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**IT TOOK ME 16 YEARS TO
FIGURE OUT MY VOICE,
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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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CM ATTENDS VIDEO CONF WITH PM ON COVID-19 VACCINE Sikkim fully prepared for COVID vaccination: CM



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

Chief Minister, PS Tamang joined Chief Ministers of other states and the representatives of all the States/UTs of India in a video conference today called by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi regarding the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

The vaccination process will commence from 16 January, 2021. For the first phase, almost 3 crore individuals throughout the country consisting of health workers and frontline-warriors have registered.

In a Facebook post, the CM informed that individuals representing the scientific community of the country briefed everyone about the vaccines.

"They informed us that the vaccines are completely safe for use and have been formulated by following proper global guidelines. They explained that the vaccines are immunogenic and two doses will be required," he wrote.

The CM wrote that the Prime Minister urged everyone to follow the SOPs and ensure that other health facilities and vaccinations will not be affected by the process. He emphasised on proper utilisation of the COWIN app for registration and providing real-time updates. The app will also serve as

a reminder for individuals who have registered to be vaccinated. He also asserted on regulating rumours and fake information regarding the vaccine and directed all to create awareness among the citizens.

He added that leaders, including himself, will be vaccinated in the second phase and asserted for the first phase to include only health workers and frontline warriors.

"Sikkim is fully prepared for administering the vaccine and has already finished dry runs throughout the State. We have prepared proper logistics for transferring the vaccines and established more than 35 cold-chain points to store the vaccines under regulated temperature," the CM informed.

The CM wrote that the country's scientific community has successfully formulated vaccines within the country, setting a precedent for 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

"On behalf of Sikkim, I thank and congratulate the scientific community for a commendable job. I would also like to extend my gratitude towards the Hon'ble Prime Minister for his exemplary suggestions during the pandemic. I believe that under his able leadership, India will reach new milestones in the years to follow," the CM added.

All-women cockpit completes Air India's longest direct flight

NEW DELHI, JAN 11

(PTI): Air India's longest direct flight from San Francisco to Bengaluru with an all-woman cockpit crew successfully landed in the southern city on Monday.

The national carrier had said on Saturday that this flight would be the longest commercial flight in the world to be operated by any Indian airline and the total flight time on this

route would be of more than 17 hours depending on the wind speed on that day.

The direct distance between the two cities at opposite ends of the world is 13,993 km with a time zone change of around 13.5 hours.

"In a moment to cherish and celebrate, women professionals of Indian civil aviation create history," Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri said on Twitter.

"Heartiest Congratulations to Capt Zoya Aggarwal, Capt Papagari Thanmai, Capt Akansha Sonaware & Capt Shivani for flying over North Pole to land in Bengaluru from San Francisco," he stated.

Flight AI176 departed from San Francisco in the USA at around 8.30 pm (local time) on Saturday and landed at the Kempegowda International Airport at around 3.45 am (local time) on Monday.

Govt Resolution endorsing tribal status for left-out communities passed

'INCLUSION IN ST LIST WILL ENSURE EQUALITY AMONGST THE PEOPLE OF SIKKIM'

SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

Political Secretary to the Chief Minister and Sikkim Krantikari Morcha spokesperson, Jacob Khaling today highlighted that the SKM government has shown its commitment to the inclusion of left-out communities in the Scheduled Tribes list with the adoption of a resolution in the State Legislative Assembly earlier in the day.

In a Facebook post on the passing of the Resolution, Chief Minister PS Tamang, writes: "It is the start of a journey towards fulfilling the age-old aspirations of our people and collectively, we will work towards achieving it. Likewise, we will also be pursuing other matters in days to come."

The one-day session of Sikkim Legislative Assembly on Monday adopted a resolution tabled by the treasury bench seeking inclusion of remaining left out communities of Sikkim as Scheduled Tribes.

The resolution argues that tribal status should be granted to all ethnic communities of Sikkim for their "social, economic and educational upliftment and equality amongst the people of Sikkim."

It argues that all the communities of Sikkim were con-



sidered Himalayan tribes living in similar social and economic conditions and enduring similar hardship and challenges and that even British India had recognised all these communities as tribes of the Himalayas.

The Sikkim Durbar also "recognised all democratic rights to all sections of the society" and the system of reservation reinforcing this was implemented in the State Council in 1958 and adopted in 1975 as well when reservation was extended to all sections of society.

Article 371F protects the old laws and Sikkim Subject Regulation of 1961, which is an old law, extends equal opportunities to all ethnic communities, hence the demand of the 12 left-out communities to be extended the status of scheduled

tribes in the State of Sikkim is genuine, the resolution states.

Addressing a press conference this evening, Mr Khaling informed that the Chief Minister will now lead a high-level delegation including SKM and BJP MLAs as well as representatives of all communities to Delhi to place this issue before the Centre.

The government will also try to take former CM and the lone SDF MLA, Pawan Chamling with the delegation, if he agrees, he added.

He mentioned that at the Assembly session today, the Minister for Social Justice & Welfare Department, Dr MK Sharma, proposed this resolution on behalf of the State Government and that it was seconded by Rumtek-Martam

MLA, Sonam T. Venchunga.

Media-persons, save those of the state-run and state-affiliated departments, are currently not allowed to attend the Assembly sessions owing to the Covid pandemic.

Mr Khaling informed that during the discussion on the resolution, Upper Burtuk MLA, DR Thapa, Barfung MLA, TT Bhutia and Soreng-Chakung MLA, Aditya Golay thanked the State government and the CM for allowing them to be part of this historic government resolution.

The SKM spokesperson also expressed his gratitude towards Chief Minister PS Tamang for bringing and adopting "this historic and important resolution" in the State assembly.

He also thanked Members of the State Legislative Assembly of SKM and BJP parties for unanimously supporting and passing this resolution.

Mr Khaling added that the CM, as the Leader of the House, placed historical documents and arguments in support of the resolution during the discussion.

He stated that the CM explained that this issue will be placed before the Centre on the basis of Article 371F and related historical documents.

turn to pg02

Only one new nCov infection in Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

Sikkim recorded one new case of novel coronavirus in the 24 hours ending 8 AM Monday.

This one case, a resident of Rabongla in South Sikkim, was detected in Rapid Antigen Testing of 16 samples on Sunday, officials inform. Since the VRD Lab at STNM Hospital is closed on Sundays, no RT-PCR tests were carried out yesterday while all the 13 samples screened through TrueNat returned negative.

Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported so far has now reached 5,989 and of these, 5,443 have already been discharged from home and facility isolation. 30 more patients were discharged on Sunday and the State now has 322 active cases and has lost 129 lives to the virus thus far.

Only 34 Covid-positive people are currently admitted at the Covid-dedicated STNM Hospital, one of whom is in the ICU.

Sikkim opens Syed Mushtaq Trophy with a win



SUMMIT REPORT

CHENNAI, 11 JAN:

Sikkim beat Mizoram in its first match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2020-21 at Sri Ramachandra Medical College, Chennai, today, a press release informs.

Due to ground condition, the match was reduced from twenty overs to five overs per team. Sikkim won the toss and chose to field first.

In the first innings, Mizoram scored 47 runs with the loss of 3 wickets, where team captain KB Pawan scored 27 runs off 13 balls, Pratik Desai scored 10 runs off 5 balls, Taruwar Kholi scored 6 runs off 7 balls.

Varun Sood and Anureet Singh took 1 wicket each for Sikkim and a run-out was completed by Mandup Bhutia.

In the second innings, Sikkim made 50 runs in 3.4 overs without any loss of wicket and sealed the match. Anureet Singh scored 28 runs off 12 balls and Varun Sood 21 runs off 10 balls.

SICA executives were there to witness this victory and have wished the team luck for the upcoming matches.

Sikkim will be playing a total of 5 matches in the tournament and their next encounter will be with Bihar on 13 January.

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DC South donates books for Child Care Institutes

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

About 500 books of different genres and for different age groups were donated by the DC South to the District Child Protection Officer (South) to help the Child Care Institutes (CCI) of South district establish libraries in their respective homes.

A press release informs that the books were donated through a library project called



Paper Bridge which is an initiative of a Delhi-based youth driven NGO, Sarvahitey. The books have been donated to the CCIs of the district to cultivate and promote reading culture amongst the children.

Under the initiative, the DC will also be donating books for setting up libraries in the various Child friendly GPUs of South district.

Designer candle making training begins



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

Micro enterprise development training on designer candle making at Rakdong Tintek

block was inaugurated today. The training is being organized by Lupin Human Welfare and Research Foundation, 4th Mile Bhasmey in

coordination with NABARD Regional office, Samdong Kambal GPU and SRLM, a press release informs.

The training will

be attended by 30 participants and the Lupin Foundation will also support participants in forward and backward market linkages.

IHRC to felicitate 3 Sikkimese

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

International Human Rights Council national headquarters has announced that three Sikkimese will be awarded the Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Bravery Award 2021, a press release informs.

In-charge Sikkim IHRC, Chotelal Prasad, president IHRC Sikkim, Ganesh Sharma and IHRC South District president, Srijana Sub-



ba will receive the award in the award ceremony to be held in Science City Kolkata on 17 Jan, 2021.

More than 250 delegates from different parts of the country are expected to attend the

award function, the release mentions. The awardees will be leaving for Kolkata on 16 Jan, 2021.

Don't jump vaccination queue, PM to politicians via CMs in meeting: Sources

NEW DELHI, 11 JAN

[NDTV]: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at a meeting with state Chief Ministers today ahead of the Coronavirus vaccine rollout, underscored that politicians should not jump queue to take the vaccine but wait for their turn, sources told NDTV.

The government has prepared a priority list of for the first phase of vaccination, which is headed by one crore health workers and two crore frontline workers like the police, civil defence personnel and sanitation workers, for whom the vaccines will be free.

The other high risk groups -- people above the age of 50 years and those below it who have co-morbidities like diabetes and hypertension -- will also be vaccinated

in this phase, starting January 16. Overall, 30 crore people will receive the vaccine in this phase.

The Prime Minister's warning came after the Haryana government's request to include public representatives like MPs and MLAs to be included in the list for vaccination in the first phase.

On November 24, at the last meeting between the Prime Minister and the Chief Ministers, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar had made the request. The Prime Minister had not responded at the time. Later, state health minister Anil Vij had written to the Union health ministry, but received no response.

At Thursday's meeting with Union health

minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, health ministers of Bihar and Odisha had demanded that public representatives from panchayats to Parliament should be considered frontline workers and be vaccinated.

Dr Harsh Vardhan had made it clear last week that everyone in the country cannot be inoculated at this point. "Based on the quantity of doses, it is not possible to vaccinate all the people simultaneously. Hence, priority groups were decided," he had said.

Given the limitations, the government is trying to vaccinate a critical mass of people that would help create herd immunity and keep the virus at bay.

Sources in Pune-based Serum Institute,

whose Covishield has received the drug regulator's approval for emergency use along with Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, said the government may place a purchase order for the vaccine today, at price of ₹ 200 a vial for the first 100 million doses.

Serum chief executive Adar Poonawalla had told NDTV that the vaccine would be priced at about ₹ 1,000 rupees per dose at the private market in India once the government gives clearance.

The Prime Minister's warning came days after reports of illegal sale of Covid vaccine in the US. In New York, the police are investigating a case where the vaccine was fraudulently obtained and distributed.

Global coronavirus cases surpass 90 million

NEW DELHI, 11 JAN (REUTERS):

Worldwide coronavirus cases surpassed 90 million on Monday, according to Reuters tally, as nations around the globe scramble to procure vaccines and continue to extend or reinstate lockdowns to fight new coronavirus variants.

The new COVID-19 variants discovered initially in the United Kingdom and South Africa are rapidly spreading globally.

The novel coronavirus has picked up pace in the past few months with about one-third of total cases registered in the last 48 days, according to a Reuters tally. (Graphic: tmsnrt.rs/34pvUyi)

Europe, which became the first region to

report 25 million cases last week, remains the worst-affected area in the world, followed by North and Latin Americas with 22.4 million and 16.3 million cases respectively.

Europe has reported around 31% of about 1.93 million coronavirus-related deaths globally.

The United Kingdom, the worst-affected European country, crossed 3 million cases last Friday.

The nation is on course to have immunized its most vulnerable people against COVID-19 by mid-February and plans to offer a shot to every adult by autumn.

To control the spread

of new coronavirus variant, countries across the globe have started to extend movement and business restrictions.

In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel and state premiers last week agreed to restrict non-essential travel for residents of hard-hit areas all over Germany for the first time, after a lockdown decreed in December failed to significantly reduce infection numbers.

French authorities imposed a stricter evening curfew in Marseille after authorities said the new variant of the COVID-19 virus initially found in the UK had been discovered in the Mediterranean city.

The United States,

world's worst affected country, reported its highest death toll on Wednesday, with over 4,000 fatalities in a single day.

The nation has recorded more than 22 million cases since the pandemic started, reporting on average 245,000 new infections a day over the last seven days, according to a Reuters analysis.

In Asia, India crossed 150,000 deaths last Tuesday, becoming the third nation to reach the grim milestone.

The south Asian nation has approved two COVID-19 vaccines and will start its vaccination drive from Jan. 16 with priority given to about 30 million healthcare and frontline workers.

Covishield will be supplied every week. 11 million doses may be supplied in the initial lot," they added.

The process of administering the vaccine will start on on January 16, the government said on the weekend.

The SII vaccine developed by Oxford-AstraZeneca was cleared for

PGA strips major golf championship from Donald Trump's Bedminster course

TOM LUTZ

NEW YORK, 11 JAN

[THEGUARDIAN]:

The PGA of America has announced that it has moved the 2022 PGA Championship from Donald Trump's Bedminster course in the wake of the invasion of the US Capitol.

"The PGA of America Board of Directors voted tonight to exercise the right to terminate the agreement to play the 2022 PGA Championship at Trump Bedminster," said Jim Richerson, president of the PGA of America.

Bedminster, located in New Jersey, had been awarded the tournament in 2012, before Trump's run for the presidency. It was the first time one of his courses had been chosen to host a men's

major although Bedminster hosted the women's PGA in 2017.

The tournament is due to be played in May 2022, and alternative venues include Bethpage Black, Southern Hills and Valhalla.

"We find ourselves in a political situation not of our making," said Seth Waugh, the CEO of the PGA of America, in an interview with the Associated Press. "We're fiduciaries for our members, for the game, for our mission and for our brand. And how do we best protect that? Our feeling was given the tragic events of Wednesday that we could no longer hold it at Bedminster. The damage could have been irreparable. The only real course of action was to leave."

Govt Resolution endorsing..

He said that the State government has studied all legal aspects following which it was vetted by the Law Department and then approved in the Cabinet before the resolution was placed in the Assembly.

"The SKM party has always been sincere on this issue. Even when we were in the opposition we took the matter to the Centre. SKM is still sincere and committed to this issue," he said.

Mr Khaling accused the previous SDF government of not pursuing the matter seriously.

"The absence of Pawan Chamling, who was CM for 25 years and MLA for 35 years, in the Assembly session today, which was a historic and important session, was very sad and irresponsible on his part. Instead of sharing his knowledge and experience in support of the resolution, his absence in the assembly without any information was very irresponsible," he said.

DOCUMENT LOST

It is notified for the information that my Original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Main Secondary and Senior Secondary Examination of Year 2016, 2018 and Roll No. 3158850, 3647513 respectively, issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the candidate: Anish Kanuja. Address: Kewzing road Ravangla South Sikkim. Phone No. 8167577300

Gangtok youth launches construction company



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

Tateng Construction, a company owned by Sikkimese youth, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, was launched today in a function attended by Forest Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia as chief guest along with MLA, Aditya Golay and other dignitaries.

The company has its head office in Tateng

Building on Sonam Tshering Marg [Kazi Road] and will be involved in planning and execution of building structures and other services.

In his address, the Minister expressed his happiness on the initiative taken by Jigme Singye Wangchuk to become self-employed and to provide opportunities to local experts and man-

power of the State. He also assured to provide all possible support from the government.

Such initiatives will help the mission and work of the State government to make its youth self-reliant and self-employed, he said.

Earlier, in his welcome address, former Secretary to the Government of Sikkim, Pema Wangyal Rinzing con-

gratulated Jigme Singye Wangchuk for exploring opportunities in the corporate sector rather than going for a government job. He stated that the company will bring qualified technical hands from different areas under one roof to provide the best service to the people.

Speaking to media persons, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, who is also

president of a senior division football club, Sikkim Aakraman Football Club, stated that it is imperative for local youth to come into the private sector.

He hopes to involve local architects, engineers and experts in Sikkim in order to uplift the local workforce and promote them outside the state as well. He urged people to give an opportunity to local youth to show their skills and ability to provide reliable service.

Mr Wangchuk informed that the company will offer services like planning and execution of building structures such as private houses, hotels, tourism projects, industrial projects and infrastructure. Other services like architectural, legal and financial consultation, project planning, administrative work and banking services will also be offered by the company.

International Inner Wheel Day celebrated



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

Inner Wheel Club of Gangtok celebrated In-

ternational Inner Wheel Day on 10 Jan by distributing windcheaters, umbrellas, warm wool-

en clothes and dustbins to the hawkers at Tashi View Point, Ganesh Tok and Oasis Cafe today.

Sikkimese doc clears NEET Super Speciality in 7th rank

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

Sikkim's Dr Sunita Dhakal has cleared the prestigious NEET Super Speciality [M. Ch/DM] 2020 with All India Rank of 7 in her very first attempt.

She is the daughter of Shyam Kumar Dhakal and Jamuna Dhakal of Noap Gaon, Pakyong in East Sikkim. She is an alumni of St. Xavier's School, Pakyong and completed MBBS from Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi and Masters in Surgery [M.S



ENT] from Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi. She has recently joined as Master of Chirurgiae [M. Ch] in the Department of Head & Neck Surgical Oncology in Kidwai Memorial In-

stitute of Oncology, Bangalore.

The family has expressed hope that Dr Sunita will encourage other young women of Sikkim to pursue a career in medicine.

BJP's vote share down by 25 pc in DCC polls: Patil

JAMMU, JAN 11 (PTI)

The Congress on Monday claimed that the BJP's vote share in the District Development Council (DDC) polls declined by around 25 per cent in Jammu region as compared to the last Lok Sabha elections.

Jammu and Kashmir Congress in-charge Rajni Patil alleged that the BJP made every attempt to polarise the election atmosphere for vested political interests but the Congress is a unifying force and would not compromise on its inclusive policies for the sake of political interests.

"The decline of around 25 per cent vote share of the BJP in Jammu region in just over one year of the last Lok Sabha polls should worry the ruling party more than claiming victory in just five districts out of 20 districts in the hurriedly-announced DDC elections," she told reporters here.

Flanked by Jammu and Kashmir Congress chief G A Mir, Patil ques-

tioned the government for "deliberately not keeping the provisions of the anti-defection law and not declaring the roster of reservation of DDC chairpersons, as per the existing law, before holding of the DDC polls, thus keeping the doors of horse-trading open".

She said "all over the country where elections are held on party basis for panchayat bodies, the anti-defection law is applied but here the government has not inserted such provision while holding election to the DDCs".

The roster of reservation for DDC chairpersons is announced prior to holding elections but that too has not been done to deliberately keep suspense and for politics of horse-trading open, which is unfortunate and illegal, Patil alleged.

She said the legislation for Finance Commission, Election Commission and ombudsman for panchayats was already made by the

Congress coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir but the BJP "delayed the implementation of these provisions".

Referring to the results of the DDC polls, she claimed that the BJP lost 25 per cent vote share in just one year from the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, which reflects the disenchantment of people with the BJP, which is wrongly claiming victory.

"Out of 20 districts, the BJP got majority in five districts only, which shows that its policies are not acceptable to the majority of the people in Jammu and Kashmir and it can't come to power again in the future", Patil added.

The eight-phased DDC elections were held in November-December last year. The polls were swept by the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) which won 110 seats, while the BJP emerged as the single largest party by getting 75 seats. The Congress won 26 of the total 280 seats.

SC pulls up Centre, says extremely disappointed with negotiation process between govt & farmers

NEW DELHI, JAN 11

(PTI): The Supreme Court Monday pulled up the Centre for its handling of the farmers protest against the new farm laws saying it is "extremely disappointed" with the way negotiations between them were going and it will constitute a committee headed by a former Chief Justice of India to resolve the impasse

Indicating amply that it may go to the extent of staying the implementation of the contentious farm laws, the apex court refused to grant extra time to the Centre to explore the possibility of amicable solution saying it has already granted the government a "long rope"

"We have given you long rope, Mr Attorney General, please don't lecture us on patience," a bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde said

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, that the top court has made "harsh observations" regarding handling of the situation by the government.

"That was the most innocuous factual thing for us to say," the bench said

The apex court, which said it will pass orders on the issue concerning

farm laws and farmers' protest in part in the matter, asked the parties to suggest two-three names of former CJIs including former CJI R M Lodha who can head the apex court-appointed panel

At the outset, the bench said, "What is going on" States are rebelling against your laws"

"We are extremely disappointed with the negotiation process," it said, adding, "We don't want to make any stray observations on your negotiations but we are extremely disappointed with the process."

The apex court, which was hearing a clutch of pleas challenging the new farm laws as well as the ones raising issues related to the ongoing agitation at Delhi borders, said it is not talking about the repeal of these farm laws at the moment

"This is a very delicate situation," the bench said, adding, "There is not a single petition before us which says that these farm laws are beneficial."

"We are not experts on economy; you tell us whether government is going to put on hold farm laws or we will do this," the bench said. "We are sorry to say that Centre has not been able to solve the problem and the farmers agitation."

Attorney General KK

Venugopal argued that a law cannot be stayed unless the court finds it violates fundamental rights or constitutional schemes

"Our intention is to see whether we can find an amicable solution to all this. That is why we had asked you (Centre) whether you are willing to keep these laws on hold for sometime. But you wanted to buy time," the bench observed, adding, "We don't know whether you are part of the solution or part of the problem".

The apex court, which said the matter is getting worse and people are committing suicides, reiterated the need for having a committee comprising representatives from the government and farmer organisations from over the country and said it will stop the implementation of these laws if the panel advises to do so.

It said farmers are protesting against these laws and they can tell their objections to the committee

The bench warned that it may stay the law if the government does not do it on its own.

"Whether you have faith or not, we are the Supreme Court of India, we will do our job," the bench told the farmer unions which

are protesting against these farm laws

The bench said it did not know whether the protesting farmers were observing social distancing amid the COVID-19 pandemic but was concerned about them getting food and water

The bench also expressed apprehension that there might be some incident which may breach the peace.

It said after the implementation of these laws are stayed, the protestors can carry on with the agitation as the court doesn't want "anyone to say that we stifled the protest"

The top court observed that talks are breaking down because the Centre wants to discuss the new farm laws point by point but the farmers want them repealed.

"We are not going to protect any law breakers. We want to prevent the loss of property and lives," it said

When the issue of law and order was raised before the bench, "These issues will be taken care by police. Right to protest is intact and Gandhiji exercised Satyagraha. That agitation was much bigger"

When the attorney general told the court that next meeting between the government

tractor rally issue during the hearing earlier in the day. Mr Mehta wanted the rally to be stopped and the Chief Justice of India had asked Centre to file an application in the matter.

The Supreme Court, which was hearing a bunch of petitions regarding the farmer rally, had suggested that the contentious farm laws be put on hold at the hearing.

The court has also suggested the formation of a committee to negotiate on the issue. The farmers however, refused to participate in the committee after an internal meeting.

The court had issued a series of hard-hitting statements against the Centre, saying, "Tell us whether you will put the laws on hold or else we will do it. What's the prestige issue here?"

An order in the matter will be passed on Tuesday.

Centre asks Supreme Court to stop farmers' Republic Day tractor rally

New Delhi, 11 Jan [NDTV]: The Centre has appealed to the Supreme Court to stop a tractor rally of protesting farmers scheduled for January 26, the Republic Day. The farmers have planned to hold a huge rally in Delhi on January 26, if their demands to scrap the contentious farm laws are not accepted. Haryana farmers plan to hold a rally too, with one tractor from each village joining in. The farmers had said they were expecting at least 20,000 tractors.

In an affidavit filed in court, the Centre cited the constitutional and historic significance of the Republic Day, around which a cluster of events take place.

Citing the grand rehearsal on January 23, the National Cadet Corps rally of January 28, "Beating the Retreat" on January



29 and "Martyrs Day" on January 30, the Centre said: "Any disruption or obstruction in the said functions would not only be against the law and order, public order, public interest but would also be a huge embarrassment for the nation".

The farm laws, the Centre told the court, were not hurriedly made but were the "result of two decades of deliberations". The farmers of the nation "are happy as they have been given

an additional option over and above existing... no vested right is taken away".

The government said it has done its best to engage with farmers to remove any misapprehensions and misgivings in the minds of farmers.

"No efforts from the Centre were found lacking," the affidavit said.

The Centre was asked to file the affidavit after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta raised the

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Committees Require Commitment

Their failure in basic tasks snowballs into across the board deficiencies

One understands that agencies and committees instituted by the government have only so much motivation, leeway or even interest in going after other agencies of the same establishment when it comes to fixing accountability. But something needs to be done if such committees are not delivering even on the basic task of keeping track or maintaining at least a semblance of an over-watch. The Annual Technical Report on Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies for the year ended 31 March 2016 by the Office of the Accountant General (Audit), Sikkim, had painted a rather dismal picture of the functioning of various committees constituted for the smooth functioning of PRIs. And this is not the first time that such shortcomings had been flagged. In fact, the lethargy enumerated in this report which is already five years in the past has appeared in past reviews as well, but either no one is reading, or more worryingly, no one cares.

So, the governments continue to constitute committees and appoint/ nominate people into them as well, but there is a big slip between the tasked assignments and performance on ground. For instance, anyone who lives in rural Sikkim would be aware of Social Audit-cum-Vigilance Committees which, on paper, are required to keep a vigil on works being executed at the Panchayat level. They are also expected to monitor the quality of works and are to be comprised of a “wide spectrum” of stakeholders, users and marginalized and vulnerable sections of society including women and senior citizens of the respective Gram Panchayats. The Audit Comment accompanying the report of 2016 on “position of functioning” of this committee informs that it “simply certified” works executed by the GPs “without exercising any checks”. Adequate monitoring was not undertaken, hence quality of work “as envisaged in the estimate” was not ensured. As a result, the “certificate” issued by these committees were a “mere formality” so that payments could be released to the contractors. The rubber stamp culture perpetuated with these committees.

Then there are the important, but similarly inept Disaster Management Committees which have been found to be “largely ineffective” due to lack of training or involvement as a result of which “victims could not be given immediate relief at the time of need”. And really, when has anyone heard of the involvement of DMCs in the wake of any disaster in Sikkim. Sure, the district administration responds and delivers relief, but the disaster management committees surface only occasionally in press releases informing about meetings of mock drills.

There is also the Block Development Committee which might have a wider jurisdiction territorially than the Social Audit committees but that does not make them any more earnest or effective. The Audit Comment for them refers to them as “largely non-functional”; this, due to absence of proper coordination among line departments, DPC and Block Office. And this comes at a cost because in its non-functionality, “identification, scrutiny, implementation of schemes and proper monitoring of schemes for overall development of the GP and Block could not be done”.

One would have thought that the erstwhile State Government’s flagship CATCH programme and the State’s Total Sanitation status would have provided the required impetus to the Village Health Sanitation Committees towards better performance. But even that has not happened for these VHSCs which the Audit has found “not adequately functional”. Since these committees did not bother to carry out household surveys or analyse health issues and health conditions of the villages, sanitation facilities were not created adequately and community toilets were not maintained in hygienic condition. Everyone is aware of the result, now we also know why.

There are, apparently, also District Technical Support Committees in Sikkim which are required to support the preparation of District Perspective Plans for each sector by coordinating with the PRIs and technical experts. What the Audit discovered was that estimates prepared by the GPs were not technically vetted by the DTSCs and this resulted in “deficiency in preparation of estimate and also execution of a number of works without preparation of estimates”. The litter abandoned and/ or over-budget projects across the state stand testimony to this.

A frequent complaint received from the villages is of the lack of proper drinking water supply. Water Supply & Sanitation Committees exist for preparation of Village Action Plans deliver “source to mouth” water supply proposals. These committees have remained “largely ineffective” the Audit Comment puts on record but that is being polite since records show that preparation of proposal for submission to district authorities has not even been initiated.

In its recommendations to the State Government, the auditors have suggested that utilisation certificates be submitted in time to avoid delayed or short release of funds; financial management be strengthened to avoid diversion of funds and/ or extra and avoidable expenses; programme execution be strengthened and dedicated and effective monitoring systems be established. All of these can be achieved if only the already existing bouquet of committees were somehow convinced to their basic tasks effectively enough. What is also disconcerting is that these committees are intentionally kept ineffectual by babus who see them as a threat to their powers and status. And to think that it this very Sarkari Raj culture that these committees had been envisioned to demolish.

Was it a coup? No, but siege on US Capitol was the election violence of a fragile democracy

CLAYTON BESAW & MATTHEW FRANK
THECONVERSATION.COM

Did the United States just have a coup attempt?

Supporters of President Donald Trump, following his encouragement, stormed the U.S. Capitol building on Jan. 6, disrupting the certification of Joe Biden’s election victory. Waving Trump banners, hundreds of people broke through barricades and smashed windows to enter the building where Congress convenes. One rioter and one police officer died in the clash and several other police officers were hospitalized. Congress went on lockdown.

While violent and shocking, what happened on Jan. 6 wasn’t a coup.

This Trumpist insurrection was election violence, much like the election violence that plagues many fragile democracies.

WHAT IS A COUP?

While coups do not have a single definition, researchers who study them – like ourselves – agree on the key attributes of what academics call a “coup event.”

Coup experts Jonathan Powell and Clayton Thyne define a coup d’etat as “an overt attempt by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting head of state using unconstitutional means.”

Essentially, three parameters are used to judge whether an insurrection is a coup event:

1) Are the perpetrators agents of the state, such as military officials or rogue governmental officials?

2) Is the target of the insurrection the chief executive of the government?

3) Do the plotters use illegal and unconstitutional methods to seize executive power?

COUPS AND COUP ATTEMPTS

A successful coup occurred in Egypt on July 3, 2013, when army chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi forcefully removed the country’s unpopular president, Mohamed Morsi. Morsi, Egypt’s first democratically elected leader, had recently overseen the writing of a new constitution. Al-Sisi suspended that, too. This qualifies as a coup because al-Sisi seized power illegally and introduced his own rule of law in the ashes of the elected government.

Coups don’t always succeed in overthrowing the government.

In 2016, members of the Turkish military attempted to remove Turkey’s strongman president, Recep Erdogan, from power. Soldiers seized key areas in Ankara, the capital, and Istanbul, including the Bosphorus Bridge and two airports. But the coup lacked coordination and widespread support, and it failed quickly after President Erdogan called on his supporters to confront the plotters. Erdogan remains in power today.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE US CAPITOL?

The uprising at the Capitol building does not meet all three criteria of a coup.

Trump’s rioting supporters targeted a branch of executive authority

– Congress – and they did so illegally, through trespassing and property destruction. Categories #2 and #3, check.

As for category #1, the rioters appeared to be civilians operating of their own volition, not state actors. President Trump did incite his followers to march on the Capitol building less than an hour before the crowd invaded the grounds, insisting the election had been stolen and saying “We will not take it anymore.” This comes after months of spreading unfounded electoral lies and conspiracies that created a perception of government malfeasance in the mind of many Trump supporters.

Whether the president’s motivation in inflaming the anger of his supporters was to assault Congress is not clear, and he tepidly told them to go home as the violence escalated. For now it seems the riot in Washington, D.C., was enacted without the approval, aid or active leadership of government actors like the military, police or sympathetic GOP officials.

American political elites are hardly blameless, though.

By spreading conspiracy theories about election fraud, numerous Republican senators, including Josh Hawley and Ted Cruz, created the conditions for political violence in the United States, and specifically electoral-related violence.

Academics have documented that contentious political rhetoric fuels the risk of election-related violence. Elections are high-stakes; they represent a transfer of political power.

When government officials demean and discredit democratic institutions as a simmering political conflict is underway, contested elections can trigger political violence and mob rule.

SO WHAT DID HAPPEN?

The shocking events of Jan. 6 were political violence of the sort that too often mars elections in young or unstable democracies.

Bangladeshi elections suffer from perennial mob violence and political insurrections due to years of government violence and opposition anger. Its 2015 and 2018 elections looked more like war zones than democratic transitions.

In Cameroon, armed dissidents perpetrated violence in the 2020 election, targeting government buildings, opposition figures and innocent bystanders alike. Their aim was to delegitimize the vote in response to sectarian violence and government overreach.

The United States’ electoral violence differs in cause and context from that seen in Bangladesh and Cameroon, but the action was similar. The U.S. didn’t have a coup, but this Trump-encouraged insurrection is likely to send the country down a politically and socially turbulent road.

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Finds in Tanzania’s Olduvai Gorge Reveal How Ancient Humans Adapted to Change

JULIO MERCADER FLORIN
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The ability to adapt to changing environments has deep roots. In a technology-driven world, people tend to conflate adaptability with technological change, especially when it comes to navigating adverse climates and places. But not every technological revolution is a result of environmental change.

Sometimes existing tool kits – containing, for instance, simple cutting and scraping flakes – allowed early humans to exploit new resources and thrive under changing conditions. As a species, humans are also characterised by the ability to swiftly use disrupted environments. And, as new research conducted at Tanzania’s Olduvai Gorge reveals, this adaptability was already apparent millions of years ago.

Our new study, published in Nature Communications, is the result of a true team and multidisciplinary effort. Principal investigators from Canada and Tanzania worked with partners in Africa, North America and Europe to describe a large assemblage of stone tools, fossil bones and chemical proxies from dental and plant materials. We also examined the microscopic bits of silica left behind by plants, ancient pollen, and airborne charcoal from natural fires retrieved from ancient riverbed and lake outcrops in the Serengeti plains.

Taken together, the data we gathered presents the earliest evidence for human activity in the Olduvai Gorge: about 2 million years ago. It also shows that early humans used a great diversity of habitats as they adjusted to constant change.

East Africa is among the world’s prime regions for human origins research. It boasts extraordinary records of extinct species spanning several million years. Over more than a century, palaeoanthropologists have explored the sedimentary outcrops and unearthed hominin fossils in surveys and digs. But the link between these fossils and their environmental context remains elusive. That’s because there aren’t many palaeoecological datasets directly linked to the cultural remains left by extinct early humans. Our study is an important step in filling that gap.

VARIED ARTEFACTS AND DATA

The dataset was obtained during a recent survey of the unexplored western portion of the ancient basin. The locality is called Ewass Oldupa; in the Maa language spoken by local residents, this means “the way to the Gorge”. It’s an appropriate name: the site straddles the path that links the canyon’s rim with its bottom.



Here, the exposed canyon wall reveals two million years of history.

The team worked closely with Maasai scholars and communities when excavating the site. The research group employed a large group of participants, male and female, selected by the local community. And in addition to community outreach in the national language, Swahili, we are delivering college education opportunities for two Maasai scholars interested in archaeology and heritage, along with several other Tanzanians.

The stone tools uncovered belong to the “culture” archaeologists identify as the Oldowan. This is a landmark representing early humans that interacted with their environment in novel ways, for example, by dietary innovations combining meat and plants. In East Africa, the Oldowan started about 2.6 million years ago.

The concentration of stone tools and animal fossils is evidence that both humans and fauna gathered around water sources. We also learned that Oldowan hominins cast their net wide for resources. Our data reveals that early humans carried with them rocks for tools that they obtained from distant sources across the basin, 12km east. They also developed the flexibility to use various changing environments.

Our research reveals that the geological, sedimentary and plant landscapes around Ewass Oldupa changed a lot, and quickly. Yet humans kept coming back here to use local resources for over 200,000 years. They used a great diversity of habitats: fern meadows, woodland mosaics, naturally burned landscapes, lakeside palm groves, steppes. These habitats were regularly blanketed

by ash or reworked by mass flows associated with volcanic eruptions.

Thanks to past and ongoing radiometric work – using the Argon method, which dates the deposition of volcanic materials that sandwich the archaeological finds – we were able to date these artefacts to a period known as the Early Pleistocene, 2 million years ago.

What’s not clear is which hominin species made the tools. We did not recover hominin fossils, but the remains of Homo habilis have been found in the younger sediments from another site just 350 metres away. It’s likely that either Homo habilis or a member of the genus Paranthropus – remains of which have also been found at Olduvai Gorge previously – was the tool maker. More research will be needed to be sure.

COLLABORATION

One of the reasons this research is so important is that it shows, again, the value of collaboration. Archaeologists, geoscientists, biologists, chemists and material scientists were all involved in the study at Ewass Oldupa.

It’s thanks to the multiple samples and artefacts these experts gathered and analysed that we also now know the adaptation to major geomorphic and ecological transformations did not have an impact on the technology hominins used. They roamed many habitats but used only one tool kit, amid unpredictable environments.

This is a clear sign that 2 million years ago humans were not constrained technologically and already had the capacity to expand geographic range, as they were ready to exploit a multitude of habitats within Africa – and, possibly, beyond.

[the writer is Professor, University of Calgary]

One new COVID-19 case in Andamans, tally rises to 4,960

PORT BLAIR, JAN 11 (PTI): One more person tested positive for COVID-19 in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, pushing the tally in the union territory to 4,960, a health department official said on Monday.

The new case was detected during contact tracing, he said.

The union territory now has 23 active COVID-19 cases and all the patients are in South Andaman district.

Two more persons were cured of the disease, taking the total number of recoveries in the archipelago to 4,875, the official said.

The COVID-19 death toll in the union territory remained at 62 as no fresh death due to the virus was reported in the last 24 hours, he said.

On January 4, 6 and 9 the archipelago had reported zero COVID-19 cases.

The Andaman and Nicobar administration has conducted 1,93,719 sample tests for COVID-19 so far, and the positivity rate stands at 2.56 per cent, he added.

The union territory reported its first COVID-19 case on June 10 last year and the first COVID-19 death on July 27, 2020.

Official sources said passengers arriving by flight or reaching by ship from Kolkata or Chennai are mandatorily required to show a negative coronavirus report before the authorities allow them to enter the islands.

Nepal Govt in talks with three countries to procure COVID-19 vaccine

KATHMANDU, JAN 11 [MYREPUBLICA]: The government is holding talks with Russia, India and the United Arab Emirates to procure COVID-19 vaccines, said Minister for Health and Population, Hridayesh Tripathi.

The government has been holding talks with the ambassadors of these three countries to Nepal to procure COVID-19 vaccine, said Minister Tripathi.

"As COVID-19 vaccines are produced by limited countries, it has become a 'political commodity', but the government is committed to procuring vaccines at the earliest," said Minister Tripathi during a press meet organized at the Ministry of Health and Population, assuring that the government will provide free vaccines to the people.

He also said that 5,000 government employees and 52,000 women volunteers will be mobilized for inoculation.

"The government will start an inoculation drive within seven days after procuring the vaccine," he said.

ED raids dozen Kolkata locations over coal scam case



KOLKATA, 11 JAN [PTI]: The Enforcement Directorate is conducting searches at least a dozen locations in Kolkata and other parts of Bengal in connection with the CBI probe into coal theft and cattle smuggling in the state. The locations being searched include the homes and offices of several businessmen.

The agency is hunting for the main accused in the coal scam case - Anup Majhi. A look-out notice was issued last month. The accused in the cattle smuggling case - Enamul Haque - is in CBI custody.

On December 31 the CBI also searched three premises in Kolkata that belong to Vinay Mishra,

who is General Secretary of the Trinamool Youth Congress. He has yet to respond to a CBI summons.

In November the CBI raided 45 places across four states in connection with the theft of coal from public sector coal firm Eastern Coalfield Limited (ECL), which operates in Bengal and Jharkhand.

The search was based on an FIR that named two general managers, two other officials and the chief security officer of ECL, besides Anup Majhi. Sources said the CBI recovered lakhs of rupees from a property in Bengal's Purlia district that

belonged to Majhi.

Majhi allegedly runs an operation in open cast coal mines along the Bengal-Jharkhand border.

Funds from the coal racket, sources said, may be reaching some political parties in Bengal.

In the cattle smuggling case the alleged kingpin, Enamul Haq has been arrested and is out on interim bail after testing positive for COVID-19. A possible link between the cases is being probed.

With the Assembly election only a few months away, the BJP has pounced on the investigations, accusing the ruling Trinamool of links to both scams and pocket-

ing large sums of money.

The BJP has singled out Trinamool Lok Sabha MP Abhishek Banerjee - who is Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew - and labelled him "to-labaj bhaipo" or "extortionist nephew".

Ex-Trinamool leader and Bengal minister Suwendu Adhikari, whose switch to the BJP last month made news, has led the charge against Mr Banerjee, who also heads the party's Youth Congress.

Mr Banerjee hit back Thursday, inviting the opposition party to "build gallows in public (so I can) embrace death" if they can prove the charges.

Country staring at food crisis because of BJP: Mamata



RANAGHAT (WB), JAN 11 (PTI): The country is staring at a food crisis because of the "adamant" approach of the BJP to the continued agitation by farmers for withdrawal of the three new farm laws, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Monday.

She also called the BJP a "junk" party for inducting "rotten" leaders from other political outfits.

"The country is staring at a food crisis. If the BJP continues to remain adamant on the farm laws, there will be a food shortage in our country. The farmers are assets

of our country and we should not do anything that goes against their interest," she said.

The TMC supremo also demanded immediate repeal of the three farm laws, as being demanded by farmers agitating at Delhi's borders.

She also unleashed a stinging attack on the BJP over the party inducting a raft of leaders from other political parties.

"BJP is the biggest junk party in the country. It's a dustbin party that is filling up its rank and file with corrupt and rotten leaders from other parties.

"You must have seen some (TMC) leaders switch over to the BJP. They have done it to protect the public money they had looted. The BJP runs the party like a washing machine, where corrupt leaders turn into saints the moment they join them," she said, addressing a rally here in Nadia district.

She also drew a parallel between BJP cadres and supporters of US President Donald Trump who stormed the Capitol recently.

"The day the BJP loses elections, its cadre and supporters will behave like that," she claimed.

Prithvi Narayan Shah Study Center inaugurated at Nepal Army HQ



KATHMANDU, JAN 11 [MYREPUBLICA]: Prithvi Narayan Shah Study Center was inaugurated on Monday, coinciding with the 299th birth anniversary of Prithvi Narayan Shah, the father of modern Nepal.

Amid a special function held at the Bhadrakali-based Nepal Army headquarters in Nepal's capital, chief of Nepal Army, Purna Chandra Thapa, unveiled the center.

The army headquarters said that the center

has been established to study the contributions made by late Prithvi Narayan Shah. The center has various sketches and paintings demonstrating contributions made by Shah.

On the occasion, Army Chief Thapa also paid tribute to late Shah. Prithvi Jayanti or the birth anniversary of Shah is observed every year on Poush 27 as per the Nepali calendar in honor of late Shah. He is credited for the country's

unification.

Prithvi Narayan was the King of Gorkha when he began the national unification campaign in September 1745. After conquering Nuwakot, he annexed many other small principalities to his kingdom.

According to the Nepali calendar, Prithvi Narayan Shah was born on 27th Poush, 1779 BS (11 January, 1723 AD) in Gorkha district and was credited for unifying various small principalities to build modern Nepal.

Odisha logs 244 new COVID-19 cases, 1 death

BHUBANESWAR, JAN 11 (PTI): Odisha's COVID-19 caseload on Monday surged to 3,32,106 as 244 more people tested positive for the virus, while one more fatality pushed the coronavirus death toll to 1,892, a health department official said.

The 244 new cases were detected in 24 of the state's 30 districts, with 142 reported from different quarantine centres and 102 are local contact cases.

Sambalpur district recorded the highest of 37 new cases followed by Bargarh (23) and Sundergarh (22).

Meanwhile, the Jharsuguda district administration declared a part of Brundaban Colony in this industrial town as a containment zone after 11 girl students of a training college tested positive for COVID-19.

The students of the GNM Training College had undergone the COVID-19 test on January 8 after the institute reopened.

As many as 11 students tested positive for the infection, an official said.

Earlier on January 9, 26 teachers and two students of a school in

the Gajapati district, had tested positive for COVID-19.

Taking to twitter, the health and family welfare department said: "Regret to inform the demise of 48-year-old male Covid positive patient of Khurda district."

With the fresh fatality, the death toll in the highly infectious disease has mounted to 1,892. This apart, 53 other COVID-19 positive patients have also died in the state due to comorbidities, he said.

Of the total 1,892 fatalities reported so far, Khurda district of which the state capital

Bhubaneswar is a part alone accounted for 329 deaths followed by Ganjam (247), Sundergarh (167), Cuttack (140) and Puri (117).

Currently, Odisha has 2,118 active COVID-19 cases, while as many as 3,28,043 patients have recovered from the infection.

The state has conducted over 72.01 lakh sample tests for COVID-19 so far, including 29,646 on Sunday. Odisha's positivity rate now stands at 4.61, the data released by the Health and Family Welfare department said.

India returns captured PLA soldier to China

NEW DELHI, JAN 11 (PTI): A Chinese soldier, who was apprehended by the Indian Army in eastern Ladakh three days ago, was handed back to China on Monday, official sources said. The soldier of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) was apprehended at the southern bank of Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh on Friday morning after he transgressed across the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The sources said



the soldier was handed back to China at the Chushul-Moldo border point in eastern Ladakh at 10.10 am.

Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a tense border standoff in eastern Ladakh for over eight months. The fa-

ceoff began in May last year, following a clash between the two sides in the Pangong lake area.

"The PLA soldier had transgressed across the LAC and was taken into custody by Indian troops deployed in this area. Troops from either side are deployed along the LAC since friction erupted last year due to unprecedented mobilisation and forward concentration by Chinese troops," the Army said in a statement on Saturday.

Mizoram reports one COVID-19 case

AIZAWL, JAN 11 (PTI): Mizoram on Monday reported a single COVID-19 case, taking the coronavirus caseload in the state to 4,293, an official said.

The patient, a Border Security Force (BSF) jawan had returned from Assam recently and was placed under quarantine since his arrival in the state, the official said, adding that the patient is asymptomatic.

The state now has 92 active COVID-19 cases,



while 4,192 people have recovered from the virus, he said.

The COVID-19 death toll in the state so far is nine.

Mizoram has tested 1,87,079 samples for COVID-19 till date, of which 2.29 per cent were found positive for the virus, the official added.

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Chennaiyin FC signs Spanish midfielder Lanzarote

BAMBOLIM, JAN 11 (PTI): Two-time champion Chennaiyin FC on Monday announced the signing of Spanish midfielder Manuel Lanzarote on a short-term deal till the end of the ongoing Indian Super League (ISL) season.

The 36-year-old former FC Barcelona graduate will arrive in Goa immediately and undergo the mandatory quarantine procedure before joining the squad, a press release said.

Lanzarote's acquisition comes on the back of CFC captain Rafael Crivellaro being ruled out for the rest of the season following an ankle ligament injury he suffered against ATK Mohun Bagan on December 29 last year.

"I am very happy and proud of the opportunity to play for a club that has won the ISL twice," the Spaniard said in the release.

"Although it will be a very short stage, I hope to contribute with my experience and be able

to help my teammates to achieve our goal."

CFC head coach Csaba Laszlo said Lanzarote is a seasoned professional with experience of playing in India and hoped to have him involved at the earliest and remain in the mix to push for the play-offs.

Laszlo has previously spent a season each with FC Goa and ATK in 2017-18 and 2018-19 respectively.

Having come through the youth ranks at FC Barcelona, Lanzarote played for a whole host of clubs in the Spanish lower divisions, before spending two seasons at RCD Espanyol in the top-flight from 2013 to 2015.

Most recently, he featured for CE Sabadell FC and UC Sant Andreu, helping the former win promotion to the Spanish second tier in 2019-20.

Chennaiyin FC are currently at eighth spot in the ISL 2020-21 standings with 11 points from 10 games with two wins, five draws and three losses.

Tencent's Honor of Kings reports 100 million daily users, expands into new genres



PEILI

HONG KONG, 11 JAN (REUTERS): Honor of Kings, Tencent's flagship video game, announced a record 100 million daily active users worldwide and said it was expanding into other genres and forming a tie-up with British luxury group Burberry.

The moves come as the world's most lucrative mobile game celebrates its fifth anniversary and faces a challenge from a mobile version of League of Legends, the world's most popular desktop game.

League of Legends: Wild Rift, made by Tencent's subsidiary, U.S. studio Riot Games, is currently being tested in Asia.

"We are going to expand how players can interact with the Honor of Kings world and create a multi-dimensional brand experience that drives engagement both inside the game and outside it. This could include anime, films, music and even live action series," Li Min, game director and general manager of Tencent's Timi Studios, told Reuters in an interview.

Tencent said it would launch two new untitled derivative games, expanding the Honor of Kings world from multi-player online battle arena into two more unspecified genres.

Honor of Kings, the multi-player role-playing game allows players hack their way through battle arenas. Timi Studios said on Sunday it had also introduced an officially-licensed Bruce Lee look to the game.

Honor of Kings is the most successful game Tencent has ever made. Tencent, China's biggest video games and social media company, also saw the game as a perfect conduit to develop the now highly popular esports in China, as more and more young and affluent Chinese are willing to spend money on video games.

With close to \$240 million in user spending, not including third-party Android stores, Honor of Kings was the top grossing mobile game worldwide for September 2020, according to Sensor Tower. This represented 87 percent growth from September 2019.

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Agnes Keleti: Olympic great who fled Nazis and Soviets smashes 100 barrier

SEAN INGLE

LONDON, 11 JAN

[THEGUARDIAN]: If a Hollywood scriptwriter had come up with the extraordinary story of Agnes Keleti – the world's oldest Olympic champion, who celebrated her 100th birthday on Saturday – as a piece of fiction, they surely would have been told to rein it in. Fleeing the Nazis, surviving the Holocaust with a false ID, and later escaping the Soviet clamp-down on Hungary? Competing in a first Olympic Games aged 31 before going on to win more medals than anyone else in Melbourne four years later? And then, just for good measure, passing her century bursting with a rare energy and unquenchable zest for life? It sounds like magical realism. Yet it was all true.

"These 100 years felt to me like 60," Keleti said, as she celebrated with a cake with fireworks fizzing from it and a smile so wide it could have lit up Budapest. It served as an instant pick-me-up, especially in these grim and monochrome times.

A new book about Keleti hails her as the Queen of Gymnastics – something she modestly describes as "an exaggeration". Hardly. Despite

missing three Olympics in her prime, she won 10 medals, five of them gold, and is still the oldest gymnastics gold medalist ever. As the International Olympic president, Thomas Bach, acknowledged when offering congratulations, her haul could have been far higher.

Having won her first national title at 16, she was expecting to compete at the Tokyo Games scheduled for 1940. Instead she was expelled from her gymnastics club for being Jewish and forced to go into hiding. "I managed to buy the identification papers of a Christian girl, she was around the same age as me," she said in a recent interview. "In Hungary, all the Jews were required to wear a yellow star for identification but I refused. With my false papers I managed to escape to the country. I stayed in a remote village and found work as a maid."

Many of her family were not so lucky. Her father and uncles were among the 550,000 Hungarian Jews killed during the Holocaust, although her mother and sister survived thanks to the help of the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg. Historians have identi-



fied 46 Olympic athletes who died in Nazi concentration camps, including 13 at Auschwitz. How many more potential stars were also murdered?

A ligament injury meant Keleti also missed out on the London Games in 1948. Yet at 31, an age at which most athletes are hanging up their leotards, she won four medals in Helsinki in 1952 – including a gold on the floor. And then, staggeringly, she became the most successful athlete at the Melbourne Games with six medals, four of them gold, at the age of 35.

What made Keleti's achievement even more extraordinary was that

she was facing the Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina, who went on to become the most decorated woman in Olympic history with 18 medals, and competing to a backdrop of the Hungarian uprising being crushed by the Soviet Union.

As David Goldblatt notes in his authoritative book, *The Games*, the Hungarian and Soviet teams had shared a boat from Europe to Melbourne and fighting had begun on board as the course of the uprising became clear. That then spilled into the pool when the countries met in the water polo quarter-finals. Several fights broke out above and below the water and in the

final minute of the game, which Hungary won 4-0, one of their players was hit so hard that he split his brow, which then bled profusely. Understandably Keleti decided not to return to Hungary, finding asylum in Israel, where she coached their Olympic team.

Perhaps surprisingly she is only the 10th oldest Olympian still alive, with the Uruguayan sailor Félix Sienra, who competed at the London 1948 Games, due to turn 105 next week. Remarkably, there are also three athletes who competed at the Berlin Games in 1936 still with us.

The oldest, the American swimmer Iris Cummins, turned 100 last month. Not only was she an incredible athlete but she also flew 18 different types of military aircraft in the second world war.

Yet how many know her story – or those of other women stars from a bygone age?

Most of us have heard of the Magical Magyars, the Hungarian team who famously beat England 6-3 at Wembley in 1953, for instance. But Keleti, who competed when women's sport was often an afterthought, remains comparatively unknown. Incidentally the ex-

cellent Oldest Olympian website tracks those still alive and notes deaths of former stars. There has been a flood of them recently, including the passing of Bill Nankeville, who represented Britain in the 1500m at the 1948 and 1952 Summer Games and was a big rival of Roger Bannister.

"In recent years he has become known to many as 'Bobby Davro's dad,'" Athletics Weekly noted after his death aged 95. "But for those familiar with his middle-distance running exploits he was one of the legendary figures of British athletics and the comedian Davro was simply 'Bill Nankeville's son'."

Thankfully Keleti, who was also an accomplished cellist who played professionally, remains in good health. When a film crew visited her a couple of years ago, she greeted her interviewer with a bone-crunching handshake before demonstrating her gymnastic prowess.

That said, her doctor has recently advised her to avoid performing full leg splits. "I love life," she said, explaining her longevity. "Health is the essence. Without it, there is nothing."

Defiant India draw third Test to set up series decider against Australia

SYDNEY, 11 JAN [AAP]:

India have pulled off the greatest escape at the SCG in more than 50 years, holding on to draw a thrilling third Test against Australia. Hanuma Vihari and Ravichandran Ashwin batted through 256 balls to save the match and allow India to finish 334-5. It left India's score short of the 407 required for victory, but their 131-over effort to survive would have felt like a win to the tourists.

The draw capped one of India's most resilient efforts in memory, keeping the series level at 1-1 with the final Test to begin in Brisbane on Friday.

Vihari endured the final session with a hamstring injury while Ravindra Jadeja, who has a dislocated thumb, was due to be the next man to bat.

Australia also only had themselves to blame,

with Tim Paine grassing three chances including one diving in front of David Warner from Vihari with 8.1 overs to go.

The only other real chance came when on the second ball of the final session when Ashwin was given out caught behind, only for a review to show the ball had hit his arm guard.

Vihari batted through 161 balls for 23, while Ashwin churned through 128 deliveries for his 39.

"I thought we would create enough chances to win the game and I thought we did," Paine said. "It's a tough one to swallow, particularly given my situation ... we just didn't hold our catches, myself in particular."

"You have to cop the blame for that, wear it, and move on to Brisbane."

Not since South Af-



rica batted through 117 eight-ball overs in 1964 to deny Australia has a team faced more balls to survive at the SCG. And perhaps more incredible was the fact that for half of Monday, it looked like India could do the impossible and win the match thanks to some Rishabh Pant heroics.

Nursing an injured elbow, Pant scored a rear-guard 97 from 118 balls

after India lost captain Ajinkya Rahane to Nathan Lyon in the second over of the day.

He was able to ride his luck after Paine dropped him on both three and 56 off the offspinner. The aggressive wicketkeeper-batsman hit three sixes and 12 other boundaries in his knock, regularly taking Lyon on down the ground.

At one stage he hit the

tweaker for a six inside out over cover, before clearing Pat Cummins and the rope at long on the next ball. It came as part of a 148-run stand with Cheteshwar Pujara, who held one end in his typical resolute style as Pant exploded at the other.

And for a moment, Australia must have seen flashes of Ben Stokes at Headingley in 2019. But

in an instant the match turned again.

Eyeing his third Test century, Pant again attempted to take Lyon (2-114) down the ground but this time only succeeded in miscuing to Pat Cummins at gully.

Hazlewood (2-39) landed another blow before before tea, with a ball that seamed away from Pujara and took his off stump on 77. That coincided with Vihari suffering his hamstring injury early as he completed a quick single, forcing India to shut up shop with Australia sensing a real opening.

From there India scored just 62 more from the remaining 42.4 overs but crucially lost no further wickets to save the game.

"It was all about character," Rahane said. "The fight to the end. Really happy with the way we fought in this game."

Esports-Alfa Romeo's Opmeer is a virtual F1 world champion

ALAN BALDWIN

LONDON, 11 JAN (REUTERS):

Former Formula Four racer Jarno Opmeer, who competed against current McLaren F1 driver Lando Norris in junior go-karts, won the Formula One Esports Pro Series championship for Alfa Romeo on Thursday.

The Dutch 20-year-old, who was also once a Renault Academy driver before switching to the world of virtual racing, beat Red Bull's Danish gamer Frede Rasmussen by 22 points to take the title.

Red Bull won the team championship for the second year in a row, however, with Alfa Romeo runners-up and Renault -- Opmeer's team last year -- third.

Ferrari's David Ton-



izza won the individual title last year but had already been ruled out of the running last month.

"Last year I felt like I had some very weak tracks," Opmeer told Reuters after a championship held with drivers racing remotely due to

the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think last year around Brazil I qualified 17th, Baku I qualified 13th, so I really worked on those tracks in the off-season...I think that's why I could win the championship, I was very consistent over all tracks.

"I could win on the tracks I was strong at and finish on the podium on the tracks I was weaker at. I think that was crucial for me this year to turn it around."

The fourth official Formula One Esports Series, using the official

F1 2020 Codemasters video game and shown on F1's social channels and selected broadcasters, had a record prize fund of \$750,000.

For the first part of the year, with the real F1 championship stalled by the pandemic, esports was in the spotlight as Formula One's regular racers took to the virtual world.

Opmeer said he had been a bit more nervous competing in isolation, compared to 2019 when the finalists gathered together in one arena, because he was used to having people around to talk to in real racing.

Opmeer has beaten both Norris and Red Bull's Max Verstappen

online, and competed with AlphaTauri's Pierre Gasly as a team mate, but has no plans to take his virtual success back onto the real racetrack.

He said he intended to speak to Alfa Romeo about some simulator involvement, however.

"This is my full time job, not to mention that for Formula Three or Formula Two you need a one and a half million euro sponsor budget and as I just have normal working parents, it's just simply impossible," he said.

"I don't think there's any plan for me to go back to real racing. Maybe if I get a job in GT racing or something but in the coming years the focus is definitely 100% on esports."

Yemen’s rebels defiant as aid agencies fear US terror label

CAIRO (AP): Yemen’s Iran-backed rebels on Monday dismissed the U.S. move to designate them a terrorist organization in the final days of the Trump administration while a leading aid agency warned such a designation would deal another “devastating blow” to the impoverished and war-torn nation.

The planned designation, announced by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo late Sunday, would take effect a day before President-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated Jan. 20. It was not clear whether Biden would overturn the decision.

Yemen is mired in a disastrous humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in wide swaths of the country on the brink of famine as a result of six years of civil war.

Pompeo said he was proceeding with the designation of the rebels, known as Houthis, along with separate terrorist designations for the three top rebel leaders. At the same time, he pledged the U.S. would help absorb the impact on aid groups and allow humanitarian assistance to continue to flow into Yemen.

Hours later, several senior rebel figures slammed Pompeo’s announcement.

“We are not fearful,” tweeted Mohammed Ali al-Houthi. “America is the source of terrorism. It’s directly involved in killing and starving the Yemeni people.”

Others said the designation was an attempt to deflect attention from the U.S. political crisis in the wake of the deadly Capitol rioting and efforts to impeach President Donald Trump. “We are honored to be terrorists and the world’s gangsters,” tweeted the Houthis media official Abdel-Rahman al-Ahnoumi.

In Iran, the Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh condemned the designation as a “doomed-to-failure” action at the end of Trump’s administration. He said the U.S. would eventually have to enter into negotiations with the legitimate representatives of Yemen — referring to the Houthis — to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Yemen’s internationally recognized government described the Houthis as a “terrorist militia” and in a statement issued by its foreign ministry called for a “continuation of the escalation and intensification of the political and legal pressures on the Houthis to pave the way for a peaceful solution to the conflict.”

Yemen, on the tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is the scene of the world’s worst humanitarian disaster. The war, has killed more than 112,000 people, has left the majority of the country’s nearly 30 million people in need of humanitarian aid. The war

The conflict started in 2014 when the Houthis overran the north and the capital, Sanaa. The following year, the Saudi-led coalition intervened to wage war on the Houthis to try to restore the internationally recognized President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi’s government to power.

In early January, Hadi’s government accused the rebels of firing ballistic missiles that targeted a plane with Cabinet members after landing in the southern port city of Aden, an attack that killed more than 25 people. The Houthis denied they were behind the strike.

Following the attack, Yemeni Prime Minister Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed told The Associated Press the rebels need to “realize that if they continue these criminal and terrorist operations, there will be no path to peace.”

At the time, Abdulmalik said a terrorist designation would be a step “of great importance” and would “help establish peace in Yemen.”

Past rounds of peace talks and cease-fire agreements have faltered and aid agencies, which mostly operate in Houthi-controlled areas, fear any targeting of the rebel group would impact the entire population.

The Norwegian Refugee Council, one of the main humanitarian agencies active in the country, said Monday that Pompeo’s planned sanctions “will hamstring the ability of aid agencies to respond” to the humanitarian needs of millions of Yemenis “Yemen’s faltering economy will be dealt a further devastating blow,” said Mohamed Abdi, the group’s director for Yemen. “Getting food and medicine into Yemen — a country 80% dependent on imports — will become even more difficult.”

Relief organizations have long warned that sanctions could prove catastrophic for efforts to help starving Yemeni civilians caught in the conflict between the Houthis and the Yemeni government, backed by a Saudi-led coalition at war with the rebels.

In his announcement, Pompeo said the U.S. recognizes the designation could impact the humanitarian situation and would take action to counter that.

“We are planning to put in place measures to reduce their impact on certain humanitarian activity and imports into Yemen,” he said. Those measures will include the issuance of special licenses by the U.S. Treasury to allow American aid to continue to flow to Yemen and for humanitarian organizations to continue to work there, he said.

Separately, the U.S. has suspended millions of dollars of its aid donations to Houthi-controlled areas after reports of theft and looting of aid. U.N. agencies have long complained of rebels stealing and rerouting food aid.

80% say Tokyo Olympics should be called off or won’t happen



TOKYO (AP): More than 80% of people in Japan who were surveyed in two polls in the last few days say the Tokyo Olympics should be canceled or postponed, or say they believe the Olympics will not take place.

The polls were conducted by the Japanese news agency Kyodo and TBS — the Tokyo Broadcasting System.

The results are bad news for Tokyo organizers and the International Olympic Committee as they continue to say the postponed Olympics will open on July 23.

Tokyo is battling a surge of COVID-19 cases that prompted the national government last week to call a state of emergency. In declaring the emergency, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said he was confident the Olympics would be held.

Japan has controlled the virus relatively well but the surge has heightened skepticism about the need for the Olympics and the danger of potentially bringing 15,000 Olympic and Paralympic athletes into the country.

The Olympics could also attract tens of thousands of coaches, judges, officials, VIPs, sponsors, media and broadcasters. It is not clear if fans from abroad will be allowed, or if local fans will attend events.

Japan has attributed about 3,800 deaths to COVID-19 in a country of 126 million.

The TBS poll asked if the Olympics can be held. In the telephone survey with 1,261 responding, 81% replied “no” with only 13% answering “yes.” The “no” responses increased 18 percentage points from a similar survey in December.

In Kyodo’s poll, 80.1% of respondents in a telephone survey said the Olympics should be canceled or rescheduled. The same question in December found 63% calling for cancellation or postponement.

Kyodo said the survey covered 715 randomly selected households with eligible voters. Neither poll listed a margin of error.

Japan is officially spending \$15.4 billion to hold the Olympics, although several government audits show the number is about \$25 billion. All but \$6.7 billion is public money.

The Switzerland-based IOC earns 91% of its income from selling broadcast rights and sponsorships.

The American network NBC agreed in 2011 to a \$4.38 billion contract with the IOC to broadcast four Olympics through the Tokyo. In 2014 it agreed to pay an added \$7.75 billion for six more games — Winter and Summer — through 2032.

Indonesia green-lights emergency use of Chinese vaccine

JAKARTA, INDONESIA (AP): Indonesia’s Food and Drug Authority on Monday green-lighted emergency use of the COVID-19 vaccine produced by China-based Sinovac Biotech Ltd., with vaccinations of high-risk groups expected to start later this week.

Conditional vaccination of healthcare workers and other civil servants using the vaccine, called CoronaVac, is expected to begin this week.

“Based on the data and considering the guidance from (the World Health Organization), CoronaVac has met the requirements to get the permit to use the vaccine,” the chief of Indonesia Food and Drug Monitoring Agency, Penny Lukito, said at a news conference.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo said he would be the first person to receive the vaccine.

“Why is the President first? It’s not about putting myself first, but to ensure everyone that this vaccine is safe and halal,” Widodo said on social media.

The vaccine was cleared for emergency use after Indonesian authorities reviewed clinical trial data from Brazil, Turkey and Indonesia, which are all taking part in Phase III clinical trials of the vaccine.

Brazil’s Instituto Butantan said last week that the vaccine was 78% effective in mild cases and 100% effective against severe and moderate infections based



on 220 COVID-19 cases from 13,000 volunteers.

In December, Turkish authorities announced an efficacy rate of 91.25% from interim analysis of 29 cases in a trial with 7,371 volunteers. Some 12,450 volunteers, including 1,500 healthcare workers, are involved in the Phase III clinical trials. Further results have not been made publicly available.

Indonesia conducted its own Phase III clinical trials of the vaccine with 1,620 volunteers. Results announced at Monday’s news conference said the efficacy rate was 65.3%.

Indonesia’s highest Islamic body, the Indonesian Ulema Council, announced last week that the COVID-19 vaccine is halal, or fit for consumption by Muslims, further paving the way for use and distribution in the world’s most populous Muslim country.

But some experts have said they would prefer more data from the clinical trials.

Griffith University epidemiologist Dr. Dicky Budiman said that many people have questioned and expressed doubt about the vaccine, as the data Indonesia used for emergency authorization is only preliminary.

Research into the vaccine is not completed yet and will still take some time, he said.

Sao Paulo’s Butantan Institute, Sinovac Biotech Ltd.’s partner in Brazil, did not disclose data such as results by age and gender or the number of asymptomatic volunteers in the sample, which many epidemiologists require to assess whether the shot complies with safety standards. Officials in Brazil said details would be published after Brazil’s health regulatory agency approves the vaccine.

Authorities in China and Bolivia have both issued emergency authorization for the CoronaVac vaccine. Chinese health officials have said that some 9 million doses have been administered in China, though the number of people being vaccinated with the Sinovac vaccine has not been disclosed. Bolivia has yet to start vaccinations with the CoronaVac vaccine.

Several other countries that were not involved in clinical trials have signed agreements or are in negotiations to secure doses from Sinovac Biotech Ltd., including the Philippines, Singapore, Ukraine, Bolivia and others.

Indonesia has recorded more than 828,000 cases of the virus, including over 24,000 deaths.

Indonesia intensifies search for crashed plane’s black boxes



JAKARTA, INDONESIA (AP): The search for the black boxes of a crashed Sriwijaya Air jet intensified Monday to boost the investigation into what caused the plane carrying 62 people to nosedive at high velocity into the Java Sea.

The Boeing 737-500 jet disappeared minutes after taking off from Jakarta, Indonesia’s capital, during heavy rain on Saturday, and the search so far has yielded plane parts and human remains but no sign of survivors.

Authorities have said signals from the boxes containing the cockpit voice and flight data recorders were detected between Lancang and Laki islands in the Thousand Island chain just north of Jakarta’s coast. Officials said they have marked a location where the sounds were being emitted from the black boxes, which detached from the tail of the aircraft when it plummeted into the sea.

The cockpit voice recorder holds conversations between pilots, and the data recorder tracks electronic information such as airspeed, altitude and vertical acceleration. When found, they will be transported to port and handed to the National Transportation Safety Committee overseeing the crash investigation.

More than a dozen helicopters, 53 navy ships and 20 boats, and 2,600 rescue personnel have been searching since Sunday and have found parts of the plane in the water at a depth of 23 meters (75 feet), leading rescuers to continue searching the area.

Television footages showed landing gear, wheels and a jet engine among the parts found, while other rescuers brought a dozen body bags containing human remains to a police hospital in eastern Jakarta for the identification process.

The National Search and Rescue Agency chief Bagus Puruhito said divers using high-tech “ping locator” equipment were looking for an identified target beneath 20 meters (65 feet) of seabed mud.

The transport committee’s chairman, Soerjanto Tjahjono, said the black boxes could provide valuable information to investigators. Once the device is found and taken to the investigators’ facility, it will take three to five days to dry and clean the device and to download its data, Tjahjono said.

He said it need more time to analyze it, “depending on the complexity of the problem.”

Tjahjono ruled out a possible midair breakup after seeing the condition of the wreckage found by searchers.

He said the jet was intact when it plunged and it broke into pieces upon the impact with the water. The debris was concentrated in one area, while a midair explosion would have caused debris to be spread over a large area, he said.

“It was broke apart naturally upon impact with water... there is no indication of unnatural destruction or explosion so far,” Tjahjono told The Associated Press. “However, this still has to be confirmed by reading the black boxes.”

The committee’s investigator Nurcahyo Utomo, said they have collected recordings and transcripts of the conversation between the pilot and air traffic controllers as part of their investigation into the cause of the crash.

Utomo said his team is still examining radar data on the plane’s movements and interviewed the air traffic officers who were in charge of controlling the crashed flight. More interviews of witnesses, including with the airlines’ technicians, fishermen and experts,

will be done in the near future.

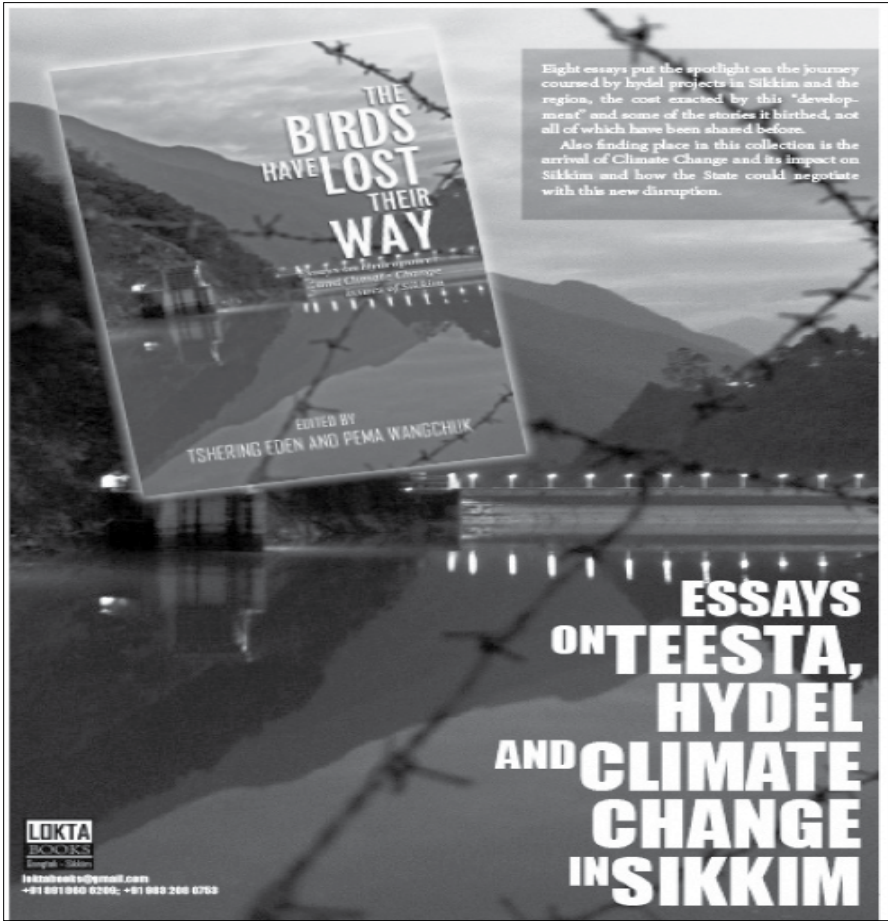
Investigators are investigating all parts of the plane found by searchers from the seafloor such as the Ground Proximity Warning System, a device that could warn the pilot if the plane is too close to the ground, a radio altimeter and several other parts mostly from the lower side of the aircraft’s tail, Utomo said.

He said that Singapore’s Transport Safety Investigation Bureau will help his committee in searching for the black boxes and the United States’ National Transportation Safety Board will join in investigating the crash.

The committee will publish a preliminary investigation report of the crash within a month and a final report a year later. Indonesia, the world’s largest archipelago nation, with more than 260 million people, has been plagued by transportation accidents on land, sea and air because of overcrowding on ferries, aging infrastructure and poorly enforced safety standards.

In October 2018, a Boeing 737 MAX 8 jet operated by Lion Air plunged into the Java Sea just minutes after taking off from Jakarta, killing all 189 people on board. The plane involved in Saturday’s disaster did not have the automated flight-control system that played a role in the Lion Air crash and another crash of a 737 MAX 8 jet in Ethiopia five months later, leading to the grounding of the MAX 8 for 20 months.

The Lion Air crash was Indonesia’s worst airline disaster since 1997, when 234 people were killed on a Garuda airlines flight near Medan on Sumatra island. In December 2014, an AirAsia flight from the Indonesian city of Surabaya to Singapore plunged into the sea, killing 162 people.



Hansal Mehta claims of harassment by unknown caller

MUMBAI, JAN 11 (PTI): Filmmaker Hansal Mehta on Sunday claimed he and his family were being harassed by an unknown caller and asked the Mumbai Police to look into the matter.

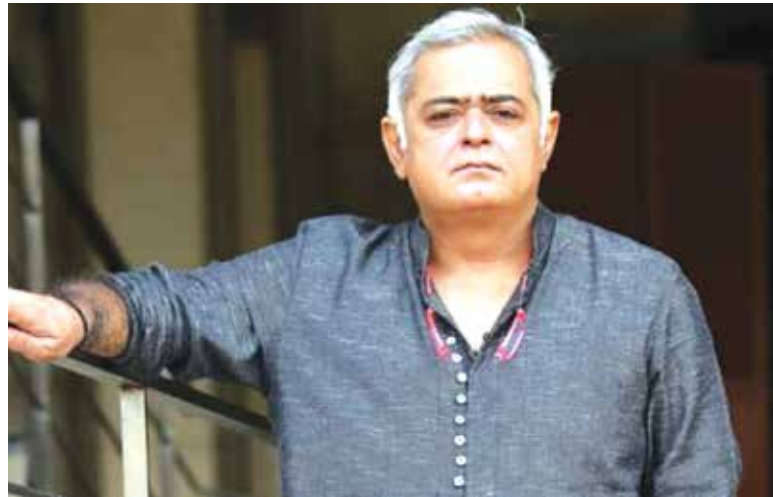
Mehta took to Twitter and shared the number of the caller, tagging police.

"Dear @MumbaiPolice this unknown person showing up as Rohit on truecaller has been harassing us incessantly all of last night.

"Please reprimand the person and take suitable action," the director tweeted.

Mumbai Police replied, "Official complaint need to be lodged at your nearest Police Station."

Mehta had a packed 2020, with the release of two projects - his maiden web series "Scam 1992" and feature film "Chhalaang".



Harris team says it was blindsided by VP-elect's Vogue cover

WILMINGTON, DEL. (AP): Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has landed on the cover of the February issue of Vogue magazine, but her team says there's a problem: the shot of the country's soon-to-be No. 2 leader isn't what both sides had agreed upon, her team says.

Instead of the powder blue power suit Harris wore for her cover shoot, the first African American woman elected vice president is instead seen in more casual attire and wearing Converse Chuck Taylor sneakers, which she sometimes wore on the campaign trail.

Harris' team was unaware that the cover photo had been switched until images leaked late Saturday, according to a person involved in the negotiations over how Harris would be featured on the cover. Harris' office declined comment and the person spoke Sunday on condition of anonymity.

In a statement, Vogue said it went with the more informal image of Harris for the cover because the photo captured her "authentic, approachable nature, which we feel is one of the hallmarks of the Biden-Harris administration."

But the magazine said it released both images as digital magazine covers to "respond to the seriousness of this



moment in history, and the role she has to play leading our country forward."

Harris, who is of Jamaican and Indian descent, posed in the light blue suit in front of a gold backdrop for the magazine's cover. She also posed, more casually dressed in slacks, a blazer and sneakers in front of a pink and green background, for photos that were planned for inside the magazine, the person said. Pink and green are the colors of Harris' college sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Vogue has released both images

online, but the photo of a sneaker-clad Harris is the one that will grace the cover of the fashion bible's print edition.

The person with knowledge of the negotiations said Harris' team has expressed to Vogue its disappointment over the magazine's decision.

The cover also generated outrage on social media as posters expressed disappointment in how the magazine decided to present the nation's first female vice president on its cover.

Harris is set to be sworn in as vice president on Jan. 20.

Hope this shift is worth it: Kritika Kamra on digital debut with 'Tandav'

MUMBAI, JAN 10 (PTI): Actor Kritika Kamra says her transition from a successful TV career to films and now the digital medium with "Tandav" is an attempt to keep evolving with time.

The 32-year-old actor began her journey in 2007 and rose to fame with shows like "Kitani Mohabbat Hai", its sequel and "Kuch Toh Log Kahenge".

Kamra said she started acting when she was just 18 and "jumped in the deep end" when she debuted with TV show "Yahaan Ke Hum Sikan-der".

"Television is a tough medium to work in. I was quite young when I started doing this. So my taste, my goals and the things I want to do have taken shape while I was working," she said.

The actor made her Bollywood debut with director Nitin Kakkar's comedy "Mitron" in 2018 and is currently awaiting the release of "Tandav", an Amazon Prime Video series.

"That's why there have been these shifts and I hope they're worth it. I hope 'Tandav' is a new beginning of these kind of projects for me because I really enjoyed being on the show," Kamra told PTI in an interview over Zoom.

Created and directed by Ali Abbas Zafar, the nine-part political drama features an ensemble cast headlined by Saif Ali Khan, Dimple Kapadia, Tigraanshu Dhillia, Kumud Mishra, and Mohd Zeeshan Ayyub.

Though artistes often talk about how the digital medium has bridged the gap between films and the small screen, Kamra said she still faces "the TV bias".

"I will not shy away from it. People keep saying that the gap is bridged, it's not the same anymore, but not in my personal experience. But it's ok. I insist on auditions. I am ok to go out there and prove myself as many times as required.

"Only if I'm good for the

job, I should get it. But there are certain stereotypes. People expect you to act in a certain way and it's not wrong - I see that on TV. I know why this notion exists, so I'm not even fighting that. I try to make choices that break that for me," she added.

Kamra's last fictional show, "Prem Ya Paheli - Chandrakanta", came out in 2017, post which the actor didn't take up too many projects.

The actor said she is aware that because of the waiting game it took her a "little longer than it would take for somebody else", but she has no complaints.

"I've got those reactions from people about TV, but I'm also incredibly proud of the work I've done there. It gives me the financial and creative freedom to be in Mumbai and choose the work I want to do. So I have no complaints," the Bareilly-born Kamra said.

Set in Delhi, "Tandav" aims to take viewers inside the closed corridors of power and uncover the manipula-

tions, charades as well as the dark secrets of people who will go to any lengths in its pursuit.

On the show, Kamra plays Sana Mir, a Kashmir-born political science student with journalistic dreams.

The actor said her character has a wholesome journey on the series, with Mir undergoing a transformation.

"Playing her (Sana), I understood a lot more about the struggles of somebody who comes with a difficult past. It'll be unfair to say I now know how it feels but you get a sense of how things can be difficult in a world where you're struggling and fighting." It's a nicely fleshed out character. You don't get to see her entire back story -- which shapes up what she believes in and why she's the way we see her -- a lot of it is for you to understand. Ali is clear about what he wants," she added.

"Tandav" will hit the streaming platform on January 15.



BIKINI BODY! Actress Bella Thorne showed off her curves in an animal-print bikini as she hung out by the pool in Tulum, Mexico, with boyfriend Benjamin Mascolo.

It took me 16 years to figure out my voice, says Anubhav Sinha

KOLKATA, JAN 10 (PTI): "Mulk", "Article 15" and "Thappad" have established Anubhav Sinha as a prominent voice in contemporary cinema, but the director says it took him over a decade to find his calling.

Sinha, who was interacting with the audiences after delivering Satyajit Ray Memorial Lecture at the 26th Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) here on Saturday evening, started his journey with the 2001 hit "Tum Bin" and went on to make films like "Dus", "Cash" and "Gulaab Gang".

"It took me 16 years to figure out my voice. The most important question in the life of a filmmaker remains what he wants to make and why," the director said.

Sinha believes literature continues to be a major source of stories for cinema and also the web space.

"I think Hollywood continues making fantastic films on books. I myself bought



four books but that is more of a personal kind of thing. On the contrary, I think it is increasing now. Especially on OTT platforms, we are looking at books now because there is so much content," he said.

The director, who was talking on the topic 'Social responsibility in mainstream cinema', said while social issues should be highlighted storytellers need to focus on the entertainment quotient as well.

"That society which goes to films, to single screens, to be entertained. You know them - people who work hard

and do jobs like pulling rickshaws. They will not come to an intellectual discourse."

Sinha, whose "Mulk" was screened at the festival on Saturday, reminisced about working with late Rishi Kapoor, who essayed a pivotal role in the 2018 social drama, also starring Taapsee Pannu.

"I had met him for the first time while working on 'Mulk' and he turned out to be a loveable person as we worked. We were in constant touch till his last day. I miss Rishiji and Taapsee here," he said.

Kapoor passed away last year on April 30.

your flawsomeness is what promises to make your relationship sweeter. Geminis who felt Cupid's absence during the holiday season could be pleasantly surprised in the days to come. There is a certain somebody who is smitten by your presence and won't shy away from expressing their feelings in an honest manner.

CANCER: Every bird flies away from the nest, and that's just the law of nature. In a similar manner, some of you may be feeling inspired to move away from where you are, or where you have come from, in order to discover who you truly are—a change that's daunting and exciting all the same. Here's the thing, though: Those around you may not be pleased with your decision due to their own fears. Don't let that stop you from facing your true north, Cancer.

LEO: Leo, that big and generous heart of yours has always been your superpower. So, don't let somebody take advantage of your inherent nature. Don't let somebody tell you that you're not doing or giving enough. Yes, there is a way to stay in this relationship. But you must establish your boundaries first. If that means say 'no' to something that doesn't sit right with you, so be it. You are responsible for your own well-being before

that of anybody else.

VIRGO: 'Free love' is a big mood around here, and you may feel inspired to experiment in ways you never have before (with adequate safety measures in place, of course!). That mysterious smile on your face says that whatever you're doing is working like a charm. Coupled Virgos could be craving what Juan Antonio (played by Javier Bardem) described as 'the salt' in the relationship. Boom! Before you know it, you may find yourself having a Vicky Cristina Barcelona situation.

LIBRA: A painful ending could be on the cards for some of you. Others could be mourning the loss of something or nursing a broken heart. Given the cataclysmic events that have unfolded recently, the old you would have lost all hope. But, the new you is embracing the virtues of optimism and realising that everything does indeed happen for a reason. PS: Your guides are with you and their support will help you get through this.

SCORPIO: How much woke is too much woke? The cards are urging you to take the 'activism' down a notch, as your passion could be adding fuel to an existing fire. Don't get us wrong. There is ab-

solutely nothing wrong with caring too much about a certain cause or being driven by the need to bring forth colossal change. Keeping your audience in mind, however, is a skill you're yet to cultivate.

SAGITTARIUS: You are where you are because you've earned your way to the top. It is your blood, sweat, and tears that have helped you shatter the glass ceiling that stood in your way, Sagittarius. So if others are beginning to feel threatened in your presence, don't take things personally. You can't possibly go around playing therapist to everybody who is nursing an insecurity. Neither can you retreat into the shadows in order to make them feel safe. So own your place in this world and do so unapologetically.

CAPRICORN: There comes a point in every journey where the thing that drew you to the path becomes the very thing that takes you away from the path. Accept the disillusionment as a necessary step, one that's forcing you to look within and ask yourself some rather tough questions. The simple act of getting some distance from your creations will help you realign *and* find that lost sense of purpose. PS: Don't let the funk you're in become the reason you give up

on something that's been *this* special to you.

AQUARIUS: Comparing yourself to others or wishing you were anybody other than who you are is a colossal waste of time—a fact queens like yourself are fully aware of on both, conscious and subconscious levels. Being who you are unapologetically is going to be a big theme for you. Remember this now and for the rest of the year: Standing in your power is the secret to advancing your career and attracting opportunities that will help you move to the next level. Speaking of your career, things on the financial front are about to take a turn for the better too. Instead of getting carried away by frivolous expenses (and shiny things!), focus on building a reserve for yourself.

PISCES: It's all about work, work, work this week, and you're feeling motivated to take your career to the next level, Pisces. So play your cards right and align yourself with opportunities that will prove to be beneficial in the long run. Remember, having the right team by your side at a time like this will prove to be your biggest asset. It's important to recruit a crew that's just as passionate towards bringing forth positive change as you are.