mimic your thoughts

exactly, Gemini. Your days of selling your soul are behind you. You are now consciously aligning yourself with opportunities that not only put money in the bank, but also make you feel emotionally and spiritually fulfilled. Continue to create from a space of love and the Universe will continue to pour its blessings.

Cancer:

Jack of all trades, master of none? If this describes where you are in your professional journey, it’s time to take stock of things, Cancer. There’s no doubt you are capable of doing everything by yourself and aching it, but at what cost? The cards are warning you against spreading yourself too thin. Take a good look at your task list. See how and where you need to compartmentalise.

Leo:

You may or may not have landed yourself a Ted Talk, but you love sharing your two cents with anybody who is willing to lend you a listening ear. Continue to share the knowledge, Leo. Your subordinates could benefit greatly from what you have learned.

Remember, everything you put into the Universe comes back tenfold. This phase of your life is also bringing great news on the money and finance front. If things have been rocky, trust that you will find stability soon.

Virgo:

This is a time of spiritual awakening. You are uncovering newer truths about yourself and the cosmos. Continue to shed the layers that feel inauthentic. There are parts of you that do not deserve a space in the narrative you are about to write—and that’s okay. Every time your inner world goes through a shift, it brings about a change in your outer reality.

Libra:

“The error of the past is the wisdom and success of the future,” said Tryon Edwards. You are human, Libra, so you are bound to make mistakes. Instead of letting these mistakes keep you up at night, acknowledge them. Admit that an error was made, and try to understand what it is teaching you. This is the way to move forward with dignity and grace.

Scorpio:

Shadow work is the process of delving into the so-called dark side. The parts that have disowned, repressed, and rejected. The parts you’ve so carefully protected from the world. Today, you’re being asked to not just acknowledge but also embrace the anger, the sadness, the shame and the guilt. Until you do, the world will keep reflecting that which is unhealed back to you.

Sagittarius:

Want to hear a cliché, Sagittarius? Everything you seek is on the other side of fear. Organise a Ted Talk for your demons. Strip them off the power to influence your decisions. This is the only way to move closer to your dreams. Remember, the Universe is going to intervene on your behalf to clear the roadblocks and bring you the kind of opportunities that were once a distant dream. How you capitalise on what’s coming your way will decide where you will in five years.

Capricorn:

Everything is working out on divine time. Trust what’s happening behind the scenes, Capricorn. Even the delays and difficulties

are providing an opportunity to grow. What do you need to keep in mind as you face both the inner and outer demons: you’re bigger and better than this. You have dealt with challenges of a larger magnitude.

Aquarius:

Penny wise, pound foolish? If this phrase accurately describes where you are at, there’s some course correction to be done, Aquarius. This phase of your life requires you to invest in the right projects—ones that promise magnificent returns. Remember, you may or may not have a grand plan in place, and that’s okay.

Pisces:

Pisces, it is time to let the dreamer take a back seat when it comes to career and finances. Clear and analytical thinking is the way forward. Stay sharp and capitalise on the opportunities that are showing up. Sometimes, you need to use your head more than your heart. As far as your finances are concerned, you’re being asked to cut corners. There are some major expenses coming your way. It’s best to be prepared for a rainy day.