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Summit **TIMES**

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HSP wants Sikkim to be brought under ILP regime

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 10 DEC:
Hamro Sikkim Party working president, Bhaichung Bhutia, has urged the State government to extend the Inner Line Permit regime to Sikkim and thus secure exemption from the Citizen [Amendment] Bill. If Delhi does not agree, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha should immediately pull out of the NDA.

"We are deeply disappointed with the CAB. The bill has not excluded Sikkim compared to other northeast states like Nagaland, Meghalaya and few others. We wanted Sikkim also to be mentioned in writing on the bill like other north east states," an HSP press release states.

The release adds that the Home Minister has mentioned that CAB will not affect States having Article 371.

"There is a difference between 371 and 371F. Article 371 does not have a separate constitution but Article 371F does have. This Bill is surely a way of diluting Article 371F in the longer run," the release adds.

He adds that despite the Chief Minister and Lok Sabha MP from Sikkim claiming to have fought for getting Sikkim excluded from CAB, "result has not been fruitful."

Govt bringing Jinnah alive with Citizenship Bill: Owaisi

NEW DELHI, DEC 10 (PTI): AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Tuesday claimed that the government is bringing Pakistan founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah alive with the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill.

Speaking at the Lokmat National Conclave, Owaisi said that even if the bill is passed by parliament, he will "knock on all doors" in the country and keep his point of view in front of the people.

"What message do you want to give. Muslims were subject to political marginalisation and now you are imposing greater exclusion on them," the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIM-IM) leader said.

Attacking the Congress and the NCP, he said despite fighting the elections against the Shiv Sena, the two parties joined hands with the saffron party for political gains. "A campaign was run against me and Imtiaz Jaleel in Maharashtra. Voters were asked to give their votes to the Congress and the NCP to defeat us as well as the BJP and the Shiv Sena," he said.

SKM only party in NE to vote against CAB

MP voices opposition to CAB in Lok Sabha

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 10 DEC:
Sikkim Krantikari Morcha today pointed out that it was the only regional party from the North East to have voted against the Citizenship [Amendment] Bill and "we will not give up our fight to work on excluding Sikkim from its purview."

CAB was passed by the Lok Sabha late Monday evening by 311/80 votes. Parties from the North East like NDPP from Nagaland, MNF [Mizoram], NPF [Manipur] and NPP [Meghalaya] voted in favour

of the Bill while SKM was the lone party from the North East to vote against despite being a member of the NDA.

Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba also spoke strongly in the Lok Sabha against the extension of the Bill to Sikkim before voting against it.

According to Citizenship Order 1975, Sikkimese Indian has been defined under Sikkim Subject Regulation Act of 1961, therefore, Sikkim should be exempted from CAB, said Mr Subba.

He further said, "From the Sikkimese people, from Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, I strongly oppose the implementation of Citizenship [Amendment] Bill in Sikkim and

hence, the Bill."

In a press release, the party has said that Chief Minister, PS Tamang has time and again requested the Centre to exempt Sikkim from CAB.

The party has informed that the CM wrote to Home Minister, Amit Shah on 05 Dec 2019 requesting for granting exemption to Sikkim from CAB.

In the letter, the CM has pointed out that the Government of India had granted citizenship to 75,000 Sikkim residents in 1989-90 who had been left out at the time of merger in 1975.

"It is in above backdrop and circumstances, we humbly beseech upon you to kindly keep the State of Sikkim exempted



from the purview of both the Citizenship Amendment Bill and the National

Register of Citizens, in order to dispel all the confusions and apprehension

that has arisen across the State," the letter states. He has also invoked

Article 371F and Inner Line Permit as ensuring the "common objective".

Khaling refutes allegations on Amit Shah statement

ARPAN PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 10 DEC:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha spokesperson and political secretary to the Chief Minister, Jacob Khaling has refuted allegations of various political parties that Union Home Minister Amit Shah failed to mention Article 371F in his statement on Citizenship [Amendment] Bill in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

Releasing a video of the Lok Sabha session, Mr. Khaling has said that it can be clearly heard that the Union Home Minister Amit Shah does mention Article 371F.

He further mentioned that in the video, available on various social media platforms, the Union Minister has clearly stated that CAB will not override any laws of the State and Article 371F which protects the State and the people of Sikkim.

The Union Home Minister has

stated that until and unless Sikkim Legislative Assembly passes the rules of Citizenship [Amendment] Bill, it will not be implemented, added the SKM spokesperson.

"There have been statements from some political leaders based on their own vested interests who claim that Union Home Minister Amit Shah has not mentioned safeguards of Article 371F in his statement in Lok Sabha session on Monday," alleged Mr Khaling.

He has further said that the MP Lok Sabha, Indra Hang Subba has clearly stated that Sikkim opposes CAB, so there should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the state government will place and pass CAB in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Khaling has urged everyone not to pay heed to such statements and have faith in SKM and its leader PS Golay.

State Govt to frame guidelines for digital media



GANGTOK, 10 DEC (IPR): A meeting was held in IPR Department today to deliberate on the draft guidelines and pertinent issues related to the functioning of Digital Media in the State. The meeting was chaired by Press Advisor to CM, CP Sharma, and presided over by Secretary, IPR Department, Namrata Thapa.

The meeting had the participation of senior officers of IT Department, SP East, SP

Crime Branch, SP Special Branch, officers of Social Justice & Welfare Department, Officer from Sikkim State Legal Services Authority, representatives from Press Club of Sikkim, and officers of IPR Department.

The meeting deliberated in detail the draft guidelines being prepared by the IPR Department. After a round of consultations, the document will be submitted for consideration of the Government.

Press Advisor to CM, CP Sharma welcomed the initiative of the IPR Department to organize today's meeting, which he said was vital to bring about a mechanism to ensure responsible use of the media.

He welcomed the suggestions placed in the meeting and reiterated that some form of advisory should be put in place to bring about discipline in the functioning of digital media in the State.

National Senior Chess C'ship begins at SMIT

SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 10 DEC:

The National Senior Chess Championship 2019 was inaugurated by Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari, here at Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology at Majhitar in East Sikkim today.

192 top-rated chess players from different States, Union Territories and PSUs are participating in the championship including 19 Grandmasters and 25 International Grandmasters. This is also the first time that the championship is coming to the North East, bringing Sikkim the opportunity to host so many Grandmasters, International Masters, FIDE Masters, Women International Masters and



top-rated chess players of the country.

The ten-day championship is being organized by Sikkim Chess Association [SCA] on behalf of All India Chess Federation [AICF] and is supported by the Department of Sports & Youth Affairs.

In his inaugural address, Secretary, SYA Department, Kuber Bhandari, commented that such a prestigious cham-

pionship will help in the promotion and development of chess in Sikkim.

He further expressed that the presence of more than 40 GMs and IMs will encourage and motivate budding chess players of Sikkim. He congratulated SCA general secretary, Mahendra Dhakal, and his team for organizing the championship in such a grand manner.

Mr Bhandari

thanked the AICF for granting SCA the opportunity to host the championship in the State.

He also conveyed his best wishes to all participating players and also stressed the need to include chess in the school curriculum for the holistic development a child.

Earlier, Chief Arbitrator, Dharmendra Kumar, appreciated the progress shown by SCA for the development of chess in Sikkim and appreciated the efforts of Mr Dhakal in grooming numerous FIDE-rated and around 500 registered chess players from the State within such a short period. He also thanked the State government for extending support to the championship.

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Gangtok Smart City Development Limited,
Sokaythang, Gangtok,
Sikkim - 737102
E Mail - gangtoksmartcity@gmail.com
CIN - U9309090WB2017SGC223807

295/SPV/GSCDL/2019-20 **Dated: 04/12/2019**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Gangtok Smart City Development Limited (GSCDL) is undertaking following projects in the city:

1. Improvement of Pedestrian Walkway/Footpath (12KM Approx from Vajra Cinema Hall, Baluwakhani to Ranipool, Gangtok).
2. Road and Junction Improvement.

These projects are aimed at easing the problem of vehicular as well as pedestrian traffic in Gangtok and it is anticipated that the general public may face inconvenience during the execution period of the projects. We request the citizensof Gangtok for their cooperation and to bear with us till the completion of the projects.

Sd/-
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
Gangtok Smart City Development Limited,
Sokaythang, Tadong, East Sikkim.

<p>CONTACT SUMMIT TIMES REPORTERS NAMCHI 9832048410.</p>	<p>9775736596 SINGTAM 7699771651 MANGAN/ DIKHU</p>	<p>9832612485/ 9434011213 GANGTOK 8016270440.</p>	<p>9832082664, 9832424750, 8768664251 9832470000</p>
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IAS coaching network opens centre in Sikkim

75 IAS ASPIRANTS SELECTED UNDER CM'S CIVIL SERVICES COACHING SCHEME BEGIN COURSE

GANGTOK, 10 DEC [IPR]: The Alternate Learning Systems-IAS (India's Largest IAS Coaching Network), in association with the Government of Sikkim through Education Department launched its 86th Centre in Gangtok today.

The training centre was inaugurated at Nar Bahadur Bhandari College by Education Minister Kunga Nima Lepcha in the presence of Additional CS GP Upadhyaya, Director [Higher Education] Suchitra Rasaily, Director [School Education], Hondala Gyaltsen, Director [SCERT] Dr Rabin Chhetri, State Project Director [Samagra Shiksha] & Director



[Primary Education] Bhim Thatal, District Magistrate [East] Raj Yadav, Vice Chancellor [Sikkim State University], Dr GK Niraula, Principal [Nar Bahadur Bhandari College] Dr Bina

Pradhan, Joint Secretary [Higher Education] Shubha Mukhia, National Sales Head Prateek Bhattacharya and the officials from the ASL-IAS.

Additional Chief Secretary, and DM East addressed the occasion which was also attended by 75 IAS aspirants selected under the Chief Minister's Civil Services

Coaching Scheme.

The ALS expressed thanks to the Govt of Sikkim and Chief Minister for this path-breaking initiative and hoped to produce results in UPSC

in the coming years for the State of Sikkim.

Although there are 75 seats at present, those who could not get admission in the 75 ranks, the next 50 in line can also apply on payment of Rs 70,800 as 75% of the entire fee as all together 150 candidates can be accommodated in the 18-month course.

National Sales Head Prateek Bhattacharya on behalf of ALS Satellite Education Pvt Ltd and Additional Chief Secretary Mr Upadhyaya on behalf of Govt of Sikkim further signed a two-year MoU for sponsorship of IAS aspirants under the Chief Minister's Civil Services Coaching Scheme today.

Agri Minister inaugurates Domestic Fish Market



GYALSHING, 10 DEC (IPR): Minister-cum-MLA Gyalshing Bermiok, LN Sharma inaugurated the Domestic Fish Market under the Directorate of Fisheries at Kyongsa, West Sikkim. The Minister was accompanied by Chairman (SBS), DB Gurung, Director Fisheries, Sunil Pradhan, Addl. Director AH&VS, S Pradhan; Addl Dir AH&VS, N Cintury and Asst Dir Fisheries, L Tamang.

Minister and Chairman SBS inspected the cold storage and other components of the building. He then interacted with the public and the fish farm owners who had come to the program. He urged them to continue the supply and gave his best wishes for their new endeavors.

In his address to the gathering, the Minister expressed his delight over attending the event and encouraged the beneficiaries of Pisciculture who were going through fish production training.

He further expressed his gratitude towards CM, PS Tamang (Golay) for his visionary leadership. He stressed that the Chief Minister's main focus has always been on the agriculture sector

hence the Chief Minister of Sikkim is keen to help the rural farming community and uplift them in order to produce more organic products and raise the standards of Sikkim's green economy.

The Minister also talked on fish-farming and its benefits, further he mentioned that the co-operative sectors will provide aid through government for the said project. He also talked about the 'trout fish' and its medical benefits, popularity, demand and market values.

The present government is far sighted and does not distinguish between opposition and ruling; it will always support those who are willing to work for the state, Mr Sharma stated.

Mr Sharma requested the beneficiaries to not take this fish-farming for granted and put all efforts to uplift the State Fisheries Department as well as themselves.

He also invited the public present to join the Thursday's event of 'Teyongsi Sirijunga Sawan Tongnam' which is being celebrated at Martam, West Sikkim, where the CM will be present as the chief guest.

Coordination meeting held on CM's Gold Cup



JORETHANG, 10 DEC (IPR): A joint coordination meeting of South District Football Association (SDFA) and Jorethang Maghey Mela Celebrations Committee (JM-MCC) 2020 organized by the office of SDM Jorethang was held at the conference hall of Green Park, Jorethang, today.

The meeting was chaired by District Collector South, Ragul K and attended by SDM Jorethang, RB Bhandari alongside president SDFA, Arjun Rai, general secretary SDFA,

Pabitra Manav and other executive members.

The meeting was organised with an objective of discussing various modalities and issues of 9th Chief Minister's Gold Cup which is scheduled to take place in Jorethang on the eve of Maghey Sankranti Mela 2020.

During the course of the meeting, various aspects such as invitation of teams, accommodation, transportation, ground preparation, fund management were discussed at length.

Article 371F already protects Sikkim, says BJP to allay fears against CAB

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 DEC:

Bharatiya Janata Party's Sikkim president, DB Chauhan, insists that the Citizen [Amendment] Bill will not affect or harm Sikkim.

He has reassured that the people of Sikkim need not fear CAB as they are already protected under the special provisions of Article 371F.

He remains convinced that "irresponsible statements without any research on the issue have been creating confusion and panic among the people."

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, Mr Chauhan stated that the people of Sikkim already have domiciles and Certificates of Identification so CAB would not touch or harm Sikkim.

He also mentioned



that the Union Home Minister has already explained that CAB would not touch Article 371F.

Mr Chauhan stated that the Centre cannot implement the CAB forcefully on Sikkim and that the State Assembly has the power to take a decision on this matter.

Responding to media queries, BJP state president expressed that due to the pressure of the

ongoing protest in other north-eastern states, Sikkim Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba also voted against the Bill but claimed that in reality Sikkim has already been protected and will continue to be protected.

On the recent statement of Hamro Sikkim Party working president, Bhaichung Bhutia on the CAB, he said the Bill passed in the Parlia-

ment were always in the interest of the country so to give such statements could only be explained to lack of issues in the party.

Mr Chauhan asserted that political parties and individuals should do research and weigh their statements before issuing them irresponsibly and creating confusion and panic among the people.

Referees' Clinic begins in Gangtok



GANGTOK, 10 DEC: A five-day Referee Clinic started here at Paljor Stadium on Tuesday.

The course, organised by Sikkim Football Association, is being conducted by Instructor Supriya Bhattacharya who has been deputed by the All India Football Federation.

An SFA press release informs that the course has 20 participants [three women and 17 men].

In his keynote address, SFA president, Menla Ethenpa, thanked

AIFF for deputing an expert to impart the course in Gangtok.

SFA chief coordinator, Phurba Sherpa, highlighted the huge demand of referees in Sikkim as well as in the Darjeeling Hills, while Head of Referee, Sikkim, Bikash Pradhan requested the participants to be punctual and benefit from the expert advice made available to them.

AIFF Instructor Supriya Bhattacharya congratulated SFA for conducting such courses in Sikkim on a regular basis.

Sunil Chhetri signs up 3-year deal with PUMA

BENGALURU, DEC 10 (PTI): Indian men's football team captain Sunil Chhetri on Tuesday signed a three-year deal with global sports giant, PUMA.

Chhetri, who is the second-highest after Cristiano Ronaldo on the list of active international scorers in world football, joins the brand's roster of global players like Antoine Griezmann, Romelu Lukaku, Luis Suarez and Sergio Aguero among others.

One of the greatest footballers India has ever seen, Chhetri plays as a striker for the national team and ISL side Bengaluru FC. A hero for both the club and the country, he is the most-capped player and also the all-time top goal scorer for

the Indian team.

Chhetri was conferred with the Arjuna award in 2011 and Padma Shri in 2019 and has been named All India Football Federation's (AIFF) Player of the Year six times.

"I am excited to join the PUMA family. Over the years, I have closely witnessed and experienced the brand's football heritage. Now signing with them as a PUMA player is a very natural progression for me," Chhetri said.

"We share a common goal to accelerate the growth of football in the country. I appreciate their commitment to the sporting ecosystem and look forward in creating a new chapter for Indian football," he added.

Vidya Bharati school hold cultural meet in Jorethang



SUMMIT REPORT

JORETHANG, 10 DEC:

Vidya Bharati Sikkim Sankul Cultural Meet 2019 was held here at Panchaseel Bhawan in Jorethang today.

Six Vidya Bharati Schools participated in the event, those from Nayabazar, Gyalshing, Ridhang, Budhabarey, Bijanbari-Darjeeling and Langdurang Darjeeling.

Soreng Chakung MLA, Aditya Golay, was present as chief guest accompanied by SDM RB Bhandari, MEO (NJMC),

Rajani Pega, Councilor, Purnima Pradhan, SHO, Mahendra Pradhan, Deptt officials, Senior Citizen, teachers, guardians, students and local dignitaries.

"Jahan Bagcha Teesta Rangit," was performed as the welcome song by students of Vidya Bharati, Gyalshing.

In his address, the MLA stated that the SKM Government was committed to change the system in every field and has given topmost priority to education.

Second review meeting on Rimbi Maghey Mela 2020

GYALSHING, 10 DEC (IPR):

The second review meeting for the Rimbi Maghey Mela, 2020 was held at the Conference Hall, DAC, Rabdentse, West Sikkim. The meeting was chaired by DC West, Karma R Bonpo along with ADC (W), Karma L Lepcha and ASP West, PVG Satish. Also present were all the Head of Department under DAC, Zilla Panchayat Members and working president of Rimbi Maghey Mela, Basant Tamang.

The meeting was



called to ensure that the Rimbi Maghey Mela would be celebrated in a grand manner. During the meeting the highlights of previous review

meeting were also discussed which was held on 01 Dec, 2019.

Deputy Speaker, Sangay Lepcha, SLA is the Chief Patron of the Rimbi

Maghey Mela, DC West and ADC West as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively.

The Rimbi Maghey Mela is scheduled to be held from 12-17 Jan, 2020 and will have Departmental Stalls along with Traditional stalls, handicrafts stalls, cultural and musical programs. Special focus will be on local artists and talents as per the decision of the committee.

During the meeting, streamlining of work distribution was also done.

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National Senior...

The inaugural function was also addressed by a GM Abhijit Kunte.

The championship is following the Swiss League System of 11 rounds and carries a total prize money of Rs 20 lakh.

Speaking to media persons, the SCA general secretary pointed out that presence of the full strength of top-rated chess players of the country has raised the standard of the championship.

Grandmaster Aravindh Chithambaram from Tamil Nadu reiterated that such a national championship will boost chess in Sikkim and encourage and motivate budding players from Sikkim.

Likewise, Grandmaster Sriram Jha from LIC SPB stated that this was the biggest championship of this magnitude with 19 GMs playing for the first time in Sikkim. "This championship will take Sikkim to the world map of chess," he said.

~ 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

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World Cup is long, long way away, let's focus on present:

Rohit Sharma
NIKHIL BAPAT

MUMBAI, DEC 10 (PTI): The Indian team might be treating every bilateral T20 assignment as an audition for next year's World Cup but vice-captain Rohit Sharma prefers to focus on the present instead of losing sleep over a marquee event, which is still 10 months away.

India will lock horns with two-time world T20 champions in the series-deciding third match here even as the efforts to find the right combination for the marquee event continue.

"See, I don't want to keep saying that we are trying to build a squad for the (T20)World Cup. It is still a long, long way ahead. We just need to focus on winning the series and that will keep us in good state, moving forward," Rohit said on Tuesday ahead of the series-finale.

"If we keep winning games, keep doing the right things on the field, the composition of the team will take care (of itself)," Rohit added.

The stylish batsman then gave his rationale for why he wants to take one series at a time.

"We are playing against a quality team and hereafter Sri Lanka is coming, then we go to New Zealand and thereafter there are a lot of T20s to focus on. If we focus on the present, that will help us more than anything else. "Right now, we need to see what are the mistakes we are making so that when we come out and play every fresh game, we look like a different side."

Talk about chasing, Rohit agreed that India have been better while batting second compared to defending totals as one found out in the first two games in Hyderabad (won while chasing) and Thiruvananthapuram (lost while defending).

"Yes, of late our chasing has been good compared to posting targets. It was a good target that we posted but again it's a new set of guys."

"There are a lot of inexperienced players along with experienced players but that is what every T20 team now has, bit of inexperience, along with that some experience. Those two elements need to come together to form a very composition (composite) side."

He gave West Indies credit for chasing a target of 171 on a slow track.

"When you talk about setting targets, on that pitch (in 2nd T20 Int'l), a target of 170 plus (171) looked decent. When we started batting, the wicket was on the slower side, the shot-making was not that easy although the West Indies made it look very easy." At an individual level, Rohit's own approach remains the same irrespective of whether the team bats first or chases a target.

"My batting doesn't change whether we are batting first or chasing. Obviously, the first few balls, I want to see what the pitch is doing, what are the shots I can play on the pitch those are the things I like to assess when we are batting first.

Proud of Shivani: SMIT



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 10 DEC:

It was a proud moment for Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT) under Sikkim Manipal University (SMU) when Sub Lieutenant Shivangi became the Indian Navy's first woman pilot, a press release from SMIT informs.

"Shivangi has not only done us and the country proud, she has broken the glass ceiling as far as the induction of women pilots in the Armed

Forces, in this case, the Indian Navy. At SMIT, our focus is not just towards academics, but all-round development of our students. We teach the students to think differently and take up challenging projects and think out of the box when it comes to career choices. We believe in inculcating values of hard work, perseverance and dedication in our students," said Director SMIT, Prof Dr Ashis Sharma.

He added that Shivangi

has set an example for all other girls, especially from Sikkim and the North-eastern region to take up challenging careers.

Vice-Chancellor, Lt Gen MD Venkatesh, Sikkim Manipal University (SMU) has also congratulated Sub Lt Shivangi on this great feat.

The 24-year-old joined naval operations at the Kochi naval base on 02 December, 2019. She is an alumnus of SMIT where she complet-

ed B'Tech in Mechanical Engineering in 2016.

Born in the city of Muzaffarpur in Bihar, Shivangi was commissioned into the Indian Navy last year after her initial training. She will be flying the Dornier Do-228s surveillance aircraft of the Indian Navy which are used by the navy for transport and maritime reconnaissance, taking off and landing on the shore, rather than from an aircraft carrier.

Howrah Strength-Lifting Assoc confers lifetime achievement award on Pema Dorjee Bhutia



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 10 DEC:

Strength-lifter Pema Dorjee Bhutia was presented the Lifetime Achievement Award by Howrah Strength Lifting Association on 08 December at Bally Physical Culture Association, Howrah, in West Bengal.

The recognition comes for his achievements in national and international

strength-lifting and inclined bench press events.

The award was handed over by the national weightlifting coach, Ashok Kumar Sengupta.

Mr Bhutia has five gold medals from international strength-lifting championships and has been active in promoting and developing strength-lifting among the young in Sikkim.

BAS fields team for Sub Jr National Badminton C'ship

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 10 DEC:

The Badminton Association of Sikkim is sending a contingent to represent the State in the upcoming Sub Jr National Badminton Championship (U-15 & U-17), 2019 organized by the Badminton Assn of India at Bhubaneswar, Odisha,

from 17 to 22 Dec, 2019.

Representing Sikkim in the U-15 and U-17 girls squad are Stutie Mandal and Anisha Rai and the U-15 and U-17 boys team comprises of Navin Pradhan, Topzang Lepcha and Pranay Sarkar.

The team is accompanied by Ravi Rai as coach and Rosy Lepcha as Manager.

Citizenship bill patently unconstitutional, battleground to shift to SC: Chidambaram

NEW DELHI, DEC 10 (PTI): Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram described the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill as "patently unconstitutional" on Tuesday and said with its passage in Parliament, the battleground will shift to the Supreme Court. He claimed that the elected lawmakers were abdicating their responsibilities in favour of lawyers and judges.

According to the proposed legislation, members of the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities, who came to India from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan by December 31, 2014 and

faced religious persecution in those countries, will not be treated as illegal immigrants and given the Indian citizenship. The bill was passed in the Lok Sabha with 311 members favouring it, 80 voting against it and zero abstentions, after a heated debate.

"CAB is unconstitutional. Parliament passes a Bill that is patently unconstitutional and the battleground shifts to the Supreme Court. Elected Parliamentarians are abdicating their responsibilities in favour of lawyers and judges!" Chidambaram said in a tweet.

Ex-Servicemen rally on 13 Dec

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 10 DEC:

Ex-Servicemen Rally for the year 2019 is being conducted under the aegis of HQ 17 Mountain Division (Black Cat) and Rajya Sainik Board at Defence Auditorium next to Ganju Lama Dwar, Gangtok on 13 Dec, 2019.

As per a press release, approximately 450 to 500 retired veterans of the Indian Armed forces and families would be attending the rally. This year has been declared as the Year of Next of Kin "YONOK" and hence maximum emphasis have been to look after our widows/ families pensioners/ non pensioners, dependents and provide maximum financial/moral support to them. In this regard, some of the widows, families and dependents who are living under financial stress (penury) or some of those who have been doing extremely well will be felicitated during the function.

It has been ensured that those coming from far off places are provided with the necessary conveyances (taxis) by Rajya Sainik Board. Necessary arrangements for breakfast on arrival and the lunch will be provided to all by the Army units detailed for the function. Similarly, all arrangements for the

function have been made under the aegis of HQ 17 Mtn Div.

Rajya Sainik Board, on behalf of the Government of Sikkim will provide financial support to the deserving Ex servicemen families/widows/NOK who are under penury, the release mentions. It has been reported by the Secretary, Rajya Sainik Board, Col D N Bhutia, that the present location of Rajya Sainik Board at DPH Road has been completely vacated and the RSB Office has been shifted to Sainik Aramghar, Singtam.

This has been necessitated since the Building & Housing Department and the contractors have been pressing hard for vacation of the construction site so that they can start executing the work immediately without further delay. It will take some time to re-establish communication, set up office and start functioning, the release mentions.

"We have been waiting for last 30 years for this project of construction of Sainik Rest House cum Office to come up at DPH Road and now it seems that this dream project will be fructified within next 30 months as the Governor of Sikkim has directed the authorities under Building & Housing Department," Col Bhutia has said.

OMAS to organize Sikkim Art Festival this month

NITESH R PRADHAN GANGTOK, 10 DEC:

Organisation of Musicians and Artists of Sikkim (OMAS) will be unveiling the curtain raiser for the upcoming Sikkim Art Festival to be held in MG Marg on 20 December. The event is titled Souvenir of Sikkim that will also host a number of stalls by local entrepreneurs from 20 to 28 December.

Sikkim Art Festival will showcase the rich creativity and heritage of the State.

"It gives us immense satisfaction to declare that the event of OMAS is in line with a series of upcoming events before starting the much awaited Sikkim Art Festival which will be one of a kind program in Sikkim," OMAS has said.

The organization has also informed all the entrepreneurs and patrons that the number of stalls at MG Marg is limited. Interested parties can contact OMAS on 6295566949, 7602546198

SSHRC observes World Human Rights Day

GANGTOK, 10 DEC (IPR): Sikkim State Human Rights Commission (SSHRC) observed World Human Rights Day in the office of the Commission here today. SSHRC Member, MG Kiran, administered the World Human Rights Day pledge to the officers and staff of the Commission.

SSHRC Member, in his brief address, elucidated the significance of the day and also read out the Pledge of the Human Rights Day. The National Human Rights Commission was established by the Government of India under Section 3 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed



the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which provides a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations on 10 Dec, 1948. Considering the world-wide historic significance of the Declaration, 10 December is observed as the World Human Rights Day every year. In pursu-

ance to the Provision of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, Sikkim State Human Rights Commission was also constituted by the State Government in October, 2008 with its Headquarters at Gangtok. The office is located in Manan Bhawan, Development Area, Gangtok.

CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED FOR AMBA SCHOOL LIBRARY UPGRADATION

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

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

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

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

To Contribute Contact WSOS at 7384639193.

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TASHILING-GANGTOK

Ref No. 42/JD-Exams 2019

Date:09/12/2019

Notice to Private Schools in Sikkim.

It has come to the notice of the State Government that many of the private schools are running without registration, recognition or renewed registration with the Department, as 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. Hence, it is hereby notified to all such Private Institute/schools in Sikkim to get themselves registered, recognized or renew registration with the Registration Cell of Education Department on or before March 31, 2020. Failure to this may invite penal action including closure and fine as per the legal provisions of the RTE Act, 2009.

Secondly, there are registered private schools which have not obtained recognition from the Education Department, as stipulated under the RTE Act, 2009 and do not meet the requirements, such as recruitment of only professionally trained teachers having B.Ed, D.El.Ed etc. with STET. These schools are also hereby given time till March 31, 2020 to meet these requirements of the above Acts and Rules from the date of issue of this Notice. Any un-recognized private institution/school to be running thereafter shall be liable for stringent action which may include closure of the institution/school as per Section 18 of the RTE Act, 2009.

Registering Authority
Education Department
Government of Sikkim.

R.O. No. 296/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20
Date: 10.12.2019



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The Problem with CAB

The ideology, and the protest, both have problems

So, the Citizenship [Amendment] Bill has been passed by the Lok Sabha. This is a problematic ideological shift which challenges the very idea of India as a secular country, and yes, while there are parts of the country which are struggling with a sustained influx of illegal immigrants, the citizenship being offered to them is not a new problem. All that the Bill does, after all, is reduce the period stipulated for naturalization from 11 to 6 years before refugees can apply for Indian citizenship. So this recourse was always available to foreigners to seek citizenship in our country and what they are receiving now is five years shaved off from the time they have lived here provided they are not Muslims. The clause in the Bill which takes away the "illegal migrant" tag from those who settled in India illegally but claim persecution in their parent countries is a new development and one that affects states which have had a long history of such immigrants settled in their lands against the wishes of the locals. When such illegal immigrants are made Indians, they will become so as local to the areas they have been living in hence the protests voiced by Assam and Mizoram are valid to some extent since they have pockets of Hindu refugees/illegal immigrants who could now become Indians. For the chest-thumping claims of other states which are claiming victory for exemption secured because of the Inner Line Permit or Sixth Schedule regimes or provisions of the Article 371 series, they have secured no extra safeguards and were technically never imperiled by CAB. Take Sikkim for instance. It does not have an illegal immigrant problem and the refugees living here have been of long enough years to have become Indians many years back. What CAB will do is make more people Indian citizens and these people will enjoy the same rights as any other [mainland] Indian and will be subjected to the same denials in Sikkim as any other Indian citizen who is not a Sikkim Subject. One needs only look at the status of the old settlers in Sikkim to realize that none of Sikkim's resources or opportunities are threatened by CAB because all that it is doing is making more people Indian, not Sikkimese. Whatever dilutions have happened to local protection in Sikkim are because of compromises by the local population or digressions by its own officers and governments. That threat to local interest is neither amplified nor reduced by CAB. No need to thank Amit Shah for assurances he has made because he has not made any relaxations beyond the existing protections.

And still, states are protesting CAB, and while that is necessary, they are not raising the right arguments. We saw that when Article 370 was hollowed out and states like Sikkim welcomed it while requesting that Article 371F not be touched. They forgot that if they did not challenge the abrogation of Article 370, they lost an ally for the time when Art 371F came into the BJP crosshairs. Even now, regional outfits are not challenging the divisive ideology that CAB perpetuates and are demanding exclusion from it. When the very idea of India and Indian is being demolished, we need to protest it as Indians and not Sikkimese or Assamese or Mizos or Nagas. When we do that, perfunctory sops are all it takes to silence our protestations like is being seen with the scaling down of protests the moment exemption is offered. This deflection is nefarious because it is not even a fig leaf covering the ugliness of the brazenness with which the secular fabric is being tattered.

There is much that is wrong with CAB and local protection is not the biggest problem. Illegal immigrants will become citizens, not locals except in places where they meet the time required to qualify as being counted as locals. In states like Sikkim, even a century will not be enough. They simply don't have the numbers to even be considered a minor stress on the nation's resources or opportunities and will not be additional pressure either since they have already been living here and partaking those resources and opportunities. Consider this: between 1964 and March 2019, the Foreigners Tribunals identified 1.17 lakh individuals as illegal foreigners! Yes, Assam now has 19 lakh people excluded from the National Register of Citizens but only a sliver of them are illegal immigrants. So no, CAB is not going to swamp anyone away.

Giving and identity of choice to refugees and illegal immigrants is a good humanitarian move, but to keep Muslims out of this special arrangement is not only evil but also against the very spirit of Constitution which makes us Indians. And it is for this reason that CAB has to be challenged and protested. Unfortunately, too many appear to have played right into BJP's hands by clamoring to protect their privileges instead of defending the idea of India. What the Central Government has succeeded in achieving is dividing us even more when what was required was for us to come closer as Indians. The forced posturing has sowed deeper parochialism, stronger feelings of denial and more fearful paranoia and it is when these emotions are strong that unholy, unethical alliances and compromises are made. So, when an existing protection is reiterated, the grateful margins say thank you and support this assault on the Constitution of India. By projecting a threat to "local" interests, attention is distracted and when people are convinced they need protection, deals are struck right wing nationalism given a toehold.

This topic can be debated endlessly, and may be it should, but it is important that we engage in the debate as Indians and not locals from different regions or states or practitioners of different faiths. When the idea of India is being redrafted and the secular nature of the country being set aside, we need to speak as Indians and rise above local interests or faiths. Will we?

How Randomised Trials Became Big in Development Economics

SEÁN MFUNDZA MULLER, GRIEVE CHELWA & NIMI HOFFMANN
theconversation.com

The 2019 Nobel Prize in economics was awarded to three researchers for "their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty", one which has "transformed development economics".

What are randomised experiments? And why have they become so influential in development economics?

Improving the quality of life, particularly for the poor, is considered to be one of the main objectives of modern societies. Doing so requires a certain level of wealth. Economists have been preoccupied for centuries with understanding why some nations have "developed" economically and others have not.

But a more immediate question is: what can be done in the present? More specifically, what policies should less-developed countries adopt to improve the lives of their citizens?

Development economics as a sub-discipline was born in the 1940s and 1950s. For pioneers such as Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, W. Arthur Lewis and Albert Hirschman, development economics meant studying ways in which poor countries could attain large-scale societal transformation. They used a variety of analytical approaches, which pointed towards industrialisation as the driver of development.

Arthur Lewis, a native of Saint Lucia, was awarded the 1979 Nobel Prize in economics. This was in recognition of his study of the ways in which countries with unlimited supplies of labour – as is the case for many developing countries – could attain economic development.

One view of the challenge of development is that it is fundamentally about answering causal questions. If a country adopts a particular policy, will that cause an increase in economic growth, a reduction in poverty or some other improvement in the well-being of citizens?

In recent decades economists have been concerned about the reliability of previously used methods for identifying causal relationships. In addition to those methodological concerns, some have argued that "grand theories of development" are either incorrect or at least have failed to yield meaningful improvements in many developing countries.

Two notable examples are the idea that developing countries may be caught in a poverty trap that requires a "big push" to escape and the view that institutions are key for growth and development.

These concerns about methods and policies provided a fertile ground for randomised experiments in development economics. The surge of

interest in experimental approaches in economics began in the early 1990s. Researchers began to use "natural experiments", where for example random variation was part of a policy rather than decided by a researcher, to look at causation.

But it really gathered momentum in the 2000s, with researchers such as the Nobel awardees designing and implementing experiments to study a wide range of microeconomic questions.

RANDOMISED TRIALS

Proponents of these methods argued that a focus on "small" problems was more likely to succeed. They also argued that randomised experiments would bring credibility to economic analysis by providing a simple solution to causal questions.

These experiments randomly allocate a treat-

ment to some members of a group and compare the outcomes against the other members who did not receive treatment. For example, to test whether providing credit helps to grow small firms or increase their likelihood of success, a researcher might partner with a financial institution and randomly allocate credit to applicants that meet certain basic requirements. Then a year later the researcher would compare changes in sales or employment in small firms that received the credit to those that did not.

Randomised control trials in economics are now mostly used to evaluate the impact of social policy interventions in poor and middle-income countries. Work by the 2019 Nobel awardees – Michael Kremer, Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo – includes experiments in Kenya and India on teacher attendance, textbook provision, monitoring of nurse attendance and the provision of microcredit.

The popularity, among academics and policy-makers, of the approach is not only due to its seeming ability to solve methodological and policy concerns. It is also due to very deliberate, well-funded advocacy by its proponents.

BIG FUNDERS

A key actor is the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), which was founded by Duflo and Banerjee. Since its creation in 2003, J-PAL has conducted 876 policy experiments in 80 countries. One estimate suggests that it received around \$300 million between 2003 and 2018, from a range of institutions. These include the World Bank, Britain's Department for International Development and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

J-PAL appears to have been influential in the World Bank's decision in 2005 to establish a dedicated impact evaluation unit composed of former J-PAL associates to conduct randomised trials. The number of such experiments used in World Bank evaluations increased from zero in 2000 to just over two thirds of all evaluations in 2010.

These changes have taken place in a broader international context where there is increased emphasis on "evidence-based policy". The idea is that policy decisions should be based on "objective", "rigorous" and "rational" information and analysis. Although this may seem obvious, there are many debates about what this actually means in practice.

In this context, the advocates of randomised trials have sought to position their preferred methods as the most reliable form of evidence.

But there is strong opposition to the approach. This argues that experiments are not as reliable or useful as they are made out to be. Some even say that many such experiments fail to satisfy ethical principles and may actually harm development efforts.

[Seán Mfundza Muller is Senior Lecturer in Economics, Research Associate at the Public and Environmental Economics Research Centre (PEERC) and Visiting Fellow at the Johannesburg Institute of Advanced Study (JIAS), University of Johannesburg; Grieve Chelwa is Senior Lecturer -- Economics, University of Cape Town; Nimi Hoffmann is Lecturer in International Education, University of Sussex]



China's failed gene-edited baby experiment proves we're not ready for human embryo modification

DIMITRI PERRIN & GAETAN BURGIO
theConversation.com

More than a year ago, the world was shocked by Chinese biologist He Jiankui's attempt to use CRISPR technology to modify human embryos and make them resistant to HIV, which led to the birth of twins Lulu and Nana.

Now, crucial details have been revealed in a recent release of excerpts from the study, which have triggered a series of concerns about how Lulu and Nana's genome was modified.

HOW CRISPR WORKS

CRISPR is a technique that allows scientists to make precise edits to any DNA by altering its sequence.

When using CRISPR, you may be trying to "knock out" a gene by rendering it inactive, or trying to achieve specific modifications, such as introducing or removing a desired piece of DNA.

Gene editing with the CRISPR system relies on an association of two molecules. One is a protein, called Cas9, that is responsible for "cutting" the DNA. The other molecule is a short RNA (ribonucleic acid) molecule which works as a "guide" that brings Cas9 to the position where it is supposed to cut.

The system also needs help from the cells being edited. DNA damage is frequent, so cells regularly have to repair the DNA lesions. The associated repair mechanisms are what introduce the deletions, insertions or modifications when performing gene editing.

HOW THE GENOMES OF LULU AND NANA WERE MODIFIED

He Jiankui and his colleagues were targeting a gene called CCR5, which is necessary for the HIV virus

to enter into white blood cells (lymphocytes) and infect our body.

One variant of CCR5, called CCR5 Δ32, is missing a particular string of 32 "letters" of DNA code. This variant naturally occurs in the human population, and results in a high level of resistance to the most common type of HIV virus.

The team wanted to recreate this mutation using CRISPR on human embryos, in a bid to render them resistant to HIV infection. But this did not go as planned, and there are several ways they may have failed.

First, despite claiming in the abstract of their unpublished article that they reproduced the human CCR5 mutation, in reality the team tried to modify CCR5 close to the Δ32 mutation.

As a result, they generated different mutations, of which the effects are unknown. It may or may not confer HIV resistance, and may or may not have other consequences.

Worryingly, they did not test any of this, and went ahead with implanting the embryos. This is unjustifiable.

THE MOSAIC EFFECT

A second source of errors could have been that the editing was not perfectly efficient. This means that not all cells in the embryos were necessarily edited.

When an organism has a mixture of edited and unedited cells, it is called a "mosaic". While the available data are still limited, it seems that both Lulu and Nana are mosaic.

This makes it even less likely that the gene-edited babies would be resistant to HIV infection. The risk of mosaicism should have been another reason not to implant the embryos.

Moreover, editing can have unin-

tended impacts elsewhere in the genome.

When designing a CRISPR experiment, you choose the "guide" RNA so that its sequence is unique to the gene you are targeting. However, "off-target" cuts can still happen elsewhere in the genome, at places that have a similar sequence.

He Jiankui and his team tested cells from the edited embryos, and reported only one off-target modification. However, that testing required sampling the cells, which were therefore no longer part of the embryos - which continued developing.

Thus, the remaining cells in the embryos had not been tested, and may have had different off-target modifications.

This is not the team's fault, as there will always be limitations in detecting off-target and mosaicism, and we can only get a partial picture.

However, that partial picture should have made them pause.

A BAD IDEA TO BEGIN

Above, we have described several risks associated with the modifications made on the embryos, which could be passed on to future generations.

Embryo editing is only ethically justifiable in cases where the benefits clearly outweigh the risks.

Technical issues aside, the researchers did not even address an unmet medical need.

While the twins' father was HIV-positive, there is already a well-established way to prevent an HIV-positive father from infecting embryos. This "sperm washing" method was actually used by the team.

The only benefit of the attempted gene modification, if proven, would

have been a reduced risk of HIV infection for the twins later in life.

But there are safer existing ways to control the risk of infection, such as condoms and mandatory testing of blood donations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR GENE EDITING AS A FIELD

Gene editing has endless applications. It can be used to make plants such as the Cavendish banana more resistant to devastating diseases. It can play an important role in the adaptation to climate change.

In health, we are already seeing promising results with the editing of somatic cells (that is, non-heritable modifications of the patient's own cells) in beta thalassemia and sickle cell disease.

However, we are just not ready for human embryo editing. Our techniques are not mature enough, and no case has been made for a widespread need that other techniques, such as preimplantation genetic testing, could not address.

There is also much work still needed on governance. There have been individual calls for a moratorium on embryo editing, and expert panels from the World Health Organisation to UNESCO.

Yet, no consensus has emerged. It is important these discussions move in unison to a second phase, where other stakeholders, such as patient groups, are more broadly consulted (and informed). Engagement with the public is also crucial.

[Dimitri Perrin is Senior Lecturer, Queensland University of Technology; Gaetan Burgio is Geneticist and Group Leader, The John Curtin School of Medical Research, Australian National University]

Anti-CAB bandh: Agitators set market on fire in Tripura



AGARTALA, DEC 10 (PTI): Agitators participating in a bandh called by NESO against the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha set a market, where shops were owned mostly by non-tribals, on

fire in Tripura's Dhalai district on Tuesday, police said.

However, no one was injured in the incident and the blaze at Manughat market was doused, a senior police officer said. "Security

forces have been deployed in the market but the incident has created fear among the non-tribals who owned most of the shops," the officer said.

The bandh has evoked massive response in the tribal areas of Tri-

pura, he said. It threw normal life out of gear in Dhalai, West Tripura and Khowai districts with residents remaining indoors while attendance at offices was thin, the officer said.

Train services in the

entire state came to a complete halt and vehicular movement was affected, he said. Bandh supporters blocked an important road near Astable Ground in Agartala at 9.30 am, stalling traffic.

"Around 300 agitators were detained peacefully after 45 minutes of their demonstration," the officer said. The legislation seeks to grant Indian citizenship to religious minorities of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh who are fleeing persecution there, was passed in the Lok Sabha with 311-80 votes.

However, Home Minister Amit Shah announced in the Parliament on Monday that areas under the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTADC) will be exempted from the ambit of the Bill.

TMC for rollback of Mudra scheme due to rising NPAs

NEW DELHI, DEC 10 (PTI): Voicing concern over increasing default in loan repayment under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (Mudra), the Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Tuesday demanded that the government roll back the scheme before rising NPAs stifle credit growth and bring ruin to the MSME sector.

The Mudra Yojana was launched in 2015 for providing small loans to income generating small enterprises in manufacturing and services.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour in the Upper House, TMC member Manish Gupta said, "Public sector banks have suffered hugely because of this scheme as collateral is not mandatory under the scheme. Over 2,300 cases of fraud have been detected and Mudra category loans have increased over last few years."

The NPAs (non-performing assets) have been on a rise in public sector banks. The number of NPA accounts have increased from 17.99 lakh accounts in 2018 to 30.57 lakh accounts in just one year, he said.

Total value of non-performing assets

(NPAs) by public sector banks is Rs 7.07 lakh crore. This figure has increased more than 100 per cent, he added.

Gupta said the RBI has advised that rising NPAs under Mudra loans should be addressed aggressively. So far this fiscal year, Rs 1.41 lakh crore loan has been disbursed under Mudra Yojana. "However, sources have claimed that bankers are pressured to grant Mudra loans to people who sometimes have no business plan," Gupta said.

The average loan under the scheme is Rs 45,000, which many reports say is not enough to start a business and create jobs, he added.

Moreover, the data suggests, the Trinamool Congress member said only one out of five or 20 per cent of Mudra loans has resulted in job creation.

"Sir, this is yet another example of poor economics and poorer implementation. I would only urge the government to roll back the scheme before rising NPAs stifle credit growth and bring ruin upon the MSME sector," Gupta noted.

Trinamool MPs stage walkout in Rajya Sabha

NEW DELHI, DEC 10 (PTI): Protesting against a West Bengal issue, Trinamool Congress MPs on Tuesday staged a walkout in Rajya Sabha during the Question Hour.

As soon as Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu announced Question Hour, Trinamool Congress members barged into the well demanding raising of an issue related to the West Bengal Governor.

Party MP Derek O'Brien tried to raise the issue but Chairman Naidu did not allow. Following this, members of TMC trooped into the well raising slogans. Later, they staged a walkout.

The members were heard sloganeering "SC/

ST Bill Me Deprivation Nahi Chalega" to which the Chair said "Members should respect the House" and "Maintain Decency." Naidu appealed to them to follow rules for the conduct of the House and said members had right to oppose any issue but they should follow rules.

He said he cannot allow members to raise the issue here and appealed for maintaining peace and order to which Naidu said "what is this happening?"

However, they were unrelenting and continued to protest.

The Bill is concerning the formation of SC & ST commission in the State.

Ruthless East Bengal outplay Neroca 4-1 in I-League



IMPHAL, DEC 10 (PTI): East Bengal earned their first win of this I-League season by outplaying Neroca FC 4-1 in front of a heart-broken 20,000 crowd at the Khuman Lampak Stadium here on Tuesday.

Jaime Colado (21st and 52nd) converted twice from the penalty spot while Juan Mera (33rd) and Marcus Espada (65th) also found the target. Bou Bacar Diara scored the consolation goal for the 'Oranges' in the 31st minute.

The determination of the red and gold brigade was evident right from the start. First, Juan Mera's cross just eluded Santos Colado and within the next few seconds, Santos' cross was headed by Marcos, but feebly, posing no problem for Neroca keeper Marvin Philip.

In the 19th minute, the ball seemed to have found the back of Neroca net after a last touch

by Taryk Sampson but it was disallowed by the referee later. In the very next minute, Juan Mera was brought down by Shaikhom Ronald Singh inside the penalty box and the referee pointed to the dreaded spot without any hesitation. Colado stepped up and made no mistake in giving the visitors the lead.

Gift Raikhan's side, having fallen behind, pressed hard in pursuit of an equaliser and were duly rewarded not long after.

In the 31st minute, Taryk's long pass found Chanso Horam who did well to keep the ball in play and squeezed in a perfect cross for Bou Bacar Diara, who just tapped in the ball home for Neroca to draw the parity.

The game kept turning on its head, as it was East Bengal who regained their lead just two minutes later. Marcos was brought down just on the edge of the

Neroca penalty box and Colado scored from the free-kick.

Just seven minutes after resumption, a handball by a Neroca player inside the penalty box from a move by Espada gave the red and golds another spot kick, which was converted by Colado again, making it 3-1 for the Kolkata outfit.

In the 65th minute, Pintu Mahata's cross beat an outstretched Marvin Philip to find an unmarked Marcus, who headed in an easy goal to further extend East Bengal's lead to 4-1.

Minutes later, East Bengal had a chance for their fifth goal, when Abhishek Ambekar's powerful shot was blocked by Marvin Philip.

After Tuesday's win, East Bengal climbed to the third spot with five points from three matches, while Neroca stay at the seventh spot with three points.

Bill for extending SC-ST quota in legislatures

NEW DELHI, DEC 10 (PTI): A bill which seeks to extend by ten years the quota given to SCs and STs in Lok Sabha and state assemblies was moved for consideration in Lok Sabha by Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, saying these communities still need reservation for a decisive say in policy-making.

A similar reservation in the form of "nomination" for the Anglo-Indian community in Lok Sabha and state assemblies is not being extended.

The reservation given to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the Anglo-Indian community for the past 70 years is to end on January 25, 2020.

The Constitution amendment bill seeks to extend the reservation for SCs and STs till Janu-

ary 25, 2030. Amid protests by opposition members for excluding the Anglo-Indian community, Prasad said the government has "not shut the doors" on extending reservation for them.

He made it clear that the present bill only deals with extending reservation for SCs and STs.

Under Article 334, these communities were given reservation in legislature for 70 years, till January 25, 2020.

There are 84 members from the Scheduled Caste and 47 from the Scheduled Tribe communities in Parliament.

In state assemblies across India, there are 614 SC members and 554 ST members.

Prasad said as of now, there are only 296 members of the Anglo-Indian community, with a max-

imum of 124 in Kerala. When Saugat Roy (TMC) challenged the figures, Prasad asserted that he was quoting the data of Registrar General.

"Although the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes have made considerable progress in the last 70 years, the reasons which weighed with the Constituent Assembly in making provisions with regard to the aforesaid reservation of seats have not yet ceased to exist," said the statement of objects of the bill while supporting the proposal.

It said with a view to retain the inclusive character as envisioned by the founding fathers of the Constitution, it is proposed to continue the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes for another ten years.

Bandh hits normal life in Arunachal Pradesh



ITANAGAR, DEC 10 (PTI): Normal life came to a halt in Arunachal Pradesh on Tuesday due to the 11-hour North East bandh called by NESO in protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, which was passed in the Lok Sabha on Monday night.

Educational institutions, banks, commercial establishments and markets were closed while public and private vehicles were off the road in the state in response to the bandh called by the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAP-SU), a constituent of North East Students' Union. Attendances in government offices were

almost nil during the bandh which began at 5 am in the morning, officials said. The bandh is peaceful except a few stray incidents of stone pelting by bandh supporters, Capital Superintendent of Police (SP) Tumme Amo informed.

According to reports, the bandh is also total in all the districts of the state where respective students bodies have imposed the bandh extending support to AAPSU and NESO.

Elaborate security arrangements have been made throughout the state to prevent any untoward incidents during the bandh period. The

Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019, seeks to grant Indian citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan if they faced religious persecution there.

They will be given Indian citizenship after residing in the country for five years, instead of 11 years which is the current norm.

Indigenous people of the Northeastern states are scared that the entry of these people will endanger their identity and livelihood.

Various organisations of the region have launched a series of agitations against the bill.

Bandh affects normal life in Meghalaya

SHILLONG, DEC 10 (PTI): Normal life was affected in Meghalaya on Tuesday due to a statewide bandh called by the Khasi Students Union (KSU), a constituent of the NESO, to protest against the Citizenship Amendment Bill.

Shops, markets and business establishments kept shutters down, while educational and financial institutions remained closed for the day, officials said.

Government offices were open but recorded less than 10 per cent attendance, they said. The bandh began at 5 am and will continue till 4 pm.

Incidents of burning of tyres and vandalising of vehicles have been reported in the state capital as protesters lobbed Molotov cocktail at a police



vehicle damaging it in Mawlai area, East Khasi Hills district deputy commissioner M W Nongbri told PTI. Additional police and CRPF forces have been deployed in sensitive areas, officials said.

The North East Students' Organisation (NESO) an umbrella body of students' organisations of the region had called for the bandh in the region to protest against the CAB. The Citizenship (Amendment)

Bill, piloted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, was comfortably passed in the Lok Sabha on Monday night as the ruling BJP enjoys a clear majority in the house.

The Bill seeks to grant Indian citizenship to non-Muslim refugees, who escaped religious persecution in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The legislation was passed by 311-80 votes in the Lower House of the Parliament.

Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey caused by hydel projects in Sikkim and the region, the cost exacted by this "development" and some of the stories it birthed, not all of which have been shared before.

Also finding place in this collection is the arrival of Climate Change and its impact on Sikkim and how the State could negotiate with this new disruption.

THE BIRDS HAVE LOST THEIR WAY

Edited by TSHERING EDEN AND FEMA WANGCHUK

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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Catalan separatists plan 'mass protest' outside the Clasico

BARCELONA, DEC 10 (AFP): Catalan separatists from Democratic Tsunami on Tuesday called for a "massive" protest around Camp Nou stadium on December 18 where Barcelona and Real Madrid are set to play their rear-ranged Clasico.

Spain's most prestigious fixture had been due to take place at the Barcelona stadium on October 26 but was postponed following a wave of violent pro-independence protests in Catalonia.

"In an exceptional situation, we should act in an exceptional way," said a statement from the group, which has called supporters to gather at four points around the stadium from 4:00 pm, just four hours before kickoff.

The rally is the latest in a wave of protests which began two months ago when Spain's top court jailed nine Catalan separatist leaders over their role in a failed 2017 independence bid.

It is not clear who runs the shadowy protest group which emerged in September and on the day of the verdict managed to rally 10,000 demonstrators at Barcelona airport, paralysing all transport links and forcing the cancellation of more than 100 flights.

Last month, its activists also staged a two-day protest blocking a key motorway linking Spain and France.

Having Mickey with us is big advantage, says Karunaratne

RAWALPINDI, DEC 10 (PTI): Sri Lankan Test skipper Dimuth Karunaratne feels the presence of former Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur in their camp will be a "big advantage" when his side take on Azhar Ali's men in the two-Test series starting here on Wednesday.

Arthur, who was appointed the head coach of Sri Lanka last week, held the same position in Pakistan from 2016 until the end of this year's ODI World Cup in July.

"Mickey is with us and previously he was the coach of the Pakistan team as well so it is a positive thing for us that he knows the Pakistan team very closely and that has given us a lot of confidence for this series," Karunaratne said on the eve of the match.

However, the skipper said the onus will be on the Sri Lankan players to execute their plans properly.

"His presence is a big advantage to us as he knows each and every player very closely. How they think. How they prepare. But we have to do things right in the middle and implement our plans properly."

"Our bowlers have to bowl in the right areas to every batsman and we have to also apply ourselves in batting and fielding. Pakistan has never been an easy side to beat at home. The good thing is we know their game well having played regularly against them in Sri Lanka or UAE," he said.

Frank Lampard urges Chelsea to embrace 'big night' against Lille

JACOB STEINBERG LONDON, 10 DEC

[THEGUARDIAN]: A troubling statistic before Chelsea attempt to secure their place in the last 16 of the Champions League by beating Lille on Tuesday evening: aside from the Carabao Cup victory over League Two's Grimsby Town in September, Frank Lampard's young side have not held a half-time lead at Stamford Bridge since the 2-2 draw with Sheffield United on 31 August. It has been a common sight this season, Chelsea getting bogged down at home after failing to build on fast starts, and Lampard needs his players to discover the clinical edge they have shown on the road when they host Lille.

"We wanted more in our home games and quite a lot of it has been chance conversion," said the Chelsea manager. "Away from home we've gone and racked up some goals and some really good performances, and scored early in the game. But when you play well at home but don't score for 45 minutes you kind of add the pressure on



yourselves. We need to take our chances, especially ones that come early in a game. If you've got pressure, you need to convert it."

Yet while it could be another tense occasion in front of their supporters, Chelsea would have taken this situation after opening their European campaign with a home defeat by Valencia. Lille are out after picking up one point from

five games in Group H and a Chelsea win will leave Ajax and Valencia fighting over the other qualification spot in Amsterdam. A draw would leave them relying on the Dutch side beating their Spanish counterparts.

Not that Lampard will take anything for granted after the 4-4 draw with nine-man Ajax last month and the wild 2-2 with Valencia a fortnight ago. Chelsea, who

have not won at home in the Champions League since September 2017, have lost three of their last four games in the Premier League and have to react after Saturday's 3-1 defeat by Everton. It is an occasion that calls for composure and Lampard, who is likely to stiffen his back four by starting Antonio Rudiger for the first time since 14 September, will find out if his players are capable

of expressing themselves when the stakes are this high. "I think you can be defined as an individual and as a group by success and what success looks like," he said. "And this means going into the next stage of the Champions League. I used to love big nights as a player. It's opportunities now for the team, particularly the young players, to make a mark. I like the pressure of this game being a

knockout. If we're going to do anything good here, then we are going to need lots of these nights."

While a lack of ruthlessness in attack explains why Chelsea are monitoring Moussa Dembélé, Jadon Sancho, Wilfried Zaha, Timo Werner and Fyodor Chalov, there are issues in defence as well. Lampard was furious after the Everton game and admitted his players failed to

show enough personality in the individual duels. Kurt Zouma and Andreas Christensen were awful in central defence and Lampard, whose side have kept one clean sheet in their last nine games, is worried about the form of his goalkeeper, Kepa Arrizabalaga.

Zouma said a lack of communication has been a problem and it is a mark of his side's vulnerability that Lampard, who could pursue a £40m move for the Bournemouth defender Nathan Aké in January after Chelsea's transfer ban was halved last week, could replace Christensen with Rudiger against Lille. The German is Chelsea's best defender but he has played only 45 minutes this season due to injuries.

"It's potentially difficult but our guard against that was to give him a lot of work," Lampard said. "We've managed to create some things behind the scenes here in training that look like match play - and some pure running as well. He's come through that. You only speak as you look at him and he looks fit and ready to go and I know he's hungry."

Defending champion Sindhu eyes turnaround at World Tour Finals

GUANGZHOU, DEC 10 (PTI): Enduring a rough patch since claiming the world championship gold, ace Indian shuttler P V Sindhu would be eager to turnaround her fortunes when she begins her title defence at the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals here on Wednesday.

Sindhu registered her career's biggest triumph at the World Championship in Basel, Switzerland in August, but since then the Indian looked awfully out of form.

The Olympic silver medalist, who had reached the finals of Indonesia Open Super 750 tournament in July, made two first-round exits at Korea Open and Fuzhou China Open and went down in the second round in three events -- China Open Super 1000, Denmark Open Super 750 and Hong Kong Open Super 500.

Her only quarterfinal finish was at the USD

750,000 French Open. Only the top 8 on the BWF Race to Guangzhou Rankings qualifies for the World Tour Finals and Sindhu ended the year at the 15th spot but still made it to the women's singles field by virtue of being the world champion.

Despite the recent dip in form, all eyes will be on Sindhu as she has the reputation of producing her best in major events. The Indian had taken a break after the Hong Kong Open to be in the best shape for the World Finals, where she has twice reached the summit clash in 2017 and 2018.

This time, Sindhu has been placed in group A alongside Chinese duo of Chen Yu Fei and He Bing Jiao and Japan's Akane Yamaguchi, while Group B consists of the rest four shuttlers -- Taiwanese Tai Tzu Ying, Thai duo of Ratchanok Intanon and Busanan Ongbamrungphan and Japan's Nozomi Okuhara. Sindhu

will open her campaign against Akane Yamaguchi, who has claimed two titles at Indonesia and Japan before a hip problem saw her make four straight first round exits. However, the Japanese showed signs of regaining her form with semifinal finishes at French Open, Hong Kong Open and Korea Masters. The world no 6 Indian has a healthy 10-6 head-to-head record against Yamaguchi but she lost to the Japanese in the last two meetings.

Against Chen Yu Fei too, Sindhu enjoys a 6-3 record but the Chinese has been in rampaging form this season, having won all six of her finals, including the All England Championships.

Sindhu, however, lost nine times to He Bing Jiao with four of them coming in their last four encounters. The Chinese won the Korea Open, besides finishing runner-ups at India Open and Badminton Asia Championships.

If Dhoni decides he is good enough to continue, don't mess around with that: Shastri

NEW DELHI, DEC 10 (PTI): India coach Ravi Shastri says none can "mess around with" Mahendra Singh Dhoni if he decides to be in contention for next year's T20 World Cup but the enigmatic former captain would "never impose himself" on the team. In a soon-to-be-telecast interview on 'India Today' channel, Shastri was asked about the much-speculated future of Dhoni, who has been on a sabbatical ever since India's semifinal exit from the ODI World Cup in England earlier this year.

"That (Dhoni) guy is a legend. The last thing he will want is to im-

pose himself on an Indian team, having known him. He is wanting to take a break but he is going to play the IPL," Shastri said on the show 'The Inspiration'. Asked if he isn't ruling out a comeback by the 38-year-old, Shastri answered, "The amount of sport he has played... if he puts himself in contention... if he feels after the IPL that 'I am good enough to play for India', don't mess around with that."

Dhoni, after maintaining a stoic silence on his future plans for months, had recently stated that, "Don't ask anything till January."

National selection committee chairman

MSK Prasad has, however, made it clear that the panel has "moved on" and Dhoni is aware of its intent to blood youngsters such as Rishabh Pant keeping in mind next year's T20 World Cup in Australia. Pant hasn't exactly capitalised on the chances that have come his way and has copped criticism for sloppy work behind the stumps. Recently, Pant also drew flak for poor DRS calls, something that the seasoned Dhoni had aced.

Dhoni was seen training with Jharkhand's under-23 team in Ranchi last month, triggering a fresh round of speculation on a possible comeback.

Pépé caps a lightning revival to give Freddie Ljungberg glimmer of hope



NICK AMES LONDON, 10 DEC

[THEGUARDIAN]: One flourish of the left foot and, for a few days at least, everything else could be forgotten. Nicolas Pépé's adaptation to the Premier League has been uncertain and, in truth, nobody could really have envied him the introductory few months he has endured at a troubled Arsenal. It must have felt like being asked to parachute safely on to the north face of Everest; in which case the telling slalom through West Ham's ever-obliging defence, and the rich oxygen its denouement breathed into both his campaign and that of his team, could hardly have seemed a more blessed relief.

Pépé had not scored for Arsenal in open play before flashing a 66th-minute finish beyond David Martin to give them a comeback lead and, from a state of dejection and disarray, put a flame under Freddie Ljungberg's tenure. It has been easy to question the wisdom of the £72m fee paid to Lille for the Ivorian; it says plenty for Pépé, though, that as he shaped to shoot there seemed only one outcome. He has beau-

tiful shooting technique on his favoured side and, given a rare chance to prove the point, shone the brightest of lights where there had been none.

A red smoke bomb, presumably earmarked as some kind of distress signal as a shoddy first hour ticked by, billowed from the away end. Everything had turned around and Pépé's wild upswing in performance had epitomised that of his team. In the 15 minutes after half-time Arsenal, limp before the break and behind to Angelo Ogbonna's bundled effort, had barely put a foot right. Pépé had shielded the ball so weakly that Aaron Cresswell virtually ran through him to start a West Ham attack, been mugged in possession by Felipe Anderson and given the ball away dangerously inside his own half. He had been given a start by Ljungberg as part of a deliberate recalibration, but aside from some spirited runs looked like a player struggling to impose himself physically or tactically.

But Ljungberg knew Pépé had improved Arsenal's showing significantly in the second half of Thursday's defeat by Brighton, even if the

scoreline did not reflect that. Pépé had "showed intensity, tried to dribble and worked well to win the ball back", the coach said, so it seemed logical that he would get a chance. The same went for Gabriel Martinelli, an 18-year-old firecracker of a forward who runs with the insistency of Luis Suárez and finishes, as West Ham would discover when he opened the floodgates, with the emphasis of Gabriel Batistuta.

The sense was that this, three games in, all presented a taste of Ljungberg's way. Even if much of the evening's fare resembled the haphazard showings Arsenal have produced all season, he remoulded his front three with a specific purpose in a lineup that screamed, "To hell with everything," and ultimately reaped handsome rewards. Pépé, Martinelli and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who scored a sharply taken third, are all direct and explosive runners, happy to shoot early and primed for the swift, direct transition. That made the ponderous buildup of Arsenal's first 45 minutes all the more maddening, given its lack of chime with their forwards' gifts, but

the flip side arrived when the match became scrappier and their possession decreased: West Ham, happy enough when the game was being played in front of them, could not keep pace when its shape deteriorated and the dynamic forward trio were, for that glorious nine-minute spell, in their element.

A turning point? Proof of Ljungberg's genius? A grand, if belated, arrival statement from Pépé? This was not quite any of those things, not yet, and the nagging thought persists that opponents with a modicum of discipline would have been able to see Arsenal off here. A bigger test will come, once the near-formality of Europa League progression has been ticked off in Liege on Thursday, when Manchester City visit the Emirates three days later. The narrative is set up, even more so after this success, to be Ljungberg's pitting of wits against the City assistant coach Mikel Arteta, who may yet take the seat he currently warms. Pep versus Pépé has more of a ring to it, though, and on this evidence Arsenal's mercurial forward might hold box-office appeal after all.

Pressured at home, Ethiopia PM picks up Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO, DEC 10 (AFP): Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed will collect his Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo Tuesday, but as ethnic violence rises at home he has kept festivities to a minimum and refused media requests.

Hailed as a modern, reformist leader, Ahmed's decision to skip all events with the press has dismayed his Norwegian hosts.

Africa's youngest leader at just 43, he is to receive the prestigious award at a ceremony in Oslo's City Hall at 1:00 pm (1200 GMT), attended by the royal family and Norwegian public figures.

The Nobel Committee announced in October it was honouring Abiy for his efforts to resolve the long-running conflict with neighbouring foe Eritrea.

On July 9, 2018, following a historic meeting in Eritrea's capital Asmara, Abiy and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki formally ended a 20-year-old stalemate between their countries in the wake of the 1998-2000 border conflict.

That was just three months after Abiy took office.

During the whip-fast rapprochement that followed, embassies reopened, flights resumed and meetings were held across the region.

Abiy's actions sparked optimism on a continent marred by



violence, and he went on to play an important mediation role in the Sudan crisis and attempted to revive a fragile peace deal in South Sudan.

In stark contrast to his authoritarian predecessors, the early days of his mandate also saw a wave of democracy-boosting measures in Ethiopia, as he lifted the state of emergency, released dissidents from jail, apologised for state brutality and welcomed home exiled armed groups.

He also established a national reconciliation committee and lifted a ban on some political parties.

Abiy's reforms and visions lifted hopes far beyond his country's borders, but the "Abiymania" hype has faded somewhat and he is now facing major challenges.

His vow to hold the first "free, fair and democratic" elections since 2005 in May

could be threatened by ethnic violence.

Less than two weeks after the Nobel announcement in October, anti-Abiy protests left 86 people dead.

Ahead of the elections, experts say the Ethiopian leader may now have to shift his attention away from the peace process.

The regime of Isaias Afwerki, the only president Eritrea has ever known, has given no sign of any kind of political opening.

The land border between the two nations is once again closed, and the question of border demarcations remains unresolved. Faced with these challenges, Abiy has considerably shortened the traditional Nobel programme: he will only stay in Oslo for a day and a half, compared to more than three days for most laureates.

And perhaps more importantly, the former

officer and ex-intelligence chief has chosen to forego any events where the media could ask him questions. The traditional press conference held by the laureate on the eve of the ceremony has been stricken from the programme, as has the press conference after a meeting with Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg.

Also gone are individual interviews with the media, and a question-and-answer session with youngsters under the aegis of Save The Children.

The head of the Nobel Institute, Olav Njolstad, called the decision "highly problematic".

"It's linked to the situation in his country and his personality: he's religious (Pentecostal) and does not want to put himself in the spotlight," Njolstad told AFP.

"In the eyes of the (Nobel) Committee, a free press and freedom of expression are essen-

tial conditions for a lasting peace in a democracy, and so it's strange for a Peace Prize laureate to not want to speak to the press," he added.

Abiy's entourage said it was "quite challenging" for a sitting leader to spend several days at such an event, especially when "domestic issues are pressing and warrant attention".

On "a personal level, the humble disposition of the Prime Minister rooted in our cultural context is not in alignment with the very public nature of the Nobel award," said his press secretary Bilen Seyoum.

The Nobel Peace Prize consists of a diploma, a gold medal and a cheque for nine million Swedish kronor (850,000 euros, 945,000).

The other Nobel prizes for literature, physics, chemistry, medicine and economics will also be handed over on Tuesday, but in Stockholm.

Chile military plane disappears with 38 aboard: Air Force

A Chilean military plane with 38 people aboard has gone missing after it took off from the country's south for a base in Antarctica and is presumed to have crashed, authorities have said.

Seventeen of those on board the C-130 aircraft were crew and the others were passengers, Chile's air force said Monday.

The plane is believed to have crashed and "all national and international air and maritime means available in the area are continuing the search (for survivors) in the sector where communications were lost with the aircraft," it added in a statement Tuesday.

The four-engine aircraft took off Monday at 4:55 pm (19:55 GMT) from an airbase in the southern city of Punta Arenas and contact was lost at 6:13 pm.

The air force said conditions for flying were good and that it was in

contact with the families of those on board, many of whom were traveling to carry out logistical support tasks at the country's largest Antarctic base Eduardo Frei.

Personnel were also being transferred to inspect the base's floating fuel supply pipeline and undertake anticorrosive treatment of the facility. The air force also said that of the passengers on board, 15 were from its ranks, three were from the army, there were two people from a private construction company, and a Chile university official.

The plane did have an emergency positioning system, but it did not appear to be working during the early morning search, said Eduardo Mosquera, Commander of the Fourth Air Brigade.

President Sebastian Pinera, whose country is witnessing its worst civil unrest in decades, tweeted he would fly to Pun-

ta Arenas with Interior Minister Gonzalo Blumel. Once there, they would meet up with Defense Minister Alberto Espina to monitor the search and rescue mission, which was underway using aircraft and navy vessels.

The plane went missing in Drake Passage -- a key maritime route between South America and Antarctica frequently hit by some of the world's worst weather. However, conditions were fine for flying on Monday, Chile's air force said.

The plane's disappearance is the latest incident in a country where Chileans have for nearly two months protested social and economic inequality, as well as an entrenched political elite.

The nearly two-month crisis and its violent demonstrations have led to 26 deaths and more than 12,000 injuries, according to the Organization of American States.

Trump to meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

BY LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, DEC 10 (PTI): US President Donald Trump will meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the White House on Tuesday, over two years after his previous controversial visit to the country.

Lavrov last visited the US in May 2017 when Trump had just fired the then FBI director James Comey, who was probing Russia's meddling in the US polls at the time. There were no immediate details available of the Trump-Lavrov meeting.

Lavrov will drive down to the White House following his meetings with the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

At the Foggy Bottom headquarters of the State Department, Lavrov and Pompeo are scheduled to address a joint press con-

ference. Their meeting and a working luncheon will precede this.

Pompeo, in an interview on Monday, said that he and Lavrov are expected to discuss a wide range of issues.

We will talk about a whole host of things. I personally the President, too have said that where there's work that we can do alongside Russia, we have an obligation to do it for the American people. I hope that Foreign Minister Lavrov and I can make progress on that, Pompeo told One America News Network.

One of the areas that the President has asked us to work on is business-to-business relationships. We'll try to work on those. There are arms control issues between our two countries. We want to bring China

into that discussion as well. I'm sure we'll talk about that as well, he said. Matthew Rojansky, Director of the Kennan Institute at The Wilson Center, described this a high stakes moment for US-Russia diplomacy.

Not only because it could either enable or obstruct progress on Ukraine, but because both sides have acknowledged the risks of the current state of conflict: Moscow and Washington have pulled out of key Cold War-era arms control treaties while backing rival factions in regional conflicts from the Middle East to South America, he said.

All this takes place against the backdrop of the Congressional and public debate about impeachment and the 2020 US presidential campaign.

Hong Kong's leader unbowed after massive weekend protest



HONG KONG, DEC 10 (AP): Hong Kong's leader on Tuesday again ruled out further concessions to protesters who marched peacefully in their hundreds of thousands this past weekend.

The six-month protest movement has five demands, including that Hong Kong's leader and lawmakers all be directly elected and that police actions against protesters be independently investigated. The only demand that has been met was the withdrawal of the proposed extradition legislation that triggered the movement in June.

But city leader Carrie Lam made clear she won't budge on the others.

As for other demands, we really have to stick by certain important principles," she said. If a particular demand requires us to deviate from the law, not to uphold the rule of law in Hong Kong, or to do things actually beyond the powers of the

chief executive, I could not agree to accept those demands. One of the protest movement's demands is amnesty for the more than 6,000 people arrested.

Lam said that wasn't legally possible.

The protest march Sunday on Hong Kong Island was one of the biggest since the mass demonstrations started against the now-withdrawn bill that would have allowed criminal suspects to be extradited for trial in Communist Party-controlled courts in mainland China.

Organisers estimated that 800,000 people joined the rally. Protesters chanted five demands, not one less! and held up five fingers.

Lam said the march reflects the freedoms that Hong Kong people are enjoying" and showed that all those accusations from various quarters that we are eroding people's freedoms are unsubstantiated.

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Democrats lay out impeachment case against Trump

WASHINGTON, DEC 10 (AFP): Democrats laid out their case Monday for the impeachment of Donald Trump, branding the US president a "clear and present danger" to national security as they prepared to issue formal charges against him. Four months after a whistleblower sparked the investigation of Trump for seeking illicit political favours from Ukraine, Democrats said there was abundant evidence that he had committed bribery, abused his power and obstructed the investigation.

"President Trump's persistent and continuing effort to coerce a foreign country to help him cheat to win an election is a clear and present danger to our free and fair elections and to our national security," said Daniel Goldman, counsel for the Democrats.

Facing an almost certain vote in the coming weeks to make Trump the third American leader impeached and placed on trial, top Republican Doug Collins countered that the effort was simply "a good PR move" for Democrats ahead of next year's presidential elections.

"It's all political," Collins said. "Where's the impeachable offense? Why are we here?"

The allegations came in a contentious House Judiciary Committee hearing in which Republicans repeatedly punched back, while Trump himself denounced the inquiry as a "disgrace" and "hoax." Fuelling the partisan divisions in Washington, the Republicans marshaled a Department of Justice report released Monday as ammunition for a counteroffensive. The DoJ's inspector general said its review of investigations into four Trump aides did not find evidence of "political bias" in the decisions to open the probes.

The report effectively rebutted Trump's repeated claims that the FBI



illegally spied on his campaign -- but Republicans seized on its findings that the bureau committed "numerous serious factual errors" related to the investigations. Tempers flared as Republicans tried to derail the hearing with procedural moves. A lone protester was ejected after shouting in the president's defense -- the first time such an outburst has occurred over the last month of public impeachment hearings.

"We voted for Donald Trump (and) Americans are sick of your impeachment scam," he shouted as he was removed by police. "Trump is innocent!" The president is accused of abusing his powers by pressuring Ukraine to announce an investigation into former vice president Joe Biden, his potential challenger in the 2020 election.

Trump also pressed Kiev to investigate a widely-dismissed allegation that the Ukraine government helped the

Democrats in the 2016 election.

Barry Berke, an attorney for the Democrats, said there was "significant proof" of wrongdoing as he laid out the evidence collected by the House Intelligence Committee in a 10-week investigation. "In the scheme to pressure Ukraine... the person at the center of that scheme was President Donald Trump," he told the hearing. Berke played videos of testimony by top US diplomats involved with Ukraine supporting the charges, and footage of Trump claiming he has "the right to do whatever I want as president."

Witnesses produced documents "that provide uncontroverted, clear and overwhelming evidence that President Trump did this scheme," Berke said.

Republican attorney Stephen Castor, tasked with disputing the evidence, said Democrats were simply attacking Trump for policies they do not agree with. "Dem-

ocrats are obsessed with impeaching the president," he said, calling evidence from the transcript of a July 25 phone call between Trump and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky "baloney." In that call, Trump told Zelensky he wanted "a favour," including an investigation of Biden and the 2016 conspiracy theory.

While Democrats have cried foul over the Biden attacks, Republicans said it was a conflict of interest at best that Biden's son Hunter served on the board of a Ukrainian energy firm while his father was US vice president. "On this record, there is a legitimate basis for President Trump to have concern about Hunter Biden's role on Burisma's board," Castor said. Castor also argued that Democrats needed to take more time to accumulate evidence and build their case. Democrats rejected that argument, noting Trump has blocked his top advisors from testifying and refused to hand over White House records.

"There is a constitutional remedy for a president who undermines our national security and our elections, who puts his own interest before those of the country -- that remedy is impeachment," said Judiciary Committee chairman Jerry Nadler. Democrats appear determined to push through to a full House vote on formal articles of impeachment before year end. That could see Trump stand trial in the Senate in January. Given the solid Republican majority in the Senate and a two-thirds threshold for conviction, it is almost certain he will be acquitted.



WILDE ON STAGE! ! The actress, Olivia Wilde is all smiles during a panel at the DGA Theater in New York City.

Patty Jenkins has already planned 'Wonder Woman 3'

Los Angeles, Dec 10 (PTI): "Wonder Woman 2" director Patty Jenkins has revealed that her team has cracked the idea of a third film in the Gal Gadot-fronted series, along with an Amazon-based spin-off. Jenkins directed 2017's DC superhero film "Wonder Woman", the origin story of the title character and how she becomes a true warrior from a sheltered, naive Amazonian princess.

The director and Gadot are set to return for the sequel, "Wonder Woman 1984", scheduled to hit the screens on June 5, 2020.

The duo unveiled the first trailer of the upcoming film at CCXP in Brazil, where Jenkins revealed they actually came up with the storyline for the sequel while they were working on the first part. The threequel is also following the same fate, Collider reported.

"We actually already know the whole story to ("Wonder Woman 3") and then some because there is an Amazon (spin-off) movie as well and so we already have it all mapped out. It's just a matter of will we change our minds and when," Jenkins said.

The filmmaker added the wait between "Wonder Woman 1984" and its follow-up will be longer than that between the first two films. Jenkins worked on "I Am the Night", a

limited series in which she reunited with "Wonder Woman" actor Chris Pine.

"I think what we don't want to do is do it back to back. It's been great doing these two movies back to back, but I think it's important to give it a little rest in between. And I like doing other things in between. "And Gal has



other things to do. I never want to make decisions too far in advance. We have to see if we both feel like making the movie we think we want to make when the moment comes," Jenkins said. When prodded if the lag time might be three to four years, the director promised it would not be two years.

"It would not be two, I'll tell you that much," she quipped, adding "I'm not doing that again". "Wonder Woman", a stand-alone film was a breather in the male-dominated superhero genre. The movie was a critical and box office success, breaking records for the biggest opening weekend for a film directed by a woman.

Overjoyed to hear my 'choti behen' Lata Mangeshkar is back home: Dilip Kumar

MUMBAI, DEC 10 (PTI): Legendary actor Dilip Kumar is "overjoyed" that Lata Mangeshkar is on the road to recovery as the music icon returned home after almost a month long stay at a hospital here. Mangeshkar, 90, was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit of the Breach Candy Hospital after she complained of difficulty in breathing on November 11.

The veteran singer was discharged on Sunday after 28 days and shared a health update with her fans on Twitter. Kumar, 96, took to the microblogging site to wish a speedy recovery to Mangeshkar, whom he fondly called his younger sister.

"Overjoyed to hear the good news that my 'choti behen' Lata, is feeling much better and is at her home now. Please take good care of yourself @mangeshkarlata," he tweeted.

Kumar also shared a picture of the two with wife, veteran actor Saira Banu.

Jonathan Groff boards 'THE MATRIX 4'

LOS ANGELES, DEC 10 (PTI): Actor Jonathan Groff is the latest name to join the much-awaited fourth installment in "The Matrix" franchise. According to Entertainment Weekly, details about the character to be played by Groff, best known for "Frozen 2" and "Mindhunter", are under wraps.

The film, which is yet to be officially titled, will see series stars Keanu Reeves and Carrie-Anne Moss, reprise their roles as Neo and Trinity. Jada Pinkett Smith is also set to return as Niobe.

Lana Wachowski, one half of the Wachowskis who directed all the three films in the sci-fi action franchise with sister Lilly, will write and helm the new project.

Aleksandar Hemon and David Mitchell have co-written the script with Lana Wachowski, who is also attached to produce with Grant Hill. Previously announced cast members also include "Aquaman" star Yahya Abdul-Mateen, Jessica Henwick and Neil Patrick Harris.

Warner Bros Pictures and Village Roadshow Pictures will back the film.

The first, "Matrix", released in 1999 followed by "The Matrix Reloaded" and "The Matrix Revolutions", depicted a dystopian future where artificial beings have taken over humanity, which is unknowingly trapped inside a simulated reality, called the Matrix.

Soha Ali Khan On Embracing Motherhood: 'I Literally Pass Out At Night'

Actress Soha Ali Khan opened up about embracing motherhood and how that's changed her life at a recent event in the National Capital. Speaking with news agency IANS, the 41-year-old actress revealed as a full-time mom and part-time professional has changed her daily routine and often leaves her

"exhausted": "I used to wake up at noon and have lunch straight-away. Now, I'm up at like before 7 and I literally like pass out at night. I don't go to bed but by like 10.30-11, I'm exhausted. Often, I can't sleep at 11 because you have a social commitment; you have a professional engagement... I think that women are used to wearing multiple caps but I know that being a mother, being a wife, being a daughter or being a sister, you are required to be all those things and then you're required to work, fulfil your professional commitments," IANS quoted her as saying.

Soha Ali Khan married actor Kunal Kemmu in 2015 and welcomed baby daughter Inaaya in 2017.

alking about motherhood, Soha Ali Khan confessed that after Inaaya was born, she's become her top "priority": "Then where's the time for me? You have to carve out that time for yourself as well. So, that me time has become very precious to me. It's all about get-

ting balance of course your child becomes your priority, more than work, more than your husband, more than anything else, your child comes first and for the first formative years, it has to be like that or it should be like that I feel personally and then of course those things that are important to you, you strike a



balance with and you try and have it all."

Soha Ali Khan added that watching Inaaya grow up is "scary" and "exciting" at the same time: "I want her to learn and grow all the time. You know, this is the age where you can see that she is absorbing everything, she is repeating things. It is a scary time as well as an exciting time because she is exposed to so much. She is not just exposed to me and I would like to think that I am the best influencer on her but I am sure that I am not perfect, so, you know, school, other children, other parents, staff, other family members, everyone is contributing to her development at this point".

We Finally Have the Trailer for 'Wonder Woman 1984' (and Kristin Wiig Totally Steals the Show)

Gal Gadot is bringing us back to the '80s. Warner Bros. released the first trailer for Wonder Woman 1984 on Sunday, showcasing the return of the lasso-of-truth-swinging superhero Diana Prince.

In the trailer, we see both new faces and a few familiar ones from the first 2017 film (like Chris Pine's Steve Trevor). We're introduced to Kristen Wiig as one of the most notorious comic book villains, archaeologist Barbara Minerva, also known as the human-cat hybrid Cheetah. In the clip, it seems that she starts as a close friend of Diana's, but eventually their friendship takes a turn for the worse. The trailer also reveals The Mandalorian star Pedro Pascal as businessman Maxwell Lord.

Gadot and returning director Patty Jen-

kins introduced the trailer at Comic-Con Experience in Brazil, where they teased the film's 1980s setting. "In the first movie, we got to establish the story of Diana becoming Wonder Woman," Gadot said. "In this movie, we're going to find Diana in 1984. She's quite lonely. She lost all of her friends over the years, and she's doing what she needs to do. She's doing her calling. She's helping mankind and saving them—until something crazy is about to happen to her."

And if the action-packed trailer isn't enough, Warner Bros. also dropped four new character posters, for Diana, Steve, Barbara and Maxwell. Watch the trailer above and catch Wonder Woman 1984 in theaters June 5, 2020. If you need us, we'll be getting our Members Only jacket ready.

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ARIES: If you expect the love of your life to show up at your doorstep while you bingeing on Netflix with your feline friend curled in your lap, news flash—that isn't going to happen. So here's the oldest advice in the book: put yourself out there. Instead of mourning your past break up and complaining about how men/women/people in general are swines, go to your favourite bar or cafe and find yourself one who isn't.
Tip: Make space for love.

TAURUS: What you're experiencing right now is a classic case of the 'glass half empty' syndrome. But could you be missing out on the blessings in the bargain? Something to think about as you sip on your morning matcha. Things on the homefront may have been especially turbulent for some of you.
Tip: The love you share is real.

GEMINI: If you think sex is a taboo topic, try talking about money, especially in the early stages of a relationship. This is something most couples shy away from. Don't let this be you, Gemini. When two people are unable to agree upon how to deal with

finances, it places a strain on the relationship and threatens the foundation on which they are building their life.

Tip: Talk about money where joint finances are involved.

CANCER: Truth bomb: your relationships will be tested, Cancer, whether it's with your partner, friends or family members. How do you feel about letting go? Does the idea of starting over bring panic or peace? Don't let old memories be the reason you hold on to toxic connections. Let the Universe intervene on your behalf and do away with all that has served its purpose.
Tip: Embrace the cosmic chaos.

LEO: Obstacles can only be overcome by determination and focus. Leo, you are ready to move forward and conquer the world. Continue to believe in those larger-than-life dreams. Ambition has always been one of your strongest suits. Some of you may be experiencing the magic of movement in your personal life too, whether it's from friends to lovers or from lovers to permanent roommates.
Tip: This is a time of forward movement.

VIRGO: There's a storm headed in your direction and we mean that in the best possible way. Given the changes are sudden, it might be difficult to find your footing initially. Make a conscious effort to stay grounded and let go of the topsy turvy emotions. When they say they want you, they are certainly not lying.
Tip: They want all of you, Virgo.

LIBRA: If things have been lacklustre for a while, expect a big change, one that will change your romantic life for the better. For coupled Libras, this could translate into vava-voom, both in the bedroom and outside. Consider changing the setting up a bit. A cottage in the hills could be the missing link.
Tip: There's a big change coming your way.

SCORPIO: While assertion has been a big theme for you this month, things may or may not have turned out the way you want them to. You have let your intentions be known, Scorpio. Now it's time for you to take a step back. Give the other person the time and space they need to process the given information.
Tip: Let things happen in their own time.

SAGITTARIUS: "I could easily forgive

his pride, if he had not mortified mine." Let Jane Austen's words remind you what happened when pride came between the cosmic lovers, Elizabeth and Darcy. Take a moment to understand where you are operating from. Could your own ego be the reason your relationship refuses to heal? Choosing to be the bigger person will benefit you in the long run. A good way to shift your focus is to remember that the love you share is real.
Tip: Let go of the ego.

CAPRICORN: Let lightning strike where it must. It is helping illuminate the so-called cracks in the foundation—cracks that could ultimately lead to destruction. A little bit of introspection will give you the strength you need to make drastic changes. Don't doubt yourself for a second, Capricorn. Some of you may be facing upheaval on the interpersonal front. Has a certain relationship run its course? Be the bigger person because you are. Forgive, forget and let go.
Tip: You are being guided to make drastic changes.

AQUARIUS: Words of wisdom by the lady

who revolutionised the little black dress, Audrey Hepburn: "I have to be alone very often. I'd be quite happy if I spent from Saturday night until Monday morning alone in my apartment. That's how I refuel." Brew a cup of sereni-tea and spend quality time with yourself. Eat, pray, love, dance and sing. Journal your thoughts and cook yourself a scrumptious meal. What you will discover in the process: happiness can only be found inside.
Tip: Spend quality time with yourself.

PISCES: Not good enough. Not pretty enough. Not skinny enough. Who wrote this narrative anyway? Stop assessing yourself by society's standards, Pisces. This week, you're being asked to accept yourself fully, despite the so-called flaws. Self-expression will become an important theme for you in the process. What's that one thing you've been yearning to experiment with? Whether you're thinking about dip dyeing your hair purple or draping a saree sans a blouse, let 'no holds barred' be your mantra. Remember, you are not doing the world a favour by being anybody but yourself.
Tip: Baby, you were born this way.