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SummitTIMES

Vol 04 | Issue 289 | Gangtok | Monday | 04 November 2019

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RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

SIKKIM UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES 5TH CONVOCATION CEREMONY WITH PRESIDENT OF INDIA

President presents Gold Medals to Sikkim Univ's top-11

GANGTOK, 03 Nov [IPR]: President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, presented gold medals to the top-11 students from various schools and affiliated colleges under Sikkim University on the occasion of the 5th Convocation ceremony of Sikkim University here at Manan Kendra, Gangtok, today. The President was accompanied by First Lady Savita Kovind.

On his arrival, the President was received and welcomed by the Governor, the Chief Minister, and Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Registrar of Sikkim University.

After the academic procession and National Anthem, the Convocation Ceremony was declared open by the Registrar of Sikkim University.

The President and other dignitaries were presented with the Convocation Memento followed by presentation of a brief report of Sikkim University by the University Vice Chancellor Dr. Avinash Khare.

Thereafter, Chancellor of Sikkim University,



Lt. Gen. (Dr.) DB Shekarkar, conferred the degrees and awarded Silver and Gold Medals, and Special Gold Medals.

The President, in his Convocation address, expressed happiness on his visit to Sikkim for the Convocation ceremony of Sikkim University.

He said that he has laid great interest and priority on higher education and that he was hap-

py to be among students and academicians.

Addressing the students who were conferred with degrees on the occasion, the President urged them to be prepared for the responsibilities and challenges that lie ahead. He stressed that the goal of education was to make good human beings and added that it was the key to being successful in any

profession. The President congratulated all the students and their parents and guardians for their accomplishment.

He reminded the audience that Sikkim University has evolved into a unique centre of higher learning in just twelve years of its establishment.

He added that practices such as gender equality, emphasis on preserving the language, culture, heritage and environmental conservation, as well as the Centre for Endangered Languages has raised the bar of Sikkim University as a model Institution for the overall enhancement of intellectual learning in the entire North East region.

He suggested that Sikkim University start a practice called 'University Social Responsibility' on the lines of Corporate Social Responsibility. He said that USR could entail activities like adoption of nearby villages and carrying out service activities like immunization, nutrition camp, cleanliness, free education and

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President lauds Sikkim for atmosphere of peace, harmony



GANGTOK, Nov 3 (PTI): President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday lauded the atmosphere of peace and harmony prevailing in Sikkim in which people practising different religions live peacefully and participate in each other's festivities.

The president was speaking at the 5th convocation of the Sikkim University here.

"It is good to know that the people of all religions in Sikkim live in peace and harmony and participate in each other's festivities with enthusiasm... they (people of Sikkim) have set a great example before their brethren in other parts of India about how to live with harmony and interact with each other," he said.

Kovind also praised

Sikkim for emerging as a tourist destination for the people of India and abroad so much so that the tiny Himalayan state, blessed with pristine beauty, is called 'Switzerland of the East.'

"It is a good thing that Sikkim has got the identity as 'Switzerland of the East,'" he said.

The president urged Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] to focus on the development of tourism-related infrastructure for the benefit of tourists.

Mentioning that Sikkim stood sixth on cleanliness index in 2018 under the central flagship programme, Swachh Bharat Mission, the president said that the governor and chief minister of the state deserve kudos for it.

Sikkim Himalayan beats Eastern Railway to enter Gold Cup quarterfinals

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 03 NOV:

Another home team has secured a berth in the quarter-final round of the ongoing 39th All India Governor's Gold Cup Football Tournament 2019 here at Paljor Stadium today.

Playing the third pre quarter-final match on Sunday, Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club edged past Eastern Railway Sports Club, Kolkata, 2-1.

Sikkim Police is already in the quarter-final round after having defeated BSS Sporting Club, Kolkata, in the second pre quarter-final match on Saturday.

SHSC maintained constant pressure on the Kolkata team with continuous attacks right from the start but could not convert in the first



half. It was Eastern Railway players who came good first and finished the first half 1-0 ahead following a goal by Binod Yadav in the 44th minute.

In the second half,

Sanjay Chettri converted a direct free-kick into the equaliser for Sikkim Himalayan SC in the 52nd minute.

Soon after, the referee offered a penalty shot to the home team in the

68th minute for a rough tackle in D-box area which was successfully converted into the lead for Sikkim Himalayan SC by Uttam Rai.

In return, Eastern Railway players played their hearts out to bounce back into the match but could not score any further goals in the match. With this 2-1 win, Sikkim Himalayan SC is through to the quarter-final round of the tournament.

Now, Sikkim Himalayan SC will take on Durand Cup 2019 champion, Gokulam Football Club, Kerala in the third quarter-final match on 07 November.

The last pre quarter-final match will be played between Kidderpore Sporting Club, Kolkata and Army Red on Monday.

Prez lauds SU's commitment developing intellectual and cultural understanding of Eastern Himalayas

GANGTOK, 03 Nov [PIB]: The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, in his Convocation address for Sikkim University here today, noted with delight that in a short span of about 12 years, Sikkim University has made serious efforts to develop the intellectual and cultural understanding of the people of the Eastern Himalayas.

He was also happy to note that to promote local languages and literatures, the university is teaching Limbu, Lepcha and Bhutia at its campus and has established the Centre for Endangered Languages for conservation of languages at risk of extinction.

He said that preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of Sikkim will prove to be a visionary initiative in protecting special identity of the State.

The President said that Sikkim has a strong possibility to become a model of development for other hill states. On the strength of conscious citizens, Sikkim is counted among the 10 leading states in the Human Development Index. Sikkim has set an example in education, health, sanitation and protection of wildlife. It has also set an example before rest of the country in organic farming and becoming a clean, pollution-free state. He said that we should resolve that our country would also become a harbinger of organic farming and free of pollution much like Sikkim.

Air purifier deployed at Taj Mahal to tackle pollution

AGRA (UP), Nov 3 (PTI): As north India battles severe levels of pollution, state authorities have deployed an air purifier at the Taj Mahal to save the iconic monument, officials said on Sunday.

The air purifier van deployed by the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) has capacity to purify 15 lakh cubic metre air in eight hours within a 300 metre radius, they said.

"Looking at the developing situation and consistent deterioration in air quality, a mobile air purifier van has been deployed at the west gate of the Taj Mahal," Regional Officer of UPPCB Bhuvan Yadav told PTI.

Pollution around the white marble mausoleum has been a cause of concern for a long time as it has been damaging the monument, one of the seven wonders of the world.

The district administration, Agra Nagar Nigam and UPPCB collaborated with telecom operator Vodafone-Idea, as part of corporate social responsibility efforts, to bring in two such air purifier vans to the city to combat pollution, the officials said.

The vans were brought to Agra on October 24 and looking at the fast deteriorating air quality in the city, one of them has now been deployed near the Taj Mahal to protect it from air pollution, Yadav said.

At present there is no continuous air monitoring

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Rohtang Pass closed after snowfall

SHIMLA, Nov 3 (PTI): The Rohtang Pass on the Manali-Keylong highway in Himachal Pradesh has been closed for vehicular traffic after snowfall on Sunday, the police said.

About six inches snowfall has been reported at Rohtang Pass, Kullu superintendent of police Gaurav Singh said.

Subsequently the pass situated at a height of about 3,980 metres has been closed for vehicular traffic, he added.

Located around 51 km from Manali in Kullu district, Rohtang Pass is a gateway to Lahaul and Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh.

Over 44,000 people register for Army recruitment rally

JAMMU, Nov 3 (PTI): Over 44,000 aspirants from three districts of Jammu region have registered themselves to serve the country as the Army on Sunday commenced a 10-day recruitment rally in Samba district to provide employment to the local youth.

This is the first major recruitment rally in the newly created Union Territory and the second in the past three months after the Centre abrogated Article 370 provisions on August 5.

Earlier in September, a seven-day recruitment rally by the Army in Reasi district saw participation of over 29,000 local youth.

"As many as 44,117 aspirants from Jammu region have registered and likely to be screened for their physical and medical fitness during the 10 days long recruitment rally in Samba," Jammu-based Army PRO Lt Col Devender Anand said.

He said the recruitment rally through Army recruitment office in Jammu commenced at Samba and would continue till November 12.

This rally is being conducted to provide employment to youth from three districts of Jammu, Samba and Kathua.



SKM DELEGATION CALLS ON PREZ:

A delegation comprising of senior office-bearers of the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha called on President Ram Nath Kovind here at Raj Bhawan today, an SKM press release informs. The delegation, which included the State Govt's administrative advisor, PM Subba, media advisor to the CM, CP Sharma, political advisor TN Dhakal, senior vice-president Bhojraj Rai, and party HQ general secretary Uttam Lepcha submitted a memorandum highlighting demands of the State which have been pending with the Centre. The release informs that Assembly seat reservation for the Limboos and Tamangs and ST status for the leftist communities figured prominently in the memorandum. The release adds that the President was very positive towards issues raised by the party.

Telangana RTC strike: Unions want govt to hold talks

HYDERABAD, Nov 3 (PTI):

A day after Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao set November 5 as the deadline for TSRTC workers to give up their stir and join duty, the employees' unions on Sunday insisted that the Telangana government first hold talks to resolve the issue.

With the indefinite strike over a slew of demands entering the 30th day, TSRTC-JAC leader EAshwathamaReddy said the Chief Minister could not instil confidence among workers, rather he was "trying to provoke" them.

"Talks should first be held to resolve the issue. It could be a committee of ministers or RTC management... but Chief Minister is seeking to dictate terms to courts and taking unilateral decisions. Nobody has the right to remove anyone from jobs," Reddy told reporters here.

Rao had on Saturday said the state cabinet decided to allot 5,100 of 10,400 routes to private operators and warned that the other routes

would also be given to them if those on strike don't join duty by the midnight of November 5.

"If 5,100 routes are privatised, then 27,000 staff are required. Why did he (Rao) not talk about the remaining 23,000 staff? What will be the future of those 23,000 people? If the number of depots is halved from 90 to 45, what will be the fate of depot managers?" Reddy asked.

Expressing willingness to wind up the unions if their demands were conceded, Reddy said, "first discuss on demands should be held."

Reacting to CM's statement, Union Minister of State for Home GKishan Reddy said Rao was acting hastily on the RTC issue. The state government should hold parleys with drivers and conductors, who hail from poor families, and arrive at a solution.

"The government should not treat employees as enemies or anti-government. RTC is a public service organisation," the Union Minister said adding it was not good to adopt

a "vindictive" attitude towards employees. In a related development, Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar on Sunday appealed to all RTC employees who are willing to join duty that their safety and security would be taken care of.

Adequate security has been provided to all depots, he said and warned of action against anyone who takes law into their hands.

On Sunday, the protesting employees held demonstrations at different places and raised slogans against the government.

The leader of the Join Action Committee of RTC unions had on Saturday said they were planning to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah to seek Centre's intervention into the issue.

Employees and unions of the bus corporation started the indefinite strike from October 5 across Telangana demanding merger of the RTC with the government and recruitment to various posts, among others.

NHAI fined Rs 6.84 cr for causing pollution in UP



AGRA (UP), Nov 3 (PTI):

The National Highways of India (NHAI) of India has been fined Rs 6.84 crore for polluting air due to consistent construction activity in Uttar Pradesh's Agra, officials said on Sunday.

The authority has also been instructed to sprinkle water wherever construction work is being undertaken around Agra, they said.

A fine of Rs 6.84 crore has been imposed on NHAI for causing air pollution through construction activities, said Bhuvan Yadav, Regional Officer of the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board in Agra.

Also, directions have been issued to Agra Nagar Nigam to carry out

mechanized sweeping work to help reduce air pollution, he said.

The anti-pollution board has also instructed brick kilns around the city using old technology to switch over to Zig-Zag technology to help reduce air pollution.

Various government agencies such as the Agra Development Authority, Awas Vikas and the PWD, have been instructed if they carry out construction activities, they have to use dust suppressant, the official said.

In addition, all the demolition and construction waste rules have to be followed like sprinkling of water, establishing green cover, covering raw materials, among others, Yadav added.

President presents...

other such services which would add value to the lives of people in need.

Speaking about the natural bounty of Sikkim and its good practices, the President said that the people of Sikkim were known for their civic sense and hospitality. He also lauded the state of Sikkim for its effort in bio-diversity conservation, promotion of overall hygiene, tourism, promotion of communal and cultural harmony, women empowerment, education development, and maintenance of its cultural heritage and places of worship.

He stated that Sikkim has created a unique place for itself among the Himalayan states of India courtesy its unique practices and development model. He also made a mention of famous sports persons from Sikkim namely Baichung Bhutia, Nirmal Chettri and Tarundeep Rai who have brought laurels to the State and the country.

In conclusion, the President wished the State all the success for its future endeavours and expressed hope that the students who have passed out from Sikkim University will spread the good practices of Sikkim both nationally and globally.

The Governor, also the Chief Rector of SU, in his address, congratulated all the students on being awarded their degrees in the presence of the President of India. He expressed his gratitude to the President for his visit to Sikkim and added that his visit has added great value to the State.

Congratulating the students on their success, the Governor stated that they should be grateful to every person who have directly or indirectly contributed to their academic success.

He urged the students to embrace the new phase of their lives with great confidence and with a feeling of indebtedness towards the society. He further urged them to equip themselves for nation building and to carry forward the legacy left behind by our forefathers. He added that each student should work with the goal to win back the lost glory of India as a great centre of knowledge.

The Governor expressed happiness at the initiatives being taken by Sikkim University to impart multi-disciplinary knowledge and at the same time preserving the local and regional ethos and values like morality, sensibility and humanity.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay], profusely thanked the President of India for his visit to Sikkim. He congratulated the faculty, officials and students for successfully organizing the Convocation ceremony.

He said that Sikkim University has established itself as a core body for higher education in the State, with great all-round progress made in the last one decade. The Chief Minister stated that the State aims to make Sikkim University the focal point for teaching and research activities especially on bio-diversity conservation and the language and culture of Sikkim.

He added that the State is deliberating on an improved education policy, which was projected in the maiden budget of the Government. He maintained that the new education policy will create an enabling environment in the State for the youth to grow in the academic field.

The Convocation ceremony was declared closed by the Registrar, Sikkim University, followed by National Anthem and departure of the President and dignitaries.

ANYESTHI KRIYA

The 13th day Anyesthi Kriya of late K.B Chettri (Orient Studio) falls on 9th November 2019.

All relatives, well wishers and friends are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul on 9/11/2019 at our residence at Upper Shyari, Opposite New Bishal Hotel.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who stood by us at the time of bereavement.

Mrs Bal Kumari Chettri(wife)

Mr Binod K. Chettri and Mr Hemant Chettri (sons)

Mrs Matilda Isaacs and Mrs Rebecca

Pradhan (daughters-in law)

Mrs Bhakti Pradhan and Mr Om

Pradhan (daughter and son in law)

Mr Arun K. Chettri and Mrs Mani Kumari

Chettri (brother and sister in law)

Silvanom Salom Karthak and Abigail Rai,

Sonom Raleon Karthak and Dechen Bhutia

(grandsons and granddaughters in law)

Tina-Avinash, Yougal -Koshi,

Yozna -Milan, Adarsh, Ananya, Aviral,

Akshata (grandchildren)



Rao rejected MHA report on Ayodhya in 1992: Ex-home secy

NEW DELHI, Nov 3 (PTI): The Babri Masjid could have been saved if there was political will to act and the then Prime Minister P V Narsimha Rao did not accept a comprehensive contingency plan of the Home Ministry prepared before the demolition, claims Madhav Godbole who was the Union home secretary that time.

If political initiative had been taken at the prime minister's level, the Mahabharata of this Ramayana could have been avoided, he says in his new book on the Ayodhya dispute.

Seeking to draw a cogent picture of the events which transpired during the critical period before and after the demolition, Godbole says as prime minister, Rao played the most important role in this crucial test match, but, unfortunately, he turned out to be a non-playing captain.

In The Babri Masjid-Ram Mandir Dilemma: An Acid Test for India's Constitution, the author claims that besides Rao, former prime ministers Rajiv Gandhi and V P Singh also failed to take timely action when the mosque was under serious threat.

He says that when Rajiv Gandhi was prime minister, some workable compromise solutions were suggested to resolve the dispute, before positions had hardened on

either side but no steps were taken. VP Singh remained firm after promulgating an ordinance vesting the specified area in and around the Babri Masjid in the central government, he says.

In 1992, after detailed discussions with institutions and officers concerned, Godbole says the Ministry of Home Affairs prepared a comprehensive contingency plan for the takeover of the structure by invoking Article 356 of the Constitution. The Ministry of Law had also cleared the Cabinet note for this purpose, he adds.

He submitted the contingency plan to the Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, Senior Advisor to Prime Minister, Home Minister and the Prime Minister on November 4.

It was emphasised therein that in order for the central paramilitary forces to successfully take over the Babri Mosque and the surrounding area to ensure its security, timing and the element of surprise were of essence, Godbole recalls.

For this purpose, it was underlined that action would have to be taken well before the proposed date of commencement of kar seva' so as to avoid the presence of large number of kar sevaks' and huge crowds at the time of action, he writes in the book, brought out

by Konark Publishers.

It was also highlighted that imposition of President's Rule under Article 356 would be necessary before the central forces commenced their action, he says.

But Rao felt the contingency plan was not workable and dismissed it, he says.

Rao held a different view regarding the powers of the central government under the Constitution and preferred to rely on the promises made and commitments given by the state government to the central government, the National Integration Council (NIC) and the Supreme Court, Godbole says.

As a result, the author says, the Kalyan Singh government was left free to deal with the situation. Not surprisingly, it permitted the kar sevaks to take the law into their own hands and to destroy the masjid. It was a clear case of the state government failing in its responsibilities under the Constitution.

But it was not just the central government which failed in its obligations to act, other institutions under the Constitution also failed, Godbole asserts.

The founding fathers of the Constitution could not have visualised such all-round failure of governance and non-observance of constitutional precepts and values.

19-yr-old wrestler dies during bout in MP

SEONI, Nov 3 (PTI): A 19-year old wrestler died after collapsing during a bout in Madhya Pradesh's Seoni district, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday night when Sonu Yadav, a resident of Bhomatola village, participated in a wrestling match in Belto-la village, located about 45 km from here, Kurai police station in-charge Ganpat Singh Uike said.

"Yadav collapsed during the match. He was rushed to Seoni District Hospital where doctors declared him dead," the

official said.

The body was handed over to the family members after the postmortem, he said, adding that a probe was underway.

"If the match organisers and referees are found guilty, action would be taken against them," he said.

The official said an initial postmortem report suggested that Yadav died due to cardiac arrest.

However, some eyewitnesses claimed Yadav participated in several wrestling matches on Saturday and despite the fatigue, he continued to play.

Air purifier...

station around the Taj Mahal to help calculate the AQI so the magnitude of how much air has been purified cannot be determined, the officials said.

However, there is a monitoring station at Sanjay Palace in the city, which showed an AQI of 293 at 4pm, according to the Central Pollution Control Board. An AQI between 201-300 is considered 'poor' and causes breathing discomfort to most people on prolonged exposure.

Several north Indian cities have been battling tremendous levels of pollution over the past few days, prompting authorities to declare health emergency in Delhi.

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For more details: 9083826462 /9832556698

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All schools in NCR to remain shut till Tuesday



NOIDA, Nov 3 (PTI): All government and private schools up to Class 12 in the National Capital Region will remain closed till Tuesday in the wake of spike in pollution levels, officials said.

Gautam Buddh Nagar and Ghaziabad administrations said the decision has been taken as

the levels of particulate matter 2.5 and 10 have been excessive in the air since Diwali, resulting in a major dip in the overall air quality.

"Transport vehicles like buses and minibuses, which a lot of schools use to ferry children, are a major contributor of PM 2.5 and PM 10.

The movement of such vehicles in the city now could aggravate the situation," District Magistrate B N Singh said in a written order.

"Hence, it is ordered that all schools up to Class 12 in Gautam Buddh Nagar will remain closed on November 4 and 5," he added.

A similar order was passed by Ghaziabad District Magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey, noting that the pollution was impacting the health of children.

In Haryana, the School Education Department issued an order to deputy commissioners of Gurgaon and

Faridabad asking them to ensure closure of all government, private and aided schools on Monday and Tuesday.

According to Central Pollution Control Board data, the average air quality index from Saturday to Sunday at 4 pm in Noida was 495, 482 in Greater Noida, 491 in Ghaziabad, 486 in Gurgaon and 496 in Faridabad, all in "severe" category, which means it affects healthy people and seriously impacts those with existing diseases.

A Supreme Court-mandated panel had on Friday declared public health emergency in the Delhi-NCR and banned all construction works, bursting of firecrackers, among others, in the region to tackle the critical situation.

SJA training for court administrative staff



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 03 Nov:

Sikkim Judicial Academy organized a training programme on 20 October on "Understanding duties and responsibilities, punctuality, Roles and responsibilities, Maintenance of record-storage,

Maintenance of files, Art of Note Writing, Confidentiality followed by a Motivational speech" for officers and Staff of Administrative Section of the High Court of Sikkim, the Subordinate Courts of Sikkim and

Sikkim Judicial Academy. District & Sessions Judge, North Sikkim, NG Sherpa, was resource person for the training. He covered each topic in detail with illustrations and also shared material which was provided to the participants.

Cong accuses Centre of ignoring MP farmers' rain woes

BHOPAL/INDORE, Nov 3 (PTI): On the eve of the BJP's statewide 'Kisan Akrosh Andolan' in Madhya Pradesh, the Congress has accused the Centre of turning a blind eye to damages caused to the state by heavy rains.

The BJP's agitation on Monday aims to pin the Kamal Nath government on failure to provide relief to rain-affected farmers. Attacking the Centre, Abhay Dubey, vice president of MP Congress media cell said, "Out of 52 districts, 39 were affected due to heavy rains. Crops spread over 60.47 lakh hectares worth Rs 16,270 crore were damaged."

He said 674 people died and 1.20 lakh houses and over 11,000 kilometres of roads were damaged apart from other infrastructure like schools and hospitals.

"It is the responsibility of the Centre to help states during such a calamity. However, the Centre has not released Rs 6,621.28 crore to MP from the National Disas-

ter Relief Fund," Dubey claimed.

Talking to reporters in Indore, state Congress media cell chairperson Shobha Oza called BJP "Bharatiya Jhoothi Party" and alleged the Centre was taking revenge for the BJP's defeat in the 2018 Assembly polls.

"Why are 28 Lok Sabha MPs and 107 MLAs of the BJP in the state not asking the Centre to send relief money to the state's farmers? Why are Union ministers belonging to the state silent on this issue? The BJP is Bharatiya Jhoothi Party," she said.

The BJP's media cell in charge Loken-dra Parashar, meanwhile, said farmers were stressed due to false promises of loan waiver and power tariff cuts made by the Kamal Nath government.

He said the BJP would hold protests at every district headquarters in the state on Monday, during which inflated electricity bills will be set on fire.

Finalists selected for SNG talent hunt



SUMMIT REPORT
SINGTAM, 03 Nov:

After conducting a series of auditions, it was the test of true talent for those who deserved to be in the final round of the talent hunt being conducted by the Sikkim Newar Guthi as part of its silver jubilee. Contestants for the final round

were selected at auditions held at the Singtam Nagar Panchayat community hall on Sunday.

67 contestants competed in the semi-final round and now only 16 remain.

The event was organized by the Sikkim

Newar Guthi Youth Affairs cell.

Auditions were held for solo and group singing, dance, poetry recitation, acting and more.

The event was supported by Sang Martam Jansewa Sangathan, East Sikkim. The final is scheduled for 09 Nov.

Sanju FA wins big on day-02 of 1st Ministers' Gold Cup Invitational Football Tournament



SUMMIT REPORT
SOMBARIA, 03 Nov:

On the second day of the 1st Ministers' Gold Cup Invitational Football Tournament here on Sunday, Sanju Football Academy thrashed Red Panda FC

of Namchi 05-03.

Sonu Hang of Sanju FA was awarded the Man of the Match trophy.

On Monday, Kumar Sporting Club of Gangtok is scheduled to take on KFC, Siliguri.

RTO, Motor Vehi-

cles, BK Neopaney, was present as the chief guest today.

Prior to the day's match a colourful cultural display was presented and Tambola organized for the large crowd that had gathered.

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.

Delhi records poorest air quality in 3 years

NEW DELHI, Nov 3 (PTI): Pollution levels in Delhi peaked to a three-year high on Sunday as hundreds of distraught people took to social media to say they wanted to leave the city due to poor air quality.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the national capital's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) stood at 494 at 4 pm on Sunday, the highest since November 6, 2016 when it was 497.

Twenty-one of the 37 air quality monitoring stations recorded the AQI between 490 and 500 with air quality sensors at Aya Nagar, Ashok Vihar, Anand Vihar and Aurobindo Marg peaked out at 7 pm.

In the National Capital Region (NCR), Faridabad with AQI 493, Noida (494), Ghaziabad (499) and Greater Noida (488), Gurugram (479), also breathed extremely polluted air.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, said the city's overall AQI reached as high as 708 around 5 pm, which is 14 times the safe level of 0-50.

An AQI between 0-50 is considered 'good', 51-100 'satisfactory', 101-200 'moderate', 201-300 'poor', 301-400 'very poor' and 401-500 'severe'. An AQI above 500 falls in the 'severe plus' category.

The apocalyptic haze stiffened its choke on Delhi and satellite towns as scattered rains on Saturday increased humidity, leading to smog and a cloud cover preventing sun rays from warming the ground.

Low visibility due to smog at the Delhi airport led to diversion of 37 flights to other airports.

The spurt in pollution levels also prompted the administrations in Ghaziabad, Noida, Greater Noida, Gurgaon and Faridabad to shut all government and private schools till November 5. The Delhi government on Friday directed closure of schools till November 5.

"Wind speed increased significantly on Sunday. But the smog, due to high humidity after scattered rains, and a cloud cover didn't let sun rays reach the ground. As a result, the air near the ground remained cold and heavy," Mahesh Palawat, a senior scientist at Skymet Weather, a private forecaster, explained.

NASA satellite imagery showed vast swathes of the northern plains, covering Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and parts of Jharkhand and West Bengal, blanketed under a smoky haze.

Weather experts said any significant improvement in the situation is highly unlikely unless there a rainfall, which may

on November 7 and 8 under the influence of Cyclone Maha and a western disturbance, washes away the pollutants.

On Twitter, hashtags 'Delhi-Bachho' and 'DelhiAirEmergency' trended for a major part of the day as hundreds of people expressed their willingness to leave the NCR till the situation ameliorates.

Many also severely criticised the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) decision to go ahead with the first India-Bangladesh T20 match at the Feroz Shah Kotla Grounds, disregarding concerns about the health of players and thousands of spectators.

"Delhi ppl should leave at least for 1-2 weeks.. It is painful to live," a Delhi resident tweeted. "I think it's time to leave Delhi. Went out for groceries and came back with eyes burning," another said.

According to a survey released on Sunday, over 40 per cent residents of Delhi and NCR want to move to another city because of bad air quality while 16 per cent want to travel during the period. The survey involved 17,000 respondents from Delhi and NCR.

A group of environmentalists wrote a letter to Prime Minister Modi requesting him

to save "the children, the elderly and our most-vulnerable who suffer the worst effects of pollution".

Union Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba will monitor the alarming pollution situation in Delhi and neighbouring states on a daily basis, it was decided at a high-level meeting chaired by the principal secretary to the prime minister on Sunday.

P K Mishra, the principal secretary to the prime minister, reviewed the situation arising out of severe air pollution in the National Capital Region, and other parts of north India. Senior officials from the states of Punjab, Haryana and Delhi joined the meeting through video-conferencing, according to a statement.

Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal questioned the pace at which the Centre was distributing machines among farmers for in-situ management of straw to prevent stubble burning.

"Till now 63,000 machines have been made available to farmers in Punjab and Haryana. There are 27 lakh farmers in these states. How long would it take to distribute machines to all these farmers. For how long do we have to bear this pollution," he asked.

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Information Sharing

Make it a habit, not just a token law

Officialdom in Sikkim continues to cling to anachronistic notions about sharing information. And it is not even sensitive documents that one is talking about here; it is as simple a matter as coming on record when approached, mostly for clarifications. Officials take the easiest way out by ignoring reporters with excuses of being on tour or engaged in a meeting or, the current favourite, not being authorised. What most of them don't realise is that every time a scribe arrives in their office for information, they are not expected to spill the beans on the latest red-tape goof-up in the corridors of power. Most of the times, they are being sought out either to confirm or deny information or present their side of the argument to an allegation. While journalistic ethics demand that views of all sides be reported, it is only for so long that a story can be kept waiting for want of views from all sides. What these officials don't realise is that news reports cannot warm the "in" trays endlessly. Explanations offered after a story has broken are invariably seen as excuses and cover-up exercises, and when they come by way of press releases, they invariably create more confusion since these one-way communications offer no room for further clarifications.

The Right to Information Act is often pointed out by officials as the route to secure information. For one, RTI is essentially for the masses to seek information on individual issues, and it would be best if it was not crowded by 'vested' interests and journalists pursuing stories. Of course, journalists working on investigative features and requiring hard data and procedural details of decision-making to connect dots for a larger picture can take the RTI route, but such details is rarely the demand for beat reporting. When it comes to incident-based news reporting, the procedures and processes involved under RTI are too long and cumbersome and hence should be used sparingly and for stories, as mentioned, requiring deeper details and more extensive data. Day to day reporting remains old school about using contacts and pestering those in the know, but it is time that those who sit on information realised that the times have changed and that it makes more sense to share information when contacted because news has a way of leaking. Leaked news is invariably incomplete and often stilted and hence more damaging especially since its circulation is now made easy thanks to information technology tools available even in the most basic of mobile phone handsets and the phenomenal reach of social media platforms.

Frankly, there were always laws and rules making information accessible to the people, just that the people with the information were not confident enough to share it. RTI forced their hand. Sharing information automatically makes one accountable and accountability could lead most officials on to sticky wickets. Information, after all, is not just about knowing but also about reacting to what is learnt. Information also means power, and while empowering the people might be mouthed by everyone, it still does not figure high enough on the agenda of the bureaucracy which draws its strength from the control it wields over the people. The excitement with which RTI was received across the country appears to however have jaded. Even in Sikkim, this Right has seen a dip in following. This might be a cyclical thing, or maybe those who are sourcing information through this Act are not making a noise about it, but now, as Sikkim prepares for another Panchayat election (due sometime in February next), it should perhaps look at placing access to information high on the agenda. This time, given the funds crunch, maybe even expand the scale of information shared with the people. As things stand, the gram sabhas from where "development" discussions begin, deliberate only on projects and schemes. Maybe, the financial constraints and other logistical challenges should also be opened for public scrutiny and then feedback. Sure, share all the developmental information of each ward with the people there but then also share every detail of where funds are stuck or why finances are no longer available and maybe the janta will reciprocate the openness with solutions.

What Sikkim dearly requires at present are not just more funds, but also solutions for its fiscal deadlock. 'Empower' the people with all information in time and maybe they will show the maturity and deliver the involvement which could get stalled plans and projects rolling again. Some years ago, the State Government had announced a policy decision for every developmental project to be preceded by a proper public discussion [on a public hearing format]. This is already being implemented and as the initiative gets improved with regular tweaking, the involvement and sense of ownership so far lacking in Sikkim could manifest. But this paradigm shift also depends finally on how willingly information is shared and offered.

Climate change, pandemics, biodiversity loss: no country is sufficiently prepared

GABRIEL RECCHIA & HAYDN BELFIELD
theconversation.com

There's little that the left and the right agree on these days. But surely one thing is beyond question: that national governments must protect citizens from the gravest threats and risks they face. Although our government, wherever we are in the world, may not be able to save everyone from a pandemic or protect people and infrastructure from a devastating cyberattack, surely they have thought through these risks in advance and have well-funded, adequately practiced plans?

Unfortunately, the answer to this question is an emphatic no.

Not all policy areas are subject to this challenge. National defence establishments, for example, often have the frameworks and processes that facilitate policy decisions for extreme risks. But more often than not, and on more issues than not, governments fail to imagine how worst-case scenarios can come about – much less plan for them. Governments have never been able to divert significant attention from the here and happening to the future and uncertain.

A recent report published by Cambridge University's Centre for the Study of Existential Risk argues that this needs to change. If even only one catastrophic risk manifests – whether through nature, accident or intention – it would harm human security, prosperity and potential on a scale never before seen in human history. There are concrete steps governments can take to address this, but they are currently being neglected.

The risks that we face today are many and varied. They include:

- Tipping points in the environmental system due to climate change or mass biodiversity loss.
- Malicious, or accidentally harmful, use of artificial intelligence.
- Malicious use of, or unintended consequences from, advanced biotechnologies.
- A natural or engineered global pandemic.
- Intentional, miscalculated, or accidental use of nuclear weapons.

Each of these global catastrophic risks could cause unprecedented harm. A pandemic, for example, could speed around our hyper-connected world, threatening hundreds of millions – potentially billions – of people. In this globalised world of just-in-time delivery and global supply chains, we are more vulnerable to disruption than ever before. And the secondary effects of instability, mass migration and unrest may be comparably destructive. If any of these events occurred, we would pass on a diminished, fearful and wounded world to our descendants.

So how did we come to be so woefully unprepared, and what, if anything, can our governments do to make us safer?

A MODERN PROBLEM

Dealing with catastrophic risks on a global scale is a particularly modern problem. The risks themselves are a result of modern trends in population,

information, politics, warfare, technology, climate and environmental damage.

These risks are a problem for governments that are set up around traditional threats. Defence forces were built to protect from external menaces, mostly foreign invading forces. Domestic security agencies became increasingly significant in the 20th century, as threats to sovereignty and security – such as organised crime, domestic terrorism, extreme political ideologies and sophisticated espionage – increasingly came from inside national borders.

Unfortunately, these traditional threats are no longer the greatest concern today. Risks arising from the domains of technology, environment, biology and warfare don't fall neatly into government's view of the world. Instead, they are varied, global, complex and catastrophic.

As a result, these risks are currently not a priority for governments. Individually, they are quite un-



likely. And such low-probability high-impact events are difficult to mobilise a response to. In addition, their unprecedented nature means we haven't yet been taught a sharp lesson in the need to prepare for them. Many of the risks could take decades to arise, which conflicts with typical political time scales.

Governments, and the bureaucracies that support them, are not positioned to handle what's coming. They don't have the right incentives or skill sets to manage extreme risks, at least beyond natural disasters and military attacks. They are often stuck on old problems, and struggle to be agile to what's new or emerging. Risk management as a practice is not a government's strength. And technical expertise, especially on these challenging problem sets, tends to reside outside government.

Perhaps most troubling is the fact that any attempt to tackle these risks is not nationally confined: it would benefit everyone in the world – and indeed future generations. When the benefits are dispersed and the costs immediate, it is tempting to coast and hope others will pick up the slack.

TIME TO ACT

Despite these daunting challenges, governments have the capability and responsibility to increase national readiness for extreme events.

The first step is for governments to improve their own understanding of the risks. Developing

a better understanding of extreme risks is not as simple as conducting better analysis or more research. It requires a whole-of-government framework with explicit strategies for understanding the types of risks we face, as well as their causes, impacts, probabilities and time scales.

With this plan, governments can chart more secure and prosperous futures for their citizens, even if the most catastrophic possibilities never come to pass.

Governments around the world are already working towards improving their understanding of risk. For example, the United Kingdom is a world leader in applying an all-hazard national risk assessment process. This assessment ensures governments understand all the hazards – natural disasters, pandemics, cyber attacks, space weather, infrastructure collapse – that their country faces. It helps local first responders to prepare for the most damaging scenarios.



Finland's Committee for the Future, meanwhile, is an example of a parliamentary select committee that injects a dose of much-needed long-term thinking into domestic policy. It acts as a think tank for futures, science and technology policy and provides advice on legislation coming forward that has an impact on Finland's long-range future.

And Singapore's Centre for Strategic Futures is leading in "horizon scanning", a set of methods that helps people think about the future and potential scenarios. This is not prediction. It's thinking about what might be coming around the corner, and using that knowledge to inform policy.

But these actions are few and far between.

We need all governments to put more energy towards understanding the risks, and acting on that knowledge. Some countries may even need grand changes to their political and economic systems, a level of change that typically only occurs after a catastrophe. We cannot – and do not have to – wait for these structural changes or for a global crisis. Forward-leaning leaders must act now to better understand the risks that their countries face.

[Gabriel Recchia is Research Associate, Winton Centre for Risk and Evidence Communication, University of Cambridge; Haydn Belfield is Research Associate, Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, University of Cambridge]

'Joker' fans flocking to a Bronx stairway highlights tension of media tourism

LAURA M. HOLZMAN
theconversation.com

New York's newest tourist attraction isn't a museum, park or art installation.

It's a stairway.

Sandwiched between apartment buildings in the Bronx, it's been dubbed by moviegoers the "Joker Stairs," earning its name and fame after being featured prominently in "Joker." Since the film's release, fans have flocked to the stairs, where they've been posing for photos – much to the annoyance of some local residents – and uploading them to social media.

As I've learned from studying film-related tourism, it's common for people to visit the places they see in their favorite movies and TV shows. But the relationships among tourist sites, visitors and locals aren't always the same, and some destinations are more benign than others.

A PLACE APPEARS ON SCREEN – AND IS TRANSFORMED

The Joker Stairs are the site of one of the movie's most memorable scenes: when Arthur Fleck, played by Joaquin Phoenix, embraces his murderous Joker identity and blithely dances down a long stairway near his apartment.

The film cues viewers to the significance of the moment. Peppy music eclipses the sounds of the city. Slow-motion shots allow viewers and Fleck to linger. The scene appears on movie posters and in other publicity materials.

When fans learned that the icon-

ic scene was filmed on location at the outdoor staircase connecting Shakespeare and Anderson Avenues in the Bronx, they started traveling to the site. Some wore costumes. Some played music from the film's soundtrack. Others simply brought their cameras. Images tagged #JokerStairs started appearing on Instagram, introducing the visually striking site to even more people, who then wanted to see it for themselves.

It's not unusual for people to visit sites they know from movies, TV shows, books or memes. Tourists strike their "American Gothic" pose in front of the Eldon, Iowa, house from Grant Wood's famous painting. So many people flocked to the shore of Thailand's Maya Bay after watching "The Beach" that the site became overcrowded and polluted. In Northern Ireland, official tours showcase places that appear in "Game of Thrones," and South Korea's tourism board highlights sites from popular dramas.

Tourists who visit these attractions view them through what scholars call a "mediatized gaze" – a way of seeing a place that's been influenced by its depiction in some form of media. The mediatized gaze can change an otherwise unremarkable site into a must-see destination. It can make locals, not just visitors, think differently about a place.

One of the most famous examples of this phenomenon involves another set of stairs. In 1976, "Rocky" sparked a fan practice that turned the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art into a landmark now

known as "the Rocky Steps."

ONE SET OF STAIRS ISN'T LIKE THE OTHER

Beyond the fact that they're both outdoor stairways that have become tourist destinations, the Rocky Steps and the Joker Stairs are more deeply intertwined.

The film's director, Todd Phillips, has acknowledged that "Joker" pays homage to many movies from the 1970s and early 1980s. Its scenes, stylistic features and characters include nods to films such as "Taxi Driver," "Network" and "The King of Comedy."

Few critics, however, have made the connection to "Rocky."

Each film tells the story of a down-and-out guy who, over the course of the movie, gradually finds his confidence. And each film uses an architecturally striking set of stairs to symbolize the protagonist's development.

Rocky, the boxer played by Sylvester Stallone, initially struggles to run up the art museum steps; he's out of shape and daunted by the prospect of training for the biggest boxing match of his life. Only after building up his physical strength and self-esteem does he bound up the steps, pump his fists and soak in the view of the Philadelphia skyline.

In early scenes of "Joker," Phoenix's Arthur Fleck trudges up the long flight of stairs – a routine that underscores his sad existence. When he emerges as Joker, however, he navigates the stairs with eerie aplomb.

At the turning point in "Rocky," however, Rocky ascends the stairs; Fleck, on the other hand, descends.

For one character, it represents his heroic potential. For the other, it symbolizes his descent into infamy.

The Rocky Steps and the Joker Stairs are different in another important way. The Rocky Steps lead to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, a space designed for crowds and tourists, and imbued with cultural power. The Joker Stairs are located in a more residential neighborhood that is poorer than other parts of the city.

In the film and through tourism, the Rocky Steps bring people into a space of privilege. They represent success and accomplishment, both for the fans who spring up the stairs and for a city that has benefited from their pop culture fame.

At the Joker Stairs, however, it's the people with privilege who are more likely to descend on the neighborhood and its newly famous steps. They see and treat the site differently than locals who know the stairs as part of their commute, the place they used to skateboard or where their parents told them not to walk after dark.

These differences contribute to the tension surrounding the Joker Stairs. While a tourist might be excited about the adventure of tapping into a piece of popular culture, a local might be wary about the attention from outsiders.

To truly understand what's happening at the Joker Stairs, it's important to think about the role they play – both in the film and in real life.

[The writer is Associate Professor, Public Scholar of Curatorial Practices and Visual Art, IUPUI]

Journalist attacked in UP village

LAKHIMPUR KHERI (UP), Nov 3 (PTI): A journalist working with a Hindi daily was shot and seriously injured by two unidentified assailants in Devuapar village of the district, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday when the 46-year-old Ramesh Mishra was on his way back home from Khamaria town where he runs a medical store, they said.

Mishra was riding pillion on a bike when the bike-borne assailants shot at him. A doctor riding the bike rushed him to the district hospital from where he was referred to the Lucknow Trauma Centre in a serious condition.

“An FIR has been lodged and police teams have been formed to identify the attackers and the motive behind the attack,” ASP Shailendra Lal said.

Police have detained two suspects for interrogation.

Describing the attack on the journalist as a “serious” matter, local journalists called on police authorities and demanded speedy investigation and arrest of culprits.

Donald Trump met with boos and cheers at UFC fights in New York

NEW YORK, 03 NOV [AP]: Politics can be a bruising business. But President Donald Trump took a break from battling the Democrats’ impeachment inquiry to watch another bloodsport Saturday, drawing a mixed response at an Ultimate Fighting Championship match at a raucous Madison Square Garden. Both loud boos and cheers could be heard as Trump, joined by his adult sons, Don Jr and Eric, as well as several congressional Republicans, took their seats ahead of the pay-per-view mixed martial arts match. The greeting, though split, was warmer than the reception Trump received earlier in the week, when he was roundly booed and faced a “Lock him up!” chant at a World Series game he attended in Washington.

Though a bloody mixed martial arts fight may be an unusual venue for a president, Trump has longstanding ties to the UFC and sat just a few rows from the cage, where fighters took turns bloodying each other with a variety of kicks and punches. When one of the fighters, Gregor Gillespie, was briefly knocked unconscious by a roundhouse kick, Trump was watching intently but did not visibly react. He later clapped when Gillespie was able to return to his feet. Trump frequently waved to the crowd at the UFC 244 card, headlined by a battle between Nate Diaz and Jorge Masvidal for the organization’s newly minted Baddest Motherfucker in the Game belt. The belt was slated to be handed out by wrestler-turned-actor The Rock.

Trump’s ties with UFC head Dana White date back to 2001, when he hosted a UFC battle at his now-defunct Trump Taj Mahal hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey. White, who has said he would “never say anything negative about Donald Trump”, spoke at the 2016 Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

3D map to help combat dengue in West Bengal

SUDIPTO CHOWDHURY KOLKATA, Nov 3 (PTI):

The West Bengal government has sought the help of National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO) to create a 3D map of areas where dengue cases have been on the rise, a senior health department official said on Sunday.

According to sources in the health department, over 25 people in the state have succumbed to dengue since January and more than 2000 have been affected by the disease.

There are many vacant plots, abandoned buildings and isolated places, where water accumulated during rain - something that the “civic officials remain largely unaware of”, the official said.

The 3D map, once



prepared by the Kolkata-headquartered organisation, would give them an idea about these places or pockets, where stagnant water has

turned into a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

“These places, where water accumulates (after rain), become a den of mosquitoes. Since last

year, we have been flying drones to keep a tab on the vulnerable areas, as part of our efforts to contain the disease.

“But just photographs

taken by drones were not enough, we needed a better plan. That is why we have decided to get a 3-D map prepared,” the health official told PTI.

Despite preventive steps and awareness campaigns, lax approach of common people towards taking safety measures, especially after the monsoons, often turned out to be one the major reasons behind the spurt in dengue cases, he explained.

The map would help the civic bodies take stock of places, where water accumulation was likely, he said.

NATMO director Tapati Banerjee told PTI that the organization “has started preparing a map, albeit on an experimental basis for now”.

Not just Kolkata, the NATMO experts would cover areas in North and South 24 Parganas and Hooghly districts before formulating the map, Banerjee said.

“The health depart-

ment has written to us to prepare a 3-D map of places, where incidence of dengue has increased.

For a start, drones will be used to collect information from South Dum Dum municipality areas, which is among the the worst-affected,” she said.

Preparing a 3D map from aerial photos was not an easy job, as several factors, including the weather conditions, have to be taken into consideration, she insisted.

“It may take us a year to create the map. We will have to convert the images taken by drones into a 3D format and that, in itself, is a tough job. We have to be very precise when it comes to recording the height of buildings, depth of waterbodies among other things,” she added.

Panchayat withdraws decision to stop ration supply to 24 families for defecating in open: Sarpanch

BERHAMPUR (ODISHA), Nov 3 (PTI): A controversial decision of a panchayat in Ganjam district to stop ration supply under National Food Security Act (NFSA) to beneficiaries, who were found defecating in open, has been withdrawn in the face of a hue and cry.

Ration supply was stopped to 24 families, in Goutami panchayat under Sanakhemundi Block, for alleged defecation on the roadside.

Sarpanch of Goutami Panchayat, Sushant Swain, said that the intention of the panchayat was “not to deny ration under public distribution system (PDS) to any family”.

“Our aim is to caution the families who are in the habit of defecating in the open, despite several awareness campaigns,” Swain said.

The families whose ration was stopped initially, will get the supply this week, he said.

The ration distribution for October would continue till November 10, Swain said.

According to a decision taken at a panchayat meeting on October 20, the distribution of ration under the PDS was stopped to over 20 families, Swain had said on Friday. The move to



stop the ration supply was strongly opposed by many, who said that it violated the right to food, as enshrined in the Constitution.

Several people, including women members of the panchayat, had staged a dharna outside the block office on Saturday against the decision to stop the ration supply.

They withdrew the stir only after the Block Development Officer (BDO) assured them that all the beneficiaries would get their ration in a week.

“We decided to withdraw the agitation after an assurance by the BDO,” said Antaryami Swain, a former sarpanch.

“I have inquired that 400 families of the panchayat are yet to get their ration supply due to shortage of rice.

They will get it by November 10,” BDO of Sanakhemundi, Gayatributta Nayak, said.

Mentioning that toilets would soon be constructed for those left out under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), the BDO said, as many as 180 families do not have toilets in their houses at present.

The panchayat has asked the families to construct toilets in their houses in the next two months, the BDO said.

The sarpanch said, a meeting will be convened soon with the sub

collector (Berhampur), BDO (Sanakhemundi), members of the gram panchayat and women self-help groups (SHG) to chalk out a strategy to stop open defecation in the panchayat area.

Earlier, the panchayat had organised various programmes to create awareness to check open defecation.

Despite the awareness drives, several people, including some who have toilets in their houses, continue to defecate in the open, the sarpanch claimed.

“The mindset of the people needs to be changed through a proactive strategy,” Swain said.

Proud Athletic Bilbao are on a journey to find ways to win beyond ball games

SID LOWE theGuardian

“They push me against the wall, hands on my head. They frisk me, re-criminating me in a language I don’t understand. Something’s happening, but I don’t know what. Before I know it, it’s happening. I respond to their threats by shouting: ‘Please, help, please!’” So begins Togo, a book in which fear is a recurring theme. Written by Óscar de Marcos, it tells the story of the journeys that shaped him, the chapters alternating between his arrival in Africa and at Athletic Club Bilbao.

In the book De Marcos says his parents wanted him to be happy, seeing football as a means of education. But players, he writes, become vain and fall fast, pressure bringing a realisation that you are alone. He explains how Togo “tore away that bubble, that nonsense, that fame, in one go”. The opening scene is just a moment but also a metaphor: “When I read the [first draft of the] book back, I thought ‘it’s too much’,” he admits. “I wasn’t planning to open up like that.”

He was not planning to write a book at all. But, having first said no, De Marcos gave in. There is nothing unusual about a footballer writing a book but this is a little different. There is no contract and no money made. “They’re friends, they’ve been working with us 10 years; it’s hard to say no,” De Marcos says.

“They” means José Mari Isasi, from Athletic’s communications department, and Galder Reguera, cultural director at the club’s foundation, which this week published two books: Togo by De Marcos and the Basque-language Bizitzu Eskukadaka by Ainhoa Tirpau, goalkeeper and captain of the women’s team. Thirteen thousand copies will be distributed to schools and local clubs as well as being available, for free, in the club store and bookshops.

Athletic have commissioned and published 10 books before – from authors including David Trueba and David Safier, who read his from the centre spot at San Mamés – but this is the first time

players have written them. They have read them, though. De Marcos and Tirpau’s books have been published as part of Athletic’s annual Fútbol y Letras (football and letters) literature festival. Run by Reguera, author of a wonderful book about how father-son relationships are forged through football, the festival is now in its 10th year, championing the link between culture and sport. It has drawn authors such as Jorge Valdano, Philip Kerr and Eduardo Galeano.

As part of that programme Athletic set up the Athletic Reading Club, where supporters recommend books from which a selection is made. In the first year the president, manager and captain volunteered to read and report back on chosen texts. Every year since, players have taken part, reading books, discussing them and making recommendations of their own.

Ernesto Valverde, the Barcelona manager, put forward Ronnie Reng’s A Life Too Short, about the suicide in 2009 of the Hannover goalkeeper Robert Enke, and Edward Bunker’s memoirs, Education of a Felon. Xabi Etxeita, whose dad died when he was young, read Hector Facionlince’s Oblivion, about his father’s murder by Colombian paramilitaries. The former Liverpool defender Mikel San José read Andre Agassi’s Open, a book that is full of lessons about the dangers of elite sport, with parents of the club’s youth-teams.

Then there is the film festival, Thinking Football. Almost 100 films have been screened over seven years, often with a marked social or political dimension, although De Marcos describes projects like these, like his, as “human”. Perhaps the most “local” club there is also includes an international aspect. British films have been successful – the Dalglish film Kenny won last year, like Next Goal Wins and The Pass before – with recent screenings including 89, about Arsenal’s title win, Kaiser! and I Believe in Miracles, about Brian Clough at Nottingham Forest, with directors,

actors and protagonists invited and players: Ossie Ardiles, Ledley King, Lee Dixon. It is a shame no one recorded John Robertson’s catalogue of jokes when he came.

For the past six years Athletic have also worked with Real Sociedad, staging a bertso derbia before each derby – a kind of competitive, improvised traditional Basque street poetry between “teams” representing the clubs.

Then, come kick-off, the identity remains. Seventeen of the 22 starters this season were Basque. The Basque Country makes up 1.4% of Spain’s territory, 4.9% of its population and 20% of its top-flight football teams: Alavés, Eibar, Real Sociedad and Athletic. Include Osasuna (the name is Basque) and Navarre (some consider it one of seven historic Basque provinces) and it has a quarter of first division teams. All five have Basque managers. Athletic famously have only Basque players – and have never been relegated.

Here talk of values does not sound empty. They call San Mamés the Cathedral; go and you may understand why. No, they are not the only club who have a foundation or who run social projects or champion literacy crusades. But events such as this reinforce that personality, reflected in the way they choose to express their identity.

In part that is because trophies cannot – a growing predicament in the super-club era. There must be something other than success, some other measurement of it. “They think about more than winning games,” says the American coach Bob Bradley, who introduced American Pharaoh at the festival. There must be something, full stop. So there is: themselves. Yet it goes beyond that, to something more universal, to ideals celebrated in others too.

Athletic set up the One Club Man/Woman award, designed to celebrate loyalty, which has been awarded to Billy McNeil and Malin Moström (2019), Carles Puyol (2018), Sepp Maier (2017) and Paolo Maldini (2016).

‘We are a special country’: South Africa hopes World Cup win can bring unity

JASON BURKE JOHANNESBURG, 03 NOV [THEGUARDIAN]: South Africans continued to celebrate their Rugby World Cup triumph on Sunday, with many in the sometimes fractious and troubled nation echoing Springbok captain Siya Kolisi’s post-match message of unity and strength. Images of Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, congratulating South African players in the changing room – including half-naked scrum-half Faf de Klerk – went viral on social media and was broadcast repeatedly by TV networks.

The nation’s president, Cyril Ramaphosa, due to fly back from Japan on Sunday after appearing with the team to lift the trophy, described

“a historic moment”.

“This historic win has been achieved with the passionate support of more than 57 million South Africans who have been inspired by the Springboks’ performances throughout the tournament.

“This is a powerful indicator of what we can achieve when we set goals for ourselves and we work together to achieve success,” Ramaphosa, who took power last year, said. “It is a moment that is embedded forever in our national memory.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nobel prize winner and leader of the decades-long struggle against the racist, repressive apartheid regime, said the Springboks had restored “a self-doubting

nation’s belief.” “The win has provided a welcome moment of optimism,” Tutu said. “Though there has been much progress since the dark days of apartheid, South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries in the world, and deep tensions between communities remain.

“Violent crime is a serious problem, with poor people most likely to be victims. There is deep public frustration with soaring unemployment, low economic growth, patchy delivery of basic services and widespread corruption.

“We are a special country, and an extraordinary people. On days such as this we understand that when we pull together the sky is the limit. When we believe in ourselves we can achieve our dreams,” Tutu said. Most newspa-

pers and bulletins were still leading with the news of the win on Sunday morning. Many quoted the words of Kolisi, who grew up in deep poverty in Eastern Cape province and spoke immediately after the match of support from “people in the taverns, in the shebeens, farms, homeless people ... and people in the rural areas.”

“We have so many problems in our country. But to have a team like this, we come from different backgrounds, different races and we came together with one goal.”

The history of rugby in South Africa – described as “the sporting embodiment of white minority rule” – touches many of the most sensitive issues in a nation where historic grievances are still powerful.

What can Tokyo 2020 learn from the Rugby World Cup?



TOKYO, Nov 3 (AFP): In many ways, the Rugby World Cup was a mini dress rehearsal for Japan, as it gears up to host an even bigger sporting event next year: the Tokyo Olympics.

While there are many differences -- far fewer countries participated in the Rugby World Cup but it was spread out over 12 host cities -- there are some lessons Tokyo 2020 can learn from the tournament.

- CONTINGENCY PLANNING MAY NOT BE ENOUGH -

Rugby World Cup organisers spent hundreds of hours gaming out every possible scenario for what would happen if a typhoon, earthquake or volcano struck a venue in Japan, one of the world's most seismically active countries that is also battered by hurri-

canes each year.

In the end, even the worst-case scenario planning was insufficient as Hagibis, one of the largest and most powerful typhoons in recent years, reared up from the Pacific and took direct aim at Tokyo.

Changing venues was impossible as the storm covered practically the entire Japanese archipelago and organisers were forced to cancel three fixtures as Hagibis brought historic rains and ferocious winds that killed more than 80 people.

The Olympics are not being held during peak typhoon season (although the Paralympics are) but Tokyo is never safe from earthquakes and typhoons can strike most of the year round.

Tokyo 2020 has its own weather-related

controversy to deal with as doctors have warned against top-level competition at the height of the Japanese summer when the heat and humidity are unbearable.

- JAPANESE FANS ROCK -

Tokyo 2020 already has no concerns about filling the stadiums -- tickets could have been sold several times over -- and the Japanese fans melted many hearts at the Rugby World Cup.

While they may not have been familiar with all the finer points of rugby, they cheered enthusiastically and fairly for all the teams, creating a sensational atmosphere remarked upon by all competing nations.

A unique feature of the Rugby World Cup that could extend to Olympics events not familiar to Japan is how fans "adopt-

ed" another team.

Images of Japanese supporters gamely singing other national anthems -- including young children selected as mascots -- or trying the New Zealand haka war dance wowed the world and showed the "omotenashi" (Japanese welcome) Tokyo 2020 hopes to emulate.

Players responded, starting a trend of bowing deeply to the crowd as per Japanese tradition after every game.

- FOREIGN FANS (MOSTLY) ROCK -

Despite scare stories about rugby fans drinking Tokyo dry and flashing their tattoos in Japanese baths (strictly forbidden), the vast majority of foreign fans were impeccably behaved at the Rugby World Cup and added to the festival

atmosphere.

However, some videos of drunken fans cavorting on public transport went viral on Japanese social media, leading some to warn of "improper" behaviour when the Olympics come around.

While rugby fans are well-known for a healthy thirst, Olympic organisers may also find a clash of cultures between foreigners and the ultra-reserved Japanese when it comes to public drunkenness.

And it's not just the fans. Some Uruguay players appeared to have let the side down by allegedly trashing a nightclub after losing their final match, sparking legal action from the owner to reclaim thousands of dollars in damage.

- GET THE KIT IN -

If the Rugby World Cup is anything to go by, Olympic organisers should make sure they are fully stocked on memorabilia and replica clothing.

Spurred by the brilliance of the home team, sales of the Brave Blossoms replica shirts exploded, with long queues forming outside specialist clothing shops several hours before they opened.

Stocks quickly ran dry, leaving many disappointed. And it was not just Japan team shirts that proved popular but Japanese fans lapped up shirts from all the top teams -- the famous All Black jersey a particular favourite.

Hockey India names 33 players for junior men's national coaching camp

NEW DELHI, Nov 3 (PTI): Hockey India on Sunday named a 33-member probable list for the junior men's national coaching camp, beginning in Bengaluru on Monday.

Players will report at the Sports Authority of India, Bengaluru campus for the four-week national camp.

The Indian junior men's team produced an impressive performance at the 9th Sultan of Johor Cup earlier this month, beating Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia in the competition.

India finished runners-up after going down to Great Britain in the final.

The group has been playing together for over a year now and will look to work on a few aspects at the camp.

"This camp will give us a chance to focus on getting into good positions and creating goal-scoring opportunities. The group needs to improve on

passing the ball and team coordination as well," said David John, High Performance Director, Hockey India.

CORE PROBABLES LIST:
GOALKEEPERS: Pawan, Prashant Kumar Chauhan, Sahil Kumar Nayak

DEFENDERS: Suman Beck, Pratap Lakra, Sanjay, Yashdeep Siwach, Mandeep Mor, Parampreet Singh, Dinachandra Singh Moirangthem, Nabin Kujur, Sharda Nand Tiwari, Niraj Kumar Waribam

MID-FIELDERS: Sukhman Singh, Gregory Xess, Ankit Pal, Akashdeep Singh Jr, Vishnu Kant Singh, Gopi Kumar Sonkar, Vishal Antil, Surya NM, Maninder Singh, Rabichandra Singh Moirangthem

FORWARDS: Sudeep Chirmako, Rahul Kumar Rajbhar, Uttam Singh, S Karthi, Dilpreet Singh, Arajieet Singh Hundal, Amandeep Singh, Prabhjot Singh, Shivam Anand, Arshdeep Singh.

India need to work on finishing and deep defence: coach Graham Reid

SAUMJOYTISCHOUDHURY BHUBANESWAR, Nov 3 (PTI): Endeavouring to accomplish an "unfinished" task at the Tokyo Olympics, Indian men's hockey team coach Graham Reid wants strikers with incredible finishing skills and a strongly fortified defence.

The Australian oversaw India's entry into next year's quadrennial extravaganza with victories over Russia in FIH's Qualifiers.

Reid was part of the team that won silver at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics but, as a coach, he had a disastrous campaign at the 2016 Rio Games, as the Kookaburras crashed out in the quarterfinals.

"Obviously, I have an unfinished business. You always dream of an Olympics podium finish. I was lucky to win one as a player and those memories are things you

hold on to," said Reid after India confirmed their place at the Tokyo Games on Saturday. Eight-time champions India qualified after thrashing Russia 7-1 in the second game to win the double-leg FIH Olympic Qualifiers 11-3 on aggregate at the Kalinga Stadium here.

"That's what we need to bring to this team and give it a big shot (in Tokyo)," the 55-year-old coach said.

"I told the players just now that we have nine months (before Olympics). Just get better and better, that's our plan. Focus on the process, result will take care of itself." Reid said his players will look to polish their game in the coming months.

"I think for me what we need to get better in is finishing. We are creating a lot of opportunities, which is great. But we need to get more returns.

"Also in deep defence, we have to get tighter. We are still giving away too many opportunities (to opponents)," he said. After opting out of the inaugural edition last year, India will make their debut in the FIH Pro League against the Netherlands in January next year.

After Netherlands, India will host Belgium and Australia in February before embarking on overseas tours. Reid believed playing against top teams will be handy for his side in its preparation for the Games.

"That's one of the things that Pro League does, that it sets up competition schedule between now and Olympics," he said.

"It's great that we have a squad of 33, which may have to become 32. Pro League is a big opportunity, to work out for the Olympics and there are a lot of games during that period.

Why US men's soccer will always be chasing the pack

BEAU DURE
theGuardian

The US men's soccer team will be forever looking up at the world's powers for several reasons.

The USA fell behind by 100 years, in part because of cultural forces that made Americans favor American sports. Now that soccer is relatively ingrained into mainstream America (the kid on the new drama Stumptown often wears a Portland Timbers shirt), US soccer entrepreneurs and supporters are battling to pick the right direction forward, and those battles too frequently end up in court. Americans are obsessed with the quick fix for whatever ails the men's team, ignoring the more systemic issues beneath the surface, and the constant in-fighting imposes a somber air on a sport built on joy.

One more reason the USA always struggle: US supporters are insecure in their identities.

Let's be clear: The US soccer community is justly proud of its inclusivity. Everyone is acutely aware that this is a global game. English-speaking soccer fans try to teach each other enough Spanish to follow broadcasts on Univision and Telemundo. Soccer is ahead of most sports in providing professional opportunities for women, and most of us recognize that we still have a long way to go. Soccer fans embrace the many lesbian players in the women's game, and it's no surprise that soccer was the first major US sport with an openly gay male player -- Robbie Rogers, who came out after his release from English club Leeds United and figured his career was done, only to be coaxed out of his brief retirement to play for the Los Angeles Galaxy, whose fans greeted his first appearance with a standing ovation. We are a diverse bunch.

But among suburbanites and young urban hipsters, being a soccer fan used to carry a sort of outsider's cachet. This is a group that wants a wide selection of craft beers, and is more likely to argue the merits of recent Radiohead albums than dance to Taylor Swift. At the extreme, some soccer fans are the Goth kids from South Park -- elitist nonconformists who frankly can be kind of obnoxious about it. Let the Great Unwashed watch brutal (football) or boring (baseball) sports.

So Major League Soccer's growth poses a problem. We want to keep up our soccer cred. But MLS isn't a microbrew. It's Budweiser, a former MLS sponsor. (The league has moved one rung up the beer snob's ladder, to Heineken.)

"We" are certainly divided. Young city dwellers are happy to partake of the MLS fan experience, especially in Portland and Seattle. But for many segments of this crowd, MLS is simply too pedestrian. And the world's

biggest clubs are clearly better than any MLS club, even Atlanta United, so they can't support that.

We're that desperate to be hip. More precisely, we have to be snobs. In the parlance of the US soccer community, Eurosnoobs.

So if you've ever wondered whatever happened to the guy in your college who insisted that the campus radio station had gone too commercial, now you know. In 2014, a couple of months before the World Cup,



Deadspin held a vote -- an NCAA tournament-style set of brackets in which the "winning" entity in the vote advanced to the next round -- to find the "Bitchiest, Most Defensive Fans in America." The top seed in the sports-related bracket: Soccer fans. To give some perspective, Duke fans -- supporters of the college men's basketball team everyone loves to hate -- were seeded fourth in that bracket.

In the same bracket, MLS Fanboys were broken out as a subset and seeded 12th. Deadspin's explanation for the nomination sounded sympathetic, pointing out the MLS contingent had to battle on two fronts against people who hate soccer and soccer people who hate MLS.

This identity crisis isn't just social media fodder. It's at the root of the disagreements and lawsuits that plague the professional game and the national teams. It also reaches down to the grass roots.

As a relatively new soccer nation, we have a lot of parents who don't know much about the game but eagerly sign up their kids and get weirdly competitive about it. And we have plenty of people who are happy to prey on their ignorance.

Consider a press release that made the rounds on behalf of a youth soccer coach who was in danger of

losing his visa. You can't blame the guy for wanting to stay in the country, and we're living in a time in which a lot of Americans don't want to recognize the contributions of people who didn't come over here before the Revolution. But the gist of the press release wasn't a humanitarian appeal to keep a hard-working immigrant in the United States: "How do we save US Soccer? With ubertalented coaches like [name and country redacted], struggling to get an O-1 Visa, but time is running out," read the subject line. The press release goes on to posit this coach as "that tiny bright light we need" who would be "bringing European soccer techniques to young US soccer players."

This press release wasn't sent in 1980. This was from 2018. If you've spent any time at all in US youth soccer, you know that hundreds of coaches have brought European soccer techniques to young American players for generations. But a lot of parents don't know that. This press release wouldn't have been sent if the coach and publicist thought the target audience of American parents understood that an accent does not a great coach make.

Then we have a busy marketplace of clubs and leagues, all claiming to offer the path forward to the pros, or at least to college. Recent scandals and studies on college admission have shed light on the fact that being a star athlete sometimes matters more than being a star student, which explains some of the motivation for parents whose kids don't make or can't commute to pro academies to shell out thousands of dollars a year for "travel" soccer.

Many of these leagues and clubs offer different approaches. And parents are ill-equipped to know which one is best for their children.

Not that the soccer community as a whole can agree. Do we want the AYSO-driven ethos of parity and opportunity for every player? Or do we want a Darwinian struggle to sort the future pros from the eight-year-olds with no future? Then what style to we want our young phenoms to play?

Other countries have national teams that reflect their nation's culture. Germany is methodical and efficient. Brazil's soccer carries the uninhibited joy of

Carnival. Italy invented a stern defensive approach punctuated by breathtaking moments of skill. England is evolving but has a rugged mentality, no surprise for a country obsessed with hard work and character. The Scandinavian countries have an English-style "direct" approach of banging the ball around and running hard, mostly in an effort to avoid freezing. If Mexican teams ran that much, they'd collapse from the heat.

The American style is ...?

We're trying, apparently. US Soccer hired its first men's national team general manager in 2018, bestowing the job on 1994 World Cup hero Earnie Stewart and charging him with pushing forward the team's national style and tactical principles. If only we knew what that was. For a while in the 2010s, the obsession was Barcelona, with its "tiki-taka" philosophy of short passes. This trend played into a sudden obsession with futsal, the indoor game (without the walls that American indoor soccer has) that puts a premium on short-range connections. Americans have failed to develop such skills, we were told, and so that became the focus on various curricula handed down from on high and usually ignored.

Americans also lacked the ability to dribble and beat defenders in a one-on-one situation, we were told. Those of us who coached the youngest players in recreational soccer were told to forget about passing for the first couple of years and just work on getting players comfortable with the ball at their feet. Some coaches took this to extremes, emphasizing individual efforts at older ages when the games expand from four-a-side to seven-a-side.

No one's going to argue against developing a good feel for the ball, both dribbling and passing at short range, at a young age. But that's not really a "style." That's simply teaching fundamental skills, like an elementary school teacher teaching multiplication or subject-verb agreement.

We can't please everybody. US Soccer certainly can't. Go all in on a Barcelona-style passing game, and some good players developed by good coaches won't fit in. Go all in on MLS, and good players won't get opportunities with the big clubs in Europe. Go all in on sending players to Europe, and MLS will wither.

And the fan base can't win. Sit quietly on our hands, and we're accused of having no atmosphere. Come up with chants emanating from large supporters' sections, and we're accused of being mere imitators of the European game.

It's all quite tumultuous and, at times, kind of fun. But is it a community that can produce a World Cup winner? Not likely.

Kartarpur ready to welcome Sikh pilgrims for 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev: Imran

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, Nov 3 (PTI): Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday shared some of the dazzling pictures of the Kartarpur complex and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, saying the revered venue is ready to welcome the Sikh pilgrims for the 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev.

The pictures were shared by Khan on his Twitter account ahead of the planned inauguration of the Kartarpur corridor on November 9.

The year 2019 marks the 550th birth anniversary year of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, whose birthplace is Sri Nankana Sahib in Pakistan. "Kartarpur (is) ready to welcome Sikh pilgrims," he tweeted.

In another tweet, he congratulated his own government for completing the construction work on time.

"I want to congratulate our govt for readying Kartarpur, in record time, for Guru Nanak jee's 550th birthday celebrations," he said.

It appears that Khan is trying to sell the idea of



religious tourism by attracting millions of Sikhs who have several holiest places in Pakistan.

Earlier, he also abolished the condition of passport for the Sikhs coming to Kartarpur and the service fee of USD 20 dollars for those coming for the inaugural ceremony and on the 550th birth anniversary of the Sikh Guru on November 12. The proposed opening of the corridor coincides with the presence of tens of thousands of protestors in the capital Islamabad. Their

leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman had demanded resignation of Khan as conditions to disperse peacefully.

Meanwhile, Ahsan Iqbal, a leader of Pakistan Muslims League-Nawaz and ally of Rehman, on Saturday criticised the move of Khan to allow Sikhs from India enter into Pakistan without passport.

Iqbal said Kartarpur opening was a good gesture but "lifting condition of passport for foreigners like Indians was a blunder".

The Kartarpur Corridor will connect the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in India's Punjab with Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur, just 4 kilometres from the International Border, located at Narowal district of Pakistan's Punjab province.

Notwithstanding a chill in bilateral ties over Kashmir, Pakistan and India after tough negotiations signed a landmark agreement last week to operationalise the historic Kartarpur Corridor to allow Indian Sikh pilgrims to visit the holy

Darbar Sahib in Pakistan.

The two countries decided that 5,000 pilgrims can visit the shrine everyday and that additional pilgrims will be allowed on special occasions, subject to capacity expansion of facilities by the Pakistani side.

India and Pakistan have also decided that the corridor will be operational through the year and seven days a week and that pilgrims, except kids and elderly persons, will have a choice to visit it as individuals or in groups.

Trump brushes off report of smugglers cutting through border wall

WASHINGTON, Nov 3 (AFP): US President Donald Trump on Saturday brushed off a report of smugglers cutting through his signature wall on the Mexican border, saying it can be "easily fixed."

"We have a very powerful wall. But no matter how powerful, you can cut through anything, in all fairness," Trump told reporters in Washington prior to his departure for

New York. "Cutting is one thing, but it's easily fixed. One of the reasons we did it the way we did it, it's very easily fixed. You put the chunk back in," the US president said.

The Washington Post reported Saturday, citing unnamed US agents and officials, that smuggling gangs have used readily available commercial power tools to cut through the wall, creating gaps that people

and drugs can be moved through.

A cordless reciprocating saw that sells for as little as USD 100 can slice through the wall in minutes, the Post reported.

Trump has made building a wall to stem the flow of migrants crossing into the United States from Mexico a key plank of his presidency, but Congress has refused to pay for its construction.

Saudi regulator says approves Aramco share offering

RIYADH, Nov 3 (AFP): Saudi regulators on Sunday approved state energy giant Aramco's request to make its stock market debut, firing the starting gun on the highly anticipated offering which could be the world's largest.

The Capital Markets Authority did not give any details of the Initial Public Offering (IPO) but it is expected to begin trading in mid-December.

The markets regulator "has issued its resolution approving the Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco)... application for the registration and offering of part of its shares," it said in a statement on its website.

The sale, which could value the company at up to 1.7 trillion, is the

linchpin of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's plan to revamp the economy and wean it off a decades-long dependence on oil.

Sources close to the IPO have told AFP that Aramco is expected to sell a total of five percent on two exchanges, with an initial listing of two percent on the Tadawul Saudi bourse in December.

That will be followed next year by a three percent listing on an overseas exchange, which has yet to be picked.

Aramco was expected to launch the first part of the two-stage IPO in October, but the process has been delayed, reportedly due to the prince's dissatisfaction with the valuation of the firm, which fell short of the hoped for 2 trillion.

Chinese news agency slams 'barbaric' Hong Kong office attack



HONG KONG, Nov 3 (AP): China's state-owned Xinhua News Agency has denounced the attack on its office in Hong Kong by pro-democracy protesters as "barbaric."

The city's journalists also criticized the attack on the media organization during Saturday's melee that marked nearly five months of unrest in the Chinese territory.

Xinhua in a brief statement strongly condemned the "barbaric acts of mobs" that van-

dalized and set fire to the lobby of its Asia-Pacific office building in the city. Hong Kong Journalists Association called for an end to violence against the media.

It was the first strike against the official Chinese news agency in a show of anger against Beijing, a day after the ruling Communist Party vowed to tighten the grip on the violence in the city. Police say Sunday over 200 people were detained.

Javadekar postponed three meetings on pollution: Sisodia

NEW DELHI, Nov 3 (PTI): Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia accused Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar of postponing three meetings with state environment ministers, saying on Saturday that either he has no time or does not consider treating the national capital's poor air quality a priority.

Sisodia's remarks came on a day Javadekar alleged that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, by asking school students to write letters to his Punjab and Haryana counterparts over pollution caused due to stubble burning, was "politicising" the issue and presenting them as "villains".

The first meeting was cancelled on September 12, the second one on October 17 and the third on October 19, the deputy chief minister claimed,

but did not clarify meetings with which state environment ministers were cancelled.

"I want to ask the Centre for how long will the people of Delhi breathe this poisonous air. Either he has no time or does not consider treating the national capital's poor air quality a priority," Sisodia told reporters.

He also said that farmers in neighbouring states do not have any means of getting rid of crop stubble, and that is the reason why they are forced to burn it.

"The Centre has made 63,000 machines (to stop stubble burning) available in two years. How will it help 26 lakhs farmers? With this speed, is it a programme for 50-60 years? If it is so, what should the people of Delhi-NCR do for next 50-60 years?" the deputy chief

minister asked. He further claimed that the cost of operating the machines was so high that even those farmers who have it prefer stubble burning.

Delhi has been battling alarming levels of pollution since Diwali with the city recording the worst air quality of the season on Friday.

According to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR), about 46 per cent of pollution in Delhi on Friday was caused due to stubble burning in the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana.

This led Delhi-NCR's air quality to touch 'severe plus' category, prompting authorities to shut schools till November 5, ban all construction activities and declare a "public health emergency".

Massive anti-encroachment drive on cards in Srinagar



SRINAGAR/JAMMU, Nov 3 (PTI): A massive anti-encroachment drive is on the cards in Srinagar as over 200 identified encroachments have been finalised for land retrieval proceedings, officials said on Sunday.

The district's Revenue Department has also identified more than 1,000 hectares of encroached land and is initiating relevant action as part of the first-phase of the drive, they said.

According to the officials, the Srinagar administration has issued instructions to the concerned departments to take "serious and definite" action involving initiation of criminal proceedings and eviction of encroachments and illegal constructions on government land and in water bodies in the district.

Over 200 encroachments in the forms of landholdings and constructions have been fi-

nished for initiation of action in the first phase of the drive aimed at retrieving all state land and water bodies in the district, they said.

This comes in the wake of a detailed report on encroachments identified in Gilsar and Khushalsar lakes by the Revenue Department. The report was compiled on the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar Shahid Iqbal Choudhary and submitted to his office, they added.

Besides locational maps of the encroachments, the report indicates names of the encroachers and those involved in land grabbing and illegal constructions.

Choudhary has issued directions for cancellation of illegal entries in revenue records and also sought explanation from the concerned agencies for providing civic amenities such as power, water supply, drainage and

roads to colonies and structures raised on state land and in water bodies, the officials said.

Last month, more than 20 encroachments were removed and a dozen FIRs lodged against land grabbers in Srinagar, they said.

According to the officials, the Srinagar administration has also taken note of inputs about illegal constructions being done at night time in the Anchar lake area on the outskirts of the city.

"The concerned officers have been instructed to keep a vigil in the area and initiate strict action with assistance from the local law enforcement officials," they said.

They added that the administration has also issued directions for strict adherence to the in-operation magisterial order banning movement of tipper trucks with construction material without permission.

Clash between cops, advocates at Tis Hazari Court, police vehicles vandalised

NEW DELHI, Nov 3 (PTI): Lawyers and police personnel clashed at Tis Hazari Court complex here on Saturday afternoon during which nine police vehicles were vandalised, officials said.

Lawyers alleged that two of their colleagues were injured, including one in police firing, but the police denied that it had opened fire.

Bar Associations condemned the incident and called a one-day strike across all district courts in the national capital on November 4.

Secretary of Tis Hazari Bar Association Jaiveer Singh Chauhan told PTI that a lawyer's car allegedly hit a police jail van following which an argument broke out between him and the police.

"He was then taken inside a lockup and beaten up badly. The SHO came but was not allowed inside. The district judges of the central and west district, along with six other judges went there but were unable to let the lawyer out," Chauhan alleged.

He further claimed that after about 20 minutes, the police fired four rounds of bullets while the judges were leaving the spot.

He claimed that one of the lawyers, Ranjeet Singh Malik, who was



protesting outside along with others, suffered a bullet injury. The injured lawyers were rushed to St. Stephen's hospital here, he said.

"The police manhandled the lawyers. This was an incident of complete negligence by the police," Chauhan alleged.

The lawyer was released from the lockup after about half an hour, he claimed.

A police vehicle was set on fire and eight others were vandalised during the fracas, the officials said, adding that the Fire Department dispatched ten fire tenders to the spot.

A huge posse of police and anti-riot vehicles were deployed at the site after the violence.

Meanwhile, lawyers sat on a protest at the gate of the court premises, demanding action against those responsible.

KC Mittal, Chairman of Bar Council of Delhi, said, "We strongly condemn the brutal and unprovoked attack on lawyers by police at Tis Hazari Court. One lawyer is critical. A young lawyer was beaten in lockup, a high-handedness of the police. They should be dismissed and prosecuted. We stand with Delhi lawyers."

Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra visited the court complex along with party members and called for action against the personnel involved in the clash.

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K-BEAUTY: “People are moving away from harsh, straight brows and are favouring softer shapes,” Chief Makeup Artist Lee said, “We try as much as possible to follow the natural shape of the brows, with a very slight arch.” He then went on say that this way, the brows don’t command attention but harmonises perfectly with the features on one’s face. For this, Lee recommends using brow powders like the Laneige Brow Shaping Kit, applied with a small dense brush or a sword-shaped brow pencil like the Innisfree Autoeyebrow Pencil.

Channing Tatum to star in ‘Soundtrack of Silence’

LOS ANGELES, NOV 3 (PTI): Actor Channing Tatum is set to star in and produce Paramount Pictures’ drama “Soundtrack of Silence”.

According to Variety, Tatum will produce the project through his banner Free Association.

He will reteam with Temple Hill, the producers of his 2010 drama “Dear John”.

Jamie Linden has penned the film, which is based on “the KQED story about Matt Hay, a sophomore in college who is losing his hear-

ing and wants to capture the sounds that are slipping away, including the songs and soundtrack of his youth. That has the young man listening to music with a new appreciation as he develops a silent soundtrack in his head and deeper love for his girlfriend.”

Reid Carolin, Peter Kiernan, Marty Bowen, Isaac Klausner and John Fischer are also attached as producers.

A director is yet to be roped in for the project.

NBC cancels ‘The InBetween’ after season one

LOS ANGELES, NOV 3 (PTI): NBC has cancelled its drama series “The InBetween” after first season.

According to Variety, the show aired between May and August this year.

The series featured Harriet Dyer as Cassie, a woman who is able to see visions of the past and future as well as communicate with the dead.

She uses her power to help her detective father

solve many dark and puzzling murders. Justin Cornwell, Anne-Marie Johnson, Cindy Luna, Chad James Buchanan and Paul Blackthorne also starred on the show.

Moirra Kirland was the creator as well as the executive producer on the series.

Universal Television, NBCU International Television Studio, and Heyday Television were attached as producers.

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»THE DAY AHEAD»

ARIES: When you argue more than you talk, it is a sign. When everyday rituals become a reason to fight, it is a sign. When you are okay going to bed angry with each other and leaving in the morning before they wake up, it is a sign. When you look for ways to avoid talking about the real stuff, it is a sign. Open your eyes to what’s happening and resolve to take things in your hand. The power to turn things around is and has always been yours.

Tip: Communicate from a place of care.

TAURUS: If there’s anybody who knows how to work the room, it’s you, Taurus. Your social life is a party and nobody is complaining! Say yes to the new and let the Universe surprise you—in the best possible way. This is the season to celebrate your friendships and connect with your soul tribe on a deeper level.

Tip: What a wonderful feeling to be surrounded by the people you love.

GEMINI: Our perception colours our reality. If your world is rife with disappointment, there’s a good chance you’re choosing to look at the cup as half-empty. What you want to do instead: weigh the blessings.

Open your eyes to the fact that you are living a charmed life. As for your personal relationships, remember that there’s little you can do to change people or influence their thought patterns

Tip: Count your blessings.

CANCER: Hello and welcome to the Tinder age! A place where multiple options are available to you, but none of them can replace the void within. What this phase of your life is bringing your attention to: you are looking for love in all the wrong places. Once you’re done with the self-sabotaging spree, breathe, step back and reassess your equation with yourself. Confront the metaphorical darkness that is keeping you from attracting healthy relationships. Remember, it’s better to be by yourself than to be in relationships that add to the loneliness.

Tip: Love yourself a little more.

LEO: Is love without passion, love at all? Thankfully, you’ll never have to find out. On the cards this weekend: a raw and passionate connection. Revel in the joy of uncovering new layers. Single lions may discover they

share chemistry with somebody who’s been around them for a while. Don’t hesitate to take the reins. Scorpio season encourages us to embrace our sexuality and act upon our desires.

Tip: A raw and passionate connection is on the cards.

VIRGO: If you’ve been counting blessings instead of calories, it’s time to change the approach a little. Remember, your body is a vessel that supports your sacred mission. It’s important to check in and see how you are feeling on every level. No, we’re not suggesting something extreme like a crash diet.

Tip: When the mind, body and soul are in harmony, the world automatically becomes a better place.

LIBRA: You’re allowed to take as long as you want to before you say yes. Just be sure your decision is based on your need to establish a deeper relationship with yourself rather than the fear of repeating past patterns. If you have integrated the soul lessons, then you will have no problems moving forward with dignity and grace.

Tip: Make the most of this period of introspection.

SCORPIO: Dreams, visions, signs, and

symbols. Be cognisant of what you are perceiving beyond the veil. Your intuitive abilities are heightened at this moment. No wonder they call you the sorceress of the zodiac. To keep a track of all the information that’s coming through, maintain a psychic journal that encompasses more than just dreams.

Tip: Your psychic abilities are heightened at this moment.

SAGITTARIUS: The Universe is in the mood to play your personal genie. What do you truly desire, Sagittarius? A partner who looks at you like you are magic, a harmonious home, a one-way ticket to Amsterdam or a wardrobe that would put the Jenners and Kardashians to shame? A new phase of your life is about to begin, and it requires you to break up with trepidation and start acting in alignment with your intentions.

Tip: Ask and you shall receive.

CAPRICORN: Capricorn, you’ve been loved many times before. But never with this much depth, intensity and warmth. This is your license to feel all the feels, to allow yourself to be swept off your feet. Know that you de-

serve every bit of the love you have attracted into your Universe. Words of affirmation will continue to be your drug of choice.

Tip: You are attracting love in myriad forms.

AQUARIUS: This phase of your life calls for conscious communication. Don’t assume, ask. There’s a good chance you’re letting your own fears, doubts and insecurities come in the way of a harmonious relationship. Remember, everything can be solved if and when you are with the right person.

Tip: Find a way to talk things out.

PISCES: Domestic bliss is on the cards for you today. You are more than ready to start a new phase. For some, this could indicate moving or tying the knot. Never have you experienced a love that moves you so deeply, Pisces. What you need to remember as you build a life together: the fine line between dependence and interdependence. The both of you are a part of each other’s universe, but not all of it. Continue to do things by yourself from time to time.

Tip: A successful relationship is made up of two complete individuals who add to each other’s lives.

MONSTA X’s Wonho Announces Sudden Departure From K-pop Group

On 31 October, member of popular K-pop boy group MONSTA X, Wonho has announced that he will be leaving the group and parting ways with Starship Entertainment. The talent agency revealed this shocking news via their social media channels.

In a letter to fans, Starship Entertainment stated that, “After a long discussion with MONSTA X’s Wonho, we have agreed that it’s best to part ways amicably at this point.” They went on to apologize to fans and that MONSTA X will continue with their schedules as a six-member group from today.

News of Wonho’s departure is shocking as MONSTA X only recently made their comeback with their mini-album, FOLLOW: Find You on 28 October. Furthermore, the group is confirmed to perform at the iHeart Radio Jingle Ball this December, alongside top acts like

Taylor Swift and Jonas Brothers.

In conjunction with the statement given by Starship Entertainment, the 26-year-old idol has also shared a handwritten letter to his fans, addressing and confirming his departure from the group. He started off the letter with, “First, I would like to apologise



for not being able to keep the promise that I would only provide good memories to our fans and for causing them pain.”

Want to play good characters to make AbRam understand why people love me: Shah Rukh

MUMBAI, NOV 3 (PTI): Shah Rukh Khan believes his son AbRam still doesn’t relate to the fandom he enjoys, and the superstar plans to play a “good character in a commercial film” to make his youngest child understand the reason for people’s love.

The actor, who turned 54 on Saturday, celebrated his birthday with thousands of fans at St Andrew’s Auditorium in suburban Bandra.

During the interaction with fans, Shah Rukh shared a conversation he had with his elder son Aryan last year.

“When they (Aryan and Suhana) were growing up, they saw ‘Baazigar’ and ‘Kuch Kuch Hota Hai’, but AbRam should get a good character in commercial film that after watching it, he would feel that his father is a big star. Aryan said that in the next three-four

years I should make such a great film that AbRam knows why so many people love me. I will work very hard to make sure I can have some new characters,” the star said.

Shah Rukh, who tasted stardom with grey roles in “Baazigar”, “Anjaam” and “Darr”, said he never liked the “hero type” characters.

“I don’t like the hero type. When I had started in the film industry and the first interview that I gave I said, ‘I have come here to play character roles’. My friends like Vivek Vaswani and producer were upset with me.

“My idea is if within a hero’s role I can add a new dimension to the character, otherwise I feel, all the young boys and girls in creative field, you will not have enough at your disposal to learn from filmmakers like me and other actors if we don’t do something new.



Singer SPB upset with PM Modi: Our phones were snatched but stars took selfies

Singer SP Balasubrahmanyam, who is known for his outspoken attitude, recently met prime minister Narendra Modi at a reception. However, he was not pleased with how he and others were treated at his residence. SPB took to Facebook to claim that he was bewildered at their double standards and partiality shown towards certain stars. Reportedly, everyone’s phones were snatched away and they were given tokens for the same. SPB questioned how and why only the Bollywood stars were allowed to take selfies with PM Narendra Modi. His post is going viral on social media.

SPB’s post read, “I am grateful to Ramoji Raoji, (Eenadu), because of whom I was able to attend a reception hosted by our Hon. Prime Minister at his home on the 29th of Oct. Upon entering the premises, we were asked to leave our cellphones

with the security personnel and were given tokens for the same. But I was bewildered

several other celebrities from the industry. The only representative



at the STARS taking selfies with the PM on that day. THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO HMMM????? (sic)”

Last week, PM Narendra Modi hosted a ‘Change Within’ meet to promote Gandhism and his ideologies on Mahatma’s 150th birth anniversary. The event saw the who’s who of Bollywood including Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan and

from the South was Telugu producer Dil Raju. SPB has now called out the double standards of PM Modi and his team.

After the ‘Change Within’ meet, Ram Charan’s wife and entrepreneur Upasana Kamineni also felt that there was no representation from the South. She voiced the same and requested PM Modi and his team to look into this issue.