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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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CM assures support for academic pursuits of underprivileged students



GANGTOK, 14 Nov [IPR]: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang attended the State Level Children's Day celebrations here at Saramsa Garden, Ranipool today. Every year, Children's Day is celebrated on 14 November in India to commemorate the birth anniversary of the country's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru had a special place for children in his heart and believed that children of today would make the future of the country.

One of the highlights of the programme was the presentation of Sulabh Sanitation Club, commendation/ State Awards to teachers 2021, mementos and cash awards to national awardee teachers 2021 and certificates and mementos to CBSE toppers.

The programme included songs presented by school children and

teachers to mark the occasion.

During the programme, copies of Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC) prospectus were handed to students of Poklong Kamrang constituency, along with retirement benefits to teachers and students.

Likewise, the programme saw the screening of a documentary film by Sulabh International and a documentary on Smart TV distribution under E-vidhya FLN and NIPUN Sikkim.

The programme also included launch of private school registration portal, STET portal, NIPUN Bharat, Sikkim Chapter, AAGAZ (Covid-19 Readiness project). The objective of the portal was to make it easy for students and teachers to take full advantage of various schemes provided by the Government.

Earlier, the Chief Minister flagged off new buses for Government colleges.

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, in his address, extended a heartfelt congratulations to both the teachers and awardees for receiving their awards.

He said that the teachers should receive their well-earned recognition for their contributions towards the society. Further, he added that Sikkim's holistic development is only possible through good quality of education. Touching on the same subject, he said that the first priority of his administration is the good quality of the education system in the State and the objective is to provide the best campus, competent lecturers and provide best facilities to students in the State.

To achieve this, the Chief Minister expanded on the introduction of new subjects in school curriculum and construction of new schools and universities with good infrastructure.

The Chief Minister highlighted the initiatives of the Government during the pandemic and said that more must be done to improve the quality of education in Sikkim.

The Chief Minister announced that vehicles would be provided to one principal in each district. These schools are Hee Gyathang Government Senior Secondary School (North), Rolep Government Senior Secondary School (East), Lingee Government Senior Secondary School (South) and Khecheopalri Government Senior Secondary School (West).

It was also announced that there will be a maternity leave of one year to female teachers and a paternity leave of one month to male teachers.

...turn Pg2

From timber to land to assets, SKM Govt selling everything, Chamling alleges

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 14 NOV:**

The Sikkim Krantikari Morcha Government is on a brazen path to sell-off everything of value in Sikkim, from its timber to land to assets, Sikkim Democratic Front president, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, alleged today.

In his weekly Facebook post, Mr Chamling returned to these allegations, which he has been levelling for the past few weeks, with more specific details and adding a more dire warning that after the SKM spent its first term selling off Sikkim's material assets, it would, in its next term, sell Sikkim's very "existence and soul."

Mr Chamling has also rejected the SKM Government's claims that these assets were being given on "lease" and properties being developed on PPP mode.

"Please be aware, the 'lease' is an eyewash. It is an indirect way of selling Sikkimese land to

non-sikkimese. The lease deal has a very powerful clause which renews the lease in the name of the lease holder at the end of lease term. These projects in the middle of Gangtok are an example of shamelessly open crony capitalism," Mr Chamling writes.

He also goes on to allege that in constructions like the mega mall coming up at where the private bus stand stood at one time, the SKM government is paying Rs 140 crore as a viability gap fund.

"What a self-destructive and suicidal idea is this that the government is giving a private company Sikkim's money to buy Sikkim's own property!" he rues.

About the sell-out, Mr Chamling claims that over one lakh trees have been cut down all over Sikkim, making Sikkim a major exporter of timber in India in the past two years that SKM has been in government here.

Government guest

houses and taxi stands all over the State, culture parks, tea gardens and land in prime locations not just in Sikkim but across the country from Siliguri to Mumbai to Kolkata to Darjeeling to New Delhi are being handed over to private parties to profit from

Mr Chamling has also questioned why the State Government has signed on to foot 90% of the cost of setting up a private institute at Chakhung and reiterated his condemnation of the blatant manner in which private entities are being allowed to profit from assets which belong to the people of Sikkim.

"If we continue to stay quiet, Sikkim will never be the same again. We will be strangers in our own homeland. I hope that Sikkim will not repeat this blunder again and again by giving these Sikkim bechuwas such a free hand. Our tolerance and silence will be at our peril," he warns in conclusion.



GaTC ROCK SARNEN, SWITZERLAND: Girish and the Chronicles, the rock band from Sikkim currently on a gig in Switzerland, performed their first show at the Ur-Rock music festival in Switzerland on Saturday at Sarnen. The band belted out their popular numbers and some solid covers and received a standing ovation. A highlight of their Europe tour for the band was scheduled to come up a few hours later when the open for and then share the stage with the legendary hard rock band, Nazareth. GaTC are in Europe after a decade, having performed there last at Montenegro. About their Ur-Rock show, Girish, the lead vocalist, writes: "It was a great show! It was amazing! Everyone loved it with a great response."

New infections continue to ease, test positivity remains under-2% in Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 14 NOV:

Sikkim's daily test positivity rate for Covid came in at 1.8% on Sunday with five new cases being detected from the screening of 264 samples in the previous 24 hours. What is more, Sikkim also completed a full week today without any Covid deaths. The last fatality due to the virus in Sikkim, the 400th, was on 07 November.

The state's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 has now reached 32,101.

As per the Daily Report of COVID-19 in Sikkim released by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of Health Department, while four people tested positive in RT-PCR testing of 181 samples, one



case was picked up in rapid antigen testing of 82 samples.

Four of the new cases were registered in East District and one in South District.

On the other hand, six more people were discharged from home isolation on Saturday after making full recoveries. With this, Sikkim's

count of recovered cases has inched up to 31,247, giving Sikkim a recovery rate of 98.4%.

There are 120 active Covid cases in the State at present, most of whom are on their way to recovery under home isolation and 22, only one of whom is under 18 years of age, are with symptoms severe enough to require

hospitalisation.

Of those in hospital, two are admitted in ICU.

About vaccines administered on Saturday, a total of 1,656 people received their Covishield jab yesterday, 125 getting their first shot and 1,531 completing their vaccination schedule with the second dose of the vaccine.



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In fond memory of Bermiok Rinpoche, Tashi Densapa

OBITUARY

KELSANG CHODEN

Bermiok Rinpoche, Tashi Densapa born on 1942 breathed his last at the Manipal Hospital on the morning of 13th November, 2021. Rinpoche was recognized as the third reincarnation of Simick Lama Rechen Drubwang Osel Dorjee Rinpoche by His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa.

His passing away is a great loss not only to his family and friends but to the entire community in general. He was a repository of knowledge of history, culture and religion of Sikkim.

Rinpoche joined the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (NIT) as its Director on 14th March, 2002 after superannuation from the State Government service as Secretary after having served in various departments and public sector undertakings. I had the opportunity to work under his dynamic leadership in various capacities for about 19 years.

Therefore, I feel it appropriate to record his vision for NIT and subsequent translation of these visions to make the NIT a premier institute in preservation of Buddhist culture and religion in this part of the region. He was not only a charismatic leader and great administrator, but also a man of letters and compassion. Rinpoche was the longest serving Director of the NIT.

He served NIT till February, 2021, with consolidated salary of Rs. 60,000/- which he enjoyed till mid 2019, thereafter, he decided to offer his service “pro bono” accepting a token salary of Rs. 100 /- per month. Though advancing in age, he continued rendering service to NIT primarily to complete some of the ongoing projects which were close to his heart.

Tashi Densapa Rinpoche was instrumental in bringing back the glory of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology which remained dormant from late 1990s till he joined as the Director in 2002.

Soon after Rinpoche took charge as the Director, NIT, he initiated some new projects such as “Sikkim Studies” mainly to help persuade young youth of Sikkim, with the requisite technical and professional qualifications, to work on



projects on Sikkim and to train them in research methodology.

He introduced Sikkim centric projects that focused on video recording of Buddhist rituals of Bhutia and Lepcha (tribal) cultures and also documentation of historical photographs of Sikkim. With his dynamic and diplomatic skills, he was able to get requisite funds and financial assistance for these projects from the various Ministries of Government of India to implement the projects and fructify his visions.

In addition to widening the scope of research activities on Sikkim Studies, he also developed the academic section of the Institute by hiring Buddhist scholars to undertake serious research in various aspects of Buddhism. This led to several book publications brought out during his tenure which forms the nucleus of Sikkim's history. Today, these books are the main source of information for scholars pursuing research on Buddhism in general and Sikkim, in particular. Besides these, he also augmented the collections of the Tibetan and General Libraries and also the art, artifacts and thangkas for the museum.

His hard work and perseverance had paid off dividends for NIT and today NIT is well equipped with adequate infrastructure to run Post Graduate in Buddhist and Tibetan Studies as well as Sowa Rigpa courses.

The infrastructure also includes hostels for the students and research scholars, Staff Quarters, a well equipped conference hall cum Library, a pharmacy unit and herbal garden for the Sowa Rigpa faculty.

In 2016, the State Government entrusted the responsibility to establish the State's first Buddhist University to the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. As a follow up action on the Sikkim Government's decision, the Institute decided on a plan of action to start the Post Graduate in Buddhist and Tibetan studies and Faculty of Sowa Rigpa in 2017 with due approval of the Government of Sikkim.

The decision of the Government was well received and the dream to have qualified Sikkimese Amjis with scholars well versed in Buddhist studies propelled Rinpoche to start the programmes on the right note. To begin with he sought the services of Mr KN Bhutia, former Finance Secretary to the Government of Sikkim and appointed him as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in NIT, in October 2016.

To establish Sowa Rigpa infrastructure facility, Rinpoche managed funding support from the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, who sanctioned the required financial assistance to build the Sowa Rigpa faculty. It is a matter of record to note that NIT Sowa Rig-

pa is the youngest Sowa Rigpa Institute established in India. It is also the first to get registered under the Ministry of Ayush. This was only possible because of the hard work and dedication shown by Rinpoche and KN Sir (as we fondly call him).

With Rinpoche's communication skills and contacts at right places, the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology was able to get the support of many renowned institutions such as Mentsekhang, Dharamsala, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan, Studies, Sarnath, Chagpori Medical Institute, Darjeeling and Sikkim Central University in the establishment of Sowa Rigpa and Post Graduate programmes. Today both these teaching faculties are functioning in full capacity with affiliation to Sikkim University as per University Grants Commission (UGC) norm.

The first batch of Sowa Rigpa Amjis will complete their five and half year Amji (MBBS) course in 2023. They will be the first Amjis of Sikkim graduating from Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (NIT) and this historic feat will bear the mark of immense contribution of late Bermiok Rinpoche Tashi Densapa.

I still recall how during his recent visit to the NIT on 1st November 2021, he was happy to see the growth and progress of Sowa Rigpa Faculty and the Post Graduate programme. I am sure it's the earnest wish of all fellow NIT staff members that we continue to receive Rinpoche's blessings for progress and prosperity of this Institute to carry on the legacy set forth by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Shri Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Chogyal Chempo Palden Thondup Namgyal, the historic stalwarts of our time.

While I am fully aware that Rinpoche's contribution to NIT cannot be summed up in this short obituary, this is my small way of trying to put on record his invaluable service to the Institute and to the State of Sikkim.

I offer my sincere prayers for Rinpoche's swift rebirth for the sake of all sentient beings.

[The writer recently retired as Joint Director, NIT]

Rethink mega constructions coming up in heart of Gangtok, Nawin Kiran urges Govt



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 14 NOV:

Sikkim Subject Committee vice-convenor, Nawin Kiran Pradhan, has urged the state government to reconsider the upcoming multi-level car parking cum commercial development project at the old West Point school complex.

He believes that while the government may have the right intention, to construct such a huge commercial structure in the heart of Gangtok was not appropriate. The diversion of such a large public space was also not in the interest of the people, he added.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Pradhan pointed out that work on the project was rushing along despite concern expressed in public by different individuals and organisations.

The fact that Gangtok falls in seismic zone-IV makes such a huge proj-

ect ill-advised from public safety point of view as well, he added.

Instead of cramming everything into the heart of Gangtok, the State Government should consider developing commercial establishments and townships in the suburbs, he added. The new road coming up from Adampool to Reshithang was the right place to develop a new township by establishing such commercial establishments, he pointed out.

On the government's claims of these properties being given on lease [and hence not sold], Mr Pradhan argued that giving a government asset to private players for 26 years was “like selling.”

He urged the government to rethink the project otherwise the people may approach the courts.

Mr Pradhan also criticised the RDD Minister for his use of crude language in a public address recently.

CM assures support for academic...

All requests from the Teachers Association which are legally fit will be granted and the Government will leave no stone unturned in its efforts to aid teachers and students, he added.

The Chief Minister also said that one hundred and five pre-primary/ primary school buildings will be constructed soon.

He further added that the underprivileged students who want to pursue education will get all the benefits from the government. Further, he informed that the education expenditure of 11 MBBS students and 129 students from other disciplines is being met from CM's discretionary fund.

The Chief Minister also assured that Geyzing Degree College will be completed within a year and also Sikkim State University will be renamed as Kanchenjunga State University. Also, more private universities are coming up in Sikkim to uplift the education system.

The government has also planned an exposure tour to foreign and within India for the school principals so that the state can exchange ideas and learn from the good practices.

Education Minister Kunga Nima Lepcha in his brief speech emphasized on the relationship between teachers and students which should be friendly in nature. He said that this relationship defines intensity at which the student learns. He further highlighted the achievements and various schemes provided by the Government during the pandemic.

The programme was also addressed by Additional Chief Secretary, Education Department, GP Upadhyaya.

The programme had the presence of Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, MP Lok Sabha, Deputy Mayor, GMC, Counsellors, Panchayats, Founder, Sulabh International, Bindeshwar Pathak, members of Sulabh International, Heads of Departments, officers of Education Department, College and School Heads, teachers and students from various colleges and schools.

How monkeys were tracked for Covaxin trial!

NEW DELHI, NOV 14

(PTI): Twenty Rhesus macaque monkeys, used during trials of Covaxin, were found near Nagpur after they had moved deep inside the forests of Maharashtra losing their usual urban food sources because of the Covid lockdown in 2020, says a new book.

In “Going Viral: Making of Covaxin - The Inside Story”, Director General of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Dr Balram Bhargava talks about the journey of India's homegrown vaccine.

The book also touches upon the intricacies of science and challenges faced by Indian scientists during the fight against COVID-19, from the de-

velopment of a robust laboratory network, diagnosis, treatment and serosurveys to new technologies and vaccines.

Bhargava says that it is important to remember that the heroes of Covaxin's success story are not just human ones as 20 monkeys are “partly responsible for the fact that millions of us now have access to a life-saving vaccine”.

“Once we knew that the vaccine could generate antibodies in small animals, the next logical step was to test it out on larger animals such as monkeys, comparable to humans in terms of their body structure and immune systems,” he writes in the book, published by Rupa.

The Rhesus macaque monkeys, used worldwide in medical research, are believed to be the best non-human primates for such studies.

The ICMR-National Institute of Virology's biosafety level 4 laboratory, the only state-of-the-art facility in India for primate studies, once again took up the challenge to carry out this critical research, Bhargava says.

But there was a hurdle: where to get the monkeys from as India does not have laboratory-bred Rhesus macaques?

The National Institute of Virology (NIV) researchers contacted multiple zoos and institutes all over India to find

some without any luck.

“Just to make things more difficult, they needed young monkeys with a good immune response, as a couple of ageing monkeys at the NIV were unsuitable,” Bhargava says.

“A dedicated team from ICMR-NIV travelled to areas of Maharashtra to identify sites for animal capture. Macaques, losing their usual urban food sources because of the lockdown, had gone deep into the forests. The Maharashtra forest department helped to track them down, scanning several square kilometres of forests for days to track the monkeys, before finally finding them near Nagpur,” he writes.

He, however, adds

that protecting the experimental animals from SARS-CoV-2 before starting the preclinical studies was another challenge.

“As the animals could be infected from the humans, all the caretakers, veterinarians and other cleaning staff were screened for SARS-CoV-2 weekly, and had to follow strict prevention protocols,” he says.

Performing large animal experiments in the NIV's high-security containment facility was the next challenge.

“To begin with, this required developing critical infrastructure (bronchoscope, X-ray machine, appropriate housing for monkeys), training the team, developing protocols, standardizing pro-

cedures like bronchoscopy in macaques and performing the necropsy,” he writes.

“There were a lot of balls in the air and we couldn't afford to drop any. We had to plan very carefully. It was exhausting as well as tough to perform these experiments in the positive pressure suits, in the containment facility for 10-12 hours without food and water,” he says after the research.

“In the end, everything fell into place. The monkey business was accomplished, and the participants of both species who made it possible deserve more praise than we could possibly give them,” he says.

Ladakh discontent grows over statehood, leaders announce mass protests

KARGIL, 14 NOV [PTI]: Accusing the BJP-led central government of being non-serious towards the issues and concerns of the people of Ladakh, prominent leaders from the union territory on Saturday announced a mass agitation to press for their four main demands including full statehood and constitutional safeguards for the region.

The Leh-based apex body of People's Movement for 6th Schedule and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) jointly called for a general strike on December 6 followed by public rallies and mass contact programmes in both Leh and Kargil districts in March coinciding with “improved weather conditions”.

Announcing the programme at a joint press conference after the third round of talks between the two powerful bodies of the region, chairman of the apex body and former MP Thupstan Chhewang and co-chairman of KDA Asgar Ali Karbalai

said they decided to step up agitation in support of their demands, which also include one more Lok Sabha seat and two Rajya Sabha seats besides a special recruitment drive for the local youth to fill up over 10,000 vacancies in Ladakh.

Both the apex body and the KDA, which is a separate amalgam of socio-religious, political and youth organisations of Leh and Kargil districts, were formed after the August 5, 2019 development when the Centre abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated it into union territories of J-K and Ladakh. The BJP Ladakh was also part of the apex body but later distanced itself after it raised the demand for the full statehood.

While the people of Leh have welcomed the fulfilment of their long pending demand of the UT status and later formed the apex body in support of the demand for implementation of the sixth schedule of the Constitution to safeguard their cul-

ture and identity, the KDA was not in the favour of the UT status and raised the demand of full statehood to Ladakh.

However, on August 1, the ideologically different representatives of Kargil and Leh districts joined hands to seek full-fledged statehood along with constitutional safeguards for the region -- some eight months after their historic meeting last year.

“The entire Ladakh region is united in support of our jointly chalked out four-point agenda...the Government of India has not shown seriousness to address the desire and demands of the people of Ladakh, prompting us to review our strategy and go for mass agitation,” Mr Karbalai said.

He said nearly three months have passed since the delegations of the two bodies met visiting union minister of state for home Nityanand Rai in Leh on August 28 and raised their demands but there was no headway, barring accepting the

demand for issuance of Ladakh Resident Certificate at par with the previously held permanent resident certificate to facilitate recruitment in government jobs.

The visiting minister was not initially willing to meet the KDA and the apex body but was forced to review his decision after people of Ladakh observed a strike on the call of the leaders of the two bodies, he said, adding attempts are continuously being made to break the alliance between the two districts.

“We have decided to go for mass agitation and are calling for a complete strike on December 6. It will be followed by mass public rallies in the twin district headquarters of Leh and Kargil and public mobilisation from block to village level to reach out to every household,” he said.

Mr Karbalai said though full statehood to the region remains the top on the agenda of both the bodies, the meeting decided to oppose any move by the UT administra-

tion to fill up nearly 12,000 jobs in various government departments by promotion quota. “We will strongly oppose any such move or any attempt to outsource jobs to daily wagers. It will be a great injustice to the educated unemployed youth,” he said, urging the UT administration to show seriousness and fill up the vacancies without any further delay.

The KDA leader asked people to remain cautious as attempts are being made by the BJP to break their alliance and create confusion among the minds of the public.

“The BJP is the only party which is outside the KDA and the apex body. We are hopeful that the local leadership will see reason and become part of the joint alliance in near future,” he said.

Mr Karbalai said the Kargil Buddhist Association has also joined the KDA and attempts would be made to address all the concerns and issues raised by the religious organisation.

Futsal Gold Cup kicks off in Yuksam



PRITAM LAMA
YUKSAM, 14 NOV:

Futsal Gold Cup, the first 5-a-side format of the beautiful game that Yuksam is hosting, got underway here today with 45 teams in the fray and the promise of hav-

ing football stars like Sanju Pradhan, Nirmal Chettri and Robin Gurung taking the field for their respective clubs.

Organised by Yuksam Sporting Club and supported by the Yuk-

sam SDM office, gram panchayat and local NGOs and organisations, SDM-Yuksam, Tshering T Bhutia, was present as chief guest today.

The tournament is being played at the new public ground developed

here which was also inaugurated today.

The team that lifts the Cup will also receive a cash prize of Rs 1.01 lakh while the runners-up will receive a cash prize of Rs 71,000 along with trophies.

Cooperative Week gets underway

GANGTOK, 14 Nov [IPR]: The inaugural ceremony of the 68th All India Co-operative Week, themed "Prosperity through Co-operation," was organised by the Cooperation Department, Government of Sikkim, today at the conference hall of Sahakari Bhawan in Tadong.

The programme had chairperson, Cooperation Department, BB Chettri, as chief guest.

Resource persons Raj Lama (SEED, Sikkim), Pema Chenzom (SISCO), and Divya Roy (NABARD) gave a brief on the focal points of the economic development of the cooperative societies.

Addressing the gathering, the chief guest extended gratitude to the Cooperation Department officials for organising the event on a holiday. While suggesting awareness camps on a wider scale, he also extended



full support of the state government for the welfare of the weaker sections and related issues.

During the programme, the department observed a one-minute of silence to pay homage to former Secretary, Tashi Densapa, who passed away yesterday. The Late Mr Densapa had served as the Secretary of the Cooperation Department

from 2000 to 2002.

RCS, Cooperation Department, Jabi Thapa, in her address, spoke on the theme and highlighted the role of cooperatives in the development of the State.

Earlier, the chief guest hoisted the Cooperative Flag at the Department premises and formally inaugurated the week-long celebration.

The programme had the presence and participation of officers and staff from the head office and districts, as well as members of cooperative societies.

It may be mentioned that a series of awareness programmes have been planned throughout the State to mark the Cooperative Week Celebration.

Legal aid awareness prog at MG Marg

GANGTOK, 14 Nov [IPR]: Sikkim State Legal Services Authority [SSLSA] organized a legal-aid awareness programme at MG Marg here today in coordination with the District Legal Services Authority (East). The programme was organised under the Pan India Awareness and Outreach Campaign on the occasion of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav". The programme also marked the closure of the fortnight-long campaign carried out under the aegis of SSLSA.

On the occasion, a skit on Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was performed by students of



Sikkim Government Law College.

The skit explained how heinous crimes against children should be addressed and the various provisions of POCSO Act for enactment

of punishment for various offences so as to deter the perpetrators and ensure safety, security and dignified childhood for children.

The programme had the presence of Member

Secretary, State Legal Services Authority, Sonam Palden Bhutia, Project Consultant, Matilda Issac, Deputy Secretary SLSA, Bikash Sharma, and officials and staff of SSLSA.

Child Rights Week begins in Mangan

MANGAN, 14 Nov [IPR]: On the occasion of Child Rights Week which got underway today, the District Child Protection Unit, North, under the Child Protection Scheme, Women and Child Development Department, organized a street play at Mangan Bazaar. Organised as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the event included



a Children's Day celebration with students of North Sikkim Academy who performed the street play. The purpose of the street play was to sensitize the general public about the rise in cases of child sexual abuse in North District and to generate awareness about child protection mechanisms established in the District.

India records 11,271 new Covid cases, 285 deaths

NEW DELHI, NOV 14 (PTI): With 11,271 more people testing positive for COVID-19, India's infection tally rose to 3,44,37,307 on Sunday, while the active cases came down to 1,35,918, the lowest in 522 days (17 months), according to the Union Health Ministry's data.

The death toll reached 4,63,530 with 285 new fatalities in the last 24 hours, according to the data updated at 8 am.

The daily rise in new Covid infections has been below 20,000 for 37 straight days and less than 50,000 daily for 140 consecutive days now.

The active cases now comprise 0.39 per cent of the total infections, the lowest since March 2020.

The average recov-

ery rate for the country stands currently at 98.26 per cent, the highest since March 2020, the Health Ministry said.

A decrease of 390 cases has been recorded in the active Covid cases in the last 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded to be 0.90 per cent --less than two per cent in the last 41 days.

The weekly positivity rate was recorded to be 1.01 per cent, which has been below 2 per cent for the last 51 days, according to the health ministry.

The number of people who have recovered from the disease increased to 3,38,37,859, while the fatality rate stood at 1.35 per cent.

The number of COVID-19 vaccine dos-

es administered in the country so far has exceeded 112.01 crore.

India's Covid tally had crossed the 20 lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5, and 50 lakh on September 16.

It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

India had crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

The 285 new fatalities include 174 from Kerala and 49 from Maharashtra.

Kerala has been reconciling Covid deaths since the last few days,

hence the death tally of the state is high.

A total of 4,63,530 deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 1,40,565 from Maharashtra, 38,143 from Karnataka, 36,273 from Tamil Nadu, 35,685 from Kerala, 25,093 from Delhi, 22,909 from Uttar Pradesh and 19,307 from West Bengal.

The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

Teltumbde among 26 Naxals killed in Maha, say police

MUMBAI, NOV 14 (PTI): Top Maoist leader Milind Teltumbde was among the 26 Naxals killed in an encounter with police in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district, a senior police official said on Sunday.

The gun-battle took place on Saturday at Korchi in Mardintola forest area of the district, located over 900 km from Mumbai, when a C-60

police commando team was conducting a search operation, police earlier said.

The C-60 commandos, an elite wing of the police, had recovered bodies of 26 Naxals during a search after the encounter and Teltumbde, one of the wanted accused in the Koregaon Bhima-Maoist links case, was suspected to be


among the dead.

"Teltumbde was among the 26 dead Naxals," a senior state police official confirmed on Sunday.

Four police personnel were also seriously injured in the action on Saturday and were taken to Nagpur by a helicopter for treatment.

Gadchiroli district lies on the border of Chhattisgarh.

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1	Processor	Intel® Core™ i3 – 10100
2	Graphics	Integrated
3.	RAM	4GBDDR4-2666 MHz RAM (1x4 GB)
4.	HDD	1 TB
5.	Audio	Realtek AL C305 Codee, 2W internal speaker universal audio jack, combo microphone / headphone jack.
6.	Monitor	18.5" LCD
7.	Operating System	Windows 10 Home single language 64-HP
8	Warranty	3 years.

PRINTER:

Sl.No.	Item	Specification
1.	Laser Printer	Print Technology : Monochrome Laser Print speed (black, normal quality, A4): up to 600 x 600 dpi (1200 dpi effective output) Duplex print options : manual Standard media sizes : A4, A5, A6, B5, postcards, envelopes (C5, DL, B5) CONNECTIVITY: Parallel/Ethernet print server/ Hi-Speed USB port.

- Sealed quotations complete in all respects duly reflecting the unit price should reach the office of the undersigned within 24th November 2021 during working hours.
- Quotations will be opened at 11:00 am on November 25, 2021 at the office of the undersigned at the address mentioned below in the presence of parties, who like to be present.
- The price quoted should be final and inclusive of all taxes.
- Vendor/ firm should be form the State of Sikkim and shall be responsible for providing support within two working days of the problem reported by the purchasing Department during the warranty period of 3 years.
- Vendor/ firm should be registered under GST & should have regularly filed GST till the time of submission of this quotation.
- Vendor/firm should submit copy of trade license and firm registration and GST clearance certificate, certificate of empanelment from IT Department.
- Conditional/ incomplete quotations shall be summarily rejected.
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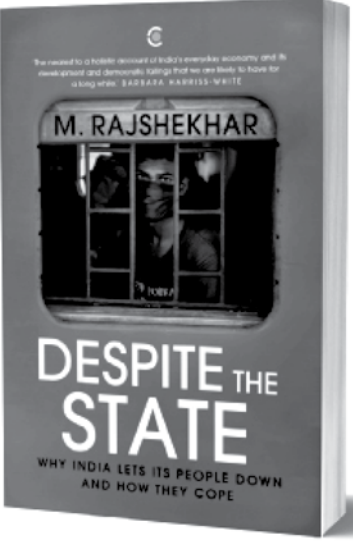
WHY INDIA LETS ITS PEOPLE DOWN AND HOW THEY COPE

by
M. Rajshekhar

in conversation with
Pema Wangchuk
senior editor, author

16 November 2021 | 5:45 pm | Rachna Books

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Pending Issues

Difficult Delhi or poor follow-up?

Any time the Chief Minister or other leaders, whether from the government or outside of it, visit Delhi and call on Ministers and leaders there, they submit memorandums which reiterate a substantial list of “pending issues” with the Centre.

The list of demands has remained unchanged for a while, and this not because Sikkim is unimaginative, but because the demands have remained pending and hence continue to be petitioned for. Delhi has acquiesced to Sikkim’s demands/ requests in too piecemeal a fashion – IT exemption for the Sikkimese and ST status for Limboos and Tamangs – are the only major demands that have been granted in a long while now, and these too after too many years of dithering and delaying. The list of demands and its follow-up has been so static that one does not even need to await an official communiqué any more before putting out a report on what Delhi was reminded about and received a patient hearing. That is how routine the pending nature of Sikkim’s demands has become!

One understands that the wheels turn slow in Delhi, and now that the current dispensation in office there is trying to reinvent the wheel itself, Sikkim will need to learn afresh how to get things moving in the Capital. But even as Sikkim and its representatives try and find their way around the new Delhi, a question that still needs to be asked is why Sikkim needs to keep returning to Delhi with “pending issues”.

At one level, the reason is simple - because Delhi needs to constantly be reminded about them since concerns of a State that sends only one MP each to the two Houses of Parliament are rarely a priority. There is nothing that Sikkim can do about that “tyranny” of slim representation. But there must be more reasons behind Delhi’s easy amnesia on Sikkim’s pending issues, for one the possible fact that Sikkim still does not have officers diligent enough to follow up on proposals which have even the PMO’s backing. Once the politicians raise a demand with Central leaders and the same gets forwarded to the respective ministries, the bureaucracy comes into play and the files start moving. Files don’t however move if there is no one pursuing them, and experience bears out that Sikkim officials rarely do so. What is worse, sometimes, they don’t even respond to queries from the Centre. There have been enough instances of recalcitrance underlining follow-up from Sikkim’s departments.

Sikkim should have figured out by now that Delhi lacks the capacity and the time to figure out Sikkim’s “issues”. Most of the pending issues, however, need to be resolved by Delhi which lobs the ball back into Sikkim’s court and expects a neatly packed and formatted solution to be recommended by Sikkim for enforcement by Delhi. In complicated matters, the State also needs to provide the supporting arguments and watertight justifications and a ready-reckoner on Sikkim’s special status and the leeway it allows. For more routine issues it is sometimes as simple as placing the right proposal on the right table. Since this is clearly not happening as fluidly and as professionally as is required for new demands to be framed (since the old have been granted), what else can the elected representatives do but keep trooping down to Delhi to raise issues that are still pending even after everyone has cleared them in principle?

Sikkim needs a bureaucratic machinery at home to troop through the doors that its leaders open in Delhi. Till that happens, an annual Delhi pilgrimage with a dusted list of pending demands will remain and constant feature.

Five things you need to know about the Glasgow Climate Pact

SIMON LEWIS & MARK MASLIN
THECONVERSATION.COM

The COP26 UN climate talks in Glasgow have finished and the gavel has come down on the Glasgow Climate Pact agreed by all 197 countries.

If the 2015 Paris Agreement provided the framework for countries to tackle climate change then Glasgow, six years on, was the first major test of this high-water mark of global diplomacy.

So what have we learnt from two weeks of leaders’ statements, massive protests and side deals on coal, stopping fossil fuel finance and deforestation, plus the final signed Glasgow Climate Pact?

From phasing out coal to carbon market loopholes, here is what you need to know:

1. PROGRESS ON CUTTING EMISSIONS, BUT NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH

The Glasgow Climate Pact is incremental progress and not the breakthrough moment needed to curb the worst impacts of climate change. The UK government as host and therefore president of COP26 wanted to “keep 1.5°C alive”, the stronger goal of the Paris Agreement. But at best we can say the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C is on life support – it has a pulse but it’s nearly dead.

The Paris Agreement says temperatures should be limited to “well below” 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and countries should “pursue efforts” to limit warming to 1.5°C. Before COP26, the world was on track for 2.7°C of warming, based on commitments by countries, and expectation of the changes in technology. Announcements at COP26, including new pledges to cut emissions this decade, by some key countries, have reduced this to a best estimate of 2.4°C.

More countries also announced long-term net zero goals. One of the

most important was India’s pledge to reach net zero emissions by 2070. Critically, the country said it would get off to a quick start with a massive expansion of renewable energy in the next ten years so that it accounts for 50% of its total usage, reducing its emissions in 2030 by 1 billion tonnes (from a current total of around 2.5 billion).

Fast-growing Nigeria also pledged net zero emissions by 2060. Countries accounting for 90% of the world’s GDP have now pledged to go net zero by the middle of this century.

A world warming by 2.4°C is still clearly very far from 1.5°C. What remains is a near-term emissions gap, as global emissions look likely to flatline this decade rather than showing the sharp cuts necessary to be on the 1.5°C trajectory the pact calls for. There is a gulf between long-term net zero goals and plans to deliver emissions cuts this decade.

2. THE DOOR IS AJAR FOR FURTHER CUTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE

The final text of the Glasgow Pact notes that the current national climate plans, nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in the jargon, are far from what is needed for 1.5°C. It also requests that countries come back next year with new updated plans.

Under the Paris Agreement, new climate plans are needed every five years, which is why Glasgow, five years after Paris (with a delay due to COVID), was such an important meeting. New climate plans next year, instead of waiting another five years, can keep 1.5°C on life support for another 12 months, and gives campaigners another year to shift government climate policy. It also opens the door to requesting further NDC updates from 2022 onwards to help ratchet up ambition this decade.

The Glasgow Climate Pact also

states that the use of unabated coal should be phased down, as should subsidies for fossil fuels. The wording is weaker than the initial proposals, with the final text calling for only a “phase down” and not a “phase out” of coal, due to a last-second intervention by India, and of “inefficient” subsidies. But this is the first time fossil fuels have been mentioned in a UN climate talks declaration.

In the past, Saudi Arabia and others have stripped out this language. This an important shift, finally acknowledging that use of coal and other fossil fuels need to be rapidly reduced to tackle the climate emergency. The taboo of talking about the end of fossil fuels has been finally broken.

3. RICH COUNTRIES CONTINUED TO IGNORE THEIR HISTORICAL RESPONSIBILITY

Developing countries have been calling for funding to pay for “loss and damage”, such as the costs of the impacts of cyclones and sea level rise. Small island states and climate-vulnerable countries say the historical emissions of the major polluters have caused these impacts and therefore funding is needed.

Developed countries, led by the US and EU, have resisted taking any liability for these loss and damages, and vetoed the creation of a new “Glasgow Loss and Damage Facility”, a way of supporting vulnerable nations, despite it being called for by most countries.

4. LOOPHOLES IN CARBON MARKET RULES COULD UNDERMINE PROGRESS

Carbon markets could throw a potential lifeline to the fossil fuel industry, allowing them to claim “carbon offsets” and carry on business as (nearly) usual. A tortuous series of negotiations over article 6 of the Paris Agreement on market and non-market approaches to trading carbon was finally agreed, six years

on. The worst and biggest loopholes were closed, but there is still scope for countries and companies to game the system.

Outside the COP process, we will need much clearer and stricter rules for company carbon offsets. Otherwise expect a series of exposé from non-governmental organisations and the media into carbon offsetting under this new regime, when new attempts will emerge to try and close these remaining loopholes.

5. THANK CLIMATE ACTIVISTS FOR THE PROGRESS – THEIR NEXT MOVES WILL BE DECISIVE

It is clear that powerful countries are moving too slowly and they have made a political decision to not support a step change in both greenhouse gas emissions and funding to help income-poor countries to adapt to climate change and leapfrog the fossil fuel age.

But they are being pushed hard by their populations and particularly climate campaigners. Indeed in Glasgow, we saw huge protests with both the youth Fridays for Future march and the Saturday Global Day of Action massively exceeding expected numbers.

This means that next steps of the campaigners and the climate movement matter. In the UK this will be trying to stop the government granting a licence to exploit the new Cambo oil field off the north coast of Scotland.

Expect more action on the financing of fossil fuel projects, as activists try to cut emissions by starving the industry of capital. Without these movements pushing countries and companies, including at COP27 in Egypt, we won’t curb climate change and protect our precious planet.

[Simon Lewis is Professor of Global Change Science at University of Leeds and, UCL; Mark Maslin is Professor of Earth System Science, UCL]

How China’s ‘leftover women’ are using their financial power to fight the stigma of being single

CHIH-LING LIU & ROBERT KOZINETS
THECONVERSATION.COM

In China, if you are female, educated and unmarried by the age of 27, people might use a particular term – “Sheng-nu” – to describe your social status. It translates simply as “leftover women”.

The label was deliberately invented to curb the rising number of single women in a traditional society which sometimes views not marrying as a moral transgression. Some even consider it a threat to national security.

Indeed, portrayals of single women as lonely, desperate, overqualified and intimidating appear regularly in Chinese media and news outlets. Research has shown that the “sheng-nu” stigma has pressurised many women into marriage.

But others are fighting back.

Partly as a result of the expansion of mass education since the economic reform of the 1980s, women in China appear to be increasingly confident about their place in modern society.

The 7 million single women aged 25 to 34 in urban China are among the largest contributors to the country’s growth. Women now contribute some 41% to China’s GDP, the largest proportion of any country in the world.

And our research reveals that single professional Chinese women are changing how others see them not through protest or activism – but through their economic power. They are using consumerism to counteract longstanding stigma over their single status.

One 33-year-old woman told us:

“During family gatherings, my aunt just loves to tease my parents about why I’m still single. In her mind, I must lead a miserable life. I need to defend my parents [so] I constantly upgrade my own self-image by buying myself more and more expensive clothes to wear.”

She continued: “I want the best of everything in life. My sunglasses are from Burberry, my handbag is from Louis Vuitton, my laptop is from Apple.”

“I show that I’m not miserable and I lead a great life. [My relatives] can then leave my parents alone.”

And a 30-year-old explained: “The more people want to laugh at you, the more glamorous you need to look in front of them. When you look



glamorous, people become more tolerant of you [and your family].”

An IT developer of 35 recalled: “When I bought my mother a golden ring, she was over the moon. My father was very poor when they got married, so she never received a ring from him. I wanted to show both of them that I can afford many, many things.”

The marketplace is also capitalising on the rise of singlehood and its economic muscle. China’s “Singles’ Day”, invented in 2009 by the e-commerce giant Alibaba as a kind of anti-Valentine’s celebration for single people, has overtaken Black Friday to become the biggest annual shopping festival in the world.

SINGLES DAY SPENDING

Held on November 11 every year (the date was chosen because of the four number ones in the date 11.11), 2021 has seen record levels of spending.

Japanese beauty company SK-II has also seen a growth in sales after it launched a series of popular videos featuring successful professional women who have chosen not to marry.

Of course, not all single women in China can afford to demonstrate this kind of spending power. But our study suggests that for those who can, a new sense of economic liberty helps to define themselves and their place in Chinese society.

The chance to spend money on themselves – and often on gifts for their parents – helps to

positively redefine their single status as something to be proud of.

Through conspicuous consumption, they promote themselves as morally upright, economically independent, successful citizens. The women in our study are deploying the power of the market to counteract the “sheng-nu” stigma and its spread.

As another woman commented: “Single women really should go out more, especially when they are not bound by family life. Go out and see new scenery, experience a new life. You might realise there is another possibility to live.”

Despite its rise in contemporary China and Hong Kong, the act of protesting can lead to imprisonment and severe consequences. For stigmatised “sheng-nu” women, direct confrontation in the form of social activism could lead to serious professional or legal consequences.

Instead, consumption and economic power has become a way for these women to build legitimacy for an alternative lifestyle. Their struggle pits the modernising and global power of the contemporary market against the traditional cultural authority and media power of China’s modern party state. And in a surprising turn of events, it looks like the single women are winning.

[Chih-Ling Liu is Lecturer in Marketing, Lancaster University; Robert Kozinets is Jayne and Hans Hufschmid Chair in Strategic Public Relations and Business Communication, USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism]

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Ladakh records two new Covid deaths, 13 fresh cases

LEH, NOV 14 (PTI): Two people died of coronavirus in Ladakh, while 13 fresh cases pushed the overall virus tally in the Union Territory to 21,148, officials said on Sunday.

In view of the recent spike in the cases, the Leh district administration ordered closure of all government and private schools from November 15 but said the board examinations for classes 10, 11 and 12 would be conducted as per schedule.

The officials said both the patients died of coronavirus in Leh district on Saturday, taking the overall death toll in Ladakh to 211 153 in Leh and 58 in Kargil.

Of the new cases, 12 people tested positive in Leh and one in Kargil, they said, adding that nine people were discharged after successful treatment for COVID-19 in Leh, thereby taking the number of recoveries in Ladakh to 20,783.

The officials said the number of active cases in Ladakh stands at 154 149 in Leh and five in Kargil.

There has been a spike in COVID-19 cases in Leh district which has so far recorded three Covid-related deaths and 186 fresh cases this month, prompting authorities to order closure of the government and private schools.

Leh District Magistrate Shrikant Balasaheb Suse ordered closure of all government and private schools, including the residential hostels, from November 15 till further order except for conduct of the board examinations.

He said the decision was taken in view of the recent spike in COVID-19 cases and in the interest of public health and safety.

"The board examinations for class 10, 11, and 12 shall be conducted as per the date sheets issued by the J&K Board of School Education, Sub Office Leh with strict observance of COVID-19 SOPs/Guidelines, Suse said in his order.

Women journalists named in VHP FIR accuse Tripura cops of "intimidation"

AGARTALA, 14 NOV [NDTV]: Two women journalists in Tripura have been named in an FIR (first information report) after a complaint by a supporter of the right-wing group Vishva Hindu Parishad. The journalists - Sammriddhi Sakunia and Swarna Jha - alleged that the cops came to their hotel early this morning and "intimidated" them; they said they were covering the recent incidents of violence in the state.

The journalists have been accused of "promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion" under Section 153-A and "being a part of criminal conspiracy" under Section 120 (B) of the IPC (Indian Penal Code) in the complaint filed by Kanchan Das.

Even as Ms Sakunia alleged in a tweet that they were not allowed to leave the hotel, sources claimed a team of cops "only served a notice" to them, and later asked them to appear for questioning on November 21.

"Based on an FIR, we



today went to meet the journalists who were staying in a hotel in Dharmanagar sub-division of Tripura's north district. We took their permission and spoke with them which for basic information. We served them a notice. They requested us to give some time so then they can appear with their lawyer. The permission was given. I believe they have already left," a police officer said.

Amid huge protests in Maharashtra over the reported clashes in Tripura, the Home Ministry on Saturday trashed the claims about the vandalism of a mosque in Gomati district.

Ms Jha, in a series of tweets, on Saturday had said they spoke to locals about the damage to a mosque. She also shared a copy of the FIR (first information report), and mentioned about a rally



by the VHP in another tweet where she elaborated the claims of the locals linked to the right-wing group.

Ms Sakunia this morning had tweeted: "We were supposed to leave for the capital Agartala but have been not allowed to move despite full cooperation. There are around 16-17 police deployed outside our hotel."

"I will be putting out

a statement soon iterating all the intimidation I had to face while covering the #Tripura story soon. Meanwhile, we are seeking legal remedy. Ps. We aren't allowed to move outside from our hotel. (sic)"

Both of them may be questioned in a fake news circulation case, sources have said.

On Saturday, the Home Ministry dismissed reports of vandalism at a

mosque in the BJP-ruled state. "There have been news reports that have been circulating that a mosque in Kakraban area of Gomati district in Tripura has been damaged and vandalised. These news reports are fake and are a complete misrepresentation of facts," a strongly-worded statement read.

Last week, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were asked by the Tripura Police to provide details of over a hundred accounts from which allegedly fake and provocative posts were made.

Recently, over a dozen criminal cases have been filed and action has been taken against 70 people including Supreme Court lawyers, activists, and religious campaigners.

Journalist Shyam Meera Singh and lawyers Ansar Indori (from the National Confederation of Human Rights Organisation) and Mukesh (from the Peoples' Union of Civil Liberties) approached the Supreme Court to nix FIRs against them.

"Fake": Centre trashes reports of vandalism at Tripura mosque

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV [PTI]: The Union Home Ministry on Saturday said news circulating on social media about damage and vandalism of a mosque in Tripura is fake and complete misrepresentation of facts.

It also said that there is no report of simple or grievous injury or rape or death of any person in any such incidents in Tripura as alleged in some social media posts.

In a strongly worded statement, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said there is no reported case of damage of the structure of any mosque in Tripura in the recent past and that people should maintain calm and should not be misguided by such fake reports.

"There have been news reports that have been circulating that a mosque in Kakraban area of Gomati district in Tripura has been damaged and vandalised. These news reports are fake and are a complete misrepresentation of facts," it said.

The home ministry said the mosque in Dargabazar area of Kakraban has not been damaged and the Tripura Police in Gomati district is working to maintain peace and tranquillity.

The home ministry said that in Maharashtra, there have been reports of violence and unsavoury statements that are aimed at disturbing peace and harmony based on fake news regarding Tripura.

"This is very concerning and it is urged that peace is maintained at all costs," it said.

The home ministry made it clear that there is no reported case of damage of the structure of any mosque in Tripura in the recent past.

Akhilesh Yadav flips Amit Shah's "JAM" strike with his own acronym

LUCKNOW, 14 NOV [PTI]: Responding to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's jibe against his party, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday attacked the BJP saying it stands for arrogance, lies, and inflation.

Mr Akhilesh's response came a day after Mr Shah's speech in Azamgarh, in which he termed the SP as a party that stands for "Jinnah, Azam Khan and Mukhtar (Ansari)", giving it the acronym 'JAM'.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has in past used 'JAM' as a shorthand to publicise his vision of getting a 'Jan Dhan Bank

account, Aadhaar, and Mobile phone' to every person in the country.

On Sunday, Akhilesh used the same acronym to attack the BJP.

"For BJP, 'J' stands for 'Jhooth' (lie), 'A' stands for 'Ahankar' (arrogance), and 'M' stands for 'Maha-gaai' (inflation)," he said addressing a press conference in Kushinagar.

In his address, Akhilesh criticized the BJP for rising prices of petrol and diesel across the country.

He alleged the BJP is pandering to the poor only because election is

around the corner in Uttar Pradesh.

"If the BJP stays in power, it (fuel price) will touch ₹ 150. They are not increasing the price as election is round the corner," he said.

"The poor are being given food grains only till the elections. They (BJP) are saying that it has been extended from Holi to Diwali," he said, adding that if his party comes to power, food will be available round the year.

Addressing a rally in the SP bastion of Azamgarh on Saturday, Mr Shah had said that

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has rid the Purvanchal region of "mosquitoes and mafia".

He claimed that while PM Modi strived to give a "corruption-free" government, SP was inducting in its fold people like Mukhtar Ansari, a don-turned-politician.

"You should tell me whether you want BJP's JAM or SP's JAM. These people can never work

for the welfare of Uttar Pradesh. They indulge in dividing people on the basis of caste, causing riots, appeasement, and vote-bank politics," Mr Shah had said.

He attacked the SP chief yet again for naming Muhammad Ali Jinnah -- the founder of Pakistan -- among other freedom fighters.

"There are so many people from the minority

community here. Is there anyone here who sees greatness in Jinnah," Mr Shah had said.

In an address in Haridwar on October 31, Akhilesh kicked up a controversy when he said Jinnah got his barristership from the same place as did Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Jawaharlal Nehru, people who got India freedom.

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Eggs thrown at Odisha Minister, MLA on the way to meet Chief Minister

BHUBANESWAR, 14 NOV [PTI]: Eggs were hurled targeting a state minister and an MLA of the ruling BJD in Odisha on Saturday as the opposition BJP and Congress intensified their stir demanding removal and arrest of minister D S Mishra for his alleged links with the prime accused in the kidnap and murder case of a woman teacher.

Both of them faced the ire of the activists of the opposition parties while they were on their way to attend Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's meeting at Bijepur in Bargarh district.

The BJP workers hurled eggs targeting Odisha's SC and ST Development Minister Jagannath Saraka's vehicle at Paikamala Chhak.

BJD MLA from Atabira and former minister Snehagini Chhuria also faced a similar attack by Congress workers at Ekamra Chhak here when she was on her way to Bijepur to participate in the programme.

Mr Patnaik was in Bijepur to launch the distribution of smart health cards under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojan (BSKY) in the Bargarh district.

Ahead of the chief minister's visit, the police detained many Congress and BJP leaders as a preventive measure.

BJP's state Yuva Morcha president Irasish Acharya, and former Congress MLA Nihar Mahanda were taken into preventive custody in Padmapur.

Earlier on November 11, activists of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) had waved black flags at Steel and Mines Minister Prafulla Mallick in Keonjhar district when he was on his way to attend a meeting of the District Planning Board.

Eggs were hurled at the carcade of the Minister of State for Home D S Mishra and black flags were shown to him during his visit to Junagarh in Kalahandi district on November 7.

In the Baripada area of Mayurbhanj district, BJP

workers hurled eggs at the police after they were stopped from entering the office of the superintendent of police by breaking barricades.

The police had made tight security arrangements keeping in view an announcement made by opposition parties that they would stage demonstrations during Mr Patnaik's visit to Bijepur.

As many as 18 platoons of the police force were deployed in Bijepur.

Meanwhile, in separate press conferences in the state capital, both the BJD and the Congress made allegations and counter-allegations.

Senior Congress leader Bhakta Charan Das, who also hails from Kalahandi district, asked the government to divulge the call record details of minister Mishra and his close associate to prove him innocent.

He alleged that the minister had a crucial role in promoting the prime accused in the teacher's kidnap and murder case

in Kalahandi. The Congress leader admitted that as an MP he had earlier donated funds for the development of Mahaling College, run by the prime accused, and had visited the institution four times as a Parliamentarian.

The ruling BJD in a separate press conference alleged that Mr Das has no moral rights to blame Mishra because he had been associated with the prime accused.

"If the Congress demands the minister's arrest, the same rule should also be applicable for Das," said BJD spokesperson Sasmit Patra.

Mr Patra also alleged that Mr Das's son Kirti was also one of the trustees of the Mahaling College, run by the prime accused.

"Let Das deny that his son is not a trustee of the Mahaling college," the BJD leader said.

Senior BJP leader Bijay Mohapatra had alleged that the law enforcers were working to ensure that the prime accused goes scot-free.

Azeem Rafiq: from England hopeful to revealing cricket's racism

TANYA ALDRED

LONDON, 14 NOV [THEGUARDIAN]: Last week a new fish and chip shop opened in Barnsley. There were long queues to snaffle the first 1,000 portions, sold at the bargain 1972 price of 45p, but the most extraordinary thing about it was the owner, Azeem Rafiq: English cricket's great disruptor.

The story of the 30-year-old Rafiq has dominated the front and back pages this month after the touchpaper finally caught in his long-running battle for justice over the racism he experienced while at Yorkshire CCC. It has been a story Shakespearean in its tragedy, and spiralling in its repercussions, of how a superb young cricketer, Yorkshire's first captain from an Asian background and a beacon of inclusivity, became lost and alienated at a club where, he has claimed, casual racism was allowed to float and fester.

Rafiq's determination to be heard has cost him his career, his mental health and many of his friends in the game; while the club's mangled investigation of his claims of institutional racism has dragged their own reputation through the mire.

In the past week, the chairman, Roger Hutton, and the chief executive, Mark Arthur, have both resigned and sponsors, previously only too glad to nail their colours to English cricket's most successful county, ran suddenly into the night: Nike, Emerald, Yorkshire Tea, Anchor Butter, Tetley's beer, Harrogate Spring Water, Bagnalls, David Lloyd Clubs – all gone.

Martyn Moxon, the director of cricket, is off sick, suffering from a stress-related illness; Andrew Gale, the head coach, is temporarily suspended before a disciplinary hearing. The England and Wales Cricket Board has suspended Yorkshire from holding internationals and other big games at Headingley, while death threats

have been sent to Rafiq, to his family and to Yorkshire employees. In all the mess, there are no winners.

Rafiq moved to England from Pakistan aged 10. He was soon picked up in the Yorkshire system, as a talented off-spinning allrounder, a clever young man and an astute leader who idolised Michael Vaughan. He played age-group cricket for England, and was captain of the under-17 and U19 sides. The U19 squad he led to the World Cup in 2010 was full of big names and bigger personalities: there was his vice-captain, Hampshire's James Vince, plus Joe Root, Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes – England's current Test captain and previous vice-captains.

His white-ball Yorkshire debut came at the tender age of 17, his County Championship debut the year after, and he scored a century in his second first-class match, a chirpy innings described as one of "confidence, panache" and "remarkably few nerves". By 2012, he was leading Yorkshire, the club's youngest captain, after an injury to Gale: five T20 wins in six games followed.

But there was sourness amongst the honey. The Headingley dressing room was a hard one and "banter" disguised racist remarks that wore Rafiq down. The al-

leged incident with Vaughan – which the former captain has vehemently denied – occurred in 2009, one of the first times the two men had ever spoken.

Rafiq's own behaviour was haphazard.



In 2010 he was one of the first cricketers to fall foul of Twitter, when he posted abusive messages about John Abrahams, his England U19s coach, after being dropped for breaking agreed curfews. He struggled to balance his Muslim background with fitting in with the lifestyles of his teammates, something he thinks helps explain the yips he started to suffer the following winter as the story of youthful promise started to spoil. He continued to struggle with his game, feeling increasingly isolated, and in 2014 left Yorkshire, suffering from a loss of form and depression.

After a couple of years in the wilderness, he admirably worked his way back to the club, and in 2016 was awarded his county cap. While hopes of represent-

ing England alongside the men he led as a teenager had faded, a fulfilling white-ball career seemed to be in reach. Then in 2018, tragedy struck, as his beloved son was stillborn. A distraught Rafiq took compassionate leave and it was during this period that Yorkshire decided to end his contract.

To the general cricketing public, Rafiq then disappeared, playing a little cricket in Pakistan, training as a coach, cooking free meals for NHS staff and key workers during the first lockdown and starting his own business. It was in an interview with Wisden's Taha Hashim in August 2020 that Rafiq first publicly mentioned the racism he had suffered while at Headingley.

It was picked up a couple of weeks later by George Dobell, then of Cricinfo, and this time Rafiq was more specific in his allegations: that Yorkshire's lack of action had left him close to suicide and that he "lost faith in humanity". After ignoring previous complaints against the club, which Rafiq had wanted to settle amicably, Yorkshire were eventually kicked into action, commissioning a report, which was supposed to take three months. As winter turned to spring and then summer, that stretched to nearly a year.

While Dobell helped keep Rafiq's name in the news, the pressure took its toll.

When brief details did emerge, Rafiq was enraged that the club apologised for "inappropriate behaviour" rather than racism. When a summary of the report was finally released, on the same day England's Test with India at Old Trafford was called off, seven of Rafiq's allegations were upheld though the report declared it was neither able to prove nor disprove institutional racism.

Still the full report was not published, nor was it sent to Rafiq, nor the ECB. As they had from the beginning, Yorkshire underestimated their former captain, a man whose stubbornness matched their own and who refused to take money in exchange for a non-disclosure agreement.

Finally, when the club announced that no disciplinary action would be taken and revelations emerged that a player had admitted using the P-word in conversation with Rafiq but the club accepted it was "banter between friends", a crisis point was reached: MPs became involved and sponsors started to flee.

Lord Patel, the former ECB deputy chair brought in to replace Hutton, settled Rafiq's employment tribunal case within 72 hours. Immediately, Rafiq promised a donation to the Bethan James bursary, set up to support young journalists. The digital, culture, media and sport select committee hearing on Tuesday, which will be attended, among others, by Rafiq and Hutton, who was thwarted in his efforts to reform the club, is expected to be explosive.

Today the Yorkshire website displays all 29 of their squad players; only one comes from a non-white background, England's Adil Rashid. It is a tragedy of opportunity denied at a personal and community level. Rafiq's legacy, what he has continued fighting for, is that he will, in the end, change English cricket's most famous club for good.

Maria Sakkari: 'I had zero support from federations or sponsors'

TUMAINI CARAYOL

LONDON, 14 NOV [THEGUARDIAN]: Maria Sakkari is one of the best women's tennis players in the world. That has been clear for a couple of years during her slow-burning 20s as, bit by bit, she steadily rose up the rankings and established herself at the top of the game. This week in Guadalajara, as she contests the WTA Finals as one of the elite eight, it is a simple fact.

And yet, for the majority of her tennis career, that has not been the case. Although she and Stefanos Tsitsipas have become the first two top-10-ranked Greek tennis players, their success belies the fact that they have done so without the guidance, expertise or financial heft of a federation. "I was lucky to have parents like my parents because they invested a lot and I had zero support from federations or sponsors," says Sakkari, whose mother, Angeliki Kanellopoulou, was once ranked No 43 in the world. "My father paid so much for me to play tennis and I'm very grateful for what he has done and they have both done in order for me to achieve my goals."

A result of treading her own path without outside help is that it has been uncommonly long. Sakkari, now 26, was unremarkable as a junior player, reaching a career high of only 203. When she decided to pursue her career as a professional, she initially gave herself two years just to see how things would go. If she didn't succeed, she already had an alternative route in mind: "I was thinking of maybe going to college or studying something in Greece."

In time she eventually transitioned to the ITF pro circuit, the lowest rungs of professional tennis, and she would see many of the

far more successful junior players, with all of their sponsors and hype, also trying to reach the top of the game: "They were so far away," she says. "They were so much better. I could clearly see that they were another level."

Looking back to those days and seeing how she has overtaken some of them is an understandable source of satisfaction for Sakkari. She cites Aryna Sabalenka, career high junior ranking of 225, as another player who defied convention: "Seeing these players now, I don't want to sound arrogant, but at the moment being the better player than some of them, it proves ... you can tell many juniors that you don't have to be a top junior to make it to the top." The progress from there was slow but constant. At 18 in 2013, she moved from Greece to Barcelona by herself which "made me realise that I have to live my own life, just take my decisions for myself". She made her grand slam debut aged 20 at the 2015 US Open, qualifying at her first attempt.

After building her game with Thomas Johansson, the 2002 Australian Open champion, she settled on a 23-year-old British former hitting partner called Tom Hill as her coach in 2018. She reached the top 20 only last year. Tennis players often dip into the same pool of inexperienced coaches who move from one camp to the next, but her unusual choice has turned out to be an inspired one. Sakkari and Hill are the same age and they have grown and improved together, with both determined to test each other's limits on the court and then enjoy themselves away from it: "It's nice to have someone your age who really understands you and really supports your decisions," she says.

Lewis Hamilton battles back brilliantly from penalty in Brazil sprint

SÃO PAULO, 14 NOV [THEGUARDIAN]:

Lewis Hamilton's Formula One world championship hopes hung by the slenderest of threads after he was disqualified from Friday's qualifying at the Brazilian Grand Prix. Yet with typical indomitable fortitude the world champion refused to accept his fate.

He delivered an exceptional performance in Saturday's sprint to give himself a chance to keep his title hopes alive at Interlagos and stay in touch with Max Verstappen.

F1 had scrupulously followed its rules in punishing Hamilton but it was impossible to ignore the sense of disappointment that accompanied the likelihood that the most exciting title fight for years might be decided in the stewards' room rather than on the track. Hamilton described the decision as "devastating" but had no intention of throwing in the towel.

Relegated to the back of the grid after the FIA confirmed his Mercedes team had broken regulations in their rear wing drag reduction system (DRS) during Friday's qualifying, Hamilton gave a masterclass in controlled, aggressive driving to move from 20th to fifth in just 24 laps. The sprint was won by his teammate Valtteri Bottas, who will start from pole, with Verstappen in second.

"I just tried to get as far up as possible, then all of a sudden, I was chipping away at it much faster," Hamilton said. "You just can't give up. You just have to keep going."

So quick and so precise was Hamilton that what had appeared to be an insurmountable task is now all to play



for. He scythed through the field, including an absolutely bravura pass on Lando Norris through turn one on the final lap to take fifth, but the challenge remains significant.

With his grid penalty for taking a new engine earlier in the weekend applied he will start the grand prix from 10th. Yet such was his pace that making a tilt at the front with a full 71 laps to play with is within his grasp.

A bullish Mercedes team principal, Toto Wolff, was hugely pleased with the result especially as he felt his team had been harshly treated. "Fuck them all," he said to Hamilton as he crossed the line. Wolff insisted the comment was not aimed at the stewards but rather an expression of building up resilience.

He believed the attention to the Mercedes wing brought by Red Bull and the refusal to allow for what he believed was damage incurred during its use was unfair. "In a way there was a gentleman's agreement that exists, now it doesn't any more," he noted before celebrating Hamilton's performance. "Today it reminded me why I love this sport," he added. "Everything is possible, we have everything to play for tomorrow."

Hamilton trails Verstappen by 21 points with four rounds, including today's, remaining and 104 points available. Before the sprint Verstappen looked all set to open a chasm to the world champion, now the fight remains on albeit with the numbers still stacked up against the British driver. If Verstappen scores three points more than Hamilton on Sunday he could finish second to him in the three remaining meetings and still take his first title.

Hamilton's team were found to have breached the technical regulation during the qualifying on Friday that decided the grid for the sprint race. His punishment was finally confirmed on Saturday afternoon and Mercedes have stated they will not appeal. Verstappen too had been drawn into the protracted steward's enquiry and was fined €50,000 (£43,500) for touching Hamilton's car after qualifying.

For Mercedes it was a technical infringement that was not intentional. The rear wing passed the FIA test before qualifying but failed to do so afterwards. The stewards confirmed they believed there had been no deliberate rule breaking, reporting there was "no question of any intent

to exceed the maximum dimension either by action or design". However, they did state the issue was likely caused by a "play in parts" (contact between different elements), a fault with the mechanism or incorrect assembly.

Wolff said the team were convinced that the wing had been damaged but it had yet to be returned to them for inspection. It was a huge blow for Mercedes. Since the turbo-hybrid era began in 2014 they have been dominant and performed operationally and mechanically at an exceptionally high standard.

The sequence of events had begun after qualifying finished on Friday at 2pm in Brazil and only concluded a full 19 hours later. With Hamilton having secured pole for the sprint race with a dominant performance, Red Bull lodged a complaint about the DRS. Mercedes were then summoned to the stewards after the FIA technical delegate, Jo Bauer, had inspected and found an infringement.

The DRS opens a flap in the wing, reducing drag and allowing the car to go car faster in a straight line. The gap is mandated to be no more than 85mm and Hamilton's was found to be marginally larger.

Welcome back, Steven Gerrard: forget Europe, avoiding the drop is your priority

JONATHAN WILSON

LONDON, 14 NOV [THEGUARDIAN]: When Ray Wilkins left Paris Saint-Germain in 1987, it seemed entirely natural that he should join Rangers. He was, after all, joining two England internationals in Terry Butcher and Chris Woods at Ibrox. A year later they would be joined by another in Gary Stevens. There was the immediate context of the Heysel ban on English clubs competing in Uefa competitions but, still, that is another world. It seems almost incomprehensible in today's financial environment that top English talent would flock to play in Scotland. And that perhaps is the most significant aspect of Steven Gerrard's appointment as manager of Aston Villa – less what it says about him or Rangers, or even Scottish football, than what it says about the Premier League.

Like Brendan Rodgers before him, Gerrard appears to have had little hesitation in accepting an offer, not from a Champions League qualifier but from a Midlands club with aspirations. Realistically, perhaps even after winning a Scottish league title, that is as big an offer as is going to come. And it is a big offer. Even with the sale of Jack Grealish for £100m in the summer, Villa's net spend over the past four years is just under £250m. They are part of the Premier League's growing middle class who may be beginning to reassess themselves. Just two wins separate sixth from 15th and the early signs are that this could be a less stratified league.

Before anybody gets too excited, we probably should remember how the Premier League table looked at this stage last season. After 11 rounds of games, Tottenham, with 24 points, were top on goal difference from Liverpool, with Chelsea and Leicester within a win and South-

ampton fifth, four points back. Then came the two Manchester clubs, both of whom had a game in hand. The truncated pre-season, the compressed calendar, the empty stadiums – as Spurs beat Manchester United 6-1 and Aston Villa put seven past Liverpool – there was a thrilling wilderness about football. Who knew what was going on?

There was a thought that Pep Guardiola might have reached some sort of limit at City, six points behind the leaders in seventh, having already lost to Leicester and Spurs. But as it turned out, City won the title by 12 points, Manchester United, Liverpool and Chelsea took the Champions League slots and two of the promoted sides went down with a club who had come up the season before. Everything suddenly became extremely normal: funny things can happen at the start of a season and a little over quarter of the fixtures probably isn't enough to draw any firm conclusions. Within two weeks, Tottenham had suffered the defeat at Liverpool that was the beginning of the end of José Mourinho's time in charge, City had embarked on a run of 15 straight league victories and Burnley had secured the 1-0 win at Arsenal that ignited their surge away from the relegation zone.

There has been none of that sense of chaos this season, yet still there feels a change from those three seasons before 2020-21 in which the champions took 98 or more points. There is a clear big three of Chelsea, City and Liverpool, but for all their qualities, none is without flaws. Three clear at the top, Chelsea are on course for 90 points. That is still historically high, the joint-seventh biggest tally for the champions, and four more than City's total last season, but feels like a return towards normality.

‘Betrayal of people, planet’: World reacts to COP26 climate pact

LONDON, 14 NOV [AL-JAZEERA]: Global climate talks in Glasgow, Scotland, have ended with an agreement that the United Nations called both an “important step” and a “compromise”, but one that some activists dismissed as a “betrayal of the planet and the people”.

The pact, approved by nearly 200 nations on Saturday, won applause for keeping alive the hope of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit), but disappointed many with a last-minute change that watered down crucial language about coal.

The revision, promoted by India and backed by China, called for nations to “phase down” rather than “phase out” use of the dirtiest fossil fuel.

The pact also did little to assuage vulnerable countries’ concerns about long-promised financing from rich nations.

Following resistance from the United States and the European Union, the text omitted any reference to a specific finance facility for the “loss and damage” that climate change has already caused in the developing world. Instead, it promised future “dialogue” on the issue.

“The approved texts are a compromise,” said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. “They reflect the interests, the conditions, the contradictions and the state of political will in the world today.”

And while the deal proposes to take important steps, it “is not enough,” he said. “It’s time to go into emergency mode.”

US climate envoy John Kerry welcomed the agreement, saying good compromises leave everyone slightly unsatisfied.

“We emerge from Glasgow having dramatically raised the world’s ambition to solve this



challenge in this decade and beyond,” he said, adding: “We are in fact closer than we have ever been before to avoiding climate chaos and securing cleaner air, safer water and a healthier planet.”

Chinese negotiator Zhao Yingmin echoed that sentiment.

“I think our biggest success is to finalize the rulebook,” Zhao told reporters. “Now we can start implementing it and delivering it on our achieved consensus.”

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the host of the COP26 talks, also remained relatively upbeat.

“There’s still a long, long way to go before we can say we’ve dealt with climate change, but the great news is, together, the world has made some important breakthroughs,” he said late on Saturday.

“We’ve kept alive the hope of restricting the growth in temperatures to 1.5 degrees, and we’ve made huge progress on coal, cars, cash and trees. For the first time ever, we’ve got over 190 countries all agreeing to sound the death knell for coal power. And tonight, the developed world has finally acknowledged the need to help poor and vulnerable nations

to deal with the loss and damage that’s already being caused by climate change.”

The EU also welcomed the agreement, saying it gave “us a chance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius”.

Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said delegates made progress on commitments to cut back on dangerous emissions, as well as pledges to help developing and vulnerable countries.

“But there will be no time to relax: there is still hard work ahead,” she added.

Meanwhile, the representative from Saudi Arabia, one of the world’s largest oil producers, avoided questions, saying all parties were “happy” with the climate pact.

“We’re good, we’re good,” said Ayman M Shasly, the Saudi representative. “The decision has been adopted. No comment. Everybody’s happy. All parties are happy with the decision so we’re good.”

Lee White, Gabonese Environment Minister and the chair of African negotiators, said the Africa team got “60 percent of what we hoped”.

“We would’ve liked to have made more progress on dependable fi-

nance for adaptation,” he said. “But we definitely got a very strong moral engagement from the EU and the US.”

Small island nations, however, said the “incremental progress” at Glasgow was not enough.

“What is balanced and pragmatic to other parties will not help the Maldives adapt in time,” said Aminath Shauna, environment minister for the low-lying Indian Ocean island nation. “It will be too late for the Maldives... We recognise the foundations that this outcome provides, but it does not bring hope to our hearts. It serves as yet another conversation where we put our homes on the line, while those who have other options decide how quickly they want to act to save those who don’t.”

Saleemul Hug, director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, was more blunt. “As far as I am concerned, it is a failure,” he said. “(I’ve) come here with a single agenda which is to help the poorest people on the planet who are already suffering from the impacts of human-induced climate change. And we needed a Glasgow facility on loss

and damage finance here. 138 developing countries put language in the text yesterday. It got removed overnight. It’s not there any more. It has been replaced by an offer for a dialogue ... absolutely disappointing and totally unacceptable.”

Other activists echoed the criticism.

Prominent environmental activist Greta Thunberg said the talks had achieved nothing but “blah blah blah”.

“The real work continues outside these halls,” the figurehead of the Fridays for Future movement posted on Twitter. “And we will never give up, ever.”

Asad Rehman, campaigner at War on Want, a group working to end global poverty, described the deal as a “betrayal of people and the planet”.

“It’s a betrayal of the science, it’s a betrayal of the realities of the climate impacts that are happening and devastating people’s lives and livelihoods,” he said. “The only people celebrating this outcome are the hundreds of lobbyists from the oil and gas industry, those whose vested interests basically say, we can’t see any change, we can’t move away from the fossil fuel addiction of our economy.”

Climate Deal emerges at COP26 Summit, India intervenes on fossil fuel



LONDON, 14 NOV [PTI]: Negotiators from nearly 200 countries have accepted a new climate agreement after the COP26 summit in Glasgow concluded its extra time plenary on Saturday with a deal, which recognises India’s intervention for the world to “phase down” rather than “phase out” fossil fuels.

It means the Glasgow Climate Pact is the first ever United Nations climate deal to plan to reduce coal, responsible for greenhouse gases with harmful climate impact. Countries, as part of the agreement, have also agreed to meet next year to discuss further carbon cuts so that the goal to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius can be reached.

“It is so decided,” said Alok Sharma, the President of COP26, as he declared the new pact with a stroke of his gavel after marathon talks which began earlier this month.

“I hope we can leave this conference united, having delivered something significant for people and the planet together as one,” he said.

Several countries criticised the change on fossil fuels promoted by India, even as Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav asked the Glasgow climate summit how one could expect developing nations to make promises about “phasing out” coal and fossil fuel subsidies when they have still to deal with their development agendas and poverty eradication.

Earlier, at a stocktaking plenary, India made an important intervention to express its disappointment over the draft text of the agreement.

The country ex-

pressed unfairness towards the developing world and pointed to a “lack of balance” and urgency around achieving climate finance targets.

“Mr president (Sharma) thank you for your continued efforts to build consensus. I’m afraid, however, the consensus remained elusive. India stands ready for constructive debate and equitable and just solution in this forum,” Environment Minister Yadav said.

The minister pointed to climate friendly lifestyles and climate justice, as enshrined in the Paris Agreement, as keys to solving the climate crisis caused by “unsustainable lifestyles and wasteful consumption patterns”.

Fossil fuels and their use have enabled parts of the world to attain high levels of wealth and wellbeing, and targeting any particular sector is uncalled for, he said.

Every country will arrive at net-zero as per its own national circumstances, strengths and weaknesses, Yadav stressed.

“Developing countries have a right to their fair share of the global carbon budget and are entitled to the responsible use of fossil fuels within this scope,” he said.

“In such a situation, how can anyone expect that developing countries can make promises about phasing out coal and fossil fuel subsidies (when) developing countries still have to deal with their development agendas and poverty eradication,” the minister asked.

Speaking on the issue of subsidies, Mr Yadav highlighted that they provide much-needed

social security and support to people.

“For example, we (India) are giving subsidies for use of LPG to low-income households. This subsidy has been of great help in almost eliminating biomass burning for cooking and improved health from reduction in indoor air pollution,” he said.

In the end, among major outcomes of the new deal was an agreement to make efforts to “phase down” the use of coal, phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies and provide targeted support to the poorest and the most vulnerable in line with national circumstances.

Accelerating 2030 emission-cutting targets, increasing funding for developing nations to adapt to climate change by 2025, boosting the agenda on how to pay for loss and damage that climate change inflicts on developing countries, and agreeing to rules on carbon offset markets were also part of the deal.

Mr Sharma, the India-born British Cabinet minister who was in charge of the summit, appeared close to tears at the end as he apologised for “the way this process has unfolded”.

“I am deeply sorry,” he said, amid criticism from some countries on the final agreed draft.

“I also understand the deep disappointment. But I think as you have noted, it is also vital that we protect this package,” he added.

Mr Sharma had earlier made an impassioned plea to delegates to back the draft, saying it was a “moment of truth” for the planet as talks failed to conclude as planned on Friday and went into an extra day.

Pakistan expecting more than 8,000 pilgrims for Guru Nanak’s Birth Anniversary, says Pak Minister

ISLAMABAD, 14 NOV [PTI]: More than 8,000 Sikh pilgrims from all over the world will visit Pakistan to celebrate the 552nd birth anniversary of Sikh faith’s founder, Guru Nanak Dev, Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry said on Saturday. Pakistan has given visas to 855 Indian Sikh pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Nankana Sahib on Guru Nanak Dev’s birth anniversary but has denied the permission to 191 others, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) said in Amritsar.

A group of Indian Sikh pilgrims is scheduled to depart on November 17 to participate in the ceremonies to be held at Gurdwara Nankana Sahib, also known as Gurdwara Janam Asthan at Nankana Sahib near

Lahore in Pakistan’s Punjab on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the first Sikh Guru.

“More than eight thousand Sikh Yatrees from all over the Globe are arriving in Pak to celebrate the Birth Anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak, welcome to the land of Gurus, Sufis and Yugi’s #GuruNanak,” Chaudhry said on Twitter.

“Pakistan High Commission for India issues around 3000 visas to Indian Sikh Yatrees on the eve of the 552nd Birth Anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak,” the Pakistan High Commission for India said in a tweet.

“Pakistan High Commission in India extends profound felicitations to the Sikh community in India and across the world on the 552nd Birth Anniversary of the founder of Sikh religion.

The High Commission also wishes a spiritually rewarding yatra to the pilgrims visiting Pakistan,” the mission said in another tweet.

During their stay in Pakistan, the Sikh pilgrims will pay obeisance at different gurdwaras including Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Nankana Sahib and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, the Express Tribune said.

“Visas to the Sikh pilgrims have been issued under the Pakistan-India Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines of 1974, which provides for the visit of 3,000 Sikh pilgrims from India for the birthday celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak. Thousands of Sikh pilgrims residing in countries other than India would also be visiting Pakistan to attend the event,” according to a statement from the High Commission.

On trial for saving lives: the young refugee activist facing a Greek court

HELENA SMITH
ATHENS, 14 NOV [THEGUARDIAN]: Seán Binder belongs to the band of committed humanitarians who rushed to Greece at the height of the refugee crisis. In other countries, and at other times, his idealism might have been celebrated. But the 27-year-old law student, who has spent the past two years in London, is a man living in fear. Though forced to abandon volunteering, the German-born Irishman and his Syrian friend, Sarah Mardini, are perhaps the most famous aid workers in Greece, for all the wrong reasons: a criminal investigation has hung over their heads for the past three years.

“There’s nothing criminal, or heroic, about helping people in distress at sea,” he tells the Observer. “Legally and morally, it is the right thing to do.”

The activists have

been accused of human trafficking, money laundering, fraud and espionage – the last charge based on allegations that, while on Lesbos, the Aegean island at the centre of refugee flows, they monitored coastguard radio channels and vessels to gain advance notification of the location of smugglers’ boats.

In an 86-page report, police also accuse them of being members of a criminal organisation that posed as an NGO with the aim of profiteering by bringing people illegally into Greece. The charges followed a six-month police inquiry: human rights groups championing the pair have called them “far-facial”. “It’s been a sword of Damocles,” Binder says. “As absurd as the charges may be, they cast a shadow over your life that makes it impossible to move on.”

On Sunday he flies to

Athens before travelling on to Lesbos for a trial, four days later, that will see 22 other frontline volunteers also stand in the dock – a case described as emblematic for civil society activists facing unprecedented harassment across Europe. That hearing will mark the start of a judicial drama that could result in them spending 25 years behind bars.

“I’m terrified,” Binder readily admits, recalling the 106 days he spent in pre-trial detention before being permitted to post €5,000 bail and leave Greece. “I’ve had a taste of life in prison on Chios. It was all scabies and bed bugs with 17 of us packed in a cell. The police holding cells were even worse, the most awful place on earth; squalid, windowless rooms full of asylum seekers just there because authorities had nowhere else to put them.”

Binder was released

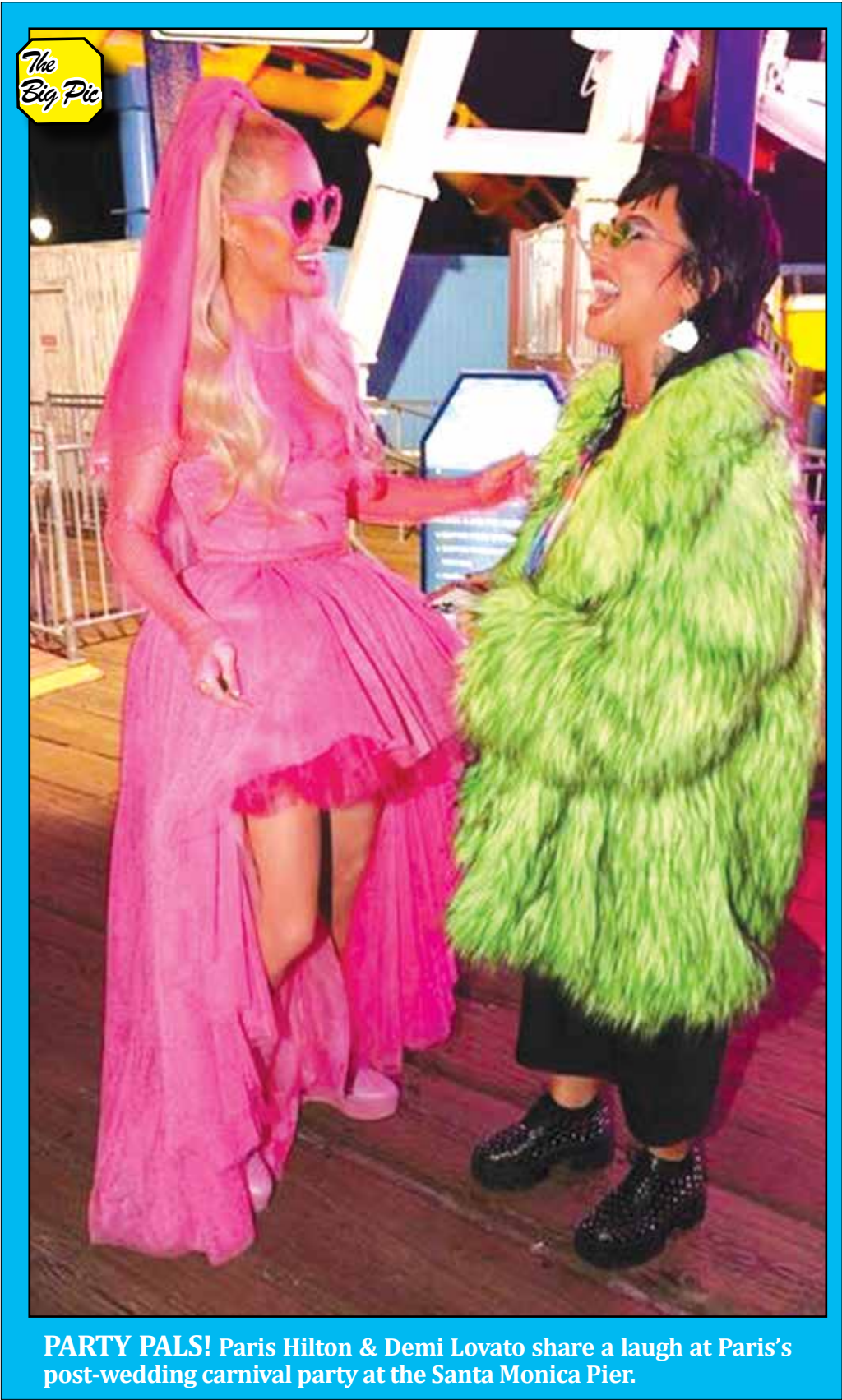
on 5 December 2018. Hours later, Mardini, who also volunteered with the now defunct rescue group Emergency Response Centre International, was let out of Korydallos prison in Athens, Greece’s toughest jail. She was 23 at the time. Mardini had become famous three years earlier, saving fellow refugees from seemingly certain death when their dinghy capsized after departing Turkey. Only three of the 20 people on board knew how to swim. Sarah and her sister Yusra, a competitive swimmer who would go on to participate in the Rio Olympics, jumped into the sea, pushing and pulling the boat until it reached Lesbos – a feat to be immortalised in a Netflix drama produced by the British director Stephen Daldry and due for release next year.

Thursday’s trial will focus on the accusations of espionage and the un-

lawful use of radio frequencies – considered misdemeanours under Greek law, punishable by up to eight years in prison.

Despite wanting to attend, Mardini learned on Friday that she would be tried in absentia after a judge refused to temporarily lift a seven-year travel ban barring her re-entry to Greece. A non-EU citizen, she has been deemed a liability to public safety.

“The inquiry into the felonies, which carry longer prison terms, is still ongoing,” says Zacharias Kesses, the lawyer heading the activists’ legal team in Athens. “This week, they’ll be put on trial for the baseless charge of using the encrypted application of WhatsApp to circulate information about migrant flows.” This is an extraordinary accusation, he says, when the data was publicly available and known to port police.



PARTY PALS! Paris Hilton & Demi Lovato share a laugh at Paris's post-wedding carnival party at the Santa Monica Pier.

Shang-Chi changes beef to veg biryani in Hindi dubbed version, hilarity ensues on social media

The Hindi dubbed version of Marvel Studios' Shang-Chi The Legend of Ten Rings has a variation from the original English version. In a particular scene, the translation of 'beef' in the original English audio is changed to 'veg biryani'.

The scene in question has the titular superhero (Simu Liu) going to China with his friend Katy (Awkwafina) to find his estranged sister. In the flight, Shang-Chi is narrating his backstory to Katy (and the audience) and suddenly they are interrupted by a flight attendant.

In the original audio, the attendant asks them whether they will have beef or vegetarian, as there is no chicken and those are the only two options. Katy responds, "Vegetarian would be great." Before Shang-Chi can continue his story, the attendant interrupts them again to

say there is no vegetarian either, so beef remains the only option.

But in the Hindi version, the original options are vegetarian or non-vegetarian. The attendant adds there is actually no non-vegetarian food available. When the two say they want vegetarian, she tells them that there is no option in vegetarian either, so their only option is veg biryani (which, as the name suggests, is vegetarian).

The change was noticed by a Twitter account called @RohitThayyil. The tweet and the comments below the tweet suggested that the change is there also in other Indian languages. For instance, beef becomes upma in Tamil and bread omelette in Malayalam.

One person wondered whether Marathi version would change it to vada pav.

The change is not surprising. Slaughtering cattle and serving beef is banned in a majority of the states in India and is taboo for most Hindus. And big entertainment companies and studios like Disney have often altered or removed lines of dialogue and cut certain scenes from films or TV shows to avoid offending governments and communities in not just India, but other markets like China and the Middle East.

Disney's latest Marvel movie Eternals had a gay kiss scene in the movie that was not deemed fit to be seen by their people by governments in Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait. The movie was thus banned. A few reports say the House of Mouse is contemplating removing the offending scenes from the film, so as not to lose such profitable markets.

Jin shuts down a marriage proposal from a fan on Jimin's behalf, ARMY says he is channeling Suga

BTS member Jin's forthrightness and sharp sense of humour is one of the million reasons why ARMY adore him. 'Worldwide Handsome' as he has named himself, decided to answer on his band member Jimin's behalf when a fan proposed to him on the interactive platform Weverse.

BTS are no stranger to proposals from ARMY. A fan wrote to Jimin and shared a photo of him with the caption, "Wow..Jimin you are so handsome..?? Exactly my ideal type. Jiminah can you marry me..?!!"

Jin flatly answered, "No." Fans couldn't stop laughing over this, and wondered whether it was actually Jin, or if Suga, who is known to be the 'savage' one, had taken over his account.

This is just one of the few instances of Jin's sense of humour. In an interview a couple of months ago, the band members had to read what people normally search about them on Google. One question was, "Can BTS attend my birthday party?" While the rest laughed and pondered over the possibility, Jin said clearly, "No, no, we are very busy!"

BTS members, RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, V, Jungkook and Jimin are quite regular with Weverse, even if they do not engage



with Twitter and Instagram directly. Recently, RM, who is the leader of the septet wrote a post saying that he deleted an unreleased track, while formatting his computer system.

His post on Weverse read, "I did (PC) cleaning wrong today. So the file I was working on, all the audios got deleted. Just mental breakdown in itself. Still, I tried having strength. I was almost done with it. I am sure this is the worst day of this year. I'm

going to record it as a 'moment' since I'm sad." ARMY of course was worried and sent reassurances and consolation to RM, who then wrote back, "Oh I thought you guys would worry. It's just one song. The other songs were safely kept by others but this had over 60 tracks that I recorded so I don't have the courage to re-do everything... Still, I'll let you guys hear it one day. Everyone, be careful when using a cleaning program..."

Red Notice gets biggest opening day in Netflix history



Red Notice stars Dwayne Johnson, Ryan Reynolds, and Gal Gadot took to their respective social media handles to celebrate the film's 'biggest opening day in Netflix film history' on Saturday. Since the film did not release in theatres apart from a limited release in the US, this perhaps means that the film garnered the most views for any film yet on Netflix.

Reynolds took to Twitter to reveal the news by sharing a photo. He wrote, "WOW #RedNotice is @Netflix biggest ever opening day for a film. Congrats to this whole

team! Can't wait for Red Notice (Taylor's Version)."

Gadot shared the same photo and wrote, "This is amazing!!!! What can I say, you guys are the best and the reason why we make these films. So grateful and excited!!! Congratulations @Netflix and to the entire #RedNoticeMovie team Heart suit-woman dancing @TheRock @VancityReynolds."

Red Notice is a Netflix action comedy thriller that is written and directed by Rawson Marshall Thurber. Its trailers and promos had teased a fast-paced

globe-trotting comedic action thriller. The film was earlier going to be released by Universal Pictures, before Netflix acquired its rights.

Despite its starry cast, Red Notice did not please critics. On review aggregation site Rotten Tomatoes, the film has a score of 39 per cent. The critical consensus reads, "Red Notice's big-budget and A-list cast add up to a slickly competent action comedy whose gaudy ingredients only make the middling results more disappointing."

The Indian Express's Ekta Malik gave it 1.5 stars. She wrote, "Red Notice brought together elements of a heist-meets-a-cop-buddy-meets-history-flick, and in the end, it resembles a 'veg thali' from your corner sweet shop. We eat it not because it is appealing or appetising but because it offers all the food groups, and the boxes are brightly coloured and look attractive. The only saving grace in the thali is the lone sugar syrup soaked gulab jamun, which we gulp down to wash down the unpalatable spicy fare."

Rajkummar Rao and Patralekhaa are engaged

Actor couple Rajkummar Rao and Patralekhaa got engaged in a ceremony in Chandigarh on Saturday. The couple, who have been dating since 2010, hosted a bash at The Oberoi Sukhvilas Spa Resort, New Chandigarh, which was attended by their friends, including filmmaker Farah Khan and actor Saqib Saleem.

In a video that has gone viral on social media, Rao, 37, can be seen going down on one knee and proposing to Patralekhaa with a ring.

Patralekhaa, 32, also goes down on her knees and the

duo exchange rings as singer Ed Sheeran's chartbuster "Perfect" starts playing. The couple then dance, as the guests cheer for them.

While Rao wore a white kurta-churidaar with a jacket and sneakers, Patralekhaa donned a white off-shoulder gown for the ceremony. The couple is reportedly set to tie the knot soon.

They have featured together in filmmaker Hansal Mehta's 2014 film "Citylights" and ALTBalaji series "Bose: Dead/Alive".

ARIES: Your vibration creates your reality, Aries. We repeat: your vibration creates your reality. So, what are you putting out there, beautiful? Are you planting the seeds of hate and vengeance or pouring the elixir of love into the cups of those around you? It's time to prepare for the shift you want too. It's time to embody kindness, compassion, and peace. Before you know, the physical will begin to reflect your intentions back to you.

TAURUS: When was the last time you showed up for your fellow warriors? When was the last time you put a smile on the faces of those around for no other reason than to witness their joy? Today, you're being asked to stop obsessing over what's going wrong and shift your gaze outwards instead. Dedicating yourself to selfless service without the expectation of any reward will help create a shift in the collective.

GEMINI: True freedom comes from being who you were meant to be. From doing what you truly feel aligned with. From following a path that makes your soul sing. It's time to take a call, Gemini. Do you want to continue to follow the script that was handed down to you and let your truth guide you? Something tells us you are more courageous than you allow yourself to believe.

CANCER: What if we said you can be anybody you want to be? You

can live a life that brings you joy and peace? Today, you're being guided to befriend courage, to visualise a parallel reality for yourself, to feel the fluttering of the butterflies in the pit of your stomach and to remember that you are so loved and so supported. The mantra 'anything is impossible if you believe' will serve you well at this time!

LEO: So what if you failed the first time, Leo? So what if you didn't receive the praise and acknowledgement you thought you deserved? Beware of making this rejection a part of your story for it is your thoughts that create your reality. What the cards are urging you to do today is to pick up the pieces. To show up for what you believe in even when you are afraid to do so. You are at a turning point, baby! Your rewards are directly proportional to your willingness to embody courage.

VIRGO: There are two kinds of people in the world, Virgo: people who make bitterness a part of their story, and people who turn the venom they have been served into a sweet, intoxicating elixir. What kind of pilgrim are *you* in this journey? Have you been descending down the spiral of negativity? Instead of focusing on who has wronged you and what hasn't worked out, breathe and release. Forgive your past. Accept the present. You are where you are supposed to be.

LIBRA: Yours is not a story of failure and rejection, Libra. It's a story of hope, faith, love, and freedom. So, let go of your inhibitions, beautiful. Let go of the idea of who you are and are not supposed to be. Something tells us you are stripping away the false layers and holding space for an inner flowering.

SCORPIO: At any point of time, we have two options: to let fear get the better of us or to embody faith, hope, and courage. Let love guide your decisions this time, Scorpio. Let love bring light into this room full of darkness. Let love help fix the broken pieces. As you do, remember your power as the conscious creator of your reality. Remember that the seeds you plant today will lead to inner flowering.

SAGITTARIUS: Spoiler alert, Sagittarius: you are operating from the space of the ego. You are fixating on how you have been wronged here without taking the other side of the story into consideration. What you want to do instead is to let go of the pride and to let go of the judgements. To bring the gifts of kindness and compassion to the table. Remember, there is no shift within that does not have a ripple effect without. Tip: You have the choice to plant the seeds of kindness and compassion.

CAPRICORN: You can blame the world and her aunt for what's going wrong, Capricorn. You can hold other people responsible

for the things that are not in alignment around here. But, the truth is that this is your life and this is your story. So, take the power back in your hands. Stop obsessing over the past and focus on what you can do in the present. Remembering Gandhi's golden words 'Be the change you want to see in the world' will help you power through it all.

AQUARIUS: The trouble is, you have been repeating the story of limitations. You've been telling yourself that there are only so many miracles that you can call in. But, this is far from the truth, Aquarius. In fact, it is this self-sabotaging pattern that's keeping you from experiencing the fullness life has to offer. So, take a moment to centre yourself and release it all. As you do, visualise a parallel reality for yourself. A parallel reality where you are so loved and so supported.

PISCES: Summer shapeshifts into winter. The darkness of the night makes way for the radiance of the day. This physical realm of ours works in accordance with the law of duality. And so, each and every experience deserves to be acknowledged. Today, instead of labelling your emotions as 'good' and 'bad', 'healthy' and 'unhealthy', hold space for them. Hold space for the sadness, the pain, the loneliness, the anger, the regret, and the melancholy. Remembering the mantra 'this too shall pass' will help you witness the ebb and flow with the tranquility of a Bodhisattva

Tip: Hold space for it all, Pisces.