



**MOTHER OF 6IX9INE'S CHILD  
REACTS TO RAPPER'S SENTENCING**  
pg 08

**5 WAYS CHESS CAN MAKE YOU A  
BETTER LAW STUDENT AND LAWYER**  
04

**TIME TO PROTEST ON SOCIAL MEDIA  
ALONE IS OVER: FARHAN AKHTAR**  
pg 08



# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Pages 8 | ₹ 5

SCA HOSTS SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL SENIOR CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2019 AT SMIT

## Aravindh Chithambaram emerges champion, Sikkim treated to skills of the nation's best

**SAGAR CHHETRI  
GANGTOK, 19 DEC:**

Grandmaster Aravindh Chithambaram of Tamil Nadu emerged the champion of the National Senior Chess Championship 2019 held here at Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, Majhitar in East Sikkim.

Mr Chithambaram secured nine and a half points to lift the champions' trophy.

Likewise, International Master, Akash G of Tamil Nadu stood on the second position with eight and a half points and International Master Ravi Teja S of RSPB finished on the third position with eight and a half points in the premier national chess championship of India.

The winner received a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh, while the first runner-up received Rs 4 lakh and Rs 3 lakh went to the second runner-up.

In the top-ten positions were: Vaibhav Suri of Delhi



on fourth position, Anurag Mhamal of Goa fifth, Lalith Babu MR of BPBP sixth, Visakh NR of Tamil Nadu seventh, Himanshu Sharma of Haryana on eighth position, Konguvel

Ponnuswamy of PSPB on ninth and Kunte Abhijit of PSPB on tenth position.

A total prize money of Rs 20 lakh was handed over to the top-10 players of the

championship.

The ten-day long championship was organized by Sikkim Chess Association on behalf of All India Chess Federation and was supported by the

Department of Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of India.

A total of 192 top-rated players from different States, Union Territories and PSUs participated, including 19

Grandmasters and 25 International Masters.

The closing ceremony held this evening had footballer, the Hamro Sikkim Party working president, Bhaichung Bhutia, as chief guest accompanied by Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari, as guest of honor.

In his address, Mr Bhutia congratulated SCA for conducting this premier national chess championship in such grand and successful manner for the first time not only in Sikkim but the entire north-eastern region.

He also thanked the AICF for giving Sikkim the opportunity to host such a prestigious championship.

He also reminisced about the time when he got the opportunity to interact with Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand.

turn to pg 02

## CM underlines Sikkim's liberal instinct at pre-Christmas celebrations

**NAMCHI, 19 DEC [IPR]:** Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] attended the Namchi Christmas Fest 2019 here at Central Park today.

He was accompanied by his spouse, Krishna Kumari Rai, IPR Minister LN Sharma, Political Secretary Jacob Khaling, MLAs, pastors and general public.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister extended warm greetings and also spoke about the significance of Christmas.

He underlined how in Sikkim, the masses practice secularism and religious tolerance and that apart from Christmas, many other festivals are also celebrated here



at around the same time namely Sakewa, Yakthung Chasok Tongnam, Losoong, Namsong and many more.

The commemoration of these festivals in Sikkim is an example that defines Sikkim and its

people as liberal in their minds, thoughts and outlook.

He also maintained that the State Government will always assist in peacefully binding the different religious communities together and

requested the public to do so as well.

Highlighting the substantial work that the State Government is doing, the CM emphasized that they will consistently work towards upgradation

turn to pg 02

## Gauhati HC directs Assam govt to restore mobile internet services

**GUWAHATI, DEC 19 (PTI):** The Gauhati High Court directed the Assam government to restore mobile internet services at 5 pm on Thursday.

A division bench of Justices Manojit Bhuyan and Saumitra Saikia gave the direction after hearing four PILs filed by journalist Ajit Kumar Bhuyan, and advocates Bonoshri Gogoi, Randeep Sharma and Debakanta Doley.

Mobile and broadband internet services were suspended on the evening of December 11, following incidents of violence during protests against the amended Citizenship Act.

turn to pg 02

## Amar Subba and student to attempt Ultra Marathon in Bengaluru



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 19 DEC:**

Two ultra-marathon runners from Sikkim are all set to participate in the Ultra Marathon Bengaluru to be held on 22 December.

Marathon Man of Sikkim, Amar Subba, and his student, Shiva Hang Limboo, will participate in the 50KM category of this ultra-marathon. They are leaving for Bengaluru on Friday. The event is being organized by Bengaluru-based NEB Sports.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Subba said, "Although I am not much prepared for the marathon this time due to my social engagements, I decided to participate and finish 50K within five hours."

He is however confident of a good performance from his student. "I have much expectation from my student and keen to see him finish in the top-three," he said.

He informed that the

top-three of the competition will qualify for an international-level 100K marathon.

Mr Subba is presently preparing other long-distance runners of the State for the upcoming marathon of NEB Sports in Kolkata next year.

23-year-old Shiva Hang Limboo hails from Timbong under Yuksum-Tashiding constituency in West Sikkim. He finished on second spot at the 12-hour Stadium Run in New Delhi last year covering a distance of 119 KMs.

"I have undergone rigorous training and have received focused coaching for the last two months. I aim to finish the marathon within four hours and stand among the top-three to qualify for the international 100K marathon," he shared.

He also expressed gratitude towards all individuals for their support in making it possible for him to participate in the Bengaluru event.

## Subject or Citizen: The Sikkim Subject Status and Indian Citizenship Anomaly

**SUNIL PRADHAN**

The President's assent to the Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2019 switches the definition of illegal immigrants in India to 'legal' with glaring religious overtones — a marked departure from the idea of India and its in-principle rejection of the two-nation theory based on religion which led to the creation of an Islamic Pakistan and a steadfastly Secular India. Under CAA, persons persecuted on the basis of practicing Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity belonging to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan would no longer be treated as illegal immigrants and the residency requisites under the third Schedule of the Citizenship Act, 1955 is set to be lowered to six years from the mandatory 11 years. India's commitment to the dominant ideal of documentary citizenship practices with a standard eleven years of residency as a prerequisite for naturalization has received a fillip for legalizing illegal stay of undocumented immigrants as an electoral stimulus.

This legislation pushed by the ruling

Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janta Party has created multiple fissures in the already ambiguous notion of citizenship in India. The question over nationality and domicile in India remain mitigated by Hindu supremacist agenda of Hindu Rashtra. Notably, four out of the six religions from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh selected for special treatment in India ironically fall under the domain of Hindu Personal Law in India. The grand narrative of citizenship practices in post-independent India is covered by two legislations on citizenship: Part II of the Constitution of India, 1950 and the Citizenship Act, 1955. Neither of these citizenship legislations espoused religion as a requisite criterion for acquiring Indian citizenship. Rather, the two legislations lay down provisions for a "natural" person to acquire Indian citizenship in line with Article 14 of the Constitution which guarantees the right to equality.

The repercussions of the Citizenship Act have been felt widely in states governed by special citizenship clause such as in the North East. Assam, which

has been at the forefront of receiving illegal immigrants since India's partition remains affected as this act has set the cut-off date at December 31, 2014 instead of the March 24, 1971 [as agreed to in the Assam Accord], for deporting all undocumented immigrants irrespective of their religion. This Act therefore nullifies the provisions of the Assam Accord of 1985 by laying parameters of India's citizenship laws within the territory of Assam. Therefore, the starting point for discussing citizenship practices in India's North East decry India's commitment to liberal citizenship project with individual as the bearer of rights. This is to say that, in many parts of India, the flesh and blood of communities continue to reinforce subjection and citizenship formation for diverse cultural communities.

For many cultural communities in India, citizenship is tied with domicile. Domicile in India is determined as permanent resident. This forms the basis of legal relationship between an individual and territory with a distinct social and cultural history. The distinc-

tive nature of social and cultural history of a particular territory necessitates a condition where their legal and customary system is regarded as personal law. In India, there are multiple ways of acquiring citizenship and religion certainly is not the criteria. It is clear that the Indian Constitution privileges only one domicile — that of the country — with Article 5 of the Indian Constitution specifying domicile in the territory of India. This reinforces the tenor of liberal project of rendering equal status among diverse people at the commencement of the Indian Constitution under a single uniform legal system and uniform citizenship law. However, the Indian Constitution made exceptions for certain regions where the nation's single uniform legal system, and uniform citizenship law would be second to the distinctive legal and customary system regarded as personal law of those particular territorial settings.

Therefore, the problem of actually applicable 'uniform' and 'universal' citizenship rights in Sikkim is akin to those

turn to pg 02

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## Two arrested for hurling bombs at CAA protesters

**RAIGANJ (WEST BENGAL), DEC 19 (PTI):** Two persons were arrested on Thursday in connection with the incident of attack on a group of people protesting against the Citizenship Act in West Bengal's North Dinajpur district, police said.

The protesters were attacked at College Para area near National Highway-34 on Wednesday when they were returning after submitting a deputation at the district magistrate's office and six persons were injured when crude bombs were hurled at them.

RAF personnel were deployed at three places on Thursday - Bamongram, Bhagdumur and Purba College Para - under the jurisdiction of Raiganj police station, the police said.

The Inspector General of Police of North Bengal, Anand Kumar, visited all these areas to take stock of the situation, the officer said.

In view of Wednesday's incident of attack on the procession, the district administration did not give permission to the Left parties and the Congress to take out processions on Thursday.

Out of the six people injured, four have been admitted to Raiganj Medical College and Hospital and the rest of the two were admitted to North Bengal Medical College and Hospital, he said.

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### Subject or Citizen...

practiced in India's North-East and the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir. The territorial form of citizenship rights in the North East, former Jammu and Kashmir and Sikkim is an exception within India's liberal citizenship ideals. Sikkim's social history, prominently wrapped under the administratively governed homogenous category of North East India, is negotiating the 'Hindutva' citizenship ideals and this deserves a attention. The prospect of implementing the Citizenship Act in Sikkim elevates the prospect of arrival of migrants to Sikkim whose demography and politics remain defined by migration of Indian citizens in the post Indian takeover of Sikkim in 1975. Therefore, the issue of fake Certificates of Identification (COI) sourced from the Sikkim Subjects Regulation Act, 1961 mediated through Sikkim Citizenship Order, 1975 is at the brink of defining domicile in the territory of Sikkim under one single unified legal system and one citizenship law, and not necessarily through the Sikkim Subject Registration Act, 1961. At this rate, the fake COI case will be nullified as citizenship virtue will soon be governed by Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 and not by special citizenship rights. Therefore, the criterion of domicile in Sikkim is not the same as it is in other parts of India. Sikkim's Old Laws hold the key to Sikkim's distinctive legal and customary laws and this defines the Sikkim Subjects relationship with Sikkim, now the constituent state of India.

Sikkim Subjects obtained Indian citizenship not by birth, descent, registration and naturalization but through incorporation of a foreign territory as specified under the Citizenship Act, 1955. Therefore, in Sikkim, every Sikkim Subject is an Indian citizen but all Indians citizens are not Sikkim Subjects. The specification of categories (Sikkim Subject and non-Sikkim Subject Indian citizen) is the primer of practice of citizenship rights discourse in Sikkim. The rights of Sikkim Subjects include sponsored entitlements, subsidies, upkeep of community land, community livelihood, resource mobilization, employment opportunities and reservations in empanelled educational institutions in various parts of India.

In sum total, Sikkim Subject as an

exceptional category of Indian citizenship practices allows one to locate collective cultures of Sikkimese cultural communities within the realm of transforming citizenship regime in India. Evidently, the transitional processes of Sikkim Subject from monarchical subjects to citizens of modern Indian state locates Sikkim's 'culture' as a terrain for representation as the subject of rights—collective and individual. This is one reason why Sikkim's special citizenship status has been under pressure to ward off India's homogenizing tendencies with a potential to disrobe its distinct Sikkimese identity for its historically situated communities.

On the face of it, the amendment opens the floodgates for non-Sikkim Subjects in the name of Indian citizenship rights to enter into Sikkim's resource mobilization sector where access to resources, especially land use and forests, remain in the hands of Sikkim's cultural communities. This is set to alter Sikkim's environmental governance.

From the electoral angle, the Sikkimese Nepali will transform as the insignificant 'other' with Nepali seats already categorized as "General" in 1977 under the Janta Government (precursor of the current BJP when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the foreign minister with Morajiji Desai as PM). The right wing Hindu nationalist party ruling India has a long history of attempting to make incursion into Sikkim's special provisions. Sikkim's special provisions built around the May 1973 Tripartite Agreement between the Chogyal, political parties of Sikkim and Government of India, today is held hostage by nationalist 'Hindu Rashtira' absurdity. For many Sikkimese the very idea of citizenship amendment evokes fears to culture and language though systematic demographic onslaughts. This is set to put intense pressure on scarce land resources and employment opportunities in Sikkim.

Sikkim's special provisions unlike most states in the North East vary because Sikkim does not have colonial-ly demarcated tribal areas governed under Inner Line Permit (Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and now extended to Manipur) and the Sixth Schedule with special reference to Me-

ghalaya, parts of Tripura. The status of Sikkim Subjects as a landmark of permanent resident status in Sikkim as a political identity has acquired native identity vis-à-vis other citizenship identities in Sikkim. The historical specificity of Sikkimese cultural communities often identified as a medium for accruing 'special' concessions for enabling communities to achieve a status to be treated at par with politically 'advanced' other populations groups in India. For example, fiscal concession extended to Sikkim Subjects defines Sikkimese as per the definition of SSR, 1961. This effectively allows Government of Sikkim and Government of India to uphold the legal status of Sikkim Subject as means to monitor distribution of entitlements for recorded Sikkim Subject.

Therefore, practice of rights as it emerges from special provisions of Indian Constitution, corresponds directly with contemporary political boundary of Sikkim. Sikkim's territory with a tangible effect reinforces norms and political value for its inhabitants. The modernizing project ushered by nationalization of resources and spaces establish incoming pressure to the limits of Sikkim's special citizenship rights notably for—categorizing Sikkimese Nepali under "General" category as per representation Act of 1977, persistent demands for substituting Constitutional category of Sikkimese Nepali as martial Gorkhas as a fillip to the formation of Gorkhaland, an alternative political settlement of Sikkim's merger with hill regions of Kalimpong & Darjeeling. The attempted nationalization of Sikkim's central bank—State Bank of Sikkim through demonetization and now the Citizenship Amendment Act reinforce this reality further. The definition of Sikkimese is perpetually being exposed to the litmus test. Therefore, Sikkim Subject Registration (SSR) Act, 1961 form a tangible landmark for Sikkim's Indian citizenship aspirations. The definition of distinctive Sikkimese communities as per SSR sets apart their citizen identity with a distinct subject status from other Indian citizens whose presence in Sikkim is actually regulated by Sikkim India Friendship Treaty 1950.

The special citizenship concessions for Sikkim Subjects refurbish promi-

nence of legal universalism versus particularism featuring minority rights/tribal rights in India. This limits civic and political membership for others Indian citizens in Sikkim. This feature of Sikkim is seen as an impediment for achieving national unity under the Hindutva cultural project. The framework of citizenship under the amended Act as the model of civic and political membership in India erodes the country's experiences with multiple citizenship practices including those accompanied with special citizenship provisions. The effacement of differentially experienced special citizenship provisions under the Citizenship Amendment Act with religious and electoral overtones directly or indirectly impinges the dialectic of citizenship and minority/tribal rights in India. Therefore, gradual erosion of autonomous arrangement which started with abrogation of J&K status mandated by Indian Constitution poses questions to the permanence of special provisions mentioned under Part XXI meant for states of Nagaland, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim.

It is true that the fundamentals of constitutional provisions for Sikkimese cultural communities override fundamental rights of Indian citizens. The paradox of 'universal' and 'uniform' citizenship rights in Sikkim remain secondary to the dominant form of territorial recognition of rights in Sikkim. Therefore, special provisions under the current dispensation are seen as a hurdle in securing 'unity of state' in India. New Delhi sees it as a roadblock to its nationalizing objectives especially for natural resource management. The settlement of 'rightless' people from 'mainstream' India in Sikkim allows New Delhi to speak on behalf of 'rightless' Indian community for securing equal rights as a fundamental right despite reserving constitutional safeguards for Sikkimese communities within the territory of Sikkim. For Sikkim, special citizenship rights under special provisions figure as a mechanism to steer substantive equality in India among the politically/economically advanced population by exercising their rights either as individuals or communities.

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politics often provides an ill-advised 'opportunity' to make those private feelings public. It should be our effort to educate people of our inherent proclivity to ultra-ethnocentrism. Also, fighting for a group identity is a fair thing, but the ground rules of exclusion and inclusion must be applied without violating the spirit and word of the constitutional provision, which is Article 371 F in Sikkim's case. This brings us to the next point.

Two, how easily Article 371F can be customized to suit a certain narrative that can often be anti-Sikkim in the long term and wider sense. That Article 371 F can be used as an elastic briefcase provision that accommodates the entirety of Sikkimese permanent and emergent aspirations is a wonderful reality. This article may seem more advantageous to the BL community in terms of certain entitlements, which are off limits to the rest, but its overall canopy is all-inclusive for the entire Sikkimese citizenry. Its nullification in any degree will jeopardize the identity of all of Sikkim, not just the BL and Sherpa communities. As long as Sikkim's special status in India is upheld constitutionally, every Sikkimese, no matter what community s/he belongs to, will be a special Indian in terms of his/her identity.

Three, Sikkim's political literacy is either skewed or lower than required. The superficiality of our political discourse is embarrassing. Often it is noise without substance, anger without valid reasoning, and passion without knowledge. Such shallow political exercise begets hollow promises. And the far reaching impacts of such hollow discourse cannot be gainsaid.

Did Bhaichung not know the exact demographic composition of Sikkim or was he deliberately presenting a twisted figure? This is a question he must answer to Sikkim. Any BL leader must know that their Nepali counterparts are too tired of being pushed into the corner and forced into solving the definitional problem of their identity. Nothing can slam the spirit of integration harder than such a subtle excommunicative attitude.

In order to verify Sikkim's retrospective demography, one of the oldest authentic documents to fall back on is the Gazetteer of Sikkim by HH Risley. According to it, the Sikkimese population in 1891 was 30,458 which consisted of 5,762 Lepchas, 4,894 Bhutias, 3,356 Limbus and 15,458 Nepalis. This would mean that Nepalis and Limbus represented over 65% of the population and

Lepchas and Bhutia put together represented over 34% of the total population. When Bhaichung Bhutia says that in 1975, the BL with Sherpas accounted for 45% of the population, he is complicating not just the mathematics of the issue but every other part of politics. This is more than a misstatement. It is an offensive proposition.

We are simply looking at his figure but lurking behind the figure is a pernicious theory. This bares his political immaturity. He completely failed to detect the toxin it could spread. When he whipped out this figure, he implied that large droves of non Lepcha, Bhutia and Sherpa people had already illegally immigrated into Sikkim. This is why, his figure is not only wrong. It is anti-truth. The only way forward is to prove it or concede a mistake. May be he has evidences that the rest do not. As I see, the most worrying issue is the massive decline in Lepcha population which could be attributable to multi-varied reasons. Social scientists have a job to study it.

Immigration is an ultra-sensitive issue in Sikkim politics and it must be buried in a grave once and for all, referencing the issue to Sikkim Citizenship Regulation 1961 which is validated under Article 371F. Digging deeper is making it worse. We must realize that even the pre-1961 immigration pattern was more complicated than we think. It didn't just happen from one side of the border. It was multi-dimensional. For example, in 1951, Sikkim received 3164 and 1,911 immigrants from Nepal and Tibet respectively and 6,854 persons born in Sikkim immigrated to India. Over 90% of them settled in West Bengal. Most of them lost their Sikkim connection for ever.

Finally, Sikkimese inherent insecurity is induced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Internally, there is a trust-deficit among the communities. Fostering unity is a tediously long process and undoing all that effort is so instant and natural. Sikkim is also grappling with the lingering fear of Delhi hitting her with another merger like catastrophe. I call it the "post-merger traumatic stress disorder". Once beaten twice shy. Could CAA do away with any post-merger vestiges of Sikkimness? This is a gripping fear- the pain of which only the Sikkimese can feel.

Sikkim needs a meta-narrative conveyed by a combined voice. Sikkimese leadership cannot afford to drop its guard. Nor can Sikkimese people afford to expose their vulnerability to self-destructive emotions.

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### NCST Chairperson...

he also raised concerns over some students often quitting studies owing to significant increase in the cost of living.

He urged the Commission to take into consideration the proposal of increasing the amount of living expense awarded to students pursuing studies under this scholarship outside Sikkim.

The Commission assured to discuss the issue with the Central Government and the concerned Ministry positively in order to deliberate upon a solution at the earliest.

Dr Sai highlighted concerns raised by Chief Minister, PS Tamang (Golay) on the increase in the rate of Cancer cases in the State of Sikkim during their meeting the previous day.

He directed the Health Department to conduct a detailed survey on the incidence and prevalence of Cancer in various parts of the State.

He further informed that the Commission has urged the Power Grid Corporation of India operating in the State to extend financial support to the State government in the form of CSRs in order to fight against Cancer.

The Commission appreciated the State for its forest safety provisions, sports facilities, education system and most importantly for prioritizing and promoting women empowerment among STs.

The Commission members applauded the State government for successfully implementing and promoting educational and economic interests of the STs of Sikkim with special care.

They assured full support to the State government for the development of the STs and Sikkim and urged all to work in tandem for the progress of the country.

The meeting was also addressed by Principal Secretary, Health, K Sreenivasulu, Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs, Kuber Bhandari, and other representatives and HoDs of concerned departments

Earlier, a PowerPoint presentation was made by Secretary, Social Welfare Department on various schemes for Scheduled Tribes.

### Aravindh...

Mr Bhutia shared that chess was always a major sport in the country and hoped for further growth of Indian chess.

He also congratulated the winners and participants and encouraged them to do better in the future.

Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, in turn congratulated the SCA team led by Mahendra Dhakal for making the State proud by conducting a premier chess championship here.

While addressing the participants, Mr Bhandari hailed them as future stars and ambassadors of the country and encouraged them to always remain motivated and progress with their best efforts.

Earlier, Chief Arbiter of the championship, Dharmendra Kumar, presented a brief report on the championship. He also appreciated SCA's efforts and Mahendra Dhakal for hosting the biggest national chess championship of the country in Sikkim.

International Master, Anup Deshmukh, also shared his experience of the championship.

### Gauhati HC...

Broadband services have already resumed in Assam.

The court observed that it is open to the state authorities taking steps to curb dissemination of "explosive messages, video" on various social media platforms which may have a tendency to incite violence and destructions affecting public safety.

Senior advocates Arup Borbora, K K Mahanta, U K Nair and Bimal Chetry appeared for the petitioners, while Specially Engaged Counsel Debajit Sah represented the state government and Assistant Solicitor General S C Keyal appeared for the central government.

### CM underlines...

of the state and stressed that they will also try to eliminate corruption in the State Government mechanism.

During the course of the program, the CM and other dignitaries felicitated Senior Pastors PT Sukmimo and Yakub Khaling for their immense contributions for the upliftment of the community.

The organizing committee of Namchi Christmas Fest also felicitated the Chief Minister for his immeasurable assistance in boosting the status of the state.

The Chairman and General Secretary Namchi Christmas Fest, Satish Chandra Rai, and Lanem Sarang also spoke on the occasion.

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

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A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Roadside just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593373387 and 9434406761



## Sikkim Police hosts Khulla Manch in Jorethang



**SUMMIT REPORT  
JORETHANG, 19 DEC:**

A daylong traffic awareness campaign of Sikkim Police, "Khu-

lla Manch," was held on Thursday here at Jorethang MG Marg in South Sikkim today.

South District (SP),

Pravin Gurung, was present as the chief guest accompanied by Nayabazar-Jorethang Municipal Council chairperson,

Tika Gurung, ASP Santosh Kr Shrestha, Traffic DSP, Jyoti Chettri, SHO Mahendra Pradhan and Sub Inspector, Gaurav

Gautam, students, police personnel, drivers and local residents.

While addressing the gathering, the SP highlighted the new traffic rules, regulations and penalties.

He called on drivers to avoid rash driving and wear seat belts and stressed the need to wear helmets while riding two-wheelers. He also briefed the gathering about different traffic signs, perils of overloading and rash driving.

The program was also addressed by the ASP and SHO.

Later, an Open Discussion was held between Public and concerned departments regarding various traffic related issues.

## Annual Day at Lower Sudunglakha Primary School



**SUMMIT REPORT  
RHENOCK, 19 DEC:**

Government Primary School, Lower Sudunglakha, celebrated its Annual Day today with a string of indoor sports events, Yoga, Quiz competition and felicitations.

Executive Secretary, Youth Development Society of Sikkim [YODESS], MK Gurung, was present as chief guest accompanied by Rhenock BAC Education Department

Assistant Director, KP Sharma, Sudunglakha Zilla Panchayat, Madhu Sharma, and Panchayat member, Journalist, Bhanuraj Thapa, Dr Umesh Chandra Rizal as special guests and senior citizens of the area, school heads, guardians and School Management Committee members.

The school also felicitated families of the Land donors, Late Khush Narayan Gurung and Lall Bahadur Chettri, lo-

cal NGO Sangit Sangam Pariwar and ex-student, Dr Umesh Chandra Rizal. An expression of gratitude was also presented to Editor, Rhenock Purba, Bhanuraj Thapa.

Earlier, the Headmaster, Madan Dhungana, placed the annual report of the school in his welcome address while students performed colourful traditional dances and the programme ended with annual prize distribution.

## Pabitra Bhandari appointed SCBC Chairperson



**ARPAN PRADHAN  
GANGTOK, 19 DEC:**

Frontline leader of the Sikkim Krantikari Manch, Pabitra Bhandari, has been appointed Chairperson, Sikkim Commission for Backward Classes.

The Home Depart-

ment notification of 17 Dec informs that Ms Bhandari will hold office for a three-year term.

Ms Bhandari hails from Rhenock in East Sikkim and has been a journalist for several years before joining politics with SKM.

## Annual function at Rongli Secondary School



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 19 DEC:**

The second day of the 5-day Annual Function Programme at Government Secondary School Rongli, featured matches of the inter-school badminton being hosted at the school as part of the celebrations.

SDM, PR Dulal, Rongli was present as the chief guest for the day with Devendra Subba, BB Gurung, MK Gurung, Deepak Dhakal, teachers from different schools, members of Naari Shak-ti, Chujachen and Youth Convenor present as special guests.

## Wasim Jaffer appointed Kings XI Punjab's batting coach

**NEW DELHI, DEC 19 (PTI):** Former India player Wasim Jaffer has been appointed as the batting coach of Kings XI Punjab for the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League. A top source in the franchise confirmed his appointment and Jaffer's name also figured in the official support staff list posted on the team's website.

The Mumbai, who now plays for Vidarbha in the Ranji Trophy, represented India in 31 Tests between 2000 and 2008, scoring 1944 runs which included five hundreds and 11 fifties. The 41-year-old also has a double hundred to his name -- a highest score of 212 against the West Indies in 2006 at St John's.

He also played two ODIs for India during an international career that

spanned nearly eight years. Jaffer remains a domestic stalwart, having played more than 254 first-class matches and scored nearly 20,000 runs. He recently became the first to play in 150 Ranji Trophy games and needs just 853 runs to complete 20,000 runs.

In the IPL's inaugural season in 2008, Jaffer represented Royal Challengers Bangalore in six matches but could only manage 130 runs at a strike rate of 110.57.

Besides Kumble and Jaffer, KXIP's revamped coaching staff includes Sunil Joshi as bowling coach and Jonty Rhodes as fielding coach, respectively. Kumble, under whose captaincy Jaffer turned out for India, played a role in the former Mumbai opener's appointment.



## Football tourney at Gor School reaches quarterfinal stage

**WANGCHUK BHUTIA  
MANGAN, 19 DEC:**

The first quarter-final match of Open Men's football tournament at Gor Secondary School, Dzongu, was played

between Legend Boys and Mangan Taxi Drivers with the latter team winning 2-5.

In the second quarterfinal match, Dikchu Secondary School defeated Sangdong Boys in a tie-breaker.

## Ministers inspect Veterinary Dispensary and Fodder Farm at Anden

**GYALSHING, 19 DEC (IPR):** Agriculture Minister Lok Nath Sharma along with the Minister MN Sherpa, who is also the area MLA [Daramdin], made a joint inspection of the Veterinary Dispensary and Fodder Farm at Anden under Upper Thambung Gram Panchayat Unit in West District this morning.

Minister Sharma enquired after the available facilities and directed the concerned officials to strengthen delivery of required facilities, including Artificial Insemination, medicines, manpower, water connectivity etc.

After taking a round of the premises, he directed that renovation of existing structure be taken up and a bull-shed and cow-shed be constructed at the premises.

The Minister also checked the land documents to verify the recorded area of the complex and advised that

fencing be erected for the protection of existing property.

He also assured to address need of Mini Operation Theatre at Anden Veterinary Dispensary.

Thereafter, the Ministers visited the Horticulture farm at Hilley under Ribdi Bharyang GPU.

The visiting team was stunned by the magnificent landscape of the departmental land spread over a cultivated area of 16 hectares and Minister Sharma stressed the need to revive the land under cultivation with the concept of agro-tourism.

Horticulture Department Officer, Ongdi Sherpa, shared the historic significance of the climatically favourable area of Hilley for production of vegetables and explained its uniqueness in terms of size and quality.

He also informed that the potato breeding farm was developed by the Chogyal in 1967 and

has produced record harvest in the past but was declining at present and indicated wildlife interference as a major cause of diminishing cultivated area to below two hectares currently.

Minister Sharma assured to take up the requirement for strong fencing work around the boundary to protect proposed cultivated land.

He also interacted with the labourers and instructed the concerned officials to put up a file for the establishment of a Labour barrack, Snow Proof Green House, Harvesting Tank along with a proposal for total utilization of barren land for cultivation of climatically suitable vegetables.

He advised to receive required Polypipe and water tanks for immediate need. Further, he headed towards Okhrey to attend the Golden Jubilee Celebration of Lower Okhrey Primary School.

## Lower Okhrey Primary School celebrates golden jubilee



**OKHREY/ DARAMDIN, 19 DEC (IPR):** Minister for Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Information and Public Relations and Printing and Stationery Departments, Lok Nath Sharma graced the occasion of Golden Jubilee Celebration of Government Primary School Lower Okhrey in special presence of the Minister-cum-Area MLA of Daramdin constituency, MN Sherpa at the School Playground, today.

Minister Sharma, in his address, underlined value of wisdom achieved through teaching and learning process in schools and congratulated school family and further conveyed heartiest gratitude of the Chief Minister of Sikkim, PS Tamang to the family members land donors and entire school family on the occasion of Golden Jubilee Celebration.

He also motivated people to encourage for taking admission in Gov-

ernment schools and touched upon the joint responsibilities of teachers, students, parents/guardian for better coordination and cooperation to ensure improved education system.

Referring his visit in the morning at Hilley Horticulture Farm, minister announced to revive the entire cultivated area through a comprehensive plan for the benefit of the local people and the entire region as a whole.

He informed that the Union Minister of Agriculture will lay the foundation stone of International level of Food Processing Unit at Rangpo on 22 Dec, 2019.

Minister also highlighted provision of subsidised loan and advised to take benefit of highly exempted loan to initiate innovative and planned work in the field of Agriculture/ Horticulture and Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services.

Minister-cum-Area MLA, MN Sherpa who is

also the Chief Patron of the organizing committee thanked committee members and everyone for peaceful conduct of the programme. He informed that the government is putting all possible efforts to improve condition of power supply in the state and a transformer of 66 KV will be installed for the Daramdin region and further urged public to bear discontinuity in power supply till the installation is over.

He also advised labourers to get registered under Boarder and Other Construction Work to take educational and medical benefits of their family members. He also informed that the state government will construct house of each land holder labour of Rs. Six Lakhs.

During the programme family members of the Land donors and Retired school staff were also honoured and felicitated for their contributions.

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## Newspaper Business

*Layoffs and roll-backs, relevance and need*

These have not been good times for newspapers. Lay-offs, wind downs, even arrests and in some regions, the challenge of putting editions to bed without internet or even that ever-exciting gossip on WhatsApp groups. Clearly, the stress is not just on the bottom-lines. There is also the ever present challenge of relevance and speed, something that social media and television beat newsprint to with ease.

And while on the current times, in the region, we have known these immediate months as the news-fluctuation phase as must be apparent to regular buyers of newspapers (thanks for still doing so) who could not have missed the ebb and flows of “local” news updates in their local papers. But this is a cyclical phase, what has arrived as a shocker, and also a reminder, on what the media space is going through came in the form of major developments like across the board layoffs elsewhere. It was not so long ago that a string of rather exceptional newspapers bankrolled by chit-fund finances folded up and left behind a litter of suddenly made jobless journalists. But at that time, the blame rested with the financiers; with what has happened with legacy newspapers as well and with other media houses over the recent years, however, has brought the whole print journalism model into question. One was always aware of these discussions raging the world over, but with these developments, the deliberations have arrived closer. Why, even this newspaper has risen from the ashes of another, and while that might have a ring of positivity to it, it also carries a hint of things not being all honky-dory in the newspaper business.

Point is that while journalism might serve the community, it still requires a business model to remain viable; bills, after all, need to be paid. Fiscal robustness is an important contributor to quality journalism. That said, it cannot be looked at solely as commercial enterprise. Unfortunately, business managers have been gaining more influence in media houses in the recent decades and while they have scaled up profits in the past, they clearly lack the resolve to weather economic crisis. Spending fiscal quarters or even entire financial years deep in the red is not new to newspaper houses, but they never triggered the kind of panic layoffs and roll-backs in the scale that one has been witnessing off late. That is happening because journalists have been edged out or won over by the accounts sections. That said, it is not being implied that newspapers should be not-for-profit (although, good luck with turning profits from good journalism), but just a reminder that business ups and downs had earlier led to re-strategizing and innovations unlike the bloodletting that one sees nowadays.

It is in a setting like this that one should also go over what newspapers are all about. Survival alone does not a good newspaper make. Opinions on this will undoubtedly differ, but here are some points for the readers to mull upon. For starters, good newspapers are unwavering in their commitment to their community and this “community” can be the national audience, a big city or even a small town. They serve as a kind of glue that provides various factions with the same information so that they can unite or divide based on their views formed from access to the same unbiased reportage. Newspapers don’t decide, they provide the people with all the required information from all the varied points of view and let the people decide. Newspapers are lynchpins which keep things civilized even as they facilitate change and moderate the opposing views in the course of this change. They don’t bring about the change. That is for the people to do. Newspapers and journalists who believe themselves to be the activists/ agents of change credit themselves with too much intelligence and importance. As individuals or even institutions, one can only contribute to change, not force it. These qualities are not always overtly expressed in a newspaper’s pages, but flow naturally when newspapers succeed in shining the light on real problems. And good newspapers go a step further.

Apart from reporting on issues they provide insight into the issues that face a community. If, after reading a newspaper, you feel that you have understood an issue better, it is a sign that the papers are succeeding. Similarly, one should see her concerns and experiences reflected in the pages. That’s a must, because that provides the connection between the publication and the readers. Good newspapers also play it straight. And when doubts surface, they explain their actions. But they are neither arrogant nor defensive. Finally, good newspapers are like relatives. They prompt a wide range of emotions that run the gamut from love to hate, depending on the day. But you still want them around, just like the relative. Look where we arrived - a conversation which started with layoffs, ended with finding family. There might be hope still :-)

## The holidays remind us that grief cannot be wished away

HEATHER SERVATY-SEIB  
*theconversation.com*

The year-end holidays are a time of social gatherings, traditions and celebrations. They can also be a time of revisiting and reflection.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2.8 million people die each year in the U.S. If we conservatively estimate four or five griever per death, there are 11 to 14 million people who are experiencing their first holiday season without the presence of an important person who has died.

No matter how long it has been since a family member or friend has died, the holiday season can understandably bring grief to the forefront of our minds. Lost loved ones are no longer physically present, and our rituals can remind us of their absence in poignant ways. And it can be challenging for others to know how best to comfort and offer support.

As a licensed psychologist and professor of counseling psychology, my clinical and research interests for the past 25 years have focused on death, dying, grief and loss. A primary goal of my work has been to “make death talkable.”

**HOW DO YOU SPEAK OF DEATH AT A TIME LIKE THIS?**

But how, you might ask, can death be talkable during the holidays? The general tendency within U.S. society is to avoid the topic. In the process, Americans tend to avoid not only our own grief, but also the grief of others.

My sense is that a good bit of this avoidance is connected to misunderstandings about the grieving process and problems with what society views as necessary, critical and “normal” for grief expression.

Psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross’s work with dying people, beginning in the mid-60s, was groundbreaking and facilitated increased conversations about death among health professionals, dying patients and their family members.

And yet the five stages that she observed in dying patients – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance – have taken on a life of their own. They have been applied well beyond the dying process, and have become a kind of prescription for grief – an unfolding that Kübler-Ross specifically warned against in her 1969 book.

When people focus on grief as a linear process with distinct stages and a clear endpoint, they are

seeking to control and contain an aspect of life that is overwhelming, unpredictable and confusing. Although quite understandable, the attempt to put grief in a nice neat box has its costs. Most specifically, grieving individuals can begin to judge their own experiences, which can lead to just as much, if not more, pain than the grief itself.

**A DISTINCT EXPERIENCE**

There are a few key points about grief that can make a tremendous difference for people during the holidays and beyond.

First, grief does not end. It is a reflection of attachment and love, and our connection with loved ones does not end when they die. Therefore, our grief will not and does not end. Grief is not a sickness to recover from, but rather an unfolding to experience.

Second, grief is not equal to sadness. In fact, it is not the same as emotions. Grief is multi-dimensional, and often incorporates emotional, cognitive, physiological, social and spiritual reactions. There is no indication in the literature that grievers must cry. Some griever may be more emotional and social in their grief expression, while others may be more cognitive and physical.

Last, grief is unique to each person within their distinct familial, community and cultural contexts. Individuals will grieve based on who they are as people and based on the unique relationship they had with the person who died.

Those relationships can be quite dynamic and complex, and grief will reflect that complexity. It can often be challenging for family members and friends when they are grieving differently from one another. However, they are grieving different relationships with the loved one who died and their grief will then also be distinct.

**WAYS TO BRING COMFORT, IF NOT ACTUALLY JOY**

Contemporary theories expand far beyond stages to acknowledge the tasks of grief and the central nature of sense-making in the grieving process. For example: How do I integrate this death into my life story? Grief is not just about missing the person who died, but also about learning to live in a world where they are no longer physically present.

Developing a more nuanced understanding of the variability, adaptability, and unfolding nature of grief has encouraging implications for griever

and for those who seek to support them.

For griever:

- Resist societal messages that limit, compartmentalize and minimize your grief.
- Observe your thoughts, feelings and actions, and honor the unique ways that you are expressing your grief.
- Remember that rituals related to grief go beyond formal services, and that post-funeral rituals can take many forms. Allow for recognition of both separation and connection. Annual rituals, such as those that may be incorporated into the holidays, can become new traditions and opportunities for meaningful reflection.

For those who seek to offer support:

- Acknowledge that grief does not end. Even brief messages of recognition and remembrance of their loss, regardless of the time since death, can be quite meaningful at the holidays and during other significant times.
- Keep in mind your level of closeness. If you know the griever well, then you will have more sense of what they will view as helpful. Consider offering tangible assistance in terms of errands, tasks, or responsibilities that you know will be difficult for them. If you do not know them well, keep your responses more inline with that level of relationship, such as sending emails and cards, or donating to a cause.
- Reflect on your own death anxiety and apprehension. Own it and then use it. Push through the common tendency to avoid those who are grieving and act on your thoughts of concern for them.

Remember that there is no set of words or phrases that will “fix” grief. It just does not work that way. What will make the difference is your presence and your willingness to reach out.

If it would help to consider specific statements, phrases that communicate presence and care, such as “I am here for you,” or “I care about what happens to you,” are more likely to be viewed as helpful than those focused on advice and forced cheerfulness, such as “You should keep busy,” or “Do not take it so hard.”

[the writer is Professor and Associate Dean of Counseling Psychology, Purdue University]

## 5 ways chess can make you a better law student and lawyer

MARK KENDE  
*theconversation.com*

Paul Morphy was a 19th-century New Orleans chess prodigy who was the de facto world chess champion during much of his short life. He rarely lost when he played throughout Europe and the United States. He was also a lawyer who graduated from what is now Tulane Law School. As a student, he was said to have memorized the Louisiana Civil Code in English and French.

His father was a prominent Louisiana judge.

There are other talented chess-playing lawyers, though none, in my view, as brilliant at chess as Morphy. Three 20th century champions all agree that Morphy was among the greatest chess players of any era.

The general view is that he would have the chess grandmaster title, the highest title in the world of chess, if he were alive today.

As a law professor and high-level amateur player, I believe that playing chess is great training to be a successful law student and lawyer. Here are five reasons why.

**1. INTELLECTUALLY RIGOROUS**

Much like law school, chess is intellectually rigorous. Playing chess at the highest level is so hard that Microsoft founder Bill Gates lost after only nine moves in an exhibition blitz game with the current world champion, Norwegian Grandmaster Magnus Carlsen. One might have expected Gates to last longer given his genius.

A chess player must concentrate for as many as five or six hours in serious tournaments, and a single lapse can cause a loss. Learning to concentrate is also invaluable for law school.

Aspiring law students often take undergraduate classes that are part of a “pre-law” program. Government or criminal justice majors are typical since they involve some focus on the legal system. These are important intellectual fields.

Yet, informal studies suggest that students who major in especially difficult areas, such as philosophy or mathematics, perform better on the LSAT – the exam required for entrance into law school. Just as math and logic serve lawyers well in the



courtroom as they fashion their arguments, so, too, is it with chess players on the chessboard as they make their moves.

**2. REQUIRES IDENTIFYING ISSUES**

Students who perform well on law school exams and the bar exam must succeed at “issue spotting.” That is to say, unlike undergraduate exams, which may require the student to summarize what they have learned, law school exams require students to figure out what legal issues are buried within the facts of a given case. Then the student should apply the right legal principles to the facts. The student often must draw analogies and see patterns. Lawyers must also spot issues and draw analogies when their clients present problems.

Similarly, good chess players survey the chess board, with a clock ticking, and must find a strong move among many possible candidate moves. They will look for patterns, such as typical methods of attacking a king. Sometimes, the move will be a tactical strike, such as the bold sacrifice of a queen leading to checkmate. Those players who cannot see many possibilities will not win many games. Both the chess player and lawyer must discover the key aspects of a situation.

**3. STRATEGIES ESSENTIAL**

Strong performance in law and chess involves strategizing effectively. Chess may therefore be law’s most common metaphor.

Success requires the ability to

plan, envision how one’s opponent will respond, and then figure out how to reply. As a former litigator, I not only had to think about what to do, but I also had to assess whether my adversary would have an effective contrary plan. I also had to know the weaknesses in my case. Similarly, a strong chess player will know the problems in their position.

**4. PRINCIPLES AND RULES APPLY**

Both law and chess have rules, general principles, and exceptions or loopholes. The law is often codified as a statute. Likewise, chess has rules, though they often lack the ambiguity of statutes. Beginning chess players then learn accepted principles. For instance, they are taught that during the opening part of the game, they should get certain pieces into play, use those pieces and pawns to control the center of the board, place their prized king in a safe position by making a special move known as “castling,” and keep moves by their valuable queen in reserve. Yet strong chess players may violate these principles, for surprise or other purposes.

Prosecutors also have common approaches. In criminal cases with multiple defendants, prosecutors are trained to go after the “small fish” first, and then use those successes to land the “big fish.” This is like capturing the pawns before checkmating the king in chess. The press even uses these chess terms in describing criminal cases.

**5. TAKES COMPETITIVE ZEAL**

Success in both law and chess

requires competitive instincts. Indeed, chess has a rating system for players and law school has class rank for students. Chess requires a will to win strong enough to maintain concentration.

Chess players often experience ups and downs during single games, as well as tournaments. They must cope with adversity, including losing. Similarly, a single law school exam can be the only basis for the student’s class grade, so everything is at stake at once, though the student has likely worked all semester. Law suits can also take years and require persistence. My cases and trials were always roller coasters with good and bad days.

Another similarity is that the chess player and lawyer must be well prepared. In chess, one can often find an opponent’s games online and see their playing style. In law, one can learn about the judge who will be hearing a case and alter one’s approach accordingly.

Admittedly chess is just a game so most people play it for fun, whereas practicing law is a profession. Few chess players will reach the heights of Paul Morphy. Nevertheless, as one who has played chess at high levels and litigated federal and state court cases, I believe that chess develops important intellectual, emotional and competitive skills that are very useful in the legal field.

[the writer is Professor of Law, Drake University]



# AMU teachers take out silent march protesting CAA

**ALIGARH (UP), DEC 19 (PTI):** Several teachers of the Aligarh Muslim University held silent march opposing the Citizens (Amendment) Act on Thursday, days after the institute witnessed police crackdown against its students who were agitating against the new legislation.

The protestors, including a large number of women teachers, marched from the AMU Teachers Club to the Purani Chungi crossing and circled the campus.

"We want to convey to the people of India that our struggle against the Citizens (Amendment) Act will continue peacefully within the democratic framework of the system," AMU Teachers Association secretary, Professor Najmul Islam told PTI.

"We feel that we are fighting for the idea of India as envisaged by



the founding fathers of the nation. This is not a struggle for the rights of any particular community," he stressed.

Hundreds of AMU students protesting against the amended Citizenship Act clashed with police on Sunday at a campus gate, leaving 60 injured. After the protest, the administration announced closure of

the university till January 5. The clashes at AMU started after an agitation by Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia students against the legislation turned violent and police used batons and tear gas to disperse them.

The Samajwadi Party held a protest march on Thursday from its city office near Jail Road up to the Tasvir Mahal cross-

ing where they handed over a memorandum to the district authorities demanding immediate revocation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

The district authorities erected barriers preventing the protestors from reaching the collectorate. Barriers had been put up at several areas adjoining the AMU campus.

In Aligarh town's sensitive Upper Court area which witnessed major protests on Wednesday, shopkeepers downed their shutters to express solidarity with the cause.

In the afternoon, however, they opened their shops when tension subsided in different parts of the city, police said.

## Bengal peaceful as no fresh violence reported over new citizenship law

**KOLKATA, DEC 19 (PTI):** West Bengal was peaceful with no fresh incident of violence over the new citizenship law reported so far on Thursday, police said.

However, stray incidents of clashes between groups supporting the amended Citizenship Act and those opposing it were reported on Wednesday.

Five persons were injured when crude bombs were hurled at a protest march taken out against the new citizenship law in North Dinajpur district, a police officer said.

The agitators had blocked NH 34 for two hours against the incident.

The state had witnessed violence and arson from December 13 to 17 during protests against the new citizen-

ship law. More than 350 people have been arrested for their alleged involvement in the violence.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who has been at the forefront in opposing the new citizenship law and the NRC, is on Thursday scheduled to conduct a protest rally in Esplanade area in the heart of Kolkata.

She had taken out three protest marches in Kolkata and Howrah from December 16 to 18.

The Left parties are also scheduled to hold a protest march against the new citizenship law from Ramlila Maidan to Lady Brabourne College in the city.

Intellectuals are slated to take out another protest march from Ramlila Maidan to Hogg Market.

## Centre scared of historian, says Mamata on detention of Ramchandra Guha



**KOLKATA, DEC 19 (PTI):** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday condemned the detention of historian Ramachandra Guha and others in Bengaluru for staging a demonstration against the new citizenship law and NRC.

Extending her solidarity with Guha and other agitators who were detained on Thursday morning, Banerjee said the Centre was scared of one of India's "most accomplished" historians.

"This government is scared of students. This government is scared of one of India's most accomplished historians for speaking to the media on #CAB #NRC and holding a poster of Gandhiji. I condemn the detention of Ram Guha. We extend our full solidarity to all those detained," she

tweeted. As many as 24 people along with Guha were detained by the Bengaluru Police when staged a protest against Act. Police said the protesters had violated prohibitory orders clamped in the city against any protest or demonstration.

Guha said it was "absolutely undemocratic" that police was not allowing even a peaceful protest, which is the democratic right of the citizens.

He was taken away by police personnel and led to a vehicle parked nearby.

Banerjee has been vocal against the NRC and the Act and had staged three protest marches in Howrah and Kolkata since Monday.

West Bengal had witnessed violent protests against the Act.

## VCs of Assam varsities appeal for peace and harmony



**GUWAHATI, DEC 19 (PTI):** Vice-Chancellors of about 20 government and private universities in Assam, which experienced mass protests against the amended Citizenship Act and mayhem, has appealed to students on Thursday not to endanger their future but help in maintaining peace and harmony in the state.

The appeal by the VCs, published in some newspapers here, pointed out that the prevailing situation in the state may affect the future of the student community.

"It is everybody's duty to ensure that the educational system in the state remains healthy.

"Students and all sections of the society should cooperate with the university authorities to ensure that the

educational calendar including the scheduled examinations are held without any disruption," the appeal said.

"In this era of globalisation, we want the student community of Assam to march hand in hand with the students of the world," the vice-chancellors said.

The students are the future resources of the state and the vice-chancellors are always there as their guardians, they said.

"We appeal to all students and their guardians to cooperate in maintaining the age-old traditions of Assam's peace, harmony, unity, brotherhood and friendly relations in the state," they said.

The appeal has been signed by Vice-chancellors of Gauhati University, National Law Univer-

sity, Assam Agricultural University, Dibrugarh University, Tezpur University, Bodoland University, Krishnakanta Handique State Open University, Srimanta Sankardeva University of Health Sciences, Madhavdev University, Bhattadev University, Rabindra Nath Tagore University, Assam Women University, Majuli Cultural University, Kumar Bhaskarvarma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University, Assam Science and Technology University, Assam Rajiv Gandhi Samabai University and Royal Global University.

The appeal was also signed by the Pro Vice-chancellor of Assam Downtown University, registrars of Cotton State University and Kaziranga University.

## Amit Shah is no less than General Dyer: NCP



**MUMBAI, DEC 19 (PTI):** NCP leader Nawab Malik lashed out at Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday over the police action against those protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), comparing him to "General Dyer".

Malik's tweet targeting Shah echoed Maharashtra Chief Minister

Uddhav Thackeray's criticism.

Thackeray, whose party, Shiv Sena, has formed alliance with the NCP and the Congress, had likened the action against students of Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi during an anti-CAA protest to the massacre at the Jallianwala Bagh.

Reginald Dyer, a Brit-

ish Army officer, ordered firing into a crowd at the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar on April 13, 1919, killing at least 400 persons.

"Just like General Dyer fired at the Jallianwala Bagh, Amit Shah is firing on people. He is not less than General Dyer," Malik, the chief spokesperson of the Nationalist Congress Party, tweeted.

## Air Marshal RD Mathur visits Air Force Station at Kurseong

**GANGTOK, 19 DEC (PIB):** Air Marshal, RD Mathur, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Air Command, Indian Air Force visited the Air Force Station at Kurseong on 18 Dec.

On arrival, the Air Marshal was introduced to key personnel of the station and briefed about the station and units as well as ongoing major projects.

On his maiden visit to the station, the Air Marshal interacted with all personnel of the station and exhorted them to remain operationally focused, physically fit, mentally agile in highest traditions of the IAF.

The Air Marshal was accompanied by President Air Force Wives Welfare Association (Regional), Shipra Mathur, Eastern Air Command.

They were received by Group Captain YK Bajaj, Station Commander and President Air Force Wives Welfare Association (Local), Manisha Bajaj.

President AFW-WA(R), Shipra Mathur presided over a meeting with 'Vayu Sanginis' of the station and showed keen interest in welfare activities of the station.

## Kolkata Science City unveils new 'time machines'



**KOLKATA, DEC 19 (PTI):** The Science City in Kolkata has unveiled a new pair of 'time machines', motion simulators with 3D projections, officials said on Thursday.

Around 15 visitors can be accommodated in each simulator where films on subjects ranging from the Great Wall of China to the Roman civilisation will be shown

in 65-inch LED monitors with 3D projections, Science City Director Subhabrata Chaudhuri said.

"Keeping in view the immense popularity of the earlier version of the time machine, which attracted around 45 lakh visitors or 14.2 per cent of the total footfall to Science City, we have installed these motion simulators," he said. The machines,

unveiled at Science City on Wednesday, have been partially funded by the Union Ministry of Culture, Chaudhuri said.

"We hope people will enjoy the shows with polaroid glasses that give an immersive feeling while inside the capsules," he said, adding that the earlier 'time machine' was shut for maintenance in April last year.

## Internet restored in some areas of West Bengal

**KOLKATA, DEC 19 (PTI):** The West Bengal government on Thursday afternoon gave its nod to resumption of internet services in Howrah district besides Baruaipur and Canning subdivisions of South 24 Parganas district, a senior state government official said.

A review was conducted in those areas which found that the situation had improved there and internet services could be resumed, the official said.

"However, we will continue to keep an eye on the situation," he said.

The services were back four days after it

was suspended following incidents of violence in the wake of the amended Citizenship Act.

"Continuous review will be done to counter any attempt to spread fake information on social media to instigate or misinform people which can disrupt peace and harmony of the state," the official said.

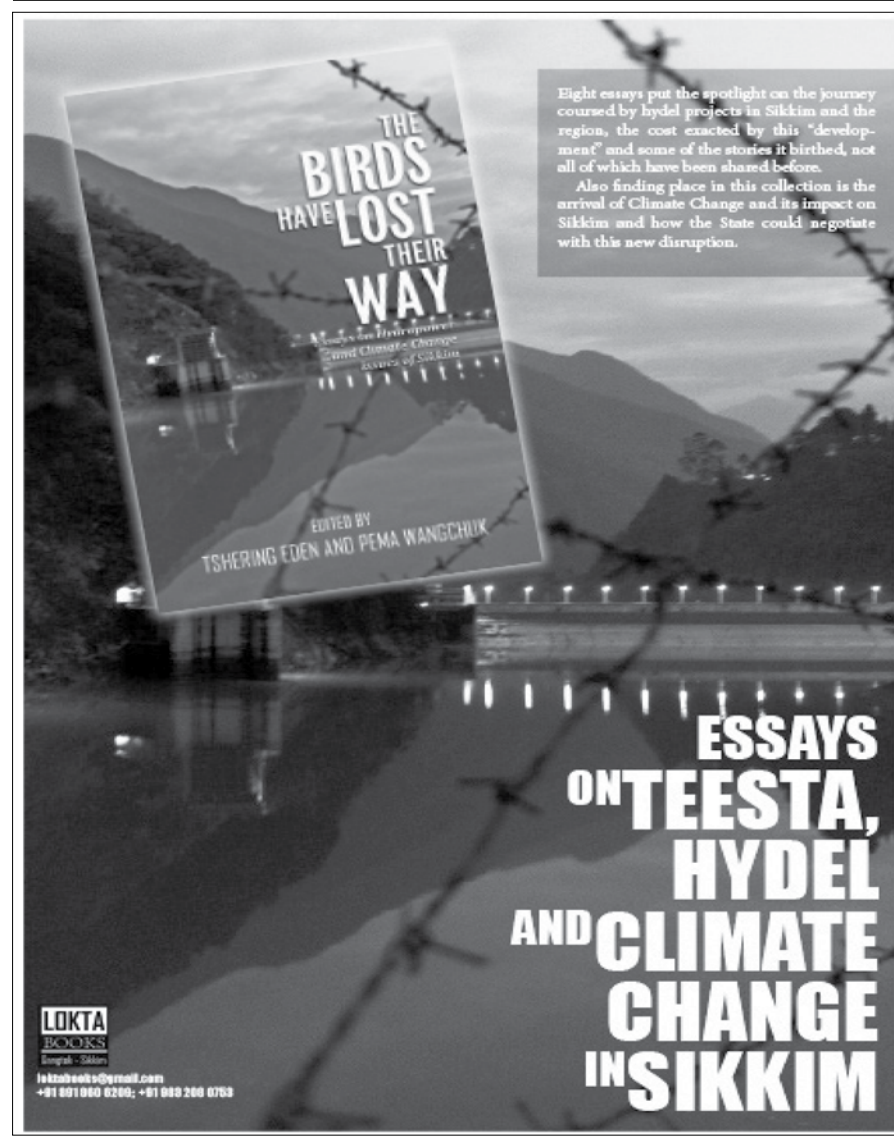
The decision of restoring internet services fully in Malda, Murshidabad, Uttar Dinajpur districts and Basirhat and Barasat subdivisions of North 24 Parganas district will be taken afterwards, he said. A report on the prevailing situa-

tion was awaited from these areas, he said.

Internet services were blocked in the areas on Sunday to prevent rumour-mongering and circulation of fake news, especially on social media, against the contentious Citizenship Act and the NRC.

Violent protests had rocked several parts of the state over the new citizenship law.

Over 600 people have been arrested in connection with their alleged involvement in damaging public property and spreading rumours leading to law and order problems, officials said.





## Man City to face Man Utd in League Cup semis

**LONDON, DEC 19 (AFP):** Holders Manchester City will face Manchester United in the semi-finals of the League Cup after both sides saw off lower league opposition to make the last four on Wednesday.

Raheem Sterling's second half double ensured City warded off a shock to win 3-1 at League One Oxford, while United ended fourth-tier Colchester United's fairytale run with a 3-0 win at Old Trafford.

Leicester set up a semi-final meeting with Aston Villa after the Foxes survived a second half fightback from Everton to secure their place in the last four 4-2 on penalties after a 2-2 draw at Goodison Park.

City have won this competition for the past two seasons with Pep Guardiola's only defeat in the League Cup coming to United three years ago.

Guardiola's men will have a chance to avenge their 2-1 Premier League defeat to the Red Devils earlier this month when the sides clash over two legs in January.

"You always want to win trophies. We've got a nice little draw coming up, it'll be exciting times," said United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

"We've shown before we can do well against City." City made eight changes for the trip to Oxford, but still named a strong side and went ahead through Joao Cancelo's first goal for the English champions midway through the first half.

However, Oxford went toe-to-toe with their illustrious visitors all night and levelled through Matty Taylor a minute into the second half.

Oxford even had more attempts on target than City, but did not have the predatory instincts of Sterling on their side as the England international twice tapped home from close range to spare City's blushes.

"It was a tight game with the wind making things difficult but we did well," said Guardiola, who was accompanied by assistant Mikel Arteta despite speculation suggesting he is set to be announced as Arsenal's new manager. "We suffered a lot in the second half. At 2-1 they play long balls with throw-ins, corners and we struggled but it's okay."

### - UNITED PATIENCE PAYS OFF -

Manchester United had to be patient before seeing off Colchester, who had beaten Tottenham and Crystal Palace to make the last eight.

Marcus Rashford was guilty of missing a host of chances in a goalless first half. However, the England forward made amends six minutes into the second period with a calm finish to register a career-best 14th goal of the season.

Rashford was also the creator of United's other two goals as Ryan Jackson turned a cross into his own net before Anthony Martial stretched to convert at the back post.

# Ronaldo scores soaring header as Juventus beats Samp 2-1

**MILAN, 19 DEC:** A superb Cristiano Ronaldo header sent Juventus three points clear at the top of Serie A with a 2-1 victory at Sampdoria. Paulo Dybala's exquisite volley put the champions in front before Gianluca Caprari levelled, but a remarkable leap and towering header from Ronaldo on the brink of halftime proved decisive.

"Ronaldo did something that you see in the NBA; he was up in the air for an hour and a half," said the Sampdoria coach, Claudio Ranieri. "There's nothing you can say about it, you can only congratulate him and move on."

Ronaldo was denied a second goal by the offside flag late on before Caprari was sent off in stoppage time after a second yellow card.

"The whole team showed the right attitude," Ronaldo told Sky Italia. "It was a good goal and I am glad to help the team with another three points. I had problems with my knee for a month but that has gone now and I feel good physically."

It was a special night for Gianluigi Buffon as the veteran goalkeeper equalled Paolo Maldini's record of 647 Serie A appearances and set a Juventus Serie A appearance record of 479 games, one more



than Alessandro Del Piero.

Juventus top the table with 42 points, although second-placed Internazionale (39) have a game in hand.

Maurizio Sarri fielded the attacking trident of Ronaldo, Dybala and Gonzalo Higuain for the second game in a row and his side took the lead after 19 minutes when Dybala struck a sublime volley into the bottom corner.

Sampdoria drew level 10 minutes before the break when Caprari swept a finish

past Buffon after a defensive mix-up.

Juve, however, went back in front through Ronaldo's extraordinary header. The Portuguese was calculated to have jumped 71 centimetres off the ground to meet Sandro's cross at a height of 2.56 metres, before powering home. He has scored five goals in his last six appearances for Juventus.

Juventus head to Saudi Arabia this week where they will face the Coppa Italia hold-

ers, Lazio, in the Supercoppa Italiana in Riyadh on Sunday before the winter break, which runs until the first weekend of January.

Bayern Munich's Joshua Zirkzee and Serge Gnabry scored stoppage-time goals to give the Bundesliga champions a 3-1 win at Freiburg on Wednesday while Borussia Mönchengladbach joined RB Leipzig at the top of the table with a 2-0 win over Paderborn.

Bayern looked set to drop

points until Zirkzee scored his first Bundesliga goal a minute after coming on as a substitute, with Gnabry making sure of the victory. The win, however, could not mask Bayern's defensive weaknesses, with the team having now conceded at least one goal in their last four league games.

Bayern got off to a strong start, hitting the post through Thomas Müller before Robert Lewandowski's 19th league goal of the season gave them the lead in the 16th minute.

Freiburg, however, gradually gained control of the midfield, attacking with greater ease as Bayern were punished once more for their complacency. Vincenzo Grifo volleyed in to level on the hour, completing a superb attacking move from the hosts.

Zirkzee, the 18-year-old Dutch youth international, then slipped into the box and slotted in from close range before Gnabry added another. Bayern are third on 30 points, ahead of fourth-placed Borussia Dortmund on goal difference.

"It was a game with many ups and downs. Fortunately, with a happy finish in the end," Bayern interim coach, Hans Flick, told reporters. "At the end we had a bit of luck. Freiburg played well, they put us under pressure."

On his decision to bring on Zirkzee in stoppage time, Flick said: "I thought if a cross comes in then he could put it in. He has been with us [from the reserves] for the past three weeks and his development is very noticeable."

Second-half goals from Alassane Plea and Lars Stindl gave Gladbach a comfortable 2-0 win over Paderborn and lifted them to 34 points, second on goal difference behind RB Leipzig.

## Jamie Vardy penalty sends Leicester past Everton in shootout drama

**PAUL WILSON**

**WALTON, 19 DEC [THEGUARDIAN]:** Carlo Ancelotti is expected to be in the stands when Everton play Arsenal on Saturday, and thanks to Duncan Ferguson's stewardship he will be watching a vibrant, confident, technically unbeaten side, though not one in the last four of the Carabao Cup.

Kasper Schmeichel's two saves from the first Everton penalties of the shootout saw to that, earning Leicester a semi-final against Aston Villa, though Ferguson and his players could take a lot of pride in fighting back from a two-goal interval deficit to claim a normal-time draw thanks to a piledriving equaliser from Leighton Baines in the 90th minute. Leicester were worth the victory on the balance of play, though by the end Goodison was jumping again, and there is clearly a direct communication between Ferguson, his players and the Everton support that Ancelotti might find difficult to emulate.

"I thought we deserved to win, but Duncan has given the team and the crowd some real spirit," Brendan Rodgers said. "He's a true Evertonian but he's also a very good coach. If it is not his time this time I'm sure he'll get his chance soon." Ferguson looked drained after the game, partly through disappointment, partly through finding it hard to sleep these past couple of weeks. "I thought it was going to be our night when Leighton hit the top corner, but it wasn't to be," the Everton interim manager said. "We

needed to be more aggressive in the first half but the players gave every ounce of energy and I'd like to thank them for that. We've given the new guy something to build on."

Ayoze Pérez might have given Leicester an even earlier lead when Ricardo Pereira showed a turn of speed to reach the byline on the right, but though his cut back picked out the Leicester forward perfectly the finish was hasty and high over the bar. When the visitors opened the scoring just before the half hour the move was almost identical. Again Pereira found himself with time and space on the right, only this time instead of attempting to beat Baines he crossed early and low to find James Maddison, who coolly controlled the ball before finding a way past Jordan Pickford with the outside of his right boot.

It was no more than Leicester deserved for the eagerness of their approach, and a couple of minutes later they went further ahead. Maddison's corner was flicked on by Jamie Vardy, even though with Mason Holgate in midfield Everton had three centre-halves on defensive duty, and it was a simple task for Jonny Evans to apply a close-range finish at the far post.

If ever the home side needed the sort of bear-pit atmosphere Ferguson demanded before kick-off it was now, yet by half-time the only section of the crowd making itself heard was the corner allocated to the Leicester supporters. While Ferguson cut the same

animated figure in the technical area as he had in his first match in charge against Chelsea, this time the response was a delayed one.

Everton might have pulled a goal back after an hour had Yerry Mina been able to do better with a free header from a Baines corner, before Dennis Praet shot at Schmeichel at the other end with a chance to make the game safe. Vardy's runs and subtle touches had caused problems for Everton's defenders all night, and he almost created one of the goals of the season midway through the second half, first by finding space to beat the cover, then showing awareness to backheel a pass to find Marc Albrighton in space. The winger knew he had to try a first-time shot but his right-foot curler came back off the bar.

Leicester regretted that missed opportunity almost immediately as Tom Davies pulled a goal back with a sidefoot volley from Richarlison's cross, particularly as the Goodison atmosphere finally arrived for the last 20 minutes, a fact acknowledged by Everton's caretaker manager removing his suit jacket in the rain. The substitute Moise Kean sent over a cross from the right that Dominic Calvert-Lewin rose to head over the bar, and Ferguson threw an 18-year-old debutant into the mix in Anthony Gordon, but it was the experienced old hand Baines, only playing because of an injury to Lucas Digne, who finally sent Goodison into rapture with a rasping shot from outside the area.

## Gareth Bale denied with Barcelona and Real Madrid distracted by protests



**SID LOWE**

**MADRID, 19 DEC [THEGUARDIAN]:** It was not supposed to be like this. The game that always delivers didn't, the clásico ending 0-0 for the first time in 17 years and 47 games, going back to the night someone threw a pig's head at Luís Figo. The biggest club rivalry in world football, a meeting that has produced 126 goals in the past decade alone, produced none here. Only Gareth Bale found the net but it was ruled out, leaving Real Madrid and Barcelona taking a point each, still level at the top.

At the final whistle there was timid applause, a few whistles too, but mostly there was quiet – punctured by the PA announcer repeatedly telling supporters not to leave out of the south end of the stadium, where smoke rose over the stands. There had been trouble there during a game that had been politically charged, with reports suggesting 46 people had been injured, but inside surprisingly little happened either off the pitch or on it. Ernesto Valverde said his players had not been affected, but it ended up an unusually flat occasion, played 53 days after it was originally scheduled.

No one found a way through and as time ticked away no one looked particularly likely to either. Real Madrid will be the more frustrated at failing to get a goal their manager felt they deserved. "I'm very

pleased with the performance," Zinedine Zidane said. "But when you have chances, you have to take them." That said, despite dominating the first half, racking up the shots, few of those chances were totally clear-cut. There were two penalty shouts for challenges on Raphaël Varane, though: a high foot from Clement Lenglet and a tug from Ivan Rakitic.

Without Sergio Busquets, withdrawn with fever just before the game, Barcelona struggled to find a way out from deep and on the rare occasions they did, they found Casemiro waiting. Everything Barcelona did seemed to end at his feet. Either side, Toni Kroos controlled and Federico Valverde ran, endlessly dashing through midfield and arriving at the edge of the area then dashing back again. Madrid have quite a player in the tireless young Uruguayan and he fired off two volleys, one veering wide, the other saved by Marc-André ter Stegen.

Casemiro, too, was getting involved. He bent a shot wide and had a header that Gerard Piqué cleared off the line. Lenglet had to block another effort from the Brazilian who is far more than just a stopper.

And yet, as uncomfortable as they were, as absent as their midfield had been, Barcelona had opportunities. Maybe even clearer ones. Sergio Ramos cleared off the line from Lionel Messi. There was also a stun-

ning Messi pass which dropped at Jordi Alba's feet, seven yards out. He, though, scuffed the shot – as if he couldn't believe it had actually reached him. A minute before the break, Luis Suárez's ball just evaded Messi close to goal. And early in the second half, first Messi and then Suárez swiped and failed to make full contact with the ball. Those chances came less than a minute apart and from a combined distance of barely 15 yards.

By then, Valverde had another shot deflected wide, drawing frustrated, fearful whistles from Barcelona fans. Then came a brief interruption as dozens of yellow beach balls were thrown on to the pitch to chants of "Visca Catalunya!"

The game went on, Antoine Griezmann more involved, substitute Arturo Vidal accelerating things, but Barça were imprecise in possession and vulnerable when they lost it. On one occasion when they did, Bale thumped the ball into the sidenetting. Soon after, Bale scored only to see the flag up. The wait was long, but it confirmed that Ferland Mendy had been fractionally offside before crossing.

Suárez bent wide before both teams made changes, but nothing much changed and nothing much happened. One late run from Suárez died at the feet of Casemiro. Of course. That, after all, was the story of a clásico that, for once, was no classic.

## India, WI teams arrive in Bhubaneswar for series-deciding ODI

**BHUBANESWAR, DEC 19 (PTI):** The players of both India and the West Indies cricket teams arrived here on Thursday for the series-deciding third One-day international, to be played at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack on Sunday.

The players along with the management staff were taken to a fortified hotel in the state capital amidst tight security by platoons of armed police force.

The match has generated a lot of enthusiasm among cricket lovers here as the men in blue are coming after a 107-run victory in the second ODI at Visakhapatnam.

India won the T20 In-



ternational series 2-1.

The state police have made elaborate security arrangements in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack for the event. While players of both the teams will stay in Bhubaneswar, they will travel to Cuttack for both practice and match on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

While the West Indies team is scheduled to go for nets on Friday morning, the Indian players will leave the hotel here for practice at around 1 pm.

Apart from opening a police camp in front of the hotel where the players are being lodged, the police had undertaken a

mock drill of the arcade on Wednesday before the arrival of teams.

Police said at least 63 platoons (one platoon comprise 30 personnel) of the police force and a Rapid Action Force contingent comprising 300 officers have been deployed to maintain law and order situation.



# Cuba to name first prime minister in 40 years



**HAVANA, DEC 19 (AFP):** Cuba is to resurrect the position of prime minister in a parliamentary session at the end of the week, with President Miguel Diaz-Canel nominating a candidate to the post which has remained dormant for more than 40 years.

The last time Cuba had a prime minister, it was revolutionary hero Fidel Castro. However, the position was abolished in 1976 when Castro transitioned to the presidency, taking over from Osvaldo Dorticos after the country's constitution was re-structured.

No one knows yet who will be appointed,

and the general public is in the dark as to what the role will even entail.

"I don't know what his functions will be, I imagine that he'll be helping that poor Diaz-Canel who never stops, going here and there trying to sort out the country," said Maria Fernandez, a 65-year-old pensioner.

Parliament will meet on Friday and Saturday before appointing the prime minister based on a proposal by Diaz-Canel.

The new official will become "head of government" for a five-year term.

Diaz-Canel's nomination must then receive an absolute majority in

a National Assembly vote, according to the country's new constitution, which was approved in April. The appointment will also have to be ratified by the omnipotent Communist Party led by former president Raul Castro.

Fidel Castro was a unique prime minister "given the weight of his persona," said Cuban professor Arturo Lopez-Levy of Holy Names University in California.

"Ultimate power in the country was in Fidel's" hands during his time as prime minister from 1959-76, even though Dorticos was president and head of state, Lopez-Levy said.

The appointment of a prime minister may signify a separation of powers but Lopez-Levy insisted that in Cuba it represents more of a "separation of functions" given the communist concept of political unity and the fact that the country is a one-party state.

State bulletin Granma said Diaz-Canel will "assist the prime minister" in running the government.

Under parameters established by the constitution the candidate must come from the 605-member National Assembly, be at least 35, "be a Cuban citizen by birth and hold no other national-

ity". The premier will be able to hire and fire state employees and will have overall control of provincial governors, another position restored under the new constitution.

Predicting who will be picked from a transitional Cuban government is tricky. Diaz-Canel could choose from any one of five vice presidents as well as his ministers.

In Diaz-Canel's approximately 20 months as president he's replaced a large part of his cabinet -- only three remain from Raul Castro's presidency: Armed Forces Minister Leopoldo Cintra Frias, Interior Minister Julio Cesar Gandarilla, and Secretary of the Council of Ministers Jose Amado Guerra.

If the prime minister is chosen from among the vice presidents, Lopez-Levy said Jorge Luis Tapia, 55, a former regional first secretary of the Communist Party, was his prediction.

"I'd pick Jorge Luis Tapia for his economic and experience profile," Lopez-Levy said. "In any case, I think you need to look further afield to the National Assembly."

As well as designating a prime minister, parliament must also ratify or approve the 26 members of the cabinet.

# Masterminds of Philippines' worst political massacre jailed



The masterminds of the Philippines' worst political massacre were found guilty Thursday of murder a decade after they led the killings of 58 people, rare convictions of powerful figures in a country notorious for its culture of impunity.

However with dozens of other accused gunmen acquitted, and 80 suspects never having been caught, relatives of the victims as well as rights groups gave a mixed response to the verdicts.

Leaders of the powerful Ampatuan family dynasty orchestrated the November 23, 2009, killings in a remote part of the conflict-plagued south of the Philippines in a bid to quash an election challenge from a rival clan.

Thirty-two journalists, travelling in a convoy to report on the filing of an Ampatuan rival's election candidacy, were among those murdered, making the killings one of the worst ever globally of media workers.

A Manila court on Thursday found 43 people guilty as principals or accessories to 57 of the murders.

They were found not guilty of the 58th murder because the body of the final victim was never recovered.

Andal Ampatuan Jnr, who had been planning to succeed his namesake father by running for governor of Maguindanao province, was among those found guilty of murder.

As principal suspects, Ampatuan Jnr and 27 others -- including seven of his relatives -- were each sentenced to at least 30 years in jail without parole.

"Their acts were de-

liberate and obviously in pursuance of their plan to kill," the court ruling read.

Fourteen members of the local police and a member of the Ampatuan family's armed militia force were sentenced to between eight and 10 years in prison as accessories.

However two clan leaders and more than 50 other police officers and alleged members of the Ampatuan militia were acquitted.

The cases against them had not been proved beyond a reasonable doubt, according to the court ruling.

Eighty suspects also remain at large.

"This makes us sad and happy at the same time, because (only) some of the major suspects were convicted," Esmael Mangudadatu, the Ampatuans' rival, told reporters outside the courtroom.

The massacre unfolded when Mangudadatu sent his wife and two sisters to file his candidacy for governor of Maguindanao province in an open challenge to the Ampatuans.

Gunmen blocked the convoy, which included the journalists, and herded them to a nearby hill where they were killed in a hail of gunfire and buried in mass graves, along with their vehicles, prosecutors said.

The Ampatuans had until then ruled Maguindanao and were allowed to build a heavily armed militia by then-president Gloria Arroyo to serve as a buffer against a long-running Muslim insurgency in the region.

The murders had cast a spotlight on the Philippines' notorious culture

of impunity, in which powerful and wealthy politicians and businessmen often operate above the law.

Human Rights Watch Philippines researcher Carlos Conde described Thursday's events as "partial justice", citing the acquittal of more than 50 suspects and others remaining at large as the main concerns.

"The broader significance, however, of the guilty verdict of the principal Ampatuan suspects clearly indicate a victory for justice. This signifies to Filipino politicians that they will pay a price for abusing the rights of constituents."

The Philippines' main media union offered a similar response.

"These people have won a great victory today, but they remain in danger," National Union of Journalists of the Philippines chairman Jose Espina told reporters in Manila.

Amnesty International regional director Nicholas Bequelin called the verdict "a critical step towards justice for victims of one of the worst killings of journalists in history," but called on Manila to find and prosecute the other suspects.

During the case's years of delays, patriarch Andal Ampatuan Snr and seven other defendants died, while some witnesses were murdered.

The Ampatuans remain a political force in the south.

Ampatuan family members won 25 local seats in May elections including Sajid Ampatuan, who was among those acquitted Thursday but did not show up in court. Sajid is one of Ampatuan Jnr's brothers.

## Russia to decide on appeal against doping ban

**MOSCOW, DEC 19 (AFP):** Russia's anti-doping agency will on Thursday decide whether to launch an appeal against a four-year ban from major sporting events over systematic violations, a prohibition denounced by the country's leadership as politically motivated.

The supervisory board of RUSADA will hold a meeting and is widely expected to announce its formal rejection of the December 9 decision by WADA to ban Russia for non-compliance.

This formal disagreement with WADA would trigger the process of appeal against the ban at the Lausanne-based Court of Arbitration for Sport.

RUSADA supervisory board chairman Alexander Ivlev is due to announce the decision at 1000 GMT.

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on December 10 banned Russia for four years from major global sporting events, including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, over manipulated doping data.

Under the sanctions, Russians will still be allowed to compete at the Olympics next year and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, but only as neutrals and if they can demonstrate that they were not part of what WADA believes was a state-sponsored system of doping.

Russian President Vladimir Putin slammed the ban as a "politically motivated" ruling that "contradicted" the Olympic Charter. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev lamented it was "the continuation of this anti-Russian hysteria that has already become chronic."

- 'Inefficient and useless' -

=====

The expected confirmation of an appeal will coincide with the annual marathon press conference of Putin, also on Thursday afternoon, where the president is set to again take a position on the issue.

The director general of RUSADA, Yuri Ganus, who has long argued for a major crackdown by Russia against doping cheats, said he expected the supervisory board to appeal but strongly opposed the move.

"The board will decide to appeal," he told AFP. "I believe this to be inefficient and useless."

Ganus, whose rigorous stance puts him at odds with his own government and supervisory board, argues that Moscow needs to accept the sanctions and own up to its faults in order to be able to reform.

The suspension was handed to Russia over falsifying data from a doping testing laboratory that was handed to WADA earlier this year as part of the compliance re-instatement process.

The significant extent of state-sponsored doping in Russia, notably between 2011 and 2015, was revealed in the independent report by sports lawyer Richard McLaren, released in 2016.

The issue has dealt a colossal blow to the status of post-Soviet Russia as a major sports power after hosting events such as the 2013 World Athletics Championships, the 2018 World Cup and the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

The Sochi Games later became notorious for the number of doping violations by prominent Russian athletes.

## India has institutions to address human rights, religious freedom concerns: US

By Lalit K Jha

Washington, Dec 19 (PTI): India is a vibrant democracy and has institutions to address concerns of religious freedom and human rights, the US has said, refusing to treat the country at par with other nations on such issues which constitute the core of its values and diplomacy.

The remarks made by a State Department official have come in the wake of widespread protests held across India against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). According to the CAA, members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities who have come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014 following religious persecution there will get Indian citizenship.

The protesters claim that the legislation is "unconstitutional and divisive" as it excludes Muslims.

A Senior State Department official told a group of reporters following the conclusion of the 2+2 ministerial here that human rights and religious freedom were a core issue for the Trump administration and for Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

The Secretary during a joint press conference noted that India is a vibrant democracy, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"There is a debate going on in India over this very legislation. It's a legislation that will be reviewed by the courts. It's being protested by political parties. It's being debated in the media.

All of these institutions exist in a democratic India and so we respect that process," said the senior State Department official.

The official was responding to a question on protests in India on CAA.

The official said at the same time, the US would continue to express its concerns on this issue.

"I think as (US) Ambassador (on International Religious Freedom, Samuel) Brownback has already commented, we have concerns about religious criteria, but again, this is a piece of legislation now, an act, that is continuing to be reviewed within the Indian system," the official said.

Noting that the US regularly raises these issues with India, the official, however, did not confirm if the developments post CAA featured during the talks at the State Department on Wednesday.

Pompeo met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for a bilateral meeting. Thereafter, they were joined by the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Defence Secretary for the second 2+2 dialogue here.

Did you seek any specific assurances on restoring those services in Kashmir, any ultimatum of any sort on that issue? the senior state department official was asked by a reporter.

"This is not a relationship where we deal in ultimatums. Again, I think this is a country, a democracy where these policies are being voted on, they're being debated, they're being reviewed by a judiciary,

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**CASUAL CUTIE!** The model, Kate Upton steps out wearing workout gear and a big smile in The Big Apple.

## Deepika, Siddhant and Ananya to star in **Shakun Batra's** next

**MUMBAI, DEC 19 (PTI):** Deepika Padukone, Siddhant Chaturvedi and Ananya Panday have been roped in as the leads in director Shakun Batra's next directorial.

The yet-to-be-titled project will mark next step in Batra's collaboration with producer-director Karan Johar after "Ek Main Aur Ekk Tu" (2012) and "Kapoor & Sons" (2016).

Described as a relationship drama, Shakun said the film will see its character finding themselves "stuck in a morally ambiguous zone".

"I have had a wonderful journey with Karan and his production house for almost a decade now, and I can't wait to get back into the director's chair for my next," the director said in a statement.

Karan and Shakun will produce the film alongside Apoorva Mehta.

"Shakun has directed one of the most acclaimed films of Dharma Productions 'Kapoor & Sons'.

"With this movie, he also turns producer with us. His upcoming directorial is an intriguing relationship drama, which will re-

lease on Valentine's Day 2021. I am proud and excited about Shakun's vision as a versatile filmmaker," Karan said.

The film will go on floors early next years with a release date of February 12, 2021.

Deepika is currently awaiting the release of acid attack survivor story "Chhapaak". The Meghna Gulzar-directed movie will bow out



on January 10. Siddhant's next will be "Bunty Aur Babli 2" opposite newcomer Sharvari. The film, produced by Yash Raj Films, will release in 2020.

Ananya, who most recently featured in "Pati Patni Aur Woh", will next star in "Khaali Peeli" opposite Ishaan Khatter. The film has a June release date.

## Mother of 6ix9ine's Child Reacts to Rapper's Sentencing

The mother of Daniel "Tekashi 6ix9ine" Hernandez's child, Sara Molina, doesn't appear to be too happy about the rapper's sentencing. On Wednesday, the controversial artist received two years in prison with five years of supervised release, a much smaller amount of time than the 37 years he was originally facing. In a series of since-deleted Instagram Stories posts, Molina took issue with what Hernandez had to say for himself when he took the stand.

"I wanted the world to see me as an example, that you are in control of where you go," the rapper told the judge. "I used my platform to push the message, if I did, why can't you? I gave people hope."

After his comments in court started to surface online, Molina wrote, "LMFAOOO... 'Whatever sounds good' I guess." She later directly quoted his comment about hope, and added, "This n\*\*\*a thinks he's a **PROPHET OF GOD LMFAOOO HURD YOU MOSES.**"

In a third post, she highlighted a comment from the judge mentioning their daughter. "As a result of your musical career, you could have gotten the advise of security people, and presumably lawyers and accountants," Judge Engelmayer said. "I have sentenced hundreds of defendants for gang activity. Your daughter had nothing to do with your

decision." Following her Instagram comments, she sat down for an interview with TMZ. "My daughter has never been a priority for him at all whatsoever," she explained. "The judge said it himself, like, your daughter has nothing to do with the

daughter's age right. They said she was six, my daughter is four."

She said she isn't receiving child support payments from him, but she also "doesn't want it." She said, "I already know what comes with it, and I'd rather



decisions you've made. You were already set, you didn't have to do it."

She accused him of using their daughter as "a prop to gain sympathy," and said she ultimately felt used by him. "He's not a changed person, I don't think he is," she added. "He has gone this whole year without reaching out, checking on my daughter." Molina additionally alleged that 6ix9ine's brother reached out after she hadn't heard from the rapper or his family for a year, asking if his defense could bring their daughter to court. "On his brother's support letter he couldn't even get my

not have those strings and that type of chaos that he comes with just for me."

While Hernandez's father did not get an opportunity to talk during the hearing today, he was asked for his thoughts outside the courthouse. "I feel glad that he's safe in there," he said. "There nothing gonna happen. Outside... They gonna try to kill him. All the stuff that he was saying... I don't have to explain. It's a serious situation, he's a target." He was later asked what he thought of his son's tattoos, to which he laughed and said, "I like them."

## Time to protest on social media alone is over: **Farhan Akhtar**

**MUMBAI, DEC 18 (PTI):** Bollywood actor Farhan Akhtar on Wednesday said he will be hitting the streets to protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act as he believes that the time to express outrage on social media alone is over.

The actor took to Twitter to announce that he will be partaking in a protest to be held on Thursday at August Kranti Maidan here.

"See you on the 19th at August Kranti Maidan, Mumbai. The time to protest on social media alone is over," Farhan said.

The actor also shared an image that sought to explain the ramifications of the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizen (NRC).

According to the amended act, members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities, who had come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan till De-

cember 31, 2014, and were facing religious persecution, will not be treated as illegal immigrants but given Indian citizenship.

Farhan's response came three days after Delhi Police action against the students of Jamia Millia Islamia University on Sunday. The police entered the campus after a protest against the Act by the students turned violent.

Many from the film fraternity including his father veteran screenwriter Javed Akhtar, actors Mohammad Zeeshan Ayyub, Parineeti Chopra, Sidharth Malhotra, filmmakers Vishal Bhardwaj and Anurag Kashyap, and Bollywood actor John Cusack expressed solidarity with the youth over the police crackdown inside the campus.



## Salman Khan's Dabangg 3 Makers 'Voluntarily' Edited Out Scenes From Title Song

The makers of Salman Khan's Dabangg 3 have announced that they have "voluntarily" removed certain scenes from the film's title track Hud Hud Dabangg. The film was dragged into a controversy after a Hindu outfit objected to a sequence in the title song that featured saffron-clad sadhus dancing with guitars.

Taking to Twitter, the official handle of Salman Khan Films posted, "Keeping everyone's sentiments in mind, we have voluntarily edited certain scenes from the song Hud Hud Dabangg." The studio, howev-

er, did not disclose the details of the scenes removed from the song. Earlier this month, Salman had addressed the controversy around the song, saying some people were trying to "get fame" by making noise about the scene.

"The song is ours and it is there for quite sometime. People are just trying to get fame by linking them with us. They get publicity and it is ok. Some fans also support them," the 53-year-old superstar had said at the launch of the song Munna Badnaam. Salman had also said that it

has become sort of a norm in the movie business that whenever a big film is getting ready for release, it gets struck by a controversy.

"Every time a big film comes there is always some controversy around it. At least, it is acknowledged that this is a big film and I'm happy about it... Controversies do happen, they get cleared. I don't think there is anything in this film, that a controversy can be created," he said. Dabangg 3, directed by Prabhu Deva, is scheduled to be released on Friday.

## Joan Cusack, Mary Holland to recur in 'Homecoming' season 2

**LOS ANGELES, DEC 19 (PTI):** Actors Joan Cusack and Mary Holland are set to feature in recurring roles on the second season of psychological thriller drama "Homecoming". The Amazon series comes from Sam Esmail, who helmed the first season of show starring Julia Roberts. Esmail will not direct any episodes of the sophomore season.

Kyle Patrick Alvarez is serving as director this time. He is also attached to executive produce, reported Deadline.

The new chapter will move away from the popular Gimlet Media's podcast from Eli Horowitz and Micah Bloomberg on which the debut season was based and will introduce new characters. Cusack will play the role of an Army officer with an unconventional approach to the job named Francine Bunda.

Holland will portray Wendy, an ambitious executive in Geist's R&D department.

Roberts will also not star in the upcoming season but like Esmail, she too will continue her association with the show in the capacity of an executive producer.

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**ARIES:** Can you really take off from where you left it? Something to think about when a certain somebody from your past makes a comeback. The connection you share is just as strong, but that doesn't mean you share the same values and have the same life goals. It's best to have an open conversation about the life you envision rather than getting caught up in a world of illusions. Ditto for Arians in love.

Tip: Open and honest communication is the way forward.

**TAURUS:** Anger often narrows our vision, clouding our ability to look at the entire picture. Love and compassion, on the other hand, help us get out of the maze and look at the bigger picture. Be the bigger person today (and everyday). Trust that the matter will resolve itself in a fair and just manner. On the upside, some of you may be presented with the opportunity to mix and mingle today.

Tip: Look at the situation through the eyes of love.

**GEMINI:** Close your eyes, take a deep breath and rewind to 2017. Now let's go

further down memory lane. Picture what your life was like in 2015. The struggles that threatened to bring you down and the patterns you were trying to break free from. Take a moment to acknowledge how far you have come.

Tip: Your desires are now within your reach. **CANCER:** Where are you in your journey, Cancer? Are you ready to commit for the long haul, or do you need some time to figure out your headspace first? Be honest with yourself and then the other. Truth is, they're ready to go all in. Not knowing where you are at could throw them off. Coupled Cancers, however, are likely to experience the bliss or cosmic union.

**LEO:** Channel your inner DIY Queen this week. Need a new lamp? Upcycle the left-over wine bottles from last night. Need a new outfit for an office party? Sew some sequins onto that vintage jacket or break out the dress you have saving for an eternity now. Every penny saved is a penny earned, Leo. Given that we're in the midst of the holiday season, it will be easy for you to

get carried away. Bring yourself back to the present when you do, and remind yourself of your financial goals.

Tip: Channeling your inner DIY Queen will help you cut down on a few expenses.

**VIRGO:** A new world is opening up for you, Virgo. A world that reverberates with joy, hope, inspiration and passion. Did your surroundings change overnight or did you work on your consciousness? You already know the answer to this one. What this phase of your life demands: a little more kindness and compassion for everybody around you, including those who trigger you and make your question your sanity.

Tip: Your secret ingredients are kindness and compassion.

**LIBRA:** On the cards for you today: radical change, on both an internal and external level. But you've been preparing for this for a long time now. You're ready to let go of the beliefs that no longer serve you and the ego self. What you are making way for: a relationship based on truth and honesty.

Tip: You have been preparing for radical change.

**SCORPIO:** Sometimes the balance we are seeking can only be found inside. See how and where you need to readjust the scales. As you do, you will experience a sense of calm on the outside. Everything will fall into place when you let go of the need to get to the finish line.

Tip: Readjust the scales on an internal level.

**SAGITTARIUS:** "No matter how qualified or deserving we are, we will never reach a better life until we can imagine it for ourselves and allow ourselves to have it," wrote American writer, Richard Bach. Something you think about when you find yourself undermining your abilities. There's no doubt you have hit rock bottom. What makes you feel you won't be able to build a brand new life for yourself?

Tip: Start over.

**CAPRICORN:** Here's some advice courtesy Christina Yang from Grey's Anatomy: "He might be very dreamy but he is not the sun. You are. Do not let what he wants eclipse what you need." Understand how, where, and why you are giving away your power, and call

it back to you this very second.

Tip: Call your power back.

**AQUARIUS:** That Gucci bag can wait until next year, Aquarius. Pay your bills, clear your debts, and renovate your studio so you have a safe space to create and express. While you're at it, clear out the clutter and restock your pantry with whole foods and multivitamins. You are renewing your membership to the self-care club and it's making you feel like a green goddess. Want to up your fitness regimen while you are at it?

Tip: You are committing to your self-care goals with a newfound fervour.

**PISCES:** When you're undergoing immense transformation, it is unlikely that you will relate to the world around you in the same manner. You're starting to see your old friendships in a new light. While some of them nurture you deeply, others leave you drained and grasping for breath. Accept the cycle of life and death. If there is something that has run its course, it's best to step away so you can gain perspective.

Tip: Step away from the noise.