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SummitTIMES

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Govt creates 4,770 posts for regularization of temp employees Depts directed to complete appointments by 28 Feb

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 28 JAN:

The State Government today created 4,770 posts under various government departments for appointment of temporary employees belonging to Group C and D category who have completed more than five years of service as on 31 December, 2018 and Home Guards who have completed 15 years of cumulative ser-

vice as on 31 Dec, 2018.

A notification issued by the Department of Personnel informs that these 4,770 posts have been created in 46 government departments in three categories - Group C, Group D and Driver/ Technical or equivalent posts.

These posts, it is clear, are for the regularization of temporary employees of the State Government who have completed five years of service [15 in the case

of Home Guards], and the notification directs all concerned departments to complete the appointment process latest by 28 Feb 2019.

Concurrence of the Finance & Expenditure Department has already been secured and the appointments are to be strictly governed by provisions of relevant rules for appointment and other conditions of service.

The pay structure shall be as

per the revised pay level framed by the State Government as per which office assistants and equivalent posts in Group C at Pay Level-3 will have an entry pay of Rs 19,300.

Junior Drivers/ Technical and equivalent posts in Pay Level-2 will have an entry pay of Rs 16,200.

Office Attendants and equivalent posts in Group D will be in Pay Level-1 and receive an entry pay of Rs 15,200.

NYK-Namchi organizes R-Day cultural prog

SUMMIT REPORT

NAMCHI, 27 JAN:

A Republic Day Celebration cum District Level Cultural Show was organised by Nehru Yuva Kendra, Namchi, in collaboration with the South District Administration at the Community Hall here on Saturday.

Man Kumar Rai presented a patriotic song, Asis and group from Saptarangi Youth Club of Ben presented a Nepali folk dance, Sahara and group from Sunakhari Youth Club, Namthang, performed a patriotic dance and Angel and group from Sunrise Children's Club of Namthang-Kabrey presented Nepali folk song (Jhaurey).

All the participants were felicitated with mementos from NYK-Namchi and DC South for their continuous support to the kendra. The Programme was attended by Road & Bridges Minister, GM Gurung, along with Zilla Adhaskhya Farwanti Tamang, DC South Prabhakar Verma, officials from various departments, NYC NYK Namchi Sangita Dahal, NYVs and students from various government and private schools.

United Sikkimese Forum to present united front on 3 issues



SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 28 JAN:

The recently formed 'United Sikkimese Forum' [USF] today announced their three-point agenda on which all member parties have agreed following three rounds of discussions. The various political parties have decided to fight together on the issues of Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, recent remarks of the Chief Minister on menstrual cycle of women and, Rojgar Mela and ongoing Janta Mela.

On being asked about the nature of the alliance,

USF chief coordinator, RN Chamling said, "The forum is basically about building consensus among different political parties on issues that matter and to see if the opposition can speak in the same voice on these topics."

He did not completely dismiss the suggestion that the forum could develop into a seat sharing pre-poll alliance.

"Time will decide what shape the forum will finally take but we will keep building upon the unity that we have forged. We will keep meeting and then de-

cide," he added.

United Sikkimese Forum is the outcome of a meeting of all opposition parties of Sikkim initiated by Sikkim Subject Committee here on 25 January to discuss the possibility of a united front in view of upcoming elections in the State.

The meeting was attended by leaders and representatives of all regional parties including Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, Hamro Sikkim Party, Sikkim Rajya Manch, Sikkim National People's Party, Sikkim Republican Party, Sikkim United Party and Sikkim Sangram

Parishad. SRM president and MLA, RN Chamling was nominated as the chief coordinator of the forum in the meeting.

On the conspicuous absence of national parties like the BJP and Congress, Mr Chamling said, "We invited all parties. We did our duty, we have no further comments."

The forum has decided to submit a memorandum to the Governor and approach all concerned authorities on these three issues.

USF member, Nawin Kiran Pradhan stated that every party has

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Janta Mela series successfully concludes with Gyalshing event



GyALSHING, 28 JAN (IPR): The Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, popularly known as 'Janta Mela,' organized by the Department of Rural Management & Development for the year 2018-19 was held at the Kyongsa Ground today with Chief Minister Pawan Chamling as chief guest.

The Chief Minister, in his address, stressed that the government was continuously expending all efforts to work in the interest of the people.

He stated that the Government has strived hard to improve the lives of the under-privileged and consistently framed policies keeping them in mind.

He mentioned that the inauguration of the 1,000-bed Multi Specialty Hospital in Gangtok was a major achievement of the State Government for the benefit of the people and emphasized that the hospital was developed with the intention to provide the best healthcare facilities to the Sikkimese in the State.

The Chief Minister also shared that

the quality of life in Sikkim has improved significantly and that Sikkim doesn't have extreme poverty nor does it have hunger.

The CM also advised all government officers to work for the upliftment of the state as they were the pillars of change in the Sikkimese society. He urged them to continue working diligently towards the state's progress and help deliver on the dream to make Sikkim the best in every sphere.

The youth he advised to help the government in state-building and urged them to strive to make the state proud and imbibe dignity of labour.

He stressed that Sikkim was an abode of 'Peace and Security' and that the public too has a responsibility towards maintaining peace here.

He advised all to maintain communal and religious harmony whilst shunning all negative thoughts which can lead to chaos and disrupt the peace which Sikkim is famous for.

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Tourism MoS arrives on 3-day visit



GANGTOK, 28 JAN [IPR]: Union Minister of State of Tourism, KJ Alphons, arrived in the State capital today. The MoS is on a three-day visit to Sikkim.

The Minister was received at Pakyong airport by Chief Administrator R Ongmu and senior officers of the Tourism Department.

Thereafter, the Minister visited the Orchidarium (Orchid Research Centre) at Pakyong, before proceeding towards Gangtok.

On 30 Jan, the Union Minister will attend the inaugural function of Swadesh Darshan - 1 Project under Sikkim at Zero Point here accompanied by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling.

Meghalaya's ruling coalition member UDP passes resolution to oppose Citizenship Bill

SHILLONG, JAN 28 (PTI):

United Democratic Party, the main ally of the NPP-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA), on Monday passed a resolution to oppose the Centre's move to implement the controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill in the state, party officials said. The leaders of the party will be attending the NPP-AGP-sponsored meeting of all the regional political parties in Guwahati on Tuesday to oppose the CAB.

We have adopted a resolution to oppose the Bill piloted and sponsored by the Centre under the BJP to regularise and invite all those people from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh to come to India and become Indian citizens, UDP working president B

M Lanong told mediapersons after the Chief Executive Committee meeting of the party here chaired by party president and Assembly Speaker Donkupar Roy.

He said the party is of the view that the Citizenship issue should be dealt within the law of the Citizenship Act and Illegal Migrant Act.

The UDP leader accused the BJP of passing the Bill with an aim to win votes.

Under these relevant acts the question of citizenship should be dealt with but not for the purpose of vote investment as done by the BJP, he said, adding that the Bill if allowed to become a law will threaten the security of the country and North East in particular.

Pope reaffirms priest celibacy but makes case for exception

Aboard The Papal Plane, JAN 28 (AP):

Pope Francis is ruling out any lifting of the celibacy requirement for priests but says there's reason to consider ordaining older, married men in remote communities where priests are in short supply.

Francis said he believes priestly celibacy is a gift for the Catholic Church and opposes a blanket change to make it optional. But he said "pastoral necessity" might justify alternative options in certain parts of the world.

"I think the problem should be opened in this sense: Where there's a pastoral problem because of a lack of priests," he said.

"I'm not saying it should be done, because I haven't reflected or prayed

enough about it. But theologians must study it."

Francis' comments, to reporters on the way home Sunday from Panama, open the way for discussion about celibacy in the run-up to a big meeting of bishops from the Amazon at the Vatican in October.

Brazil's bishops have long pushed for the church to consider ordaining so-called viri probati, older married men of proven virtue, to minister in remote parts of the Amazon where the faithful can go weeks or months without Mass and evangelical and Pentecostal churches are making inroads as a result.

Francis was asked about the possibility that the Latin Rite church might follow the Eastern rite Catholic Church,

where married men can be ordained.

He ruled out an across-the-board opening, repeating a famous phrase by Pope Paul VI, who was also under pressure in the sexual revolution of the 1960s to allow married priests. "I'd rather give my life before changing the law on celibacy," Francis said.

The celibacy question has been a mainstay in Catholic debate given it is a discipline, not a doctrine, and therefore can change. The church has had the tradition since the 11th century, imposed part to spare the church the financial burdens of providing for large families and to ensure that any assets of the priest would pass to the church, not his heirs.

Jorethang School Band performs at Prime Minister's Office

SUMMIT REPORT

NEW DELHI, 28 JAN:

The Jorethang Senior Secondary School Band, which won the first position in the all-India Inter School Band Competition in December 2018, was invited by the Prime Minister's Office to participate at a function there.

The programme was to motivate youth of the country towards creat-

ing a better society and developing qualitative human resource. The student band was also invited to perform at the National Police Memorial Ground on 27 Jan, 2019 and also witnessed the 70th Republic Day parade at Rajpath on 26 Jan, 2019.

The band team, led by Principal Archana Gurung, also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi

at his residence on 24 Jan, 2019. The Prime Minister interacted with the band members during an interactive programme.

The Union Defence Minister and Sports Minister were also present at the function. Youth from countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Russia, Sri Lanka, China, Japan, Bangladesh, NCC Cadets and NSS were also present for the function.

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Icons nominated to get Sikkim to vote



GANGTOK, 28 JAN (IPR): With the aim to generate awareness towards voting and ensure participation of youth, women, persons with disabilities and all sections of the society in the voting process, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer here has nominated popular local icons as Ambassadors/ Icons for the forth-

coming elections.

Owing to their popularity in the state in various fields, ace footballer Sanju Pradhan and models Peden Ongmu Namgyal and Parmila Chettri have been made State Icons.

Likewise, self-taught engineer Bikal Rai was made the East District Icon and Gold Medalist Special Olympian (2007),

Nirmal Chandra Dahal, made the PwD (Persons with Disabilities) Icon.

The names of the Icons were announced and they were felicitated on the occasion of the State level National Voters' Day program held at Chintan Bhawan here on 25 Jan. They were felicitated on the occasion by Chief Secretary.

These five personali-

ties were roped in by the office of the CEO to engage with the youth and inspire them to become responsible voters. The icons will be responsible for generating voter awareness, enhancing voter turnout and promoting ethical participation among the citizens of Sikkim.

"It is a great honor for us to be chosen as

icons by the Election Office Sikkim and we are very grateful for being considered as icons who could influence change and help people make a choice by casting their votes during the election," said Bikal Rai on the sidelines of the program.

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer has made short video promos of the nominated Icons to be shown at various places across the state to create interest among the people to vote.

Joint Chief Electoral Officer, Sikkim, Roshni Rai, informed that for the upcoming elections, the Election Commission have emphasized on making PwD-friendly polling stations.

"All arrangements will be made for PwD voters for hassle free voting and Election Commission is engaged to roll out the exact figure of PwD voters in the state," she states.



National Youth Parliament fest in Namchi

NAMCHI, 28 JAN (IPR): As part of the National Youth Parliament Festival-2019, a District Youth Parliament for South and West Sikkim was held at the Officers Club here today.

The program was jointly organised by Nehru Yuva Kendra, Namchi, and the NSS unit of Namchi Government College.

A prepared speech competition was held for students and youth as part of the event.

The five best speakers from the district are: Ayesha Limboo, Sanjoy Rai, Nima Lepcha, Susmita Thapa and Robert Chamling. They will now represent the district at the State level competition.

The jury comprised of former bureaucrat Santa Pradhan, retired DYC Puran Chettri, Headmaster Dr Roshan Pradhan, VBDAS president Deepak Rai and senior journalist Namo Dixit.

Training on life skills by YODESS



SUMMIT REPORT

RONGLI, 27 JAN:

A weeklong training on Life Skill Education was organised at Shardhanjali Bhawan, Lower Dalapchand under Rongli SubDivision by Youth Development Society of Sikkim (YODESS) supported by Nehru Yuva Kendra

Sangathan, Gangtok.

The training was organised under a national programme for youth and adolescent development. 30 local students aged between 5 to 20 years from different NGOs participated in the training held from 19-26 Jan.

Janta Mela series successfully...

The Chief Minister then handed over token grants/benefits in cash and kind to beneficiaries from different parts of the West District.

The Janta Mela at Gyalshing marked the successful conclusion of the Janta Mela Program for the year 2018-19.

The CM also inaugurated the OBC Girls Hostel at the Kyongsa Senior Secondary School.

Some of the items distributed at the Janta Mela today were Electric Rice Cookers, Water Filters, Compost Bins, Sound Systems, Samajik Seva Bhatta, Financial Assistance for purchase of religious robes, Oxen for ploughing and breeding, Milch Cows, financial incentive to disabled persons for setting up business enterprises, Incentives under CM's Start-up Scheme, House allotment certificates under CMRHM Phase II, GCI Sheets, House up gradation grant, LPG, Induction Stove, buffet Sets, torch Light, Sewing Machine, Photocopier Machines, Tents/Shamiyana, Pressure Cookers, Desktop Computers, Laptops to students and Self Help Groups, Power Tiller, GENEP tank - 50,000 litres, Community Vermicompost, RCC Tank - 10,000 litres, Post Metric Scholarship schemes to students, CM's Merit Scholarship Scheme, 1000 litres HDPE Tanks, Poly pipes, flexible/nylon pipes, and fabricated green houses. Likewise, buffaloes, poultry and piglets were also distributed under Animal Husbandry Department. Similarly, token incentives were also handed over to beneficiaries of 'Proud Mother Scheme', grant-in-aid to religious institutions under Ecclesiastical department, and incentives for community investment under State Rural Livelihood Mission.

South and West officials train to become better team leaders for elections



JORETHANG, 28 JAN

(IPR): A three-day leadership and motivational training for officials engaged in election-related works in South and West Sikkim commenced today at Sikkim Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Karfectar.

Nilay Majumdar and Sanjiv Deb are the resource persons for the training being attended by Assistant Returning Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, Nodal Officers and other officials from South

and West districts.

The resource persons explained that the objective of the training is to prepare the participating officials to become able leaders and efficient motivators while conducting the upcoming general elections in their respective areas.

They also led the attendees through various PowerPoint presentations on how to be an efficient commander, the methods of inculcating self-awareness, strategy

planning, authority and influence and on many more significant topics.

On the basis of the presentation a debate, an interactive session and various outdoor activities were also held between the participants to encourage a smooth communication spirit.

It may be mentioned here that from 31Jan to 02 Feb another training conference on Training for Trainers and Facilitators (TTF) will be held at the same venue.

ICFAI marks R-Day with felicitations and inspiring speeches



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 JAN:

ICFAI University Sikkim organized a special Republic Day celebration at the university campus on Saturday with CP Dhakal, State Information Commissioner, as chief guest.

The programme was attended by several dignitaries and awardees like Major General NS Raja Subramani, GOC Black Cat Division, Akhshay Sachdeva Additional DG of Police Fire Department of Sikkim, Kapil Dev Dwivedi, DIG, Col Rakesh Menon, CO NCC, Ongden Tshering Lepcha,

president of Sikkim Lepcha Youth Association, Nirmal Mangar, co-founder of Sikkim Chronicle and Sonam Chuki Lepcha, founder of Childcare Institute, Bojoghari.

The Vice-Chancellor addressed the gathering and thanked all the awardees and spoke on the relevance of Republic Day which was followed by lighting of the lamp by all the dignitaries along with the Vice-Chancellor.

Mr Dhakal, Major General Subramani and Mr Sachdeva addressed the gathering. The University felici-

tated the awardees with Lifetime Achievement for their distinguished service and contribution to the society.

This was followed by awarding the employees of ICFAI University - Sandhya Rani Pant, Balram Khaling, Uttam Sharma and Chundu Pradhan - who were recognized for their contributions to the University.

28 children from Ms. Lepcha's Home were taken for a short sightseeing trip to Banjhakri falls in the university bus and gifted school bags at the end of the programme.

Strength-lifters felicitated for rich haul of medals



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 28 JAN:

Sikkim Strength Lifting Association (SSLA) today felicitated strength lifters from the State for their outstanding performance at the recently-held 7th International Strength Lifting & Incline Bench Press Championship 2019 held from 17 to 20 January at Karmazari, Pench, in Madhya Pradesh.

Eleven Sikkimese lifters were part of the 98-member Indian team. Sikkimese lifters bagged 21 medals, including 10 gold medals, 5 silver medals and 6 bronze medals for the country.

Edu Tshering Bhutia set a world record in the women's inclined bench press by lifting 75.5 kgs and Pema Dorjee Bhutia also set a world record in master's inclined bench press by lifting 135.5 kgs.

In the championship, three women strength lifters from Sikkim, Edu Tshering Bhutia, Ranju Sundas and Kalpana Chettri bagged two gold medals each, while Pema Dorjee Bhutia also bagged two gold medals, Thinley Wangdi Bhutia won 1 gold medal and 1 silver medal, Homnath Siwakoti clinched 1 gold medal and 1 bronze medal, Ganesh Kumar Subba won 1 silver medal and 1 bronze medal, Ongdup Tamang bagged 2 silver medals, Palden Tamang won 1 silver medal and 1 bronze medal, Santosh Gupta won 2 bronze medals and Pempa Tamang won 1 bronze medal for India.

In his report, SSLA chief coach and international strength lifter, Pema Dorjee Bhutia, informed that 209 lifters from 10 countries had participated

in the tournament.

He shared that the competition was really tough and that India won the team championship.

"All lifters from Sikkim gave an outstanding performance in the champion and it was a proud moment for us to win 21 medals for the country," he expressed.

While congratulating international lifters from Sikkim for their outstanding performance, SSLA president TD Denzongpa stated that Sikkimese lifters have been doing well at national and international levels in a short span of time. Strength lifting was introduced in Sikkim in the year 2013.

Mr Denzongpa also informed that the association will hold a state championship shortly and send teams for upcoming national and international competitions.

Training on manufacture of reusable sanitary pads



SUMMIT REPORT

JORETHANG, 28 JAN:

A 3-day workshop on washable sanitary cloth pads was organized by the North East Rural Livelihood Project, South Sikkim, in collaboration with EcoFemme from 24 to 26 January at the Community Learning Business Resource Center, Nandugaon, a press release informs.

17 women from different Self-Help Groups and BoD members of Sikkim Pragatesheel Nari

Cooperative Society attended the workshop.

Women, mainly from the Cutting and Tailoring Unit promoted by NERLP, were focused upon, the release adds.

The workshop was also about making women understand menstrual hygiene, keeping proper track of menstrual cycle, environment and the health benefits of using cloth pads.

Women were also given training on stitching of cloth pads in "All in

one" and "foldable" model. The SHG members will now be engaged in producing reusable cotton cloth pads which are both environment-friendly and healthy for women.

Tsheringkee Lama, consultant, Livelihood & Rural Marketing, adds that the final goal is for these women to kick-start a trend by producing and selling cloth pads in every part of the state and making Sikkim one of the states to use eco-friendly sanitary pads.

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Month-long Geeta camp at Mamring concludes

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 JAN:**

The closing function of a month-long camp on Geeta at Mamring in East Sikkim was held on Monday. The camp was organised by Dharma Jagaran Samiti. The closing function had the president of Chinmaya Mission and the Chief Information Commissioner of the State, CP Dhakal as the chief guest who was accompanied by senior journalist and litterateur, Arjun Piyush as the guest of honour.

In his address, the chief guest encouraged people to read Geeta and spoke about its benefits. He mentioned that the State government has been providing opportunities for people in different fields and encouraged all to take advantage of these opportunities.

Likewise, Mr Piyush spoke about Nepali language, culture and literature. He encouraged students to be aware about the language and culture. He also stressed upon the need for moral education of students.

The programme was also addressed by Mamring senior secondary school Principal, Prahalad Dawadi and Dharma Jagaran Samiti member, RC Rijal.

Tharo Line R-Day

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 JAN:**

Members of the business community of Tharo Line, Lal Bazaar, here celebrated Republic Day with a special programme here on Saturday. Social activist Prem Goyal of MG Marg was present as the chief guest of the celebration. On the occasion, members of business community raised donations for orphanages and old age homes. It is informed that a sum of Rs 6,226 was collected on the day.

R-Day at Mamring School

**SUMMIT REPORT
MAMRING, 27 JAN:**

Government Senior Secondary School, Mamring, East Sikkim, celebrated Republic Day at the school premises on 26 January. Chairperson, State Bank of Sikkim, KB Chamling, was present as the chief guest accompanied by MLA Hemendra Adhikari, Zilla Panchayat Subhadra Dangal, Panchayat President DL Sewa and other dignitaries and local gentry.

House wiring and food production training concludes

**SUMMIT REPORT
RANGPO, 27 JAN:**

A 20-day electrician house-wiring and food production training organised by 36Bn SSB and 72nd Bn SSB respectively at ITI Gyalshing concluded today. The initiative, taken under the Civil Action programme for Indo-Nepal border youth of north east region, had the Gyalshing Municipal Council chairperson, IK Neopaney, as chief guest.

"I am not a Northeastern writer" says Janice Pariat

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 JAN:**

Janice Pariat, the author of Boats on Land, Seahorse and The Nine Chambered Heart was at The People's Studio at ARTEM to conduct a workshop on "How to read as a writer" on 27 Jan. While in conversation with Digital Editor, Roshni Chetri, ARTEM, she critiqued the practice of labelling writers from the region as "Northeastern" writers since, "there are no Northeastern writers, just as there are no North Indian writers".

As part of The People's Studio at ARTEM's ongoing effort to create opportunities for capacity building in creative arts, the workshop was organized to present to the participants a deeper look at the process of reading.

Dissecting assigned



readings for the workshop, the participants were taken from decoding choices made by the writer in who becomes the narrator – from whose perspective the story is written – to literary motifs and language.

Following the workshop was a reading by the author of selected stories from Boats on Land and her most recent work, The Nine Chambered Heart.

The last program for the evening was a conversation with the author during which the structure of her novels to the presence of same-sex relationships in each of her books was explored. Reflecting on the two readings assigned for the workshop and talking about good writing, Pariat said, "Good writing takes the familiar and makes you see it in a

new way. It's about taking every-day mundane life and making you see it anew."

The evening ended with a question-answer round with the audience. Pariat is the winner of the Sahitya Akademi Young Writer Award for English (2013) and Crossword Book Award. Her book Seahorse was shortlisted for The Hindu Literary Prize (2015).

Training of Trainees and Facilitators for elections begins



GANGTOK, 28 JAN (IPR): A three-day Training of Trainees and Facilitators (TTF) regarding Leadership and Motivation kicked off for the upcoming general election at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer today.

The inaugural session was chaired by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), R Telang. He was accompanied by Joint Secretary, Roshini Rai.

In his inaugural address, the CEO urged the participants to take full advantage and be part of conducting free, fair and peaceful elections in Sikkim.

Nupur Purohit from Hero Mindmine Institute is the resource person for the training which aims to focus on empowering people and enhancing their professional skills and attitudes.

The training was attended by Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers, Electoral Registration officers, Assistant Electoral Registration Officers, Nodal Officers from the various government departments from East and North districts.

Simultaneously, for South and West districts, TTF is being held at SIRD, Karfector.

Northeastern allies of BJP to meet Tuesday in Guwahati against Citizenship Bill

GUWAHATI/SHILLONG/AIZAWL, JAN 28 (PTI): Regional parties across the Northeast which are in alliance with the BJP will meet in Guwahati on Tuesday to put forth their objections to the controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill.

They will be joined by the JD(U), NDA's major ally in Bihar, and the AGP, which recently snapped ties with the BJP in Assam over the proposed legislation that seeks to provide Indian citizenship to non-Muslim nationals from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan after six years of residence in India.

Meghalaya Chief Minister and National People's Party (NPP) president Conrad K Sangma is taking the lead role in convening the all-regional-parties meet Tuesday and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) is the co-convenor of the meeting, Meghalaya's ruling party NPP leaders said Monday.

The MNF from Mizoram, NDDP from Nagaland, IPFT from Tripura, SDF from Sikkim besides NPP leaderships from Arunachal

Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur have confirmed their participation in the meeting, they said.

KC Tyagi, general secretary of the Nitish Kumar's headed JD(U), arrived in Guwahati. Party's national vice president Prashant Kishore is expected to reach the city.

Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga left Aizawl Monday for Guwahati to attend the meeting of chief ministers and regional parties of the northeast to be held Tuesday on the issue of Citizenship Amendment Bill, ruling Mizo National Front (MNF) party sources said.

The regional parties across northeast which are meeting on the Citizenship Bill are members of BJP-led NEDA (North East Democratic Alliance). Protests against the Bill have rocked the Northeast region, with those opposing it contending that it would harm the rights of the indigenous people.

The gathering to put forth their objections to the Citizenship Bill, which is piloted by the BJP, is bound to create more uneasiness for the party as the Northeast

together accounts for 25 Lok Sabha seats. The BJP which either on its own or with NEDA allies is in power in all the eight northeastern states is eyeing them in the coming parliamentary polls.

"The chief minister (Sangma) has invited all political parties, mostly regional parties in the NE region, to discuss on the amendment of the Citizenship Bill. The meeting will be held at Vivanta Taj in Guwahati," Meghalaya state president of the NPP Wanweiroi R Kharlukhi told PTI.

All regional parties in Meghalaya, which are part of the ruling Meghalaya Democratic Alliance, have confirmed their participation at the event, he said.

Regional parties from Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura are also attending the meeting, he added.

The NPP, which is the main ally of the BJP in the Northeast and part of the NEDA, had met Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh last month to oppose the Bill.

SOH launches 24x7 helpline on theme #WeCanTalkSikkim



**ARPAN PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 27 JAN:**

Formed with the objective of bringing awareness and providing various kinds of support to people in need, a social organization, The Stars of Hope has started a helpline.

The Stars of Hope launched a 24x7 helpline to provide counseling, guidance and support to those in need. The helpline has been started on the theme #WeCanTalkSikkim, as a step towards addressing social problems like, suicide, sexual harassment, depression and human trafficking.

The helpline endeavors to provide free counseling through technology assisted medium such as chat to anyone in need of emotional support, irrespective of age, gender, sexual orientation or

race, transcending geographical distances while ensuring confidentiality.

The Helpline number 890022-5195 was launched in Gangtok in a function organized at MG Marg today. The helpline is being promoted not only in Gangtok but in various other places of the State.

Stars of Hope helpline counseling services are run by members of the organization and counselors.

The main objective of starting the helpline is to provide information, emotional support and counseling interventions and connect individuals to knowledge and service resources with a special focus to build capacities of helping professionals & stakeholders involved in any kind of social cause.

The organization also

seeks to enhance awareness and increase sensitization about mental health, suicide, depression, sexual harassment, human trafficking and many other social issues by means of creating content and undertaking outreach activities.

It may be mentioned here that the Stars of Hope is a Gangtok based organization which was formed in 2015 by youth involved in various social activities.

The Stars of Hope initially started working in the field of Waste Management and has then on been involved in bringing awareness about various social issues among the masses. They have also been involved in organizing various charity events to raise funds for those in need, informs the SOH president, Bikash Thapa.

SNT Drivers and Conductors Assoc felicitates recent retirees

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 JAN:**

SNT Drivers and Conductors Association, Gangtok Branch, felicitated six retired drivers and four retired conductors of the department at a picnic held in Ranipool on Sunday.

On the occasion, the association felicitated retired drivers MK Chettri, Karma Lodey Bhutia, Subash Subba, Tashi Norbu Bhutia, Pradeep Rai and Hem Bahadur Chettri and retired conductors Dilliram Sharma, CP Sharma, Laxu-

man Pradhan and Ganesh Bahadur Chettri.

The felicitated retirees were presented Letters of Appreciation, gold rings and cash by the chief guest and other guests. On the occasion, the association has also felicitated the retired DGM NT Bhutia of the department.

The programme had SNT General Manager, ST Bhutia, as the chief guest.

In his address, Mr Bhutia mentioned that all officials and employees of SNT have made

immense contributions towards the remarkable achievements made by SNT in the last four years.

He expressed his gratitude to all officials and employees of the department for their contributions and further encouraged them to continue working as a family.

President of the association, Deven Rai, appealed to all drivers and conductors to continue with their sincere commitment to their responsibilities and duties in the service of the people.

Cleanliness drive by Manav Utthan Sewa Samiti

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 JAN:**

Manav Utthan Sewa Samiti [MUSS], Sikkim, carried out a cleanliness drive in STNM Hospital complex on the occasion of the 37th birthday of Vibhuji Maharaj, son of MUSS founder Satpalji Maharaj, and the 70th Republic Day of India on Saturday.

MUSS members started the drive from the stairs going down to the hospital from Tibet Road and covered the entire

hospital complex. Members of Sawayam Sewa Samiti and youth wing of MUSS participated in the cleanliness drive.

Earlier, the national flag was hoisted at MUSS head office by Sambhala Ashram in-charge, Mahatma Gyan Baiji. The cleanliness drive was followed by the birthday celebration of Vibhuji Maharaj at MUSS head-office with a series of activities.

United Sikkimese Forum...

its own issues and stand but common issues can be fought unitedly in the interest of the people.

Mr Pradhan mentioned that the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 is a threat to the Sikkim Subject. He also criticised the language and remarks of the CM on the menstrual cycle of women.

USF president, Narendra Adhikari stated that the forum objects to SDF MP Lok Sabha, PD Rai offering support to the Citizenship Bill when other north eastern regions have protested strongly against the bill. He alleged that the State MP has worked against the interest of the people of Sikkim even after getting their mandate.

"SDF government should pass a resolution in the State Assembly against the bill and send it to the Centre otherwise such bill will put the future of Sikkim in danger," Mr Adhikari said.

HSP spokesperson, Biraj Adhikari stated that the forum supports the Rojgar Mela but objects to the way the scheme is being implemented. He added that such an initiative just before election is just to get people's votes.

USF chief coordinator demanded that the government provide permanent job and not adhoc ones. He also said that the forum fully supports the initiative of Sikkim Progressive Youth Forum adding that the Health Minister should immediately fulfil his written assurance given to SPYF.

WRITE US: Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence. Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

Jorethang School Band...

On the last day of their New Delhi visit, they performed at the Rashtriya Rangshala. The team was felicitated by the Union Defence Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman.

HRDD Minister RB Subba has expressed happiness and congratulated the band for having performed at such occasions. Additional Chief Secretary, HRDD, GP Upadhyaya, has also congratulated the team and wished that they go ahead with achieving more such accolades in the days to come.

The State Project Director for Samagra Shiksha, Bhim Thatal, further informs that the band competition, which started in 2017, is a programme sponsored by the Ministry of HRD under the Samagra Shiksha programme. In the first edition, Sikkim had stood second.

He has congratulated the team and has also conveyed his thanks to the Principal of Jorethang SSS for preparing the students so well in the short time provided for preparation. HRDD has called on the school leaders and students to participate in such more programmes and competitions being held at the national level in several disciplines for which funds are available under Samagra Shiksha.

SummitTIMES

Still Need to Discuss LGBT Issues? Sad!

But let's get the families on board and then the society and laws can be changed

Sikkim's first Queer Pride Parade marched through the capital on Sunday. The numbers were not staggering, but at least one was taken out and the State reminded of the rights and continuing sidelining of their issues and the always attendant stigma. Enough has been said about the insecurities and trauma suffered by the LGBTQI community. While it is accepted that the community is not targeted with any direct physical violence in the State, what cannot be denied either is that they continue to remain closeted. They suffer ridicule and from misunderstanding like anywhere else in the country or most parts of the world, and even though they might not be singled out and demonized, there is no overt acceptance of even their existence.

In most instances, Sikkim slips into its standard response – ignores it.

Families, even when the obvious stares them in their face, pretend not to comprehend. They probably don't do this because they are revolted, which is also one of the responses, but because they don't know how to react. As it is the generation gap is so wide in most families that they cannot even converse about simple challenges like education or careers, so addressing a situation as complicated as sexual orientation becomes impossible for them to grapple with. Since most families cannot even speak to their children about sex even when it is necessary to keep them safe and responsible for their choices, matters of sexuality hence become impossible conversations to even broach. While this might explain why families opt for the ignore button, what this response also does is that it pushes the already confused youth deeper into their complexities. This complicates their confusions into trauma as they try to negotiate their way around their awakenings with no one there to even talk to. Some are lucky to find friends they can open up to, and while sharing is therapeutic to some extent, they still remain denied the counsel and acceptance beyond their circles. Needless to add, this comes at a substantial psychological cost and cause long-term damage. And all this because we felt too awkward to talk...

Yes, the laws dealing with homosexuality are obnoxiously regressive in our country and given the extreme right wing that the nation is gravitating to, it is unlikely that the situation will improve any time soon in that regard. But that should not stop the society at large from developing some empathy. It will have to start with families which should start measuring up to their responsibility towards the young in their fold. Do not think that intentionally ignoring the LGBT in the family is enough of a signal of tacit acceptance. It is not. Until families are openly accepting a supportive of the LGBT among them, the world outside never will. No one expects you to celebrate the coming out, but by accepting it without sitting on judgment will be a very important step towards normalizing the world for the LGBT. It will also go a long way towards saving them from the darkness they otherwise keep withdrawing into, always holding back, always watchful, always on guard. No young person should have to do that.

And once the family is on board, the rest too will fall in line, and as the society starts normalizing we can begin the challenge of amending the laws and ensuring that the LGBT receive equal status in our country. Let's accept it, just because cops are not going around arresting homosexuals does not mean that they enjoy equal status in our country. To begin with, a majority of them cannot be open about their sexual orientation and that itself makes them less equal than those we see as "normal". And it keeps getting worse for them. For instance, a gay couple cannot get officially married. And before someone starts sermonizing on the sanctity of the institution of marriage and all that, what such denials essential mean is that as far as the country is concerned – homosexuals are not equal to the heterosexual citizens because while couples of the latter club can get married, homosexual couples cannot. They just don't enjoy the same rights and privileges as the rest even when it come life choices and decisions which impact only them. That will be the bigger battle we will need to wage once we have got the families on board.



Greta Thunberg at Davos: why Gen Z has real power to influence business on climate change

VANINA FARBER & PATRICK REICHERT
theconversation.com

The time for action is now – this is the mantra being taken up by Generation Z across the world. Already this year, thousands of high school students across the world have skipped school to protest their governments' inaction on climate change. The students were inspired by 16-year-old Swede Greta Thunberg, who started the movement by skipping school every Friday since August 2018. This is only the beginning: further demonstrations are already scheduled for the coming weeks.

Gen Z has the most to lose from the negative effects of climate change, and Thunberg made a compelling call to action at the recent COP24 conference in Katowice, Poland: "You say you love your children above all else – and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes," she told global leaders during the climate summit. "Until you start focusing on what needs to be done rather than what is politically possible, there is no hope. We cannot solve a crisis without treating it as a crisis," she added.

Despite the urgency in Greta's speech and calls for climate protesters to get more radical, the outcomes of COP24 left much to be desired, in terms of actionable steps to cut emissions. It remains to be seen whether Greta's call to action will take root and drive meaningful change. But our intuition is that, armed with social media and growing economic clout, Gen Z is best positioned to influence business practices, rather than global climate agreements, where political gridlock appears to be the status quo.

A PROUD HISTORY OF ACTIVISM

A look back at recent social and environmental movements proves that youth activism can shape the current debate around climate change. Approaching the 60th anniversary of the Greensboro sit-ins – where students flouted segregation by occupying seats at diners – it's timely to recall the instrumental role young people played throughout

the American civil rights movement's most critical moments. Their actions helped to desegregate schools, challenge racism and advance voter and civil rights legislation.

Other notable youth movements over the past 50 years have included the Vietnam War protests, Tiananmen Square and the Arab Spring. While each of these movements is unique to its time and place in history, they share a common element: a clear authority to protest against.

Arguably, young climate activists today face an even tougher challenge than their historical predecessors. Getting political action on climate change is a seemingly impossible task, and youth movements over the past 30 years have been unable to influence global policy in any meaningful way. This is largely because no single government or organisation has the necessary authority to create the kind of change needed to address climate change on a global scale.

A POWERFUL APPEAL

While Greta's message may have fallen on deaf ears at COP24, her appeal to global business leaders at the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, holds more promise. As scholars in social innovation, we are interested in understanding how youth activism can transform the business sector, by aligning sustainable business models with a meaningful purpose and positive impact on the environment.

Companies are already looking for ways to hitch a ride on social and political movements and tap into Gen Z's purchasing power, reportedly worth US\$44 billion globally. And a number of recent campaigns by young activists have already succeeded in making corporations change their ways.

The anti-straw movement, started by nine-year-old Milo Cress in 2011, illustrates how social media can change behaviour at multinational companies such as McDonalds and Starbucks. Likewise, the Facebook page Kids Cut Conflict Palm Oil has – with the help of Australian NGO Wildlife Asia –

successfully lobbied PepsiCo to cut ties with an Indonesian palm oil supplier over deforestation and labour concerns.

Recent initiatives to end gun violence in the US have also seen youth activists play a major role. Following the shooting that killed 17 people at a school in Parkland, Florida, students began social media campaigns targeting major companies with ties to the National Rifle Association, forcing them to end those relationships. Dick's Sporting Goods, a major gun retailer, pulled assault-style rifles from its stores in response.

Companies also want to understand how digital natives use social media to interact with their products and services. From hiring Gen Z advisors to guide digital marketing efforts, to putting Millennials and Gen Z on their board of directors, companies are racing to connect with young people.

Understanding that Gen Z are motivated by social causes, companies are making efforts to genuinely engage with this demographic on social media. For example, Boxed Water has pledged to plant two trees for every picture of their product shared with #betterplanet, and has planted nearly 800,000 trees to date.

The international community has been warned that there is only a 12 year window to keep global temperatures from rising more than 1.5C – the limit to prevent "climate catastrophe". By that time, Greta Thunberg will be just 28 years old – so it's no wonder that today's youth are determined to keep up the pressure.

Tackling climate change is going to need buy-in from corporations, governments and civil society. If today's young activists can speed up this process, all power to them. After all, as the old proverb goes, we don't inherit the world from our parents – we borrow it from our children.

[Vanina Farber is elea Professor for Social Innovation, IMD Business School; Patrick Reichert is elea Research Fellow in Social Innovation, IMD Business School]

Can you life-hack your way to love?

JOSEPH REAGLE
theconversation.com

There's never been a shortage of dating advice from family, friends and self-help authors. Yet in the digital age, people are turning to nerdy hacker-types as guides.

At first, they might seem like an odd source of romantic advice, but think again: Computer programmers created the systems of quizzes, swipes and algorithms that millions rely on for match-making. Who better to explain how to make the most of these digital tools?

This new approach to dating takes advantage of the power of data. "Quantitative futurist" Amy Webb, for instance, created a handful of fake accounts depicting the types of men she wanted to marry and learned what her highly-rated competitors' profiles looked like. After applying these insights to her own profile, she became the most popular woman on JDate, an online dating site for Jewish people. Mathematician Christopher McKinlay similarly hacked his profile on OkCupid and crawled thousands of profiles to identify the clusters of women he most wanted to target.

With hundreds of candidates in hand, both had to then filter the field: Webb created a sophisticated spreadsheet, and McKinlay went on 88 dates. In the end, each found a spouse.

All of this is part of a new approach to life, as a thing to be hacked and optimized by way of a quantified self.

People track what they eat, the

hours they work, the items they own and countless other details, hoping to experience better health, improved productivity and greater contentment. However, in my forthcoming book, "Hacking Life: Systematized Living and its Discontents," I reveal how the quest for the optimum path can lead you astray. In the case of dating, trying to optimize can be fool-

realized that she had been too inflexible about dealbreakers. She wrote, "I am now in a happy relationship with someone who had six of what I labeled 'dealbreakers' when we met. And if he hadn't been interested in working those issues out with me, we would not be dating today. But he was, and working together we managed to resolve all six of them to our mutual satisfaction."



ishly naive and misunderstand the nature of the task.

COUNTING ON LOVE

Consider the case of former software engineer Valerie Aurora, who in 2015 returned to the dispiriting task of online dating. This time, she hoped she might make the experience palatable, fun even, by hacking dating. Inspired by Webb, Aurora developed a spreadsheet for ranking candidates with positive and negative attributes, including flaws that were so bad they were "dealbreakers."

However, with experience, Aurora

It is a mistake to believe that an ideal match is somewhere out there, just waiting to be rated and ranked. Instead, people invest and grow in their relationship. A good match can be found, but psychology research suggests a good relationship is made.

SEARCHING FAR AND WIDE

Taking a data-centric approach can also lead to a never-ending search. Technology entrepreneur Sebastian Stadil went on 150 dates in four months – more than one a day! At the end, he wrote, "I still believe technology can hack love, though that be-

lief is likely irrational." He confessed that "having more matches increased my odds of finding someone interesting, but it also became an addiction. The possibility of meeting that many people made me want to meet every one of them, to make sure I wouldn't miss the One."

It's a paradox of choice in the digital age: A better match could be just one more date – and data-point – away. Hackers who know their computer science recognize this as the puzzle of "optimal stopping," which seeks to determine how long someone should hold out for a better option.

There is no perfect solution, but there is a reasonable formula: Figure out your parameters, like how soon you want to be in a relationship and how many dates you want to go on in search of the right person. Say you've given yourself a year and 100 dates – two a week. The math says you should go on dates with 37 percent of them without committing, and then – after the 37th person and about four and a half months – pursue the first person who's better than all the others you've met.

Of course, this still assumes that the problem of starting a relationship is a matter of quantity, measurement and optimization. Aurora's experience suggests that making a match is as much about interpersonal negotiation as it is about data and analysis.

[The writer is Associate Professor of Communication Studies, Northeastern University]

Assam assembly sees disruptions amid citizenship bill protests

GUWAHATI, JAN 28 (PTI):

The Opposition Congress, the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) came together to protest against the citizenship bill in the Assam assembly on Monday, alleging the contentious issue found no mention in the Governor's speech. Amid demonstrations, the House was adjourned for 45 minutes.

Soon after Governor Jagdish Mukhi ended his tribute to legendary singer-composer Bhupen Hazarika for being conferred the Bharat Ratna, AGP president Atul Bora raised the issue of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill and said it found no mention in his speech. Thereafter, the entire Opposition, including the Congress, the AIUDF and AGP MLAs shouted slogans and held up placards demanding scrapping of the bill.

The AGP had recently snapped ties with the BJP over the controversial bill, which was passed in Lok Sabha on January 8. Noisy scenes prevailed on the opening day of the budget session, as



the opposition members rushed to the well of the House, and showed the placards to the Governor as he read his speech.

Congress legislators also wore the traditional Assamese scarf of honour - 'gamusa' - around their necks. As the demonstrations continued, the House was adjourned by Speaker Hiten Goswami for 45 minutes.

Later, talking to reporters outside the House, AGP president Atul Bora said the Governor's speech had no mention of the bill, which

"threatens the existence, language, culture, heritage" of the indigenous Assamese people. The Congress' Debabrata Saikia, also the leader of the Opposition in the House, alleged that the state government is trying to keep the people in the dark on the issue of the bill.

"We did not protest when the Governor was paying tributes to Bhupen Hazarika. But, when he started speaking about the law and order situation and that peace, harmony and fraternity prevailed, we protested as the ground

situation is different," Saikia asserted. "The speech is not based on facts. The government has destroyed social harmony creating divisions among people by bringing the bill, which violates the historic Assam Accord," he claimed.

If the Assam government wants to actually honour Bhupen Hazarika, it should scrap the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, he asserted.

In his speech, the Governor said the multi-pronged strategy adopted by the Assam Government under the Unified

Command Structure in the form of sustained counter-insurgency operation and peace overtures have yielded results. "Rehabilitation of misguided youths has paid rich dividends, which has been reflected in the suspension of operation agreements with as many as 13 extremist outfits," he said.

"My government is also hopeful that ULFA(I) and the NDFB(S) faction will also come forward to solve their problems through negotiation," Mukhi added.

WB govt machinery impeding Saradha scam probe: CBI

KOLKATA, JAN 28 (PTI):

The CBI has alleged that the probe into the multi-crore Saradha ponzi scam has been badly hit by a "hostile" government machinery in West Bengal, which is delaying filing of the final charge sheet.

Explaining the reasons for the delay, a senior official of the premier investigative agency told PTI, "The state government is hostile to the CBI and in the case of Saradha scam, the government machinery has damaged all the evidences."

"So, we are getting late in filing the final charge sheet," added the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) official.

He further said that the banking security fraud branch, special crime branch and the economic offences wings of the agency had all become non-functional

after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee decided to withdraw the "general consent" to the CBI to conduct raids and investigations.

"Only the Economic Offences IV (chit fund probe wing) is functioning in the state," he said.

Regarding the deadline in filing the final charge sheets in the Rose Valley and Saradha scams, he said "there is no time frame".

Citing the arrest of renowned film producer Shrikant Mohta by the agency in the Rose Valley chit fund scam case on January 25, he alleged that officers from a police station had gone to Mohta's office on that day to intimidate the agency sleuths, asking them why they had come.

"They had no business to go there and prevent the CBI from carrying out its duty," the official said. CBI sleuths

had questioned Mohta in his office at a shopping mall in south Kolkata on January 25 and later in the day they took him to the CBI office at the CGO Complex in Salt Lake for further interrogation, where he was placed under arrest.

Mohta, considered close to the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal, allegedly duped Rose Valley of Rs 25 crore.

The CBI is probing both the Saradha and Rose Valley multi-crore-rupee scams. The Enforcement Directorate is also probing the Rose Valley scam.

The West Bengal government had formed the SIT in 2013 with officers drawn from the state's CID and Kolkata Police.

The Supreme Court ordered a probe into the Saradha scam and transferred the case to the CBI in 2014.

CBI court convicts NDFB chief, 14 others in 2008 Assam serial blast case

GUWAHATI, JAN 28 (PTI):

The chief of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), Ranjan Daimary, and 14 others were on Monday convicted by a CBI fast track court in the 2008 case of serial bomb blasts in Assam that had left 88 people dead.

CBI Special Judge Apakesh Chakraborty convicted them under various sections of the IPC.

The quantum of the punishment will be announced on Wednesday.

Besides Daimary, others convicted in the case are George Bodo, B Tharai, Raju Sarkar, Nilim Daimary, Anchai Bodo, Indra Brahma, Loko Basumatary, Khargewar Basumatary, Prabhat

Bodo, Jayanta Bodo, Ajay Basumatary, Mridul Goyary, Mathuram Brahma and Rajen Goyary.

The serial blasts were triggered by the NDFB on October 30, 2008 in Guwahati, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Barpeta, killing 88 people and injuring more than 500.

The CBI had taken over the case from Assam Police and had filed two charge sheets, naming 22 accused - seven of them still absconding.

The first charge sheet was filed in 2009, followed by the second and the final one on December 20, 2010.

The trial began in 2011 and the fast track court took over the case in 2017.

During the course of

the trial, the statements of 650 witnesses were recorded and over 600 exhibits examined. Daimary was arrested in Bangladesh in 2010 and was shifted to Guwahati Central Jail.

He was released on conditional bail in 2013 after the state government and the CBI stated before the Kamrup District and Sessions Judge that they had 'no objection' to his release, if he was given conditional bail in view of the ongoing peace talks with the NDFB. The court had imposed eight conditions, including restrictions on Daimary from holding public meetings and media interviews.

Barring Daimary, all others are currently in judicial custody.

SC seeks information on detention centres, foreigners detained there in Assam

NEW DELHI, JAN 28 (PTI):

The Supreme Court Monday directed the Centre to provide it various details including number of functional detention centres in Assam and the number of foreigners detained there during the last 10 years.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Sanjiv Khanna was hearing a petition filed by activist Harsh Mander on the condition of detention centres in Assam and the prolonged detention of foreigners there.

The apex court asked the Centre to provide various details about the detention centres, the period of detention of detainees and the status of their cases before the Foreigners Tribunal.

"We would like to know as to how many detention centres are there. We also want to know how many persons are lodged there and since when," the bench said.

The bench also asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to provide details as to how many persons are being declared foreigners so far and how many of them have been deported till date.

The bench also sought the year-wise details of foreigners who have illegally entered into India during the last 10 years.

The bench, which has sought details within three weeks from the authority, has now posted the matter for further hearing on February 19.

After tussle with Trinamool, BJP shifts Modi's Bengal rally venue

KOLKATA, JAN 28 (PTI):

The BJP has decided to shift the venue of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally in North 24 Parganas' Thakurnagar, as the site where it was scheduled to be held has been booked by the Trinamool Congress.

The ground, where Modi was supposed to address the mega gathering on February 2, has been booked by Mamata Banerjee's party for a week-long religious programme.

According to BJP leaders, the venue was also not big enough and did not meet the security requirements.

"We will organise the rally on February 2 at Thakurnagar but the land or the venue where we were supposed to organise it has been changed and it has been shifted to another nearby ground," BJP state president Dilip Ghosh told PTI.

"It has been done mainly due to two reasons -- the new ground is much bigger than the previous one and secondly TMC had already booked the previous venue for religious programme. So we didn't



want to take any risk," he said. The Special Protection Group, which guards the prime minister, was also not happy with the previous venue as it did not meet the security requirements, Ghosh said.

The BJP-aligned faction of All India Matua Mahasangha is organising the rally. Modi's proposed rally is of immense political significance as the area is known as the hub of Matua community and is near the house of its matriarch Binapani Debi.

Matuas with an estimated population of three million in Bengal exerts influence in at least five Lok Sabha seats

in North and South 24 Parganas districts.

The community originally hails from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Matuas started migrating to West Bengal beginning 1950s, mostly due to religious persecution there.

Ghosh alleged, "Whenever we try to organise any rally, the TMC tries to create hurdles. This time too there has been no difference. So we decided not to take any chance." The Trinamool Congress denied the charge and called the allegation "baseless".

"The allegation is baseless. We had obtained police permission for using microphone on

the ground for our religious fair between January 28 and February 5 long time back," said Trinamool Congress MP Mamata Thakur, who heads a faction of the Matua Mahasangha.

According to BJP sources, this will be one of the areas where the saffron brigade will campaign about the Citizenship Bill, which was passed in the Lok Sabha on January 8.

The Bill seeks to grant Indian citizenship to non-Muslims who fled religious persecution from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and entered India before December 31, 2014.

Bridegroom comes to marry in a road roller in West Bengal

KRISHNAGAR, JAN 28 (PTI):

A man in West Bengal's Nadia district became the most talked about bridegroom of his town on Sunday, when he came to tie the knot in a road roller, breaking away from the tradition of arriving on a horse or in a car.

Arka Patra, 30, the son of a goldsmith, stepped out of the decked-up road roller outside the bride's house at Krishnagar Ukilpara, much to the surprise of the waiting guests and



onlookers. "I wanted to make my wedding ceremony memorable and unique. I could take a vintage car, but that would not be new. I have also heard someone went to marry in an earth mover. But, I did not know of

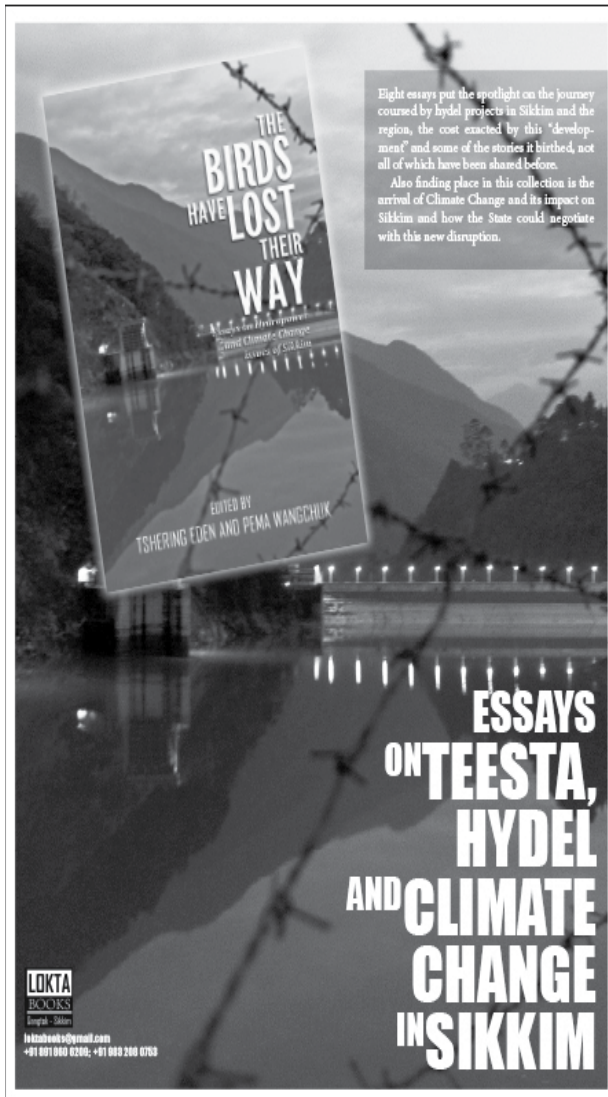
anyone going to marry in a road roller, so I decided on it," he said.

Patra said his wife Arundhuti Tarafdar had also agreed to his unique idea, when he had discussed it with her a few days back.

While the bridegroom rode a road roller, accompanying friends and relatives turned up in a yellow and red coloured mini bus.

For his wedding reception, Partha again wants to do something different and environment-friendly.

"I have decided that no loudspeaker will play at the reception, which is the usual norm on such occasions. Instead, a person will play a flute, moving around the venue," Patra said.



10 Year Challenge: Dominant India conquer another series away from home

MOUNT MAUNGANUI, JAN 28 (PTI): A formidable Indian team completely dominated an out of sorts New Zealand for a series-clinching seven-wicket win in the third ODI, continuing to send a resounding message of its near invincibility to every World Cup opposition.

With an unassailable lead in the five-match series, skipper Virat Kohli signed off his tour Down Under on a high with a first ODI series win in New Zealand in 10 years. However, it is to be noted that prior to this, India played just one series here since the one in 2009.

It was a complete team effort after the bowlers shot New Zealand out for 243 in 49 overs with all-rounder Hardik Pandya (2/45 in 10 overs) making his presence felt with the ball as well as on the field. Pandya was playing his first match after the suspension on him for sexist remarks on a TV show was lifted.

“Three clinical games for us. I couldn’t have asked for a better performance after the first two clinical games. The relentlessness of the side is something that really pleases me,” Kohli said in the post-match presentation.

The chase was a cakewalk with skipper Kohli (60, 74 balls) and his deputy Rohit Sharma



(62, 77 balls) adding 113 runs for the second wicket to set up the victory in only 43 overs.

“When a guy doesn’t get runs in a couple of games, he’s actually hungry to score runs and the opposition feels a bit nervous because he’s gonna fire at some stage. So, that’s the kind of confidence we carry in the team right now,” Kohli said.

With the pitch on the slower side, the two fluent stroke-players had to keep it slower than usual but even that didn’t come in the way of another comprehensive performance.

Once Shikhar Dhawan (28, 6x4) was dismissed, caught in the slips off Trent Boult, Rohit, who till then went

slow, finally opened up. He signalled his intentions with a straight six off Mitchell Santner.

Kohli, at the other end, punched Lockie Ferguson through the point and then hit Ish Sodhi for two boundaries. The first was a top spinner that was pulled in the mid-wicket region while the next was a wrong ‘un on the fifth stump which he cut for another boundary.

Rohit, who has treated Ferguson with a lot of disdain, than hit a front-foot pull off the bowler for his second six.

His skipper also got a six off Ferguson even though he was not in complete control as the ball flew off the top edge.

Rohit, who now has 39 half-centuries, was

stumped off Santner’s bowling, when he tried to go for an ugly hoick. His innings had three boundaries and two sixes.

Kohli, who now has 49 half-centuries in ODIs, also hit six fours apart from the the six off Ferguson.

Just when a 40th ODI ton was looking imminent, Kohli’s uppish drive off Boult failed to clear Henry Nicholls at extra cover. However, Dinesh Karthik (38, 38 balls) and Ambati Rayudu (40, 42 balls) did their cause no harm with an unbroken 77-run stand for the fourth wicket to steer the team home.

Earlier, during New Zealand innings, Pandya seemed unfazed by the tribulations of the past few weeks and made a

significant contribution to India’s impressive bowling effort.

Pandya delivered figures of two for 45 in 10 overs and choked the run flow during the middle overs.

Skipper Kohli’s stand on the kind of balance that the Baroda all-rounder brings to the side stood vindicated during another controlled bowling effort by the visitors.

Save the 119-run fourth wicket stand between Ross Taylor (93 off 106 balls) and Tom Latham (51 off 64 balls), New Zealand couldn’t really accelerate against the Indian attack on a pitch that was a touch slower compared to the second ODI.

Mohammed Sha-

mi (3/41 in 9 overs), who had all but sealed the third seamer’s spot for the World cup, once again provided the initial breakthrough as Colin Munro (7) edged one to Rohit in the slip cordon.

Martin Guptill (13) then got a delivery from Bhuvneshwar Kumar (2/46 in 9 overs), which moved a shade after pitching. The resultant nick was taken by Dinesh Karthik, replacing an injured Mahendra Singh Dhoni (hamstring) behind the stumps.

Kane Williamson’s (28) bane in the series has been not capitalising on good starts and it was no different in this game either with Pandya coming into the focus with an impressive catch at the mid-wicket off Yuzvendra Chahal (2/51 in 9 overs).

Chahal shortened the length as Williamson came out. The home batsman couldn’t control his flick shot and an agile Pandya did the rest.

Pandya’s bowling was sharp as he got a few to rear up to both Taylor and Latham, who resurrected the innings from 59 for 3.

Pandya’s first spell read 5-0-9-0 with 23 dot balls.

In his second spell, he did get some stick but removed Henry Nicholls and Mitchell Santner in successive overs. The next match is in Hamilton on January 31.

2nd International: India women hold Spain to 1-1 draw

MURCIA (SPAIN), JAN 28 (PTI): Indian women earned a hard-fought 1-1 draw against Spain in the second international hockey match after having lost the opening encounter by a close margin. Gurjit Kaur’s 43rd minute strike was nullified by home team’s Maria Tost in the 49th minute during an encounter on Sunday evening.

Having lost 2-3 to Spain in their opening match on Saturday, the Indian team put up a spirited performance in a high-voltage second encounter here.

While the first quarter ended in a stalemate, the second quarter saw India make a breakthrough with their first PC of the match. The PC was re-taken but well-saved by the Spanish goalkeeper.

It was goalless at half-time but Spain created a penalty corner opportu-

nity soon into the third quarter. The Indian goalkeeper made an impressive save to deny the hosts. In the following minutes, India increased their tempo that resulted in yet another short corner, which was brilliantly struck by dragflicker Gurjit Kaur.

The joy of 1-0 lead against the 2018 Women’s World Cup Bronze Medal winners was shortlived as a defensive lapse by India gave way to Spain scoring a beautiful field goal through Tost in the 49th minute which levelled the scores 1-1. The final quarter remained intense until the hooter with both teams taking their game a notch above and pushing for a winning goal but neither succeeded with the match ending in a draw.

India will play their third match of the tour on Tuesday.

Rayudu suspended from bowling in international cricket



suspended from bowling in international cricket by the ICC after the Indian player opted against getting his suspect action tested within the stipulated 14-day period.

Rayudu was reported for a suspect action during the first ODI against Australia on January 13.

“The player elected not to submit to a test of his bowling action within the stipulated period of 14 days of being reported for a suspect action, and therefore he has been suspended with immediate effect...,” the ICC said in a statement.

The suspension was done in “accordance with clause 4.2 of the ICC regulations” which deals with the legality of bowl-

remain in place until he is tested, and can demonstrate he is able to bowl with a legal action,” the world body stated.

However, according to Article 11.5 of the ICC regulations and with the consent of the BCCI, the 33-year-old is free to bowl in domestic cricket played under the auspices of the Indian Board.

The Andhra Pradesh cricketer is primarily a middle-order batsman and has a mere three wickets from the 121 ODI deliveries he has bowled in his 49-match ODI career so far.

He has been handed the ball on only nine occasions in the 50-over format and has never bowled in T20 Internationals.

Real Kashmir beat Chennai City FC 1-0



SRINAGAR, JAN 28 (PTI): Real Kashmir upstaged Chennai City FC for the second time and kept themselves in title contention with a 1-0 victory over the table-toppers in a crucial I-League match here Monday.

Ivorian striker Gnore Krizo struck in the 81st minute to send the home supporters who braved the near freezing temperature at the TRC ground into wild celebrations.

Real Kashmir dominated throughout the

match with a lot of shots at the opposition goal while Chennai had far fewer attempts at the home side goal.

Real Kashmir had defeated Chennai with the same margin in the first leg in Coimbatore in December last.

With Monday’s win, Real Kashmir joined Churchill Brothers at second spot with 28 points each from 14 matches. Chennai are still on top of the league table with 30 points from 14 matches.

Bhopal Gas Tragedy: SC to hear in April Centre’s plea seeking additional funds for compensating victims



NEW DELHI, JAN 28 (PTI): The Supreme Court Monday agreed to hear in April the Centre’s plea seeking Rs 7,844 crore as additional fund from the successor firms of US-based Union Carbide Corporation, now owned by Dow Chemicals, for giving compensation to victims of the 1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Sanjiv Khanna said it would hear the central government’s curative petition for enhanced compensation for the victims in April.

The Centre is seeking a direction to Union Carbide and other firms for Rs 7,844 crore additional amount over and above the earlier settlement amount of USD 470 million for paying compensation to the gas tragedy victims.

Over 3,000 people had died in the tragedy due to release of methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas.

The Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) gave

a compensation of USD 470 million (Rs 715 crore) after the toxic gas leak from the Union Carbide factory on the intervening night of December 2-3, 1984, killed over 3,000 people and affected 1.02 lakh others.

The survivors of the 1984 tragedy have been fighting for long for adequate compensation and proper medical treatment for ailments caused by the toxic leak.

The families of the deceased and people who bore the brunt of the industrial disaster were planning to sign a petition, to be sent to the Supreme Court, requesting it to start hearing a curative petition of the government filed in December 2010 for more compensation.

The victims of the “world’s worst disaster” had not been paid adequately by US-based UCC now owned by Dow Chemicals, Madhya Pradesh’s Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Vishwas Sarang had told PTI.

On June 7, 2010, a

Bhopal court had convicted seven executives of Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) to two years’ imprisonment in connection with the incident. Then UCC chairman, Warren Anderson was the prime accused in the case but did not ap-

pear for the trial. On February 1, 1992, the Bhopal CJM court declared him an absconder. The courts in Bhopal had issued non-bailable warrants against Anderson twice -- in 1992 and 2009.

Anderson died in September, 2014.

India women aim to seal series against NZ in 2nd ODI

MOUNT MAUNGANUI, JAN 28 (PTI): A dominant India will look to seal the three-ODI series with another collective effort and consolidate their position in the ICC women’s championship table when they face New Zealand in the second one-day here Tuesday.

The Indian women’s team put behind off-field controversies by making a superb start to the three-ODI rubber -- which is part of the ICC Women’s Championship series -- thrashing New Zealand by nine wickets in the opening match.

Ahead of the series, Indian women’s cricket had found itself in the

middle of a furore when ODI skipper Mithali Raj and then coach Ramesh Powar had a fallout during the semifinal of the T20 World Cup in West Indies.

It eventually led to the exit of Powar and appointment of WV Raman as head coach.

Under Raman, the Indian team dished out a dominating performance, outclassing the hosts in all three departments in the series-opener.

The spin trio of Ekta Bisht (3/32), Poonam Yadav (3/42) and Deepti Sharma (2/27) strangled the Kiwi batswomen to dismiss them for 192 in

48.4 overs before openers Smriti Mandhana and Jemimah Rodrigues steered the side home with a 190-run stand -- India’s third-best for the first wicket in ODIs.

Stylish opener Mandhana played a starring role, hitting her fourth ODI century as India overhauled the target in 33 overs to improve their position to fourth in the ICC championship table, which will determine qualifiers for the 2021 World Cup.

A win in the second ODI will seal the series and would be a fitting revenge for the Indian team, which had lost the home leg of the ICC

Women’s Championship series 1-2 to New Zealand during the last cycle that ran from 2014-2016.

New Zealand, on the other hand, are ranked second in the ICC Women’s Championship table and are guaranteed direct entry into the 50-over World Cup being the hosts.

In the first ODI, the Kiwis have looked clueless against India, a team that ended the hosts’ hope of qualifying for the knockouts at the ICC Women’s World Cup 2017 and the Women’s World T20 last year.

New Zealand’s batting was in disarray in the opening match with most batswomen failing

to capitalise on starts.

Opener Suzie Bates (36) and skipper Amy Satterthwaite (31) were the top-scorers for New Zealand in the first match and they would hope to convert these starts in the second ODI.

“We need to keep backing our abilities and play with more confidence. It is a bit of a mental challenge for us to step up against India,” skipper Satterthwaite had said after the first ODI.

“Not relying on a couple of players, whole batting order needs to contribute. Also need to back all our bowlers to execute.”

Squads: India: Mithali Raj

(capt), Tanya Bhatia (wk), Ekta Bisht, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Jhulan Goswami, Dayalan Hemlatha, Mansi Joshi, Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana, Mona Meshram, Shikha Pandey, Purnam Raut, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Poonam Yadav.

New Zealand: Amy Satterthwaite (capt), Suzie Bates, Bernadine Beuzidenhout (wk), Sophie Devine, Lauren Down, Maddy Green, Holly Huddleston, Leigh Kasperek, Amelia Kerr, Katie Perkins, Anna Peterson, Hannah Rowe, Lea Tahuhu.

Match starts 6:30am IST.

Pak to complete fencing of 2,600-km-long Afghan border by next year

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, JAN 28 (PTI) The Pakistan Army has said that the fencing of a substantial portion of the over 2,600-km-long Afghan border has been completed and the rest will be finished by next year to check the movement of terrorists.

Pakistan has spent billions of rupees for putting fence on the porous border. Army spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor said that the fencing of the entire border will be completed next year with the cost of about Rs 70 billion, Radio Pakistan reported.

Gafoor said that of the total 2,611 km, fencing of 900 km has been completed.

He said besides fencing, the project also includes gadgets and surveillance equipment to keep strict vigilance on illicit movement from across the border. "The



fence has amply helped to check the movement of terrorists from across the border and it would further assist after completion of the project," Ghafoor said in an interaction with a group of media during a visit to border tribal district of North Waziristan.

Media representatives visited Ghulam Khan, Miranshah and

other parts of North Waziristan for the first time after the military operations. He said the fence had helped check the movement of terrorists from across the border and the situation would further improve after the completion of the project.

Giving a break-up, Gafoor said that about 1,200km of the total 2,600km border with Af-

ghanistan was in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the rest is in Balochistan province.

The work on the erection of about 1200 km chunk, the most sensitive portion out of the total 2,600km border with the war-torn country, had commenced last year.

The fence has made it difficult for terrorists to cross the border. It will

stop cross-border terrorism and uncontrolled movement of the people even if the law and order situation gets worst again in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of US troops, The News International reported.

In December, President Donald Trump decided to pull a significant number of American troops from Afghanistan.

Earlier, briefing the media representatives at Corps Headquarters Peshawar, Commander 11 Corps Lt Gen Shaheen said after the end of war in the area, the troops are now in the process of consolidation.

He said ninety five per cent work of resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons has already been accomplished. He said following the operation against militants, there is no "No Go Area" in the tribal region.

US democracy under attack like never before: Kamala Harris

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, JAN 28 (PTI) Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris has launched her 2020 presidential bid on Sunday with a scathing criticism of President Donald Trump's policies, saying that the US is at an "inflection point" in the history due to the attack on democracy like never before.

Harris, 54, who was elected to the Senate in 2016, announced her run for presidency last week. She has been voted on top of the list of Democratic leaders aspiring to defeat Trump in the November 2020 election.

Harris, the second African-American woman elected to the US senate, has drawn comparisons to Barack Obama since early in her political career. "We are at an inflection point in the history of our nation. We are here because the American dream and our American democracy are under attack and on the line like never before," she said.

When we have leaders who bully and attack a free press and undermine our democratic institutions, that's not our America, she said, without mentioning Trump's name. She criticised "the arrogance of power she saw in wealthy bank executives after the foreclosure crisis, and said that Americans needed to be honest about the country's problems with racism, sexism, anti-semitism and transphobia.

She also emphasised unity, praising the amazing spirit of the American people and pledging her desire to be a president, echoing former president Abraham Lincoln's famous words, Of the people, by the people, and for all people.

Pointing to Trump's xenophobic rhetoric, his policies at the border, and his decision to shut down the government in a failed attempt to get

funding for his controversial plan to build a wall along the US-Mexico border, she said, "People are trying to convince us that the villain in our American story is each other." "But that is not our story. That is not who we are." "We are better than this," she said.

Recollecting the fighting spirit of her Indian mother, Shyamala Gopalan, who migrated to the US from Tamil Nadu for studies, Harris told a cheering crowd in her hometown of Oakland, California, that this was not going to be an easy election pitted against an incumbent like Trump.

Harris spoke of an America where "we welcome refugees and denounced President Trump's plan to build a wall along the US-Mexico border as a "medieval vanity project". "If I have the honour of being your president I will tell you this: I am not perfect. Lord knows, I am not perfect. But I will always speak with decency and moral clarity and treat all people with dignity and respect. I will lead with integrity. And I will tell the truth," she said.

"My mother used to say don't sit around and complain about things. Do something," Harris said in her impressive speech that lasted for more than 30 minutes.

"With the fighting spirit I got from my mother, I stand before you today to announce my candidacy for president of the United States. And I will tell you, I'm running for president, because I love my country," Harris told the crowd estimated to be around 20,000, a few blocks away from where she was born.

So far four women Democratic leaders have entered the presidential race. Apart from Harris, the three others are Sen-

ators Elizabeth Warren, Kirsten Gillibrand and Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard from Hawaii.

All of them have to pass through a grilling presidential primary beginning next January, the winner of which would be announced in the Democratic National Convention in July 2020. The nominee would challenge incumbent Trump, a Republican, in the presidential election in November that year.

Quoting the former presidential candidate Robert Kennedy, Harris said challenging an incumbent is not easy.

"Of course, we know this is not going to be easy guys. We know what the doubters will say is that they always say, they'll say it's not your time. They'll say, wait your turn. They'll say, the odds are long. They'll say, it can't be done.... But, America's story has always been written by people who can see what can be unburdened by what has been... that's our story." "I say to you my friends, these are not ordinary times, and this will not be an ordinary election. But this is our America.... We can reclaim the American dream for every single person in our country. We can restore America's moral leadership on this planet," she added.

Asserting that she running to fight for an America where the economy works for working, Harris promised education and healthcare for all if elected as the 46th US president.

Harris was the first African-American and Indian-American attorney of California, before being elected as the US Senator. Already having many firsts in her name, Harris will be the first woman president of the country if she wins.

Trump warns Europeans not to try to evade Iran sanctions



WASHINGTON, JAN 28 (AP) The Trump administration is closely eyeing efforts in Europe to set up an alternative money payment channel to ease doing business with Iran without running afoul of US sanctions.

The White House is putting the Europeans on notice, saying that if they try to do an end-run around U.S. sanctions on Iran, they will be subject to stiff fines and penalties.

A spokeswoman for

the European Union says preparations for the alternative system are "at an advanced stage" and could be announced "very soon."

In an effort to get ahead of any announcement, a senior administration official told The Associated Press on Friday that the U.S. will fully enforce its sanctions and hold anyone accountable for undermining them. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the issue.

Japan PM vows to step up China ties but bolster defense

TOKYO, JAN 28 (AP) Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged to further expand Japan's already improving ties with China but stressed the need to bolster defense capability as far as space amid concern about China's military activity.

Abe's comments came in a policy speech at the start of the parliamentary session Monday. He said bilateral relations have returned to "normal" since he visited Beijing in October and that Japan wants to further elevate Japanese-Chinese cooperation in trade and other areas.



He said Japan however needs to expand its defense capability against the potential threat of space and cyber wars as China rapidly advances

its aerospace technology.

Abe is hoping to lead his party to win parliamentary elections in July and strengthen his grip on power until 2021 or possibly beyond.

Chinese rights lawyer jailed for 'subversion'



BEIJING, JAN 28 (AFP) Prominent Chinese human rights lawyer Wang Quanzhang was sentenced on Monday to four and a half years in prison for state subversion, a northern Chinese court said.

Wang, 42, who defended political activists and victims of land seizures, disappeared in a 2015 sweep -- known as the "709" crackdown -- aimed at courtroom critics of Communist authorities.

Charged in January 2016 with alleged state subversion, Wang had been the last of more than 200 lawyers and

activists arrested in the 709 crackdown to be tried or released.

Wang was "found guilty of subverting state power, sentenced to four years and six months in prison, and deprived of political rights for five years," the Tianjin Second Intermediate People's Court said in a statement.

After more than two years of being in legal limbo -- detained without a trial date -- Wang's court hearing took place behind closed doors in Tianjin on December 26.

At the time, the court said the trial was closed to the public "due to the

state secrets involved".

Wang's wife Li Wenzu was placed under de facto house arrest the day before her husband's trial to prevent her from attending.

Li has actively protested her husband's detention. Last April, she attempted to march 100 kilometres (60 miles) to the detention facility in Tianjin where her husband had been held.

In December, before Wang's court date was announced, Li and three supporters shaved their heads and tried to submit a petition to a Beijing court protesting Wang's detention.

Blaring midnight music on Noida road lands 3 behind bars

NOIDA (UP), JAN 28 (PTI) Three men were arrested Monday for allegedly playing loud music around midnight with speakers mounted on a pickup truck, police said.

A complaint was received around midnight about the accused men causing inconvenience to the people in Sector 10 area, going around with music blaring, the police said.

"The people were getting inconvenienced. Some of them were angry and had started assembling on the road due to the disturbance," said Inspector Manoj Kumar Pant, the in charge of the Sector 20 police station.

Soon, Pant said, local police officials reached the area, intercepted the vehicle and tried to talk them through the situation.

"It was around quarter past 12 in the night and the three were unrelenting, hence they were arrested on charges under the Code Of Crim-

inal Procedure, 1973, and their pickup truck impounded," he said.

Those held have been identified as Aslam (22), Buntty (24) and Aman (18), all residents of Noida, the police said.

They have been booked under CrPC Section 151 (arrest to prevent the commission of cognizable offences), 107 (security for keeping the peace), and related offences, the police said.

Pant said the vehicle was impounded under Section 207 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (Power to detain vehicles used without certificate of registration permit, etc) after the accused failed to show necessary documents. "The accused are being produced in a local court," he added.

On January 18, a DJ was sent behind bars after he was booked for playing "very loud music" during a wedding after 10 pm in violation of the law, in a first such arrest in Noida over noise pollution.





VERY VINTAGE: Singer FKA Twigs wraps up in a corset, green animal print coat, striped pants, and gold necklaces during the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

I love having all eyes on me: Vanessa Hudgens

Los Angeles, Jan 28 (PTI): Actor Vanessa Hudgens has said like her "Rent: Live" character Maureen Johnson she 'loves being the centre of attention'.

The actor said she could relate to her character's approach to life in the upcoming TV production of the Broadway musical.

'It's been so much fun finding Maureen within myself because she is loud and she loves being the centre of attention, and I am a performer.'

'I love having all eyes on me. She expresses herself in a way that is unique to her own, and she's an artist, and I feel like that's what I aspire to be like as well,' Hudgens told the Hollywood Reporter.

The actor said she also enjoyed working with Jordan Fisher on "Rent: Live".



'I feel like we both have such a love for musical theatre and a love for 'Rent' even before we came to it, (and) it really just translates," she said.

Couldn't afford to cry while making 'Rubaru Roshni': Svati Bhatkal

MUMBAI, JAN 28 (PTI): Debuting with a film which chronicles stories of grief, loss and forgiveness, director Svati Chakravarty Bhatkal says it was a challenge to not shed tears while making the documentary "Rubaru Roshni"

The film, produced by Aamir Khan, follows the story of three individuals coming to terms with the death of their loved ones and eventually getting healed after forgiving them.

"I couldn't afford to cry during the shoots but I did cry at times. It was difficult to not cry. It's not easy. But Aamir cried a lot. He used to use his t-shirts to wipe his tears," Svati said in a group interview.

The three stories focuses on assassination of Congress member of parliament Lalit Maken and wife Gitanjali Maken, murder of nun Rani Maria and the killing of two American citizens in the 26/11 attacks.

Svati says while there are other stories too where the grieving member of a family forgave the perpetrator these three gave her a good arch.

"There is a limitation in terms of how many stories you can

include in a film. Length was a limitation. Also, I was getting a historical arch in these three stories- from 80s to 2000s, I was getting to explore the time frame.

"There are several other stories as well, no doubt. We



researched quite a few too. So lets see if we get a chance to showcase those, in some form or the other," she added.

The director says she didn't need to "convince" her subjects to appear in the film and the process was organic and built on a relationship.

"There really wasn't much convincing. I had just met them initially, with a curiosity to know what actually happened. I had told them I want to shoot something but I don't know how and what exactly will come out of it. A relationship began and things developed slowly."

The challenge for Svati was to figure out if her voice would remain relevant in the times of edgier content and web series heavy environment.

"This is a modern era of web series, people are doing edgy things, so you do feel if we'll remain relevant, if, what we want to say, will reach generations. You question yourself a lot. I didn't know it'll take this much time too. I had to learn how to be patient, which Aamir taught me."

The title of the film comes from Rumi's poem "the wound is where the light enters" and Svati says it was Aamir who instantly came up with "Rubaru Roshni".

For Aamir, the decision to produce the project was done in a blink as he was consumed by the message of the film.

"When I heard what Svati wants to do, I felt this was a very important concept and felt that in life, as human beings, we have forgotten the power of forgiveness, how healing it can be.

"I knew we had to make this. I didn't know how we will show it at that time. But I said lets make it first and then we'll see," the actor said.

He'll have to pass screen test: Aamir on launching son



MUMBAI, JAN 27 (PTI): Aamir Khan says he is looking for the right story to launch his son Junaid in films but insists that he has to pass the screen test for it. Aamir said his 26-year-old son's taste in films is quite similar to his but he will have to prove himself worthy of a role before he is signed for a project.

"We are looking for Junaid. I've seen his work and I'm quite happy with it. When we will get the right kind of story... I believe in screen tests so he has to pass the test. If he does a good test, he'll be in the film. If not, he won't be," Aamir said in a group interview. The actor said Junaid has trained in acting and has been taking part in plays. "He has trained as an actor. He did two years of training and theatre in American Academy of Dramatic Arts in LA and then he did plays for one year there. He has been in theatre for three years now."

Aamir said he would like his son to play strong characters rather than a "hero".

"I would like to see him as a lead actor who plays characters, because I've always believed in that. You should always be playing characters and not hero. There's a difference. "I've always felt happy that whenever my films come out, people call me by my characters name. That tells me my work has really hit home," he added.

The actor was in conversation with the media to promote his upcoming production, "Rubaru Roshni". Directed by Svati Chakravarty Bhatkal, the film chronicles three real life story of grief and forgiveness.

REQUIRED FOR CANADA

**Nurses,
Caregivers,
Chef-Waiters-Butchers-Bakers,
Driver,
Farm Workers - Meat Packers
IT PROFESSIONAL**



Walk for Interview & Resume Submission

7SEA OVERSEAS CONSULTANCY

Paribahan Nagar, Opp. Webel IT Park, Matigara, Siliguri

Email ID: sevenseainfo8@gmail.com/

sevenseasconsultancy5@gmail.com

Contact No. +9170764 21789 / +9183487 14807

ARIES: Hello, psychic hotline! You may be especially tuned in today, as the moon in Scorpio fires up your metaphysical eighth house and connects with spiritual Neptune in Pisces and your intuition zone. This can be an asset or a liability, Aries, so slow your pace and be a little more self-reflective than usual. While knowing what others are really thinking can be an ace up your sleeve, being vulnerable to absorbing people's energy could seriously cramp your style.

TAURUS: Bring back that loving feeling! If you've lost sight of the big picture in a key relationship, widen the angle on your viewfinder. Today, as the Scorpio moon in your committed-partnership zone forms a supportive angle to gentle Neptune, you can do the necessary triage. Under this compassionate transit, you'll be able to listen to the other person's point of view without getting defensive. In the scheme of things, it doesn't matter who paid for the last two meals or always initiates contact.

GEMINI: Struggling to get anything accomplished today? That's not surprising,

considering that the two dreamiest planets, the moon and Neptune, are synced up in your work houses. Save the data analysis for another day. You CAN get a lot done, Gemini—in the more creative realms of your job. Call an impromptu brainstorming meeting. Look over images and fonts for your next visual project.

CANCER: Everything's coming up roses today, especially when it comes to your career. But to enjoy the blossoming possibilities, you have to take a risk. Daredevil Mars gets a windfall of support from lucky Jupiter—a rare, one-day formation. Their combined powers give you the guts to ask for a raise, pitch a project or share your work with the world. Is a leadership position calling your name? Stop waiting for someone else to ascend to the throne. Jump in, Cancer. Anything you don't know now you'll learn on the job.

LEO: Leave the partying to others tonight, Leo. Under today's emotionally intense skies, you'll seek the comfort of home sweet home. A penetrating Scorpio moon in your domestic fourth house syncs up with intro-

spective Neptune in Pisces. You may need some alone time to process something that happened at work today or simmering issues on the family front. Or maybe you just need to unplug from the all noise and demands of a busy workweek and be present with your thoughts. Either way, kick off your shoes and unwind.

VIRGO: Think money doesn't fall from the sky? Under today's rare and bizarrely lucky trine between abundant Jupiter and assertive Mars, you could talk your way right into an opportunity. Don't be shy about sharing your professional goals. You could be the recipient of financial support, perhaps from a relative or someone who champions your efforts.

LIBRA: Although you're a staunchly independent thinker, you love to partner and collaborate with people who share your idealistic perspective on life. If they're free-spirited, visionary and open-minded, you'll make magic with them any day. (No, they can't make a million demands on your time, but otherwise, it's cool.)

SCORPIO: Find the middle ground be-

tween "meticulous" and "hot mess" today, Scorpio. With energizer Mars in your systematic sixth house, you could get caught in the grips of perfectionism and try to crush the competition with your masterful skills. Today, a lucky connection between your co-ruler Mars and "let your hair down" Jupiter saves you from this obsessive demise.

SAGITTARIUS: Is your life lighting a fire in your belly, Archer? Today's energizing and optimistic alignment of Mars and your ruler, live-it-up Jupiter, ignites your passion. Take matters into your own hands and drum up a challenge for yourself. You're definitely capable of achieving more—or something more satisfying to your soul!

CAPRICORN: You're not imagining it. Capricorn: You're definitely picking up on

AQUARIUS: Pay it forward, Aquarius. But first, stay in receptive mode as the Scorpio moon in your ambitious career corner gets a powerful boost from Neptune in your money zone today. You could finally receive recognition for something you've been toiling away on, or a mentor figure could offer some sage advice. If you see an opportunity, seize it! People will be happy to help under this cosmic alignment. THEN make your own contribution to the karma bank by lending a hand to someone less experienced.

PISCES: Your tuned-in sign seldom has a problem going with the flow. And under today's footloose starmap, you could get going in a literal sense. Pack a bag, Pisces: You might be hitting the road—or the friendly skies—on a moment's notice. A Scorpio moon in your travel zone syncs up with your co-ruler, nomadic Neptune, in your sign. Visions of white-sand beaches, or white-capped mountains, are dancing in your head. You don't need a companion, Fish. Spontaneity and self-direction are your roadmaps for this journey.