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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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*Delhi, Punjab
and Haryan
CMs urge
Centre to
convene urgent
meeting*

NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH, Nov 2 (PTI): Amid a blame game over failure to check toxic haze that has enveloped the national capital and neighbouring areas, the governments of Delhi, Punjab and Haryana on Saturday called for urgent intervention by the Centre to develop and implement a joint plan with the states to address the “serious” situation.

Delhi’s Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia accused Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar of postponing meetings with state environment ministers thrice, on September 12, October 17 and on October 19, saying either he has no time or does not consider treating the national capital’s poor air quality a priority.

He also claimed that with the Centre making 63,000 machines to stop stubble burning available in two years, it might take 50-60 years to implement the programme and asked “what should the people of Delhi-NCR do” during this period.

Sisodia’s remarks came on a day Javadekar alleged that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was politicising the issue by asking school students to write letters to his Punjab and Haryana counterparts over pollution caused due to stubble burning and was to trying to project the other chief minister as “villains”.

“We have started holding inter-state meetings of NCR ministers and officials. All stakeholders need to act together and not blame each other,” he said.

Kejriwal, meanwhile, wrote to Javadekar saying air pollution “is not a Delhi specific issue, it is a North India issue and therefore, requires a North India solution under the “chairmanship” of the Union Minister.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar also wrote to Javadekar requesting him to convene a meeting of chief ministers of Delhi and neighbouring states to prepare a joint strategy to address the problem of severe pollution in the National Capital Region.

Without naming anyone, Khattar also criticised the “growing tendency” on the part of some stakeholders to “play petty politics” on the issue. The AAP government in Delhi has been blaming BJP-ruled Haryana and the Congress-ruled Punjab for failing to check stubble burning which is considered one of the main contributors to air pollution in the Delhi-NCR region.
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President arrives, visits Lingdum Monastery

GANGTOK, 02 Nov (IPR): President of India, Ram Nath Kovind accompanied by First Lady Savita Kovind arrived in Gangtok this morning. He is on a two-day visit to Sikkim.

The President was received upon arrival at Army Helipad, Libing, by Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad, Chief Minister of Sikkim, Prem Singh Tamang, Speaker, Sikkim Legislative Assembly, L.B. Das, Ministers, MPs, MLAs, Chief Secretary, S.C. Gupta, DGP Sikkim, A. Shankar Rao, GOC 17th Mtn Division, Major General Ram Chandra Tiwari, DC East, SP East and State Protocol Officer.

After receiving the Guard of Honour from the 17th Battalion of the Rajput Regiment under 17 Mtn Division of the Army, the President and his entourage proceeded to Raj Bhawan, Gangtok.

Later, the President visited Lingdum Monastery, Ranka, accompanied by Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad. He was received and welcomed at the Monastery by Garwang Rinpoche,



Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang, Cabinet Ministers, Chief Secretary and senior officers of the State Government.

The President was given a traditional welcome by monks of the

Monastery through the display of Singhi Dance and Mask Dance. He offered his prayers in the

Monastery and also interacted with the monks. President Kovind will be attending the first half

of Sikkim University’s Convocation ceremony on Sunday, after which he will leave for Meghalaya.

Indefinite strike by lawyers hits work in courts across Jammu

JAMMU, Nov 2 (PTI): Work at the high court and lower courts was affected in most parts of Jammu region on Saturday, following an indefinite strike by lawyers against the recent decision to divest the judicial courts of its powers to register various documents and vest the same with the revenue department.

The strike call was given by Jammu chapter of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association (JKHCBA) on Friday, also opposing the proposal to shift the high court from its present location at Janipur to the outskirts of the city.

The indefinite strike by the lawyers is seen as a major challenge for G C Murmu who took over as the first Lt Governor

of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir which came into being on October 31.

On October 23, the State Administrative Council (SAC) headed by the then Governor Satya Pal Malik accorded sanction to the creation of a new department, which will function under the overall administrative control of revenue department, to provide hassle free and speedy service to the citizens for registration of documents pertaining to immovable property like sale, gift, mortgage, lease and bequest.

Earlier, the revenue department was involved in only issuance of ‘Fard Intikhab’ (authentication of property with reference to original record) and cost estimation of

land on the ground of which registry was being done by judicial officers.

Following the strike by lawyers, work in all courts including the high court, district courts, subordinate courts, tribunals and revenue courts remained affected for the second consecutive day on Saturday.

Almost all major political parties, including the BJP and the Congress, expressed their resentment against the decision to divest the judicial courts of its powers to register various documents, saying that the change is not in the public interest.

“The decision to abstain from the work against the government decision was taken in the General House meeting of the association which

met under the chairmanship of president Abhinav Sharma yesterday (Friday),” a spokesman of the JKHBA said.

While opposing the proposed shifting of the high court site to Raika, he said the general house was of the view that the move requires cutting thousands of trees at the site, which is considered ‘lungs’ of the Jammu city, besides causing inconvenience to the general public and advocates.

Meanwhile, Financial Commissioner Revenue, Pawan Kotwal, who has recently been assigned the charge of Inspector General of Registration J-K, convened a meeting of registrars here and had threadbare discussion on various aspects of the process for registration.

Sikkim qualifies for knock-out round of Vijay Merchant Trophy



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 Nov:

Sikkim qualified for the knock-out of Vijay Merchant (Under 16 Boy’s) Trophy 2019-20 by winning their match against Nagaland by 9 wickets at Sovima Cricket Stadium, Dimapur, Nagaland, on 01 Nov. With this win, Sikkim has topped the Northeast and Bihar group, a press

release informs.

Sikkim will be playing five league matches in this tournament of which four matches have been played. Sikkim won three matches against Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland, drew one as the match was abandoned due to rain against Arunachal Pradesh. The last match will be played against Manipur

at Ravenshaw University Ground, Cuttack, Odisha on 06 Nov, 2019.

The match started on 31 Oct where Nagaland won the toss and elected to bat first. In the first innings, Nagaland was all-out for 89 runs in 34.1 overs. Md Sarim Iqbal took 3 wickets, Obedonx Subba; Tusya Naman Sharma and

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Govt revokes Akshay’s suspension

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 Nov:

The State Government has revoked the suspension of Additional Director General of Police Akshay Sachdeva on the recommendation of the three-member inquiry committee which has submitted its report in August earlier this year.

The three-member committee headed by the then Chief Secretary AK Shrivastava, Home Secretary SC Gupta and then DGP, SD Negi, had examined the role of Mr Sachdeva in a lathicharge on Sikkim Krantikari Morcha [SKM] workers in 2013.

The lathicharge was led by Mr Sachdeva who was the IGP Law & Order at the time. In July 2019, the gov-

ernment had placed the ADGP under suspension pending inquiry by the three-member committee. This followed from a petition filed against Mr Sachdeva by SKM’s Kala Rai and three others.

Mr Sachdeva was suspended after Supreme Court checked with the State Government on what action it intends to take against him after a one-man Special Investigating Team instituted by it had submitted its report on the lathicharge of 11 Feb, 2013. This report had put on record that lathicharge was not required on the day.

The 3-member inquiry committee which was eventually formed and the criminal cases with-

drawn on 27 August.

Earlier, in February, the Apex Court has directed the State government to take holistic approach in the matter and indicate the next course of action it intends to take depending upon which the Apex court could further examine grievances of the petitioners and or reliefs as claimed.

While senior State Government officials confirmed that the suspension was revoked after examining the inquiry report, the contents of the inquiry report have not been made public in view of matter being sub judice.

The case is expected to be taken up on 12 December by the Supreme Court.



Sikkim celebrates Chhat Puja

Chhat Puja, an important festival for the Bihari community, was celebrated across the State today. At Tadong’s Durga Mandir, large number of devotees gathered for prayers and offerings. **[photos: Sandeep Prasad]**

Mamata asks Centre to probe WhatsApp snooping case

KOLKATA, Nov 2 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday said the centre should probe into the WhatsApp admitting that Indian journalists and human rights activists were spied upon by unnamed entities used by Israeli spyware Pegasus.

She reiterated the allegation that her phone was being regularly tapped by the union government.

She criticised the role of the central government in the snooping row and alleged it was totally aware of the security breach on the messaging platform.

Banerjee described the issue as “very serious” and said she will request Prime Minister Narendra Modi to get the matter probed.

“My phone is tapped,



I know that because I have got the information and have the evidence with me. The government knows it because it is they who are doing it. This is happening at the behest of the central government and two three state governments. I will not name the states but one is a BJP

ruled state,” she said.

Earlier also on several occasions Banerjee had alleged that her phone was being tapped by the central agencies.

The Trinamool Congress supreme further alleged that espionage practise is going on in the country and described the current situation as

“quite serious”.

“Where is our freedom of speech? Which Independence are we living in now that today we cannot even talk (freely over the phone). Even if we are talking, they are getting tapped and someone is listening to them,” Banerjee told reporters.

“Nothing is safe now,

not even WhatsApp. Earlier, we thought WhatsApp can’t be intercepted. But, now even WhatsApp has not been spared. Neither the landline phones nor mobile phones are safe. There is total espionage going on (in the country).

“This is a very serious matter. I will request the

PM to investigate into the matter,” Banerjee said.

Facebook-owned WhatsApp on Thursday said Indian journalists and human rights activists were among those globally spied upon by unnamed entities using an Israeli spyware Pegasus.

WhatsApp said it was suing NSO Group, an Israeli surveillance firm, that is reportedly behind the technology that helped unnamed entities spies hack into phones of roughly 1,400 users.

These users span across four continents and include diplomats, political dissidents, journalists and senior government officials.

Facebook owned WhatsApp has over 1.5 billion users globally, of which India accounts for about 400 million.

Gangtok MLA thanks voters



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 NOV:**

The recently-elected Gangtok MLA, YT Lepcha of the Bharatiya Janata Party, has reiterated his commitment to fulfill all promises made for the overall development of the people of Gangtok.

He also thanked the people of the constituency for putting their faith and trust in BJP in the by-polls.

He also expressed his gratitude to BJP high command for giving him the opportunity to serve the people of Gangtok and recognized that Sikkim Krantikari Morcha played a major role in ensuring

victory for him and has thanked SKM supporters for supporting him.

Speaking to media persons here this evening, Mr Lepcha assured to work as an ‘Imandaar Chowkidar’ for the people of Gangtok and fulfill all promises made for the constituency.

He asserted that BJP was not a party from the outside and would work to further strengthening the protection and rights of the people of Sikkim.

He stated that the better coordination with the State government and the Centre would fulfill all demands of the people of Sikkim.

Dikchu school NSS start Special Camping Prog at Sokpay



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 02 NOV:**

The NSS (National Service Scheme) Unit of Government Senior Secondary School Dikchu started its Special Camping Programme (SCP) at adopted village of Sokpay, Lower Rakdong for both Unit I and II for the year 2019-20.

The inauguration programme had SKM CLC president, Tumin Lingee constituency, Lall Man Limboo, as chief guest. Also present in the function were Principal, Dr Saroza Pradhan, Ward Panchayat, CL Sharma, Sonam Lepcha, Social Worker, Tseten Lepcha

and NSS National Awardee, Naresh Chettri.

Programme Officer, Arjun Pradhan highlighted the programme of the week-long camp, such as construction of garbage pit, maintenance of organic herbal garden and the villager’s awareness programme on Tuberculosis, Malaria, Dengue, etc.

A total of 100 volunteers from both the units will participate in this week-long residential camp scheduled from 02 to 08 Nov. The programme ended with the vote of thanks delivered by NSS volunteer, Avishkek Chettri.

1st Ministers’ Gold Cup begins in Sombaria

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 NOV:**

Twelve-day 1st Ministers’ Gold Cup Invitational Football Tournament initiated by Daramdin Khel Kud Sangh (DKKS) is being held at Sombaria playground from 02 to 13 Nov. The tournament has cash prize of Rs. 3 lakh for the winning team and Rs. 2 lakh to the runners up, a press release informs.

Chief Minister, PS Tamang is scheduled to attend the final day of the tournament on 13 Nov as chief guest.

The inaugural day today had General Manager, State Bank of Sikkim, SR Karki, as the chief guest of the day. Mr Karki in his address gave kudos to the Sangh for having



organized the event in a grand manner. He further assured DKKS all possible help and support through SBS in the days to come.

The day’s programme also had colourful cultural displays, Scottish Band display and Tambola.

The inaugural match was played between Sikkim Aakraman FC and United Brothers, Kalimpong. At full time, the score was 2-2. In the extra time of 30 minutes, both teams scored a goal each to end in a draw again.

Sikkim Aakraman FC finally won the match in the tie breaker penalty shootout with the final score of 06-05.

On Sunday, Red Panda FC, Namchi will play against Sanju Football Academy (SFA), Sombaria.

JHS Headmasters thank CM for pay fixation arrears



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 NOV:**

All Sikkim Junior High School Headmasters have thanked Chief Minister, PS Tamang [Golay] for releasing the much awaited pay fixation arrears.

In a press release, School Head of Rangpo Secondary School, Suren Tamang, School Head of

Upper Sumin Junior High School, Navraj Lamsal and School Head of Cheuribhotay Junior High School, R Chettri have appreciated the new government’s decision to release the arrears.

The release also congratulates the Chief Minister on winning the by-election from Poklok Kamrang constituency.

JUTA to meet Bengal Guv over revised pay, other demands

KOLKATA, Nov 2 (PTI): Representatives of the Jadavpur University Teachers’ Association (JUTA) would meet West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar to discuss several of their demands, a senior leader of the teachers’ body said on Saturday.

The JUTA is demand-

ing implementation of revised UGC pay scale as per seventh Central Pay Commission recommendations and release of funds for the institute.

Dhankhar, who is also the chancellor of the state-run university, had asked the JUTA members to meet him at Raj Bhavan to discuss

their demands. “The JUTA has informed the Hon’ble Governor that we hope the issue of implementation of the revised UGC pay scale will be looked into by the chiefminister.

“We hope the Governor ensures that the issue of central funding is addressed,” JUTA General Secretary Partha Pratim Roy told PTI.

Roy said the Raj Bhavan has communicated to the JUTA saying the Governor will let the students’ body know about his availability by next week, according to which date of the meeting will be fixed.

Minister distributes shawls to elderly on Chhat Puja



**YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 02 NOV:**

Thousands of people from Bihari community celebrated Chhat Puja on the banks of Teesta today. Area MLA cum Health Minister, MK Sharma attended the puja as chief

guest accompanied by president, Bihari Jagaran Manch Singtam branch, Dilip Gupta along with SKM workers. During the celebration, the Area MLA distributed blankets and shawls to all the elderly people of the community.

Rangpo school wins Quiz Competition



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 NOV:**

Rangpo Senior Secondary School won the Inter School Quiz Competition organised at Chujachen Senior Secondary School today, a press release informs.

Rangpo SSS, Linkey SS and Chujachen SSS participated in the quiz

competition which was hosted and organised by Chujachen SSS.

Two students from each school participated in the competition. The team from Rangpo School stood 1st followed by Linkey School and Chujachen School in 2nd and 3rd positions, respectively

Delhi, Punjab...

The Haryana chief minister, in a telephonic conversation with Javadekar earlier in the day, requested him to convene a meeting, preferably on Sunday.

Following up his conversation with a letter, Khat-tar said the meeting of all chief ministers and environment ministers of the states concerned would help evolve an actionable plan and a joint strategy to address the serious situation.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh too stressed on the need for the Centre’s urgent intervention, underscoring that his state was not oblivious to the misery of people in the national capital, “whatever many around the country might have been led to believe.

He also noted that the Centre had failed to respond to his proposal for a separate bonus amount at the rate of Rs 100 per quintal to facilitate stubble management by the farmers.

“Is it not your government’s task, Mr. Prime Minister, to search for that permanent solution, in consultation with all the other stakeholders, including Punjab, Delhi and Haryana? he said

Admitting that stubble fires, supported by the winds blowing in the wrong direction, were contributing to the toxic levels of air pollution that prevail today in Delhi, the chief minister, at the same time, noted that data from several independent agencies had pointed out that large-scale industrial pollution, the traffic overload, the excessive construction activity taking place in Delhi were equally, if not more, to blame.

But, Singh said, he took no solace from this data, nor could this blame game help any of them to assuage our own guilt in a matter of such serious national consequence.

The chief minister further wrote that Punjab had tried to enforce the law against stubble burning to the maximum extent possible, and was even penalising the farmers, but it does not really deter the farmers from resorting to burning of paddy straw to keep their pathetic margins from falling further.

Delhi and Haryana, too, were doing what they could, in their own ways, he pointed out, and added that the role of the Centre had remained dubious in the whole affair, even though the central government was the biggest stakeholder of national prosperity.

However, Javadekar earlier said air pollution is a problem which has aggravated in the past 15 years and is now being remedied by the Narendra Modi government.

“I feel it is very unfortunate that the Delhi chief minister is politicising the issue of pollution and indulging in blame game instead of finding a solution. He is instigating children to send letters to Haryana and Punjab chief ministers to present them in a bad light and as villains,” the minister said on Saturday.

“The solution to air pollution is not with a ‘switch on’ and ‘switch off’ mode. It is with sustained efforts that pollution will be brought down. All the state agencies and people need to participate in this effort to combat it,” the minister said.

Taking a dig at the Delhi chief minister, Javadekar, who is also the minister for information and broadcasting, said that instead of spending crores of rupees on advertisements, the Delhi government should focus on using the money for larger good.

“I appeal to all agencies to work together in combating air pollution and give relief to the people and not indulge in cheap politics,” he said and urged people to use cycles instead of motor vehicles as much as possible and travel by public transport.

Sikkim qualifies...

Yawar Hussain took 2 wickets each and Tarun Sharma took 1 wicket.

Chasing a total of 89 runs Sikkim made 175 runs giving a lead to the team of 86 runs. Senge Wajahat Medhi scored 66 runs, Md Arif (31), Irfan Ansari (15), Obedonyx Subba (18), Adiv Tamang (8), Md Sharim (6).

In the second innings, Sikkim bowlers restricted Nagaland for 108 runs getting the target of just 22 runs. Once again the bowler showed aggressive bowling. Yawar took 4 wickets, Tusya 3 wickets and Tarun 2 wickets.

Sikkim achieved the target in five overs with the loss on one wicket where Adiv Tamang made 14 runs and Md Arif 6 runs.

This is for the first time that Sikkim’s Under 16 team has entered the knock-out round and will be playing in the pre-quarterfinals of the tournament.

President of SICA, Lobzang G Tenzing says he will be rewarding the team players with a “Special Blazer” that will identify them as Champions of SICA and also commemorate the history scripted by the team.

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GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

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

For details contact: 9083826462

FLAT FOR RENT/LEASE

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

For more details: 9083826462 /9832556698

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College.

Flat Land no cutting required. Price 30 Lakhs (negotiable).

Contact: 9800201335

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us: news@summittimes.com

Sikkim University - on a mission to provide quality higher education



GANGTOK, 02 Nov (PIB): Sikkim University was established by an Act of Parliament on 02 Jul, 2007, with a vision to achieve intellectual, academic and cultural development of the people of Eastern Himalayas, and to provide quality higher education. The University is presently located at Gangtok and operates from several hired buildings located along NH-10. The main administrative office of the University is located at Samdur, 6th Mile, Tadong. The permanent campus of the University is coming up at Yangang in South Sikkim, located at a distance of 56 kilometers away from Gangtok.

The University seeks to disseminate and advance knowledge by providing instructional and research facilities in such branches of learning and to make provisions for integrated courses in humanities, natural and physical sciences, social sciences and other allied disciplines in the educational programmes of the University. It also seeks to take appropriate measures for promoting innovations in teaching learning process, interdisciplinary studies and research and to educate

and train the manpower for the development of the State of Sikkim. Sikkim University aims to be one of the leading academic and research hubs in the country and to create well-trained human resources to be absorbed all over the world. It also focuses on both access and quality of higher education at an affordable cost for the deserving students of the country in general and Sikkim in particular.

The President of India in his capacity as the Visitor of the University had appointed Prof AP Mitra as the first Chancellor of the University on 02 Jul, 2007, a renowned scientist, Prof Mitra unfortunately passed away on 03 Sept, 2007. Then Dr MS Swaminathan was appointed as the Chancellor for a period of five years from 2007-2012. Justice (Mrs) Ruma Pal was appointed Chancellor in 2012. She continued till the present Chancellor Lt Gen (Retd), DB Shekatkar was appointed in March 2019. Similarly, Prof Mahendra P Lama was appointed as the first Vice-Chancellor of the University on 02 Jul, 2007. He continued till Prof TB Subba was appointed as Vice-Chancellor

on 15 Oct, 2012. He remained in office till 14 Oct, 2017. Present Vice-Chancellor Prof Avinash Khare assumed his office on 11 Oct, 2018.

The University started the first post graduate courses in four departments- Microbiology, Sociology, International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies and Management in September 2008, with less than 20 students. Today, after 12 years of establishment there are six established Schools of Studies under which there are 32 full-fledged academic departments offering undergraduate, postgraduate, MPhil and PhD programmes with more than 160 faculty members, 110 non-teaching staff members and 2100 students. Ever since its establishment, Sikkim University has had several milestones to witness. One such milestone is the establishment of post graduate departments in Lepcha, Bhutia and Limbu languages, which are not only listed as endangered languages by the UNESCO, but they are also recognized as the tribal and indigenous languages of Sikkim, Darjeeling and Nepal Himalayas. With this, the

University acquires the rare distinction of being the only University in the entire world where these languages are taught at the postgraduate level. The University also has an established Bioinformatics Centre which aims at enhancing the quality of biological research in the University. Similarly, the Centre for Endangered Languages was established in December 2016 for preservation and promotion of endangered languages of the region to complement national and international endeavours to document and preserve endangered languages which are on the verge of being forgotten with each passing day.

The University Library was established in 2008 and today, it is comparable to any good academic libraries of the country so far as its modernization and introduction of services are concerned. The University had introduced RFID technology with automatic circulation and security system as early as in 2012 which is ISO certified with the facility of self-check-in, check-out, online reservation and renewal of books, serial holdings and e-

books. All buildings of the University including the Library premises is Wi-Fi enabled and it also has its own webpage with a mobile App enabling the users to access library resources on their mobile phones from anywhere and at any time. The Library has more than 45,500 books with the subscription of more than 240 journals to supplement the e-resources available under UGC-Infonet (Sodhsindhu) and Delcon consortiums.

Separate hostel facilities are available for both girls and boys with good security round the clock. The University also has a well-equipped gymnasium where students and staff members alike can avail of the gymnasium facilities by paying a nominal subscription fees. A number of international and national conferences, seminars and workshops are organized by the academic departments each year and such events enrich the learning experiences of the students and also expose them to varied and collaborative learning experiences. The University is facilitating its young faculty members to go for Refresher and Orientation courses in other universities and participating in various seminars in India and abroad. The University also invites a large number of specialists from various parts of India to teach and train the students in special areas of knowledge besides sending the students for study tours, fieldworks and internships to various parts of the country.

With one of the best work ethics of the employees, a disciplined student community and excellent support of the people, the University has been able to achieve many milestones and hopes to establish itself as an institute of national repute.

Sikkim Police enters quarter-finals of Gold Cup



SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 02 Nov:

Sikkim Police entered the quarter-final round of the ongoing 39th All India Governor's Gold Cup Football Tournament 2019 being played here at Paljor Stadium. In the second pre-quarter-final match played on Saturday afternoon, Sikkim Police defeated BSS Sporting Club, Kolkata 2-1 in the extra-time.

Both teams played neck-to-neck with an attacking game from the start but could not capitalize some good opportunities in the match. The home team conceived

an own goal in the 35th minute. With this goal, Kolkata club ended the first half with 1-0 lead.

Sikkim Police players sweated it out hard in the second half to bounce back into the match. In the 75th minute, the home team got a penalty shot when one of its players was tackled roughly by the opponent's stopper in the D-box area. Sikkim Police stopper, Dawa Lepcha successfully converted the spot kick into the equalizer to end the full time of the match in a 1-1 draw. The match was extended for 30 minutes extra-time to decide the winner.

Both teams again missed some good opportunities to score in the early minutes of the extra-time. In the last minutes of the extra-time, Tempo Gyalsten Bhutia scored the winning goal for Sikkim Police. With its 2-1 victory, Sikkim Police has secured its berth in the quarter-finals of the tournament. Sikkim Police will now take on Punjab Police in the quarter-final match on 06 Nov.

On Sunday, the third pre-quarter-final match will be played between Eastern Railway and Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club.

Govt to set up 'hunar hubs' in every state: Naqvi

ALLAHABAD, Nov 2 (PTI): Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Saturday said here that his ministry has been working on war-footing to set up hunar hubs across the country to train indigenous talent of master artisans, craftsmen in the next five years as per the market needs.

On the occasion of formal inauguration of a Hunar Haat, being held at the north central zone cultural centre here from November 1 to 10, 2019, Naqvi said his ministry has sanctioned 100 Hunar Hubs in different parts of the country in the first 100 days of the Modi government-II.

Training will be provided to master artisans, craftsmen and traditional culinary experts accord-

ing to the modern needs in these Hunar Hubs, he said, adding that his ministry has been working on war-footing to establish them.

Uttar Pradesh Minister for Khadi and Village Industry Siddharth Nath Singh, Minister of Civil Aviation and Minority Welfare Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi and other senior officials were present on the occasion.

Naqvi said the employment-oriented schemes of the Modi Government such as Hunar Haat have ensured economic empowerment of traditional master artisans and craftsmen from minority communities.

More than 2.5 lakh master artisans, craftsmen and culinary experts have been provided employment and em-

ployment opportunities in the last three years through 'Hunar Haat.' These include a large number of women artisans, the minister said.

More than 300 master artisans and culinary experts including a large number of women artisans from every corner of the country are participating in the Hunar Haat at Allahabad.

All the 'Hunar Haats' to be organised in 2019 and 2020 will be based on the theme of Ek Bharat Shresth Bharat, said Naqvi, adding his minority has decided to organise about 100 Hunar Haat in the next five years across the country.

The next Hunar Haat will be organised at Trade Fair, New Delhi and then in Mumbai.

Javadekar postponed three meetings on pollution: Sisodia

NEW DELHI, Nov 2 (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.

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

NEW DELHI, Nov 2 (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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Dreaming of Quality in Spending

Stressed exchequer and misplaced priorities

Sikkim's smart rate of growth, as measured in GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) terms, makes for interesting reading. Sikkim is powering ahead on a stronger clip than the rest of the country, with the GDSP even though it has climbed down to around 11% from the high teens some years ago still higher than what the country or other states can muster. But when one looks beyond the growth percentages, one realises that the economic buoyancy is essentially being held up, even bloated, by the State exchequer. The purchasing power standards here are financed by what the State pays out by way of salaries and wages to its employees and payments for supplies and contracts since apart from being the largest employer, it is also the largest consumer here. This then could explain why people, including the State Government, save those boosted by pay arrear receipts, have been complaining of a Hilley Dasain and a Sukha Tihaar this year, and they did not mean just the weather. GSDP is the total income of the State or the market value of goods and services produced using labour and other factors of production at current prices. Since government salaries and wages make up nearly a quarter of the State's Gross State Domestic Product, this sector should perhaps be understood better.

Salaries and wages account for nearly 29 per cent of the revenue receipts of the State. With the pay revision and arrears already doled out, expect this component to escalate substantially in the coming years irrespective of what the fiscal health of the State might be. When it comes to revenue expenditure, the pay out on salaries consumes around 37 per cent of this kitty. Pensions, in turn, account for around 10 per cent of revenue receipts and 13 per cent of the total revenue expenditure. In actual monetary terms, the expenditure on salaries increased from Rs. 355.97 crore in 2003-04 to Rs. 492.91 crore in 2007-08 registering an increase of 38.47 per cent. In 2010-11, salaries and wages cost the State exchequer Rs. 882.31 crore. In 2014-15 this amount stood at Rs. 1,236.37 crore! In 2017-18, this expenditure stands at Rs 1,478.98 cr. Expand this a bit, and the statistics reveal that 56.56% of the revenue expenditure goes towards committed expenditure on salaries, pension, interest payment and subsidies. The pressure of paying out salaries, wages and pension at nearly 45% of the revenue expenditure is so huge that it is now eating into the development expenditure of the State.

Dry economic terms serve well to downplay the import of what the figures tell and hence we explain these terms to drive home the share of salaries to what the government spends. Revenue receipts, of which salaries use up 29%, comprise interest and dividends on investment made by the government. Revenue expenditure, nearly 37% of which is towards salaries, is the cost of resources consumed or used up in the process of generating revenue. With nearly 46% already spent on salaries and pensions, it is hardly surprising that not enough is left for the other components of revenue expenditure like maintenance or loan servicing. That perhaps explains the general disrepair that one finds the State's infrastructure in.

Agreed, this is very superficial economics at best, but should serve the purpose for now. To get a better grip of the kind of money the government pays its officers to work for the people, revenue expenditure should be compared to capital expenditure. Revenue Expenditure is the cost of maintaining the bureaucracy and other liabilities of the State and Capital Expenditure is the amount spent on creating real assets. The commissioning of a new road for example, is capital expenditure, and its maintenance, revenue expenditure. Of all the expenditure incurred by the Government, the most important, as far as the lay citizens are concerned, is Capital Expenditure and the non salary component of Revenue Expenditure.

As things stand, Revenue Expenditure makes up a staggering 70 per cent of everything that the Government spends. Capital Expenditure, the important expenditure for the people, stood at a paltry 25%. In lay man's terms, for every Rs. 100 that the Government spends, nearly Rs. 75 goes towards paying salaries and maintaining offices and assets to ensure that the remaining Rs. 25 gets spent properly. The need to realign the allocative priorities to improve the quality of expenditure is obvious. Unfortunately, if one were to look at the existing debates in the public domain, no one is even alluding to it yet – not the government, and definitely not the employees. The slant is instead towards further increasing the Revenue Expenditure share even more. Since the resources are not limitless, maintenance is the first casualty and then the Capital Expenditure will get curtailed.

This confounding economic model is now the one from which there is no escaping anymore, and what should perhaps be drawn into sharper focus is that the handsome remunerations are at least matched with dignified delivery of services.

Don't Make Intimate Violence Victims Look for Help

Research shows they fare better when police and community organizations coordinate assistance

ANNE DEPRINCE
theconversation.com

Michelle Monson's story, reported by Rachel Louise Snyder in "No Visible Bruises," is a haunting tale of intimate violence and missed opportunities.

Michelle tried to escape her husband's abuse. She tried to get help for herself and her children. Many of the people from whom she sought help had a piece of the puzzle. But no one saw the whole: that Michelle's life was in imminent danger.

In the end, Michelle's husband killed her and their two young children.

Not every story of intimate violence ends as Michelle's did. But Michelle's story has much in common with what I've learned from women over 20 years of conducting research on the consequences of intimate violence.

Over that time, public awareness of intimate violence has increased, in part as a result of the #MeToo movement. Yet women and children remain incredibly vulnerable to harm after violence. They may face physical injuries and psychological distress as well as educational, employment, social, housing and legal problems.

And getting help can be overwhelming.

IN THE AFTERMATH

After intimate violence, victims may miss work and lose wages because of injuries or abusers stalking them at work. On college campuses, avoiding assailants can mean skipping classes and withdrawing from activities.

Just getting basic needs met, such as housing, is often difficult after violence. Some women flee their homes to escape abusers. Others face eviction threats from landlords who have wearied of the police showing up. Landlords are not supposed to evict tenants for being domestic violence victims. But victims may not know this.

Victims who report the incident to the police may be asked to have numerous conversations – with victim advocates, uniformed officers, detectives, prosecutors and even child-protection workers.

To get help with legal, health or social service needs, victims may have to visit multiple agencies at different locations. The very problems caused by the violence – housing instability and financial stress – can make getting to those agencies difficult.

If victims get through the door, they may not know the right questions to ask to get the services and support they need. For example, victims may

not think to ask a counselor or police officer whether their landlord can evict them.

Victims may also discover that service providers do not necessarily communicate with one another, sometimes due to confidentiality limitations. Tracking lots of people and information can be made more difficult by post-traumatic problems victims may have with attention and memory.

Recognizing the challenges facing victims, communities nationwide are building victim-centered, coordinated responses to intimate violence. These responses prioritize meeting victim needs and sharing information (when confidentiality allows). Research points to the benefits of such coordinated approaches.

COORDINATING RESPONSES

To find out whether coordinating responses could help victims, I worked with a research team to test what happens when criminal justice and community-based agencies work together to respond to domestic violence.



Using a randomized-control design, we compared usual practice – where advocates gave victims lists of local resources that the victims could call themselves – to a new, coordinated response.

In the coordinated response, community-based and criminal justice agencies reviewed police reports together. They identified issues facing victims, such as housing problems or abusers showing up at their workplaces.

Based on what victims might need, a community-based agency from the team then contacted each victim. The agency offered services, such as counseling or help getting a court order to keep the violent partner away from the victim.

A year later, the coordinated response had an impact. Leaving an abuser or holding them accountable in the criminal justice system can be difficult and even dangerous for victims. Yet, women who got the coordinated outreach (compared to other women who did not) were more likely to have left and been more involved in the prosecution of their abuser.

Though the psychological effects of intimate violence can last long after the violence, women who got the coordinated outreach had fewer negative mental health symptoms a year later compared to other women.

BREAKING DOWN SILOS

Coordination of services for victims of intimate

partner violence makes sense because victims' experiences with one agency can affect whether they contact other agencies, including the police.

My research team saw this when studying sexual assault, one of the most underreported crimes.

After sexual assault, women who got more practical help from community-based providers were more likely to report the assault to the police, even months later. For example, counselors and nurses helped women get medical attention, information and referrals for services to meet their needs. This practical support from people working outside the criminal justice system can help open doors into the system. Though research points to the value of coordination, building coordinated responses is not easy.

Victim service providers trained in their own specialties have to learn to work across disciplines. For example, a counselor who knows about problems with attention, memory and traumatic distress has to learn the details of what happens in criminal investigations. A police officer who knows about investigations has to learn about the psychological impact of trauma. Agencies have to build new cultures of collaboration across their organizations' boundaries.

We saw this in action when we studied concurrent investigations undertaken after campus sexual assault allegations. These investigations were conducted by both schools and law enforcement, who each have their own legal obligations, timelines for investigations and ways of talking about cases.

Often when these concurrent investigations happen, victims and investigators can end up feeling as if everyone is working at cross-purposes.

But these investigators set out to do something different. Over 16 months, we observed how professionals from schools, community-based agencies and criminal justice offices went about trying to improve these concurrent investigations.

They spent much of their time teaching each other about their agency's procedures and building relationships. For example, campuses explained the steps they took to meet the fast investigation time line expected by the federal government. The police explained the procedures they had to follow for interviews and collecting evidence.

They told us that their participation in the group helped them do their jobs better. Now they knew who to call and how to solve problems in the middle of complicated investigations.

Victim-centered, coordinated responses to intimate violence promise to improve outcomes for women and help providers do their jobs better. While these approaches do not necessarily change abusers' behaviors, they can be an essential part of how communities help victims escape intimate violence, seek justice and rebuild.

[the writer is Professor of Psychology, University of Denver]

How much of a difference does the number of kids in a classroom make?

DIANE WHITMORE
SCHANZENBACH
theconversation.com

Teachers in Chicago, USA, went on strike in October, suspending instruction for the city's public school students for 11 days.

Educators in the nation's third-largest school district were seeking higher pay and improved benefits. But they also wanted to reduce the number of classrooms with large numbers of students.

The deal the union representing Chicago's teachers struck with the city calls for enforcing limits on class size that are in place but not always heeded. It also commits the authorities to spend US\$35 million a year to cover the cost of hiring more teacher's aides to relieve teachers responsible for 32 or more kids in kindergarten through third grade.

Such a change would require more teachers.

Would it also make a difference for kids?

I've studied how schools can boost student achievement for more than two decades and I've found that smaller classes are better for students. This is especially the case in the early grades and for students from low-income families.

Unfortunately, though, it is impossible to say what class size between 15 and 40 is ideal. However, the evidence suggests that every decline in class size within this range leads to kids learning more.

REVIEWING THE RESEARCH

Many factors influence educational outcomes.

Total spending, class size and teacher quality are important. So is a school's culture, including how school staff work together and learn from each other, and how they respond to student needs. The

characteristics of a student's classmates matter, as does the fit between the student and her teacher.

A randomized study conducted by researcher Helen Pate Bain and her colleagues in Tennessee in the mid-1980s, called Project STAR, provided the strongest evidence to date that children learn more when they are in smaller classes.

The researchers randomly assigned nearly 12,000 students and their teachers in kindergarten through third grade in 79 schools to classes with 13-17 students or 22-25 students.

The results were clear: students in the smaller classes performed significantly better on math and reading tests, with a gain of 4 percentile points or more. The benefits of smaller classes were even larger in schools with low-income students.

More recent research indicates that the benefits of being taught in smaller classes persist long after students have moved on to the next grade. They become more likely to complete high school and go to college and less likely to end up becoming parents in their teens, to name some of the most compelling examples.

Many other researchers who have studied the impact of smaller classes in Wisconsin, Sweden and Israel have found similar connections.

But the evidence is not entirely clear cut. Although most research points to students faring better when they're taught in small classes, some studies have not found any benefits.

And there's a big gap in this research. Most studies have looked into how class size affects learning in elementary school, providing little insight when administrators and policymakers make decisions about class sizes for middle and high school students.

COMPARING IDEALS AND REALITY

In theory, at least 19 state govern-

ments have imposed class-size mandates based on classroom averages, and another 10 have binding ones that require schools or districts to maintain a set average.

In reality, these rules vary widely in terms of funding, enforcement and how the authorities measure class size.

For example, in theory, Texas has a maximum class size of 22 for kindergarten through fourth grade, but waivers that allow classes to have larger numbers of students are easy to obtain. Delaware requires a ratio of 22 students per teacher, but it counts classroom instructional aides as half a teacher.

Reducing the number of students in each classroom requires employing more teachers, which in turn, means spending more money on salaries and benefits. In some cases, the additional teachers hired may not be as effective as those already in the building. Strictly limiting class size can also drive up school construction costs when there aren't enough classrooms to accommodate students being split into more groups.

It's also impossible to maintain consistent sizes in classes, especially in the early grades, since elementary schools tend to be relatively smaller.

Say a school had 71 first-graders, with a class size cap of 24. They could group them into two classrooms of 24 students and another with 23. But if the next year a family with twins moves into a nearby neighborhood, raising the number of second-graders to 73 students, the school would wind up with three second-grade classrooms with 18 students and another with 19.

Taking that step instead of splitting them into two classrooms of 24 students and another with 25 could require hiring a new teacher. School administrators might argue in this

situation – correctly – that one additional student would not make much of a difference in terms of what those second-graders would be learning that year. At the same time, those students could wind up benefiting from having fewer classmates.

My example assumes that an additional classroom is available, and an additional qualified teacher can be hired. That's not always the case.

HEEDING THE CALIFORNIA PRECEDENT

California enacted a voluntary class-size reduction program in 1996 that dramatically reduced class sizes in kindergarten through third grade statewide. To adhere to the new rules capping those classes at 20 students, schools had to hire 30,000 new teachers.

Many of those new hires lacked experience and standard teaching credentials. Kids, at least initially, didn't gain as much as expected from being in smaller classes because some of new teachers weren't as good as the ones hired before the rules changed.

And because there weren't enough classrooms to accommodate them, many schools made do with the portable structures sometimes called "relocatables" or trailers.

California rolled back this requirement during the Great Recession. By 2012, many schools had 30 or more children in a classroom. Wyoming, likewise, has pared back its ambitious goal of having no more than 16 children in its kindergarten through third-grade classrooms to save money.

Without question, class size matters. But when faced with constraints such as building sizes and tight budgets, the choice to reduce class size can be hard to sustain.

[the writer is Professor of Education and Social Policy; Director of the Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University]

Two die in Tripura Bru relief camp, blockade continues demanding resumption of free ration

AIZAWL, Nov 2 (PTI): A two-year-old boy and a woman died in a Bru relief camp in Tripura even as the refugees continued to stage blockade for the third consecutive day on Saturday, demanding resumption of free ration and cash-dole to them, officials said.

Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) alleged that the two died of "starvation" after the Centre "stopped providing free ration and cash-dole" to the inmates of the relief camps from last month as the ninth repatriation process has been commenced from October 3.

Kanchanpur Sub-divisional Magistrate Abhedananda Baidya said that "an infant and a 60-year-old woman" died in the Naisingpara relief camp but the "cause of death has not been ascertained" as an inquiry is being conducted.

He refused to comment further on the allegation of the Bru leaders.

MBDPF's vice president R. Laldawngliana told PTI over phone that two-year-old boy, John Chongpreng, and Makoto Reang (60), wife of



Binoda Reang, died on Thursday. He, further, alleged that the refugees informed the authorities and doctors in Gachirampara, about three kilometres from the camp, but they did not come.

"The Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) and Sub Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Kanchanpur did not allow the officials to visit the relief camps," the MBDPF leader alleged.

Laldawngliana also said that Ramjoy Reang (65) of Asapara relief camp also "fell sick from

Friday due to starvation".

Protesting against the suspension of the free ration and cash-dole by the government, Bru refugees continued to stage road blockade between Dosda in Kanchanpur and Anandabazar area in North Tripura district since Thursday.

The agitation forced the Mizoram government to discontinue the repatriation process.

Officials said that 216 Bru families have returned to Mizoram from the relief camps since October 3 and the repar-

tiation is scheduled to be completed by November 30. They also alleged that the "anti-repatriation elements have been instigating the agitation and hindering the process".

The repatriation process, was undertaken to bring back 4,447 Bru families living in the Tripura relief camps since 1997. The Centre has approved Rs 350 crore for the ninth phase of repatriation and the amount covers transportation and rehabilitation package expenses, which include Rs 5,000 per month for each resettled

Bru family in Mizoram and free ration for them for two years. The vexed Bru problem started when the Bru people, spearheaded by an organisation, Bru National Union, demanded a separate autonomous district council by carving out areas of western Mizoram adjoining Bangladesh and Tripura in September, 1997.

The situation was aggravated by the murder of a forest guard in the Dampa Tiger Reserve in western Mizoram by Bru National Liberation Front insurgents on October 21, 1997.

Sudarsan Pattnaik selected for Italian Golden sand art award

BHUBANESWAR, Nov 2 (PTI): Internationally acclaimed sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik has been selected for the prestigious Italian Golden Sand Art Award 2019.

He will be honoured during the International Scorrana Sand Nativity in Italy scheduled to be held from November 13 to 18.

Pattnaik said he will also represent India in International Scorrana sand Nativity. As many as eight sculptors will participate in this festival.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik congratulated the sand artist for his achievement.

"Congratulations to eminent sand artist Padma Sri @sudarsansand



on being selected for the prestigious Italian Golden Sand Art Award 2019. His flair with sand continues to make #Odisha proud across the world and serve as a beautiful tribute to the states rich artistic culture," the chief minister tweeted.

Sudarsan Pattnaik

said he has received a letter from the president of "Promuovi Scorrana" Vito Maraschio informing him about his selection for the award.

"I am very glad to know that I am selected for this award. I feel very honoured to be part of this festival," he said.

Environment minister hits out at Kejriwal for 'politicising' pollution in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Nov 2 (PTI): A day after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asked school students to write letters to his Punjab and Haryana counterparts over pollution caused by stubble burning, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar slammed him for "politicising" the issue and said it was "unfortunate" that he was indulging in blame game.

Javadekar said that by bringing students on board the issue, the chief minister was presenting them as "villains".

"I feel it is very unfortunate that the Delhi chief minister is politicising the issue of pollution and indulging in blame game instead of finding a solution. He is instigating children to send letters to Haryana and Punjab chief ministers to present them in a bad light and as villains," the minister said on Saturday.

Javadekar said air pollution is a problem which has aggravated in the past 15 years and is now being remedied by the Narendra Modi government.

"We have started holding inter-state meetings of NCR ministers and officials. All stakeholders need to act together and not blame each other," he said.

"The solution to air



pollution is not with a 'switch on' and 'switch off' mode. It is with sustained efforts that pollution will be brought down. All the state agencies and people need to participate in this effort to combat it," the minister said.

Taking a dig at the Delhi chief minister, Javadekar, who is also the minister for information and broadcasting, said that instead of spending crores of rupees on advertisements, the Delhi government should focus on using the money for larger good.

"I am not interested in blaming anyone today. Instead of spending Rs 1,500 crore on advertisements, the Delhi government should give it to the farmers of Punjab and Haryana to tackle pollution and acquire machines that would help in reducing pollution. Any blame game will not reduce the pollution, but efforts in the right direction will," he said.

Javadekar also hit out

at the Delhi government for not releasing funds for the construction of Phase IV of the Metro and eastern peripheral expressway until the courts directed it to do so.

Appealing to agencies to work together, the minister later tweeted, "I appeal to all agencies to work together in combating air pollution and give relief to the people and not indulge in cheap politics."

He also urged people to use cycles instead of motor vehicles as much as possible and travel by public transport.

Listing out achievements of the Modi government, Javadekar said Metro rail projects have paced ahead under the prime minister's leadership, 60,000 heavy duty trucks have stopped passing through Delhi after completion of the eastern and western peripheral expressways, the Badarpur power plant was closed and 24x7 monitoring of industries was initiated.

Miscreants open fire on Bengal policemen, three injured

BARASAT (WEST BENGAL), Nov 2 (PTI): Two police personnel and a civic volunteer were injured in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, when a group of miscreants opened fire on them, police said on Saturday.

Two persons have so far been arrested in this connection, they said.

The incident took place at Khulna village under Basirhat subdivision on Friday, a police officer said.

Some miscreants fired on the policemen and civic volunteers when they reached the

spot on the basis of a complaint by locals that villagers were being attacked during a programme by unidentified men, police said.

"Two villagers were injured after being beaten up by the miscreants. Two policemen-Arindam Halder and Biswajit Maiti-and one civic volunteer Babusona Singha sustained bullet injuries," the police officer said. The injured persons were admitted to hospitals, he said.

An investigation has been initiated and search for the miscreants is on, police added.

164 young soldiers join Ladakh Scouts regiment



JAMMU, Nov 2 (PTI): As many as 164 recruits, hailing from different parts of Ladakh, were on Saturday inducted into the Army after completing a rigorous training programme, a defence spokesman said.

An attestation parade for the induction of the young soldiers into the Ladakh Scouts regiment was held at Regimental Centre in Leh, he said.

The spokesman said

the ceremony conducted in consonance with the highest traditions of the Indian Army was reviewed by General Officer Commanding, Trishul Division, Major General Sanjiv Rai.

It was attended by a spectrum of civil and military dignitaries, including war heroes of the regiment and parents of the recruits, he said.

He said the young soldiers took oath in unison to serve the nation. Maj

Gen Rai congratulated the young soldiers for the impressive parade and urged them to devote their lives in service of the nation, the spokesman said.

The reviewing officer also exhorted them to continue to strive hard in pursuit of excellence in all spheres and take a solemn vow to uphold the sovereignty of the nation against all odds in the true spirit of the Army, he said.

Whatsapp spyware: Hyderabad lawyer's number compromised

HYDERABAD, Nov 2 (PTI): A city-based civil rights advocate has been targeted by the Pegasus spyware, which infected about 1,400 civil rights activists, lawyers and journalists across the world.

Balla Ravindranath said he started receiving messages from an unknown international number to his Whatsapp claiming to be from a Canada-based Citizen Labs since October 7, saying they were conducting a survey on the hacking, which the lawyer ignored. "I thought they (the messages) might be spam or fraud.

Subsequently there were some whatsapp calls also from the same number. I ignored them too. On October 29, I received an official message from Whatsapp

saying that my phone may be compromised. I ignored that also.

Later when the company filed the lawsuit (against NSO group), I realised that my phone was hacked," Ravindranath told PTI. On October 31, Facebook-owned WhatsApp had said Indian journalists and human rights activists were among those globally spied upon by unnamed entities using an Israeli spyware Peagasus.

WhatsApp had said it was suing NSO Group, an Israeli surveillance firm, that is reportedly behind the technology that helped unnamed entities' spies hack into phones of roughly 1,400 users spanning across four continents and included diplomats, political dissidents, journalists and senior government offi-

cials. However, the company didn't disclose the details or the number of people affected in India.

WhatsApp had on Tuesday filed a lawsuit in a US federal court against NSO Group.

Ravindranath is the general secretary of the committee for release of political prisoners (CRPP), which was described as a "frontal organisation" of banned CPI (Maoist) by the Bhadradi Kothagudem Police. The police also alleged that Ravindranath, among other has been working for Maoists in urban areas to propagate the ideology.

However, the allegation was rejected by the lawyer. He said as an organisation they were working for the release of "political prisoners" including Maoists.

Kashmir attack: TMC to hold candlelight march in protest

KOLKATA, Nov 2 (PTI): The ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) in the state will take out a candlelight march here on Monday to protest against the killing of five labourers of West Bengal in Kashmir early this week.

The party would also press for an "impartial inquiry" into Tuesday's incident during the march, which would begin around 5 pm from Birla Planetarium and conclude at the Gandhi statue in Maidan area, a senior TMC leader said.

Five labourers - all residents of Bahalnagar village in Murshidabad district - were shot dead by terrorists in Kulgam district of Kashmir on Tuesday. They had gone to the Valley to work at apple orchards.

State education minister and general secretary of the TMC, Partha

Chatterjee, said, "We will take out a candlelight march to protest the dastardly killing of the five labourers in Kashmir. We will also press for an impartial inquiry."

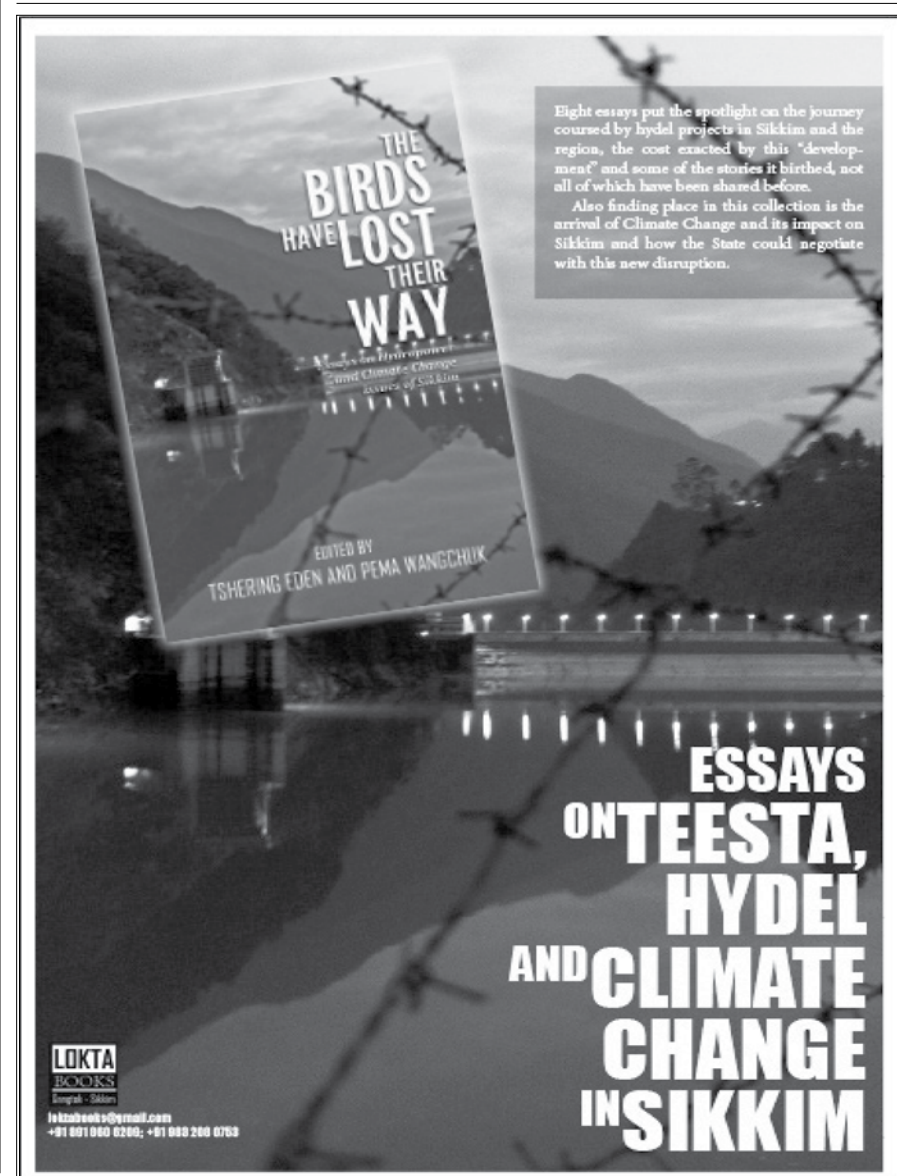
The party would stand by the family members of the five victims and extend all support possible, he added.

A senior official had said on Friday that the state government was facilitating the return of 131 people from Jammu and Kashmir, in the wake of Tuesday's attack.

A special coach had been arranged for the workers who expressed their desire to return home, she said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had earlier described the incident as "pre-planned murder" and sought a "strong" investigation to find out the "real truth".

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Nadal, Djokovic edge closer to possible Paris final meeting

PARIS, Nov 2 (AFP): Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic, fighting it out for the year-end world number one spot, edged closer to a possible Paris Masters final clash as both eased into the last four on Friday. The 33-year-old Nadal, who can secure the end-of-year top ranking ahead of Djokovic by winning his maiden Bercy title, beat French wildcard Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 7-6 (7/4), 6-1.

Nadal is bidding for a record-extending 36th Masters crown and will take on Denis Shapovalov in the last four on Saturday after the Canadian youngster thrashed Gael Monfils 6-2, 6-2.

The Spaniard has reached the semis for the first time at the event since 2013, having withdrawn injured before the quarter-finals on his last appearance in 2017. "I've had a lot of injuries in this tournament (historically)," said Nadal.

"I'm happy to be back in the semi-finals."

Djokovic had earlier crushed seventh seed Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-1, 6-2 and will next face Grigor Dimitrov, who saw off unseeded Chilean Cristian Garin 6-2, 7-5. Nadal has now reached 73 Masters semi-finals in total and is two wins away from his 85th ATP title, but only third indoors.

Tsonga was rock solid on serve in a first set which did not see a single service game from either player even reach deuce.

But second seed Nadal stepped it up in the tie-break, with two incredible winners on the run helping him take a crucial one-set lead.

Tsonga's serve briefly deserted him in the second game of the second set, as successive double faults allowed Nadal to claim the first break of the match and he then sped to victory.

- DJOKOVIC SWATS ASIDE TSITSIPAS -

Djokovic said he played "one of his best matches of the season" to thrash Tsitsipas. The 32-year-old dispatched his Greek opponent in only 58 minutes.

The 16-time Grand Slam champion went into the match with a 2-1 losing record against Tsitsipas, but put the young world number seven in his place with a commanding victory.

"I played one of the best matches of the season," said Djokovic. "I prepared myself very well for this match."

"I lost to Stefanos about three weeks ago in Shanghai. And obviously I went through the videos and understanding on what I did well, what I didn't do so well, what I can do better." Djokovic will be usurped by Nadal at the top of the rankings next week, but can ensure the race to be the best player at the end of the year reaches the ATP Tour Finals in London by winning a fifth Paris Masters title.

The defeat ended Tsitsipas' run of three consecutive semi-finals and dealt a blow to his confidence ahead of his maiden appearance at the season-ending championships, which start on November 10.

'It's surreal': Roberto Lopes's road from bank job to international footballer

PAUL DOYLE
theGuardian

LONDON, 02 Nov: At the age of 24 Roberto "Pico" Lopes was a part-time centre-back with a steady day job in a bank in his native Dublin. He was freshly qualified as a mortgage adviser. A solid career was taking shape before him. He hated it.

Three years later he is a professional footballer who hopes to lift his first major trophy on Sunday before embarking this month on the Africa Cup of Nations qualification campaign with Cape Verde Islands, from where his father comes and for whom he made his debut in October. "It's crazy, so surreal," he says before explaining how excited he is about the new direction his career has taken and the cultural awakening it has inspired – and how close he came to missing out on all that because of an embarrassing social media mix-up and a twisted testicle. Those last two things, it should be made clear right now, were not related.

Where to start? How about with when Lopes was a teenager, because back then an international football career did not seem so improbable: he had, after all, played alongside John Egan, now of Sheffield United, in central defence for the Republic of Ireland Under-19s. Lopes was playing for Bohemians, a top-flight League of Ireland club without the resources to give players professional deals. Five years later Lopes was still playing for them while advancing in the bank. Then



Shamrock Rovers – Bohemians' better-heeled arch-rivals – offered him a two-year deal to leave his boyhood club and his day job. It was a risk, as even Rovers could not offer the sort of money that would make quitting a secure job prudent. "I just thought: 'Worry later about what happens next; at least I'll be happy for a few years,'" says Lopes. "And then it took off. It's been a dream."

Mostly. There was a scare a few months later when he woke one morning with a pain in a testicle. He rolled over and hoped it would go away. It got worse. "I called the doctor and he told me come in. It took me 15 minutes to get there and by that time the pain had multiplied by 10. He said: 'Yeah, you've twisted your testicle' and

started explaining the possibilities. I said: 'Yeah, I don't care, take them both off if you want, just make the pain stop!' So he wrote me a reference for the hospital. I had to go straight there because apparently there's a six-to-eight-hour window in which your testicle can be saved. I had to drive to me ma's to get her to take me to hospital. I was driving with my leg out the window at one stage just trying to get some pain relief."

He made it to the hospital, was treated quickly and two weeks later, once the stitches had healed, he was back in action for Rovers.

Lopes has helped Rovers do well domestically and qualify for Europe every season. On Sunday they will contest the FAI Cup final against

Dundalk. "But still, even at the start of this season I'd never have said I'd become an international footballer," he says. That was despite the fact that Cape Verde's manager, Rui Águas, had been in touch. Lopes had blanked him.

"I've been a member of LinkedIn since college and one day I was just doing up my profile and I remember connecting with Rui Águas after his name popped up. Then a while later I received a message from him. It was in Portuguese and I just thought it was spam so took no notice. That was in October 2018. Then in September of this year I got another message saying: Did you think about it?" I was like: 'Oh, what's this?' So I translated the [original] message. They were looking at players who might be interest-

ed in declaring." Lopes cannot help laughing as he continues the story. "I was straight back in there apologising with my tail between my legs saying: 'Sorry, I don't speak Portuguese but I'd love to be involved if it's not too late.' Lucky enough, he said: 'That's great, give me your mobile.'"

And lo, Lopes made his international debut in a friendly against Togo in France last month, then played in a behind-closed doors match against Marseille. He feels he did well but does not know whether he will be included in the squad for this month's qualifier in Cameroon. He has no doubt, though, that he has been enriched.

"Cape Verde has always been part of my identity but mainly because there are not

many Roberto Lopeses floating around Crumlin so when people would hear your name they'd always ask: 'Where are you from?' and I'd explain that my da's from Cape Verde and then have to explain where that is," says Lopes, adding that he has met only one other Cape Verdean person in Ireland. "It's only really now that I'm delving deeper into the culture and the heritage. It makes you proud. Even my girlfriend Leah, who's a history teacher, has been looking into the history of the country. It's really interesting. Being involved with the team just opened my mind and made me realise how much I didn't know."

The realisation started with his initiation, when he had to sing in front of the squad.

"I was thinking I'd do something handy, maybe Drake, but they said: 'No, no, it has to be a Creole song.' So after lunch I went up to my room and on to Spotify and found a song called Dança Mami Creola. I went down and as soon as I sang the first line, everybody joined in. I probably got it wrong but everybody was so supportive that it turned out to be a bit of craic and a great way to help me settle in."

"It was such a positive environment. And it was really inspiring to be part of when you see how much playing for the country means to them, how dedicated they are to it even in a friendly with no fans."

"And my dad, when I came back from the trip, he was just beaming," says Lopes of his father, Carlos, who left his homeland at 16 and spent years travelling as a ship's chef before opening a cafe in Belgium, going on a holiday to Ireland and, in the words of Roberto, "finding me ma!"

"There are more Cape Verdians living abroad than in the islands themselves," says Lopes. "And they're very active on social media. All the family across the world have been in touch to congratulate my dad; uncles were sharing posts from various Cape Verdian pages; and I've heard from cousins I never knew I had. It's just a real buzz around the family. It makes you proud."

"And to think I nearly missed out on all that because I didn't reply to a LinkedIn message. I reply to everyone now!"

Bopanna-Shapovalov bow out of Paris Masters

PARIS, Nov 2 (PTI): India's top doubles player Rohan Bopanna, along with his partner Denis Shapovalov of Canada, suffered a narrow defeat against Russian duo of Karen Khachanov and Andrey Rublov in the quarter-finals to crash out of the Paris Masters here. The Indo-Canadian duo fought hard for over 80 minutes before losing 5-7, 7-6, 8-10 against the Russian pair to bow out of the ATP Masters 1000 tournament.

Bopanna and Shapovalov

produced 10 aces but they also committed three double faults during the match.

The Indo-Canadian pair saved four out of seven break points and converted both the chances that came their way. Bopanna and Shapovalov had defeated the American Manuel Gonzalez and Argentine's Austin Krajicek in the prequarter-finals.

The Russian pair will now take on Slovakian-Croatian combination of Filip Polasek and Ivan Dodig in the semifinal.

We are here to play our own game against Vietnam: Maymol Rocky

HANOI, Nov 2 (PTI): Indian women's team head coach Maymol Rocky sounded confident on the eve of their first international friendly against Vietnam, stating they are here to play their own game. The coach said that the preparatory camp in Delhi helped the players get ready for the upcoming challenge. India are set to take on Vietnam in the first of two FIFA international friendlies here on Sunday. The coach is wary of the fact that Vietnam (34) are a much higher-ranked side than India (58).

"Vietnam are obviously a strong side, they are much higher ranked than us, so it is a bit of an uphill task for us," she said. However, she believes that it will be down to how the

two teams will perform on a particular day, which will decide the result of the match. "But football is not a game that is played on paper. It is played on the pitch, where the two sets of 11 players start on equal terms. So we are here to play our own game against them, and we are ready for the fight," she continued. Rocky and her charges spent a week in Delhi for a training camp ahead of the upcoming encounters.

"The team has been really preparing well for the two matches coming up against Vietnam. We have had a good camp in New Delhi to gear ourselves up for the Vietnam games and that has really helped us put the girls back in shape for international football," said Rocky.

Focussing on cricket now, not pollution: Mahmudullah

NEW DELHI, Nov 2 (PTI):

The issue of poor air quality indeed figured in Bangladesh's team discussions but the visiting skipper Mahmudullah Riyad said that it's time to shift focus on cricket since they have no control over weather conditions.

A public health emergency has been declared in the NCR region following rising pollution level in the region due to stubble burning incidents in Northern states of Haryana and Punjab.

The bursting of crackers during the Diwali festivities coupled with construction work too impacted the air quality level.

"Actually, we had a chat about these conditions. It is not within our control. We are focussing much more on the match tomorrow and win this game," said Mahmudullah ahead of the T20 series-opener.

"We have not played



here, when we came here, there was smog, we all know. But players have practised last three days, trying to adapt to the conditions. It's not within our control, we have to focus on our cricket."

Mahmudullah, a delightful batsman to watch on his day, said he enjoys captaincy and does not consider it as a burden.

He was asked to lead the side when their skipper Shakib Al Hasan was handed a ban for not reporting

to the ICC the corrupt approaches made to him during the Bangladesh Premier League.

"I think the word (burden) that you said, I don't think that way. It's a great opportunity for me to lead the team. I have done it before a few times in T20s and Test as well because Shakib missed a few times. We will have to play as a team, as a group we need to use out opportunities and execute our skills in the game."

Mahmudullah playing

alongside Mashrafe Mortaza and Shakib, both of whom led Bangladesh for long, was a good learning curve for him.

"We have been playing together for a while. They have been great leaders. Shakib has some amazing qualities. He is a great motivator in our team. I just need to step up my game and be a good leader within the group."

The captain said Bangladesh has been playing some really good cricket, running the bog teams

close but it's time that they "cross the line".

"Hopefully, we have learnt from those mistakes we made in the past and if we face those crunch moments then we need to focus much more in our skills and execution rather than thinking about the past."

India skipper Rohit Sharma too acknowledged that Bangladesh is now a strong cricketing unit with some mature players. "All these years we have seen how Bangladesh has performed not just at home but also away. They have always put us under pressure. There is no way we would look at this team differently," he said.

"I understand there are two key players (Tamim Iqbal and Shakib) missing but they still have quality in their squad which can upset any team on that particular given day. There are matured cricketers in their side," he said.

I was surrounded by fixers such as Aamir and Asif, says Akhtar

NEW DELHI, Nov 2 (PTI): "I was playing against 21 people -- 11 theirs and 10 ours," said former speedster Shoaib Akhtar, once again fuelling match-fixing allegations against his former Pakistan teammates.

Pakistan cricket had plunged into one of its many crisis in recent years when fast bowler Mohammad Aamir, Mohammad Asif and Salman Butt were banned for spot-fixing in 2011.

"I was always of the belief that I can never cheat Pakistan, no match-fixing but I was surrounded by match-fixers. I was playing against 21 people (sic) -- 11 theirs and 10 ours. Who knows who was the match-fixer," Akhtar said during a talk show 'Rewind With Samina Peerzada'.

"There was so much match-fixing. Asif told me which all matches they had fixed and how they did it," Akhtar said

he was livid when he came to know that Aamir and Asif had indulged in corruption during a Test against England.

"I tried to make Aamir and Asif understand. What a waste of talent. When I heard about this, I was so upset that I punched the wall," said the 44-year-old retired pacer.

"Pakistan's two top bowlers, smart, intelligent and the two perfect fast bowlers

were wasted. They sold themselves for a little money."

Of the suspended trio, only Aamir managed to make a successful comeback to international cricket.

The pacer was instrumental in Pakistan winning the 2017 Champions Trophy, beating India in the finals. He was also a part of the Pakistan team during the 50-over World Cup in England.

No arrests after California Halloween shooting kills 5

ORINDA (CALIFORNIA, US), Nov 2 (AP): A woman who rented a San Francisco Bay Area home where five people were killed in a Halloween party shooting lied to the owner, saying she only wanted to keep family members away from the smoke of a wildfire, according to police and a person with knowledge of the transaction.

Witnesses described hearing gunfire and seeing chaos erupt as some 100 terrified partygoers fled the home Thursday night in Orinda, a quiet and wealthy suburb about 15 miles (24 kilometers) from San Francisco that has seen only two previous killings this century, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

No arrests had been made and there was no immediate word on a motive for the attack. Two guns were found at the property, authorities said.

Three people, all from the Bay Area, died at the scene and a fourth died at the hospital, authorities initially said.

The Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office identified them Friday evening as 22-year-old Tiyon Farley of Antioch, 24-year-old Omar Taylor of Pittsburg, 23-year-old Ramon Hill Jr. and 29-year-old Javin County.

The sheriff's office identified a fifth victim, 19-year-old Oshiana Tompkins of Vallejo and Hercules, late Friday night, saying she died at a local hospital.

Other people were wounded by gunshots or injured in the panic that followed, authorities said.

The party apparently was advertised on social media. One attendee said he was enjoying the music and watching people dance when he heard shots and people started running. The screaming seemed to



last forever, said Devan, who asked that his last name not be used because he feared for his safety. "Everybody started running, scrambling," he said.

"People were just collapsing and friends were helping friends. It was a scary situation and then as everyone is panicking and stuff, there were more shots."

Devan shot a video posted to Instagram that showed a wounded man on the ground and a police officer standing over him and a woman saying she needs to go to the hospital "because my hand's

been blown off." On Friday, police tape surrounded the block as people came to collect their cars and other belongings.

One woman in tears told reporters the father of her child had been killed. She left before giving her name.

Romond Reynolds picked up the car of his son, 24-year-old Armani Reynolds, who he said was left comatose by the shooting. "All I know is that he's a victim and was at the wrong place at the wrong time," Reynolds said. The four-bedroom home had been rented on Airbnb by a woman who

told the owner her dozen family members had asthma and needed to escape smoke from a wildfire, the person with knowledge of the transaction told The Associated Press. A fire burning in Sonoma County about 60 miles (97 kilometers) north of Orinda earlier in the week fouled the air over a wide area.

The owner was suspicious of a one-night rental on Halloween and before agreeing reminded the renter that no parties were allowed, said the person with knowledge of the transaction, who was

not authorised to publicly disclose the information and spoke only on condition of anonymity. The owner, Michael Wang, said his wife reached out to the renter Thursday night after neighbours contacted them about the party.

The renter said there were only a dozen people at the home but Wang said he could see more people on video from his doorbell camera.

"We called the police. They were on the way to go there to stop them, but before we got there the neighbor already sent us a message saying there was a shooting," he told the Chronicle.

Neighbor Shahram Saki, 61, said in a phone interview that some fleeing partygoers hid in the bushes in his front yard and others begged to be let into his home.

"They were screaming for help. I told them, 'You gotta get out of here,'" Saki said. "I was scared to death, anything could have happened."

Orinda city documents show officials issued violations in March for exceeding the home's maximum occupancy and illegal parking. City Manager Steve Salomon said the homeowner had resolved previous complaints lodged in February over occupancy and noise and in July over overflowing trash.

Orinda, with a population of about 20,000, requires short-term rental hosts to register with the city annually and pay an occupancy tax. The maximum occupancy is 13 people. Airbnb is "urgently investigating" what happened, spokesman Ben Breit said in an email.

Airbnb has banned the renter from its platform and the home has been removed as a listing, he said.

Huawei moving on 5G while politics plays out

Major state telecom operators are rolling out 5G wireless advances in China as the country races to close a technology gap with the United States amid a bruising trade war. The new-generation telecommunication networks move data at blazing speeds, promising economic and technological advantages to countries where they are deployed.

US regulators earlier this week proposed rules to block telecom carriers from buying from Chinese tech companies Huawei and ZTE, and to remove any of their equipment already in place to "safeguard the nation's communications networks."

The US Federal Communications Commission said the rules -- to be voted on November 19 -- were part of an initiative to "safeguard the nation's communications networks." The two Chinese firms have been accused of posing a national security threat because of their close ties to the Beijing government. Both have repeatedly denied the allegations.

AFP sat down with Huawei US vice president of public affairs Joy Tan to ask her three questions:

- What is your reaction to the proposal of the US regulators? -

Huawei has never had any major cybersecurity-related incident.

I think targeting specific vendors based on country origins will not make America's communication network more secure.

It will only impact rural operators and the most underserved areas in US. So, we think this kind of action will further widen the digital divide and slow the pace of economic development, not make the network more secure.

On average we procure \$11 billion in goods and services from US suppliers each year. These companies cannot continue to sell components or products to Huawei. I've seen their business impacted in the short term and in the long term we'll see bigger impact for US companies as well.

\$11 billion creates about 40,000 to 50,000 US jobs, so we hope these jobs won't be impacted for the longer term.

- How is the deployment of 5G going? -

South Korea and the US started launching 5G last year. Already 3.5 million people are on 5G services. China is moving very fast in terms of 5G deployment.

We continue to sign more contracts globally as well, Huawei is definitely leading commercial deployment of 5G. 5G has come faster than all expected; we believe we are 12-18 months ahead of competitors.

Our most recent 5G base stations are shipped without any US components; (instead they come) with our own or components from other countries, so we're not dependent on the US components

- Do you need to work with the US? -

We want to work with them. Huawei's principle is always to collaborate with the best companies around the world, so that's why we continue to want to engage with the US companies.

If the US government allows big suppliers to continue to ship components, we'll continue to buy from them, even if we have our own solutions and alternatives. Harmony OS has a different purpose compared to Android or iOS.

When we designed it, we had the future in mind. It's a lightweight, compact operating system, with powerful functionalities. We use that for smart watches and smart screens in vehicles, and smart speakers first.

We definitely want to keep working with American companies including Google.

No one will be allowed to create instability: Pak Army tells Azadi March protestors



BY SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, Nov 2 (PTI): The Pakistan Army on Saturday warned that no one will be allowed to create instability and chaos in the country, a day after the incalculable cleric and politician Maulana Fazlur Rehman set a two-day deadline for Prime Minister Imran Khan to step down. The hard-line cleric addressed a massive protest rally, dubbed "Azadi March", held here on Friday to topple the incumbent government.

In his address to tens of thousands of protestors, the right-wing opposition leader said the "Gorbachev of Pakistan" must resign without testing the patience of peaceful protestors.

He also said that only people of Pakistan and not any "institution" had the right to govern the country.

"We do not want conflict with our institutions. But we also want to see them to stay neutral. We give two days to the institutions (also) to decide if they will continue to support this government," he said on Friday.

"Maulana Fazlur Rehman is a senior politician. He should clarify which institution he is talking about. Pakistan's armed forces are an impartial state institution which always supports democratically elected governments," Pakistan Army spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor said in response to Rehman's remarks.

"Nobody would be allowed to create instability as the country cannot afford chaos," he warned.

Ghafoor said the army was neutral and supported democratically elected governments in accordance with the Constitution.

He also defended the army's deployment during the 2018 general elections, saying it fulfilled the constitutional responsibility in the polls.

"If the opposition has any reservations [about the results], it can approach the relevant forums instead of levelling allegations on the streets," he added.

Ghafoor said in democracies issues should be resolved democratically and appreciated the contact between the protestors and the government.

Reacting to Ghafoor's remarks, Rehman told the media after meeting with the opposition leaders that the military

spokesman should avoid giving such statements which violate the neutrality of the army. "This statement should have come from some politicians and not from the army," he said.

He also announced the Opposition would meet on Saturday to decide the future course of action, if the two-day deadline was not met by the prime minister Khan.

The much-hyped "Azadi March" led by Rehman's Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) reached its final destination Islamabad on Thursday after it set off from the Sindh province and left Lahore on Wednesday.

Along with Rehman, leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Awami National Party (ANP) participated in the march held to topple Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government led by Prime Minister Khan.

Unfazed by the protest, Prime Minister Khan, while addressing a public rally in Gilgit-Baltistan on Friday, told the protestors congregated in Islamabad that when they run out of food, more will be sent to them, but their leaders should not expect any relief from him.

"Gone are the days when one used to use Islam to gain power. This is a new Pakistan. Sit however long you want. When your food runs out, we will send more. But we will not give you an (NRO)," he said.

National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) was an ordinance issued in October 2007 granting pardon to politicians, political workers and bureaucrats accused of corruption, embezzlement, money laundering, murder, and terrorism.

"Who are they wishing to gain freedom from? I want the media to go there and ask people who they wish to free themselves from," Khan said, adding that all his opponents appear disjointed in their thoughts and aims.

The prime minister said the protest rally had made Pakistan's enemy happy.

"I will put all of them into jail," he said, in an apparent reference to former premier Nawaz Sharif, his brother Shehbaz, former President Asif Ali Zardari and former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi.

Vietnam 'strongly condemns' human trafficking after UK truck tragedy

HANOI, Nov 2 (AFP): Vietnam said Saturday that it "strongly condemns" human trafficking, after British police confirmed 39 people found dead in a truck last week are believed to be Vietnamese.

Most of the victims are thought to come from central Vietnam, where easy-to-find brokers help to arrange trips to Europe -- often via Russia -- for migrants hoping to earn money overseas.

The extreme risks of the journeys were laid bare after eight women and 31 men were found dead in a refrigerated container in Essex, east of London, on October 23.

Two people were arrested in central Ha Tinh province for human trafficking on Friday, as British police sought more suspects.

Vietnam said Saturday it "strongly condemns human trafficking and considers it a serious crime," according to a statement from foreign ministry spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang.

She called the incident a "serious humanitarian tragedy", urging help to tackle the scourge



of trafficking. "Vietnam calls upon countries in the region and around the world to step up co-operation in combating human trafficking in order to prevent the recurrence of such tragedy," she added.

Officials are now working to identify the victims after DNA samples were collected from families in Ha Tinh and Nghe An provinces in central Vietnam.

"I think my son could be among the 39 dead," Nguyen Dinh Gia told AFP Saturday from Ha Tinh province where he has been anxiously waiting for news about his child Nguyen Dinh Luong.

The grim case has shocked Britain and plunged families in remote Vietnamese villages into grief. It has also

cast a light on sophisticated transnational trafficking networks helping to smuggle migrants into Britain. The 25-year-old Northern Irish driver of the refrigerated lorry has been charged with manslaughter, money laundering and conspiracy to assist unlawful immigration.

In Dublin, another Northern Irishman appeared at Ireland's High Court for the start of extradition proceedings to bring him to Britain in connection with the incident.

British police have also said they want to speak to Ronan and Christopher Hughes, two brothers in the haulage business from Northern Ireland.

Three other people have been arrested and released on police bail.

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Musician Shubhendra Rao accuses airline of breaking his sitar

MUMBAI, Nov 2 (PTI): Celebrated Indian classical musician Shubhendra Rao on Friday night took to social media and accused Air India of breaking his sitar.

Rao accused the airline of mishandling his sitar and said the staff should be sensitised on how to handle the music instruments.

In a lengthy Facebook post he said, "There it happens again! My Sitar has been vandalised once again, this time by our own #AirIndia!! Just arrived in New York to perform at the #VedicHeritageInc and this is how my Sitar has arrived. How can anyone be so ruthless and insensitive?"

"For sure, this has been slit open because there is no way the sitar would break in this fashion. I know many people will come out in support and suggest many things but the simple truth is that airlines and their staff need to be sensitised towards how to handle music instruments."

Last November, Rao had a similar experience while he was travelling to Sydney from Delhi for a concert when his sitar was damaged by another airline.

Rao said he had started a petition online to raise the issue of safety of musical instruments but nothing concrete seemed to have happened.

"When does this stop? How can any artist survive if airlines keep breaking their instruments whenever they travel? These days, no one asks me how I am after a journey. They always ask me how my instrument is.

"I had started a petition on www.change.org about two years ago, fight-

ing for the right of artists like me who continue to suffer at the hands of these stupid airlines. Even got a lot of support but eventually, nothing happened since the powers-to-be continue to remain insensitive towards arts and artists."

Tagging Minister for Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri, Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Karola, CMD of Air India Ashwani Lohani, Rao further

can easily scan the instrument to find out what the mic is.

"I also know that this part of the instrument is the most well-protected part of the instrument with even a 3-4 inch thick foam inside the fibre-glass box that is covered by a thick padded cover"

He insisted that "its a clear case of vandalism", where someone has "slit it



wrote on Facebook, "Please note that #injustice has happened on our own national carrier and someone needs to take responsibility for this callousness and something drastic needs to be done so that we artists do not continue to suffer, be it at the hands of #AirIndia or any other airlines."

Rao also shared the pictures of his damaged Sitar and said, "From the pictures, it is very clear that someone has sliced the sitar open. To have a look at the AKG 411 mic inside? Have they not heard of scan? When they can body scan you, why is it difficult to know that they

open consciously". Rao suggested the airlines should pay fine for damaging musical instruments.

"Unless airlines are made to pay heavily when they break music instruments and are made to take responsibility, such cases will continue to happen. They know that they can hide behind rules and go scot-free.

"Just one case of an airlines having to pay heavily to the aggrieved musician and all airlines will toe the line and ensure that musical instruments are treated with care and respect and musicians do not suffer anymore.

Leslie Mann to play lead in Amazon's 'The Power'

LOS ANGELES, Nov 2 (PTI): Actor Leslie Mann will top line Amazon Studios' upcoming thriller series "The Power".

Based on the international best-selling novel of the same name by Naomi Alderman, the show will be directed and executive produced by Reed Morano of "The Handmaid's Tale" fame.

The series is set in a world where all teenage girls across the globe suddenly develop the power to electrocute people at will.

They soon learn they can awaken the power in older women as well, and soon enough every woman in the world can do it. And then

everything is different.

Mann, 47, will portray Margot Cleary-Lopez, the mayor of Seattle and a rising star in the political world. Her character has been as "vital, charming and incredibly smart", according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Alderman is adapting her novel and will also serve as executive producer. She is working with an all-women writers room that includes co-exec producer Claire Wilson, Sarah Quintrell, Whit Anderson, Stacy Osei-Kuffour and novelist Rebecca Levine.

"The Power" is produced by Sister Pictures.

Rage Against the Machine Announce Reunion Shows, Including Coachella



First tour dates since 2011 will take place in 2020 Rage Against the Machine are reuniting, according to Rolling Stone, Forbes and Consequence of Sound. The band, who last played together in 2011, will play handful of U.S. shows in spring 2020, capped by a headlining slot at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, according to a post on

verified social media accounts. Find the post below. Rage Against the Machine released four albums from 1992 to 2000. They then disbanded before reuniting for Coachella in 2007. Rage's final show from their initial reunion run took place on July 30, 2011 at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

Read Pitchfork's Sunday Review of Rage Against the Machine.

Post 'Game of Thrones', Emilia Clarke wants to do indie films

LOS ANGELES, Nov 2 (PTI): After a blockbuster show and a couple of franchise films, actor Emilia Clarke says she now wants to do some indie projects. Clarke, who shot to global fame with HBO epic fantasy series "Game of Thrones", has tried her hand at mainstream films with "Terminator: Genisys" and "Solo".

However, unlike "Game of Thrones", her films have not lived up to the expectations of both critics and fans. In an interview with IndieWire, the 33-year-old actor said she has taken the decision to stay from franchise films.

"For 10 years, I was either on Game of Thrones' or I was doing a different movie, and if I wasn't doing a different movie, I was promoting a different movie or I was promoting Game of Thrones'.

"Now I just want to be able to do a project and to put all of my energy just into that, as opposed to trying to make myself into seven different people to do seven different kind of things at once," Clarke said.

She said big budget movies are not going to happen "any time soon" for her.

"I'm really actively looking for indies. Those are the things I'm making, as well. And those are the movies I watch," Clarke added.

DEAR READERS,
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BIKER BOY! The singer, Justin Bieber enjoys a bike ride wearing pink crocs and a purple helmet in Los Angeles.

Kacey Musgraves Shows off Toned Abs In Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader Halloween Costume

Kacey Musgraves is a Texas girl, and she paid homage to her home state with her 2019 Halloween costume. Kacey dressed as a Dallas Cowboys cheerleader, and she absolutely slayed the costume. She wore the cheerleaders' signature uniform, including a tied-up, blue and white crop top and teeny-tiny white shorts. The shorts were held by a white belt with blue stars, and the top was tied right in the center, which put cleavage on full display. Kacey's toned abs were front and center in the look, as well. All in all, she nailed this!

To celebrate Halloween, Kacey attended Kendall Jenner's birthday party, which doubled as a Halloween bash for her dozens of close friends. Kacey hung out with Kourtney Kardashian, Gigi Hadid, Bella Hadid and more at the star-studded party. The 31-year-old seems to have gotten quite close

with Gigi and Bella recently — the models fangirled out at Kacey's NYC concert in October, and they all hung out after the show, too. Considering the massive year Kacey has had, it's no surprise that she's mingling in these A-list crowds nowadays!

Kacey released her album, Golden Hour, in March 2018, and went onto win the Album of the Year award at the CMA Awards, Grammy Awards and ACM Awards. The record was extremely critically acclaimed, and Kacey has been touring in support of it all year long.

She recently wrapped up the tour with a sold-out show at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena, which was the perfect way to close out such an epic run. Now, Kacey can hopefully enjoy some time off as the year winds down — and fans are sure to start begging for some new music soon!



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.