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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Too many coincidences for Power Dept fire to have been accidental: SKM

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 DEC:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha today pointed out to a string of coincidences to suggest that the recent fire in the Energy & Power Department might not have been an accident.

SKM spokesperson, Jacob Khaling, while addressing a press conference here today, pointed out that the Prime Minister, during his recent visit to Sikkim, had mentioned the crores given to Sikkim for strengthening of the power transmission network and for rural electrification.

There were also several queries filed under the Right To Information Act which the Department had remained unable to furnish proper details for, he contended further, and stated that



when the record room of the Department suffers a fire incident in the wake of such developments, it

suggested at more than mere coincidence.

He also mentioned the recent transfer of a

senior police officer to the Fire & Emergency Services and added that the officer was seen as

pro-Government. "When you have such officers, such incidents will happen," he said.

Mr Khaling also took issue with the Chief Minister's recent comments to government employees during the inauguration of Tashiling Secretariat and said that it was unfortunate that the CM was using official government functions to make political speeches.

He also invited government servants to weigh their options by themselves and decide what was best for them and the State.

He also said that the SKM was thankful to government servants for having consistently supported the party since its inception and expressed confidence that a majority of government servants will support SKM in 2019.

The party also continued its questioning of the **turn to pg02**

Two minors sexually assaulted by juveniles, molested by teacher and ignored by HM

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 DEC:

Two minor girls, aged 11 and 8 years, are reported to have been raped by six senior boys [all juvenile] and molested by a school teacher of a Junior High School.

Singtam Police have registered two cases of rape and the accused have been taken into custody, informs Senior Superintendent of Police, East.

It is informed that the 11-year-old girl narrated her harrowing experience of being sexually assaulted by 6 boys way back in February earlier this year and being molested by a school teacher last month, to her mother and her aunty on 28 November, last month.

After learning of the incident, her mother and her aunty met the Headmaster the very next day who inexcusably delayed follow-up action and them only on 05 December. It is being alleged now that the Headmaster tried to hush up the case.

The aggrieved parents eventually filed an FIR with Singtam Police following which the six juvenile boys, the accused teacher and also the Headmaster were arrested by the police on Wednesday evening.

Superintendent of Police, Hem Raj Rai, confirmed that after the arrest of the school Headmaster, teacher and six boys, another eight-year-old girl also told her grandmother of having been sexually assaulted by four boys in October. These boys are also among the six accused in the earlier case.

Following this, the grandmother of the second victim also lodged a complaint today and another case under POCSO Act was registered today.

The SP informed that the case was still under investigation and that the juvenile boys have been sent to the correctional home while the two teachers are under police custody.

Golay reaches Zoom-Salghari with Parivartan Sankalp Yatra



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 DEC:

In continuation of his Parivartan Sankalp Yatra, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president, PS Tamang [Golay], arrived in

Zoom Salghari constituency today and interacted with people of Thapa Kholcha, Pipaley Bazaar, Subitar and Samsing in West Sikkim.

An SKM press re-

lease informs that people of these areas placed their grievances, highlighting acute shortage of drinking water, lack of developmental activities and even of some

houses having no toilets in these areas.

The release adds that the people also complained about inferior work in construction of REDRH houses due to carelessness of the concerned department and that roads have still not reached some of areas despite several assurances.

The release states that the SKM president, on his part, alleged rampant corruption in the government while executing works.

He also assured the people to build houses [on Rs 15 lakh budget] for the people and provide 50 kg rice to every BPL family and address all problems of these areas should SKM form the next government.

Festival of Folk, Tribal and Traditional arts in Lachen

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 DEC:

Cultural Affairs and Heritage Department and Sangeet Natak Akademi, North East Centre, Guwahati, have announced plans to jointly organize a festival of folk, tribal and traditional presentations of India from 08 to 10 December at Lachen in North Sikkim.

This three-day event, 'Deshaj,' to be held at Lachen Dzumsa Ground, will have renowned personalities from the fields of music, drama and art from 21 States of the country.

The first day of the event will have presentations of Naumati Baja, Singhi Cham and Yak dance from Sikkim, Chakhesang music from Nagaland, Dhmel dance from Tripura, Cheraw dance from

Mizoram, Manipuri folk dance and Kalbelia from Rajasthan.

The second and third days of the event will feature a series of folk, cultural and traditional presentation by artists and groups of the participating States.

The event will have the presence of renowned artists and nationally awarded and recognized personalities.

OSD, CA&HD, Jagdish Sharma, informs that participating artists and personalities from 21 States have already arrived in Gangtok and will leave for Lachen on Friday.

He added that the Department has taken up the challenging task of organizing this national level event at Lachen in North Sikkim in this chilly weather.

Pahuna premieres in Gangtok

REBYNA RANA

GANGTOK, 06 DEC:

The much-awaited Nepali film, "Pahuna- the little visitors," premiered here today at Denzong Cinema hall with Tourism Minister Ugen T Gyatso present as chief guest.

The film, produced by Priyanka Chopra's Purple Pebble Pictures and directed by Paakhi A Tyrewala, follows the story of two displaced children from Nepal who take refuge in Sikkim. The movie has been shot extensively in Sikkim and has two local kids, Ishika Gurung & Anmol Limbu, in lead roles.

Earlier, Minister Gyatso, accompanied by Ms Tyrewala, addressed the media.

During the press



meet, the film director expressed gratitude towards the people for their generous support in making the film possible.

"The journey of making the movie has been phenomenal and we all

had fun. Sikkim is going to be on the world map through this movie," she said. In fact, the movie will take the two kids to the international platform, she added.

The Minister, in turn,

said that the State Government invested Rs 80 lakh on the movie. He also clarified that the State was not upset or offended that the producer of the film, Priyanka Chopra, could not make

it for the premiere since all are aware that she got married recently.

"We understand her situation and wish her a happy married life," he said.

The press meet was also attended by Secretary

of the concerned department, TT Bhutia, accompanied by the chief executive officer of Purple Pebble Pictures Production, Sandip Bhargava.

The film will release in major parts of India and Nepal tomorrow. It will be screened two shows at Denzong Cinema for a week from tomorrow onwards [11:00 am and 2:15pm].

The team has invited people to watch and enjoy the film. The entire program [screening of movie Pahuna] which was held today at Denzong cinema hall was organised by the Tourism Department. During the function, the crew members of the movie were also introduced and offered the khadas by the Minister.

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Gangtok on Friday, 07 Dec

Temp: 19°C/09°C
Forecast: Sunny to partly cloudy with a little rain in the evening, then a shower in spots

Sunrise: 06:05 AM
Sunset: 04:42 PM

Tripura seeks Amul help to develop dairy industry

AGARTALA, DEC 6 (PTI): Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Thursday sought help from Amul India Ltd for developing dairy industry in the state.

A delegation of Amul India, headed by senior dairy expert S T Deshai called on Deb at his office and discussed the prospects of developing the dairy industry and milk-based economy in the state, a press statement said.

The chief minister hoped that help from Amul will help in solving unemployment to some extent besides fulfilling the state's demand for milk, it said.

Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMF) is the largest food company marketing milk and milk products under the brand name of Amul.

Deb also said his government wants to share experiences in running dairy industry with Amul which has a vast experience in the sector.

The CM sought help from Amul to implement his plan of distributing 10,000 cows to farmers in rural Tripura.

The state government had last month that it would launch a scheme for distributing 10,000 cows among 5,000 farmers to combat malnutrition and generate employment in the state.

Kamal Krishna Majumder, Director of Animal Resources Development Department, said that Tripura produced 1,74,260 metric tonnes of milk in 2017.

In April this year, a government notice said that steps would be taken for augmenting milk production at Gomati Milk Cooperative Limited.

Deb said, If Tripura become self-reliant in milk production then there will be no need for importing milk from other states and the money of our state will not go outside. I sought Amul India Limited to help in this sector."

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Too many coincidences...

"one family, one job" initiative of the State Government and Bikash Basnet of SKM pointed out that when SKM promised 30,000 government jobs, the SDF mocked their proposal, but now that elections were round the corner, the SDF Government has suddenly created 17,000 openings.

SKM was still not opposed to the move, he clarified, adding that what should be ensured was transparency.

The SKM party officials also informed that the proposed 5-day long Youth & Nari convention of the party scheduled to begin on 19 December will focus on the youth on the first two days, mark the tenth year of the "Rolu Picnic" on the third day, and the final two days will feature the women's convention of the party.

ECI Secy in-charge for Sikkim checks on Special Summary Revision of electoral rolls



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 07 DEC [IPR]: Election Commission of India had announced Special Summary Revision of Photo Electoral Rolls of intensive nature w.e.f. 01.01.2019 as qualifying date. Pre-Revision activities of house to house, field verification by Booth Level Officers, rationalisation and phys-

ical verification of polling station buildings have been completed. Draft Photo Electoral Roll was published on 01 September 2018. Period for filing of claims and objections was scheduled from 1st September to 31st October 2018.

ECI has been monitoring all these activities very closely. In this regard,

Secretary, Election Commission, Arvind Anand, in-charge of state of Sikkim, is on two day visit to Sikkim to review the progress of activities under the Special Summary Revision 2018.

On 05 December 2018, Mr Anand called on Chief Electoral Officer, Sikkim, R. Telang, to take stock of progress in Sikkim.

The CEO apprised him of the Assembly Constituency wise status and field reports.

Later in the afternoon, a meeting with District Election Officer, East, Kapil Meena, and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) of various assembly constituencies of East District was held in the conference hall of District Administrative Centre, Sichey.

Mr Anand also interacted with Booth Level Officers of Arithang and Upper Burtuk Assembly Constituencies and expressed his satisfaction over the work undertaken by the field functionaries and urged them to work diligently to prepare a healthy and error-free electoral roll for final publication for the ensuing election 2019.

He shall be visiting some of the remote polling stations and interact with the concerned BLOs and EROs to obtain first-hand information on the work done so far.

He will also be visiting South District on 07 Dec to see that instructions issued by the Commission are being implemented at all levels.

BJP leaders make fresh pitch for Ram temple; Left, Mamata call for upholding secularism

NEW DELHI, DEC 6 (PTI): On the 26th anniversary of the Babri mosque demolition in Ayodhya by Hindutva activists, several BJP leaders made a fresh pitch for the construction of Ram temple while Left parties and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee called for upholding the country's secular fabric.

The Congress, which has been highlighting its pro-Hindu credentials to blunt the BJP's attack on it over Hindutva issues, maintained a studied silence on the matter.

Union minister Uma Bharti, a leading figure of the Ram Janambhoomi movement, "appealed" to Congress president Rahul Gandhi to support the construction of Ram temple to "honour" his holy thread and Datatreya Brahmin lineage.

She was referring to the claims of Congress leaders that Gandhi was a "janeu-dhari" (sacred thread-wearing) Hindu. Recently at a religious ceremony, the Congress president was referred as a Dattatreya Brahmin.

Talking to reporters, she said attempts are on

for coordination among various groups so that a temple can be constructed at the disputed site in Ayodhya and accused the Congress of trying to vitiate the atmosphere.

There was no comments from the Congress.

In Uttar Pradesh, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya said the BJP accorded the highest priority to an agreement between the warring parties for building the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

"The BJP is in favour of the Ram temple's construction either by a judgement of the Supreme Court or through mutual agreement (among parties). And if both the options are exhausted, then the legislative route must be explored. The BJP accords highest priority to an agreement for paving the way for construction of the temple," Maurya said.

Amid the clamour for building the Ram temple, Left parties took out a protest march in the national capital with CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury accusing the ruling BJP

and its Hindutva ideology RSS of working to "destroy" the country's secular fabric.

Attacking the BJP, he said the saffron party has publicly proclaimed that it would abide by the Supreme Court order on the Ayodhya land issue but has been now talking about bringing ordinance on the matter.

In the last four years and seven months, the BJP was "silent" on the temple issue and has been raking it up as the next general election is approaching, he alleged.

Banerjee, a bitter critic of the BJP and head of Trinamool Congress, tweeted that the anniversary of the Babri mosque demolition is observed as "Samhati Dibas" (unity day) in the state.

"Just like a human body is incomplete without all organs, India is incomplete without all communities, religions, castes, creed and gender. Let us pledge to uphold the secular fabric of India," she tweeted.

CPI national general secretary D Raja alleged that the RSS, VHP and other affiliates of the

Sangh Parivar were bent on changing the character of the country.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad said it would launch a public outreach from the 'Gita Jayanti', the day when holy epic Gita was believed to have been revealed, later this month to build a movement for the construction of Ram temple. BJP MLA Sangeet Som, who is known for making headline and often controversial statements, said the temple will be constructed before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, while calling for unity among Hindus.

The VHP and Bajrang Dal also burst crackers at several places to mark the day while Muslim outfits held protests to express grief over the mosque's demolition.

A member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Khalid Rashid Firangimahi, handed over a memorandum to the District Magistrate of Lucknow addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on behalf of the board demanding justice in the demolition case.

CBSE to discuss with states about removing marks disparity

KOLKATA, DEC 6 (PTI): The Centre has instructed the CBSE to discuss about how to remove the disparity between marks awarded to examinees by it and that by various state boards, Union minister Satya Pal Singh said here on Thursday. Citing an example, Singh said when students of the CBSE and various state boards seek admission in the under-graduate level of a university furnish their marksheets, it is found that their marks range from 98 per cent to 85 per cent.

The university then has to make a comparison between papers of different boards and strike a ratio to arrive at an admission formula, he said. "We have already sent an instruction to the CBSE to discuss with other state boards on the issue," the union minister of state for human resources development said.

The CBSE is now in the process of discussing the issue, he said while interacting with the media on the sidelines of a Merchants' Chamber of



Commerce and Industry programme on education.

Singh, however, maintained awarding marks remained in the domain of school education department of the respective state boards. On the Centre's move to introduce "no homework policy" for class 1 and 2 students, Singh said "The parents also want the same."

Providing quality education to children remained the priority of the government, the minister said. He said there will be a mandatory 4week internship with industry in every year of the total semester-based programme in engineering institutes, to impart hands-on training to students. As part of the Cen-

tre's decision to remove social- regional imbalances, it will fund setting up of a central institute in states, he said adding that priority would be given to states with no such facility.

The state concerned will provide land and the Centre will provide the funds. "As far as I know, I don't recall any proposal from the government of West Bengal," he said to a question.

Calling for restructuring of syllabus for education by 2035, the minister said in Harvard/MIT, curricula are made keeping in mind expected developments in the next 20 years. He said there is no dearth of talent in India, only opportunities should be created.

Organic pest management training at Toong-Naga



SUMMIT REPORT

MANGAN, 07 DEC:

Farmers of Manul ward under Toong Naga GPU were briefed on Organic Pest Management Technology at a ward level program organised by Organic Sikkim at Thinley Chopel Lepcha's farm under Toong Naga GPU in North Sikkim on Tuesday.

The program was attended by Vice President of Tong Naga GPU,

Pema Laden Lepcha, along with Amit Lepcha, Mission Officer of Sikkim Organic Mission for Toong Naga GPU.

Meena Sharma, Field Coordinator of Organic Sikkim, displayed pest and disease management technologies using herbal plants.

Amit Lepcha Mission Officer briefed on the inputs and seed distributed by the department to the farmers earlier.

In FIR Bajrang Dal convenor claimed saw cows being slaughtered, in video says he was 'informed'

NEW DELHI, DEC 6 (PTI): Contradictions appear in the two statements given by Bajrang Dal's Bulandshahr unit convenor Yogesh Raj over the cow slaughter incident on Monday which spiralled into a mob violence that claimed two lives, including that of a police inspector.

Two first information reports (FIRs) were registered by the police at Siyana police station in Bulandshahr -- one over cow slaughter and the other on the mob violence in which a village man was also killed.

The first one was lodged at 1 pm on December 3, the day violence broke out, on a complaint by Raj in which he claimed cow slaughter near Mahav village and accused seven persons from nearby Naya Bans village.

The second FIR, in which police itself became a complainant, was lodged at 2.30 AM on December 4 for rioting and violence and names Raj along with 26 men including those from right-wing groups besides 50 to 60 unidentified people.

"Around 9 am on Monday we, Yogesh Raj, Shikhar Kumar, Saurabh etc, had come to the jungles of Mahav village while roaming. There we saw Sudaif Chaudhary, Ilyas, Sharafat, Anas, Sajid, Parvez, Sarfuddin (residents of Naya Bans village) etc slaughtering cows and ran away after we raised an alarm over it.

"When alerted, police from Siyana police station and the additional district magistrate of Siyana reached the spot. The people mentioned above had brutally slaughtered the cows

which has hurt our Hindu religious sentiments," states the first FIR, on a complaint by Raj.

Almost 50 hours after the violence broke out and several accused including Raj went absconding a purported video with his statement surfaced on social media Wednesday.

In the purported video, Raj, who starts off with a "Jai Shri Ram" salutation and introduces himself as the Bajrang Dal's Bulandshahr unit convenor, says the police are portraying him as if he is a "history-sheeter".

"There were two incidents that happened on that day," he said referring to the Monday incident.

"The first incident was related to cow slaughter at Mahav village near Siyana. When I got information about that, I reached there with my supporters. The police also reached there and we went to the Siyana police station for filing our complaint (about cow slaughter)," he said.

Raj said that while he and his supporters were still at the police station on December 3 they got to know that villagers were pelting stones.

"There had been firing as well and a youth and a policeman have sustained gunshot injuries," he claimed.

However, relatives of Raj Kumar Chaudhary, on whose "fields" in Mahav village the carcasses were found strewn on December 3 morning, claimed the dead animals were discovered by a villager only who alerted Chaudhary about it around 7 AM.

Chaudhary, a former head of Mahav village, had alerted the local police which had reached

the spot and the matter had come to an "amicable compromise" around 8.30 AM, his wife Preeti claimed.

"Nobody knows who informed these people from the (Bajrang) Dal that they reached the spot. They only insisted on taking the carcasses to the police station when everything was already settled," she told PTI.

Chaudhary has been named in the second FIR on violence and rioting and he along with others from Mahav village were also absconding "fearing police action", she said.

Meanwhile, four of the seven names in the first FIR on cow slaughter have been disputed after it turned out that two of them were minors aged 11 and 12, one name was non-existent in the village and one person, Sarfuddin, was claimed to be at the Ijtiba (Muslim congregation) in Bulandshahr city, 35 km away from the site, when the entire episode unfolded.

Superintendent of Police, Bulandshahr City, Pravin Ranjan Singh Wednesday said that in the last nine months, action has been taken against nine people under the National Security Act and against 44 under the UP Gangsters Act over cases related to cow slaughter.

"Because of such actions there has been a strict control on cow slaughter in the district," he said.

"In Chingrawathi police post there has been no complaint of cow slaughter in the last one year," the SP said about the police post, under Siyana police station, which had come under the mob attack on December 3.

Eye on 2019 polls, Trinamool plans Derek O'Brien's quiz contests in Bengal schools, colleges

NEW DELHI, DEC 6 (PTI): With an eye on the 2019 general elections, the Trinamool Congress will reach out to college and class 12 students with activities like quiz contests across all 42 seats in West Bengal starting January, a party source said.

The activities will be of inter-school and inter-college level and will be conducted by party lawmaker

and former quiz master Derek O'Brien, the source added.

The party, which conducted the competitions last week in Barasat and Jadavpur as a trial, will launch the initiative after January 19 across the state, the source said.

O'Brien, Trinamool's Parliamentary party leader in the Rajya Sabha will conduct the competition along with Dip-

tangshu Chowdhury, the co-convenor of the Trinamool's cyber cell and party member Suparno Maitra.

Giving a sneak peek into the questions that the contestants will face, the source said that the competition named "Digital Challenge" will cover topics like social media, government schemes, current affairs, Parliament and Bengal.



State of States awards handed over to CM

GANGTOK, 06 DEC [IPR]: Chief Minister Pawan Chamling receiving the Best Performing State in Education from the State of the States Awards of the India Today Group. Along with this award, the Chief Minister is

also being handed over the awards on Cleanliness and Good Governance from the India Today Group. Ashwini Kumar Chand, Resident Commissioner, Delhi had received these awards on Sikkim's behalf on 24 November

24, 2018 in Delhi. An HRDD team led by Minister RB Subba and accompanied by the Additional Chief Secretary, GP Upadhyaya, and others handed over the award trophies to the Chief Minister yesterday.

SFA to hold Referee Clinic

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 DEC:

Sikkim Football Association is organising a Referee Clinic from 27 to 30 December here at Paljor Stadium.

Fifty candidates, including 24 women, will be participating in the referee clinic from different parts of the State.

A SFA press release issued by its president, Menla Ethenpa, informs

that only those candidates whose bio-data had been forwarded to AIFF, Delhi, will be allowed to attend the clinic. AIFF is deputing two instructors to conduct the clinic. No TA, DA or accommodation will be provided for the clinic.

SFA coordinator, Phurba Sherpa, or HOR Sikkim Referee Bikash Pradhan can be contacted for further details.

Rest of India can learn a lot from Northeast: Vice Chief of Army

New Delhi, Dec 6 (PTI): The Northeast is endowed with rich cultural heritage and biodiversity but not much is known about it to people living outside the region, Vice Chief of Army Lt Gen Devraj Anbu said Thursday and asserted that the rest of India can learn a lot from these states.

A group of 26 students and seven teachers from the seven states, who are visiting Delhi as part of a national integration tour, interacted with Lt Gen Anbu at the South Block. "All the Northeasters states, from Arunachal Pradesh to Mizoram and Assam to Meghalaya, are blessed with scenic beauty, and each state has its own rich culture, but not much is known to people about it. And the rest of India learn a lot from these states," he told reporters on the sidelines of an event here.

The contiguous states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura are popularly referred to as the 'Seven Sisters' and along with Sikkim comprise the Northeast India.

"I have been to all the states in Northeast and each state has so much of diversity to offer. Particularly, Sikkim, where I found that it was so well-managed, including the discipline in traffic and civic sense exhibited by people in driving and parking vehicles. Besides, the region has lessons in ecological preservation too, which other parts of India can learn from," he said.

Anbu emphasised that in north India, people celebrate Holi for a day or two, but in Manipur people from the Meitei tribe play Holi for

five days. The colourful festival is known as 'Yaoshang'. "How many know about Manipuri Holi. They use natural colours and everyday wear starched white clothes and sing and dance. Isn't it something, we all should know about?" he said.

The Vice Chief of Army also said the the Northeast has a very rich culinary and linguistic and art and cultural heritage. Bihu dance of Assam and Manipuri dance are some of the well-known art forms.

Earlier, during the interaction, he said the purpose of the tour was to bring the society in these states closer to other parts of India and vice versa.

"You must project your states, and tell it to others and also make friends with people from other states. You have already visited Delhi and met the president at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and will visit Agra too. So, when you go back from here, tell people in your home state about the places visited and your experiences," he told the students.

Ruby Choudhury, 17, a student from Assam Rifles Public School in Jorhat, said she felt very happy to visit Delhi for the first time and was thrilled to meet President Ram Nath Kovind.

"I was born in Manipur but moved to Assam as child along with my parents. I love Assam and feel proud that Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and star athlete Hima Das are from my state. But I wish more people knew more about my state or other Northeastern states. Even in films and news we don't see much of the Northeast really," she told PTI.

Roshini Nadar-Malhotra, Mazumdar-Shaw among world's 100 most powerful women: Forbes

YOSHITA SINGH

NEW YORK, DEC 6

(PTI): IT stalwart Roshini Nadar Malhotra, biotechnology pioneer

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, media mogul Shobhana Bhartia and actor Priyanka Chopra have been named among the world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes in a list topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Merkel, 64, a four-time Chancellor, retained the top spot in The World's 100 Most Powerful Women 2018. It is the eighth consecutive year and 13 times in total in the 15 years of the annual list she has topped.

She is followed by UK Prime Minister Theresa May, who for the second year in a row has retained the No 2 spot on the list. May, 62, is followed by International Monetary Fund managing director Christine Lagarde (No 3), General Motors CEO Mary Barra (No 4), and Fidelity Investments CEO Abigail Johnson (No 5).

Nadar Malhotra, CEO, HCL Technologies is ranked 51st on the list. The 37-year old is responsible for all strategic decisions for the USD 8.1 billion enterprise, which operates in technology, healthcare and infosystems.

Nadar Malhotra is also the Vice Chairperson of the board of HCL Technologies and the Chairperson of its CSR Committee. She is a trustee of the Shiv Nadar Foundation, which is focused on education and has established some of India's top colleges and schools.

Mazumdar-Shaw, Founder and Chair, Biocon, is ranked 60. India's richest self-made woman had founded the country's largest biopharmaceutical firm in 1978.

The firm has successfully forayed into the lucrative US biosimilars market, catching the attention of investors and creating a surge in market cap, Forbes said.

Biocon became the first company to gain approval from the USFDA for two different biosimilars of drugs used in certain cancer treatments.

The 65-year old business woman has invested in research infrastructure and scientific talent with the aim of building a deep R&D-based biotech firm, not a copycat generics maker.

Bhartia, 61, Chairperson and Managing Director, HT Media, is ranked 88th. In 2013, Bhartia launched the business weekly MintAsia in Singapore and then bought Webitude, a social and digital media outfit. HT Media's tutoring arm, Studymate, has expanded into coaching students for the admissions exam required by India's elite engineering schools.

Chopra, who married American singer and actor Nick Jonas this week, comes in at the 94th spot.

Forbes said Chopra, 36, is "arguably the most successful Bollywood actor to cross over to Hollywood".

Chopra made her US big-screen debut in 2017's "Baywatch" and became the first Indian actor to lead a drama



series on American television as the former star of ABC's "Quantico."

She launched her own production company, Mumbai-based Purple Pebble Pictures, to promote regional filmmakers and emerging Indian talent.

In 2018, she became a tech investor, putting money into dating app Bumble's investment fund and Holberton School for software engineering.

The UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and UN Foundation Girl Up Champion also launched the Priyanka Chopra Foundation for Health and Education.

"Forbes' Most Powerful Women 2018 list reflects what is always known about power, how ephemeral it is and how volatile it can be," says Moira Forbes, Executive Vice President, Forbes Media.

"The world's most powerful women are leading amidst a tumultuous time where geopolitical tensions are on the rise, key economies are facing instability, and where trust in institutions is at an all-time low."

The 100 women on the list are women who are building billion-dollar brands, calling the shots in the financial markets, crisscrossing the globe to broker international agreements, and provide aid to those in need.

Their accomplishments are formidable on their own, and even more so given how difficult it can be to establish inroads into industries and job titles traditionally dominated by men, especially in tech, venture capital, and Hollywood.

They are builders, disruptors, and innovators in every sector from business to creative worlds, taking a modern, forward-looking view on power and using their positions to better the world.

Members of the 2018 Most Powerful Women list represent women in six categories: business (27 honorees), technology (18), finance (12), media & entertainment (16), politics & policy (22), and philanthropy (5). In total, the Power Women control or influence nearly USD 2 trillion in revenues and oversee 5 million employees.

The 2018 list spans more than six generations of influential women, with Taylor Swift the youngest honoree at 28 and Queen Elizabeth II the oldest at 92.

The list also includes siblings for the first time Anne and Susan Wojcicki of 23andMe and YouTube respectively.

North America represents 50 women on the list, Asia Pacific 22, Europe (inclusive of Russia and Turkey) 17, the United Kingdom 7, the Middle East 3, one in Africa.

Around 15,000 deaths in road accidents due to potholes 'unacceptable', says SC

NEW DELHI, DEC 6

(PTI): The Supreme

Court on Thursday termed as "unacceptable" the death of nearly 15,000 people in road accidents caused by potholes in the last five years and said the number was probably more than those killed on the border or by terrorists.

This indicates that authorities concerned are not maintaining the roads properly, a bench headed by Justice Madan B Lokur said.

"It is unacceptable that such a large number of death takes place on roads due to potholes," said the bench, which also comprised Justices Deepak Gupta and Hemant Gupta.

The bench perused a report filed by the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety, headed by former apex court judge Justice K S Radhakrishnan, which said 14,926 persons had died in road accidents due to potholes from 2013 to 2017 across the country.

"It is almost 15,000 deaths in five years, probably more than those killed on border or by terrorists," the bench said, adding, "These are government figures".

The bench asked the Centre to file their response on the committee's report after consulting all state governments and posted the matter for hearing in January. Advocate

Gaurav Agarwal, assisting the court as an amicus curiae in the matter, said the committee has filed a report on the issue following the apex court's direction and consulted all the states.

He said the data on death in such accidents was based on the figures of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

The bench observed that many authorities like the municipal corporations, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), concessionaires working with them or the state road departments would be responsible for these deaths as they were not maintaining the roads.

Referring to the number of deaths, the bench said, "This is absolutely a very high number and indicates that concerned authorities whether they are municipal corporations, state governments, NHAI and others are not maintaining the roads".

The bench also observed that no compensation was paid to the victim's family in such cases and legal representatives of the deceased have to "live with the unforeseen tragedy due to lack of concern shown by the authorities". It said no

data was available before it about the number of persons injured in road accidents due to potholes and it was clear that "number of injured will be much much higher than the number of deaths". The apex court had in July termed as "frightening" the number of deaths in accident caused due to potholes on roads across the country and had observed that number of fatalities in such incidents was more than those in terror attacks.

While hearing a matter related to road safety in India, the bench had also said that persons who have lost their lives as a result of accidents caused due to potholes should be entitled to compensation.

It had asked the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety to look into this "very serious issue" and file a report before it.

The court is also dealing with issue of compensation paid to the victims of hit-and-run and road accidents.

It had also raised the issue of deaths in accidents due to potholes on roads, particularly in Mumbai, and said that according to reports there were around 4,000 potholes in Mumbai.

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4. Annual turnover for the last 3 years not less than Rs.6.00 Crore.
5. Solvency certificate.
6. Profit and loss Statement for the financial year ending March 2018.
7. Fixed Deposit Details not less than an amount of Rs.2.00 Crore.

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SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Discuss Suicides More *Mental health and suicides rates need to be deliberated more often by the lay people*

Suicide statistics for Sikkim no longer even shock with their frequency. It is not rare to learn of two suicides (sometimes more) on the same day at villages at different corners of the State and the victims separated by decades in age and unlikely to have anything in common. They do however have some things in common – a condition which made them suicidal and an environment which ignores their situation.

Suicides in Sikkim are not limited to any specific age-group, and every new incident needs to be received with anxious worry (despite the sheer frequency which can dull the shock), because in the absence of empathy, suicides could become even more routine, an even easier decision to make for those on the brink when they hear of so many following through on their suicidal tendencies. There is a lot that needs to be done to save lives from self-destructing, but the first step towards delivering anything effective will have to be active engagement.

Only after the people start talking about suicides beyond just airing shock over their increasing numbers can the society stand a chance of building the required defences. These conversations will have to be about more than just the incidents and move more towards asking what the experts and the concerned agencies are doing to address the situation. More people need to begin asking what is being done to counsel the surviving families of suicide victims, because surely, the guilt that burdens them must be staggering and they should not be required to weather through it alone without any professional help. More people need to wonder why no explanations have been forthcoming as to why the suicide rate is so high and which experts from where will make the time to “study” and explain the whys and the draw up an action plan on how to contain it.

The reasons behind suicides or attempted suicide are complex, but suicidal tendencies don't always require medical expertise to detect. Depression and other mental disorders, feelings of worthlessness, signs of abuse and other warning signs manifest rather clearly. What is missing is the correct response. Family and friends, the first to notice these signals, perhaps prefer to ignore them because it is a difficult situation to address and they find themselves at a loss on how to respond. Maybe they will seek out help and counselling if they were made to understand how serious the problem is. Although it is now widely accepted in Sikkim that too many suicides are taking place, individual realisation of how people around them could also take that route has not yet dawned. Suicides are still looked at from a sanitised distance of it could not happen to us. Any attempt at generating wider awareness and involvement on curtailing suicides has to begin by sharing case studies of how apparently “normal” people from “normal” families have also ended their own lives. The social support required to save lives will perhaps then reinforce itself better. It is also true that even people worried by warning signs they notice, don't know how they can help. That is where governmental and non-governmental organisations can take a leading role. It is important to bear in mind that awareness is required not only to highlight suicides as a problem, but also in equipping the first-responders to panic signs – friends and family – on what they can do and whom they can approach for help.

And one is still discussing only the first step of addressing suicides and generating awareness for Sikkim here. The equally important phase of helping friends and family of suicide victims deal with the trauma and heal themselves is not even being considered in what little is being done here on the issue of suicides.

WRITE US: Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence. Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

WhatsApp skewed Brazilian election, proving social media's danger to democracy

LUCA BELLI
theconversation.com

Misinformation via social media played a troubling role in boosting far-right Congressman Jair Bolsonaro into the Brazilian presidency.

Bolsonaro did not win 55 percent of votes thanks to misinformation alone. A powerful desire for political change in Brazil after a yearslong corruption scandal and a court decision compelling the jailed front-runner Luis Inacio Lula da Silva to withdraw from the race both opened the door wide for his win.

But Bolsonaro's candidacy benefited from a powerful and coordinated disinformation campaign intended to discredit his rivals, according to the Brazilian newspaper Folha.

Days before the Oct. 28 runoff between Bolsonaro and his leftist competitor, leftist Fernando Haddad, an investigation by Folha revealed that a conservative Brazilian business lobby had bankrolled the multimillion-dollar smear campaign – activities that may have constituted an illegal campaign contribution.

ELECTION SCANDAL FALLOUT

Using WhatsApp, a Facebook-owned messaging service, Bolsonaro supporters delivered an onslaught of daily misinformation straight to millions of Brazilians' phones.

They included doctored photos portraying senior Workers Party members celebrating with Communist Fidel Castro after the Cuban Revolution, audio clips manipulated to misrepresent Haddad's policies and fake “fact-checks” discrediting authentic news stories.

The misinformation strategy was effective because WhatsApp is an essential communication tool in Brazil, used by 120 million of its 210 million citizens. Since WhatsApp text messages are forwarded and reforwarded by friends and family, the information seems more credible.

The fallout from Folha's front-page report compelled WhatsApp to issue an apologetic op-ed.

“Every day, millions of Brazilians trust WhatsApp with their most private conversations,” wrote WhatsApp's vice president, Chris Daniels, in Folha. “Because both good and bad information can go viral on WhatsApp, we have a responsibility to amplify the good and mitigate the harm.”

The company announced that it would purge thousands of spam accounts in Brazil, clearly label messages to show that they had been forwarded, tighten rules on group messaging and partner with Brazilian fact-checking organizations to identify false news.

Brazil's highest electoral court also created an advisory board on internet and elections to investigate disinformation in Brazil's 2018 election and propose regulations to limit its impact in future political processes.

IT'S A WHATSAPP-DEFINED WORLD

Brazil is only the latest country to learn that social media can undermine the democratic process.

Numerous studies have confirmed that a toxic blend of data mismanagement, targeted advertise-

ment and online misinformation also influenced the outcomes of the United Kingdom's Brexit vote and the 2016 U.S. presidential race.

Brazil's WhatsApp election scandal should be a wake-up call particularly for other developing world democracies, as revealed in research I recently presented at the United Nations' Internet Governance Forum.



That's because the conditions that allowed fake news to thrive in Brazil exist in many Latin American, African and Asian countries.

Internet access is very expensive in Brazil. A broadband connection can cost up to 15 percent of a household's income and mobile plans with unlimited data, common in rich countries, are rare.

Instead, mobile carriers entice users by offering “zero rating” plans with free access to specific applications, typically Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. Nearly three-quarters of Brazilian internet users had these prepaid mobile-internet plans in 2016, according to the technology research center CETIC.br.

Most Brazilians therefore have unlimited social media access but very little access to the rest of the internet. This likely explains why 95 percent of all Brazilian internet users say they mostly go online for messaging apps and social media.

Yet the “rest of the internet” is precisely where Brazilians might have verified the political news sent to them on WhatsApp during the 2018 election. Essentially, fact-checking is too expensive for the average Brazilian.

CONCERN OVER AFRICA'S ELECTIONS

Democracies in Africa, where more than a dozen countries will hold elections in 2019, are vulnerable to the same kind of lopsided access to information that influenced Brazil's presidential vote.

As in Brazil, many Africans get stripped-down internet access through Facebook's Internet.org and Free Basics platforms. But, worryingly, most African countries have little or no data protection and no net neutrality requirements that internet providers treat all digital content equally, without favoring specific apps.

Why we should stop labelling people climate change deniers

CHUI-LING TAM
theconversation.com

In the westernmost reaches of Nunavut, on the Northwest Passage, Inuit hunters have told me some pithy things about climate change.

The land is changing. It isn't climate change. This is part of cycles. Our elders saw this coming.

Some of the most visible and profound effects of global warming are occurring in the Arctic. Some Inuit are worried climate change will permanently alter the world. Others say it will pass, as other times of want and plenty have passed through the Inuit's long cycles of life in the Arctic.

In Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland in Canada, perceptions about climate change cannot be divided into two camps of “believers” and “deniers.” The situation is far more complex.

To understand climate change communication and adaptation in maritime communities, my research team has travelled to the Canadian Arctic, Indonesia and the Philippines to find out what local communities have to say about climate change.

The answer so far? It varies.

Some fear climate change, some deny it's real and some don't know what, or whom, to believe. Many don't want to talk about climate change at all. Others say we must talk. The diverse interpretations of how climate change fits into their own stories are beautifully captured in the documentary Qapirangajuu: Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change.

It's simplistic to divide people into only two opposing camps of climate change: believers or deniers. The way we have been communicating the science of climate change has not been persuasive.

PLACE MATTERS

Scientists warn that human activity, industrialization and our dependence on fossil fuels have caused a warming of global temperatures that threatens life on Earth. By contrast, climate change deniers dismiss such dire premonitions as conspiracy. The weight of scientific facts is often presented to better inform or inoculate a misinformed public.

Yet between those two polarized positions are local populations living with the immediate effects of climate change on the environments they depend upon.

Few people can claim to share the Inuit's experience of climatic variation. Many process the concept of global warming with facts about climate change, but also by the geographies they occupy. As University of Cambridge geography professor Mike Hulme suggests, we should conceive of climate change as the cultural evolution of the idea of climate.

Local experience, traditional knowledge and personal experience may blend in a swirl of contradictory impressions about climate change. People are shaped in part by their place in the diverse physical and social spaces undergoing climate-related events, whether they are marine, mountain, urban or desert regions.

The history and experience of individuals and communities may influence how they interpret and prioritize climate change. This diversity of lived experience and worldviews contradicts the divisions between climate change belief and denial.

FACTS AREN'T ENOUGH

Climate change science alone is not convincing. Recent research suggests the public is split into two conflicting groups: those whose views align with the scientific community (believers) and those who do not. These opinion-based groups have distinct social identities, beliefs and emotional reactions to environmental change; they are set apart by cultural differences and political leanings.

A recent study found that social networks influence people's stance on climate change. So, how you talk about climate change matters. An international survey of 24 countries found that personal experiences, beliefs, knowledge, values and worldviews are important factors that shape climate change belief.

The viral response to last year's National Geographic video of a starving polar bear shows how easily climate change narratives can be hijacked by deniers.

The video was initially swiftly embraced by climate change champions. For instance, Canada's Environment Minister Catherine McKenna tweeted: “THIS is what climate change looks like. Climate change is real. As are its impacts. Time to stand up for our polar bears and our planet.” But the photographers were later criticized for assuming the polar bear was starving because of climate change, laying the “believe” camp open to ridicule.

The dominant climate change narrative is one of permanent, near-irreversible human-induced changes to the climate accompanied by a rise in global temperatures.

This is what I thought I heard as an Inuit hunter eloquently described how the land has stayed greener for longer during each of the last 40 seasons he has travelled since his honeymoon.

Then I pondered his words again, and I asked him, “Do you think climate change is permanent or cyclical?” He paused and replied, “It's cyclical.”

LISTEN TO LOCAL PEOPLE

In its new report “Global Warming of 1.5°C,” the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says the prognosis is dire if we do not contain a rise in global temperatures to 1.5°C.

The debate over “1.5 to stay alive” is not new. It was central to the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Paris in December 2015.

Will the IPCC's latest message finally convince the climate change confused or their leaders, who failed to make 1.5°C binding in the Paris text three years ago? The debate will rage on at the 24th COP in Katowice, Poland in December.

Meanwhile, far from the pomp and formality of COP meetings, do local populations feel engaged in climate change action? I doubt it.

Inuit hunters must increasingly navigate unpredictable sea ice. One explained their seeming indifference to climate change this way: “What are we going to do about it? We Inuit take care of the land.”

Elsewhere, a community leader

In my analysis, Facebook and a handful of tech companies are now racing to collect and monetize the data gathered through sponsored apps, allowing them to profile millions of Africans. Lax government oversight means that people may never be informed that they pay for these “free” apps by exposing their personal information to data mining by private companies.

Such personal information is exceedingly profitable to advertisers in Africa, where Western-style public polling and consumer surveys is still rare. It is easy to imagine how valuable targeted advertising would be for political candidates and lobbies in the lead-up to Africa's 2019 elections.

MOVE FAST AND BREAK DEMOCRACY

Democracy cannot thrive when the electorate is intentionally misinformed about candidates, parties and policies.

Political debate driven by likes, shares and angry comments on social media increases polarization and distorts healthy public discourse. Yet evidence shows that insults, lies and polemics are what best drive the user engagement that generates that precious personal data.

For over a decade, social networks have been associated with free communication, unfettered by gatekeepers like news editors or fact-checkers. Many in Silicon Valley and beyond saw this innovative disruption as broadly beneficial for society.

That can be true when social networks are just one of many ways that people can engage in open and pluralistic debate. But when just a handful of apps are available to the majority of users, serving as the sole channel for democratic dialogue, social media can be easily manipulated to poisonous ends.

Mark Zuckerberg's longstanding motto was, “Move fast and break things.” That catchphrase was retired in April 2018, perhaps because it is increasingly evident that democracy is among the things that Facebook and friends have left broken.

[The writer is Professor of Internet Governance and Regulation, School of Law, Fundação Getúlio Vargas]

hinted at his weariness of a problem that has been known to Inuit but ignored by the world for too long: “What's there to say? We've said it all before.”

BE BETTER COMMUNICATORS

After attending three COP meetings since Paris, I question the reach of the existing narrative and governance of climate change. I suggest we move beyond a simplistic division between believers and deniers, and talk to people in local communities to examine how climate change complexity and confusion are hindering effective action on climate change.

We need to communicate at the local scale where resource-dependent or climate-susceptible populations live with the actual or foreseen threats of climate change.

We should heed the words of Thai marine scientist Suchana Chavanich, who told delegates at a workshop at COP 23, hosted by Fiji but held in Bonn, last year that to make a difference we need more than scientific knowledge; we need to connect with local people on the ground, in the places they live and work, to learn about the relevance of climate change in their lives.

That is more effective than theorizing about what might happen in a 1.5°C or 2°C world.

For many, climate facts are not convincing nor do they speak for themselves. And because people are not necessarily swayed by climate change facts but rather the communicator of facts, the nature of communication, their personal affiliations and networks, and their personal experience, labelling someone who is confused about climate change as a denier does not advance us to a world of collective effort to confront climate change.

We are not doing a good job of communicating climate change. Maybe we can do a better job if we recognize that people are not just passive receivers of climate change facts, but actors with their own history and knowledge in place and interpretations of how climate change fits into their own stories.

[The writer is with University of Calgary]

Cal HC says can't give permission for BJP rally at this stage

KOLKATA, DEC 6 (PTI): The Calcutta High Court on Thursday said it cannot give permission at this stage for the BJP rally in Coochbehar, scheduled to be flagged off by party president Amit Shah on Friday, after the West Bengal government refused to allow the event on the grounds that it might cause communal tension. The court directed that superintendents of police of all districts in West Bengal will file a report by December 21 to it on the holding of 'rath yatra' rallies by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), after hearing all the district presidents of the party.

Directing that the rally stands deferred till the next date of hearing on January 9, Justice Tapabrata Chakraborty observed that the prayer of BJP for permission to hold the 'rath yatra' cannot be granted at this stage. The BJP was scheduled to hold three 'rath yatras' that will start from different



parts and traverse all the 42 Lok Sabha constituencies.

It had moved the court seeking a direction to the state government for giving permission for its rallies af-

ter its applications allegedly went unanswered.

The BJP campaign was scheduled to begin from Cooch Behar district in the north on December 7, from Kakdwip in

the South 24 Parganas district on December 9, and from the Tarapith temple in Birbhum district on December 14. State advocate general Kishore Dutta told the court that the

Cooch Behar superintendent of police refused permission for the BJP president's rath yatra from Friday. The state government submitted that it might cause communal

tension in the district. Dutta said the district has a history of communal issues and that there was information that some "communal provocators" and rowdy elements had become active there.

The SP's refusal letter also noted that several top BJP leaders would come to Coochbehar, as also people from other states, stating that these may affect the communally sensitive district.

The refusal of permission was an administrative decision in view of the ground situation, the AG said, adding that "details of apprehension" cannot be spelt out in open court due to their sensitive nature and he can submit these to the court in a sealed cover, if directed.

The BJP told the court that it will hold peaceful rallies. Asked by the judge as to who will take responsibility if anything untoward happens, BJP counsel Anindya Mitra

submitted that the party will hold a peaceful rally, but it was the duty of the state government to maintain law and order. Mitra submitted that the Constitution guarantees the right to hold political programmes.

He said that assumption of untoward situation cannot be a ground for refusal.

When the judge asked if he was agreeable to deferment, the BJP counsel answered in the negative and said that the party had started preparations for long and had approached the administration for permission in October. He submitted that "it is only now that they have refused permission after sitting on the applications for long."

The advocate general also opposed the BJP filing a supplementary affidavit opposing the refusal of permission, saying it can either come with a fresh petition or an amendment to his petition.

Arunachal seeks feedbacks from karatekas on sports policy

ITANAGAR, DEC 6 (PTI):

Arunachal Pradesh government on Thursday sought feedbacks from the state karatekas, who won 16 medals in the recent Commonwealth Karate Championships in South Africa, for incorporating in the state sports policy.

Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Dr Mohesh Chai said these karatekas would be awarded by the state government.

"The governments require feedbacks from the karatekas and the Arunachal Karate Association to be incorporated in the new sports policy," Chai said.

The minister also felicitated the 13-member Arunachal karateka team for winning 16 medals among India's kitty of 59 in the Durban championship from November 29 to December 2.

The team returned here on late Wednesday evening and, along with officials of the Arunachal Karate Association, called on the minister in his chamber, on Thursday.

"I feel proud not only as the sports minister but as an Arunachalee for our talented children. They deserve special credit. I congratulate you all on behalf of the state people, state government and Chief Minister Pema Khandu and on my behalf," the sports minister said.

Chai expressed hope that these players would be able to bring laurels for the country and the state from the next Asian Games and the Olympics.

WB govt denies permission to Amit Shah's rath yatra



KOLKATA, DEC 6 (PTI): The West Bengal government has denied permission to BJP president Amit Shah's proposed 'rath yatra' from Cooch Behar on grounds that it might cause communal tension, the state's advocate general informed the Calcutta High Court on Thursday.

Kishore Dutta told the court that the Cooch Behar superintendent of police refused permission for the BJP president's rath yatra from Friday.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah is scheduled to kickstart the party's 'Save Democracy Rally', comprising three 'rath yatras', in the state.

The state government submitted that it might cause communal tension in the district.

Dutta said the district has a history of communal issues and that there was information that some communal provocators and rowdy elements had become active there.

The SP's refusal letter

also noted that several top BJP leaders would come to Cooch Behar, as also people from other states, stating that these may affect the communally sensitive district.

Stating that refusal of permission was an administrative decision in view of the ground situation, the AG said that details of apprehension cannot be spelt out in open court due to its sensitive nature and he can submit these to the court in a sealed cover, if directed.

The BJP, which moved the court seeking direction to the state government for giving permission for its three rallies, told the bench of Justice Tapabrata Chakraborty that it will hold peaceful yatras. Asked by the judge as to who will take responsibility if anything untoward happens, BJP counsel Anindya Mitra submitted that the party will hold a peaceful rally, but that it was the duty of the state government to maintain law and order.

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tees the right to hold political programmes.

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He submitted that "it is only now that they have refused permission after sitting on the applications for long."

The advocate general also opposed the BJP filing a supplementary affidavit opposing the refusal of permission, saying it can either come with a fresh petition or an amendment to his petition.

The BJP campaign is scheduled to begin from Cooch Behar district in the north on December 7, from Kakdwip in the South 24 Parganas district on December 9, and from the Tarapith temple in Birbhum district on December 14.

Need infrastructure, but can't deforest our way to prosperity: Jairam Ramesh

NEW DELHI, DEC 6 (PTI): Deforestation is the wrong way to prosperity and it would haunt the people in the form of ecological imbalance, former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh said here on Thursday.

He claimed that eight per cent deaths during 2000-2015 were due to pollution-related ailments, but did not comment on the current pollution crisis in Delhi and the measures taken by the government to combat the effect.

In his inaugural address at an environmental film festival here, Ramesh, who held the environment portfolio during the UPA rule, said, "We have to grow. We

need infrastructure. But we cannot deforest our way to prosperity. That is a wrong path that we have started walking upon and it will come to haunt us soon in form of ecological imbalance."

"We should aim for economic growth but not at the cost of ecological imbalance," he said.

Ramesh said very frequently, the proponents of big-ticket projects are the governments, centre or state, and not the private sector.

"It is a tough call that those in power have to take and they must evaluate that what the exact issues are. What can be the short term implications, what can be the long term implications

whether it is a national highway or a railway project," he said.

Asserting that the substance and style of India's climate diplomacy needs a change, Ramesh said that he had suggested several measures.

"Tried to implement them, was heavily criticised too and the positions I had taken during 2009-2011, for which I was attacked in my own country by many politicians, NGOs and the media, have now become part of the mainstream."

"We need not be an obstructionist and make India a constructive part of the solution," he said.

'Quotes from the Earth', the three-day

environmental film festival by environmental research and advocacy group Toxics Link, with support from the Swedish Society For Nature Conservation, was kicked off in the national capital on Thursday.

The festival aims to sensitise people towards the critical environmental issues plaguing the world today.

Apart from thought-provoking films by renowned Indian environmental filmmakers like S Nallamuthu, Gautam Pandey, Doe Trivedy and Jalal Ud Din Baba, viewers will also get to watch internationally acclaimed films from countries such as Russia and Turkey.

Prohibitory orders in Sabarimala can't be withdrawn: Ker govt

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DEC 6 (PTI): The LDF government in Kerala Thursday made it clear that the prohibitory orders imposed at the Sabarimala temple cannot be withdrawn now, even as the 'Satyagraha' by three opposition UDF MLAs at the state Assembly against the curbs, entered its fourth day.

The lawmakers-V S Sivakumar (Congress), Parakkal Abdullah (Indian Union Muslim League) and N Jayaraj (Kerala Congress-Mani)-- had launched the indefinite 'Satyagraha' on December 3 demanding lifting of prohibitory or-

ders at Sabarimala and providing more facilities to the pilgrims.

State Devaswom Minister Kadakampally Surendran said in the Assembly that the CPM-led Left Democratic Front government was not adamant in facilitating the entry of young women at the hilltop temple and it would not have been difficult to take thousands of such women there, if it had really wanted.

He was replying to a question on the Sabarimala issue raised by independent MLA and Janapakhsham leader, P C George.

The Left government

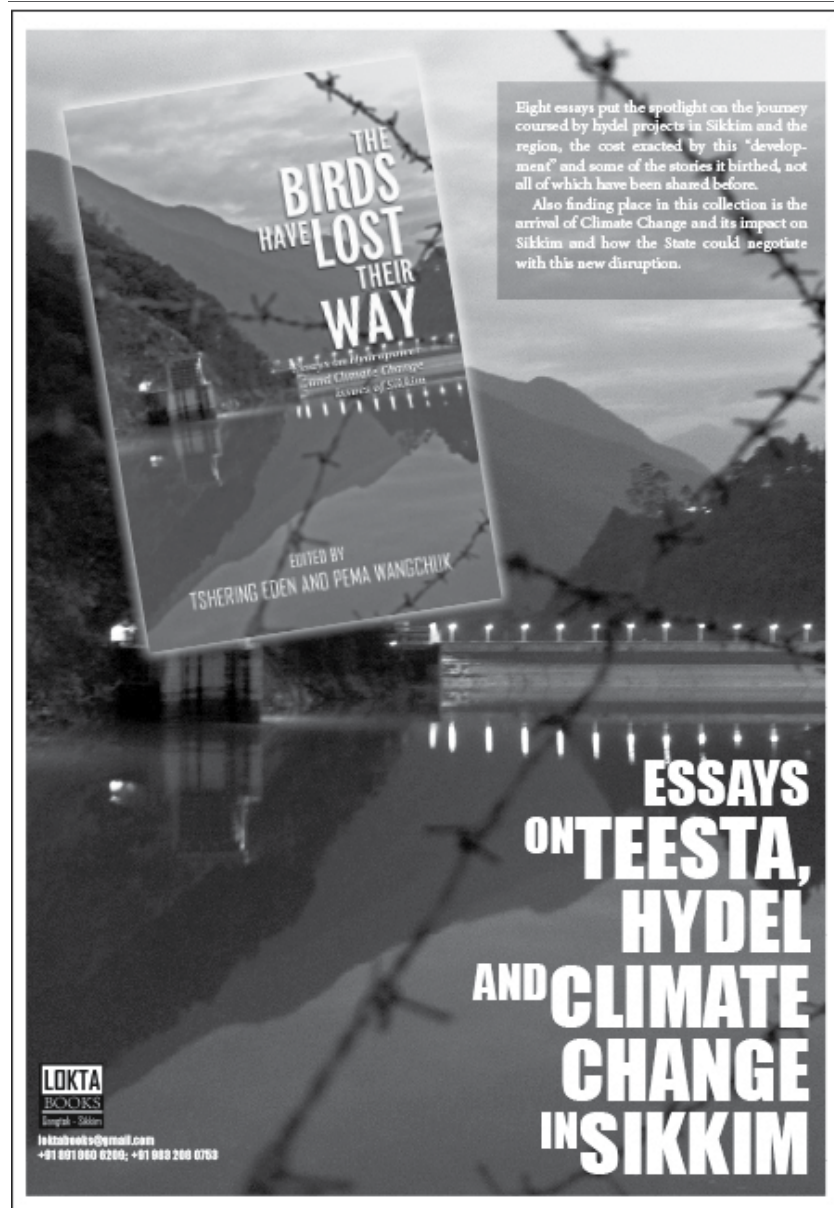
was bound to implement the September 28 Supreme Court verdict permitting women of all age groups into the Lord Ayyappa shrine, Surendran said, adding they had no plan to bring out any legislation regarding the entry of women of traditionally barred age group of 10-50 years there.

Amid a war of words with opposition members, Surendran informed the House that Section 144 imposed at Sannidhanam (the temple complex) and the premises was not against devotees, but to regulate "anti-socials"

who attempted to indulge in violence.

Referring to the incidents of alleged violence unleashed by the right-wing activists in the garb of protesting against the implementation of the verdict, the minister said the "RSS had run riot in Sabarimala" and the restrictions were to ensure that such incidents were not repeated.

"Pilgrims have not faced any hardship due to the invoking of Section 144 so far. It is not against devotees, but only to regulate anti-socials. There is no way to withdraw the prohibitory orders now," Surendran said.



Man Utd fight back again but Arsenal extend unbeaten run in four-goal thriller

MANCHESTER, DEC 6 (AFP): Jose Mourinho accused his Manchester United players of shooting themselves in the foot as he saw his under-strength team gift Arsenal two goals in a 2-2 draw that extended their winless Premier League run to four games.

United, who started with Paul Pogba and Romelu Lukaku on the bench, showed great spirit to twice come back, with equalisers from Anthony Martial and Jesse Lingard earning a much-needed point.

But, after a defeat at Manchester City and dispiriting draws with Crystal Palace and Southampton, United are now 18 points behind leaders City and actually closer to the relegation positions than they are first place.

United also trail Chelsea and Arsenal, who are now unbeaten in 20 games, by eight points in the battle for a place in the top four.

And Mourinho, who saw a bad David de Gea error and Marcos Rojo own goal twice hand Arsenal the lead, believes the performance continued their run of self-inflicted harm.

"We scored four goals and we drew 2-2," joked Mourinho.

"But we scored four goals and even in matches like today where we play well, we always shoot ourselves.

"Sometimes we miss chances with an open goal, other



times defensive mistakes but tonight there was a fantastic spirit, good performances.

"Our problem is finding a performance like this without the mistakes we made and we had very good performances where we make mistakes and we are always punished."

Mourinho's frustration was especially understandable given that Arsenal's opening goal, after 26 minutes, featured that rarest of collector's items, a mistake by his Spanish international goalkeeper David de Gea.

Chris Smalling slipped

at Lucas Torreira's 26th minute corner, allowing Mustafi the space to send a free header bouncing into the ground and goalwards.

It looked a routine save for United's number one but he succeeded only in pushing the ball into the air, two-handed, over his own head and over the goalline, despite Ander Herrera's desperation clearance.

But United responded within four minutes as Rojo, playing for the first time this season, unleashed a terrific free-kick which Bernd Leno kept out at the foot of his left-

hand post. Herrera responded quickly, although replays suggested he may have been fractionally offside, reaching the loose ball on the by-line and turning it into the six-yard area where Martial was able to convert. That dramatic pattern would be repeated after 68 minutes when Arsenal regained a lead they could only hold, on this occasion, for 74 seconds.

Lacazette played a one-two with fellow substitute Henrih Mkhitaryan and advanced into the area where Rojo tackled him from behind and succeeded only in turning the ball into

his own net.

But there could be no faulting United's response as Arsenal panicked at a long ball punted forward, almost directly from kick-off.

Lukaku caused uncertainty in the visitors' area and as Sead Kolasinac tried to turn the ball back to his goalkeeper, he allowed Lingard to ghost in and complete a simple finish past Leno. Error-strewn as it might have been, there could be no faulting the entertainment in the first Manchester United-Arsenal fixture since 1986 to take place without either Sir Alex Ferguson or Arsene Wenger in one of the dug-outs.

De Gea made amends for his first-half error with two fine saves to deny in-form Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, with Mkhitaryan also wasting a good close-range chance in between.

Neither Mkhitaryan nor the injured Alexis Sanchez have shone since a January swap deal between the clubs, but only the offside flag denied the Armenian coming back to haunt United in stoppage time when he rifled home after another decent De Gea stop from Torreira. "I am proud of my players and the second half gives us confidence," said Arsenal manager Unai Emery.

"We controlled the game and if one team deserved to win, we did more.

Making art accessible, one flash mob at a time



NEW DELHI, DEC 6 (PTI):

A 19th century painting by renowned artist Raja Ravi Varma was brought to life through the medium of a flash mob here recently.

Organised in the busy Select City Walk in South Delhi, the flash mob saw a group of performers dressed in 19th century costumes casually converge in the central atrium of the mall and break into a dance.

They recreated Varma's 'Portrait of a Family' where the artist captures a South Indian family in their finest attire.

Kiran Nadar, Chairperson of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art here, said the idea behind the flash mob was to make art more accessible to the public through its dissemination in an entertaining way.

"In India, we have a fondness for song and dance, and what better way to connect and engage with the public (than a flash mob) to raise awareness of India's great art heritage," Nadar told PTI.

According to her, the collector base in India is "very small" compared to countries like China, resulting in inadequate visibility of and dialogue around modern and contemporary Indian art.

"Art and art related activities are still not a regular part of people lives. There is still a gap in the dissemination of knowledge to people," she said.

With outreach initiatives such as the flash mob, Nadar wants to

bridge this gap so that art is no longer seen as just for the elite but a layman could also strive to stay connected with it.

The flash mob leveraged the entertainment value of the performance, surprising the visitors at the mall with a choreographed jig that combined traditional classical forms, break-dancing and modern dance set to South Indian fusion music.

The performers were wearing saris along with temple jewellery, gajras, dhotis and turbans -- all draped in styles from centuries ago.

The final pose saw the dancers assemble in the same form as the Raja Ravi Varma painting 'Portrait of a Family'. It was done in order to recreate it in real life, and also to mark the opening of a new exhibition at KNMA which featured his celebrated works.

"By using an unusual, quirky and one of a kind activity like the flash mob, we wanted to treat the public to a visual spectacle to help peak interest in art.

"We wanted people to pick up their phones and google 'Raja Ravi Varma' and 'Indian art'," Nadar said. Although the museum does not have any immediate plans for another flash mob, it is currently hosting an exhibition on the works of Jangarh Singh Shyam that is scheduled to continue till January 12.

The collection has been curated by Jyotindra Jain and Roobina Karode.

Hockey Men's World Cup anthem a tribute to India: Rahman



MUMBAI, DEC 6 (PTI):

AR Rahman is not new to anthems but when he was approached to create a song for Hockey Men's World Cup, he wanted the idea of the country and culture to come across.

'Jai Hind India', penned by Gulzar and featuring Shah Rukh Khan and Nayanthara, is a tribute to India, the double Oscar-winner said at the launch of the song.

"The video and the song has to go beyond hockey. When people watch something they watch it for many things. When you do something for sports, we felt we should include culture also. The song is a tribute to India," Rahman told reporters here.

He said having done anthems for films like "Lagaan", "127 Hours" and "Million Dollar Arm", he had an idea about the world he wanted to create through his music.

"Hockey is a national game and I wanted to give my heart to it," he said.

Pujara's maiden hundred in Australia bails India out of trouble

CHETAN NARULA

ADELAIDE, DEC 6 (PTI): Cheteshwar Pujara rose to the occasion with a maiden century in Australia, pulling India out of a deep hole to a respectable 250 for nine on day one of the first Test here on Thursday.

Pujara showed the same grit and gumption that is typical of him en route a 246-ball 123 that kept India in the game after being reduced to 127 for six in the 50th over.

It took a brilliant direct from Pat Cummins to remove him on what happened to be the final ball of an absorbing day one of the four-Test series.

Skipper Virat Kohli opted to bat in ideal conditions but the top-order once again failed to apply themselves against the potent pace trio of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Cummins.

Anything close to 250 looked a mountain to climb with India reeling at 56 for four at lunch. But Pujara stood tall amid the ruins to save India from embarrassment on way to his 16th Test ton. His fighting effort comprised seven fours and two sixes.

The 30-year-old put on two crucial partnerships with the lower-order batsmen to ensure India give their bowlers something to bowl at.

Post tea, Pujara added 62 runs with R Ashwin (25) for the seventh wicket. The latter played watchfully, unlike the Indian top-order, and played a great role in this minor recovery.

Cummins (2-49) finally got the breakthrough in the 74th over when Ashwin edged to second slip. Ishant Sharma (4) then put on 21 runs with Pujara, pushing the score past 200 in the 79th over.



Ishant survived a loud lbw shout via DRS, but Mitchell Starc (2-63) bowled him with a fuller delivery thereafter. As he started to run out of partners, Pujara hit a few lusty blows to gather some quick runs.

Earlier, Pujara's effort was the sole silver lining after India were reduced to 143-6 at tea. This was after a horrendous shot selection by Rohit Sharma (37) left India in the lurch at 86 for five in the 38th over.

Post lunch, Rohit and Pujara started off well as they added 45 runs for the fifth wicket.

While Pujara was se-date at one end, the former took the lead in scoring as he hit sixes at will. Two came off Cummins; the first a pull shot that sailed for six and the other a proper cover drive that cleared the ropes as well.

It seemed that Rohit was intent on digging India out of this hole as he hit Nathan Lyon (2-83) for a six on the second ball of the 38th over. Marcus Harris almost caught it, with the ball barely

crossing over the ropes and the umpire took some time to call it a six.

That should have been a note of caution for the batsman, but he didn't heed it and skied the very next ball for Harris to take an easy catch in the deep.

Rishabh Pant (25) too arrived at the crease with intent of attacking the bowling. He scored two fours and a six in the space of a few deliveries, before Pujara asked him to calm down.

The duo then added 41 runs for the sixth wicket as India crossed 100 in the 41st over, including five sixes surprisingly.

Pant didn't look comfortable though as he was forced to play against his natural game. And it showed when he edged Lyon behind to be dismissed shortly before tea.

In the morning session, Hazlewood (2-52) reduced India to 56 for four. The Australian pacers struck regularly with the new Kookaburra ball and made inroads into the Indian top-order that

never got going.

Hanuma Vihari was left out as the visitors drafted in Rohit for the number six spot. For Australia, Marcus Harris made his Test debut as announced a day prior.

Starc and Hazlewood began proceedings for Australia, and were on the money straightaway with their lengths.

Of the two Indian openers, KL Rahul (2) looked out of sorts against their express pace, and was unsurprisingly dismissed cheaply. He went for an extravagant drive in only the second over and was caught at third slip off Hazlewood.

Murali Vijay (11) looked intent on getting a better start and he was watchful. On a couple occasions, he drove the ball to get the score moving but ultimately this led to his dismissal. In the seventh over, Vijay went for a cover drive against the Starc and only ended up edging behind.

Given the conditions, Kohli then walked out to bat a lot earlier than anticipated. He looked a

lot more confident, but an awe-inducing diving catch ended his short stay at the crease.

Usman Khawaja dove to his left and held a stunning one-handed catch at gully off Cummins as Kohli was sent back with India reeling at 19-3 in 11 overs.

Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane (13) then came together for the fourth wicket, trying to put on a semblance of a partnership. Together they faced 59 balls and put on 22 runs in a bid to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Rahane had some difficulty against Lyon who came on to bowl immediately after the drinks' break. The batsman then stepped out to even hit Lyon for a six over long on in his second over.

But this didn't work against the pacers, who pushed Indian batsmen back with their perfect length and induced drives thereafter. In the 21st over then, Rahane fell to Hazlewood, the fourth batsman out driving in this morning session, and was caught at second slip.

Yemen govt, rebels lash out as peace talks set to open



RIMBO (SWEDEN), DEC 6 (AFP): Yemen's government and rebels

doubled down on their rival demands Thursday, just moments before hard-won peace talks were due to open in Sweden under the auspices of the United Nations.

A top Huthi rebel official threatened Thursday to bar UN planes from using the Yemeni capital's airport unless peace talks in Sweden lead to its full reopening.

"If the Yemeni capital's airport is not opened to the Yemeni people in the peace talks in Sweden, I call on the (rebel) political council and government to close the airport for all planes," Mohammed Ali al-Huthi tweeted.

The Yemeni government hit back, demanding the rebels withdraw

from the flashpoint port city of Hodeida.

Yemen's foreign ministry demanded the "coupist militias withdraw fully from the western coast and hand the area over to the legitimate government" via Twitter -- a reference to rebel-held Hodeida, home to Yemen's most valuable port.

The Sweden talks mark the first attempt in two years to broker an end to the Yemen conflict, which has killed at least 10,000 people since 2015 and triggered what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Some 14 million people are at imminent risk of starvation in Yemen, according to UN estimates, as a Saudi-led military coalition continues to battle the country's Iran-backed Huthi rebels.

800k to 2 million religious minorities detained in Chinese internment camps: US

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, DEC 6 (PTI): An estimated 800,000 to 2 million religious minorities are currently being detained in internment camps in China, the Trump administration has told lawmakers, who have expressed serious concerns over the massive human rights violations in the Communist nation's Xinjiang province.

The situation in resource-rich Xinjiang has been restive as the native Muslim Uighurs have been resisting increasing settlements of majority Han Chinese from other provinces.

China appears to have set up a series of secret internment camps used to lock up hundreds of thousands of ethnic Chinese Muslims, whose existence has long been denied by authorities.

At a Congressional hearing, Scott Busby, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State at the Bureau of the Human Right Democracy and Labour, alleged that Beijing was supporting similar repressive moves by other authoritarian regimes across the globe.

"The US government assesses that since April 2017, Chinese authorities have indefinitely detained at least 800,000, and possibly more than 2 million, Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs and members of other Muslim minorities in the internment camps," he said.

Testifying before a Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, Busby said reports suggested that most of those detained were not being



charged, and their families had little or no information about their whereabouts.

At first, China denied the existence of such camps, but as public reports have emerged, Chinese authorities now assert that they are "vocational education centres", which glosses over the fact that many renowned Uighur intellectuals and retired professionals are also detained in these camps, he said.

Former detainees, who have reached safety, have spoken of relentless indoctrination and harsh conditions for example, praying and other religious practices are forbidden.

"The apparent goal is to force detainees to renounce Islam and embrace the Chinese Communist Party," Busby said.

Life outside the in-

ternment camps is not much better, he noted. Neighbourhoods have entry and exit checkpoints manned by armed police. Families have been forced to accept Chinese officials into their homes for extended home-stays. Thousands of mosques have been shuttered or destroyed, while some turned into communist propaganda centres, Busby alleged.

"Unfortunately, fleeing China is not enough to escape the long arms of the government. China has routinely pressured other countries to return Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs and members of other Muslim minority groups, which has often proven successful," he told the lawmakers.

Even when such individuals reach safely, China continues to harass and intimidate them. China's repression of mi-

nority groups does not end in Xinjiang, he said.

Its policies have spread hundreds of miles away, for instance to the Hui Muslim communities. Tibetans also face continued repression and pervasive surveillance. The Tibetan Autonomous Region was the testing ground for many of the techniques now used in Xinjiang, Busby claimed.

Senator Cory Gardner said the so-called authoritarian closing under President Xi Jinping has resulted in an unprecedented and intensifying crackdown on civil society, ethnic minorities and religious freedom in China.

"The news of mass concentration camps for Uighur Muslims and the Xinjiang Autonomous Province has shocked the conscience. And this necessitates a serious re-

sponse from the United States and the international community," he said. Senator Ed Markey said it was pretty clear that there was a systematic effort by the Chinese government, not just within China, but also around the world, to back those policies which are most repressive and which allow for a compromise of human rights.

Senator Tim Kaine said reports indicated that a million Han Chinese have been recruited to forcibly occupy homes of Uighurs so that those not in detention camps, are having Han Chinese placed in their homes to ensure there isn't a Quran visible and they don't pray during the day.

Senator Marco Rubio rued the silence of the Muslim world in the face of the forced internment of hundreds of thousands of Muslims Uighurs in China.

Top Huawei executive detained in Canada, angering China

OTTAWA, DEC 6 (AFP):

A top executive and daughter of the founder of Chinese telecom giant Huawei has been arrested in Canada and faces extradition to the United States, officials said Thursday, angering Beijing days into a trade war truce with the US. The detention of Meng Wanzhou, Huawei's chief financial officer, comes after American authorities reportedly launched an investigation into suspected Iran sanctions violations by Huawei, which was already under scrutiny by US intelligence officials who deemed the company a national security threat.

The arrest stirred tensions just as the United States and China agreed to a ceasefire in their trade spat while negotiators seek a deal within three months.

News of her detention rippled through stock markets in Asia, particularly Shanghai and Hong Kong, with tech firms among the worst hit. By lunch Shanghai was 1.3 per cent lower while Hong Kong was 2.6 per cent off. "China is working creatively to undermine our national security interests, and the United States and our allies can't sit on the sidelines," US Senator Ben Sasse in a statement linking the arrest to US sanctions against Iran.

"Sometimes Chinese aggression is explicitly state-sponsored and sometimes it's laundered through many of Beijing's so-called 'private' sector entities that are in bed with (President) Xi (Jinping)'s communist party," he added. Meng was arrested in the western city of Vancouver on December 1, Canada's ministry of justice said in a statement.

The ministry said the US is seeking her extradition and she faces a bail hearing on Friday, adding it could not provide further details due to a publication ban that was sought by Meng, whose father, Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei, is a former Chinese People's Libera-

tion Army engineer. The arrest occurred on the same day that US President Donald Trump and Xi struck the trade war truce at a summit in Argentina. China's embassy in Ottawa demanded Meng's release.

"The Chinese side firmly opposes and strongly protests over such kind of actions which seriously harmed the human rights of the victim," the embassy said in a statement.

"The Chinese side has lodged stern representations with the US and Canadian side, and urged them to immediately correct the wrongdoing and restore the personal freedom of Ms Meng Wanzhou." Huawei said it was unaware of any wrongdoing by Meng and was provided "very little information" about the charges. "Huawei complies with all applicable laws and regulations where it operates, including applicable export control and sanction laws and regulations of the UN, US and EU," the company said in a statement.

The Wall Street Journal reported in April that US Department of Justice had opened an investigation into suspected violations of Iran sanctions by Huawei. The New York Times said the company had been subpoenaed by the Commerce and Treasury Departments over alleged violations of Iran and North Korea sanctions. Huawei is not the first Chinese telecoms equipment firm to face the ire of US authorities.

Earlier this year, the US imposed a seven-year ban on the sale of crucial US components to Chinese smartphone maker ZTE after finding it had failed to take action against staff who were responsible for violating trade sanctions against Iran and North Korea.

The ban nearly killed the Chinese tech company, which said it was forced to cease major operations in May.

A month later, Washington and Beijing reached a deal that would

strike ZTE from the sanctions list -- just days after China reportedly offered to ramp up purchases of American goods to help cut the yawning trade imbalance with the US.

American officials denied any connection between the two. In exchange, ZTE agreed to pay a hefty USD 1 billion fine and put an additional USD 400 million in escrow in case of future violations. It was also ordered to replace its board of directors and retain outside monitors.

The case showed that China is highly dependent on imports of US-made semiconductors or computer chips and reinforced Beijing's need to become self-reliant on this key technology.

Huawei is one of the world's largest telecommunications equipment and services providers.

But despite global success, its US business has been tightly constrained by worries it could undermine American competitors and that its cellphones and networking equipment, used widely in other countries, could provide Beijing with avenues for espionage. In May, the Pentagon said that devices from Huawei and ZTE posed an "unacceptable" security risk.

Personnel on US military bases are banned from buying equipment manufactured by the Chinese tech firms. Over the summer, Australia barred Huawei from providing 5G technology for wireless networks in the country over espionage fears. New Zealand followed suit in November, but said the issue was a technological one. Britain's largest mobile provider too has joined the global ban on Huawei.

On Wednesday, BT announced it was removing Huawei's telecommunications equipment from its 4G cellular network, following a warning from the head of MI6 foreign intelligence service that singled out the Chinese company as a potential security risk.

China to 'immediately' implement US trade truce measures



BEIJING, DEC 6 (AFP): China said Thursday it would "immediately" implement measures agreed under a trade war truce with the United States.

The commerce ministry's remarks came days after US President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping agreed to give negotiators 90 days to resolve their trade spat.

Few details have been made public about what the two sides will negotiate, a lack of clarity that has unsettled stock markets. "China will immediately implement the consensus both sides already reached on agricultural products, energy, autos and other specific items," commerce ministry spokesman Gao Feng said at a regular press briefing.

The two sides will also discuss intellectual property protection, technology cooperation, market access and "fair trade", and "work hard to reach a consensus", Gao said.

But the spokesman did not provide more specific details about

what actions China will take.

The White House has said China agreed to purchase a "very substantial" amount of agricultural, energy, industrial and other products to reduce the yawning trade gap. It also would begin buying products from US farmers "immediately".

The two sides will also negotiate "structural changes" to forced technology transfer, intellectual property protection, cyber intrusions and cyber theft, services and agriculture, according to the White House.

For its part, China has said it will import more US products to reduce its trade surplus, but no dollar amount has been publicly discussed.

Trump added China would roll back tariffs of 40 per cent on cars. It was unclear if Gao was referring to the tariffs in his remarks to reporters.

Gao's briefing came hours after the trade detente risked being rattled by the arrest in Canada of a top executive from Chinese telecom giant Huawei at the request of the United States.

Pakistan slashes non-salary budget by 10%

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, DEC 5 (PTI): The Pakistan government has decided to cut by 10 per cent the non-salary current budget of the civilian setup as part of an austerity drive to solve the cash-strapped nation's economic woes, according to a media report.

The Express Tribune reported that the move will help save nearly Rs 10 billion in the remainder period of fiscal year (2018-19) but would not address core fiscal problems.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has also decided to continue with a ban imposed on the creation of new posts excepts where the posts are required to be created under development projects, the report said.

The Ministry of Finance has issued an office memorandum to give effect to the austerity measures for fiscal year 2018-19. Effectively, the cut in the current non-salary expenditure will be on the budget allocations for the period of December 2018 to June 2019, the report said.

"In consideration of fiscal constraints and keeping in view the austerity drive of present government and to save public money, it has been decided to effect a saving



of 10 per cent in current expenditures," said the ministry of finance office memorandum.

The 10 per cent cut will not be applicable on employees' related expenses, their retirement benefits, subsidies, transfers, and civil works. The military budget has also not been slashed.

The PTI government is implementing tight fiscal and monetary policies. The State Bank of Pakistan has already downward revised the economic growth rate projections to 4 per cent for this fiscal year as against 5.8 per cent growth rate in the last fiscal year.

The total downward revised annual budget for running the civil government is Rs 460 billion for fiscal year 2018-19. Nearly 70 per cent expenditures have been exempted from the budget cut, which would reduce

the net benefit to not more than Rs 10 billion, according to an official of the Ministry of Finance.

The total non-salary expenditures are Rs 180 billion and some components like transfers and civil works are exempted from the cut. The total budget for this fiscal year is Rs 5.3 trillion. Out of this, an amount of Rs 1.1 trillion has been allocated for defence and Rs 1.842 trillion for servicing of the public debt.

Prime Minister Imran Khan, after his swearing on August 18, moved into a modest three-bed room house of his military secretary along with two servants.

He had announced that he would not be staying in the sprawling PM House which has a staff of 524 and fleet of 80 vehicles, keeping his pledge to cut down the expenditure of the cash-strapped government.



Desperate to get back to normal life now: Vinta Nanda

MUMBAI, DEC 6 (PTI): Writer-director Vinta Nanda, who has accused actor Alok Nath of rape and sexual harassment, says she now “desperately” wants to get back to normal life.

Nanda gave an account of the alleged sexual assault in a Facebook post on October 8, soon after actor Tanushree Dutta’s complaint of harassment against Nana Patekar fuelled India’s #MeToo movement.

The director said she got the courage to call out Nath after she realised it was for the first time that men in Bollywood were standing up for women.

“My trigger obviously was the atmosphere, there was an enabling environment. I was very certain I will be heard and supported because the movement had gathered momentum, started by Tanushree. I give her all the credit in the Bollywood space, as she took on very big people.

“When I saw that the industry was supporting her, CINTAA was coming out openly and speaking for her... It was the first time in Bollywood where I saw men stand up and speak for women,” Nanda said on Wednesday.

She was speaking at a panel discussion on #MeToo at the Mumbai Curtain Raiser of the Zee Jaipur Literature Festival, which



will run from January 24 to January 28.

Nanda said she “went to sleep” after writing about the alleged sexual harassment on social media and woke up to realise that things will never be the same.

“For me, it was over. I had held back for so many years. I was relieved but I had given sleepless nights to everyone, including my family. By the time I woke up, from my building to the office building, there were media vans parked all over the place.

“I woke up to the fact that ‘ok now I’ve done it’. Now I have to live up to it.

That’s what I am doing until today. I am trying desperately to get back to normal life now. This is the last panel I’m saying ‘yes’ to because I just have to get back to normal life now,” she added.

Last month, Mumbai Police registered a rape case against Nath following Nanda’s complaint. He has been booked under Indian Penal Code’s Section 376 (rape).

Nath has refuted the allegations and filed a civil suit against Nanda and is seeking Re 1 as damages for alleged defamation.

Sarah Hyland takes social media break amid trolling



Days after her cousin was killed in a car crash, actor Sarah Hyland is distancing herself from the social media for a while.

The “Modern Family” star was trolled with respect to

the 14-year-old Trevor Canada, who was killed late Saturday night in Omaha, Nebraska, in an alleged drunk driving accident.

Hyland announced her decision on Monday that she was stepping away from the internet due to the “horrible negative ignorant words”.

“You guys finally did it. Your horrible negative ignorant words have broken me. Happy? Staying offline for a while. I have a special announcement and video releasing on Wednesday I believe. So. There’s that,” Hyland, 28, wrote on Twitter.

Earlier Monday, she asked the trolls to keep their opinions about the tragedy to themselves.

“You don’t know all the details. And how dare you attack when a beautiful life has been lost,” the actor added.

Over the weekend, Hyland announced on social media that Canada “was killed by a drunk driver”.

She said her uncle, who was also in the car, “is still in



TRAILBLAZER! Actress Viola Davis makes an empowering speech as she accepts an award at the Women in Entertainment event in Los Angeles.

Sandra Oh, Andy Samberg to host 2019 Golden Globes



LOS ANGELES, DEC 6 (PTI): Actors Sandra Oh and Andy Samberg have been confirmed to host the 76th Golden Globes Awards.

The ceremony, to be held on January 6, will officially kick off the award season in Hollywood.

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) announced the hosts on Wednesday.

“We’re excited to welcome Sandra Oh and Andy Samberg as co-hosts of Hollywood’s Party of the Year. Both Golden Globe Award recipients have continually showcased their talents in film and television, and we can’t wait to see what their undeniable chemistry will bring to the Golden Globes stage,” said HFPA President Meher Tatna in a press release. Oh currently stars in critically-ac-

claimed drama “Killing Eve”, which she also co-executive produces. The actor has won a Globe in Best Actress in a Supporting Role in a Series category for her performance as Dr Christina Yang in “Grey’s Anatomy”.

Samberg is a two-time Best Actor in a Television Series Musical or Comedy Golden Globe winner for playing NYPD detective Jake Peralta.

Last year, TV presenter Seth Meyers hosted the ceremony.

Winners will be voted by the association in 25 categories - 14 in film and 11 in television.

Produced by dick clark productions in association with the HFPA, the Golden Globes will air live on NBC.

‘Mirzapur’ second season to arrive next year, confirms Ali Fazal

MUMBAI, DEC 6 (PTI): Ali Fazal on Thursday confirmed the second season of his gangster drama, “Mirzapur”.

The actor, who plays gun-toting gangster Guddu Pandit in the Amazon Prime Video series, revealed that the follow-up to the show is expected to arrive in early 2019.

“About season 2, hopefully early next year. We are hoping to bring you back to the world of ‘Mirzapur’. So early next year we would but before season 2 I have some film commitments to finish both here and abroad and yeah, then after that we will begin,” Fazal said in a statement.

The nine-episode series, produced under the banner Excel Entertainment, also stars Pankaj Tripathi, Vikrant Massey, Diveyendu Sharma, Rasika Dugal, Shriya Pilgaonkar and Shweta Tripathi in key roles.

“Mirzapur” season one started streaming from November 16.



ARIES: Bring things back into balance, Aries. You’ve probably been so focused on yourself that you’ve completely forgotten about others. It’s time to fill in the rest of the equation and take into account what other people feel. Balance is crucial in every part of your life so that you maintain a healthy viewpoint. A clear mind allows you to see the truth of what’s really going on.

TAURUS: This is a good day to look at the big picture and discuss your ideas with others, Taurus. As you walk down the street, make sure you pay attention to what’s going on around you. If you continue to be preoccupied by one issue, you may never see some of the other important pieces of the greater whole even though they’re obvious to everyone else.

GEMINI: You will be in an excellent mood, Gemini, and find your positive attitude amplified as you come into contact with more and more

people. The one thing to watch out for today is laziness. There may be a great deal of it going around, especially in your camp. Don’t waste the good energy of the day sitting around and doing nothing - even though it’s quite tempting.

CANCER: Speak your mind clearly, Cancer. Other people aren’t mind readers like you are. If you keep waiting for someone to figure out what you’re thinking, it will be a long time before the truth comes out. Give people a break and let them know what’s going on inside your head. Communication is important, and today it begins with you. **LEO:** You can soar to great heights on a moment’s notice today, Leo. There’s a fast-paced, socially minded quality to the day that will encourage people to share more of themselves with others. You will find a great deal of support from many different people now. Welcome this help with open

arms. Don’t try to do things by yourself when you’re surrounded by such a strong team spirit.

VIRGO: Try to see the positive in people, Virgo. Relax and don’t get so worked up over your internal drama. You’re the one responsible for creating this turmoil. Find comfort in a creative project. Do something that you love to do that makes you truly happy. There’s an expansive feeling in the air that’s likely to amplify whatever mood you project. **LIBRA:** You should find that the adventurous side of you has the support of your emotions, Libra. These two parts of your spirit are working in harmony to help you stretch beyond your limits. Push into new realms and ask questions when you don’t understand something.

SCORPIO: Dress in your very best today, Scorpio. Feel free to kick up your heels and take on the town. This is a great time to go out with friends, socialize, and have a fab-

ulous time. Put your worries aside and join a group for some light-hearted fun and merriment. Keep a smile on your face and you will find that you can walk through any door you choose.

SAGITTARIUS: You will find that the more peaceful and understanding you are today, Sagittarius, the better off you will be in general. Doors will open and people will welcome you with great fanfare. Be the diplomat instead of the warrior. Focus on the positive aspects of the equation instead of the negative. Luck and prosperity will come your way when you have this attitude wherever you go.

CAPRICORN: Make sure you leave things in better condition than you found them, Capricorn. This is a good time to tidy your personal space and the environment. This is also a great time to do some shopping for yourself. Just be careful that you don’t spend too much money. When beautiful things catch

your eye, it might be hard for you to resist them, regardless of how much they cost.

AQUARIUS: This is one of those days in which it’s easier to be yourself, Aquarius. Don’t feel like you need to change your personality to fit a situation. You naturally add an important dynamic to the group. Your detached, unbiased, and knowledgeable view of the situation will be an important asset to today’s events. People would do well to listen to you, so be bold when expressing yourself.

PISCES: Communication is a key part of the day, Pisces. You will find that a great deal of information is available to you when you ask for it. You can pull from many different resources, so don’t be afraid to tap the different wells available to you. Emotionally, this may not be the best day for you, but you can overcome this as long as you keep a lighthearted, optimistic approach.