



# SummitTIMES

**Five leaders resign from HSP**

**SAGAR CHHETRI**  
**GANGTOK, 02 JAN:**

Five leaders of Hamro Sikkim Party [HSP] resigned from their respective posts and primary membership of the party on Thursday.

HSP vice-president, Anu Bhattacharai, general secretary, Prem Karki and publicity secretary, Punya Koirala and HSP candidates in the last election, Rudra Khatiwada for Chujachen constituency and Indra Kumar Suji for West Pendam constituency have submitted their resignation letter to the president of the party.

In the resignation letter, they have said, "We joined the party from the start believing in Bhaichung Bhutia to work for Sikkim and its people. But now his stubbornness and one-sided decisions and his recent communal statement are not in the interest of majority communities of the State."

The letter further states that such communal and narrow thoughts would not allow democracy to prosper and would further weaken it.

## Namprikdang Namsoong festival begins



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA**  
**DZONGU, 02 JAN:**

The three-day Namprikdang Namsoong festival at Dzongu, North Sikkim, started today. The festival is scheduled to continue till 04 January.

The festival was inaugurated today by Forest Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia in the presence of Roads & Bridges Minister, Samdup Lepcha who is also the chief patron of the celebration, In-charge,

Chungkipo Lepcha, president Celebration Committee, Nezing Lepcha, DC North, TT Kaleon, DFO North, Pempa Dadul Bhutia and officials from various Departments.

General Secretary, Namprikdang Namsoong Celebration Committee, Samten Lepcha, while delivering the welcome speech highlighted the tradition of Namprikdang festival.

The chief guest, in his speech, urged all the peo-

ple of Dzongu to safeguard their culture and identity.

He also stated that all the villagers should be united in making decisions for the benefit of the area and also urged that there should not be any disparity among the people regarding Teesta Stage IV.

The chief guest and other guests also visited the traditional stalls while the festival also includes colourful cultural program, traditional games, etc.

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## AASU hangs Sonowal's effigies

**NALBARI (ASSAM), JAN 2 (PTI):** The All Assam Students Union, which is spearheading protests against the contentious Citizenship Amended Act, on Thursday hung effigies of Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal at twentytwo places in Nalbari district.

The students union alleged lathicharge by police on AASU protesters for waving black

flags at Sonowal, a former president of the student's union when he was on way from Guwahati to Krishnaguru's ashram in Barpeta district and demanded that he take action against the force personnel.

In Nalbari town, AASU members hung Sonowal's effigy at the Harimandir Chowk, Ghograpar, Barbhag, Bahjani, Tihu, Chamata and Koithalkuchi in Nal-

bari district.

An AASU spokesman said on Thursday that the students union will organise a ten-hour mass hunger strike on January 6 in protest against the alleged assault on its members.

AASU also submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner demanding appropriate steps against police officials who were allegedly involved in the assault.

## MP attends Rainbow Trout Festival at Sribadam



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 02 JAN:**

Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, Indra Hang Subba was the chief guest, on the fifth day of Rainbow Trout Festival at Sribadam, West Sikkim, a press release informs.

The programme was organized by Sribadam Rain-

bow Trout Festival organizing committee in collaboration with Trout rearing Co-operative Society Ltd.

The programme included Ziplining, Burma Bridge, Volleyball, Traditional Food and Drinks and Paragliding & Ride for unexplored routes in West Sikkim with Royal Enfield was also demonstrated

by BOW Namchi, DMC & Kanchanjunga Motor Cycle Club.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Subba said that Sribadam has made exemplary progress in trout farming as compared to other places. Further, he shed light on the concept of tourism and explained how this initiative would bring about visible transformation in the economy

## Former Karnataka CMs hit out at PM over Karnataka visit



**BENGALURU, JAN 2 (PTI):** Former chief ministers of Karnataka Siddaramaiah and H D Kumaraswamy on Thursday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he embarked on a two-day visit to the state attend events in Tumakuru and Bengaluru.

In a series of tweets, the Congress and the JD(S) leaders took a dig at Modi for his alleged failure on various fronts.

"You did not visit Karnataka when it was devastated by floods, you did not visit Karnataka when our farmers cried for help, but all of a sudden, when you want to launch your political propaganda, you remember the innocent people of Karnataka. Wah Modi Wah!!" Siddaramaiah tweeted.

In another tweet, the Congress leader claimed Karnataka is

starved of Central government funds as there were no adequate flood relief, no GST revenue loss compensation and there was a delay in the transfer of grant-in-aid.

He further said, "Before attempting to fool our people, let the people of Karnataka know when they will get their due share!" He also sought to know from Modi why the 25 MPs from Karnataka have 'turned off' their engines.

"With 25 MPs from BJP and a state government with BJP, people hoped for a double engine. Instead, all BJP representatives have turned off their engines and have become sycophants to play a tune to your idiosyncrasies. Why, are they scared of you?" Siddaramaiah said.

Seeking an explanation on various incomplete projects, the Con-

gress leader said, "Mr Narendra Modi, people are fed up of your lies and double-edged sword comments. We want your answer today about long-standing questions on: Kalsas Banduri Yojana, Belagavi border issue, exams in Kannada, Tulu & Kodava in 8th schedule, the list goes on."

Kumaraswamy too minced no words as he went on the offensive against the Centre.

In his tweets quoting newspaper reports, he said Karnataka's coffers have dried up, financial position is in doldrums and the revenue has plummeted.

"What's the reason (behind poor economic situation)? The poor economic policies of the Centre. After swallowing the GDP and development of the country, the wrong policies have affected the state too," alleged Kumaraswamy.

Quoting reports, Kumaraswamy said the Centre has denied the state's share of revenue.

"About 5.44 per cent of state's share is yet to come from the Centre. This is step-motherly attitude of the Centre towards the state," Kumaraswamy tweeted.

## Delhi factory fire: Firefighter succumbs to injuries



**NEW DELHI, JAN 2 (PTI):** A fortnight before he would have turned 29, Amit Kumar Balyan died saving lives after a building collapse in Peeragarhi area in northwest Delhi on Thursday.

Balyan had joined the Delhi Fire Service as a fire operator after successfully completing his basic training on June 10, 2019. A resident of Meenagar, he was posted at Kirti Nagar fire station.

He married in February 2019 and is survived by his wife, father, mother, one younger brother

and two younger sisters.

The firefighter, who was rescued after a portion of the three-storey building collapsed following an explosion, succumbed to his injuries at a hospital, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said.

Officials said 17 others were injured in the fire that broke out early Thursday.

Ved Pal Chhikara, assistant divisional officer of the fire department, said the rescue operation became difficult after the rear portion of the building collapsed after the explosion.

"We got information around 8 am regarding the collapse following a blast inside the building. Total four persons, including three firemen, were trapped. We broke the portions of two buildings on either side of the premises where fire occurred.

"Civilians were taken out first, following which two firemen -- Manjeet and Mahavir -- were moved out. Balyan was the last person who was rescued around 3 pm. He was taken to Balaji Hospital where he was declared

dead," Chhikara said.

Delhi Fire Service Fire Director Atul Garg said Balyan was trapped for almost six hours.

He was on the ground floor during the rescue operation and died due of injuries suffered when a mould of debris fell on him, Garg added.

Balyan's wife Shivani is a constable in UP police and posted in Ghaziabad. His father Babu Ram is an assistant sub-inspector in Delhi Police. Surrounded by relatives outside the mortuary of Sanjay Gandhi Hospital, where Balyan's body is kept for post-mortem, Ram was numb with shock.

His family members said they cannot do the funeral on a Thursday, so they will take the body from the hospital Friday morning, Chhikara said. "We will take his body to the Fire Safety Management Academy in Rohini to pay tributes and then

will hand it over to the family members."

"We received information around 10 am that Balyan was trapped under the debris. We rushed to the spot and waited for the officials to rescue him. He recently got married and it is very unfortunate that he died," one of his neighbours said.

The government gives an ex-gratia of Rs one crore to the family of uniformed services personnel who died in line of duty.

According to an official, the scheme covers personnel serving with armed forces, paramilitary forces, Delhi Police, Delhi Fire Services, district disaster management staff, home guards and civil defence.

The armed forces and paramilitary personnel qualify for the scheme if they had Delhi as permanent residence at the time of joining.



## Satpalji Maharaj arrives in Namchi

**NAMCHI, 02 JAN (IPR):** Minister for Tourism, Irrigation, Minor Irrigation, Culture, Watershed Management and Indo-Nepal Uttarakhand River Projects, Government of Uttarakhand, Satpalji Maharaj along with his family arrived at Namchi, today. He is on a three-day visit to South and West Sikkim.

The Minister along with his family visited and offered prayers at Siddheshwara Dham and attended



evening aarati at the main shrine.

It may be mentioned here that

Satpalji Maharaj will be visiting Samdruptse and Thagata Tsal at Rav-

angla on 03 January after which he will proceed towards West District.

## Govt sets up dedicated desk to look after Ayodhya issue

**NEW DELHI, JAN 2 (PTI):** The government has set up a dedicated desk, headed by an additional secretary, to look after all matters related to the Supreme Court verdict on the Ayodhya issue.

In an official order, the Union Home Ministry said Ayodhya matters and related court judgements will be handled by three officers, headed by Additional Secretary Gynesh Kumar.

The move bears significance in the wake of November 9 judgement of the Supreme Court which allowed construction of a Ram Temple in the disputed site in Ayodha.

The apex court also

ordered handing over of a 5-acre plot to Uttar Pradesh Sunni Waqf Board and setting up of a trust for construction of the Ram temple.

Now, this new wing of the home ministry, headed by Kumar, will look after all matters related to the Ayodhya issue.

There have been reports that the Uttar Pradesh government has sent a proposal to the home ministry suggesting three plots in Ayodhya, one of which can be given to UP Sunni Waqf Board.

“All such matters will be now handled by the new desk in the home ministry,” an official said.

Interestingly, Kumar

also heads the Department of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh affairs in the home ministry.

He was the key officer in the central government’s move to abrogate the special status given to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcation of the state into two Union Territories.

Till now, matters relating to Ayodhya and court cases related to Ram Janma Bhoomi and Babri Masjid dispute were handled by the Internal Security-I division of the home ministry, along with matters related to National Integration Council, Sikh militancy, Official Secrets Act, communal riots besides others.

There was a dedicated Ayodha cell in the home ministry in the 1990s and early 2000s but it was closed down after the submission of the Liberhan Commission of Inquiry on Ayodha.

In the same order, the home ministry also said the Internal Security-II division has been merged with the Internal Security-I division and henceforth it will be known as Internal Security-I division.

Joint Secretary (Women Safety) Punya Salila Srivastava has been given the charge of the merged Internal Security-I division along with her present responsibility in the home ministry.

## Ker govt to press Centre to frame law for expatriates’ welfare: Vijayan

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN 2 (PTI):** The Kerala government on Thursday said it would press the Centre to frame necessary legislation to ensure the welfare of expatriates.

Inaugurating a conference being held as part of the second Loka Kerala Sabha (LKS), a platform of Non-Resident Keralites from 47 countries and 21 states, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan assured his government “will take up the matter of the legislation with the Centre”.

Attacking the BJP-led NDA government, Vijayan said there is no national policy or legislation for the welfare of expatriates despite the challenges and exploitation being faced by them and added the “insensitivity” towards the NRI community is “quite unfortunate”.

Despite its limitations, the Kerala government had taken a lot of initiatives in this regard, he said adding the

Centre does not have a system to support or provide information to those who wish to migrate to other countries, nor to ensure their safety, whereas the state government has initiated a pre-departure training.

The LDF government has also started skill development courses to cater to the need of professionals in foreign countries.

Vijayan said it was unfortunate that the Union government does not equip the embassies to efficiently intervene and end exploitation of expatriate employees abroad.

With the formation of Pravasi Legal Cell, the state was trying to provide maximum help to the NRKs, he said.

Pointing out that there was no national level policy to ensure rehabilitation of the returnees, he said the state government had, however, taken steps in this regard too by

strengthening the activities of NORKA (Non Resident Keralites Affairs) and Pravasi Welfare Board.

Vijayan also suggested a consortium be formed jointly with expatriates, state government and the centre and he would bring this to the notice of the Union government.

Though the Centre is planning a new emigration policy, there is no indication that it would consider issues like the exploitation by middlemen and the discriminatory approach in verification of migration documents of the expatriates based on educational qualification, he said.

The Sabha should also actively involve in policy making platforms related to migration, he said.

The migration of Malayalees within the country has come down to 5.25 lakh from seven lakh within three years, Vijayan said adding the government with its

limitations was trying its best to ensure the safety of those migrants too with constant communication with the respective state governments.

The expats have invested recently in major projects like airport, multi-speciality hospitals and convention centres in the state.

The recently registered Pravasi Investment company, Pravasi Chitti and dividend bonds too provide secure investment options, he said.

The State government has also effectively initiated talks with the Sultan of Sharjah, which helped to free 149 expats from jail, Vijayan said.

Kerala Assembly Speaker P Sreeramakrishnan presided over the function.

The opposition Congress-led UDF has boycotted the meet.

Union Minister of External Affairs N Mukesh Kumar, who was the chief guest, also kept away.

jayan should seek “better legal advice.”

Prasad had also said it is only “Parliament which has got the powers to pass any law with regard to citizenship; not any assembly, including the Kerala Assembly.”

However, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had on Wednesday rejected BJP’s criticism against it, saying the state assemblies have their own privileges.

The Kerala Assembly on Tuesday passed the resolution becoming the first in the country to do so.

## Yogi, Mayawati target Priyanka over Kota deaths

**LUCKNOW/JAIPUR, JAN 2 (PTI):** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and BSP chief Mayawati on Thursday targeted the Congress over infant deaths at a Rajasthan hospital, suggesting that party leader Priyanka Gandhi should have gone there to console the children’s mothers instead of “playing politics” in UP.

Both appeared to refer to Gandhi’s visit to the Uttar Pradesh after violent protests over the amended citizenship law.

Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Rajasthan BJP president Satish Poonia have also criticised the Congress-led government in Rajasthan over the functioning of the state-run JK Lon hospital in Kota, where 104 infants have died since the beginning of December.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who is an MP from Kota, had also expressed concern.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said the deaths should not be politicised and invited Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan to visit the hospital and see the “best” facilities offered there.

The Centre has decided to send a high-level team comprising experts from AIIMS, Jodhpur, and health economists to Kota.

“Let us ensure no child succumbs to preventable causes or due

to lack of health system capacity,” Vardhan wrote to Gehlot.

Adityanath, who was at the receiving end of Congress criticism over a series of deaths at a hospital in Gorakhpur over two years ago, attacked the Congress leadership in a series of tweets in Hindi.

“The death of 100 innocent children is extremely saddening and heart-wrenching. The death of children is a blot on a civilised society, human values and feelings,” he said.

“It is extremely sad that Congress president Sonia Gandhi and general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, despite being women, are not able to understand the sorrow of mothers,” he added.

He said it would have been better “had Priyanka met and consoled the aggrieved mothers instead of indulging in politics in UP”.

This was in apparent reference to her criticism of the BJP government’s handling of the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act. In tweets and during her visit to Lucknow, she had accused the UP Police of committing excesses.

BSP supremo Mayawati questioned the Congress general secretary over her “silence” on the deaths.

She said if Priyanka Gandhi does not meet

the children’s mothers, then her meeting with the kin of the victims of violence during the anti-CAA protests in UP will be “construed as pure theatrics”.

“The death of 100 children in Rajasthan’s Kota district is very sad and painful. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his government are still insensitive, disinterested and irresponsible, which is highly condemnable.”

“But what is more saddening is the fact that the top leadership of the Congress, especially its general secretary, are maintaining silence over this issue. It would have been better that like she did in UP, she had met the aggrieved mothers, who lost their children due to the laxity of the party’s government,” she said.

But Gehlot said his government is sensitive to the issue of death of sick infants at the Kota hospital.

“There should no politics over the issue. Infant mortality at this hospital is steadily decreasing. We will try to reduce it further. It is our top priority that mothers and children remain in good health,” Gehlot tweeted in Hindi.

Gehlot claimed that the first ICU for children in Rajasthan was established by the Congress government in 2003.

“We also established an ICU for children in Kota in 2011,” he added. “We are ready to im-

prove medical services in the state through discussions and cooperation with an expert team from the Centre,” he said.

BJP state president Satish Poonia said the BJP does not want to do politics on the issue but the state government is not dealing with it seriously.

“It is regrettable that the state health minister did not even visit the hospital. The chief minister is known for being sensitive. A delegation of BJP MPs had met the families who lost their children. They were in deep anguish. If the government is not sensitive, then it is worrisome,” Poonia said.

He alleged that the BJP MPs were manhandled by Congress workers during a visit to the Kota hospital.

Recently, a Rajasthan government committee had found that the hospital was short of beds and its functioning needs improvement but cleared the doctors there of any lapses.

The three-member committee, which was sent to investigate 10 deaths on December 23 and 24, had said the infants who died on the two days were given the right treatment.

The committee submitted that eight out of the 10 infants were referred from other hospitals and they were at higher risk due to pre-term birth.

## AAP seeks special session of Punjab Assembly on CAA

**CHANDIGARH, JAN 2 (PTI):** The AAP on Thursday demanded that the Congress led government in Punjab call a special session of the Assembly to adopt a resolution against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

The main opposition party in the state also urged Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to hold an all-party meeting to discuss the issue.

AAP legislator and Leader of Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema said the chief minister should immediately

convene an all-party meeting and also decide upon calling a special session of Vidhan Sabha in order to adopt a resolution against the CAA as done by the Kerala Assembly.

Cheema said “the Modi government at the Centre imposed these controversial laws, which were aimed at dividing the country and spreading bitterness among the diverse communities”.

He further said that a delegation of AAP would meet Punjab Assembly Speaker Rana KP Singh to convey the same.

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Dzongu FF and M Town in Namsoong tourney finals



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**DZONGU, 02 JAN:**  
Dzongu Football Federation defeated Chungthang Gambo in the second semifinal of

the Namprikdang Namsoong Football tournament held today. Dzongu FF won the match in a penalty shootout.

The final of the tournament will be held on 04 January between Dzongu Football Federation and M Town.

The winner of the tournament will be awarded cash prize of Rs 1,20,000 while runner up team will be awarded cash prize of Rs 60,000 with trophy.

Sena admits to tussle among Maha allies for Cabinet berths

**MUMBAI, JAN 2 (PTI):** The Shiv Sena on Thursday admitted that there was a tussle among senior leaders of the three ruling alliance parties in Maharashtra for key Cabinet berths, and said some MLAs could not be inducted as ministers because the list of “probables” was huge.

It also took a dim view of some people vandalising the Congress office in Pune to protest against non-inclusion of party MLA Sangram Thopte in the ministry.

The Congress used to call Shiv Sena’s protests as ‘rada culture’ (hooliganism), but what Thopte’s alleged supporters did was exactly the same, it said.

This does not suit the “Congress culture”, an editorial in Sena mouthpiece ‘Saamana’ said.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray expanded his month-old ministry on Monday by inducting 36 ministers.

“The Cabinet expansion was, indeed, delayed but it finally happened. There were some sparks of disappointment from those who could not make the

cut, but the list of probables was huge,” the Shiv Sena said.

It said the opposition (BJP) may be “bubbling” over such developments, but even the previous Devendra Fadnavis government was no exception to such discontent during its Cabinet expansions.

The Uddhav Thackeray-led party also said it kept its word by inducting three Independents, who extended support to the Shiv Sena, unlike the Congress and NCP.

“A strong and experienced Cabinet is in power, it should be allowed to function,” the Sena said.

On Shiv Sena MLA Bhaskar Jadhav expressing “shock” over his exclusion from the ministry, the Marathi daily said Cabinet berth was “not promised” to anyone, including Jadhav, who joined the Thackeray-led party after quitting the NCP.

“Jadhav claimed Thackeray promised to make him Cabinet minister. As per our information, no such promise was made to him. Thackeray must have asked him to join the Sena ahead of the Assembly polls and be part of the



government,” it said.

The Shiv Sena joined hands with the Congress and NCP, its traditional adversaries, after its alliance with the BJP collapsed over the issue of sharing the chief ministerial post following the state Assembly polls held in October last year.

Noting that there was a tussle over portfolio distribution, the Shiv Sena said senior Congress leader and former chief minister Ashok Chavan, who has been inducted into the state Cabinet, needs a ministry like ‘revenue’.

But the ministry is currently with another Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat, it pointed out.

Expressing displeasure over vandalisation of Congress’ office in Pune, the Sena said though Sangram Thopte distanced himself from the protest, the way such discontent has come out

does not suit the “Congress culture”.

“The Congress used to call Shiv Sena’s protests as ‘rada culture’, but what Thopte’s alleged supporters did in the Pune Congress office was exactly the same,” it said.

Another Congress hopeful was three-time MLA Praniti Shinde, whose supporter wrote a letter in blood to party chief Sonia Gandhi, claiming that Shinde and her father worked hard for the party and always remained loyal to the leadership.

Praniti Shinde, the MLA from Solapur, is the daughter of veteran Congressman and former Maharashtra chief minister and Union home minister Sushilkumar Shinde.

“Her father could become chief minister and Union home minister because of the Gandhi family and the Congress,” the Sena claimed.

New Year celebration at Raj Bhavan

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 02 JAN:**

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad exchanged greetings and good wishes for New Year 2020 with staff and ITBP Jawans posted at Raj Bhavan in a special function held at Raj Bhavan today. Wishing a prosperous and fulfilling New Year to all staff, officers and ITBP Jawans, the Governor also distributed blankets, sweets and gifts to all present in the function.



Annual magazine “Hamro Serophero” released

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 02 JAN:**

A new Nepali magazine ‘Hamro Serophero’ was released here at Press Club of Sikkim on Thursday. The magazine was jointly released by senior litterateurs, Chakrapani Bhattarai and Punya Koirala. Jagannath Pandey of Luing-Thamidara, East Sikkim is the publisher and editor of this annual magazine.

On the occasion, publisher and editor, Mr Pandey stated that the magazine was a gift to the people on this New Year. He mentioned that this annual magazine includes happenings and events mainly from in



and around Luing-Thamidara and also provides space for essays, poems, writings of students, upcoming and prominent writers of the State.

The main objective to take out this magazine is to highlight issues and happenings of the area,

he said adding that the magazine will come out annually in January.

In his address, Chakrapani Bhattarai, who was present as the chief guest, said that to publish a magazine is not an easy task. On the same, he appreciated the initiative of Mr Pandey

for highlighting issues and events of his village and for providing space for creative writings.

He stressed upon the need of competition in writing mainly for students and youths on pertinent issues of the State to create mass awareness on these issues.

Shiromani Akali Dal leader shot dead in Amritsar

**AMRITSAR, JAN 2 (PTI):**

A local Shiromani Akali Dal leader was shot dead by three motorcycle-borne assailants at Umarpura village here when he was coming out of a gurdwara after offering prayers, police said on Thursday.

Gurdeep Singh, whose wife is a village head, was killed on

Wednesday, they said.

The assailants managed to flee after pumping five bullets into Singh, who died on the spot, they said.

Singh was said to be a close associate of senior Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia.

The police have booked five people including a father-son

duo, Nirmal Singh and Harmanjeet Singh, in connection with the killing.

The police said Harmanjeet is wanted in several criminal cases.

Station House Officer Tarsem Singh said raids were being conducted at their possible hideouts to nab them.

The police are also

examining CCTV footage obtained from nearby areas.

This is second fatal attack on SAD functionaries in the state since November last year, when the party’s Dalbir Singh Dhilwan was killed in Gurdaspur.

The SAD had described Dhilwan’s killing as a “political murder”.

28th World Book Fair to focus on Gandhi as writer

**NEW DELHI, JAN 2 (PTI):**

The annual New Delhi World Book Fair, in its 28th edition, will focus on how Mahatma Gandhi influenced generations of writers through his writings.

The nine-day fair, organised by National Book Trust (NBT) in association with ITPO, will be inaugurated by Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank here at the Pragati Maidan on January 4.

Commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi, the theme pavilion, inspired by Sabarmati Ashram, uses hand-spun materials as wall-cladding, the organisers said in a statement.

Besides an exclusive exhibition of 500 books on and by Gandhi in different languages, it will also host 30 panel discussions, book launches and performances related to

the theme, they said.

“Mahatma Gandhi was a prolific writer, editor, publisher, printer and institution builder. He wrote extensively in Gujarati, Hindi and English languages. His writings not only reflected his philosophy of non-violence and peace but also gave an insight into the socio-economic and political scenario of the country,” the statement said.

It will also witness panel discussions, talks, workshops, childrens activities, screening of short films, special photo exhibits as well as cultural and musical performances, they added.

Some of the well-known authors to take part in the fair include the likes of Sudha Murthy, Bhawana Sommaya, Anirban Ganguly, Kevin Missal and Sumit Dutt Majumdar. Over 600 publishers -- from India and abroad -- will

display books at more than 1300 stalls.

The number of countries at the book fair has come down from 20 to 15 this year and includes Abu Dhabi, China, Sharjah, China, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Iran, Nepal, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sri Lanka, the UK and USA.

The fair, however, will not be hosting any ‘guest country’ this year.

“Due to the ongoing construction and the subsequent lack of space in Pragati Maidan, we did not invite a guest country this time around,” said Govind Prasad Sharma, Chairman, NBT.

The exhibition centre, which was inaugurated in 1972 by then prime minister Indira Gandhi, is being re-built into an Integrated Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre (IECC).

Sharjah was the guest country last year.

However, the space provided for the fair is similar to what it was

last year, which is close to “24,000 sq metres”, Rajesh Aggarwal, executive director at ITPO said.

Another highlight will be the exhibition of over “250 titles” in Hindi, English and other Indian languages published in Braille for visually impaired readers, the statement said.

“NBT India in collaboration with All India Confederation of Blind (AICB) has jointly published a set of books in Braille... A catalogue of these books in Braille as well as bilingual catalogue in English and Hindi have also been brought out by NBT. A special exhibition of these books will also be put up,” they said.

Though there is free entry for students (wearing school uniform), senior citizens and differently-abled people, the entry ticket for children and adults is priced at Rs 20 and Rs 30, respectively.

The fair will end on January 12.

Japan raid, Turkey arrests in widening Ghosn probe

Officials on Thursday raided the Tokyo residence of former Nissan boss Carlos Ghosn who fled to Lebanon to avoid a Japanese trial, while Turkey detained several people as part of a widening probe into the security lapse.

Ghosn, who faced multiple charges of financial misconduct that he denies, won bail in April but with strict conditions -- including a ban on overseas travel.

But the disgraced executive, who has French,

Brazilian and Lebanese nationalities, managed to slip out of Japan on Sunday despite having handed over his three passports to his lawyers.

A court in Tokyo had allowed Ghosn to keep a second French passport as he needed one to travel inside Japan, a source close to the matter told AFP Thursday.

“He had to keep this passport” to prove his short-stay status, the source said, adding: “There was permission from the

court.”

Ghosn was allowed this French passport so long as it was kept in a locked case with the code held by his lawyers, the source said.

There is no emigration data showing Ghosn’s departure from Japan but he entered Lebanon on a French passport, public broadcaster NHK said.

Colourful rumours abound regarding the exact circumstances of Ghosn’s daring escape.

One claim in the Leb-

anese media was that the mogul was sprung from his Tokyo residence in a musical instrument case -- a story a source in his entourage denied.

He is thought to have taken a private jet from Kansai Airport in western Japan on December 29, heading for Istanbul. It is believed Ghosn headed from there to Beirut.

Turkey’s interior ministry has opened an investigation into

Ghosn’s apparent transfer between private jets at an Istanbul airport on Monday.

Officials questioned seven people, including four pilots, as part of the probe, news agency DHA reported Thursday.

- Residence raided - Prosecutors, meanwhile, raided his former Tokyo residence Thursday as part of an initial investigation into his escape.

Television footage

showed several officers in dark suits entering the property.

Authorities are expected to analyse security camera footage from his residence and other places they suspect Ghosn travelled to before he fled, NHK said.

Police suspect “several” people accompanied him to help him escape “in an unlawful manner,” it added.

The Japanese government has yet to issue any official statement on the case.

When his defence law-

yers were arguing for bail, prosecutors claimed he was a flight risk with powerful connections, but Ghosn himself said he wanted to be tried to prove his innocence.

One of his lawyers also said at the time that he was such a famous face he had no chance of slipping away undetected.

Several countries allow people to have two passports of the same nationality -- for example if they are frequent travellers

constantly needing visas, or visit nations in conflict with each other.

The Japanese government is likely to ask Lebanon to extradite Ghosn through diplomatic channels, but chances of his handover appear slim as Beirut has no extradition accord with Tokyo.

The French government said on Thursday it would not extradite Ghosn if he arrived in the country because it does not extradite its nationals.



## Hum Dhekenge

*Will citizens lose to the apologists*

So, an institution of excellence has decided to reduce itself to a mocking meme, the butt of jokes and object of ridicule. Too clichéd, the references you say? Well, IIT-Kanpur is receiving exactly the mediocrity it deserves and the lazy application it appears to be managed with.

For those who had better things to do, like party and nurse hangovers, than keep track of the horror that our country is becoming, here is a quick recap. IIT-Kanpur students, thank god they are better than the supplicants running the institution, took out a rally some days back in support of Jamia Milia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University students on whom the Machiavellianly-infected unprofessionalism known as the Police had unleashed their frustrations. Before the rally started, the students sang Faiz Ahmed Faiz's celebrated Urdu poem, "Hum dekhenge". Anyone with a Facebook account of an Instagram app knows of this rhyme. Its catchy, and at least some lines which are in accessible Urdu [the rest, is admittedly difficult to understand] are inspiring and powerful. The IIT rally was disciplined but clear in its condemnations, and this spine that the young have discovered for the country is ranking the saffron brigade, bhakts and apologists and one of them [a faculty member] wrote to the institution's administration complaining that the students sang an anti-Hindu song. The administration clicked its heels and has formed a committee to verify whether "Hum dekhenge" is an anti-Hindu poem or not. Clearly, the fear of big brother is so pervasive that the administrators, even at an institution of technology in a Digital India will not do a simple Google search and inform themselves better. Hum Dekhenge is an anthem penned by Faiz against a military dictator and his regressive Islamisation of Pakistan. This one, along with most of Faiz's other poems were banned in Pakistan, but they survived, performed from protest to protest and its message was so powerful that the song speaks even for protests in India where the Communists have embraced it [Faiz was a communist, btw]. The song speaks of toppling dictators and challenging their versions of faith and nationalism; it speaks of demolishing icons bolstered by hate and spite. It is not anti-Hindu, but then again, so what if it was? Haven't reformers and revolutionaries challenged organized religion in India's own past?

The gaggle at IIT-Kanpur has painted itself into a corner. What if the "committee" decides that Hum Dekhenge is indeed an anti-Hindu call? What will it do about it. Remember, this is an IIT, and given the failed education and lack of equal opportunity in our country, most of the protestors there would have been upper caste Hindu males, entitled enough to not only claim that they are somehow discriminated against, but also with the right to challenge their, let's accept it, privileged religion. This development is also an indication of a bigger worry – one in which institutions are being hollowed of their independence. In a real democracy and at independent institutions, such a complaint letter would have been summarily dismissed, or, if the administrators were polite and believed in the freedom of speech of even the ignorant, would have received a rejection letter with a Wikipedia link to Faiz Ahmed Faiz. What happened instead was an institution projecting to the world that they take even the vacuous rants of the ill-informed Right very seriously and will follow up on its complaints officially. That is dangerous, and warning signs have been aplenty in the recent years. One small gesture of independence will be for the committee to complete its enquiry and then hold a press conference explaining what Hum Dekhenge is all about – an anthem which employs the metaphor of religious imagery to subvert and challenge rigid interpretations of faith and speaks of a Day of Revolution when a dictator is overthrown and ousted by the people and democracy re-installed. The committee in question could conclude then that the complainant was probably scared of this sentiment coursing through the country and challenging the bigotry of his leader. That would be nice, but is unlikely to happen.

That said, it is a sad day for a country when its government and leaders can be accused of extreme bigotry and violence and of invoking fascist quotes, and, even when the allegations are false, get accepted by the people as being true. Recently, the Pradhan Sewak of the country was accused of lifting a quote from Hitler to underline his nationalistic credentials. A fact-check eventually confirmed that the analogy was his own and not Hitler's. The worry is that most people did not even bat an eyelid when the first wave of this fake news hit social media. No one was shocked that the country's PM's sense of nationalism is sourced from Hitler. At that should scare all citizens; not that its current crop of leaders might be evil, but the fact that people believe, without pause, every monstrosity ascribed to them.

# Five Rules From Psychology to Help Keep Your New Year's Resolutions

BRIAN HARMAN & JANINE BOSAK  
THECONVERSATION.COM

We are creatures of habit. Between a third and half of our behaviour is habitual, according to research estimates. Unfortunately, our bad habits compromise our health, wealth and happiness.

On average, it takes 66 days to form a habit. But positive behavioural change is harder than self-help books would have us believe. Only 40% of people can sustain their new year's resolution after six months, while only 20% of dieters maintain long-term weight loss.

Education does not effectively promote behaviour change. A review of 47 studies found that it's relatively easy to change a person's goals and intentions but it's much harder to change how they behave. Strong habits are often activated unconsciously in response to social or environmental cues – for example, we go to the supermarket about 211 times a year, but most of our purchases are habitual.

With all this in mind, here are five ways to help you keep your new year's resolutions – whether that's taking better care of your body or your bank balance.

### 1. PRIORITISE YOUR GOALS

Willpower is a finite resource. Resisting temptation drains our willpower, leaving us vulnerable to influences that reinforce our impulsive behaviours.

A common mistake is being overly ambitious with our new year resolutions. It's best to prioritise goals and focus on one behaviour. The ideal approach is to make small, incremental changes that replace the habit with a behaviour that supplies a similar reward. Diets that are too rigid, for example, require a lot of willpower to follow.

### 2. CHANGE YOUR ROUTINES

Habits are embedded within routines. So disrupting routines can prompt us to adopt new habits. For example, major life events like changing jobs, moving house or having a baby all promote new habits since we are forced to adapt to new circumstances.

While routines can boost our productivity and add stability to our social lives they should be chosen with care. People who live alone have stronger routines so throwing a dice to randomise your decision making if you do could help you disrupt your habits.

Our environment also affects our routines. For example, without giving it any thought, we eat popcorn at the cinema but not in a meeting room.



Similarly, reducing the size of your storage containers and the plates you serve food on can help to tackle overeating.

### 3. MONITOR YOUR BEHAVIOUR

"Vigilant monitoring" appears to be the most effective strategy for tackling strong habits. This is where people actively monitor their goals and regulate their behaviours in response to different situations. A meta-analysis of 100 studies found that self-monitoring was the best of 26 different tactics used to promote healthy eating and exercise activities.

Another meta-analysis of 94 studies informs us that "implementation intentions" are also highly effective. These personalised "if x then y" rules can counter the automatic activation of habits. For example, if I feel like eating chocolate, I will drink a glass of water.

Implementation intentions with multiple options are very effective since they provide the flexibility to adapt to situations. For example, "if I feel like eating chocolate I will (a) drink a glass of water, (b) eat some fruit; or (c) go for a walk".

But negatively framed implementation intentions ("when I feel like eating chocolate, I will not eat chocolate") can be counterproductive since people have to suppress a thought ("don't eat chocolate"). Ironically, trying to suppress a thought actually makes us more likely to think about it thereby increasing the risk of habits such as binge eating, smoking and drinking.

Distraction is another approach that can disrupt habits. Also effective is focusing on the positive aspects of the new habit and the negative aspects of the problem habit.

### 4. IMAGINE YOUR FUTURE SELF

## How to Rethink Your Idea of Success in the New Year – according to ancient Stoic philosophers

JOHN SELLARS  
THECONVERSATION.COM

What are you hoping for in the new year? Do you want to progress in your career or perhaps buy a house? Maybe you're looking to start a new relationship or finally achieve that pay rise?

While there's nothing inherently wrong with pursuing any of these things, by attaching your sense of self-worth to these kinds of external successes, the road ahead can be fraught with danger. So with the help of the philosophy of the ancient Stoics, it's time to rethink what's worth chasing.

By fixating on external successes, most of us end up thinking that if we don't achieve these goals, we've failed. We often think, "if only I were more determined or worked harder, then I'd fulfil all my ambitions, because if I don't, I've only got myself to blame".

So what's the trick to avoiding this trap? The answer could very well lie in the ancient Stoics, who put forward several ideas that suggest a different way of thinking.

Stoicism is a philosophy that was founded in Athens in the early third century BC. Stoics believe that virtue (such as wisdom) is happiness, judgement should be based on behaviour, rather than words, and that we don't control and cannot rely on external events, only ourselves and our responses.

So as you set your goals or resolutions for 2020, here are the three key Stoic ideas that could help you to think differently.

### 1. MUCH OF WHAT HAPPENS IS OUT OF YOUR CONTROL

Although we can certainly contribute to outcomes, such as doing our best in a job interview,



we can never completely control the result. Our performance in the interview may be excellent, but the outcome will be as much determined by how the other candidates do and how the interviewer feels on the day.

If you tie your sense of success and self-worth to something out of your control, then you are turning your happiness into a hostage to fortune. That's not a good position to be in, but something can be done about it.

### 2. FOCUS ON THE ACTIVITY, NOT THE OUTCOME

The Stoics drew an analogy with archery. As absurd as it might sound, the goal of archery isn't about hitting the target, but simply to shoot well.

Hitting the target is out of your control – a gust of wind might blow the arrow off course.

So instead, you should focus on mastering the technique of archery. That won't guarantee you'll always hit the target – there will still be gusts of wind – but it will increase the likelihood of hitting it more often.

Most importantly, the goal of shooting arrows as best we can is completely within our control, and no annoying side winds can stop us from achieving that. Thinking along these lines helps us to bring our happiness back within our control.

### 3. TRUE VALUE RESIDES INSIDE, NOT OUTSIDE

The Stoics would argue that getting that new job, promotion, or pay rise is not genuinely good. Why? Because even if you get it, you might still be unhappy or unfulfilled. It might even make things worse – more responsibility, more stress, greater expectations. Or it might be quickly forgotten as you focus your attention on climbing up the next rung of the ladder.

The Stoics insisted that, for something to be good, it must always benefit us. And they suggested that there's only one thing that always benefits us when we have it: a calm, rational and consistent mind. This is where real value lies.

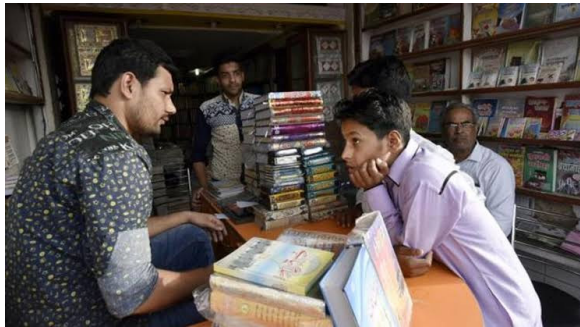
So for 2020, try to forget the external ambitions that you can't control and instead focus on cultivating the right frame of mind, such as the desire to do whatever you're doing as well as you can, simply for the satisfaction of doing it well, without any thought for further reward.

That's an ambition completely within your control. Nothing can stop you, and you can be the master of your own success this coming year.

*[the writer is Lecturer in Philosophy, Royal Holloway]*



## Bengal govt distributes workbooks to students to enhance English proficiency



**KOLKATA, JAN 2 (PTI):** The West Bengal government on Thursday distributed 'easy-to-learn' workbooks to students of classes five and six in around 80,000 state-run and aided schools to help them enhance their English proficiency, officials said.

Chairman of state Syllabus Committee, Abhik Majumder told PTI that English workbooks 'Wings' and 'Fragrance' were distributed to the students of classes five and six respectively, he said.

"Both the workbooks will help students enhance their proficiency in English. There are chapters in the books that will enable students to practice English," Majum-

der, chairman of the school education department-appointed committee, said.

There are several activity-based portions in the books where students can solve questions to enhance their skills, he said.

Majumder said the school education department had distributed English workbooks to students of classes three and four last year.

"We want to build a solid foundation of English in every child to dispel their fear of the language," he said.

Education Minister Partha Chatterjee had earlier said the state government wants students of vernacular-medium schools to succeed in competitive exams.

## BJP leader likens those opposing CAA to 'urban naxals'



**PANAJI, JAN 2 (PTI):** Goa BJP chief Vinay Tendulkar on Thursday compared the parties opposing the Citizenship Amendment Act to "urban naxals".

Hitting out at the Congress and various other parties criticising the new law, he said they were protesting against it just "for the sake of opposing".

Urban naxals is a term used to describe city-based supporters working in alleged front organisations of proscribed Maoist outfits.

Talking to reporters here, Tendulkar said people in countries like the US and UK have come out in support of the Citizenship Amendment Act.

"But in India, like ur-

## CBI transfers 19 officers

**NEW DELHI, JAN 2 (PTI):** The CBI has transferred 19 officers including two DIGs, 14 Superintendents of Police and three Additional SPs with "immediate effect", officials said on Thursday.

Deputy Inspector General Abhay Singh, who was leading the probe into sexual assault on minor girls in Muzafarpur shelter home, has been brought to the Economic Offences Wing in Delhi from the Special Crime Branch in Kolkata, but he will continue to probe sexual assault cases, the order accessed by PTI stated. The order signed by Administrative Officer Personnel D P Singh makes it clear that officers who have been specially directed by their names to supervise, investigate, or enquire into any case or matter by any Constitutional court shall continue to do so.

The order also states

that it has the approval of the CBI director.

DIG Nitin Deep Blag-gan who is heading sensitive Anti-Corruption Unit has been given the additional charge of AC-V unit, the officials said.

SP Partha Mukherjee whose unit Economic Offences IV, based in Kolkata, was probing chit fund cases, has been brought to the headquarters as AIG (Policy) here replacing Vivek Priyadarshi who has been transferred to Jaipur, they said. Priyadarshi had led the probe into 2G spectrum cases.

Vijayendra Bidari, SP in Economic Offences-III, has been transferred to Interpol Coordination unit and he will also look after the systems wing of the agency, they said, adding that Kiran S, who is part of the team probing Agusta Westland, Vijay Mallya and other cases, has been moved to AC-V unit.

## TMC hits out at Centre over rejection of R-Day tableau proposals

**KOLKATA, JAN 2 (PTI):** The Trinamool Congress on Thursday hit out at the Centre for rejecting West Bengal's tableau proposals to showcase its schemes during the Republic Day parade, alleging it insulted the people of the state for protesting against the amended Citizenship Act.

The state BJP was quick to return fire, accusing the TMC government of not properly following rules and procedure, which it said caused the rejection.

The West Bengal government had submitted proposals to display at the parade its award-winning cash transfer scheme "Kanyashree" besides giving alternatives of "Sabuj Sathi" (distribution of bicycle among school students) and "Jol Dhoro Jol Bhoro" project that seeks to conserve water, sources said.

A Defence Ministry statement had on Wednesday said an expert committee has rejected West Bengal's pro-



posal after examining it in two rounds of meeting.

"The tableau proposal of the West Bengal government was not taken forward for further consideration by the expert committee after deliberations in the second meeting.

"It is pertinent to mention here that the tableau of the govern-

ment of West Bengal was short-listed for participation in the Republic day parade 2019

as an outcome of the same process," it said.

West Bengal Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Tapas Roy accused the BJP-led central government of having a "vindictive" attitude towards the state.

"Just because West Bengal has been opposing anti-people policies of the BJP government, a step-motherly treatment is being meted out to the state. As

we have opposed anti-people laws like CAA, the Centre has rejected our tableau proposal," Roy told PTI.

This is not for the first time that West Bengal's tableau proposal has been turned down. There have been previous instances also, he said.

"Such cheap politics won't deter us from opposing anti-people policies. The BJP has insulted the people of West Bengal and they would

get a befitting reply for it in the near future," Roy said.

The Kanyashree scheme launched in 2013 is a cash transfer scheme aimed at retaining girls in schools and preventing their early marriage.

The United Nations had in 2017 awarded the Kanyashree scheme its highest public service award for promoting girls' education.

"Kanyashree is a pet project of Mamata Banerjee which has been awarded by the UN. Rejecting a tableau on it reflects the vendetta politics of the BJP.

"Our proposals to showcase Kanyashree in 2015 and 'Ekata-i Sampriti' (unity is harmony) programme in 2018 during Republic Day parades were rejected," another state minister said.

Responding to the allegations, West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh said the tableau proposals were rejected as the state government didn't

properly follow the rules and procedure regarding it.

"The state government has not followed the rules. Other states have followed them, so their tableau proposals have been accepted. The TMC should stop doing politics on each and every issue," Ghosh said.

BJP state general secretary Sayantan Basu also termed the TMC's allegations as "baseless".

"Everything is done as per the rules. There have been previous instances when West Bengal's tableaux were showcased.

So this allegation of step-motherly treatment by the centre is baseless," Basu said.

The decision to reject Bengal's tableau proposals comes at a time when Banerjee has been criss-crossing the state holding protest marches against the new citizenship law.

The TMC supremo has announced that new citizenship will not be implemented in the state.

## Mamata writes to students with New Year wishes

**KOLKATA, JAN 2 (PTI):** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday wrote individual letters to around 1.5 crore students in state-run schools as well as madrasas wishing them "a very Happy New Year". The letters were sent in the chief minister's official letterhead and signed by Banerjee herself.

They were sent individually to students of all state-run schools primary, secondary and higher secondary as well as madrasas, Sishu Shiksha Kendras and Madhyamik Shiksha Kendras. Addressing the students as "dear", Banerjee's letter reads 'At the onset of

the New Year, I convey my good wishes to you. You are the future of our country, artisan, who will build the society. Be good and study hard to be a successful human being. My wishes are all with you".

The letter also wished their parents and teachers.

A similar letter written by Banerjee was sent to each student last year.

"It's great for a student to start a New Year and a new session with a personalised letter from the chief minister. It will definitely inspire them to work hard," Kartik Manna, the chairman Sarva Shiksha Mission said.

## MP: 1,000 medical college teachers quit to press demands

**BHOPAL, JAN 2 (PTI):** At least 1,000 teachers from six government medical colleges in Madhya Pradesh have resigned in the last 48 hours to press their demands including a "clear-cut promotion policy", their union said on Thursday.

The protest could hit services in hospitals attached to government-run medical colleges.

The protesting teachers would not be reporting for duty from January 9, said Dr Rakesh Malviya, secretary of the state unit



of the Central Medical Teachers' Association.

Remaining 2,300 teachers from other colleges were expected to

tender resignations by Friday, he told PTI.

"We want the state government to come out with a clear-cut promo-

tion policy for us and address anomalies in the pay and perks under the 7th Pay Commission," Malviya said.

The absence of teachers from January 9 can hit medical services as they also serve in hospitals attached to 13 government-run medical colleges.

Hamadia Hospital, attached to Gandhi Medical College here, alone caters to around 3,500 patients every day.

Medical education minister Vijaylaxmi Sadho could not be contacted for comment.

## Sonowal shown black flags by anti-CAA protesters

**GUWAHATI, JAN 1 (PTI):** Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal faced black flags by agitators protesting against the amended Citizenship Act on Wednesday, the first day of the year.

Activists of the

AASU and Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chhatra Parishad (AJYCP) waved black flags at him at a number of locations while the chief minister was travelling from Guwahati to the ashram of religious preacher

Krishnaguru in Barpeta district.

The protesters also shouted anti-CAA and anti-government slogans while Sonowal's convoy was passing through Nalbari and Barpeta districts.

## 3 NLFT militants arrested in Tripura

**Agartala, Jan 2 (PTI):** Three militants of the outlawed National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) were arrested and arms and ammunition seized from their possession in North Tripura district, a senior police officer said on Thursday.

Superintendent of police, North Tripura, Bhanupada Chakraborty said acting on a tip-off a police team raided Panisagar railway station and arrested two NLFT militants.

Based on the information provided by the two arrested militants, police raided Dharmanagar railway station and arrested another NLFT militant.

"We have seized a 9 mm pistol, six live cartridges, many bank pass-books, SIM cards and several other documents

## TMC's no-confidence motion against Bhatpara Municipality chairman passed

**KOLKATA, JAN 2 (PTI):** The no-confidence motion moved by the Trinamool Congress against Bhatpara Municipality chairman and BJP leader Sourav Singh was passed by a margin of 19-0 in the 35-member civic body on Thursday, a senior West Bengal minister said.

"A trust vote was held on Thursday morning and we won it by a margin of 19-0. The BJP councillors didn't vote," state Food and Supplies Minister Jyotipriyo Mul-



including extortion notices, extortion rate charts, from their possession", the SP said.

All three arrested NLFT militants were booked under sedition charge, extortion and illegal possession of arms.

The NLFT on December 18 last year had served a "threat notice" to Tripura Lok Sabha MP Rebati Mohan Tripura for voting in favour of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in the Parliament, police said.

The notice issued by

NLFT self-styled secretary general D Uomthai also threatened the MP of "dire consequences and social boycott."

The NLFT was founded on March 12, 1989 with Dhananjay Reang as its self-styled chairman.

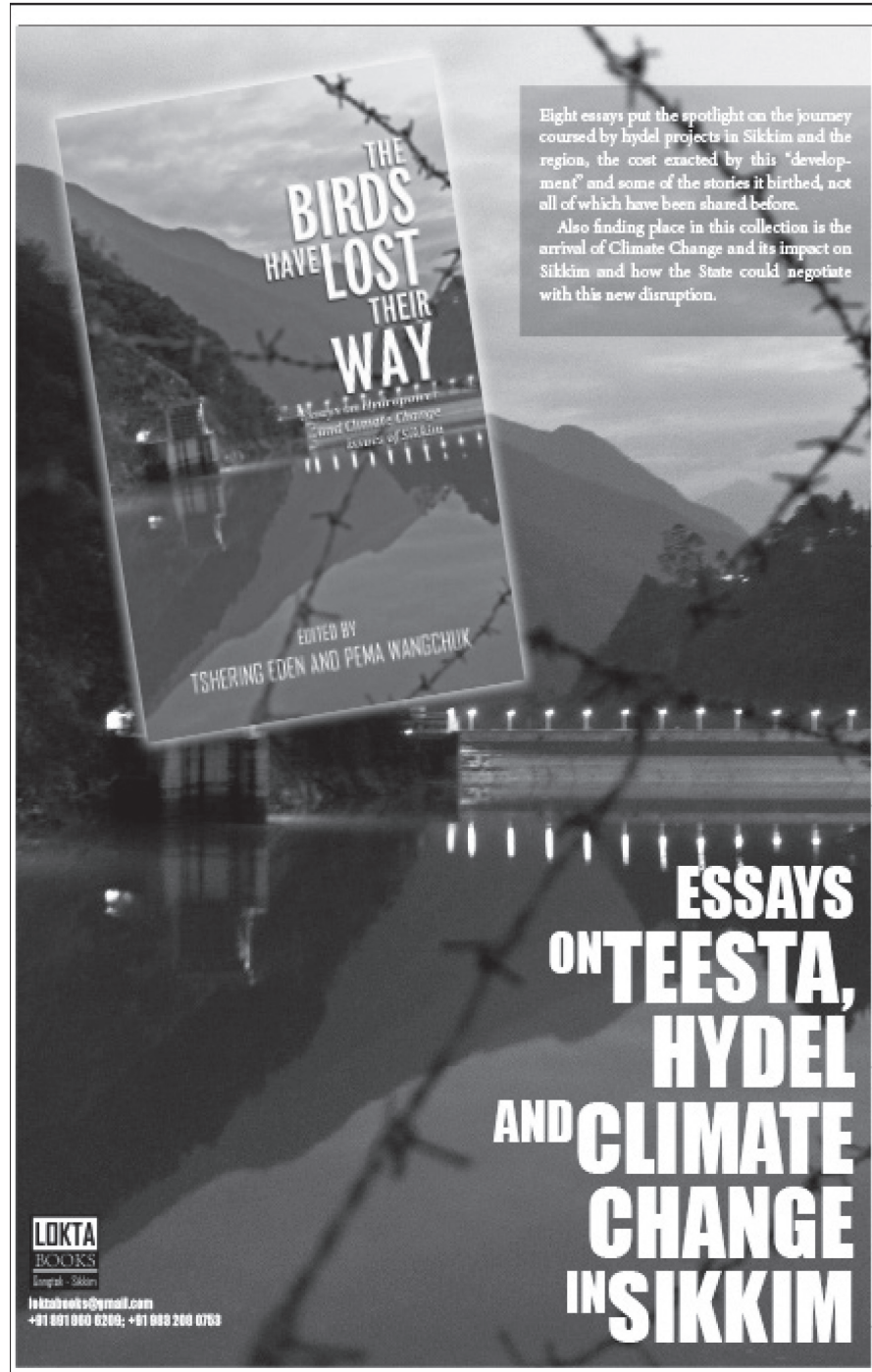
The outfit was banned in 1997 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and later under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).

A large group of 88 NLFT militants had surrendered with arms before the state government in August last year.

course against the illegal trust vote."

A total of 26 TMC members of the civic body had joined the saffron party after the Lok Sabha elections last year, and Sourav Singh had become its chairman after winning the trust vote in June last year.

In November last year, the TMC had claimed to have regained the majority in the civic body after 12 of these 26 councillors rejoined the party.





## Possessed Arteta coaxes Nicolas Pépé back from the living dead



**BARNEY RONAY**

**MANCHESTER, 02 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]:** Welcome to the Emirates, Nicolas Pépé. We've been expecting you. On a chilly, boisterous night in north London, Arsenal's £72m record signing produced a fine attacking performance that was startling in more ways than one.

Startling first of all because Pépé was able to unpick the left side of Manchester United's defence with such ease that the heavy-legged, heavy-footed, and indeed heavy Luke Shaw looked genuinely lost at times, a single stone Easter Island head planted in the sand, watching on in sombre silence as a game of football took place around him.

And startling also because it was Nicolas Pépé; and this has not been Pépé's story at Arsenal, at least not before now.

Arsenal were aggressive in midfield and coherent in their attacking plans. Mesut Özil ran the game as a genuine No 10. Toward the end he took a dropping ball just outside his own area with such a beautifully soft, cushioned touch that his left boot seemed to cradle and cosset the ball, like a man tickling a cat beneath the chin.

And again Arsenal's attacking plan was startling for other reasons too. Mainly, it was startling because Arsenal actually had an attacking plan; and this has not been the story of this team, at least not before now.

The ballad of Nicolas Pépé has made for a curious tale so far. At times he has been vague, peripheral, hard to define, and hostage to the idiot-wind of online Arsenal rage. But really, whose fault is this? To what degree can one high-priced inside-forward be expected to fix this huge, listing entity, the mixed and flowing substance that is Arsenal? Or even to step outside the general flow of Arsenal-ism, a condition that has been defined by vagueness, entropy, drift.

It is these qualities that Arteta has set his face against in his early days. "We are asking the players to do something different," he wrote before the game, "to play at a different pace, much more aggressive than they've been used to."

More aggressive, more physical. This is, it should be said, a low bar. But there has been a notable cranking of the throttle. And to his credit Arteta went with the full gun here, starting Pépé alongside Alexandre Lacazette and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang.

Arsenal's manager makes for a compelling figure on the touchline. He looks like a man en-

tirely possessed by the task. He looks like he lives every pass. He looks like a handsome tailor's mannequin haunted by the spirit of a Victorian wraith.

But Arteta is nothing if not furiously thorough in his preparation. Here he seemed to have grasped before anyone else that Pépé should, given a clear run, have the beating of Shaw every time.

And so it came to pass. There were some early splutters. Three times in the opening five minutes United had one of those cavalry charge attacks at the Arsenal back four, bearing down on that strangely vacant space where usually some footballers stand.

After which Arsenal began to impose their own patterns. Pépé opened the scoring with a slightly strange goal. Aubameyang twirled out to the right and laid the ball inside for Sead Kolasinac. His cross took a flick off Victor Lindelöf's heel. Pépé scuffed it back across goal, but with enough meat on the shot to defeat David de Gea's dive.

Steadily Pépé seemed to realise that Shaw just wasn't able to follow his movements. Pépé glided inside. Shaw flinched. Pépé produced a regal stop and turn that left his man scrambling on the turf in a jumble of limbs. He looked in those moments like what he is, a high-end footballer with the kind of poise and snap that seems to make the day stand still just a little when he has the ball.

It could have been more. Towards half time Pépé took a poor clearance from De Gea and had time to wait, take a breath, consider the fleeting nature of youth, power, beauty, talent, then curl a shot on to the foot of the post. It could have been more also because Pépé didn't quite do to Shaw what he might have done, an opponent who was reduced at times in the face of Özil, Pépé and Ainsley Maitland-Niles to the status of a training aid, a defensive hurdle rigged up out of three sacks of grain and a pumpkin for a head.

"Rinse him!" one Arsenal fan kept shouting. But Pépé didn't quite rinse Shaw, or didn't quite rinse him enough to kill the game completely. Pépé has balance, touch, pace. He just lacked a bit of viciousness here. Perhaps it will come.

He left the pitch shortly after the hour mark having attempted 26 passes and made all 26 of them, completed more dribbles than anyone else and won as many headers as any Arsenal defender. It felt, as all new eras should, like a start had been made.

## Ish Sodhi returns to Royals as spin consultant



**JAIPUR, JAN 2 (PTI):** Rajasthan Royals on Thursday appointed New Zealand leg-spinner Ish Sodhi as their spin consultant for the 2020 edition of the Indian Premier League.

The 27-year-old was part of the Royals squad in the 2018 and 2019 before being released ahead of last month's IPL

auction.

As part of his new role with the franchise, Sodhi will be working closely with bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule and Chief Operating Officer Jake Lush McCrum.

Sodhi has represented Royals in eight IPL matches, taking nine wickets at an economy rate of 6.69. "Having

played for two seasons for the Royals, I have formed a great level of understanding with all the people involved with the franchise, and they have always been very supportive of me. Therefore, I did not have to think twice when this opportunity was offered to me by the Royals' management," said Sodhi in a statement.

"It is a fascinating opportunity for me, to be involved in the coaching staff at such a young age, while also supporting and learning about the operations of the business," said Sodhi, who has picked up 47 wickets in 40 T20 Internationals for New Zealand.

He has also played 17 Tests and 31 ODIs.

## New tennis era kicks off with ATP Cup

**SYDNEY, JAN 1 (AFP):** Tennis' innovative new team championship kicks off the men's 2020 season on Friday, with Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic among those looking for a winning start ahead of the first Grand Slam of the year.

The ATP Cup will see 24 nations split into six groups across three Australian cities, with eight teams emerging from the round-robin to compete in a knockout phase until one country is left standing.

It is the sport's newest tournament and the third men's team event competing for the hearts and minds, and dollars, of fans, along with a revamped Davis Cup and the annual Laver Cup, which pits Europe against the World.

But it has already suffered setbacks, with major drawcard Roger Federer opting to give it a miss and Andy Murray and Kei Nishikori pulling out injured.

Despite this, world number two Djokovic said the move towards more team tennis was good for a sport best known for the individuality of its global superstars. "More than 90 percent of the time, we're playing as individuals and we don't have too many team events," said the Serbian great, who also heads the ATP player council.

"This is going to bring



together a lot of nations and, for me personally, it will be a very nice and proud moment to represent my country. An event like this is truly going to make an impact."

Sydney hosts the finals, along with group games, which are also held in Brisbane and Perth with US 15 million in prize money and up to 750 singles and 250 doubles ATP rankings points at stake. Australian star Nick Kyrgios agrees with Djokovic, believing it will be "an awesome event".

"I know everyone on the Tour wants to be with their teammates. There's nothing better than playing for your country against the other best players in the world," he said.

- LOOKING TO THE FUTURE -

While Federer, Nishikori and Murray are missing, most of the world's top 30 men are playing.

The championship, from January 3-12, will feature two ties each

day in the three cities during the round robin, comprising two singles matches then a doubles.

Belgium kick off the Sydney action against Moldova before Britain face Bulgaria. Kyrgios spearheads local hopes for Australia in Brisbane against the Alexander Zverev-led Germany while Greece take on Canada in the same city.

First up in Perth will be the United States against Norway followed by Russia and Italy.

Djokovic makes his tournament debut in Brisbane for Serbia on day two, as does Spanish world number one Nadal in Perth.

Under the format, the second-ranked singles players from each country face each other first, then the top-ranked men ahead of a potentially decisive doubles. A country winning two of three matches will claim the tie.

As well as the players, some big-name former stars are captaining their countries, including Boris Becker (Germany),

Marat Safin (Russia), Tim Henman (Britain), Lleyton Hewitt (Australia), and Thomas Muster (Austria).

Previously the men's season kicked off with players spread across various smaller-scale tournaments, and outgoing ATP chairman Chris Kermode said it made far more sense to have everyone under one umbrella.

"The ATP Cup fits perfectly with our strategy to innovate and look towards the future," he said. "The first week of the season is when the players want to play and that's why the tournament has their strong support."

Group A (Brisbane) - Serbia, France, South Africa, Chile Group B (Perth) - Spain, Japan, Georgia, Uruguay Group C (Sydney) - Bulgaria, Belgium, Great Britain, Moldova Group D (Perth) - Russia, Italy, USA, Norway Group E (Sydney) - Austria, Croatia, Argentina, Poland Group F (Brisbane) - Germany, Greece, Canada, Australia.

We are on the right track: Misbah

**KARACHI, JAN 1 (PTI):** Banking on the young talent, Pakistan head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq hoped for better results in 2020 and indicated that a few seniors may not return to the national side.

Misbah hailed emergence of batsman Babar Azam and pace duo of Naseem Shah and Shaheen Afridi in 2019, which he termed as tough for Pakistan in Test cricket.

"Going further we have to improve a lot of things in both red-ball and white-ball cricket. This team has enough potential and new boys are also making their way in international cricket. There's certainly a bright future ahead for us," Misbah said.

The coach spoke highly of Babar Azam.

"The emergence of Babar Azam as a mega star across all formats is very good news for Pakistan cricket. He remained number one in T20I cricket and is in the top ten batsmen in the ODI cricket.

"He played some brilliant innings in the World Cup and ended the year by establishing himself as a Test batsman with scintillating performances in Australia and two centuries against Sri Lanka in Pakistan."

Misbah also noted Naseem Shah and Shaheen Afridi's impressive start in Test cricket.

"Naseem got a fifer in the last Test against Sri Lanka. Shaheen bowled well in the World Cup and he showed glimpses of being a Test bowler in South Africa, and

bowled really well in Australia and here in Pakistan against Sri Lanka. We will hopefully bank on these two promising fast-bowlers in the future.

"Overall, we are on the right track. The more we play the longer format, the more we will improve. We need to do a lot of work in white-ball cricket ahead of the all-important ICC T20 World Cup in Australia."

Misbah did not take any names but his comments indicated that it is the end of the road for Muhammad Hafeez and Shoaib Malik in international cricket

"We can go a long way with a few more additions in the side and the present players maturing," he said.

Misbah since assuming the dual responsibility in September has himself come under fire for the team's poor performances specially after they suffered a three nil defeat to Sri Lanka in the T20 home series but did not call Hafeez or Malik to the team even though Pakistan also lost a T20 series in Australia.

Hafeez and Malik last played for Pakistan in the World Cup. Since then Malik has retired from ODIs and only focuses on T20 cricket while Hafeez is also available only for white-ball cricket. None of the two has been called up for Pakistan duty by Misbah.

Malik and Hafeez have in a combined total made 705 white ball international ODI and T20 appearances for Pakistan.

## Formidable Punjab host depleted Delhi in Ranji Trophy

**MOHALI, JAN 2 (PTI):** Sans India opener Shikhar Dhawan and speedster Ishant Sharma, a depleted Delhi will have to improve their game significantly to present a tough challenge against table leaders Punjab in their Ranji Trophy match, beginning here on Friday. Delhi, whose batting has proved to be their weakest link so far this season, will find it tougher in the absence of Dhawan, who will miss the game as he will be on national duty with Twenty20 series against Sri Lanka starting January 5 in Guwahati.

The southpaw had made a match-winning 140 in testing conditions against Hyderabad in the previous game at Feroz Shah Kotla grounds.

Kunal Chandela, who failed in the last two games after scoring a hundred against Kerala

in the tournament-opener, is likely to open with Anuj Rawat in Dhawan's absence. Since it is an away game, Delhi's lead pacer Ishant is also be unavailable as he play only home matches as part of his workload management. Expectations are high from 21-year-old Simrajeet Singh, who impressed in the last two games against Hyderabad and Andhra, taking 12 wickets. Medium pacer Subodh Bhati may get a chance to play his first game of the season in Ishant's absence.

After salvaging a draw against Kerala, Delhi had lost to Andhra in an away game before beating Hyderabad at home. The Dhruv Shorey-led side has its task cut out against hosts Punjab, who are the team to beat with two bonus points victories and a draw.

## NZealand look to salvage pride in smoky Sydney

**SYDNEY, JAN 1 (AFP):** Smoke haze could come into play as New Zealand look to salvage some pride from their miserable tour of Australia in the third and final Test in Sydney this week.

With bushfires raging across New South Wales state, day two of the match on Saturday shapes up as the biggest challenge with temperatures forecast to soar and smoggy conditions expected.

The issue of smoke is a difficult one for officials, who currently rely on a mix of air quality guidelines from the International Cricket Council, state governments and the Australian Institute of Sport.

But there are inconsistencies on what is considered "unsafe", with Cricket Australia and the players' association currently working to develop better protocols around visibility and air quality.

It follows a Big Bash League match in Canberra being abandoned this month because of toxic bushfire haze.

Currently, it is up to the umpires to decide whether conditions are safe, without any formal framework for that decision.

With the first two Tests at Perth and Melbourne ending in heavy defeats inside four days, New Zealand will need all the help they can get.

Coach Gary Stead admitted the Black Caps were "beaten up by Australia again" in their 247-run Melbourne thrashing and they have had to go back to the drawing board.

"We've got to find some areas where we can keep chipping away, make improvements and put Australia under pressure for longer," he said.

"When you get put under pressure for the periods Australia have put us under, then you have to question what we're doing.

"Australia have three bowlers at 145 kph and a spinner (Nathan Lyon) that's taken over 300 Test wickets so you're always up against it. You

don't get a reprieve and that's the hard thing for us."

- NO LET-UP -

The bright spot from Melbourne was makeshift opener Tom Blundell's gritty second innings century and he is set to retain the role alongside Tom Latham in Sydney.

But there is doubt over skipper Kane Williamson, who has had a poor tour.

The New Zealand Herald reported that he missed training Wednesday with flu-like symptoms, with batsman Henry Nicholls suffering similar problems.

Jeet Raval is the only specialist batsman waiting in the wings, but he

has been out of form and was dropped for Melbourne.

Australian captain Tim Paine has made clear his team has no intention of easing up now the series has been won, with New Zealand potentially coming under a five-pronged attack in Sydney, starting Friday.

Depending on the pitch, they could play two specialist spinners alongside their fast-bowling machine of Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and James Pattinson.

Leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson, championed by Shane Warne, has been called up to the squad and is keen to make his debut.

"The team's doing re-

ally well at the moment and it's going to be a tough team to crack into," he said.

"But I'm here and going to be preparing to play. That's the only thing I can do." New Zealand's task has been that much harder with strike bowler Trent Boult ruled out after a Starc bouncer in Melbourne fractured his non-bowling hand.

They have turned to off-spinner Will Somerville, who was raised in Australia, as his replacement.

"The fact he's played a lot of cricket in Sydney during his career for New South Wales will also be helpful as we prepare for this final Test," said Stead.



# AI beats human breast cancer diagnosis

A computer programme can identify breast cancer from routine scans with greater accuracy than human experts, researchers said in what they hoped could prove a breakthrough in the fight against the global killer.

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in women, with more than two million new diagnoses last year alone.

Regular screening is vital in detecting the earliest signs of the disease in patients who show no obvious symptoms.

In Britain, women over 50 are advised to get a mammogram every three years, the results of which are analysed by two independent experts.

But interpreting the scans leaves room for error, and a small percentage of all mammograms either return a false positive -- misdiagnosing a

healthy patient as having cancer -- or false negative -- missing the disease as it spreads.

Now researchers at Google Health have trained an artificial intelligence model to detect cancer in breast scans from thousands of women in Britain and the United States.

The images had already been reviewed by doctors in real life but unlike in a clinical setting, the machine had no patient history to inform its diagnoses.

The team found that their AI model could predict breast cancer from the scans with a similar accuracy level to expert radiographers.

Further, the AI showed a reduction in the proportion of cases where cancer was incorrectly identified -- 5.7 percent in the US and 1.2 percent in Britain, respectively.



It also reduced the percentage of missed diagnoses by 9.4 percent among US patients and by 2.7 percent in Britain.

"The earlier you identify a breast cancer the better it is for the patient," Dominic King, UK lead at Google Health, told AFP.

"We think about this technology in a way that supports and enables an expert, or a patient ul-

timately, to get the best outcome from whatever diagnostics they've had."

- Computer 'second opinion' -

In Britain all mammograms are reviewed by two radiologists, a necessary but labour-intensive process. The team at Google Health also conducted experiments comparing

the computer's decision with that of the first human scan reader. The study by King and his team, published in Nature, showed that using AI to verify the first human expert reviewer's diagnosis could save up to 88 percent of the workload for the second

clinician.

"Find me a country where you can find a nurse or doctor that isn't busy," said King.

"There's the opportunity for this technology to support the existing excellent service of the (human) reviewers."

Ken Young, a doctor who manages mammogram collection for Cancer Research UK, contributed to the study.

He said it was unique for its use of real-life diagnosis scenarios from nearly 30,000 scans.

"We have a sample that is representative of all the women that might come through breast screening," he said.

"It includes easy cases, difficult cases and everything in between."

The team said further research was needed but they hoped that the technology could one day act as a "second opinion" for cancer diagnoses.

## Canadian military police assigned Pokemon Go after fans invade bases

At least three military police officers were ordered to play Pokemon Go in Canadian bases across the country, after players invaded the facilities in a quest to catch them all.

The interlopers were not foreign agents but fans of the wildly popular Pokemon Go app -- launched in 2016 -- trying to capture as many of the game's virtual characters as possible and even wandering into restricted army areas.

A surge in the number of suspects being apprehended in the summer after the game's release puzzled the army, according to internal documents obtained by Canadian public television channel CBC.

"Please advise the Commissioners that apparently Fort Frontenac is both a PokeGym and a PokeStop," Major Jeff Monaghan at Canadian Forces Base Kingston wrote. "I will be completely honest in that I have not idea what that is," he said in a message among the nearly 500 pages of military documents obtained by CBC under an access to information request.

At least three military police officers, at dif-

ferent bases across the country, were assigned to wander around army facilities with phones and notebooks in hand to search for virtual Pokemon infrastructure and characters.

"We should almost hire a 12-year-old to help us out with this," wrote security expert David Levenick at CFB Borden in Ontario, 100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of Toronto.

At the entrance to the base, one woman was caught playing Pokemon Go while her three children were climbing over tanks.

A man separately arrested at CFB Borden explained he was just collecting points playing Pokemon Go and told officers: "I have to beat my kids."

Shortly after the release of Pokemon Go, the armed forces even had to issue a public notice warning players not to venture onto military bases.

But some saw a positive side to the influx of Pokemon hunters.

"Maybe some extra people will visit the museum!" wrote Major Alicia Saucier at CFB Petawawa, Ontario, where the garrison museum

## Australia orders evacuation of fire-ravaged towns before heatwave

Australia ordered residents and tourists out of the path of raging bushfires Thursday as the country braced for a weekend heatwave expected to fan the deadly inferno.

Catastrophic blazes ripped through the country's south-east on New Year's Eve, killing at least eight people and stranding holidaymakers.

New South Wales (NSW) Premier Gladys Berejiklian declared a seven-day state of emergency that allows for forced evacuations beginning Friday, for the third time in Australia's most populated region this fire season.

"We don't take these decisions lightly but we also want to make sure we're taking every single precaution to be prepared for what could be a horrible day on Saturday," she said.

It came as the NSW Rural Fire Service declared two "tourist leave zones" stretching almost 300 kilometres (186 miles) from the town of Nowra along the picturesque coast to neighbouring Victoria state, where people are also being urged to flee.

Residents and visitors in two inland areas -- which include popular holiday resorts in the Snowy Mountains -- were

also told to leave, with people given less than 24 hours to evacuate before a heatwave brings gusting winds and temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

That weather will create conditions officials say will be as bad as -- if not worse than -- Tuesday, the deadliest day in a months-long bushfire crisis.

At least 18 people are now known to have died in one of Australia's most devastating bushfire seasons yet, and there are growing fears the toll could rise dramatically, with officials in Victoria saying 17 people were missing in the state.

- Queue of cars -

Many tourists and residents spent two nights isolated with no electricity or telecommunications, before authorities on Thursday declared some roads safe to use.

NSW Transport Minister Andrew Constance called it the "largest evacuation of people out of the region ever", with queues of cars reportedly stretching for kilometres along roads toward Sydney and Canberra as thousands fled.

One driver told AFP it had taken her three hours to travel just 50 kilometres (30 miles).

NSW Rural Fire Ser-



vice deputy commissioner Rob Rogers said firefighters would be unable to extinguish or even control the raging blazes.

"The message is we've got so much fire in that area, we have no capacity to contain these fires," he told ABC.

"We just need to make sure that people are not in front of them."

John Steele, 73, who lives outside the south coast town of Merimbula, told AFP some people were "panicking" amid the warnings to evacuate.

Steele said he and his wife were staying put for now, but added: "We have our bags packed."

- 'Weeks' to evacuate -

The number of homes confirmed destroyed in recent days has topped 400, with that figure ex-

pected to rise as firefighters reach communities still isolated by flames.

Two Navy ships arrived in Mallacoota -- where people huddled on the foreshore for hours on New Year's Eve as a fire bore down on the remote town -- to begin evacuating up to 4,000 people in an operation officials say could take weeks.

Victoria joint bush-fire task force commander Doug Laidlaw said the first evacuees would be moved onto the vessels Friday morning, with children, the sick and elderly taking priority.

"If we need to reset and (return) again, weather permitting, that is exactly what will happen," he said.

Military aircraft have

also been working with emergency crews to drop relief supplies into isolated areas and continue assessing the extensive fire damage.

This season's blazes have destroyed more than 1,300 homes and scorched over 5.5 million hectares (13.5 million acres) across the country -- an area far greater than Denmark or the Netherlands. Suburbs of cities like Sydney and Melbourne, home to several million people, have also been hit by bushfires.

The blazes have shrouded Australia's capital, Canberra, in acrid

smoke haze that has travelled as far as New Zealand, turning the air over glacier peaks brown.

The unprecedented crisis has sparked street protests calling on the government to immediately act on climate change, which scientists say is creating a longer and more intense bush-fire season.

Conservative Prime Minister Scott Morrison has come under increasing pressure for his actions, which included holidaying in Hawaii as the disaster unfolded and reiterating his support for Australia's lucrative -- but heavily polluting -- coal mining industry.

In his first official press conference since the latest blazes flared, Morrison said Thursday said "every absolute effort" was being made to assist affected communities.

"The best way to respond is the way that Australians have always responded to these events and that is to put our confidence in those who are fighting these fires," he said, while defending Australia's climate change policies as "sensible".

## Indonesia floods leave nearly 30 dead, several missing

Indonesia's disaster agency warned Thursday of more deaths after torrential rains pounded the Jakarta region, triggering floods and landslides that killed at least 29 and left vast swaths of the megalopolis underwater.

Tens of thousands fled to temporary shelters across the capital region -- home to some 30 million -- with scores of houses damaged in the deadliest flooding in years, after torrential rains on New Year's Eve.

Images showed waterlogged homes and cars covered in muddy floodwaters, while some people took to paddling in small rubber lifeboats or tyre inner-tubes to get around.

In Bekasi, on the outskirts of the city, receding waters revealed swampy streets littered with debris and crushed cars lying on top of each other

-- with waterline marks reaching as high as buildings' second floors.

"I saw the water coming and it just kept getting higher and higher," said Deddy Supriadi, after a local river overflowed on the first day of 2020. "It swept away 40 or 50 cars that were parked right here," he told AFP.

- Baby rescues -

Rescuers used inflatable boats to evacuate residents trapped in their homes, including children and seniors.

TV images showed the dramatic rescue of a baby saved by disaster personnel who waded through chin-deep water to the family's home and carried the infant away to safety in a small plastic tub.

"We've been rescuing newborns, mothers who just gave birth and babies trapped in houses without food," said Yusuf Latif, spokesman for the

National Search and Rescue agency.

"In some places, the rescue operation was quite challenging and difficult. The water was deep with a strong current. Some alleyways were so narrow that it was hard for our inflatable boats to pass through," he added.

Across the city, kids took the opportunity to swim in the floodwaters while some people grabbed fishing rods.

"I saw people were fishing here so I followed them," said 28-year-old Agung Rosiadi.

"There were lots of fish before but I don't know why they're all gone now," he added.

- 'Without warning' -

At least 26 people died in greater Jakarta, while three more were killed by flash floods in neighbouring Lebak regency in the south of Java

island, according to the local disaster agency.

Police in Lebak said Thursday they were searching for as many as eight people who could still be missing.

"We hope the toll won't keep going up," Social Affairs Minister Juliari Peter Batubara told reporters earlier Thursday.

Around Jakarta, an eight-year-old boy killed in a landslide and an 82-year-old pensioner were among the confirmed victims.

Others died from drowning or hypothermia, while one 16-year-old boy was electrocuted by a power line.

"The floods hit without warning," Munarsih, who goes by one name, said from her waterlogged neighbourhood in Jakarta's western outskirts where dozens of families fled to safety.



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# Bobbi Kristina Brown's ex-partner Nick Gordon dies at 30

ATLANTA (AP) — Nick Gordon, who was found liable in the death of his ex-partner Bobbi Kristina Brown, has died. He was 30.

Gordon's attorney Joe S. Habachy confirmed his client's death in a statement Wednesday to The Associated Press. The Atlanta attorney did not give a cause of death or say where it occurred.

Gordon's death comes nearly five years after Brown, the daughter of singers Whitney Houston and Bobby Brown, was found face-down and unresponsive in a bathtub in January 2015. The 22-year-old died after six months in a coma.

Investigators with the medical examiner's office were not able to determine exactly how Bobbi Kristina Brown died. An autopsy showed that she had morphine, cocaine, alcohol and prescription drugs in her body, but the medical examiner couldn't determine if she killed herself, if someone else killed her or if her death was accidental.

Her family blamed Gordon, accusing him in the lawsuit of giving her a "toxic cocktail" before putting her face-down in the water.

Gordon was never charged in the case, but he was found responsible in a wrongful death lawsuit. An Atlanta judge ordered him to pay \$36 million to Brown's estate.

Houston brought Gordon into her household as an orphan at the age of 12, raising him and her daughter after divorcing Bobby Brown in 2007.

Gordon wore a large tattoo of Houston's face on his



arm and called the singer "mom," but the music superstar never fully adopted him or included him in her will. Houston died in 2012 after she drowned in a bathtub. Coroner's officials ruled Houston's death accidental and said heart disease and cocaine were contributing factors.

After Houston's death, Gordon and Bobbi Kristina went public with their romance.

"Despite all of the incredible challenges Nick faced over the last few years I can honestly say that he worked hard to hold his head up and stay sober and that he genuinely wanted a happy healthy life with his family more than anything else," Habachy said in a statement.

## 'Captain America' actress charged with killing mom in Kansas

OLATHE, KAN. (AP) — An actress who had a small role in the movie "Captain America: The First Avenger" is accused of fatally stabbing her mother inside a suburban Kansas City home.

Mollie Fitzgerald, 38, was arrested Tuesday by police in Olathe, Kansas, the Kansas City Star reported. She is charged with second-degree murder and jailed on \$500,000 bond. It wasn't immediately clear if she had an attorney who could comment on her behalf.

She's accused in the death of 68-year-old Patricia "Tee" Fitzgerald, who authorities say was found dead on Dec. 20 inside her Olathe home.

The website IMDb said Mollie Fitzgerald is a movie director and producer as well as actress. She worked on mostly low-budget films, including "The Lawful Truth" in 2014 and "The Creeps" in 2017.

In "Captain America," she played Stark Girl and

worked as an assistant to the director, Joe Johnson. The film grossed \$176.6 million in the U.S.

"Being a part of this production has been one of the best experiences of my life," Fitzgerald told a comic book publication in 2011.

Patricia Fitzgerald was in the process of moving back to the Kansas City area after living several decades in the Houston area, her brother, Gary Hunziker, told the Star.

Their family grew up on a farm in northeast Missouri. Patricia Fitzgerald studied physical therapy at the University of Missouri and moved to the Kansas City area. She then moved to Texas, where her husband had a law firm, Hunziker, 72, of Keokuk, Iowa, said.

Hunziker said he knew few details about the circumstances surrounding his sister's death.

"We were shocked," he said. But, "it doesn't matter the circumstances — the loss of a sister is what it's all about."

# Gigi Hadid sparks romance rumors with wx Zayn Malik

Is this the recipe for a rekindled romance?



Since officially announcing their breakup in March 2018, longtime couple Gigi Hadid and Zayn Malik have kept fans guessing on the current state of their relationship. Just over a month after their announced split, they were spotted kissing in the Big Apple. Then, in June 2018, a source told E! News the runway pro and performer were "giving things a second chance."

However, by the start of the new year, a source confirmed they had been "spending [time] apart since early November." "They are in different points in their lives right now and decided they needed the time to breath apart from each other," the source explained. "They are still in touch and both hope that things

will work out, but their relationship is always up and down."

While the two stars have not been photographed together since August 2018, following Hadid's split from Tyler Cameron. In the fall, she and her ex apparently got to talking again. "They went through a phase where they took time apart and weren't communicating at all, but they have been in touch recently," a source told E! News in November. "She is supportive of him. They chat here and there, but it's been casual."

Last month, the source cautioned, "They are definitely not getting back together, but are on good terms right now."

Their "good terms" were clear in a recent

## CD Projekt signs new agreement and ends dispute with The Witcher author

The game developer has the rights to the IP in video games, graphic novels, board games and merchandise

CD Projekt has ended its disagreement with The Witcher author Andrzej Sapkowski.

The game developer will continue to have the rights to the IP in video games, graphic novels, board games and merchandise.

"We've always admired Mr.

Andrzej Sapkowski's works -- a great inspiration for the team here at CD Projekt Red," said president and joint CEO Adam Kiciński in a statement. "I believe today marks a new stage in our continued relationship."

Sapkowski had signed over the game rights to The Witcher to CD Projekt for an upfront fee, turning down any potential royalties. He told Eurogamer later about the deal: "I was stupid enough to sell them rights [to all of my novels]. They offered me a percentage of their profits. I said, 'No, there will be no profit at all - give me all my money right now! The whole amount.' It was stupid. I was stupid enough to leave everything in their hands because I didn't believe in their success. But who could foresee their success? I couldn't."

Following this, he publicly demanded over \$16 million in royalties from CD Projekt, claiming that under Polish law he had been wrongfully underpaid for his work. CD Projekt dismissed the claim, but said:



"It is the Company's will to maintain good relations with authors of works which have inspired CD Projekt Red's own creations. Consequently, the Board will go to great lengths to ensure amicable resolution of this dispute; however, any such resolution must be respectful of previously expressed intents of both parties, as well as existing contracts."

It appears that the desired amicable resolution has been achieved. The statement from CD Projekt states that: "The agreement satisfies and fully clarifies the needs and expectations of both parties, past and present, and sets out a framework for the future cooperation between the two sides."

CD Projekt is currently working on Cyberpunk 2077, which is due on April 16th. It has committed to future The Witcher titles.

Meanwhile, The Witcher mini-series was released on Netflix in December last year and became one of the most popular shows during the festive period. In fact, it is already the most streamed Netflix TV show in the UK.

## Julia Garner, Mark Foster get married

LOS ANGELES, DEC 30 (PTI): "Ozark" actor Julia Garner and musician Mark Foster have tied the knot.

The couple got married on December 27 and took to Instagram on Monday to make things social media official.

Garner, 25, and Foster, 35, had an intimate wedding at New York City Hall, with family members and close friends in attendance.

Both the newlyweds shared the same

black-and-white picture on the photo-and-video sharing site with a caption: "12/27/19".

Designer Zac Posen shared a few behind-the-scenes photos and videos at their reception. "Congratulations @juliagarner94 and @mistersmims," Posen captioned on Instagram, alongside an image of the couple sharing a kiss.

The couple reportedly got engaged back in May.



**CHEERS! The rapper, Post Malone helps ring in 2020 with a performance at the Times Square New Year's Eve celebration in NYC.**

Aries:

Aries, your mental health is as important as your physical health. Take charge of how you are feeling. Make a conscious effort to understand your triggers. Remember, awareness is the first step to healing and making a positive change. Don't shy away from working with a therapist if it helps alleviate the process. Some of you could be struggling with emotional pain or loss at this point. Choose to invest in relationships that are in alignment with the highest good.

Taurus:

Only when you take time to replenish your spirit, will you be able to fulfill your sacred purpose and serve others. Solo time is sacred, Taurus. Doing nothing at all is just as important as checking off the tasks on your to-do list, and being proactive about your mission to take over the world. So eat, pray, love and dance a little.

Gemini:

Sometimes, things don't unfold the way we imagine they would—and that can only be a good thing. Today, the Universe is in the

mood to intervene and throw in a whole bunch of surprises. We're talking about serendipitous encounters and synchronic messages, all of which reiterate the message that you are on the right track. Trust that your romantic life will reverberate with the same magick.

Cancer:

Whisky Sours are great, but have you ever started your day with a stiff kombucha? Spending time with the soul crew brings you so much happiness and joy. But there is no reason a celebration should take a toll on your physical health. Set the precedent for what you want the rest of the year to look like. Choosing the middle path will help you stay consistent in your efforts.

Leo:

Putting yourself first is never easy, but you've made your choice, Leo. Now it's time to let the other person know where you stand. Bring the gift of clarity to all of your relationships. Single lions in the market for love, the beginning of the year could bring with itself joyous tidings. The key to man-

ifesting love: stay open as you keep your judgements and biases aside.

Virgo:

This is just the beginning, Virgo. There is so much more wealth and abundance coming your way. Remember to stay open. Give thanks for all that you have and all that is yet to come. Some of you may be in the mood for a beginning of the year indulgence. Thinking about investing in a new piece of jewellery? Or a haircut that will make you feel like JLo? The Gods of Beauty are rooting for you.

Libra:

You can't live in the past or the future. If you keep looking back, you will miss out on what the present is offering you. Free yourself from the inner conflicts and come back to the now, Libra. Call your power back to you. Some of you may be tempted to go back to somebody you parted ways with a long time ago. There's a reason it didn't work out in the past.

Scorpio:

Scorpio, your past hasn't always been

vibrant and colourful. In fact, it has taken more out of you than you were prepared to give. Before you start afresh, allow yourself to look at the pain, sorrow and heartbreak one last time. Instead of raising the question 'why did it happen to me?' ask 'why did it happen for me?' As Ram Dass once said, "Suffering is the sandpaper of our incarnation. It does its work of shaping us."

Sagittarius:

Yes, we know just how stubborn you can be, Sagittarius. But do you really want to push the other to a point where they almost snap? Don't let your ego be the reason you miss out on a love that is this sacred and pure. The beginning of the year is also a good time to take stock of your inner circle, to pull out a few weeds before you plant new seeds.

Capricorn:

What do you do when faced with injustice? Do you stoop down to their level of do you let the gods of karma intervene on your behalf? Capricorn, the less you do,

the more you will gain. Continue to live conscientiously and get ready to watch poetic justice unfold. Saturnians who have been working themselves to the bone, consider taking some time off to recalibrate.

Aquarius:

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, Aquarius. Next step: confronting that feeling of inadequacy within you, which is making you settle for less or put yourself down.

Pisces:

When you assign the responsibility of your happiness to another person, more often than not, you will face disappointment. Nobody understands you the way you do. Free yourself from unrealistic expectations, Pisces. Focus on creating a life you deserve, one that sparks joy, creativity and playfulness. This is also a time of uncertainty, and you may realise that there are no straight answers. Find the courage you need to ride the storm.