



## GRAND REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS IN GANGTOK

pg03

## NEPAL'S MENSTRUAL HUTS: WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT THIS PRACTICE OF CONFINING WOMEN TO COW SHEDS?

pg04

## WEST SIKKIM CELEBRATES REPUBLIC DAY WITH FELICITATIONS

pg02



# SummitTIMES

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O N T O P O F T H E N E W S

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## Why progressive youth marched to Gangtok

*"We are not demanding anything extra, just what is prescribed by norms"*

PEMA WANGCHUK

GANGTOK, 27 JAN:

Sikkim Progressive Youth Forum started off in 2016 as a collective of youth finding common ground in their desire to instill progressive outlook and a scientific bent of mind among the young here. And that is the aim they pursued until their other expressed aim of protesting injustice and denial gathered steam and brought them to the streets and into the front pages of newspapers. Some hundred of them are currently on dharna outside the District Administrative Centre in Gangtok, their residence here since they marched into Gangtok after covering 110 KMs from Gyalshing on foot on 23 January demanding that the State Government live up to its written commitment of appointing the 100-bed-

ded District Hospital at Gyalshing, West Sikkim, with facilities and manpower prescribed under the Indian Public Health Standards of the National Health Mission.

They remain unsatisfied with the State's response, and on Republic Day, which also marks their foundation day, took their protest to the next level by issuing a statewide appeal to all organizations, whether non-governmental, social or political, to support their cause and join their protest. This, with the caveat that the supporting groups do so exclusively in pursuit of the demand for basic [as dictated by IPHS] health facilities at the Gyalshing District Hospital and not to further their own organizational or political agendas. Political parties, for instance, have



been invited to join the protest so long as they leave their flags and agendas behind.

So what is it that has riled the SPYF, this collection of youth aged primarily between 19 to 26, so much that they have put all their other plans

and engagements on hold to invest time and energy to try and ensure that the Gyalshing District Hospital provides at least the basic health services to people of the district?

"We noticed that the healthcare infrastructure in West district was espe-

cially weak; people with even minor health conditions would get referred elsewhere for treatment. This was discomfiting because many who visit government hospitals in West Sikkim cannot even afford the travel costs to seek medical care else-

where," informs Rupen Karki, one of the core-group members of SPYF.

SPYF, by the way, does not have any organizational hierarchy. There are no official posts in the group which has around six in

turn to pg02

## SPYF refused to participate in discussion: Health Secy

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Health Secretary, Vishal Chauhan, in a press communiqué issued on 25 January, informs that Sikkim Youth Progressive Forum members refused to participate in a discussion when he approached them accompanied with senior department officials for the same at their dharna site on Friday.

SPYF, it may be recalled, is demanding that the Department deliver on its written commitment made last year to provide facilities and manpower as prescribed in the Indian Public Health Service norms at the Gyalshing district hospital. They have been sitting on a dharna outside the District Administrative Centre here since 23 Jan, the day they arrived in Gangtok after a 4-day march from Gyalshing.

The Health Secretary informs that he had approached the protestors at the dharna site accompanied by Dr Pemba T. Bhutia Principal Director-I, Dr Uttam Pradhan [Principal Director] and Dr Bimal Kr Rai, MD National Health Mission.

SPYF, it may be mentioned here is insistent that discussions involve the Health Minister as well since he signed the

assurance letter of August last [read accompanying report for details].

The Health Secretary adds that earlier as well, Dr Pemba Bhutia and Dr Uttam Pradhan had called on the protestors on the evening of 23 Jan at Titanic Park and explained to them action taken by Health department for improvement of Gyalshing hospital.

The Health Department has appealed to SPYF "to cooperate and give their suggestion and advice to health department through discussion."

"Health department is making all efforts to improve health facilities in district hospitals and PHCs/ PHSCs," the Secretary adds while detailing that the Department recently restructured the health cadre and created several posts of doctors and specialists.

"As a result, recently 47 doctors and 261 Staff Nurses have been appointed. Recruitment process for more than 50 no of specialists through SPSC is on and is likely to be completed in the first week of February 2019. Once these specialists are recruited many will be posted at district hospitals, which will strengthen all district hospitals and STNM Hospital," he informs.

## JANATA MELA ENDS WITH JORETHANG EVENT

*Be wary of divisive  
and communal  
forces, CM appeals*

BIKASH CHETTRI

JORETHANG, 27 JAN:

Chief Minister Pawan Chamling distributed several aids to thousands of beneficiaries of South district here at Jorethang at the sixth edition of the latest round of Gram Swaraj Mela (Janata Mela) today. The Janta Mela today covered the BACs of Namchi, Poklok-Nandugaon, Sumbuk, Sikkip and Namthang from the South District and Chumbung Chakung and Mangalbaria from West Sikkim.

The CM handed over tokens for various



schemes and amenities including CMRHM, GCI sheets, LPG connections, induction stoves, computers, house up-gradation support, sewing machines, subsidy scheme allotments, loans and other benefits.

Addressing the gathering, the CM said that

this year's Janta Mela was the one with the highest budget of around Rs 1,000 crore worth of benefits distributed among the people.

He also informed that the State government had always followed the path of equality, hence from this year onwards,

beneficiaries are also being picked from urban areas and aid given to all - Sikkim Subjects, Residential Certificate holders, Trade License holders and those whose names are found in the voter list here.

The State government wants to provide

benefits to every household of the state, he stressed, while calling on the people to collect their tokens without delay from their respective GVKs and assured that if any genuine beneficiary has been left out, the matter would be looked into and aid reached to them by 15 February.

In this regard, he directed the officials and the Panchayats to submit the list of left-out beneficiaries by 05 February to the Chief Minister's Office.

The Chief Minister also informed that from this year onwards, the State Government has

turn to pg02

## Citizenship Bill: Burden of new citizens would be borne by entire country: Sonowal

GUWAHATI, JAN 27 (PTI): Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Sunday said the Citizenship Bill was a national policy and once it becomes an act, the burden of new citizens would be borne by the entire country.

Attempts are being made to confuse people but the state government which has come to power with a popular mandate would do nothing to harm the interests of the local people, Sonowal said.

Speaking at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Nalbari Medical College and Hospital at Borigaon, Sonowal said the bill can never threaten the existence of the indigenous people of Assam which has a legacy of great personalities like Srimanta Sankardev, Azan Fakir, Lachit Borphukan, Bagh Hazarika

and other.

The chief minister also urged the All Assam Students Union (AASU) to extend full cooperation in successful implementation of Clause 6 of the Assam Accord for ensuring constitutional, administrative and legislative safeguard for the indigenous people.

He asked the intelligentsia to present the true picture of the bill before the people of the state, while criticising the previous Congress government for neglecting development in the region as well as the interests of the local people.

The previous Congress governments imposed IMDT Act in the state to protect illegal immigrants and made no significant efforts to update the National Register of Citizens (NRC), Sonowal said.

## Queer Pride Parade attempts sensitization and awareness on LGBTQI rights

SAGAR CHHETRI

GANGTOK, 27 JAN:

The first ever Queer Pride Parade of Sikkim witnessed the participation of members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning and Intersex [LGBTQI] community and their supporters here on Sunday.

The parade was taken out by Gangtok-based Rainbow Hills Association [RHA] in association with Darjeeling-based Mitijyu Society and had participants from Sikkim, the neighbouring hills and Bhutan.

The parade started from Deorali with banners and placards and walked along the National Highway to Hospital Dara and then down to Paljor Stadium where it concluded at the Fish Pond area.

The main objective of the initiative was to campaign for equality and acceptance of LGBTQI members in the society.



Speaking to media persons, RHA co-founder, Tshering Wangchuk Lepcha, informed that the recently-formed RHA has been working for the welfare of LGBTQI members and serving as a bridge between LGBTQI and the society by creating mass awareness for social acceptance.

He stated that due to lack of awareness among the people, LGBTQI members have been facing problems in their social acceptance. "This is the first ever

Queer Pride Parade in the State to create awareness among the people that we are also human beings and everyone should accept us. We have won the law but we have to win the society. So, I would like to request the people to help them come out and to express their identity," he said.

A Sikkim University research scholar, Lhamu Dukpa, who is working on Transgender issues, remarked that this was an unprecedented rally to generate a certain level of sensitization

turn to pg02

check out an experiment with  
some podcasting from Sikkim.

**Stray  
Thoughts**  
with Tshering Wangchuk

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## Namchi celebrates R-Day

**NAMCHI, 26 JAN [IPR]:** District level Republic Day was celebrated amidst much grandeur at the Community Hall here on Saturday.

Organized by South, District Administration Centre in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra, Namchi, the celebrations had Minister of Roads & Bridges GM Gurung as the chief guest. In his address, the chief guest elaborated on Sikkim's contributions towards nation-building under the leadership of the Chief Minister Pawan Chamling.

The State Government has initiated many key initiatives, innovative programmes and formulated policies, plans and schemes which have delivered visible transforma-

tion to the socioeconomic development of the State, he said.

Focusing on the students, he urged them to be determined about their education and motivated towards attaining higher goals.

During the course of the programme, the officials and staff of different departments were presented the District Meritorious Service Award.

The Chief Guest and the dignitaries presented Letters of Appreciation and awards to Junior Engineers Syndriya Rai, Pravesh Sherpa, Husian Rai, Laden Sherpa and Prabhin Rai from Energy and Power Department.

Likewise, Retired Senior Private Secretary Dilip Kumar Rai from Rural

Management and Development Department also received an award.

Also felicitated were Assistant Paravets of Animal Husbandry, Livestock and Veterinary Services Mr Saran Kumar Tamang, Shanker Pradhan and Mr. Kalzang Gyatso Bhutia.

From South District Police, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Namchi, Anjana Silal, Sub Inspector Rinzing Dorjee Lepcha, Home Guard Indra Kumari Chhetri, Home Guard Phurba Sherpa were also provided awards.

On the occasion, seven students who had excelled in seven disciplines at the 20-day winter coaching camp were also given Certificates of Appreciation by the Sports and Youth Affairs Department.

### Why progressive youth ...

the core and expands out to include around 60 actively involved members.

"We have a horizontal, collective leadership by discussion," explains Mr Karki.

Members of the collective are all products of government schools and govt colleges with most of them hailing from rural corners and belonging to farming households.

In fact, when SummitTimes reached the venue of the dharna late on the evening of 26 January, the protesters were in the midst of animated "discussions," something, we are told, they engage in on a regular basis especially before and after a major decision is taken.

It must have been after a discussion like this that SPYF decided in end-Jan 2018, a year back, to address the issue of poor healthcare facilities in West Sikkim.

Since most of the members are academically inclined, as they researched the issue, they learned that as per IPHS norms, which have been place since the year 2012, the government is required to provide an easily verifiable set of infrastructure and medical personnel at its different hospitals and health centres. These were found wanting in West Sikkim.

"Imagine, it costs a villager around Rs 300 to come to Gyalshing for treatment from Karjee, a remote village here. If they are referred to Gangtok, it will cost them around Rs 700 on travel alone. Most people cannot afford even the travel costs. And there are other expenses to take into consideration as well," stresses Prakash Parajuly, another member of the core-group.

Such high costs would be difficult to bear for those who, ironically, have to visit government hospitals and cannot afford services of a private hospital.

On 04 Feb, 2018, SPYF initiated its first step towards demands that the IPHS norms be met in West Sikkim, and after a signature campaign in the district, an application demanding the same was submitted to the hospital authorities and the District Collector.

And then they waited.

When nothing came about even till July last year, SPYF called for a rally to press for their demands. Some 1,500 people joined their rally and a fresh memorandum addressed to the Health Minister was drafted. The demand was the same - ensure that all facilities and manpower prescribed under IPHS were provided at the Gyalshing Hospital.

A few days later, SPYF members arrived in Gangtok with the memorandum wanting to submit it to the Health Minister. When the Minister's office refused to accept the memorandum, the youth sat on a dharna outside his office. 22 hours into their dharna at the Health Secretariat, the memorandum was accepted and a written assurance, signed by the Health Minister, the Health Secretary and the Principal Director, issued.

This assurance, marked to the DC, West, refers to the SPYF memorandum and commits "continue to work for the improvement of all District Hospitals, including District Hospital Gyalshing."

Specifically for the Gyalshing Hospital, the letter assures that 90% of the IPHS norms for the 100-bedded District Hospital at Gyalshing "will be achieved within one month and the remaining requirements will be taken care of within 03 months."

SPYF returned confident that their movement had succeeded and returned to their lives. Over the following months, visible efforts were made to improve the conditions at the hospital, but, as per SPYF, not enough was done even to meet the most basic of the norms.

"Yes, they have an ultrasound machine now and occasionally an ultrasound is also done. They hold surgeries sometimes also, but there is no consistency in the service despite all the claims and promotions," insists Mr Parajuly.

The three-month deadline assured by the Minister ended in November last and when the basic IPHS norms remained unmet, SPYF decided on its Gangtok Chalo march and began their walk from Gyalshing on 20 January, arriving here on the 23rd and have been sitting on dharna here ever since.

The youth on dharna are clearly passionate about the demand and insist they are not being stubborn or misguided. Claims, it may be recalled, have been made about how they are being unclear and stubborn.

"How can insisting that the authorities abide by prescribed norms and commitments they have themselves made, be called stubborn? As for being unclear, even that is unfair because we are not demanding anything extra, just the requirements prescribed under IPHS norms," Mr Karki points out.

There are also whispers doubting the timing of the protest, coming as close as it does to the elections.

The SPYF members dismiss this suggestion by pointing out that the Gangtok Chalo march was the culmination of an issue they picked up in February last year when elections were distant, and it stretched this long because the concerned authorities have been dilly-dallying.

"We have been at it since Feb 2018 so one cannot say that our movement is politically timed or inclined. If anything, the election cycle is intruding," they scoff, adding, "Our demand is now a year old so it is unfair to cast any aspersions of political opportunism on us."

Since the SPYF marchers arrived in Gangtok, they have been visited by Health officials a few times, but they remain unconvinced. So what is it that they want first?

"We want the three signatories of the February assurance letter - the Minister, Secretary and Principal Director - to meet us together so that we can discuss and debate the situation, otherwise nothing concrete will emerge," Mr Karki explains while addressing the criticism that they have refused offers for discussions by Health officials since their arrival in Gangtok. The offers for discussion have not included the Health Minister thus far.

At the time of writing this report, such a meeting had not yet come about, and the youth remain camped at the dharna site, a site which offers no facilities beyond the space to lay out "profiles" and stack their beddings and sleep exposed to the elements. They lack access to water and toilets, and the weather too has not been gentle. But they hold on to their position, buoyed by the spontaneous support they have received from the lay people and boosting their morale and keeping their spirits alive with their progressive songs and evening discussions.

## West Sikkim celebrates Republic Day with felicitations



**GYALSHING, 26 JAN**

**[IPR]:** Republic Day

was celebrated at the District Administration Centre, Rabdentse, West Sikkim, on Saturday with RM&DD Minister SB Subedi as chief guest accompanied by the DC West, SP West, ADC West, Padmashree Kedar Gurung; HoDs and other dignitaries.

In his address, the Minister congratulated all on the occasion of Republic Day and acknowledged sacrifices made by the defence forces in their service to the nation.

He then thanked the officials and the administrative staff who have worked hard and urged officials to continue working selflessly for the benefit of the people.

Messages of the Governor and the Chief Minister were read out by the DC and the ADC West respectively.

The chief guest also

handed over felicitation letters to officers and staff of the DAC for their service to West District.

The list of awardees are as follows.

I. Merituous Award for Best Performing Schools of West District.

1. Lingchom Sr. Sec School
2. Gangyap Secondary School
3. Darapthang Junior High School

4. Lower Tadong Primary school.

II. Meritorious Award for Best Performing Employees of West District.

1. Mr. Bikash Rai & Bikash Subba (Best Booth Level Officer)
2. Mr. Joshep Lepcha (ACE,KNP)
3. Mrs. Urmila Subba (RO,Wildlife)
4. Mr. Nar Bdr. Thapa(Asst. Livestock Inspector/Ah,LF&VS)

5. Mr. Baudaman Chettri (Meter Reader,Power Deptt.)

6. Mr. Aita Hang Subba(2nd SHO,Soreng)

III. Champions of West District Awardees.

1. Mr. Sonam G. Bhutia (SE, Buildings &Housing Deptt.)
2. Mr. Tushar Nikhare, IAS (SDM/Geyzing)
3. Mr. Santosh Alley (Sr. Welfare Officer)
4. Dr. Tseten Namgyal

Bhutia (CMO, District Hospital Gyalshing)

5. Mr. Amrit Rai (RO/LRMD)

6. Mr. Dilip Sharma,DCSO

7. Mr. Surat Kr. Gurung(ADC/Dev)

8. Mrs. T. Eden, Addl. Director (HRDD)

9. Mr.H.B Shanker, CDPO.

A special showcasing of Arms were exhibited by the SSB during the Republic Day Program at the DAC.

### Queer Pride Parade...

among the people to make them more aware about this issue.

She added that such initiatives would help bring transformation from the grassroots level.

Founder of Mitiyu Society, Lakpa Tamang, in turn mentioned that the main objective behind the rally was to create mass awareness and added that this was the first step initiated with the hope that LGBTQI members here would carry the torch further.

The march also protested against the Transgender Bill which was recently passed by the Lok Sabha which they stated goes against the fundamentals of human rights and the Constitution of India.

### JANATA MELA ENDS WITH...

also introduced rojgar yojana (one family, one job) where the state government has provided around 12,000 jobs to unemployed youth of the state.

The State government has proven how much the government is genuinely concerned and dedicated towards the people but is still being criticized by Opposition parties which are claiming that jobs provided by the state government are only for 89 days.

He reminded that before the SDF government come in power, Sikkim was the poorest state of the North East, and that after 24 years of SDF government, Sikkim now is on top of the list in NE.

The SDF government, he stressed has consistently pursued the ideology equality and harmony and said that this pursuit is constantly hounded by groups forming political parties, associations and social organizations with the obvious agenda to sow confusion and disharmony.

The CM said that the people of Sikkim should observe things wisely and defeat nefarious designs to divide and distract the people.

"Look closely at these groups and you will find the same agent provocateurs backing all divisive organizations," he said.

"The people of Sikkim have to realize who the leaders are and who are the people behind such parties and organizations," he stressed, adding that despite claims of belonging to different groups, such mindsets invariably came together on an anti-development, anti-Sikkim platform before elections.

He also accused these groups of paying lip-service to issues like the Limboo-Tamang seat reservation demand while they collaborated with agencies which have sabotaged the demand through the years with their communal arguments in Delhi.

He pointed out that Opposition insistence of carving out LT seats from the existing 32 seats in the Assembly was inherently communal because it went against the rights and expression of the majority community here, something which the Opposition is aware of but pretends to ignore.

He also shared that he had earlier decided not to contest the 2019 elections, "but seeing the growing activity of racist and communal forces and their unethical propaganda on important issues, I am compelled to contest this election because the future of Sikkim is at stake".

The CM also said that SDF was confident of winning all the 32 seats in the legislative assembly and needs no coalition partners. "We needed no coalition in 1994 when we were first voted into office and definitely need no opportunist alliances this time either," he said.

Also today, a book published by Akhil Sikkim Mangar Association was released.

## Republic Day celebrated in Mangan



**Mangan, 26 Jan [IPR]:**

The 70th Republic Day was celebrated in grand manner at Mangan Zilla Panchayat Bhavan with the Forest Minister present as the chief guest. The ceremony was also attended by the District Collector [North], Karma R Bonpo, Sr Superintendent of Police, K. Shandarpa, Heads of Departments, teachers and school students.

Earlier, the guard of honor was presented to the chief guest by the Sikkim Police after the unfurling of the National Flag. Students from JNV Phodong sang the national anthem and patriotic songs.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister dwelled on the achieve-

ments of the state government and stated that wide progress has been made in various fields. The State Government has always maintained an environment of peace and worked towards the upliftment of the weaker sections of the society, he stressed.

Nehru Yuva Kendra, North Sikkim, volunteers presented a cultural program and the best youth club award was presented to Ongshi Welfare Organization of Kabi.

On the occasion, certificates of appreciation were presented to Mingma Doma Bhutia, Anil Kumar Darjee, Shanti Sundas and Damber Kumar Sharma. They had been felicitated in the field of social work by Bharatiya

Dalit Sahitya Academy, Rajasthan Branch on 16 December 2018.

The Sport & Youth Affairs Department also distributed tokens of appreciation to various students who won medals during the recently concluded North East Youths Sport meet at Dentam, West Sikkim.

A career counseling session was conducted by Deputy Director HRDD for students. An EVM and VVPAT awareness program was also held.

The message of the Governor of Sikkim was read out by the District Collector, North, while the Additional District Collector, North, read the message of the Chief Minister of Sikkim.

## Residential sports coaching camp concludes in Mangan

**MANGAN, 27 JAN [IPR]:**

The Sports Winter Coaching Camp which had commenced on 03 January concluded on 26 January at Mangan Public Ground.

The residential coaching camp was organized by the Sports & Youth Affairs Department in collaboration with the North District Administration under the Khelo India scheme and 275 athletes participated in the coaching camp which was divided into under-14 and under-19 categories.

The training camp for five disciplines - Archery, Badminton, Football, Taekwondo and Table Tennis - was conducted at Mangan whereas the training camp for boxing

was conducted at Mangshila.

Deputy Director, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, North, Janim Lepcha, informs that the coaching camp which was part of the Khelo India scheme aims to transform India into a global sporting powerhouse in the coming years.

She said that children were able to utilize their winter vacations fruitfully due to the coaching camps and many have excelled in several competitions held during the North East Youth Festival at Dentam recently where they won medals in several disciplines.

Forest Minister Tshering Wangdi Lepcha felicitated the following Medal winners during the occasion of Republic

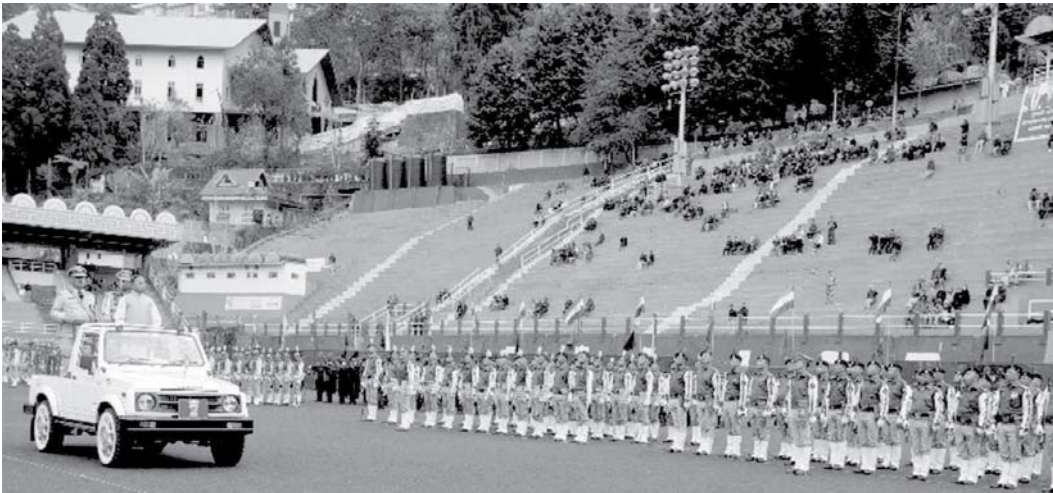
Day celebration held at Mangan: Prakash Kafley, Gold Medal, Doma Lepcha, Gold Medal; Kalpana Chettri, Silver Medal; Santosh Singh, Bronze Medal; Abina Limboo, Bronze; Sabina Chettri, Bronze; Astha Basnett, Bronze; Passang Dorjee Lepcha, Bronze.

The Deputy Director also thanked the District Collector North, Karma R Bonpo, for providing a new taekwondo mat costing Rs 1.70 lakhs to the Sports Department and providing the residential facilities for the students.

She also stated that the sports competitions will be held in the various disciplines in the month of February 2019.



Grand Republic Day celebrations in Gangtok



**GANGTOK, 27 JAN [IPR]:** Republic Day was celebrated at Paljor Stadium on Saturday with Governor Ganga Prasad as chief guest and Chief Minister Pawan Chamling as the guest of honour accompanied by Speaker (SLA) KN Rai, MP (Lok Sabha), Members of the Cabinet, Chief Secretary AK Srivastava, Heads of the Departments, officials, students and the public were present at the function.

The programme began with the unfurling of the National flag by the Governor followed by National Anthem. The Governor then received the salute and reviewed the parade.

Indo Tibet Border Police, Shashastra Seema Bal, Sikkim Armed Police, Sikkim Police (Male and Female Platoon), Sikkim Home Guards and Civil Defence, NCC, Sikkim Police Pipe and Brass Band and the Army Band participated in the march past.

In his address, the Governor expressed happiness and satisfaction with the development of the State, which he said is a result of efficient and effective implementation of schemes.

He spoke on the history and the significance of the Constitution and said that we should be proud of our roots, stating that the Constitution is a symbol of pride for all Indians.

He highlighted the successful implementation of Organic Farming in Sikkim and said that Sikkim was a model State for others to follow.

From progress in the education sector to rural development, he also stated that the goal of the Government was to provide electricity to every household through the Deendayal Upadhyay Grameen Jyoti Yojana and Integrated Power Development Scheme.

He shed light on the importance of road connectivity and all forms of transport, stating that a comprehensive road net-

work in the entire State to connect with the most remote villages would be implemented.

He congratulated all those who have excelled in their respective fields, the State Awardees, recipients of Letters of Appreciation and ended his note encouraging everyone to unite and become a strong State so that progress and development takes place through the people and for the people.

The recipients of the State Meritorious Service Award 2019 are as follows:

1. Sangeeta Thapa, Deputy Nursing Superintendent, STNM, Health Care Human Service & Family Welfare Department
  2. Chador Bhutia, Deputy Director (Exam), Human Resource Development Department
  3. Ayta Raj Subba, Under Secretary, Health Care Human Service & Family Welfare Department
  4. Sashi Kala Tamang, Assistant Nursing Superintendent, STNM, Health Care Human Service & Family Welfare Department
  5. Passang Tshering Bhutia, Office Superintendent, Home Department
  6. Santosh Subba, Head Assistant, Department of Information & Public Relations
  7. Sashi Kala Rai, Head Assistant, Office of the District Collector, South Sikkim
  8. Bhim Narayan Pradhan, Costume Assistant, Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department
  9. Dhanapati Sharma, Cameraperson, Information & Public Relations Department
  10. Satbir Balmiki, Safaikarmachari, Office of the District Collector, South Sikkim
- Meanwhile, Shanti Ram Nepal, a long-distance marathon runner from Raley Khesey, East Sikkim received the Certificate of Commendation and Appreciation along with a cash award of Rupees One lakh in view

of his contribution and accomplishments as a long-distance marathon runner.

Five Forest Officers and staff of the Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary, East Wildlife Division, were presented with Commendation Certificates for their outstanding effort in capturing a rare photograph of the Royal Bengal Tiger roaming the forests of Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary on two occasions in the month of December 2018. They are: Roshan Tamang, Range Officer, Dil Bahadur Subba, Range Office, Bir Bahadur Subba, Block Officer, Chuden Bhutia, Forest Guard, and Dinesh Sharma, Community Organizer.

The much-prized photograph of the Royal Bengal Tiger shot in the forest of Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary was then released on the occasion by the Governor:

Bijay Rawat, Gangtok Beautifier, Gangtok Municipal Corporation, received a Certificate of Appreciation for his diligent and valuable service. For their praise-worthy service and contribution to the society, taxi drivers from the State were acknowledged and awarded with Certificates of Appreciation. Their names are as follows:

1. Dawa Phuti Bhutia (Lepcha), who hails from Pangthang Kyongsa East Sikkim and is the first woman taxi driver in the State
2. Pratap Tamang, of Pragati Chowk, Soreng West Sikkim
3. Deo Kumar Sharma, of Ghurpisey Namchi South Sikkim, who has been rewarded as 'Best Driver' in the past
4. Bindeshwari Prasad Datta, of Singtam Bazar East Sikkim
5. Karma Zangpo Lachenpa, of Sakothang, Lachung, North Sikkim. He holds a master's degree in political science and is the President of North Sikkim Taxi Driver Association. 6. Bigen Rai

of Namchi South Sikkim, who also holds a graduate degree.

The Governor also released several books published recently by the Department of Information & Public Relations: Sikkim: Then and Then; Organic Farming in Sikkim As a Strategy for Sustaining Ecosystem Services and Livelihood by Dr. Eklavya Sharma; Ke Ho Yo Organic? Sikkim Ma Jaivak Khetiko Ek Sangchipta Parichay by Lalit Rai; Over To You: Inspirational and Challenging Quotes from Chief Minister Pawan Chamling for Students; Sikkim's Green Vision: Strategies and Capacity Building; 24 Years of Unprecedented Development; Pawan Chamling: Leader with a Difference; Coffee Table Book on Infrastructure Development; Women's Empowerment in Sikkim; Pawan Chamling: A Stalwart in Educational Reforms; Pawan Chamling: The Most Secular Leader of India; Awards and Recognitions: A Testament to Pawan Chamling's Golden Era of Good Governance; Rewarding Achievers during the Golden Age of Sikkim under Chief Minister Pawan Chamling 1994-2018; Secular Sikkim: Harmony at its Best; 25 Years of Glorious and Committed Governance under the Leadership of India's Most Popular Chief Minister Shri Pawan Chamling; 32 Vidhansabha Chetra ko Sikkim Bhraman Ma Pawan Chamling; Mintokgang- A Coffee Table Book

The Governor also released nineteen documentary video films produced by the Information & Public Relations Department that highlight the achievement of the State Government in various sectors. The documentary videos covered the following topics/Departments: Disaster Management, Health, Art, Culture & Food Habits, Awards received by the Chief Minister, Gangtok Municipal Corporation, Roads & Bridges, Tourism & Civil Aviation, Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department, HRDD, RMDD, Police, Homestay Development, Information Technology, Animal Husbandry, UD&HD, Commerce & Industries, Women Empowerment; Building & Housing, Election Department, Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department

The Governor also launched SWACHH CAR BINS to be distributed to local taxis - an initiative of the Marwari Yuva Manch, Prerna Branch, Gangtok.

He also launched Packaged Large Cardamom by Olivet, a young start-up from Sikkim.

The Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour visited the Army Equipment Display at the venue along with the other dignitaries.

The Governor presented trophies to three parade contingents for their performance. The Parade result is as follows:

- Overall Best Platoon: Indo Tibet Border Police (ITBP)
- 2ND Best Platoon: Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

-Consolation Prize: Sikkim Home Guards & Civil Defence.

This was followed by displays from Army Pipe Band and Sikkim Police Pipe Band. Kendriya Vidyalaya, Gangtok and Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department put up cultural dance programmes.

Earlier, the venue erupted in joy and pride as the news of Draupadi Ghimirey, a well-known social worker from Sikkim and the founder of Sikkim Viklang Sahayata Samiti, being awarded the Padma Shri Award 2019 was announced. The news was received from New Delhi on 25 January. Ms Ghimirey is known for her service towards the welfare of people with disabilities.

Municipal Corporation, Roads & Bridges, Tourism & Civil Aviation, Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department, HRDD, RMDD, Police, Homestay Development, Information Technology, Animal Husbandry, UD&HD, Commerce & Industries, Women Empowerment; Building & Housing, Election Department, Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department

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Southern Enfielders organize R-Day picnic for Mayal Lyang Children's Home



SUMMIT REPORT

**NAMCHI, 27 JAN:** Joining the Republic Day celebrations, Namchi-based motorcycle club, Southern Enfielders, spent the day with 40 children living at Mayal Lyang Children's Home here.

The club hosted a picnic for the children at the Assangthang Helipad. They were joined by retired Additional Director PP Gautam, youth of Namchi and 15 members of the club.

The club also organized different sport events and a cultural show for the children and later distributed prizes and gifts as tokens

of love to the children.

Club President, Suvash Gurung, informs that the club lives by the motto of brotherhood and commitment to serve society sharing love for humanity.

"The Club members know that there are children living without parents in homes of Namchi. We cannot change the past for them but we can share some time with them to make them smile and hold hope that they are not alone in this world as they have many brothers and sisters with them," he said.

He adds that theirs was only a small contribution and that the children

need more attention and care from the society at large.

The club has decided to make bigger plans for the children.

Mr. Gurung also thanked PP Gautam, Tenzing Bhutia, Sunil Saha, Kiran Zimaba, Bikash Gurung, Raja Mukhia and other youth of Namchi and all club members for their contributions which made the celebration possible.

The in-charge of the home, Suk Tshring Lepcha, thanked the club members on behalf of Mayal Layang Children's Home for organising the picnic and giving the children a good time.

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM  
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY, LIVESTOCK, FISHERIES  
AND VETERINARY SERVICES, KRISHI BHAWAN, TADONG.  
Website: [www.sikkim.ahvvs.gov.in](http://www.sikkim.ahvvs.gov.in)

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Application are invited from the eligible local candidates for filling up of 14 (fourteen) posts of Kennel Hand/ Humane Animal Handler/ Kennel Hand/ Vet-Aide on temporary regular basis in the pre-revised PB-I of 5200-20200 plus Grade Pay of Rs. 2200/- plus other admissible allowances as per the rules under AH,LF&VS Department through direct recruitment. However, during the period for Probation/ Apprenticeship/ Training, pay shall be governed by Notification No. 489/ GEN/DOP dated: 31.10.2011.

CONDITONS OF ELIGIBILITY:

1. Minimum Educational Qualification
  - (a) Class-V passed from a recognized Board.
  - (b) The applicant should possess a valid Certificate in Humane Animal Handling Course accredited by Animal Board of India (AWBI).
  - (c) Preference will be given to person with 5 (five) years of experience in animal birth control and stray dog population control programme.
  - (d) Candidates must be in possession of either Sikkim Subject Certificate or COI issued by the competent authority under relevant orders of the State Government.
  - (e) Should have knowledge of any of the State Language viz. Nepali/Sikkimese/ Bhutia/Lepcha/Limboo.
  - (f) Should have valid Local Employment Card.
  - (g) Should be conversant with the customs and usages of Sikkim.
3. Duties of the post. : As per Appendix-I given on website. [www.sikkim.ahvvs.gov.in](http://www.sikkim.ahvvs.gov.in)
4. Age. : Should have attained the age of 18 years, but should not have exceeded 40 years as on 31.01.2019 vide Notification No. M(3) / /GEN/DOP PT-III, dated 03.07.2017.
5. Reservation 14(fourteen) posts of Kennel Hand/ Humane Animal Handler/ Kennel Hand/ Vet-Aide.

Sl.No.	Category	No. of Posts.
1.	Unreserved	02
2.	Bhutia Lepcha	01
3.	Bhutia Lepcha (Women)	01
4.	Other Backward Classes-Central List	02
5.	Other Backward Classes- State List	01
6.	Other Backward Classes- State List (Women)	01
7.	Schedule Tribe	02
8.	Schedule Caste	01
9.	Primitive Tribe	01.
10.	Most Backward Classes-State List	01.
11.	Wealer Section of the Society	01
	Total	14

Candidates should bring all attested copy of documents while submitting the application forms and ensure that they are qualified on the date of application in all respect. Candidate will not be informed by the AH,LF&VS Department for any discrepancy or disqualification at personal level. However, those candidates whose forms are found to be incomplete in any manner will be summarily rejected, so all candidates are advised to ensure that they are qualified for the post.

**The application form should be obtained from the Head Office, AH,LF&VS Department, Krishi Bhawan Building, Room No. 104 along with original Bank Receipt of Rs.150 in favour of Secretary, AH,LF&VS Department w.e.f 01.02.2019 to 15.02.2019 on any working day between 10.30 AM to 3.00 PM under charge Head 0403-AH-800. Admit Card will be issued accordingly on the day of submission of application form i.e. from 01.02.2019 to 15.02.2019.**

Those candidates fulfilling the above prescribed criteria will be called for interview. No TA/ DA admissible for attending the examination/ interview.

Admission at all the stages of examination for which candidates are admitted by the AH,LF&VS Department viz. Part-I & Part-II. The scheme and syllabus of examination for the purpose of filling up the post of Kennel Hand/ Humane Animal Handler/ Kennel Hand/ Vet-Aide is given on website at Appendix II.

Name of the candidates eligible for appearing interview will be displayed in the notice board of Krishi Bhawan, Tadong, and SARAH Division, Deorali, East Sikkim, AH,LF&VS Department. **The date for interview shall be on 18.02.2019.** If any changes regarding date shall be notified on the Notice Board of AH,LF&VS Department.

Test will be purely provisional and is subject to satisfying the prescribed eligibility conditions. If, on verification at any stage of examination process, it is found that candidates do not fulfill any of the eligibility conditions, their candidates for the post will be cancelled by the AH,LF&VS Department, Government of Sikkim without notice.

The AH,LF&VS Department will not entertain any application on review or RTI/ Correspondence till the entire process of recruitment is completed.

**R.O. No. 626/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19  
Date: 24.01.19**

Sd/-  
**Deputy Secretary**  
AH,LF&VS Department

Republic Day in Jorethang

**JORETHANG, 26 JAN [IPR]:** Republic Day was celebrated in the spirit of nationalism and patriotism at the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Jorethang, on Saturday. Minister, Area MLA Arjun Kumar Ghatani, graced the occasion as the chief guest alongside Chairman Nayabazar Jorethang Municipal Council Tika Gurung, Dy. Chairperson Pema Tamang, Councilors, Sub Divisional Magistrate Jorethang Tshering Bhutia, SDPO Sonam Wangdi Bhutia, Block Development Officer Prem Kumar Rai, officials under Jorethang Sub Division and local gentry.

Sub Division Level Celebration of Republic Day 2019 was organised by the State Institute of Rural Develop-

ment & Panchayati Raj in collaboration with the office of the Sub Divisional Magistrate, Jorethang, South Sikkim.

Mr Ghatani also congratulated Draupadi Ghimirey on the prestigious honour of Padma-Shri for Social Work.

He spoke on achievements of Salghari Zoom constituency and highlighted the ongoing construction of 50-bed Mother and Child Care Hospital, development of other additional infrastructure in Jorethang Community Health Centre, programmes to generate mass health awareness, upgradation of schools at Sawaligaon and Sisney, establishment of SDM office at Jorethang Bazar, beautification and new road connectivity in the entire constituency.

**KUTSE ZHIPCHU SHERGU**

*Our gratitude to all our Friends,Relatives and well wishers for their support and love during the time of our bereavement Our beloved Late Mr Pem Deecheen Denzongpa, Yapa Jantarey, to many of his Friends and Well Wishers and Managing Director of Yuksom Breweries passed away on 11th December 2018.*

*With humility we request all our Family, Friends and Well Wishers, to please join us in prayer for the Kutse Zhipchu Shergu at our residence at Tashi Ghang, Yangtsey on the 28th January 2019*

*The Yuksom Family,*  
*Tashi Ghang,*  
*Yangtsey, West Sikkim.*

#9933117744  
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# SummitTIMES

Tackle Corruption with Accountability  
*Corruption should not be catergorised,  
it should be removed*

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission had tabled its recommendations to the Central Government a decade ago. The report covered 15 topics, of which around eleven have been “considered” by a Group of Ministers thus far, and some, like the Right to Information and the idea of Lokpal, have already been implemented with varying degrees of success. There are several aspects that this document delved into, but it did direct special focus on ways and means to tackle corruption.

As mentioned, the Lokpal initiative was mooted in it, and although that recommendation obviously has an uphill journey to negotiate to be able to deliver with any real consequence, the recommendations had made it obvious that the administration required reforms because it has been too compromised by bureaucratic extortion. The realization was welcome, even if it had come late, because the planners are normally satisfied by the fact that India ranks lower than Pakistan in the list of most corrupt nations. The Panel on Ethics in Governance had suggested that corruption in the administration be split into two categories – coercive and collusive. The former kind covers the corruption that lay people are made to suffer on a daily basis – the need to grease palms to get even routine jobs like processing a request done. Collusive corruption, the Panel had defined as corruption that sees governance join hands with the briber and assist in the subversion of laws, dodging rules and avoiding dues which should accrue to the State exchequer. Interestingly enough, it was the latter kind of “corruption” that the Panel recommends for stricter action. Why, because it bleeds the State exchequer of its dues. But what about the internal hemorrhage that democratic principles bleed when the public is made to dance circles unless they pay up the public servants to do their jobs?

The irony cannot be missed. Penalize short-changing of revenue returns more strongly than the denial of rights! The revenue of course, some will defend, gets pumped back to the people in the form of populist measures. This can be countered with the argument that more populist measures mean even more powerful babus and even more invasive governance which will automatically lead to even more corruption. The nexus of the corrupt figures out loopholes in every new rule even ahead of its implementation since they are invariably drafting these in consultation with the sections they are in collusion with. The suggestion to approach corruption in two categories – coercive and collusive, is flawed because there cannot be kinds or grades of corruption; there is either corruption or honesty. At least in this case, there are blacks and whites. The categories and grades can be used for the purpose of understanding corruption, but not to deal with it.

The rot of corruption has set in too deep and if corruption is to be tackled, amputations are required. Since governments cannot be expected to prune their staff strength, the least they can do is prune powers and then make the powerful more accountable. There are too many desks that every request has to move through before it is decided for there to be accountability clearly defined. These can be reduced and the accountability established by setting a time limit on every process and requiring officials to provide specific explanations every time a deadline is missed or request denied. This gets everyone on record, and because it is the bureaucracy one is dealing with here, taking away anonymity from the process will ensure everyone becomes judicious. Even this experiment might fail, but given the nation’s seventy years of continuing failure in containing corruption, it is worth giving a shot.

## Venezuela: how Latin American tolerance of illiberalism let a nation slide into crisis

TOM LONG  
theconversation.com

Venezuela today finds itself at the centre of Latin America’s tension between liberal and illiberal forces. These forces are domestic in origin but have powerful international backers. On one side, the United States and a host of Latin American governments have recognised opposition leader Juan Guaidó as the new legitimate president of Venezuela. On the other, Nicolás Maduro clings to power with the backing of Russia and Cuba.

Illiberalism in Venezuela paved the way for an unprecedented humanitarian disaster in the country, spurring today’s contest over Maduro’s legitimacy. Despite the current growing support for Guaidó, for a decade, most Latin American neighbours quietly tolerated Venezuela’s erosion of democracy and markets.

After the Cold War, Latin America embraced the principles of liberal international order perhaps more than any other part of the world. But rising illiberalism now spans the political spectrum. In some cases, has drawn support at the ballot box. Populist legislator Jair Bolsonaro became Brazil’s president in spite of – or perhaps because of – his lack of concern for human rights or the rule of law. Mexico’s president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador is using questionable “popular consultations” to justify decisions that ignore significant opposition. In Honduras a right-leaning president has extended his power and tolerated violence against social movements. In Nicaragua, a former leftist guerrilla leader has turned authoritarian and is repressing peaceful protests.

### A GLOBAL STRUGGLE

Latin America was supposed to be past all this. But patterns there reflect wider challenges to the liberal international order, exemplified by the election of President Donald Trump and the UK’s decision to leave the European Union. The order also seems threatened from the outside by Russian attacks on democracy – and most recently, Russia’s explicit support of Maduro. China, long a major Venezuelan creditor, poses a subtler, but grander, challenge to the existing international rulebook.

Discussions of this crisis of confidence in international liberal principles have often ignored Latin America. Comparisons have been made of Trump and Bolsonaro, but democratic backsliding in Latin America is hardly limited to the spread of the populist right and has very little to do with Trump’s rise. As Venezuela’s own history shows, Latin America has experienced both bouts of illiberalism and passionate movements towards democracy and human rights over decades. These should be understood in the context of the fickle relationship between Latin America and the liberal world order.

Almost since independence in the early 19th



century, Latin American states have been only partially included in the rules-based, liberal world.

The international rules of the liberal order were only sporadically applied across the continent because great powers, including the United States, granted themselves exemptions to protect their interests in the region. Latin American elites also often found their attempts to be properly included in the development of international law and diplomacy were frequently rebuffed. And when Latin American states got involved in international institutions and global markets, it was often only to entrench the power of elites who practiced illiberal politics and crony capitalism at home.

Powerful states in the liberal world have often gladly ignored this, focusing more on their own economic and political priorities than on whether liberal principles and practices were being upheld domestically within Latin America. This has been exemplified most recently by Bolsonaro, who almost boasts of his illiberalism at home while courting the favour of global markets and business. On the left, Venezuelan largesse dampened the regional response to its democratic decline, until the money ran out and the crisis started spilling over the borders.

### TURNING A BLIND EYE

Latin America’s experiences shed light on how life at the margins of the liberal international order means that, domestically, the gains of liberalisation are shared narrowly and the commitment to democracy and human rights is often paper-thin. These problems aided the rise of former president Hugo Chávez in Venezuela two decades ago, gradually setting the stage for today’s crisis. As it turns out, similar dynamics are at the core of the liberal international order’s problems today.

Champions of these liberal principles in Latin America should combine the region’s own rich

liberal traditions and interstate cooperation to shape international rules about domestic conduct. This liberal tradition was poorly reflected by a new wave of regional organisations during the 2000s that largely served to protect and legitimise incumbents, including Maduro. The region’s leaders would do better to revive the ideals of the collective defence of democracy, with a focus on prevention. They are rooted in the 1907 Tobar Doctrine and the 1945 Larreta Doctrine, which encouraged multilateral engagement with the internal affairs of states which violated human rights or whose governments had come to power through unconstitutional means.

These proposals emphasised regional peer pressure on governments and collaborative responses to undemocratic practices. They must be applied early and consistently to prevent illiberalism’s next crisis, regardless of whether it emerges from left or right.

In Venezuela, this diplomatic pressure and isolation signals an important reversal of earlier tolerance and comity. Regional breathing room allowed Maduro to consolidate his power, dramatically reducing the prospects for peaceful solutions. In the future, preventative regional pressure on illiberal activity would be more effective than turning to punitive actions once disaster is already upon us, as is the case with Venezuela’s suffering millions.

To regain its vitality, the liberal international project in Latin America and elsewhere must ensure that the economic, social and political gains of the international order are available consistently and to everyone. Latin Americans need not look abroad for solutions to this crisis of international order, but to their own liberal heritage.

[the writer is Assistant Professor in New Rising World Powers, University of Warwick]

## Why people with anxiety and other mood disorders struggle to manage their emotions

LEANNE ROWLANDS  
theconversation.com

Regulating our emotions is something we all do, every day of our lives. This psychological process means that we can manage how we feel and express emotions in the face of whatever situation may arise. But some people cannot regulate their emotions effectively, and so experience difficult and intense feelings, often partaking in behaviours such as self-harm, using alcohol, and over-eating to try to escape them.

There are several strategies that we use to regulate emotions – for example, reappraisal (changing how you feel about something) and attentional deployment (redirecting your attention away from something). Underlying neural systems in the brain’s prefrontal cortex are responsible for these strategies. However, dysfunction of these neural mechanisms can mean that a person is unable to manage their emotions effectively.

Emotion dysregulation does not simply occur when the brain neglects to use regulation strategies. It includes unsuccessful attempts by the brain to reduce unwanted emotions, as well as the counterproductive use of strategies that have a cost that outweighs the short term benefits of easing an intense emotion. For example, avoiding anxiety by not opening bills might make someone feel better in the short term, but comes with the long-term cost of ever increasing charges.

These unsuccessful attempts at regulation and counterproductive use of strategies are a core feature of many mental health conditions, including anxiety and mood disorders. But there is not one simple pathway that causes the dysregulation in these conditions. In fact research has found several causes.

### 1. DYSFUNCTIONAL NEURAL SYSTEMS

In anxiety disorders, dysfunction of the brain’s emotional systems is related to emotional responses being of a much higher intensity than usual, along with an increased perception of threat and a negative view of the world. These characteristics influence how effective emotion regulation strategies are, and result in an over-reliance on maladaptive strategies like avoiding or trying to suppress emotions.

In the brains of those with anxiety disorders,



the system supporting the reappraisal does not work as effectively. Parts of the prefrontal cortex show less activation when this strategy is used, compared to non-anxious people. In fact, the higher the levels of anxiety symptoms, the less activation is seen in these brain areas. This means that the more intense the symptoms, the less they are able to reappraise.

Similarly, those with major depressive disorder (MDD) – the inability to regulate or repair emotions, resulting in prolonged episodes of low mood – struggle to use cognitive control to manage negative emotions and decrease emotional intensity. This is due to neurobiological differences, such as decreased density of grey matter, and reduced volume in the brain’s prefrontal cortex. During emotion regulation tasks, people who have depression show less brain activation and metabolism in this area.

People with MDD sometimes show less effective function in the brain’s motivation systems – a network of neural connections from the ventral striatum, located in the middle of the brain, and prefrontal cortex – too. This might explain their difficulty in regulating positive emotions (known as anhedonia) leading to a lack of pleasure and motivation for life.

### 2. LESS EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

There is little doubt that people have different abilities in using different regulation strategies. But for some they simply don’t work as well. It’s possible

that people with anxiety disorders find reappraisal a less effective strategy because their attentional bias means they involuntarily pay more attention towards negative and threatening information. This can stop them from being able to come up with more positive meanings for a situation – a key aspect of reappraisal.

It’s possible that reappraisal doesn’t work as well for people with mood disorders either. Cognitive biases can lead people with MDD to interpret situations as being more negative, and make it difficult to think more positive thoughts.

### 3. MALADAPTIVE STRATEGIES

Although maladaptive strategies might make people feel better in the short term they come with long term costs of maintaining anxiety and mood disorders. Anxious people rely more on maladaptive strategies like suppression (trying to inhibit or hide emotional responses), and less on adaptive strategies like reappraisal. Though research into this is ongoing, it’s thought that during intense emotional experiences these people find it very difficult to disengage – a necessary first step in reappraisal – so they turn to maladaptive suppression instead.

The use of maladaptive strategies like suppression and rumination (where people have repetitive negative and self-deprecating thoughts) is also a common feature of MDD. These, together with difficulties using adaptive strategies like reappraisal, prolong and exacerbate depressed mood. It means that people who have MDD are even less able to use reappraisal during a depressed episode.

It’s important to note that mood disorders don’t just come from neural abnormalities. The research suggests that a combination of brain physiology, psychological and environmental factors are what contributes to the disorders, and their maintenance.

While researchers are pursuing promising new treatments, simple actions can help people loosen the influence of negative thoughts and emotions on mood. Positive activities like expressing gratitude, sharing kindness, and reflecting on character strengths really do help.

[the writer is PhD Researcher in Neuropsychology, Bangor University]



Border personnel meetings held in Arunachal

ITANAGAR, JAN 26 (PTI): As part of the ongoing confidence building measures between India and China and also to give a boost to the interactions between the two armies, a Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) was held on Saturday to celebrate the 70th Republic Day. The Indian delegation was led by Brigadier Robi Kapoor of Dao Division of the Army while the Chinese delegation was led by Senior Colonel Xu Hong Gang.

The meeting was held at Kibithu on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the delegations comprised military officials from each side, a defence statement said. The Kibithu-Damai border meeting mechanism was started as a confidence building measure to resolve local boundary issues and has been instrumental in maintaining peace and tranquillity along the LAC since 2014.

The Indian delegation, while welcoming the Chinese side, expressed hope that coming together of troops from both sides would facilitate development of mutual cooperation. The Indian Army also presented a cultural programme showcasing the rich culture and heritage of the country.

Both sides agreed that joint celebrations signified the importance attached by the two countries to enhance the trust and cooperation and hoped that such interactions will continue to foster the environment of mutual confidence and understanding.

Indo-Myanmar Post Level meetings were also held during the day between Assam Rifles and Myanmar Army at nine different locations of the North East including Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram as a part of confidence building measures between India and Myanmar and in order to further consolidate the ties, another release said. Apart from cultural programmes, both the delegations also engaged in friendly sports events.

Contact Summit TIMES at 9832556698, 9832369520 news@summittimes.com advertse@summittimes.com summittimes16@gmail.com

The Road to Mandalay



CK LEPCHA

It was a rather uneventful journey from the border town of Tamu to Mandalay. Everyone slept except for that one time in Kalaymyo when we stopped for food. Thereafter everyone was quiet despite a toddler in the white van. At 6:30am, we reached Mandalay and we could see we had arrived in a city of high rise buildings and bustling activities.

We walked past a very busy morning market where fresh vegetables were being bought and we soon found ourselves in a local food joint. It was a full meal and the cost for one was about 40 Indian rupees. Fresh healthy food at such affordable rate would follow us throughout the trip and we knew we would be eating lots in Myanmar.

Our first destination was the Mandalay Palace –the royal palace of the last Burmese king. It looked well fortified surrounded by high walls and remains of its grandeur was still visible. The gold colored roofs today were actually made of gold and glass had replaced the different stones that was used to decorate its walls. The wooden interiors were intricate and made of Burmese teak as the pagoda architecture was to be expected. History tells of how the British plundered their wealth and sent their last king Thebaw Min –the owner of Mandalay palace to exile in India (they also sent the last Mughal emperor of India to exile in Myanmar which is another story for next time).

The palace is a popular tourist destination –for both domestic and international visitors as we saw students, families and lone travelers appreciating the remains of a grand past. Seeing the palace made me realize how Myanmar used to be a rich and

wealthy nation till the British took over and left them in a predicament that they are still recovering from.

The next day we booked a one-day tour to the ancient cities of Sagaing, Ava and Amara-pura. And it was the beginning of our temple hopping exercise which would follow us in our travels across the country.

Myanmar is also known as the land of pagodas so there are hundreds of pagodas as if there is a pagoda for almost each family or more. There was a time when the ancient city of Bagan alone boasted of 10,000 pagodas but it has since been destroyed, forgotten and the practice of constructing pagodas has disappeared. It was believed that to make up for one’s wrong doings, one has to build their own pagoda and someone else could not build a pagoda for the other person. So perhaps there was a time when each citizen would’ve built their own pagoda.

Besides pagoda hopping, our tour also included a visit to a local handicraft shop and that was equally impressive. Myanmar used to be famous for its Burmese teak and teak-wood is often known by the former name. At the workshop, artists were busy carving elaborate designs of furniture, show pieces and statues of Buddha and other emperors. Majority of their craft is exported to China and they also take orders from customers abroad.

We were soon to find that Burma was rich in mineral resources. In the same workshop was a corner where they sold jade artefacts, showpieces, bangles, necklaces and earrings. Jade is mined and manufactured in Myanmar so if one wants to bring back a souvenir from



Myanmar, jade is a must. It is easy on the eye and equally easy on the budget because one can afford smaller pieces of jade jewellery if at all. But jade is also mostly exported to the Chinese and other Asian nations.

Before leaving for the trip, a Manipuri friend had told me to buy gold because “gold was cheap in Burma”. But then I found out that other precious stones like ruby and sapphire were easily found and could be bought too. I did not buy gold but got myself a small jade necklace as a reminder of Myanmar and the country’s wealth. I kept thinking how they were naturally blessed in landscape and mineral resources but that the course of history has not been kind to them.

These thoughts were in my mind as we

went to watch sunset at the very crowded U Bein bridge popularized by Amitav Ghosh in the cover of his novel ‘The Glass Palace’. It is the longest and the oldest teak bridge supported by hundreds of wooden pillars stretching 1.2 kilometres long. It is iconic and if you are a visitor in Mandalay whether domestic or international, you would make way to this bridge during evening without fail.

But as we walked back to our hotel at dusk, a nearby pagoda caught my eye and we entered its premises. It was lit up in golden yellow and seemed to almost overshadow the troubled times of the country. It was heavenly and exactly how I imagined a Myanmar pagoda to look like.

FieldworkReflections

Introducing the Faith Restorer

MONGFING LEPCHA

Faith doesn’t make sense that’s why it makes miracles. – John Di Lemme Numerous religions are followed all over the globe, and each religion has a different set of laws, but the purpose of all religions is to help the faithful live harmonious life. This statement is based on what I believe and I also believe that belief systems vary between individuals which is why the concept of religion gets complex and sensitive.

This article is not about any particular religion but an attempt to introduce someone not just as a religious leader but as one who is the epitome of belief and faith among the people of Chawang village in North Sikkim. I have written about other experiences in this field area in my previous articles as well. It seems like there is so much to share because of the fact that we come across so many new and unfamiliar things while on field work. Everything we come across adds more value and meaning to our studies, things, which if ignored, will only fade away with time.

Lepchas, as known to everyone are originally animists and worship spirits of the mountains, rivers and forests. Today, Lepchas can be seen following different religions, especially Buddhism, the influence of which has grown since the eighteenth century. Many Lepchas are seen to be inclined towards Christianity as well. Interestingly, the original shamanistic beliefs and practices can be seen practiced alongside their present faiths, especially among the Buddhist Lepchas.

This article consists of information gained in the field work area of Chawang. It is a Buddhist village which has its own monastery and many of the villagers have devoted their lives as monks. With time and space, monkhood has become one of the professions. Trained monks are required to perform most of the Buddhist rituals. As such, monks are offered goods and cash as a gesture of gratitude and they earn their livelihoods with it. Monks are trained in a monastic school known as Sheda. Some start monastic schooling at a very young age while

some start only after they have become adults. However, it is not just the schooling that is taken into account, but intense and deep meditation for years is also a way one can attain higher status among monks. One who succeeds in deep meditations for years are known as Chombu. While in retreat, they have to stay away from their homes and families usually in caves or places especially built for such meditational purposes by the monasteries. They attain higher knowledge from the scripts and from intense meditation. They are respected and people have strong faith in them. They are believed to possess supernatural powers and can stop natural disasters through prayers.

One such monk-resident of Chawang is Ajyoo Goolung. During his lifetime, he lived not just as a devoted monk but also as a pillar of faith among the people who knew him. While conducting my fieldwork, I heard many people talk about him with great bewilderment and belief about the miracles he performed. Even after his death, his influence on the people is still strong and fresh which fascinated me to learn more about him. His family still resides in the same village and that got me the chance to meet them.

Bhaichung Lepcha, one of the grand nephews of Ajyoo Goolung, gave information about him and the powers people believe he acquired through meditation. The real name of Ajyoo Goolung was Tshultim Zangpo Lepcha, the second son of Tengay Lepcha. He has one elder and two younger siblings. He was the successor of Lachen Rinpoche. Ajyoo Goolung devoted his life to attaining Buddhist wisdom through Cham (meditation). He was a respected monk and used to perform all the main rituals of the village. He was also one of the head monks of the village monastery situated at the top of the village.

Ajyoo Goolung spent most of his life mediating and performing rituals. He performed meditation at Ringu, the top of the village. Later, as age caught on and he could not go to the village top for meditation, the villagers, for his convenience, built a Chamdung (place for meditation) near his house which is in the village



area called Kolbong.

Upon enquiring about the miracles he performed, it came to light that he could even stop hailstorms which destroy crops by performing rituals and offering prayers. I was also told that a part of the village prone to landslides was stabilized after Ajyoo Goolung performed rituals and prayers there. The area has been stable ever since. A part of the same area is where the Chamdung and Chorten are built. Ajyoo Goolung, till the end of his days, continued deep meditation. He passed away in the year 2004 and in his memory a Chorten has been built near the meditation house built by the villagers.

When asked about photographs of the prominent leader, his grand nephew took out a passport size picture from the pages of an old copy. He mentioned that this was the only pic-



ture he has of Ajyoo Goolung.

I was inquisitive to know why there were no more photographs but I realized it was not necessary because the picture he showed was perfect. I took permission and received the picture.

Although a short article is not enough to write about the many years someone dedicated to belief, it is an attempt to share the story of someone who lived as an example of a belief system for the entire village which finds itself fortunate to have someone great as a part of their village and their lives. This is an attempt to tell a brief story about someone who was an important part of the village not because he fought battles but because he dedicated his life to keep faith and hope alive and strong.

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



# Focus on Hardik inclusion as India look to seal series



**MOUNT MAUNGANUI (NEW ZEALAND), JAN 27 (PTI):** A well-deserved break on the cards, India captain Virat Kohli will be aiming to seal the five-match series when his team square off against a confused New Zealand in the third ODI here Monday.

The Indian captain has been given a break as part of BCCI's workload management programme and he would ensure that he finishes his assignment Down Under on a high after the maiden Test and ODI victories in Australia.

An unassailable 3-0 lead would be a fitting revenge to India's abject 0-4 humiliation during the 2014 limited overs series.

One of the primary focus of Monday's encounter could be inclusion of Indian cricket's latest enfant terrible Hardik Pandya, who is coming back from provisional suspension for his loose talk on a TV chat show.

Pandya's presence lends solidity and balance to the side and the skipper has time and again admitted it.

The Baroda all rounder's replacement Vijay Shankar is a decent cricketer but is yet to possess the X factor that Pandya has.

That Shankar was given only two overs in the second ODI is an example that he is still not ready to shoulder extra responsibility.

Pandya is a few clicks quicker than Shankar whose bowling in the three ODIs that he has played has not been penetrative.

Pandya can also bat at No 6 if situation arises and his busy approach in batting can also get the scoreboard ticking in middle overs as the skipper wants.

Otherwise Indian team doesn't require much tinkering.

New Zealand, on the other hand, have looked clueless against India's wrist-spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal, who accounted for 12 of the 20 wickets in the last two ODIs.

Kuldeep has looked the most menacing as he claimed two four-wicket hauls in the first two ODIs, while Chahal returned with two wickets on both the matches.

Seamers Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Mohammed Shami also have done their job well, getting crucial breakthroughs for the team.

India's batting too have complemented the bowlers, looking rock solid in both the games with Shikhar Dhawan's return to form lending the team the much-needed support at the top.

If he had scored an unbeaten 75 in the first ODI, he cracked a 67-ball 66 in the second game.

Vice captain Rohit Sharma, who had flopped in the first ODI, too en-

tertained the spectators here with a strokeful 87 en route his 14th century stand with opening partner Dhawan.

Skipper Kohli also looked in good nick in both the matches, while Ambati Rayudu seemed to have found his mojo back with a 49-ball 47 on Saturday.

An ageless Mahendra Singh Dhoni too continued his rampaging run with yet another unbeaten 33-ball 48 to take India across the 300-mark, while Kedar Jadhav has also grabbed the role of a finisher with both hands.

While the batting looked in place, there is a slight concern about the visitors fifth bowler's slot where Pandya might fit in.

India are yet to finalise their middle-order ahead of the World Cup.

Once Kohli takes a break following the third ODI, Dinesh Karthik might get a place to boost the middle-order in the skipper's absence.

The team management might also think of handing an India debut to the very talented Shubman Gill.

For Black Caps, captain Kane Williamson, who had top-scored in the first ODI, looked good during his short stay in the second ODI, while all-rounder Doug Bracewell tried to take the game to the wires with a 46-ball 57 but none of the other batters could convert their starts.

## Sport&Specials

# Griezmann on target again as Atletico edge closer to Barca



**MADRID, JAN 27 (AFP):** Antoine Griezmann struck again as Atletico Madrid kept the pressure on Barcelona at the top of La Liga by beating in-form Getafe 2-0.

Griezmann now has eight goals in as many games, his latest helping Atletico register their sixth win in seven league matches. The only dropped points came in a respectable draw away to Sevilla.

Saul Niguez tapped in a second before half-time at the Wanda Metropolitano to complete an impressively smooth victory over a Getafe side that had lost only once, to Barcelona, in 12 outings.

Renowned for their tenacity, Getafe strayed in the final minutes, when Djene Dakonam and Leandro Cabrera were both sent off.

"From the beginning of

January the team has been playing well," coach Diego Simeone said Saturday.

"We have injuries and I'm excited to think what we can do when they're all fit again."

"We were not good," Getafe coach Jose Bordalasaid. "I didn't like my team, we weren't like us."

Griezmann could have been playing for Barca had his decision been different last summer but instead he is fast-becoming the sharpest thorn in their side, driving Atletico almost single-handedly at times to a sustained title challenge.

Alvaro Morata could yet join this month, even if reports in the Spanish press have suggested a deal with Chelsea is proving difficult to close.

But with Griezmann in this sort of form and Diego Costa expected back next month, per-

haps Atleti are less in need, with some fans even appearing to chant against Morata's arrival, although they were quickly drowned out by boos.

"The opinion is respectable, people can say what they want," Simeone said.

"I look for players that serve the club and the team."

It is no coincidence that Griezmann's surge has coincided with a consistent run for Atletico, which looks timely too, with Real Madrid in La Liga and Juventus in the Champions League both to come at the start of next month.

**- 'SOME DISCOMFORT' -** Simeone will hope the thigh strain that forced his captain Diego Godin off at the interval is not serious. Atletico described the substitution as a "precaution".

"He left with some discomfort," Simeone said afterwards. "Let's hope it's nothing."

Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde had said earlier on Saturday that he considers Atletico the greatest threat to their title hopes from the Spanish capital and it is hard to argue given Simeone's side are now just two points behind, eight closer than Real Madrid.

Sevilla jumped above Real into third after earlier thrashing Levante 5-0, with all of their goals coming in the second half. Valencia move up to seventh after continuing their revival by beating Villarreal.

Barca and Real both have games in hand to come on Sunday, however, the former away to Girona and the latter up against Espanyol.

Atletico will watch on

happy after Griezmann's shot in the 27th minute was too quick for Getafe goalkeeper David Soria. The excellent Thomas Partey had battled through midfield before teeing up his team-mate on the edge of the area.

Thomas was key again to the second, his lofted pass out wide allowing Lucas Hernandez to volley first-time into the six-yard box, where Nikola Kalinic should have finished. His effort was parried out and Saul slid in the rebound.

Getafe's frustration built and boiled over at the end as Dakonam was shown a second yellow card in the 88th minute for a rash challenge on Thomas Lemar and then Cabrera followed him three minutes later for applauding the referee. It was a feisty end to a comfortable Atletico win.

## Khelo India Youth Games: A melting pot of young talent

**APARAJITA UPADHYAY NEW DELHI, JAN 27 (PTI):** The established names excelled expectedly but Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) also brought to the forefront a bunch of talented kids, whose success was a testimony that unflagging spirit can overcome adversities.

The superiority of Youth Olympic gold medalist weightlifter Jeremy Lalrinnunga, CWG silver medalist shooter Mehuli Ghosh and swimmer Srihari Nataraj was beyond doubt but there were a few like Bavleen Kaur and Deepak Singh, for whom the Games was a big window of opportunity.

Jammu and Kashmir gymnast Bavleen was star performer for her team, taking home three gold and two silver medals.

The 16-year-old had scores of 12.35, 11.25, 13.30 and 11.40 in the ball, ribbon, clubs, and hoop events, respectively.

But Bavleen, who aspires to represent India in the next Commonwealth Games, explains how difficult it is for the gymnasts in her place to even find a suitable training space.

"I practice in a government stadium where we have a multipurpose hall for gymnastics and badminton. It actually caters more to the shut-

ters. We just have space of one badminton court and everyday 150-200 gymnasts come to practice in that one court," Bavleen told PTI.

"It's quite tough for us. During summers it's too hot and in winters it's too cold. We don't even have a proper rhythmic floor. We practice on mats. Two weeks back a proper floor was brought but we don't have a place to keep it. We need our own hall," she added.

Then there is wrestler Deepak, also from Jammu and Kashmir, who struggle to get sparring partners and relies heavily on internet to learn techniques. He did not win any medal but was richer by experience.

"I am from Kathua, and not a single kid in my school or in that area is into wrestling. I can't practice unless I participate in any tournament. We have traditional wrestling but modern wrestling infrastructure, training and support system does not exist in Jammu and Kashmir. There are no coaches or even mats in our area," he said.

Whatever he has learned, is from coach Sahil Kumar, an army personnel, and by watching videos of Sushil Kumar and Bajrang Punia.

"I learnt the basics of the game from my coach. Then I started watching Sushil Kumar and Ba-

jrang Punia's bouts on YouTube. I read about training methods and diet and am trying to follow in their footsteps on my own," Deepak, who competed in U1-755kg, said.

In the ever-growing list of shooting talent, one more name was added-- 10-year-old Abhishek Shaw.

Named after Beijing Olympics champion Abhinav Bindra, he became the youngest medalist of the Games, teaming up with new shooting sensation Mehuli in the 10m air rifle mixed team event.

Shaw, who also became India's youngest national shooting gold medalist in November last year, proved his mettle and got a measure of competing at a multi-discipline event.

For Srihari, who has represented India in several international events including the Asian Games and the Youth Olympics, the KIYG marked the beginning of preparations for the World Championship in South Korea later this year.

The 18-year-old swimmer had a 100 per cent strike rate as he won seven golds and topped every category he participated in. He bettered his own record of six golds that he won at the Khelo India School Games, last year.

# Millwall stun Everton, Man City continue quadruple quest

**LONDON, JAN 26 (AFP):** Everton were shocked 3-2 by Championship Millwall in controversial circumstances as Manchester City's quest for four trophies continued with a 5-0 thrashing of Burnley to march into the FA Cup fifth round.

League One Shrewsbury also narrowly missed out on a big upset as Wolves scored a 93rd-minute equaliser to rescue a 2-2 draw at New Meadow.

Everton twice led at The Den, but were left to rue the lack of VAR at the game as Millwall's second goal, from Jake Cooper, was allowed to stand despite coming off the defender's arm.

However, Marco Silva's men also only have themselves to blame after dire defending saw them concede from three set-pieces.

Richarlison's long range effort squirmed through Jordan Archer's grasp to give the visitors a lead that lasted just four minutes when Lee Gregory's header levelled in first-half stoppage time.

Substitute Cenk

Tosun restored Everton's advantage before the moment of controversy when the ball ricocheted off Cooper's arm and into an unguarded net.

Everton's players and manager were furious as replays shown inside the stadium showed the goal should have been ruled out for handball, but with VAR not in use, referee Michael Oliver had to stick by his original decision to give the goal.

The Premier League side failed to recover their composure and paid a heavy price when Murray Wallace turned home another free-kick launched into the Everton box in the 94th minute.

**- "WHO IS GOING TO STOP THEM?" -**

City boss Pep Guardiola labelled talk of a quadruple as "fantasy" earlier in the week, but after cruising into the League Cup final in midweek, the English champions are in contention for a clean sweep of trophies as they challenge Liverpool in the Premier League and face Schalke in the last 16 of the Champions League.

"It is very difficult when teams like this play the way they do," said Burnley boss Sean Dyche.

"Who is going to stop them winning everything if they are in that mood?"

The defeat left Burnley to concentrate on their bid for survival in the top flight as City stretched their remarkable run of late to 28 goals and none conceded in their last six games.

"Everybody wants to play and you have to play good when they do because the others are at a high level," said Guardiola.

Gabriel Jesus continued his hot streak with a fine individual run and powerful finish past Nick Pope to open the scoring with his eighth goal in five games.

Burnley wasted a great chance to level when Matej Vydra fired wide with just Ederson to beat and within seconds Bernardo Silva's deflected effort gave City breathing space.

Kevin de Bruyne's brilliant strike then made it 3-0 and another wicked delivery from the Belgian forced Kevin

Long to turn into his own net for the fourth before Sergio Aguero rounded off the scoring from the penalty spot.

**- SHREWSBURY DENIED SHOCK -**

Wolves knocked out Premier League leaders Liverpool in the last round, but needed a late fightback from 2-0 down to force a replay. "It's real mixed emotions. I base myself on performances and that was very, very good but I am disappointed not to win the game," said Shrewsbury manager Sam Ricketts.

Greg Docherty smashed the third-tier side into the lead just two minutes into the second-half.

Luke Waterfall gave the Shrews a two-goal lead 19 minutes from time with a towering header from a corner.

They needed that cushion as Raul Jimenez came off the bench to give the Wolves a lifeline and Matt Doherty levelled three minutes into stoppage time to save Nuno Espirito Santo's side.

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# Canada's prime minister fires his ambassador to China

**TORONTO, JAN 27 (AP):** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau fired Canada's ambassador to China after the envoy said it would be "great" if the US dropped its extradition request for a Chinese tech executive arrested in Canada.

Trudeau said Saturday that he had asked for and accepted John McCallum's resignation Friday night.

McCallum made the remark to the Toronto Star on Friday. That came a day after he issued a statement saying he misspoke about the case earlier in the week and regretted saying Meng Wanzhou has a strong case against extradition.

The arrest of the daughter of the founder of Huawei Technologies Ltd. at Vancouver's airport Dec. 1 severely damaged relations between China and Canada.

The US wants her extradited to face charges

that she committed fraud by misleading banks about Huawei's business dealings in Iran "Last night I asked for and accepted John McCallum's resignation as Canada's Ambassador to China," Trudeau said in a statement.

Trudeau said Jim Nickel, the deputy head of mission at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing, would represent his government in China. He thanked McCallum, a former minister in Trudeau's Cabinet, for his 20 years of public service.

China detained two Canadians shortly after Meng's arrest in an apparent attempt to pressure Canada to release her. A Chinese court also sentenced a Canadian to death in a sudden retrial of a drug case, overturning a 15-year prison term handed down earlier.

McCallum told Chinese media in the To-

ronto area earlier in the week that the extradition of Meng to the United States "would not be a happy outcome."

He suggested the case was politically motivated and said the US could make a trade deal with China in which it would no longer seek her extradition, and two Canadian detained in China could then be released.

But on Thursday McCallum walked back the remarks and said he "misspoke."

Trudeau had earlier dismissed calls to fire McCallum, but he clearly had enough after the envoy spoke off script again. Trudeau and Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland have stressed that Canada's government can't interfere politically in the case.

The leader of the opposition Conservative Party, Andrew Scheer, said McCallum should have been fired days



ago because his remarks raised concerns about the politicization of the Meng case.

Scheer said McCallum caused damage to Canada's reputation by delivering different messages through different media on different days.

McCallum's remarks surprised many and fueled speculation that Canada might be trying

to send a signal to China to reduce tensions.

A year ago, McCallum also made controversial comments about how Canada had more in common with China than the United States under Trump.

McCallum has strong personal ties to China, and he pointed out to Chinese-language media this week that his wife is

of Chinese ethnicity and his three sons have Chinese spouses.

Guy Saint-Jacques, a former Canadian ambassador to China, said he felt bad for McCallum but said it was the right thing to do.

"What is worse is this is happening in the middle of the crisis when we need all-hands on deck," Saint-Jacques said.

He said the Chinese

will now know that McCallum was not speaking for the Canadian government.

Roland Paris, a former foreign policy adviser to Trudeau, said "Mr. McCallum's remarks were continuing to cause confusion about Canada's position."

On a matter of this importance, the Canadian government has to speak with a single, clear voice," Robert Bothwell, a professor at the University of Toronto, said it is not an ambassador's job to speak out of turn.

"Of course, McCallum can obviously take refuge in arguing that what he said was largely true, but he can't escape the fact that it wasn't his job to say it. It does underline the hazards of sending a politician to do a diplomat's job," Bothwell said.

Saint-Jacques said he spoke to China's consul general in Montreal on Thursday who reported that China is furious

at Canada for arresting Meng on behalf of the U.S., which is involved in a trade talks with China.

Saint-Jacques said the consul general told him he thinks a Canadian delegation should visit Beijing for talks. Saint-Jacques believes Canada should appoint a special envoy to try to resolve the crisis.

Trudeau and Freeland have stressed that Canada has an extradition treaty with the U.S. that it must respect.

The White House National Security Council declined comment on McCallum.

Meng is out on bail in Vancouver awaiting her extradition proceedings. The US has until Wednesday to submit paperwork for the extradition request.

Huawei has close ties to China's military and is considered one of the country's most successful international enterprises.

## Venezuela backtracks on order to expel US diplomats

**CARACAS, JAN 27 (AP):** Nicolas Maduro's government backtracked on an order that gave US Embassy personnel 72 hours to leave Venezuela, defusing tensions between the countries just hours after their top diplomats traded heated rhetoric at a special UN Security Council meeting to address the South American country's crisis.

Maduro broke relations with the United States on Wednesday after the Trump administration recognised opposition leader Juan Guaido as interim president, a move the embattled socialist described as a "vile" coup attempt.

Maduro gave American diplomats three days to leave the country, but the Trump administration refused to obey his order, arguing that the leftist leader was no longer Venezuela's legitimate president. That set the stage for a potentially violent showdown at the hill-top Embassy compound on Saturday night, when the deadline was to expire.

But as the sun set on Venezuela's capital, the Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying the Maduro government had opened a 30-day window to negotiate with the Trump administration the establishment of a "US interests office" in Venezuela, and a similar office for Venezuela in the United States.

A similar arrangement governed bilateral relations between the US and Cuba for decades before the Obama administration restored diplomatic relations with the communist-run island.

The State Department did not immediately confirm the Venezuelan government's account, reiterating only that its priority remains the safety of its personnel and that it has no plans to close the embassy.

"That is true diplomacy," Maduro said after reading out the statement on national television.

Earlier in the day, Venezuela's Foreign Af-

fairs Minister faced off against Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at a special UN Security Council meeting on Venezuela's situation.

During the debate -- which was convened by the US -- Pompeo urged all nations to end Venezuela's "nightmare" and support opposition leader Juan Guaido while Russia accused the Trump administration of attempting "to engineer a coup d'etat" against President Nicolas Maduro - a reflection of the world's deep divisions over the crisis in the South American country.

Pompeo told the UN Security Council that it's beyond time to back the Venezuelan people as they try to free themselves from what he called Maduro's "illegitimate mafia state" and support Guaido. The young opposition leader has declared himself the country's interim president, arguing that Maduro's re-election was fraudulent.

But Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said Venezuela doesn't threaten international peace and security and accused "extremist opponents" of Maduro's legitimate government of choosing "maximum confrontation", including the artificial creation of a parallel government. He urged Pompeo to say whether the US will use military force.

Pompeo later told reporters who asked for a response, "I am not going to speculate or hypothesize on what the U.S. will do next."

What has played out in Venezuela and the world's media between supporters and opponents of the Maduro government played out face-to-face in the chamber of the UN's most powerful body, which has failed to take action on the Venezuelan crisis because of deep divisions.

The Security Council's five veto-wielding permanent members could not unite behind a statement on Venezuela, presenting widely differing texts.

The leaders of two

of those council nations - France and Britain - joined Spain and Germany to turn up the pressure on Maduro Saturday, saying they would follow the US and others in recognising Guaido unless Venezuela calls new presidential elections within eight days.

European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said if there is no announcement of new elections in the next days the 28-nation bloc "will take further actions, including on the issue of recognition of the country's leadership".

Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza dismissed the deadline. "Europe is giving us eight days?" he asked the council. "Where do you get that you have the power to establish a deadline or an ultimatum to a sovereign people. It's almost childlike."

Arreaza said Venezuela "will not allow anyone to impose on us any decision or order" and demanded that someone show him where in the country's constitution it states that an individual can proclaim himself president.

As for possible military action to oust Maduro, Arreaza said, "we will not allow any government or any country to violate our sovereignty, and give a pretext for Donald Trump to start a war!"

The opposition to Guaido was also reflected in the initial procedural vote on whether the 15-member Security Council should even discuss the crisis in Venezuela, which is not on its official agenda.

The United States barely survived the vote to go ahead with the meeting, receiving the minimum nine "yes" votes from the council's six Western nations along with Kuwait, Peru and the Dominican Republic. China, South Africa and Equatorial Guinea joined Russia in voting "no" while Indonesia and Ivory Coast abstained.

Pompeo went after Russia and China, accusing them of trying "to prop



up Maduro while he is in dire straits ... in the hopes of recovering billions of dollars in ill-considered investments and assistance made over the years".

But he saved his sharpest attack for Cuba, saying no country has done more to sustain "the nightmarish condition of the Venezuelan people".

He said Cuba has sent "security and intelligence thugs" to sustain Maduro's "illegitimate rule".

"Now is the time for every other national to pick a side," Pompeo said. "No more delays, no more games. Either you stand with the forces of freedom, or you're in league with Maduro and his mayhem."

China's UN Ambassador Ma Zhaoxu said his government "firmly opposed" the US accusations and doesn't interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. "We hope the country that accuses others can do likewise itself," Ma told the council.

Cuba's UN Ambassador Anayansi Rodriguez went further, rejecting "the deliberate" and "fake news" cast on the country not only by Pompeo but by Elliot Abrams, the new chief of US policy on Venezuela who sat in the council after the secretary of state left.

The Security Council meeting came a day after Guaido vowed to remain on the streets until his country has a transitional government, while Maduro dug in and accused his opponents of orchestrating a coup.

In rival press conferences, Guaido urged his followers to stage another mass protest next week, while Maduro pushed his call for dialogue.

The standoff could set the scene for more

violence and has plunged troubled Venezuela into a new chapter of political turmoil that rights groups say has already left more than two dozen dead as thousands take to the street demanding Maduro step down.

Guaido took a symbolic oath of office Wednesday proclaiming himself the nation's constitutional leader on grounds that Maduro's re-election last year was fraudulent - an allegation supported by the US, the European Union and many other nations.

Directives sent Friday by the State Department to the Federal Reserve will make it harder for Maduro to gain access to the government's sizable overseas assets, including revenue from oil sales and profits by Houston-based Citgo, a unit of the state-owned oil giant PDVSA.

Guaido's move is the most direct challenge to Maduro's rule despite years of protests at home and international efforts to isolate the regime amid a growing humanitarian crisis fuelled by falling oil prices and government mismanagement.

Maduro is accusing the opposition of working with the US to overthrow him. Though over a dozen nations are recognising Guaido as president, Maduro still has the support of the military and powerful, longtime allies like Russia and China.

He said he is still willing to talk with the opposition. Both sides attempted dialogue last year, but it fell apart as Maduro pushed forward with an early election that Venezuela's most popular opposition leaders were barred from running in.

## Sikh separatists protest in front of Indian Embassy in US

**WASHINGTON/ NEW DELHI, JAN 27 (PTI):** A small group of Sikh separatists held a protest in front of the Indian Embassy in Washington during which they tried to burn the tricolour on the Republic Day, a move slammed by the local Sikh community and termed as a "flop show" by Indian government sources.

The demonstration by Sikh For Justice (SFJ) outside the Indian Embassy in Washington was a flop show attended by around 15-20 people. They were completely outnumbered by flag waving, enthusiastic and patriotic Indians, official sources said in New Delhi.

It demonstrated the hollow claim of the SFJ that they enjoy wide sup-

port. They are a fringe group backed by Pakistan clearly bringing out the nefarious design of Islamabad to stir up trouble. In fact, most of the demonstrators were Pakistanis, they said.

The protesters raised "Khalistan Zindabaad" slogans and tried to burn the Indian flag in the presence of a battery of reporters from the local Pakistani media.

The Indian government sources said SFJ's claim on their website that they burnt an Indian flag outside the Embassy is "completely false" as the photos/videos show, no such thing took place.

The claim is intended to cover up for their flop show, they said.

The SFJ supporters were outnumbered by

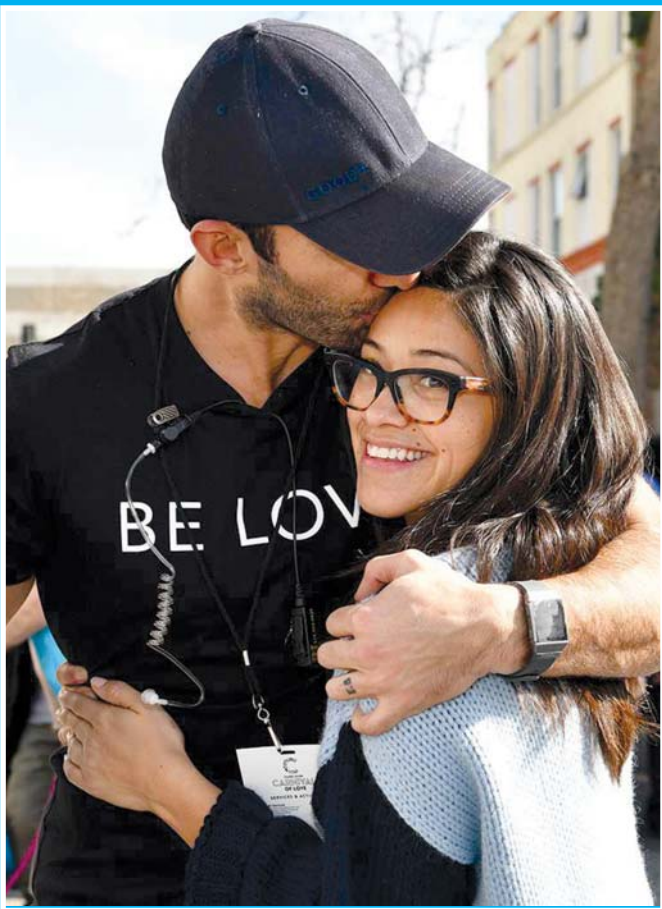
Indian-Americans raising 'Vande Mataram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' slogans with Indian flags flying high in their hand.

Around 2.30 pm on Saturday, the members of the SFJ - in front of a group of Pakistani reporters and cameramen - tried to burn the Indian flag. They ended up burning a green flag that had 'S' written on it.

With passions running high between Indian-Americans and protesters, the local law enforcement officials had warned against any attempt to burn the Indian flag. In fact, they sought additional security personnel as the standoff continued. A group of mounted police were seen standing a few blocks away.







**JANE & RAFAEL FOREVER!** Jane the Virgin co-stars Justin Baldoni & Gina Rodriguez share a cute moment at the Skid Row Carnival of Love in L.A.

## It's something I think about: Alyssa Milano on joining politics



**LOS ANGELES, JAN 27 (PTI):** Actor-activist Alyssa Milano says she may consider running for a political office.

When asked about a possible bid for political office at the BlogHer Health Conference on Friday here, Milano said, "It's something that I think about."

The actor, who played an important role in bringing the #MeToo movement to Hollywood, said politics is no different from what she is doing currently as an activist.

"I'd really love the staff. I'm doing this by myself now. I want that person where I'm like, Can you talk to me about immigration in a way that I don't have to go through so much research?"

"I would love it in that respect, but I don't even know what trajectory looks like. Do I

start on a state, local level? If anybody has any ideas, tweet me. 2028? Maybe. It's something that I think about, for sure," she added.

The actor also addressed issues related to #MeToo and what to do about men who have sexually harassed or abused people but continue to find work.

"Those men aren't just going to go away. Other companies are going to hire them, so what are we going to do to make sure that those companies actually have some protocol in place so that the women that also work in those other companies feel safe?"

"Let's focus on that. What's the policy for men who have been accused of things that come back to a different job? I mean, we can't put them all on an island, and say, Yeah, they'll be fine," she said.

work on a creative project of some kind, although the downside might be that you keep working at it for too long and could well exhaust yourself. Remember to take breaks. You need to relax a little and remember to take time out to eat.

**CANCER:** Someone you've known for a long time but haven't seen for a while could suddenly come back into the picture. Cancer. He or she could attend a social event of some kind or actually drop in to visit your family. Friendships and group affiliations could prove supportive and satisfying right now and you should feel pretty secure with them. This is a great time to sign up for classes, particularly those involving the arts.

**LEO:** Today you and your family or a group of friends might spend most of the day out and about, Leo. You might spend the day outdoors, or possibly attend a concert or festival of some kind. This should be a very happy day for you, as you're likely to be feeling especially close to those around you. Your relationships appear to be quite secure, as does your career and financial situation.

Enjoy your day.

**VIRGO:** A class, lecture, or workshop could prove fascinating and stimulating for you today, Virgo. Plans for travel to a distant state or foreign country, perhaps in the company of friends or family members, could be confirmed, which should make you feel really good! Your relationships seem warm, supportive, and stable, even those with people who live far away from you. Have fun!

**LIBRA:** If you've been thinking of buying a home or otherwise purchasing real estate, Libra, this is the day to start the ball rolling or finalize the deal, depending on your situation. Investments in property planned at this time should continue to increase steadily in value. However, make sure this is the right investment for you before committing to anything. Otherwise, you might be stuck with something you don't like for a long time.

**SCORPIO:** A festive social event could either start or consolidate a love relationship, which could last for a long time. New and interesting people could come into your life,

Scorpio, bringing stimulating conversation and useful information. Someone you haven't seen for a while could also appear on the scene, making for a joyful reunion. A project you've been working on, either job related or personal, could finally be completed. Enjoy your day.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Today you should be experiencing a strong feeling of satisfaction and contentment with your life, Sagittarius. Business and financial matters continue to go well, and your home life especially appears to be secure and stable. You might be considering investing some of your resources in your home. Any new romantic relationships begun at this time could well last for a long time, so make sure you really like the person before committing!

**CAPRICORN:** Business transactions taking place in your near neighborhood should prove sensible and satisfying today, Capricorn. You should be feeling pretty financially secure right now, as career and money matters continue to go well for you. Contact with friends, neighbors, and relatives should

be open, congenial, and honest. Relationships of all kinds are apt to be pretty stable. In the evening, take a brisk walk near your home.

**AQUARIUS:** If you're into gardening or in any way working with the land, you're likely to spend a lot of time doing it today, Aquarius. A friend or family member could help. Anything planted today is likely to grow and thrive, so don't worry about seeds that don't sprout. You might spend a bit too much time doing it, however. Work only until you're pleasantly tired, then quit for the day; otherwise, you might burn yourself out.

**PISCES:** A warm and loving communication could come today from a longtime friend or romantic partner. This could be the high point of your day, Pisces, especially since a letter or delivery you've been waiting on for a while still might not come. An older relative or neighbor might come to your door wanting advice about something. Children could prove particularly inspiring at this time, as you're especially attuned to them now. Enjoy!

## Both fashion and film industries made on image, egos and identity: Gaurav Gupta

**SHUBHA DUBEY**

**MUMBAI, JAN 27 (PTI):** Celebrity favourite designer Gaurav Gupta says fashion and film industries go hand-in-hand as he believes both are built on "image, egos and identity".

The Delhi-based designer said it is tough to establish one's label in the fashion world and if a film celebrity contributes to the growth of the brand, it is a sign of a healthy interdependent work model.

"The influence of Bollywood on the fashion industry and the influence of fashion on Bollywood, both go hand in hand. I think both the industries are made on image, egos and identity and different set of personality. And same is the case with Hollywood and their respective industries is what makes fashion."

"It takes a lot to be recognised as a bona fide, celebrated star. And if the latter's strength is offering to somebody's work or somebody's brand, it speaks volumes. I think it's a great ecosystem that way since we live in an interdependent ecosystem," Gaurav told PTI in an interview.

The designer will be showcasing his new collection at the opening show of the upcoming Lakme Fashion Week Summer/Resort 2019.

The show will take place on Tuesday, January 29 at The Royal Opera House here.

Titled, 'The (Un)folding', the range is a blend of the delicacy of handwoven fabrics and Gaurav's signature gravi-



ty-defying pattern making.

The couturier said his aim is always to design something innovative and with this collection, he is focusing on creating demi-couture garments.

"The inspiration behind the collection is that it is an unfolding of a new idea for me. I always want to make something original, innovate within my art in couture and demi-couture. This collection is an unfolding of a new chapter, unfolding of a new line of Indian textiles turned into demi-couture garments."

"I have stayed away from Indian textiles for all these years, I wanted to do something special and experimental for the 15th anniversary of our brand. I wanted to experiment with chikankari by taking it out of context and not just making regular sarees again for it to be seen in a different light," he said.

Gaurav will be returning to LFW after a gap of four years and for his come-

back on the India's most popular fashion runway, it took him three months to curate the range which has put to use Lucknowi chikankari on dresses and worked with Benarasi brocade to create deconstructed lehengas.

The designer said he endorses the idea of 'fashion for all', even though the concept, which is currently being promoted globally, is an "illusion".

"I think the concept of fashion for all is extremely important for me. Having said that, it is pertinent to note that fashion for all is more like an illusion since fashion is something which is very subjective and is thus, embraced and worn by anyone and everyone accordingly."

"But with respect to inclusivity, I am a firm believer in fashion for all," he said.

Lakme Fashion Week Summer/Resort 2019 will take place from January 30 to February 3 at JioGarden, Bandra-Kurla Complex.

## Anne Hathaway confirms script for 'The Princess Diaries 3' is ready



**LOS ANGELES, JAN 26 (PTI):** Anne Hathaway, who had her breakout role in 2001's "The Princess Diaries", revealed that the third installment of the romcom is in the works.

The actor said the script is ready and the on-screen royal grandmother Queen Clarisse Renaldi, played by veteran actor Julie Andrews, to her new Queen Mia, is also interested in reprising her role.

"There is a script for the third movie. There is a script. I want to do it, Julie wants to do it, Debra Martin Chase our producer wants to do it. We all really want it to happen," Hathaway said on "Watch What Happens Live".

The actor, however, added that the team wants to make a sequel only if it would be "perfect".

"It's just, we don't want to do it unless it's perfect, because we love it just as much as you guys love it. It's as important to us as it is to you and we don't want to deliver anything until it's ready. But we're working on it," she said.

In 2016, director Garry Marshall said he and Disney were in talks to make a third part.

He also said around the same time that he had spoken to Hathaway who also wanted the new film to happen after she gave birth to her son.

But months after, Marshall, 81, died of complications from pneumonia following a stroke.

Last year, Andrews said in an interview that the team might do another film in Marshall's "honour".

The second part of the series, "The Princess Diaries: Royal Engagement", also starring Chris Pine, released in 2001.

## Christopher Nolan's next film to release in July 2020



**LOS ANGELES, JAN 27 (PTI):** Filmmaker Christopher Nolan's next film will hit the theatres in July 2020.

According to Variety, Warner Bros. announced Friday that Nolan's next film would open in IMAX on July 17, 2020.

The project was also described as an "event film", although any other specifics

including title, plot and cast were not revealed.

Warner Bros released Nolan's last directorial venture "Dunkirk" on the same weekend in 2017.

Nolan's new film is the third title slated to release on July 17, 2020, joining Paramount's "The SpongeBob Movie" and Fox's "Bob's Burgers".

## Aparshakti Khurana joins 'ABCD 3'

**MUMBAI, JAN 27 (PTI):** Actor Aparshakti Khurana has joined the cast of choreographer-director Remo D'Souza's film "ABCD 3".

The third installment in the "ABCD" franchise features Varun Dhawan and Sharadha Kapoor in the lead roles.

"I'm glad to be part of the 'ABCD 3' team. I'm very excited to collaborate with Bhushan Kumar and Remo and looking forward to share the screen space once again with Varun Dhawan after 'Badrinath Ki Dulhania', Aparshakti said in a statement.

The actor, who impressed both the audiences and the critics with his performance in last year's "Stree", will also be seen in "Luka Chuppi" alongside Kartik Aryan and Kriti Sanon and "Jabariya Jodi" featuring Sidharth Malhotra and Parineeti Chopra in lead.

"ABCD 3" is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar and Lizelle D'Souza.

**ARIES:** If you've been thinking about starting a garden, this is a great day to do it, since anything relating to the land you begin today is likely to thrive. Doubts about your financial security might be on your mind, Aries. They're probably misplaced, because you should continue to do well. However, your doubts can serve a purpose in that they could inspire you to take steps to ensure that your situation continues. Go to it!

**TAURUS:** Family and friends may gather for an intimate get-together at your home or perhaps at the home of a neighbor. At some point, expect an exciting phone call. You should be feeling pretty secure in relationships of all kinds, Taurus, from business partnerships to close friends to love partners. Information provided by someone else could give you some ideas as to how to fix up your house in a new and different way.

**GEMINI:** A close friend or lover could share a secret with you today, Gemini. An older person could be in the news, perhaps an author or politician you particularly admire. You, yourself, could feel inspired to