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Vol 04 | Issue 303 | Gangtok | Monday | 18 November 2019

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

AIMPLB, Jamiat to seek review of Ayodhya verdict

LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI): A review petition will be filed against the Supreme Court's Ayodhya verdict, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board and the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind announced on Sunday, stressing that mosque land cannot be given up as per the Sharia.

The Board, after a meeting in Lucknow, also said that it was against accepting the five-acre alternative land given for a mosque as it "will neither balance equity nor repair the damage caused" and claimed the verdict had several contradictions.

The Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, whose former Uttar Pradesh General Secretary M Siddiq was one of the original petitioners, said it will file the review petition soon as the verdict is "not based on evidence and logic".

However, Iqbal Ansari, a main litigant in the Ayodhya land dispute case, distanced himself from the AIMPLB decision and stuck to his position that he will not go for a review. The Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board, which has been awarded the five-acre plot by the apex court, had also welcomed the verdict but was yet to take a decision on "accepting" the alternative land.

Jamiat chief Maulana Arshad Madani said in a statement in Delhi that the apex court accepted most of the arguments and evidence of the Muslim parties, but delivered the judgment against them in favour of the Hindu parties.

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Deliberations held on importance of Sanskrit to civilization and present scenario

GANGTOK, 17 Nov [IPR]: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] attended a special programme organized here at Mannan Kendra to discuss "The Importance of Sanskrit in Human Civilisation and present Scenario" organized by Shri Shri Duttatraya Seva Sangh, Sikkim.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Health Minister MK Sharma, MLAs YT Lepcha and Vishnu Kumar Khatiwara, Organisation Secretary of Shri Shri Duttatraya Seva Sangh, Mukul Kanitkarji, Swami Narayan Chaintanya, Professor Hari Prasad, Shastri Yoganandaji, Dr Gyanendra Sabkota, Dr Deepak Koirala, dignitaries, officials and members of the Sangh.

The Chief Minister, in his address, said that Sanskrit was vital to Indian culture because of its extensive use in religious



literature, primarily in Hinduism, and because most modern Indian languages have been directly derived from, or strongly influenced by, Sanskrit.

He pointed out that most Vedic religious texts as well as texts on medi-

cine, astronomy, philosophy, art and architecture and important literary works were written in Sanskrit in spite of the language's primary recognition as a religion's language.

He said that the importance of the study of

the Sanskrit goes far beyond the aesthetic value of its literature and remarked that Sanskrit was key to the study of most of the branches of Indian Civilization and the contribution of this civilization to the development of human

thought and culture.

He added that Sanskrit has the most detailed morphological system and is hence ideally suited for computers programming.

Lastly, the Chief Minister said that Sanskrit served as a link language

not only within India but even among South East Asian countries and that its influence on foreign languages and even on modern Indian languages was vast and immense.

Swami Narayan Chaintanya, in turn, said that the Gurukul system has a

rich tradition of learning since ancient times and it is still practised today. It is where students are taught how to live a cultured and discipline life, he said about Gurukuls.

He said that the main focus of the Gurukul was imparting learning to students in natural surroundings enjoying brotherhood, humanity, love and discipline with essential teachings in subjects like language, science, mathematics through group discussions and self learning.

Not only this, there is special focus given to arts, sports, crafts and singing which develop their intelligence and critical thinking which helps in their personality development and to increase confidence, sense of discipline, intellect and mindfulness which are necessary to face the world.

turn to pg 02



Ministers inspect Reshi-Legship highway work

CHUNBHATTI/ LEGSHIP, 17 Nov [IPR]: Road & Bridges Minister, Samdup Lepcha, and Gyalshing Bermiok MLA, Minister Lok Nath Sharma, jointly inspect-

ed the ongoing work of black-topping along the Reshi Legship highway. Both the Ministers stressed the need to ensure quality work.

Winter session of Parliament from Monday; govt set to push Citizenship bill

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI): The situation in Jammu and Kashmir, economic slowdown, unemployment and the government's plan to bring the Citizenship bill are some of the issues which are likely to emerge as flashpoints between the opposition and treasury benches in the Winter session of Parliament beginning Monday. Besides the passage of the Citizenship (amendment) bill, the government also plans to convert two crucial ordinances into law during the session.

One ordinance reducing corporate tax rate for new and domestic manufacturing companies to arrest slowdown in the economy and boost growth was issued in September to give effect to amendments in the Income Tax Act, 1961 and Finance Act, 2019.

The second ordinance, also issued in September, banned sale, manufacture and storage of e-cigarettes and similar products. This is the second Parliament session of the BJP-led NDA government which returned to power with a greater mandate in the Lok Sabha elections.

The first session of the government was very productive which saw both houses passing key leg-

islations such as the one to penalise the practice of instant triple talaq and the other giving more powers to the National Investigation Agency.

The two Houses also passed a resolution scrapping special status accorded to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the state into two union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

In the session beginning Monday, the government is set to push for the passage of the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, a key BJP plank which is aimed at granting nationality to non-Muslim immigrants from neighbouring countries. The government has listed the bill in its items of business for the session, official sources said. The government had introduced the bill in its previous tenure as well but could not push it through due to vehement protests by opposition parties, which criticised the bill as discriminatory on religious grounds. The bill had lapsed following the dissolution of the last Lok Sabha.

The legislation seeks to grant Indian citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan if they have fled their re-

spective country due to religious persecution. There has been opposition to the bill in Assam and other North-eastern states. Student organisations, political parties and socio-cultural bodies have been protesting on the grounds that it seeks to grant nationality to non-Muslims, mostly Hindus, who have come into India up to December 31, 2014, thereby increasing the deadline from 1971 as per the Assam Accord.

At an all-party meeting convened by Speaker Om Birla on Saturday, the opposition said it will seek answers from the government on issues such as slowdown in economy, farmer distress, unemployment and situation in Jammu and Kashmir after its special status was scrapped in August.

After the all-party meet on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted, saying "We look forward to a productive Parliament session, where people-centric and development oriented issues would be discussed." During the session, a special joint sitting of the both the Houses has been planned to mark Constitution Day on November 26.

The Winter session will conclude on December 13.



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R.O. No. 168/IPR/Pub/Dis./19-20
Date: 08.11.2019

Regional Vedic seminar begins in Legship

LEGSHIP, 17 Nov [IPR]: A three-day, Regional Vaidik Sammelan, began at Kirateswar Shiva Dham here today with Culture Minister Samdup Lepcha as chief guest.

The Vedic Sammelan encompasses various components with the centric attractions of Veda chanting, a vast collection of hymns that were heard by ancient Indian sages when they were in a deep meditative state.

In his inaugural address, the Culture Minister applauded the initiative as historic and held it up as a unique event for self realisation and prosperity of the state.

He also spoke about secular freedom in practice and articulated leadership of the Chief Pa-



tron and his extroverted nature to lead the programme based on Hinduism philosophy.

He also extended gratitude towards the guest speakers for their presentations and remarked that peace and

prosperity for the state and the nation could come through the Vedic knowledge imparted in different sessions.

He also urged the younger generation to be more proactive in taking benefit of the Vedic

wisdom to build their careers. The inaugural day was also attended by area MLA [Gyalshing Bermiok], Minister Lok Nath Sharma, as guest of honour accompanied by Professor Ravindra Mule, who is the Direc-

tor, Sanskrit Department of Pune University; Dr Prafulla Kumar Mishra, Chancellor; Dr Rajendra Prashad Central Agriculture University, Bihar; Dr A Venkateswar, Consultant, Maharshi Sandipani Ved Vidhya Prathisthan,

Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

Minister Lok Nath Sharma, in his welcome address, said that the collective chanting and interpretation of the four Vedas on one stage made the programme historic

He also reiterated his commitment to work tirelessly for the all round development and welfare of the society. He also underlined vision and inclusive politics of the state government under the leadership of Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay].

Prof Mule spoke on the historic and religious significance of vedic knowledge. He also urged people to imbibe Vedic wisdom in life to realise human values and make the world a sacred and peaceful paradise.

Thiem dethrones Zverev to set up London final against Tsitsipas

LONDON, Nov 17 (AFP): Dominic Thiem beat defending champion Alexander Zverev to join Roger Federer's conqueror Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final of the ATP Finals in London.

The Austrian fifth seed saw off the big-serving German 7-5 6-3 on Saturday after Greece's Tsitsipas, making his debut at the tournament, had earlier beaten Federer 6-3 6-4.

Thiem is playing in his fourth ATP Finals but during his first three trips to the season finale, he won only three matches and never advanced out of the group stage at the O2 Arena.

Zverev landed 75 percent of his first serves but Thiem was tougher in the big moments, breaking in the 12th game of the opening set and in the sixth game of the second set. The Austrian also saved all four break points on his racquet.

Germany's Zverev, who beat Novak Djokovic in last year's final, went toe to toe with Thiem in a relatively uneventful first set but served a double fault to lose the opener 7-5.

The seventh seed, 22, regrouped and settled back into his serving rhythm at the beginning of the second set but was broken again to trail 4-2.

Thiem, looking unflustered, fended off a couple of break points in the following game and served out to take the match, winning with a forehand down the line.

"This is a big, big dream coming true for me, it is one of the biggest and most prestigious tournaments of the whole year and I'm getting the chance to play the final," said Thiem.

The 26-year-old, who reached the final of this year's French Open, has been considered a clay-court specialist but joked after winning indoors in Vienna last month and now reaching the final in London he was becoming

a "big, big fan of faster hard surfaces".

- TSITSIPAS SNUFFS OUT FEDERER -

Earlier, Tsitsipas, 17 years younger than Federer, ended the 38-year-old's hopes of securing a seventh year-end title.

Federer was unrecognisable from the player who dominated Djokovic in his final round-robin match, struggling on serve and hitting a total of 26 unforced errors compared with just five against the Serbian.

But Tsitsipas belied his years with a performance full of confidence and grit, saving 11 out of 12 break points during the match.

"I'm so proud of myself today, a great performance and once again the people were great," he said. "I really enjoyed myself on the court and sometimes in matches like these you wonder how you recover from difficulties and break point down."

Tsitsipas, ignoring loud support for Federer, broke the Swiss at the first time of asking, taking advantage of two missed overheads.

The Greek was forced to dig deep in a dramatic 13-minute final game of the first set in which he saved two break points and needed seven set points to close it out 6-3.

Federer was in deep trouble when Tsitsipas broke him to love in the third game of the second set but he finally made a break point count to level at 2-2. Undaunted, Tsitsipas, dominating rallies from the back of the court, broke again straight away with a forehand cross-court winner for a 3-2 lead.

At 5-4 down Federer knew he had to break Tsitsipas for only the second time in the match. The Greek slipped to 15-40 down but Federer again could not take advantage, spraying a forehand out to give his opponent a match point and he won with a thundering ace.

Deliberations held...

He further quoted various hymns from religious texts and urged all present to become better human beings with richness of thought and not necessarily wealth.

Earlier, the Governor's message was read out by PRO to the Governor, Deputy Secretary Khemraj B.

Shastri Yoganandji, Deepak Koirala, Gyanendra Sabkota and Hariprasad Adhikari and Shri Mukul K. shared their views on the importance of Sanskrit and Gurukul. Earlier, Tika Ram Dhal and Bhawani Shankar Neupani were facilitated for their contributions to Sanskrit.

The teachers association also presented a citation to the Chief Minister for appointing 170 Sanskrit teachers.

Justice Ranjan Gogoi retires as CJI

RANJIT KUMAR SINHA

NEW DELHI, Nov 17 (PTI): Justice Ranjan Gogoi, the first person from northeast to reach the top of judiciary and credited for bringing the curtains down on the decades old politically and religiously sensitive Ayodhya land dispute, retired as the chief justice of India on Sunday.

Justice Gogoi's tenure as judge and as CJI was marked by some controversies and personal allegations but that never came in his way of his judicial work that was reflected in the last few days when benches headed by him delivered some path-breaking judgements.

He etched his name in the annals of history when a five-judge bench headed by him on November 9 brought an end to the Ayodhya land dispute, which dates back to even before the Supreme Court came into existence in 1950.

However, his tenure in the apex court will also be remembered for being part of a presser by the 'gang of four' senior most judges in January last year which questioned the then CJI's way of functioning.

Later at a public function, Justice Gogoi had remarked that "independent judges and noisy journalists are democracy's first line of defence".

A "revolution, not reform" was needed to keep the institution of judiciary serviceable for the common man, Justice Gogoi had said at the same function.

Justice Gogoi's tenure as CJI was not free of controversy as he faced allegations of sexual harassment, of which he was cleared.

However, he is more likely to be remembered for the Ayodhya verdict that gave Hindus the 2.77 acre disputed land for construction of Ram Temple, and order that Muslims be given a 5-acre land at a "prominent location" to build a mosque in the city.

The CJI also headed a bench

which, by a majority 3:2 verdict, referred to a larger 7-judge bench the pleas seeking review of the apex court's historic 2018 judgement allowing women and girls of all ages to enter Kerala's Sabarimala temple. The majority verdict included in the ambit of the review petitions raising issues of alleged religious discrimination against Muslim and Parsi women as well.

Justice Gogoi's name will also be remembered for heading a bench which gave clean chit to the Modi government twice -- first on the writ petition and then on Thursday on the pleas seeking review of the December 14, 2018 verdict -- in the Rafale fighter jet deal with French firm Dassault Aviation.

The bench warned Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for wrongly attributing certain remarks to the apex court in the Rafale case and asked him to be more careful in the future.

Besides, Justice Gogoi headed a bench which in a landmark verdict held that the office of the CJI is a public authority under the Right to Information Act, but "judicial independence has to be kept in mind" while disclosing information in "public interest".

On the same day, a 5-judge Constitution bench headed by him struck down in entirety the rules formulated by the Centre on appointment and service conditions for members of various tribunals, and referred to a larger bench the issue of examining the validity of the passage of the Finance Act 2017 as Money Bill. These important decisions apart, Justice Gogoi, known for his no-nonsense approach, boldness and fearlessness, also led a bench which monitored and ensured that NRC exercise in Assam, his native state, is completed within the set timeframe.

A lot of controversies plagued

the National Register of Citizens (NRC) but he stood his ground and came out in public recently to defend the decision to hold the exercise to identify illegal immigrants.

Friday was the last day for his judicial work and he sat in the Supreme Court's number one court for just about four minutes during which the lawyers' body of the apex court expressed gratitude to him. He reached out through video conferencing to country's judges in all high Courts and judicial officers of district and taluka courts on Friday.

The outgoing CJI in a signed statement later in the day expressed his inability to have one-to-one interview with journalists but lauded the press for its "maturity" and "character" in preventing "canards and falsehood" in "trying times" of the judiciary.

Justice Gogoi, who was sworn on October 3, 2018 as the 46th CJI, had the tenure of a little over 13 months. Since taking up the leadership of the Indian judiciary, and also as the judge of the apex court before that, Justice Gogoi faced several ups and downs but that did not affect his approach to take on issues head on.

While Justice Gogoi was known for taking hard and sometimes surprising decisions, the Ayodhya matter reflected both as he ensured that arguments were not allowed to be dragged and wrapped up the hearing two days ahead of the scheduled deadline of October 18, saying 'enough is enough'.

As the CJI, he took tough decisions against erring judges and recommended their transfers and a woman high court judge was virtually forced to resign. He also headed a bench which dealt with a contempt proceedings against former apex court judge Markandey Katju for his remarks against judiciary in his blog.

AIMPLB, Jamiat...

"It is not a prestige issue. This is a matter of Sharia. We can neither give the mosque, nor take anything in lieu of it," Madani told reporters in Lucknow.

The decision by the Jamiat to review the Ayodhya judgment was taken after its highest decision-making body, the working committee, gave its nod for filing the review petition following extensive deliberations involving lawyers and experts.

Sources said Jamiat's working committee was earlier undecided on whether to file a review petition on the verdict and had formed a five-member panel headed by Madani on Friday to take a call on it after consulting with lawyers and experts.

"The committee (formed by the Jamiat) was of the view that our review petition will be dismissed, but we have to take this step (of filing the review)," Madani told reporters.

He was speaking after attending the AIMPLB meeting where AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi was among those present.

"The AIMPLB, which is not a direct party to the case, will continue to play the role of guiding force for the litigants and in managing the case. Out of the Muslim petitioners, at least five seem to be backing a review with the Jamiat already announcing that it will do so," AIMPLB member Kamal Farooqui told PTI after the Board's meeting in Lucknow's Mumtaz College.

AIMPLB secretary Zafaryab Jilani told reporters after the meeting, "The land of the mosque belongs to Allah and under the Sharia, it cannot be given to anybody."

"The Board has also categorically stated that it was against taking five-acre land in Ayodhya in lieu of the mosque. The board is of the view that there cannot be any alternative to the mosque," he said.

The installation of a statue of Lord Ram inside the Babri Masjid in the night of December 23, 1949, "was unconstitutional", Jilani said, adding, "So, how did the Supreme Court consider them as 'araadhya' (eligible for worship). They (idols) cannot be considered as 'araadhya' (eligible for worship) even as per Hindu religion."

"We feel that Sunni Waqf Board shall give respect to this view of the community at large," the AIMPLB said.

"The AIMPLB is not doing any politics over the Ayodhya issue, but is fighting for its constitutional rights," he said, replying to a question during the press conference after the meeting.

After the AIMPLB made the announcements, Ansari told PTI in Ayodhya, "My views are different from that of the Board and want an end to the mandir-masjid issue at this very point. There is no use of going for the review as the outcome will remain the same...the move will also vitiate the harmonious atmosphere."

The Supreme Court, in its verdict in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi title case on November 9, said the entire 2.77 acres of disputed land should be handed over to the deity Ram Lalla, who was one of the three litigants. The five-judge Constitution bench also directed the Centre to allot a five-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board in Ayodhya to build a mosque.

The AIMPLB, in a statement later, said the Muslim community contested this litigation to ensure and secure the fundamental values guaranteed in the Constitution.

"It is clear that the state has no religion and secularism is basic feature of the Constitution. Earlier the court's judgments have recorded that the state's action were discriminatory against one religion favouring the other religion. In 1994, the Supreme Court has held that the act of demolition of mosque in 1992 was a 'national shame' and that it shook the faith of the minorities in the rule of law and constitutional process," it said.

The court further stated that this "failure amounted to betrayal meted out to the Muslim community at large," it said.

"Justice was not done fully as Muslims cannot shift the mosque, therefore, accepting an alternative land for the mosque is absolutely out of the question," Madani was quoted as saying by the Jamiat statement.

Jamiat's former Uttar Pradesh General Secretary M Siddiq was one of the original petitioners in the case. The Jamiat's present UP general secretary Ashhad Rashidi later became the petitioner in the case, Jamiat secretary Fazlur Rehman said.

Will retire once law enacted to control population: Giriraj

KATIHAR, Nov 17 (PTI):

Union Minister Giriraj Singh has said he would retire from politics "the day a legislation was enacted to control population" in the country. The firebrand BJP leader, while talking to reporters on Saturday, claimed that two of his long-cherished dreams -- Centre scrapping Kashmir's special provisions and the apex court verdict for Ram temple construction at Ayodhya -- have been recently fulfilled. "It's time I take retirement from politics as two of my wishes have been fulfilled. I will make an exit the day a bill is enacted to control population," he said.

Singh, a minister of animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries in the Narendra Modi-led government, had been pitching



for a stringent legislation to control the burgeoning population in the country.

He had thanked the Assam government when it came out with its two-child policy, which entailed that people with more than two kids will not be eligible for government jobs in the north-

east state. Opposing the move, Lok Sabha member and president of the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), Badruddin Ajmal, had said the Assam government's policy would not stop Muslims from making babies. Taking a dig at the Assam parliamentarian, Singh, who

has often courted controversies for his remarks, said, "Is Islam a factory to produce children?"

The BJP MP, at a Delhi seminar in September, had likened India's growing population to "second-stage cancer" and called for strong measures to control it.

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BJP leader removed as JK Assembly Speaker

JAMMU, NOV 17 (PTI): The Jammu and Kashmir administration headed by Lt Governor G C Murmu has issued a notification ending the tenure of legislative assembly Speaker and senior BJP leader Nirmal Singh who was appointed to the post under provisions of the now-revoked J&K Constitution.

The order comes days after several political parties, especially the Jammu-based National Panthers Party (NPP), questioned Singh's continuation on his post despite the dissolution of the Assembly, abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories.

"...Singh, speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir shall be deemed to have ceased to hold the office of speaker of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir with effect from 31st October, 2019," read the notification issued by the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs on Saturday.

On November 13, NPP chairman and former minister Harsh Dev Singh termed Singh's continuation on the Speaker's post as "an insult to the constitution and the prevalent laws".

Singh was elected as the Speaker of the legislative assembly of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state on May 10, 2018, over a month before the fall of the PDP-BJP government and im-

position of Governor's rule on June 20, 2018.

The BJP leader continued as the Speaker even after re-organization of the state into two union territories and held the office on November 4 after the government shifted its base from Srinagar to Jammu following the bi-annual 'darbar' move.

Alleging brazen defiance of the rule of law and Constitutional provisions by the helmsman in J&K so as to favour a member of the ruling party, the NPP Chairman had said the continuance of the Speaker defied all logic and rationale besides being violative of the Indian Constitution and the provisions encapsulated in J&K Reorganization Act.

The notification pointed out that Singh was appointed as Speaker of the legislative assembly of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir cannot hold the said office after the reorganization of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into the UT of Jammu and Kashmir and UT of Ladakh with effect from October 31," the notification said.

"Whereas, the matter has been examined in consultation with the learned advocate general of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir and the legal position which has emerged in that the speaker of the legislative assembly of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir cannot hold the said office after the reorganization of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into the UT of Jammu and Kashmir and UT of Ladakh with effect from October 31," the notification said.

Grooming begins for Mr Sikkim Manhunt finalists



NITESH R. PRADHAN GANGTOK, 17 NOV:

The grooming session of Temi Tea Mr Sikkim Manhunt got underway today with Kutty Rajesh Nayyar as the expert.

The second season of the Manhunt is being organised by Sikkim Chronicle and the Accelerator covering multiple themes including "Breaking Gender Stereotype." Speaking about the

event, organisers Yougan Tamang and Pragya Satpathy said that the idea behind the current session was to groom the boys into polished models and good human beings.

The first day saw the welcome and introduction of the top-20 contestants who were visibly excited about having made the cut and on receiving the grooming.

Mr Nayyar thanked the organisers for the second stint offered to him as the grooming expert for the competition.

The finale of the competition is scheduled for 30 November when three titles - Temi Tea Mr Sikkim Manhunt 2019, Mr Sikkim Kanchenjunga, Mr Sikkim Demazong - will be awarded along with many sub-titles.



Mazzaroth and HPC through to second round of Sikkim United Cup

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 NOV:

Mazzaroth and HPC-Darjeeling have reached the second round of the ongoing Sikkim United Cup.

Both teams registered convincing victories at Paljor Stadium on Sunday.

In the first match, Mazzaroth humbled United Turuk of South Sikkim 7-1. Royal Lepcha of United Turuk was adjudged Man of the Match.

In the second match of the day, HPC thrashed Sribadam Christian Team 9-1 with Diwas Chhantyal of HPC Darjeeling receiving the Man of the Match trophy.

Tomorrow, Bethany Ranipool will take on EPCS Ranipool in the first match at 10 AM, followed by Hebron and Abad clashing at 1 PM. The last match of the day will be played between EPCS Namchi and Omega Church, Gangtok at 2:30 PM.



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Delhi beat Sikkim by 9 wickets

SURAT, NOV 17 (PTI): Leg-spinner Karan Dagar starred with the ball before opener Hiten Dalal scored a blistering half-century as Delhi registered an emphatic nine-wicket win over Sikkim in a Syed Mushtaq Ali encounter here on Sunday.

Dagar (4/12) and medium pacer Simarjeet Singh (2/17) restricted Sikkim to a paltry 88 for seven in the stipulated 20 overs before Dalal played an unbeaten innings of 54 off 24 balls to take Delhi home with 11 overs to spare.

The win helped Delhi move to the second spot in Group E with 18 points from seven games, while Jharkhand were atop the standings with 22 points from as seven matches.

Opting to bat, Sikkim were off to a disastrous start with Simarjeet dismissing openers Bibek Diyali and Yashpal Singh in the first over itself.

Wicketkeeper Ashish Thapa (17) and skipper Iqbal Abdulla (37), who top-scored, tried to resurrect the innings by stitching a 45-run partnership but Dagar bowled out the captain in the beginning of the 11th over.

Dagar then tore through the middle order, dismissing Plazor Tamang (0), Benoy Upreti (1) and Thapa in the next four overs.

In reply, Delhi reached the target in nine overs. India opener Shikhar Dhawan, who is struggling for form, fell in the sixth over for 19.

However, fellow opener Dalal and wicketkeeper Anuj Rawat (14 not out) helped their team reach the target without much trouble.

Dalal cracked six boundaries and four maximums in his innings while Rawat hit a four and a six each.

In another group E

encounter, Utkarsh Singh (42) and Virat Singh (56) guided Jharkhand to a nine-wicket win over Gujarat.

Brief Scores:

Sikkim 88 for 7 in 20 overs (Iqbal Abdulla 37; Karan Dagar 4/12) lost to Delhi (Hiten Dalal 54 not out; Yashpal Singh 1/16) by 9 wickets.

Gujarat 128 for 7 in 20 overs (Urvil Patel 47; Varun Aaron 2/26) lost to Jharkhand 131 for 1 in 18 overs (Virat Singh 56 not out; Arazan Nagwalla 1/25) by 9 wickets.

Odisha 149 for 9 in 20 overs (Subhanshu Senapati 42; Imliwati Lemtur 2/20) beat Nagaland 104 all out in 17 overs (Yogesh Takawale 31; Pappu Roy 3/21) by 45 runs.

Saurashtra 149 for 7 in 20 Overs (Sheldon Jackson 55; Aquib Nabi (4/43) lost to Jammu & Kashmir 155 for 4 in 19.2 overs (Parvez Rasool 59 not out; Chetan Sakariya 2/34) by 6 wickets.

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CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED FOR AMBA SCHOOL LIBRARY UPGRADATION

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

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

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

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

To Contribute Contact WSOS at 7384639193.

**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
TASHILING, GANGTOK- 737103**

No. GOS/TECHED/2001/V(2) Pt.file-IV/1052

Dated: 14/11/2019

NOTICE

The Directorate of Technical Education, Education Department, Government of Sikkim invites applications in the prescribed format from local eligible candidates for filling up of posts of Lecturers at Advanced Technical Training Centre (ATTC), Bardang, East Sikkim and Centre for Computers and Communication Technology (CCCT), Chisopani, South Sikkim as indicated below:-

Sl. No.	Post	Vacancy	Minimum Essential Qualification (as per AICTE norms)	Pay Scale (in Rs.)	Remarks
Advanced Technical Training Centre (ATTC), Bardang, East Sikkim					
1.	Lecturer, Civil Engineering	02	B.Tech in Civil Engineering with First Class or equivalent from AICTE recognized University.	Level - 9A Entry pay 56,100/-	Written Test on Civil Engineering of 85 Marks and Viva Voice for 15 marks.
2	Lecturer (Chemistry)	01	Master's Degree in Chemistry with first class or equivalent at Bachelors or Masters Level from UGC recognized University. Candidate must have Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics at Bachelor's level.	Level - 9A Entry pay 56,100/-	Written Test on Civil Engineering of 85 Marks and Viva Voice for 15 marks.
Centre for Computers and Communication Technology (CCCT), Chisopani, South Sikkim.					
3.	Lecturer, Computer Science	01	B.Tech/B.E. Degree in Computer Engineering / Computer Science & Engineering with First Class from AICTE recognized University.	Level - 9A Entry pay 56,100/-	Written Test on relevant subject of 85 Marks and Viva Voice for 15 marks.
4.	Lecturer, Mathematics	01 (on Contractual/ Adhoc)	M.Sc in Mathematics with First Class from UGC recognized University. Candidates must have Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics at Bachelor's level.	30000/- consolidated (all inclusive)	Written Test on relevant subject of 85 Marks and Viva Voice for 15 marks.

Please note: (In case where no class/ division is awarded minimum of 60% marks in aggregate shall be considered equivalent to first class/division. If a grade point system is adopted the CGPA will be converted into equivalent marks as per AICTE norms.

*Contractual /Adhoc appointment for six month as replacement faculty, no extension will be given after expiry.

Other requirements:

- Candidates must be in possession of either Sikkim Subject Certificate or Certificate of Identification issued by the competent authority.
- Candidates should be fluent in English with good communication skills and sound temperament.
- Age limit as per Government of Sikkim norms.
- No Objection Certificate from the present employer, if employed will be required.

Terms and Conditions:

- Selection of candidates will be made on the basis of written test and viva voice for the above posts.
- Candidates selected for the posts will be initially offered 01 (one) year contract term with consolidated pay.
- Contractual Consolidated pay per month will be Rs.30,000/- (Thirty thousand only) all inclusive.
- The pay scale as mentioned will be implemented after the completion of the contract term and will be based on work performance and recommendation of the regularization committee of the Institute.
- On successful completion of the contract period the candidate will be under probation of 2 years and will be regularized only on successful completion of the probation based upon the recommendation of the regularization committee.

Interested candidates may download the form available in the webportal www.sikkimhrdd.org of Education Department, Government of Sikkim from 20/11/2019. The filled in application form may be submitted at the Directorate of Technical Education, Education Department, Tashiling, Gangtok, East Sikkim or ATTC, Bardang, East Sikkim or CCCT/Chisopani, South Sikkim with a bank draft of Rs.500/- drawn in favour of Director, Technical Education, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok alongwith the requisite documents.

Last Date of submission of application : 2nd December 2019.

Syllabus will be made available in the webportal www.sikkimhrdd.org.

A common written test for the above posts will be held as per the details given below:-

Date of written test	9/12/2019
Time	10:30 AM
Venue	ATTC, Bardang, East Sikkim

After scrutiny of documents, admit cards of the eligible candidates will be sent through email in the id provided in the application form.

The Directorate of Technical Education, Education Department reserves all rights to the selection procedure and appointments.

R.O. No. 256/IPR/Pub/Class./19-20

Date: 15.11.2019

Director
Technical Education
Education Department, Govt. of Sikkim.

SRCA health camp and awareness prog



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 NOV:

Sikkim Roman Catholic Association organized a daylong health camp and awareness programme at St Peter's School, Lingee-Payong, in East Sikkim, on Sunday.

The camp, which was organized under the Health Commission of the SRCA, had Principal

of St Xavier School [Pakyong] and N/E Dean, Fr Francis Banerjee, as chief guest.

The camp, facilitated by Dr Gagan Ruchal and his team accompanied by MPH-WPHSC Chandrajit Chettri, had medicines provided by Paul Karna Rai, Severine Rai and Mahendra Gurung.

Govt considering to reintroduce restrictions on royalty payments

NEW DELHI, NOV 16 (PTI): The government is considering to re-introduce restrictions on royalty payments for technology transfer in view of excessive outflow of such funds to overseas companies, sources said.

A proposal in this regard will soon be circulated by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) for inter-ministerial consultation, sources said.

According to the proposal, limits could be imposed on royalty payments in case of technology transfer or collaboration involving foreign entities either directly or indirectly through any firm in India.

A similar proposal was mooted by the department last year. That time it had proposed that royalty payments should

be capped at 4 per cent of domestic sales and 7 per cent of exports for the first four years; and for the next three years the limit should be 3 per cent of local sales and 6 per cent of exports.

But the finance ministry had raised objections over the proposal saying it could send a negative signal to foreign investors.

The increase in outflow of these payments started after the government liberalised the FDI policy in 2009. It had removed the cap and permitted Indian companies to pay a royalty to their technical collaborators without seeking prior government approval.

Royalty is paid to a foreign collaborator for the transfer of technology, usage of brand or trademarks.

Against Gender-Based Violence

For a fortnight, discuss the denials and ill-treatments foisted on women

Each year, from 25 November to 10 December, the United Nations and women's groups around the world gather ranks to organize "Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender Violence" to draw attention to the continuing violence against women, at home, out in the open and in the work-place. The string of special Days include 25 November, designated by the UN as "Day Against Violence Against Women"; 01 December, "World AIDS Day"; 06 December, "anniversary of the Montreal Massacre" when 14 women engineering students were gunned down for being feminists and 10 December, "Human Rights Day".

A Day is earmarked for issues demanding consistent governmental and people's support so that at least once a year, they take centre-stage and force everyone to take notice. The fact that violence against women demands 16 Days of Activism in the public domain [with those involved in curbing it working at their own levels the rest of the year] says a lot about how much this underbelly of the society continues to haunt. The 16 Days are not just marked for India or the Middle East which are notorious for their persistent insult of women, but are observed across the world. The choice of 'Days' which fall during these 16 days is also telling. It is important to remember abused women on World AIDS Day because a victim of abuse is not in a position to demand safe sex. The carnage of Montreal remembered on 06 December is important because it brings home the fact that violence against women is not just a Third World aberration and is a social concern all over the world. Rounding up the 16 Days of Activism against gender violence with the Human Rights Day is apt for obvious reasons – human rights are infringed upon not only by the establishment, but also by people at home, by husbands who beat up their wives and families which sanction female foeticide and look the other way when an abused lady needs support or work hard to justify denials on the basis of gender and appear comfortable with unequal treatment.

In the context of Sikkim, as far as the official policy goes, women's issues are not ignored here, but the establishment can only ensure the Rights, it cannot prick social conscience. For something like that, women, at least for some days in the year, need to come out on the streets, they need to be contacted in the bastis and the towns, they need to rally together and understand what their rights are, realize how some of them are still victims at home and at the work place and decide how things can be improved. In any society where alcoholism and substance abuse are high and where parochial nationalism is not only not frowned upon but even embraced and where women continue to be denied equal treatment, domestic violence can be expected to be high as well.

It goes without saying that domestic violence is not rare in Sikkim, or anywhere for that matter. What is also a fact is that domestic violence is loud and vicious, meaning that neighbours in the now cheek-by-jowl tenements of Sikkim are also in the know of these violent episodes. But no one intervenes. Even if one is to accept that domestic disputes are uncomfortable situations to intervene into, surely, when violence comes into the mix, someone should have done something... called in the cops at least. Societal indifference is actually an instigator for domestic violence. According to a report released by the World Health Organisation [WHO], up to 70% of women experience physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. What is the statistic for Sikkim? We have not even bothered to find out. That is how uncaring Sikkim is because it is comfortable with being so un-informed. Violence against women is an issue that needs to be addressed and it is not the government's job to do even this for the society – it has to be the civil society, social bodies and women's organizations that have to stand up to the task and address the problem. Such engagement is also necessary because only after the society at large resolves to address an obvious problem which stares them in the face every day, will it eventually mature to address the more nuanced and chronically internalized denials and ill-treatments like compromised identities, stifled ambitions and inexcusable sidelining of women in Sikkim. But then again, with even the tokenism missing, expecting genuine interventions might be a bit too much.

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: news@summittimes.com



Gilets Jaunes: one year on, how 'yellow vest' movement has changed French citizens' lives

ELISE LOBBEDEV
theconversation.com

Often perceived as disorganised, scattered and even violent, France's "gilets jaunes" movement has taken many by surprise with its staying power. A year into the movement, which began on November 17, 2018, many activists are still regularly meeting, organising and protesting, despite the challenges they've faced over the past 12 months. In fact, for many French citizens, the yellow vest has become a symbol of civic engagement.

"If you don't visit the roundabouts, if you don't go to the protests, if you don't meet people, you don't know shit, and you think that the gilets jaunes are over, that they have no demands, that they've lost their purpose. But we are still demonstrating. Our demands haven't changed." (Stéphanie)

While fewer people attend yellow-vest demonstrations these days, the movement is still going strong. In my ethnographic study of the movement in the Lyon area, I was able to observe that commitment to the movement often goes beyond protesting, occupying roundabouts and breaching toll-road gates. In fact, participants often report that they haven't had time for anything else this year.

Over time, the rallies have settled into a certain routine, described by one gilet jaune, Margot, as an "activist's regimen" in our interview this summer.

Participating in operations, handing out flyers, helping the homeless – these are the activities that make up the daily routine of "yellow activism". During a meeting at the beginning of the school year, Etienne talked about how the days of action on Saturdays eventually became less intense:

"I want us to go back to a 9am to 9pm routine. A 12-hour day, right? We need to show we're still here."

Apart from operations on the ground, the daily lives of yellow vests are organised around discussions and experiments in direct democracy, with weekly meetings, conferences and debates. Between tips on what to read, discovery of the world of activism, and tutorials into banner making, many emphasise that they have never learned as much as they have since they joined the movement.

A YEAR OF STRUGGLE

"Some people are against wearing the yel-

low vest now ... I'm not saying they're wrong. Because, in the end, we've been stigmatised too much... (Julien)"

During this year of struggle, wearing the yellow vest has not always been easy. The drop in participation sometimes impaired cohesion and led to internal tensions. Several arguments have plagued assemblies, particularly over the way forward. Should protesters ask for a permit to demonstrate? Would teaming up with other movements help boost actions? What would that entail in practice?

With media coverage from many outlets emphasising protester violence, the yellow vest has taken on another kind of symbolism for people outside of the movement, sometimes hindering its efforts.

In some cases, it even constitutes a deterrent to inter-movement collaboration, as was the case during some climate marches, in particular in early January. Some yellow-vest protesters felt unwelcome, and had the impression that they were simply there to boost numbers rather than out of any solidarity with their demands.

Symbolically, many feel stigmatised and must navigate the prejudices of their relatives, and on-lookers. Within the collective, the culture of sacrifice encourages participants to go all in for the cause, sometimes setting targets that are difficult to attain, at the expense of their health, family life, friendships, and work. Exhaustion due to overinvestment is common, and it is not unusual for some to take a step back, at least for a while.

LIFE THROUGH A YELLOW LENS

"When I see some outrageous news, I have no choice but to send it on, to share it. I'm a yellow vest because I'm outraged. (Thierry)"

But distancing oneself from the movement does not mean giving up. The political practices developed through this year of activism remain infused in their daily lives, even for those who have packed away their yellow vest.

The vest is, above all, a state of mind. Very often, seemingly commonplace daily activities take a political turn: for Anaïs, it's going to the market rather than the supermarket; for Michel, it's creating a parents' network to help with babysitting; for Frédéric, it's giving up buying things on Amazon.

When it comes to the media, everyone picks up

their ears at the mention of strikes and controversial news stories, as they try to get their news from alternative outlets. Francine, for example, has distanced herself from the movement but stays actively informed via independent news sites. She told me about the new platforms she discovered via the yellow-vest movement: "I listened to all the content on ThinkerView ... It fosters the exchange of ideas and opens your mind."

For her, it's not just about keeping up to date, but familiarising herself with other points of view, which she believes is essential in her day-to-day encounters and interactions.

THE VEST: A SIGN OF CHANGE

"I will never stop being an activist now. It might take different forms ... Through politics, maybe, or local organisations. But now hooked. After a year like that, trying to change things, you can't go back to just mindlessly listening to the news on [main French channel] TF1, thinking, 'Time will tell'. (Florence)"

Many in the movement feel the yellow wave has changed their lives. Some, like Maxime Nicolle, decided to seeking another job, more in line with their values. Marie, who worked in the business tourism market, quit her job to look for work that better fits her ideals.

For Florence, the movement was a wake-up call. Her growing involvement led her to decide to leave her partner. She is still very active in the movement but is now wondering what her engagement will be like in the future. Life without some form of activism has become inconceivable for her. She is not alone: some "yellow vests" have decided to run for office within a party or on a citizen's ticket.

Of course, these changes in lives and habits are personal and cannot describe the entire movement, especially given its multifaceted nature. However, they are a testament to the effect the yellow vest movement has on many individuals.

While it is difficult to foresee the movement's future, it is clear that the yellow vest has changed lives and will continue to impact the future militancy of many of its participants. It will always be there, ready to be resurrected when the time comes.

[the writer is PhD candidate au centre de recherche OCE, EM Lyon]

Narcissists: Why we need to take better care of them

KOSTAS PAPAGEORGIOU
theconversation.com

Narcissists, like sharks, get a bad press. Both are generally seen as menacing, negative forces to be feared and avoided.

But as any biologist will tell you, sharks play a vital role in the marine ecosystem. And it may be that narcissists also have a necessary part to play in human society.

This of course, goes against the widely accepted perception of personality traits – that it is good to be agreeable and outgoing, and bad to be narcissistic.

After all, narcissistic people engage in risky behaviour, hold an unrealistic superior view of themselves, are overconfident, show little empathy for others, and have little shame or guilt. But if narcissism is so socially toxic, why does it persist and why is it said to be on the rise in modern societies?

The answer is that human nature is complex. And while narcissism is often associated with "dark traits" like psychopathy and sadism, it also has aspects which are widely considered to be positive, such as extroversion and confidence.

In saying this, I do not mean to defend or excuse the worst examples of narcissistic behaviour. Instead, I want to highlight the potentially beneficial elements – which could then enable society to harness the positive poten-

tial of "dark" personalities while also curtailing their potential for harm.

THE BEST KIND OF NARCISSIST

There are two main types of narcissism: "grandiose" and "vulnerable". Vulnerable narcissists are likely to be more defensive and view the behaviour of others as hostile, whereas grandiose narcissists usually have an over inflated sense of importance and a preoccupation with status and power.

The results from our studies show that grandiose narcissism correlates with highly positive components of mental toughness. These include confidence and a focus on achieving goals, which help protect against symptoms of depression and stress.

The association between narcissism and mental toughness may help to explain the variation in symptoms of depression in society. If a person is more mentally tough, they are likely to embrace challenges head on, rather than viewing them as a hurdle.

So while not all dimensions of narcissism are good, certain aspects can lead to positive outcomes. And a little bit of narcissism can be a useful tool when faced with stressful situations, providing that extra bit of mental toughness we need to get through.

It's a bit like having the ability to run when walking is not enough. The idea is that people need to be flexible. They need to walk when that's all that is required, but run when that's what's necessary. Likewise, the abili-

ty to call on a little bit of narcissism when faced with a challenge, socially or professionally, is a useful skill.

A BRIDGE TO THE OTHER SIDE

Recent research from our lab suggests that narcissism may act as a bridge connecting the "dark" (anti-social) and "light" (pro-social) sides of the human personality. Put simply, individuals can cross that bridge to use their dark traits when facing a challenge, and pro-social characteristics when in a safe environment.

Our work suggests that instead of perceiving human personality as a dichotomy (narcissistic versus agreeable) we should treat it as a constantly changing spectrum.

It is not about promoting grandiosity over healthy self-esteem and modesty. Instead it is about promoting diversity of people and ideas by advocating that dark traits, such as narcissism, should not be seen as either good or bad. They are products of evolution, and expressions of human nature that may be beneficial or harmful depending on the context.

This may help to reduce the marginalisation of individuals that score high on dark traits, and work out how best to cultivate some manifestations of these traits, while discouraging others, for the collective good.

It is too simplistic to say that personality traits like narcissism, which help individual empowerment, are socially toxic. People are trying to adapt, survive and succeed in a so-

cial, political and economic environment that promotes the "self-made man or woman", and if they exhibit antagonistic traits such as narcissism they receive negative attention. Yet grandiose narcissism may be the key to protecting individuals from such needless pressure.

Nor do I think there are individuals who live without narcissism. In common with other psychological traits, it exists on a spectrum, with some individuals scoring higher than others.

Elsewhere in the natural world, a human fear and distrust of sharks has led to widespread attitude of "us" versus "them". After the movie Jaws was released, according to one conservationist there was a "collective testosterone rush" which led to thousands of anglers targeting and killing sharks off the American coast.

Shark numbers have dropped dramatically (by up to 92%) in the past half century. So just as we are starting to understand the importance of sharks for the marine ecosystem, we have run out of sharks to study.

We should not let narcissists be similarly marginalised just because we don't understand them. Instead of demonising parts of our personality, we need to celebrate all of its aspects – and work out how best to use them, for our own benefit and the benefit of society.

[the writer is Lecturer in Psychology, Queen's University Belfast]

Thiem dethrones Zverev to set up London final against Tsitsipas

LONDON, Nov 17 (AFP): Dominic Thiem beat defending champion Alexander Zverev to join Roger Federer's conqueror Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final of the ATP Finals in London.

The Austrian fifth seed saw off the big-serving German 7-5 6-3 on Saturday after Greece's Tsitsipas, making his debut at the tournament, had earlier beaten Federer 6-3 6-4.

Thiem is playing in his fourth ATP Finals but during his first three trips to the season finale, he won only three matches and never advanced out of the group stage at the O2 Arena.

Zverev landed 75 per cent of his first serves but Thiem was tougher in the big moments, breaking in the 12th game of the opening set and in the sixth game of the second set. The Austrian also saved all four break points on his racquet.

Germany's Zverev, who beat Novak Djokovic in last year's final, went toe to toe with Thiem in a relatively uneventful first set but served a double fault to lose the opener 7-5.

The seventh seed, 22, regrouped and settled back into his serving rhythm at the beginning of the second set but was broken again to trail 4-2.

Thiem, looking unflustered, fended off a couple of break points in the following game and served out to take the match, winning with a forehand down the line.

"This is a big, big dream coming true for

me, it is one of the biggest and most prestigious tournaments of the whole year and I'm getting the chance to play the final," said Thiem.

The 26-year-old, who reached the final of this year's French Open, has been considered a clay-court specialist but joked after winning indoors in Vienna last month and now reaching the final in London he was becoming a "big, big fan of faster hard surfaces".

- TSITSIPAS SNUFFS OUT FEDERER -

Earlier, Tsitsipas, 17 years younger than Federer, ended the 38-year-old's hopes of securing a seventh year-end title.

Federer was unrecognisable from the player who dominated Djokovic in his final round-robin match, struggling on serve and hitting a total of 26 unforced errors compared with just five against the Serbian.

But Tsitsipas belied his years with a performance full of confidence and grit, saving 11 out of 12 break points during the match.

"I'm so proud of myself today, a great performance and once again the people were great," he said.

"I really enjoyed myself on the court and sometimes in matches like these you wonder how you recover from difficulties and break point down."

Tsitsipas, ignoring loud support for Federer, broke the Swiss at the first time of asking, taking advantage of two missed overheads.

FIELDWORK NOTES

Is Rape a Women's Issue or a Human Issue??

MONGFING LEPCHA

Every morning, as I sit on my chair waiting for my coffee to cool on the table which is as messy as life itself, I try to start the day with positive energy in the hope that I spend the day fruitfully, but the zest somehow turns into anger and sorrow when the first thing I read in the morning newspaper is about rapes, and, in recent days, more gang rapes.

There isn't a single day that we don't receive news about rapes. I wonder, as many of us have wondered, why there is hardly ever any news about the rapist being punished. When I say punished, I clearly mean being punished for real and not just that the rapist has been taken into custody. There are many cases in which victims are publicly shamed rather than being provided help. There are cases of rapes in which survivors were later killed by the rapists in their own home because they complained about the incident. There are rapes on children – girls and boys, rapes on elderly people, differently-abled people and now even animals are being raped.

Recently, a brilliant student with dreams and who was working hard to achieve them, was gang raped leaving her dreams consumed by the ordeal she went through. Even children, some as young as a month or two old, are not spared. Now, murder follows rape too worryingly often, a sight that must haunt the family and friends of the victim for life. It gives me chills just thinking of what the parents of such victims must have to go through.

Around a year back, there were cases in which a teen-aged girl was beaten to death because she resisted rape, a woman bathing in the sacred Ganga was dragged and raped by two men and even filmed and when she complained

about it, the police turned their backs on her.

As I said, there isn't a single day without any news of rapes.

While I am writing this, I wonder how many rapes must be happening even as I write this, how many victims taking their painful last breaths. I am horrified by the thought and wish these could be avoided.

Make the disappointment even deeper is that the rape culture is becoming prevalent in my own State as well, as is the murder of women and crimes of passion. Although the law-keepers have been diligent in taking suspects into custody, one still awaits news of enough convictions for justice to act a deterrent. Elsewhere, today I read news about a group of men chasing away a person trying to rape a woman and later taking turns to rape her. It left me deeply worried and saddened.

Rape, I agree, is prevalent all over the world but the way it is dealt with is surely an individual nation's issue. We are already aware that different nations have different laws for different crimes, and here I am taking about the nation I live in. What have the law makers done and what are the law enforcement agencies doing to prevent rape. Different people have given different perspectives on rape. The incident of the medical student who was gang raped in a moving bus a few years back shook the nation and somehow created a platform to talk about rape publicly. I wonder how many such incidents must have happened before, which, because news did not get traction, did not move people the way the Nirbhaya incident did. The entire nation started talking about rape yet it never occurred to the law makers that there has to be a stricter law to avoid such incidents in future.

Where are we heading? Where are



our localities, society and nation heading? People blame women dressing inappropriately or being out too late of walking alone or living alone; women are being publicly shamed for being raped, and yet victims are raped in offices, schools, homes, roads, jungle, fields, and yet the message I receive is that women are not considered worthy enough to receive justice. In many cases, even complaints are not filed. And we have not even begun talking about rape if men or boys.

Yes, women have now become more self aware and cautious to avoid such ordeals but why is this again a women's issue only? Are the law makers doing anything to curb rapes and convict rapists? Rape is a human issue because the

entire family, village, state and nation are being affected in their own ways but nothing serious has been done so far except for projecting women as victims. May be it is an women's issue because it affects them the most whether as victims or whether being confronted by such news on a daily basis. She is not okay about how the law is failing them. She is not okay with the law keepers becoming deaf and blind when one gathers courage and talks about the suffering. She is not okay and will never be okay unless rape is not seen exclusively as a women's issue and recognized as an issue concerning all humanity.

[the writer is a Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology, Sikkim University]

Gotabaya Rajapaksa wins Sri Lankan presidential election: Official results

COLOMBO, Nov 17 (PTI): Sri Lanka's controversial wartime defence secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa will lead the country after ruling party candidate Sajith Premadasa conceded the hotly contested presidential poll on Sunday, marking the return of the powerful Rajapaksa dynasty known for its pro-China tilt, amidst security challenges following the Easter Sunday terror attacks that killed 269 people.

Rajapaksa, 70, defeated Premadasa, 52, by more than 13 lakh votes, according to the official results.

Rajapaksa, who will succeed President Maithripala Sirisena for a five-year term, will be sworn in as the seventh executive president of Sri Lanka on Monday at the ancient north central town of Anuradhapura.

He will be the second member from the Rajapaksa family to become the president. His older brother Mahinda Rajapaksa was president from 2005 to 2015.

Rajapaksa secured 52.25 per cent votes (6,924,255) while Premadasa received 41.99 per cent of the total votes polled (5,564,239), the election commission said.

Other candidates got 5.76 per cent votes.

Rajapaksa urged his supporters to "rejoice peacefully".

"As we usher in a new journey for Sri Lanka, we must remember that all Sri Lankans are part of this journey. Let us rejoice peacefully, with dignity and discipline in the same manner in which we campaigned," the retired lieutenant colonel said in a tweet.

Rajapaksa had vowed to "re-store relations" with Sri Lanka's top lender, China, if he wins the election, despite international concerns over the island na-

tion's financial debt to the Asian superpower.

Premadasa, meanwhile, was considered leaning more towards India and the US.

He conceded the presidential election to his rival even before the official results were announced and also stepped down as the Deputy Leader of the ruling United National Party (UNP) with immediate effect.

"It is my privilege to honour the people's decision and congratulate Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa on his election," Premadasa said.

"I am grateful our citizens who voted for me. I am humbled that you placed your faith in me. Your support has been a fountain of strength throughout my political career," he said on Twitter.

Rajapaksa, who was the top defence ministry bureaucrat for 10 years, swept the poll in the Sinhala majority districts while Premadasa garnered most of the votes from the Tamil dominated north and east and Muslim community, including the tea plantation workers of Indian origin.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Rajapaksa and said he looks forward to further deepen relations between the two nations.

Rajapaksa thanked the people of India and Modi, saying he looks forward to strengthening the friendship and meeting him in the near future.

The turnout in the election was more than 80 per cent.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who cannot be removed unless he steps down, is expected to resign.

The current Parliament cannot be dissolved at least before February next year.

It is believed that Rajapaksa,

after taking over as the President, would appoint his elder brother and former strongman Mahinda as the Prime Minister.

Issuing a statement, Mahinda said one of the first tasks of the new government is to study the 19th amendment to the constitution adopted in 2015.

We will be studying the provisions of 19A and planning our immediate program of action accordingly, he said.

The 19A introduced a three-time bar to contest the presidency and made key areas such as elections, judiciary and public service independent of political influence.

Rajapaksa senior took to Twitter to congratulate his younger brother on election victory.

"I Congratulate @GotabayaR for his success at the #lka #PressPolls2019. The long campaign trail to serve our motherland again is worth it. Commiserations to @sajithpremadasa for a well, hard fought election. Above all, thankful to the citizens for facilitating a peaceful elections," he said in a tweet.

President Sirisena termed Rajapaksa's win as "historic".

"My heartiest congratulations to the President-elect @GotabayaR on his historic victory!," he said on Twitter.

Premadasa, the son of assassinated president Ranasinghe Premadasa, is a seasoned politician with an experience of more than 25 years in the power corridors.

The Rajapaska senior's legacy of ending the Tamil separatist war has made him the darling of the Sinhala Buddhist majority. Gotabhaya was his top defence ministry official who supervised the military operations against the LTTE. While doing so, he ac-

quired the reputation of a ruthlessly efficient administrator.

Rajapaksa's victory marks the return of the family to the pinnacle of power in the island after they were surprisingly ousted in the previous presidential poll.

According to observers, with pro-China Rajapaksa winning the election, the result will have a bearing on India's presence in the Indian Ocean region where Beijing is increasingly making inroads.

China, which has acquired Sri Lanka's Hambantota port in 2017 as a debt swap, has been ramping up its ties with the island nation and expanded its naval presence in the Indian Ocean with an established logistics base in Djibouti.

Beijing in July gifted a warship to Sri Lanka, in a growing sign of its deepening military cooperation with the strategically located island nation in the Indian Ocean.

The Lanka election took place nearly seven months after the Easter Sunday attacks that killed 258 people, seriously hitting the tourism industry, one of the main forex earning sectors of the country.

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Man City legend Micah Richards to visit India

MUMBAI, NOV 17 (PTI): Manchester City on Sunday announced that legendary Micah Richards would visit India next week for the first time.

The club is bringing its silverware to three cities in the country, including Mumbai and Kolkata, after it became the first English football club to lift six trophies - Premier league title, FA Cup, Community Shield, Carabao Cup, Women's FA Cup and FA WSL Continental Cup, across both its men's and women's teams in the same sea-



son. "Former City centre-back, Micah Richards, who made 246 appearances between 2005-2014 and won three trophies during his time at City, will accompany the silverware in Mumbai and Kolkata," a media release issued here said on Sunday.

"Our aim is to bring an authentic City expe-

rience, allowing fans in India a chance to experience the club they love closer than ever and right in their hometowns. We have been receiving immense support from the City fans in India and I can't wait to engage with them all," Richards was quoted as saying in the release.

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

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

THE BIRDS HAVE LOST THEIR WAY

Edited by TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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Euro 2020 takes shape as Netherlands, Germany and Croatia qualify

PARIS, NOV 17 (AFP): The Netherlands, Germany and World Cup finalists Croatia expanded a list of big hitters to qualify for Euro 2020 on Saturday as the trio booked their places at next summer's finals. Austria also made it through to the multi-host tournament, which kicks off in Rome on June 12, with 16 sides now ensured of a spot at the 24-team event and only four places remaining from the main qualifying route.

They join other big names such like world champions France, Spain, Italy and England, with European champions Portugal one win away from qualification. Ronald Koeman's resurgent Dutch needed a point to qualify for their first major tournament since coming third at the 2014 World Cup and got what they needed in a scrappy goal-less draw with Northern Ireland in Belfast.

"It means a lot for us as players. Hopefully it means so much to the Dutch people," Liverpool defender Van Dijk said.

However they were far from the flamboyant outfit that has so often thrilled in Group C, and survived a huge scare when Steven Davis smashed a first-half penalty high over the bar.

The Dutch dominated possession and stopped the hosts from having a single shot on target but failed to create much themselves. Davis' spot-kick blunder left Michael O'Neill's side third and hopping for a way into the tournament via the playoffs.

- GERMANY JOIN THE DUTCH -

The draw allowed fierce rivals Germany to move top in the group as Toni Kroos hit a brace in a simple 4-0 win over Belarus in Moenchengladbach which saw them qualify for the Euros for the 13th time in a row.

A deft back-heeled goal from defender Matthias Ginter just before the break and impressive finishing by Leon Goretzka and Kroos gave the Germans a comfortable three-goal lead early in the second half.

Captain Manuel Neuer produced a superb save to keep out Belarus striker Igor Stasevich's penalty before Kroos dribbled through the defence to claim his second goal seven minutes from time and make sure of a routine win.

"Overall we did well, but at the moment I don't include us among the favourites for the European title," said Kroos, echoing coach Joachim Loew's comments from earlier in the week.

A win over Northern Ireland in Frankfurt on Tuesday will guarantee Loew's new-look side first place.

Croatia survived a scare to secure their place in the Euros after coming from behind beat Slovakia 3-1 in Rijeka.

The World Cup runners up needed just a point to ensure qualification from Group E but Robert Bozenik stunned the home crowd when he tapped the away side ahead in the 32nd minute.

'The British were our heroes' – why Kosovans love the England team

NICK AMES
theGuardian

These days, the distinctive green tower blocks in the centre of Pristina's Dardania neighbourhood look out over a school, a library and a caged-off concrete football pitch. This used to be among the toughest parts of the Kosovan capital but those times are long gone.

The silence bears no menace and is only broken from somewhere up one of the high-rise blocks, where a child is yelling for his mother. At the bottom, out on the playing surface, there is the occasional thud of boot on ball as two boys – one in full goal-keeping gear, the other responsible for giving him a workout – train with an intensity several notches up from usual Saturday kickabout fare.

Two decades ago this was a wild, open square of grass and soil. So much has changed but at the top of the tallest building there is a reminder of what once passed. A grey, squat structure used to be a lookout post for British soldiers deployed to Pristina in 1999, when the Nato-led Kosovo Force, arrived to maintain peace and establish a secure environment in what was a deeply traumatised, war-ravaged state.

As Atthe Muharremi absorbs the scene, he is reminded of the days shortly after he and his family returned to Pristina that summer, having spent three months as refugees in Macedonia. They were the first to return to their own area, Taslixhe, on the other side of town and, in his words, it was "a new beginning ... time to build a new life and new society again."

The city seemed empty, desolate, at first but as more people came back, the opportunities to enjoy old recreational pursuits grew. Muharremi would travel to Dardania and play football on that bumpy quadrant, sometimes in impromptu tournaments between different districts. Now and again they would be joined,



just for a few minutes at a time, by a foreigner in fatigues; the simple act of knocking a ball around bred a kinship he has held close ever since.

"The British KFOR guys would be on patrol and sometimes they'd get into the game, we'd pass some balls with them," he says. "They'd stop, talk to us, join in. It was a way of gesturing, bonding through playing, we didn't need the same language."

"We saw them as our heroes. They were very nice, very loving with us. It was a certain mutual love without words, the energy we felt. We could sense this love."

It goes a long way towards explaining the extraordinary reception England and their supporters have received before Sunday's Euro 2020 qualifier, which is now a dead rubber but will celebrate a relationship that could hardly be more profound.

The UK's role, among an international coalition, in ending the brutal struggle with Serbian forces has nev-

er been forgotten in Kosovo. It is why streets are named after Tony Blair and Robin Cook, who were instrumental in the policymaking that led to Nato forcing Belgrade's withdrawal of troops from Kosovo, and why a handful of children were famously named Tonibler. And it is why Pristina's centre is festooned with signs and posters offering thanks and goodwill to the 1,000 or so who have made the trip.

Muharremi's words are not offered lightly; as one figure with extensive experience of the countries' pasts asked the Observer, how often can it genuinely be said that one nation holds love this deep for another? Nobody walking down Mother Teresa Boulevard, the city's main pedestrian thoroughfare, can miss the "Welcome and respect" banners – complete with English and Kosovan flags and a poppy – that straddle it every 100 metres or so and there have been plenty of other

little touches. A plan to offer English supporters free alcohol did not get off the ground but waiters around Pristina will be wearing specially commissioned shirts and a number of establishments have been rolling out the goodwill.

Blodin Gagica is the owner of Gagi, a Mediterranean restaurant 500 metres from the national stadium. When his younger brother, who runs a photo studio, designed a banner reading "Welcome, brothers!" and displaying pictures of Raheem Sterling, Fabian Delph and Danny Rose, he asked for one of his own. It is now strung across the building's balcony and the resulting footfall appears to have justified the idea.

"We didn't do it for attention though," he says. "We just did it to say thank you for everything. We never, ever thought we'd have the chance to do it this way, before playing football against England. It gives me goose bumps. When we saw the British

troops it was like 'God is helping us'."

The UK provided 19,000 troops for KFOR, most of them operating in Pristina. Muharremi's brother-in-law, Shpetim, inadvertently became famous when a photograph of his own footballing encounter with a soldier on the Dardania pitch resurfaced online before the sides played in Southampton two months ago. Hundreds of people have their own such story and the forces' impact was indelible. But Kosovo would not be the quietly optimistic state it is now without the extraordinary application and resilience of its people; the football team, who played their first official friendly five and a half years ago but could still reach Euro 2020 through the play-offs, is the best advertisement of that and Muharremi is proud they are capable of giving England a run for their money.

"I never thought we would be playing them within 20 years, and never thought we'd have such a strong team to show them," he says. "We love our footballers; they have made us feel more Kosovan."

As he speaks, the children on the concrete pitch – who must be around 11, Muharremi's age upon coming back in 1999 – continue to play, the outfielder frequently besting his friend with sweet, left-foot strikes. He is dressed head to toe in a Kosovo kit and explains he has spent time training with an academy in Croatia.

His confidence speaks to the modern Kosovo, reflects the identity football is helping it to carve. The towers overhead bear witness to a game filled with hope yet again; this one just feels a world away from the times when, with those uniformed Britons for company, it was a relief simply to play.

"When I was young I would dream of playing in a Kosovo jersey like that," Muharremi says.

Now, thanks in at least some part to British assistance, boys and girls in Kosovo do not need to imagine.

Benzema hits out at continued French exile



MADRID, NOV 17 (AFP):

Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema has told French Football Federation president Noel Le Graet he and he alone will decide when the time to end his international retirement has come. After Real coach Zinedine Zidane called for Benzema's four-year France exile, caused by his alleged part in an attempt to blackmail Mathieu Valbuena, to end this week,

Le Graet told French radio Benzema's adven-

ture with the French team was finished. "Noel, I thought you didn't interfere with the decisions of the France coach," said Benzema on Twitter.

"Please understand that I and I alone will call an end to my international career," Benzema, who is of Algerian origin, added that Le Graet should "let me play for one of the countries for which I'm eligible" if he thinks the 31-year-old is done.

Benzema has not played for France since 2015, when he was placed

under formal investigation over the blackmail attempt. Coach Didier Deschamps has maintained Benzema's omission is in the best interests of the French squad, who won last year's World Cup without him.

Benzema has scored 9 goals in 11 La Liga appearances for Madrid already this season. "He has always wanted to play for France," Zidane said this week. "He is the best and I think he should definitely have a place in the national team. Football-wise, there is no debate."

Brendan Rodgers and Frank Lampard prove worth in battle for second place

PAUL WILSON
theGuardian

Gareth Southgate was probably right to play down the significance of last weekend's Liverpool v Manchester City showdown from an England point of view. Only three members of his present squad played at Anfield and featured in the starting lineup against Montenegro, even if one more came on as a substitute, and as the England manager pointed out there might have been double that number in times gone by. Yet despite most predictions, the Premier League is not turning out to be quite the two-horse race originally envisaged. Leicester City and Chelsea stand between the leaders and the defending champions, and by way of proving this is no accident, those two clubs have just supplied six members of the England squad.

Whichever way you look at it there is quality at Stamford Bridge and the King Power, and based on the start both teams have made it is not too early to suggest both could still be occupying Champions League positions at the end of the season.

Brendan Rodgers sensibly dodged title talk after moving into second with their win over Arsenal, for until Liverpool begin to show signs of weakness the rest of the division can

only dream of overtaking the leaders, though Leicester and Chelsea have already achieved the seemingly impossible by nudging ahead of City and the onus is now on Pep Guardiola and his players to do the catching up.

Chelsea are City's next opponents at the Etihad, so the chance will come quite early. Few would have imagined Guardiola would have much trouble with a side coached by a rookie manager and subject to a transfer ban when Chelsea began their season with a 4-0 drubbing at Old Trafford, yet quite a lot has changed in the short time since.

It turns out Chelsea have more than enough talented young players at their disposal to survive without going to the market, particularly as the influential Christian Pulisic was already on the books as a handy replacement for Eden Hazard, and it also looks as if handing the reins to Frank Lampard was not such a gamble after all.

Lampard was lucky to take over an already successful squad from the undervalued Maurizio Sarri – not many Premier League berths become available with Champions League football already secured – and has so far proved the safe yet still adventurous pair of hands the club needed. Much more of this

and Chelsea could find themselves keeping hold of a manager for more than a single season or two, confounding those who believed Lampard was simply a cheap and convenient appointment necessary to keep the seat warm until the transfer ban expires.

At Leicester Rodgers has possibly done even better. Certainly there were plenty of Arsenal-watchers shaking their heads last week and wondering why the Gunners could not have brought in the Celtic manager instead of going abroad for Unai Emery.

It is fair to say the latter is struggling. If Arsenal felt he was the nearest thing to a younger Arsène Wenger they have somehow managed to import all the difficulties associated with the older Arsène Wenger, whereas Rodgers was simply waiting under the radar in Scotland for the right opportunity to arise. Given that top-four clubs not subject to transfer bans do not generally appoint home-grown managers, Leicester was probably the best destination Rodgers could hope for, whatever his disaffected public in Glasgow thought of the move.

Leicester finished in the top half of the table last season, are well run and resourced, and unlike clubs of broadly similar stature such as Everton or West Ham, have a

league title win in recent memory. Practically, only Jamie Vardy and Kasper Schmeichel survive from that side, though that is not the point. Both are still excellent players and encapsulate the confidence that runs through the squad, the certain knowledge that anything is possible. Rodgers signs off his programme notes with a similar sentiment each week, because in Leicester everyone knows it to be true, and with James Maddison, Youri Tielemans, Ben Chilwell and other players brought through since 2016 a return to the Champions League could well be within reach.

That an eight-point gap exists not only at the top of the table but between fourth place and fifth suggests the present top four may already be breaking away. The identity of the team in fifth place – Sheffield United – also tells its own story.

The reality for Arsenal, Tottenham, Manchester United and anyone else with Champions League pretensions, however optimistic, is that a newly promoted side is doing a better job of hanging on to the leaders. If that remains true after next weekend, when Manchester United are the visitors at Bramall Lane, Chris Wilder will be in line for a coaching award and some of his more lauded managerial counterparts will be in trouble.

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Hong Kong protesters clash with police at key campus battleground



HONG KONG, Nov 17 (AFP): Hong Kong police fired tear gas on Sunday morning at protesters intent on keeping their stranglehold on a major tunnel as pro-democracy activists vowed to “squeeze the economy” into next week.

Hardliners occupying Hong Kong Polytechnic University in Kowloon -- now a key battleground near the blocked Cross Tunnel Harbour -- responded by throwing Molotov cocktails shortly before 10.30 am.

Dozens of government supporters had gathered in the area earlier to clear barricades near the university campus, which was the scene of more violence overnight as riot police

clashed with protesters.

Around 80 to 100 middle-aged residents clapped and cheered as they moved debris from the road near the crucial Cross Harbour Tunnel to Hong Kong island -- shut since Tuesday -- before protesters in masks and their signature black t-shirts returned to rebuild the roadblock.

Local media reported the activists were throwing bricks at the residents. The clashes broke out as demonstrators vowed online to continue their “Blossom Everywhere” campaign of blockades and vandalism across the semi-autonomous financial hub which last week shut down large chunks of the

train network and forced schools and shopping malls to close.

A poster circulating on social media called for “dawn action” on Monday. “Get up early, directly target the regime, squeeze the economy to increase pressure,” it said.

Students and protesters last week occupied several major universities around the city -- the first time a movement characterised by its fluidity and unpredictability has coagulated in fixed locations.

The Polytechnic University (PolyU) has become a major flashpoint in the city rocked by a week of intensified violence and chaos. A message on the university’s

Facebook page urged demonstrators to leave “immediately”.

“In view of safety concerns posed by possible violent unlawful activities conducted by protesters who are still occupying the PolyU campus, the University again urges all people on campus, including students and staff members, not to stay, and to leave as soon as possible,” the post said.

Chinese People’s Liberation Army soldiers -- based in barracks near Hong Kong Baptist University -- briefly came out on Saturday to help the clean-up after a week of disruption, a rare and highly symbolic troop movement unsolicited by the city’s embattled

government. The action saw scores of soldiers from the garrison, which is confined to the barracks under Hong Kong’s mini-constitution, with crewcuts and identical gym kits conduct a lightning-quick removal of bricks and debris near their base.

Chinese state media has repeatedly warned that troops could be deployed to quell an unprecedented crisis in the semi-autonomous city that has entered its sixth month.

Confirming the brief deployment, the PLA said it acted to open a debris-strewn road outside their Kowloon Tong barracks to traffic, winning “applause from residents” in the process.

The last time soldiers assisted in the city was in 2018 to clean up after a typhoon. A spokesman for Hong Kong’s government said the troop movement had not been requested by city authorities but was instead a “voluntary community activity initiated by themselves”. The protests started against a now shelved bill to allow extradition to China but have billowed into wider calls for democracy.

Two people have died this month as the violence worsened, while the financial hub has been pushed into a recession by the turmoil.

EU offers technical assistance to Pak for FATF action plan implementation



ISLAMABAD, Nov 17 (PTI): The European Union has offered technical assistance to Pakistan for the implementation of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) action plan by the country, according to a media report.

A joint press release issued at the conclusion of the 10th session of the European Union-Pakistan Joint Commission in Brussels on Friday said the two sides emphasised the importance of the implementation of FATF action plan by Pakistan, the Dawn reported.

Global terror financing watchdog FATF last month retained Pakistan on its ‘Grey List’

till February next year for its failure to take adequate action against money laundering and terror financing.

Pakistan was placed on the Grey List by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in June last year and was given a plan of action to complete it by October 2019, or face the risk of being placed on the Black List with Iran and North Korea. The Pakistan side at the meeting appreciated the EU’s offer of technical assistance.

Implementation of GSP-Plus, issues hampering trade and investment, and improving the business climate remained

focus of the discussion during the meeting.

The plenary of the joint commission was preceded by meetings of sub-groups on trade, development cooperation, democracy, governance, rule of law and human rights on November 13-14, the daily said.

The next session of the joint commission will be held in Islamabad in 2020. The two sides undertook to hold the next political dialogue in Islamabad that would contribute towards the EU-Pakistan strategic dialogue at high representative and foreign minister level at mutually agreed dates in Brussels.

Trump aide curbed access to Ukraine call, fearing fallout

WASHINGTON, Nov 17 (AFP): A top US official restricted access to the summary of Donald Trump’s Ukraine call that triggered an impeachment probe, fearing it would damage the president, testimony released Saturday showed.

White House Ukraine expert Timothy Morrison told House investigators he knew immediately how sensitive the call was when he heard Trump press Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate former US vice president Joe Biden.

“I recommended... that we restrict access to the package,” said Morrison, who left the National Security Council the day before testifying.

The conversation, which took place on July 25 while the White House was withholding military aid to Ukraine, is central to the House impeachment inquiry into Trump.

Democrats leading the probe say the call summary shows the president abused his office by bullying a vulnerable ally into interfering on his behalf in the



2020 US election. “The testimony released today shows that President Trump’s July 25 phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky immediately set off alarm bells throughout the White House,” Adam Schiff, the congressman leading the inquiry, said in a statement released jointly with other senior Democrats.

Morrison said however the summary had been placed on a highly classified system due to a “mistake” by White House staff -- casting doubt on allegations that it was squirreled away as part of a deliberate cover-up.

He also broke with other witnesses who have spoken out against the call, telling House

investigators he heard nothing wrong. “In your view there was nothing improper that occurred during the call?” the Republican’s lead counsel asked Morrison.

“Correct,” he replied.

House investigators also released testimony from Jennifer Williams, Vice President Mike Pence’s special advisor for Europe and Russia, who told lawmakers Trump’s push for Ukraine to open investigations was “unusual and inappropriate.”

Williams listened in on the July 25 call and said the requests appeared to have been made to further Trump’s “personal political agenda” rather than US foreign policy goals.

Rajapaksa takes early lead in Sri Lanka election

COLOMBO, Nov 17 (AFP): Sri Lanka’s former war-time defence secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa took an early lead Sunday in a fiercely fought presidential election conducted under high security seven months after deadly Islamist attacks. Rajapaksa, the main opposition candidate, was leading with 52.87 percent while housing minister Sajith Premadasa had 39.67 percent out of half a million votes counted, according to the Election Commission.

Leftist Anura Kumara Disسانayake was in third place with 4.69 percent. There were 32 other candidates for the top job.

Commission chairman Mahinda Deshapriya said at least 80 percent of the 15.99 million eligible voters participated in Saturday’s poll, which was marred by isolated violence that left several people injured.

Rajapaksa, 70, was leading in the island’s majority Sinhalese areas while Premadasa showed strong support from among the island’s minority Tamil community in the northern and eastern regions. Premadasa, 52, from the liberal United National Party (UNP), is the son of assassinated ex-president Ranasinghe Premadasa. The election is the first popularity test of the UNP-led government since the April 21 suicide bomb attacks that killed at least 269 people and were blamed on local Islamist extremists. The government had faced severe criticism for failing to prevent the attacks despite prior warnings.

‘Show no mercy’: leaked documents reveal details of China’s Xinjiang detentions

LILY KUO NEW YORK, 17 Nov [THEGUARDIAN]: Hundreds of pages of leaked internal government documents reveal how China’s mass detention of Uighurs and other minorities in Xinjiang came from directives by Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, to “show absolutely no mercy” in the “struggle against terrorism, infiltration and separatism”.

More than 400 pages of documents obtained by the New York Times show the government was aware its campaign of mass internment would tear families apart and could provoke backlash if it became widely known.

Beijing has repeatedly refuted criticisms of its crackdown in the predominately Muslim region, which has seen more than 1 million Uighurs, Kazakhs and other minorities sent to camps where they are often subjected to political indoctrination. China has organised tours of the camps, which it describes as voluntary “vocational training centres” intended to provide “students” with job skills.

The documents, leaked by a member of the Chinese political establishment who hoped to prevent Xi and other leaders the ruling Chinese communist party from escaping responsibility, contradict those claims. That person requested anonymity, according to the New York Times.

According to the report, Xi first called for the crackdown in a series of private speeches given



to officials during and after a visit to Xinjiang in 2014, weeks after Uighur militants had attacked a train station, stabbing and killing 31 people.

“We must be as harsh as them,” Xi said, adding, “and show absolutely no mercy.” In the speeches, Xi did not explicitly order the creation of a large network of camps, but called for the party to use the “organs of dictatorship” to deal with extremism.

Other documents showed that officials looked at the UK as a cautionary tale of a government placing “human rights above security.” Instead, Xi encouraged officials to follow aspects of the US “war on terror” following the September 11 attacks.

Among the most telling of the documents is a script for local officials in Turpan in southern Xinjiang to use when the children of parents being “punished” and sent to a camp returned home for school holidays. Many of

Xinjiang’s top students attend university outside of the region, in universities in other Chinese provinces. Officials were instructed to meet students as soon as they returned home and explain that their loved ones had been exposed to religious extremism and were receiving “concentrated education” to eradicate them of “violent terrorist thoughts.”

If asked why the relatives could not return home if they are only receiving training, officials were to employ the language of disease to justify the prolonged detention and isolation. “Freedom is only possible when this ‘virus’ in their thinking is eradicated and they are in good health,” the script said.

The documents also highlight the extent of resistance from local officials. In 2017, more than 12,000 investigations into party members for violations related to the “fight against separatism.” According to in-

ternal documents, one Han Chinese official was jailed for trying to slow down the detentions and protect Uighur officials.

Another, named Wang Yongzhi in charge of Yarkand county, was made an example of after he defied orders and quietly released more than 7,000 detainees. “He refused,” an internal document said, “to round up everyone who should be rounded up.”

Beijing has not issued a response to the documents. While the New York Times is blocked in mainland China, the report appears to have been circulated. On the microblog Weibo, often heavily censored, some users posted in English: “He refused.”

One Weibo user wrote: “Time records everything. Those who need attention the most are often the ones who are not able to ask for it. The tide of history is surging. The truth will come out one day. That’s what I believe.”

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Why Harry Styles is the male pop star we need right now

What did we do deserve Harry Styles?

That's the question we've been ruminating on ever since the charming pop star kicked off his solo career with the release of his eponymous debut album in 2017, after years spent comfortably ensconced within the confines of the biggest boy band in the world (One Direction, if you've somehow forgotten). And it's one that only seems more pertinent as he prepares to take the stage in Studio 8H in Rockefeller Center as both host and musical guest of Saturday Night Live on November 16. The gig is his biggest promo moment yet as Harry readies the launch of his highly-anticipated sophomore effort, *Fine Line*, due on December 13, and will certainly allow everyone who may have missed his acting debut in Christopher Nolan's WWII film *Dunkirk* to see the superstar in a new light.

And while we may never be truly sure of what we did to deserve him—or that we even do at all—allow us to count all the ways that Harry is exactly the male pop star we need in these trying times.

He's not ashamed of where he came from: While most former boy band members trying to go "legit" typically shun their pasts, Harry's not interested in trying to fully distance himself from his 1D days. "I know it's the thing that always happens," he told *Rolling Stone* in their September cover story. When somebody gets out of a band, they go, "That wasn't me. I was held back! But it was me. And I don't feel like I was held back at all. It was so much fun. If I didn't enjoy it, I wouldn't have done it. It's not like I was tied to a radiator."

But he's hoping to constantly evolve: When Harry dropped his first solo single, he stunned us all with the cinematic and nearly six-minute long piano ballad "Sign of the Times," signaling a clear intention to transcend his pure pop roots. Over the course of 10 tracks, his debut album was an excellent exploration of West Coast '70s rock. And after releas-

ing the anthemic "Lights Up" as the lead single for *Fine Line*, all signs point to a further evolution of sound. "It's not like his last album," friend and Fleetwood Mac legend Stevie Nicks told *The Face* in September. "It's not like anything One Direction ever did. It's pure Harry, as Harry would say. He's made a very different record and it's spectacular."

He loves his fans: "They're the most

go through the same things as a lot of the people that come to the shows. I can't claim that I know what it's like, because I don't. So I'm not trying to say, 'I understand what it's like.' I'm just trying to make people feel included and seen."

He's a proud feminist: "I think ultimately feminism is thinking that men and women should be equal, right? People think that if you say 'I'm a feminist,'



honest — especially if you're talking about teenage girls, but older as well," he gushed about his fervent fanbase to *RS*. "They have that bulls--t detector. You want honest people as your audience. We're so past that dumb outdated narrative of 'Oh, these people are girls, so they don't know what they're talking about.' They're the ones who know what they're talking about. They're the people who listen obsessively. They f--king own this s--t. They're running it."

And always wants them to feel safe and seen with him: Known to wave the pride, bi, trans and Black Lives Matter flags onstage while on tour, Harry says he's motivated by making the arenas his fans have crowded into to see him a welcoming place for everyone. "I want to make people feel comfortable being whatever they want to be," he told *RS*. "Maybe at a show you can have a moment of knowing that you're not alone. I'm aware that as a white male, I don't

it means you think men should burn in hell and women should trample on their necks. No, you think women should be equal," he told *RS*. "That doesn't feel like a crazy thing to me. I grew up with my mum and my sister — when you grow up around women, your female influence is just bigger. Of course men and women should be equal. I don't want a lot of credit for being a feminist. It's pretty simple. I think the ideals of feminism are pretty straightforward."

And fully aware of his privilege: "It's not about, 'Oh, I get what it's like,' because I don't," he told the magazine. "For example, I go walking at night before bed most of the time. I was talking about that with a female friend and she said, 'Do you feel safe doing that?' And I do. But when I walk, I'm more aware that I feel OK to walk at night, and some of my friends wouldn't. I'm not saying I know what it feels like to go through that. It's just being aware."

Amol Palekar's comeback play to be his 'showstopper'

MANISH SAIN

NEW DELHI, NOV 17 (PTI): Whether it was a lack of "challenging roles" or preoccupation with making films, something or the other kept veteran actor and director Amol Palekar away from theatre for a long period of over 25 years. Compelled by a challenging role as well as an engaging story "Kusur (The Mistake)", the actor is ready to make a comeback. For one last time.

Talking to PTI, Palekar said that given to the physical demands of theatre and uncertainty about the audience's expectations he will perform only 25 shows before calling it quits. "I have no intention to keep on doing theatre. 'Kusur' is my showstopper. At my age, it is physically very demanding. Besides, I don't know if I will be able to fulfil the audience's expectations. This role is very challenging and I hope they enjoy the play as much as I am enjoying performing it," the 74-year-old thespian said.

Written by screenwriter Sandhya Gokhale, "Kusur", an adaptation of Danish mystery film "Den Skyldige" revolves around a retired assistant police commissioner (Palekar).

"During the Ganesh festival, when there is high security demand from the police force, he chooses to help the emergency service. He receives one distressed phone call that triggers the pace of this thriller. It is not a regular crime drama, engaging the audience to resolve the mystery every moment," Palekar, who has also directed the play, said. Talking about his absence from theatre in 1991 and eventually

from films with "Samaantar" in 2009, Palekar said that while he had "an urge to do theatre", the roles offered to him "did not challenge the actor in him". "Also the themes/content has to be meaningful beyond some frivolous entertainment. I'm not interested in doing something which is time tested and successfully established. I love to challenge myself if I fail, so be it but I have to try something new. 'Kusur' offered me that opportunity, the 'Gol Maal' actor said. While the famed performer rued the lack of challenging roles, the current generation of filmmakers, he said, exude promise for "experimenting with themes".

"The OTT platform has given so much freedom and space for young filmmakers to experiment with form as well as content. The audience is also exposed to international content which compels our filmmakers to excel in their explorations. 'All this has created a nourishing environment for Hindi as well as regional cinema. People are not shying away from experimenting with themes," he said. He added that the contemporary filmmakers should project the indigenous ethos than imitating what is out there in the foreign markets.

Produced by BookMyShow, the play also holds a special place in Palekar's heart for its opening location.

After making his directorial debut in theatre from the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in 1969 and delivering his last stage performance at NCPA in 1991, "Kusur" will also open at the cultural centre on November 24, which also happens to be the actor's 75th birthday.



BLACKPINK'S LISAIASIA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN: BLACKPINK's Lisa definitely puts the "boom" in "Boombayah"! And now the K-pop queen has nabbed yet another accolade for her stunning looks: The Thai idol tops this year's TCCAsia's Most Beautiful Faces in Asia 2019 list for the first time ever. Fellow bandmates Jennie, Rosé and Jisoo also made it to the list, coming in at number 3, 13 and 22 respectively. Other female Korean celebrities who made it to the long-running list of beautiful faces include Girls' Generation's Yoona, who took number 6, and Red Velvet's Irene who rounded out the list at number 10.

Alexis Ren confirms that Noah Centineo is the Perfect Boyfriend

The rumors are true, people. Noah Centineo is a gem in real life! And who better to share this news than the 23-year-old star's girlfriend, Alexis Ren. The 22-year-old model couldn't help but gush over her beau at the 2019 Revolve Awards in Los Angeles on Friday night.

"He's amazing," she told *E!* News. "His heart is really that genuine. He has a heart of gold, and he's that much of a dork in real life, too." As if that weren't cute enough, Ren shared that their date nights are also swoon-worthy, considering their both "spontaneous" people. "It's different every time because I'm very spontaneous and so is he," she said. "It just depends what we're trying to do for each other. He likes to paint, so I took him to paint one time. Just little fun things. We both love art, so we love doing art together."

Even though the two are in the early stages of their romance—they sparked dating rumors back in September—they've already taken a major step in their relationship: Noah has met Alexis' fam-

ily. "He's met my family... it was great," the model gushed about the experience. "My little brother was like, 'Who is this person?' and I was like, 'Please, like him for me. I really like him.'"

It seems everything went well, because the celebrity pair is still going strong. In fact, Ren and her leading man plan to take a "few trips together" during the holidays.

Additionally, *The Perfect Date* actor told *E!* News' Jason Kennedy how important family is to him during the 2019 People's Choice Awards. "Man, I keep my family really close," he shared, after winning Comedy Movie Star. "I live with my sister and her boyfriend. It's a really small circle, man—my close friends and my girl. All of us hold it down for each other."

"Dude, we love each other," the 23-year-old star continued. "The rest just kind of fades into the background." Alexis revealed that her boyfriend was so excited to win a PCA. "He's been so positive through that journey," she said on Friday night. "He's like, 'I made it. Yeah!' He'll chase me down the hall, it's so funny."

ARIES: You've lost a battle, not the war. Aries, you are in this for the long run, and victory will require more than just your physical strength. So detach yourself from the material plane of existence and turn inwards to find that reserve of resilience. Remember, the weather doesn't have to be gloomy if you don't want it to. Tip: Find that reserve of resilience.

TAURUS: What do you do when faced with injustice? Do you stoop down to their level or do you let the gods of karma intervene on your behalf? Taurus, the less you do, the more you will gain. Continue to live conscientiously and get ready to watch poetic justice unfold. Taureans who have been working themselves to the bone, consider taking some time off to recalibrate. Tip: Watch poetic justice unfold.

GEMINI: Physical exhaustion is one thing; mental, quite another. If you feel like the stress is getting to you, give in to your need for solitude. Sometimes, you just need to put your phone on flight mode and get eight hours of uninterrupted sleep. To turn things

around, the cards are also encouraging you to spend time with in the company of children.

Tip: Spend time in the company of those who make you forget your troubles.

CANCER: To quote the most commonly used self-help affirmation: change is the only constant. What you've displayed this week is courage at its best. Give yourself a pat on the back, Cancer. At the same time, let go of the need to be okay or make things okay immediately. You need time to process the learnings and adjust to a new way of life. Be patient with yourself.

Tip: You are coping with the changes. Be patient with yourself.

LEO: When you focus all your energy on doing what you love, you become a magnet for joy and abundance. As a result, wealth flows freely into your life. Keep this in mind when you are faced with choices today. Opt for the path that ignites your passion and brings you joy. Just because you are taking a risk does not mean things will manifest immediately. Tip: Pour your energy into what brings you joy.

VIRGO: Wise words by GB Shaw, "The

single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." Do not let yourself fall into this trap. Remember, we are still in retrograde season. Make sure what you have said and what others have understood is exactly the same. When it comes to professional matters, it's best to put everything on paper. Tip: Keep your communication clear and direct.

LIBRA: In a world that glorifies the busy, understand the importance of rest and rejuvenation. Libra, you've dealt with some major changes in the past few days. Your body deserves some downtime to process it all. Word for the wise: schedule that spa appointment or aromatherapy session pronto! Some of you may be recovering from a betrayal of sorts. Not everybody deserves to know your secrets.

Tip: Take time off from your schedule.

SCORPIO: Nothing will go back to being the same. Such is the cycle of life. Understand and embrace this, Scorpio. You have the strength and flexibility required to adapt to the given changes. Trust that everything is

ultimately transpiring for your highest good. Today also brings with itself the reminder that your body is a sacred shrine that houses your soul. Keep the promises you made to yourself. Tip: Change is the only constant.

SAGITTARIUS: You may or may not have the entire road map in front of you. What matters is that you know the next step. Pay attention to your intuition. Be cognizant of the signs and symbols. Trust that you are already on the right track. Some of you are being asked to level up at this point. Sagittarius, you have the power to make the changes you are being guided to.

Tip: Pay heed to your inner voice.

CAPRICORN: Teamwork divides the task and multiplies the success. Today, make a conscious effort to work with rather than against people. A dream team, united by common goals, is sure to achieve the required targets much faster than expected. Remember, as a leader, you are also responsible for turning rocks into diamonds and reminding others of their true potential. Don't hesitate to shine your light on the world.

Tip: You're working with a team that understands you perfectly.

AQUARIUS: There is a reason why you have hired talent, Aquarius, so that you do not have to do all the work by yourself! You are no longer a one (wo)man army. There is no need for you to carry the load of the entire company on your shoulders. Burdening yourself with mundane tasks is actually taking you away from your sacred purpose. Today, you're being asked to work smart (not hard) and delegate responsibilities with a smile.

Tip: Focus on the bigger tasks.

PISCES: Look at you resolving conflicts, restoring peace, and exiting volatile situations with grace and poise. You deserve a pat on the back for being the light. As such, interpersonal relationships of all kinds will take centre stage today. Be the catalyst of change, Pisces. Initiate conversations outside of the workplace. Some of you may be presented with the opportunity to collaborate and co-create with people who inspire you deeply. Make the most of this opportunity.

Tip: Be the light.