



**SMIT'S ANNUAL FEST
'KAALRAV 2019' CONCLUDES**
pg02

**DONALD TRUMP'S USE OF
HUMILIATION COULD HAVE
CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES – A
PSYCHOLOGIST EXPLAINS WHY**
pg04

**'ANDHADHUN' TO
RELEASE IN CHINA
AS 'PIANO PLAYER'**
pg08



SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Pages 8 | ₹ 5

Pulwama terror attack mastermind killed in encounter: Officials

SRINAGAR, MAR 11 (PTI): The mastermind of the February 14 Pulwama terror attack, in which 40 CRPF personnel had died, has been killed in an encounter in south Kashmir's Tral area, officials said Monday.

Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorist Mudasir Ahmed Khan alias 'Mohd Bhai' was among two militants killed in the encounter in Tral's Pinglish area in Pulwama district, they said. The encounter lasted past midnight.

Khan and an JeM operative, who officials believe is Sajjad Bhat, whose vehicle was used in the Pulwama attack, were killed in the gunfight with security forces.

The family members of Khan have taken his body, the officials said, adding that family members of Bhat refused to take the body, saying it was charred beyond recognition. Security forces had launched a cordon and search operation in Pinglish after receiving specific intelligence about the presence of militants in the area.

The operation turned into an encounter after the militants opened fire at the search party who retaliated, the officials said.

Lesser-known JeM terrorist Khan has been identified as the brain behind the audacious terror strike in Pulwama that left 40 Central Reserve Police Force personnel dead on February 14, officials said on Sunday.

The CRPF personnel were killed when a JeM terrorist rammed an explosives-laden vehicle -- a Maruti Eeco minivan -- into their bus. The minivan was bought by Bhat just 10 days before the suicide attack.

Suicide attacker Adil Ahmed Dar, who blew the explosive-laden vehicle next to the bus, had

turn to pg02

East dist details model code of conduct rules

GANGTOK, 11 MAR [IPR]: With the announcement of the schedule for 2019 General Election to Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies in the state by the ECI on 10 March, the District Collector-cum-DEO (East), Kapil Meena, called a press briefing about the implementation of the Model Code of Conduct which came into force on Sunday evening.

The District Collector informed that there are a total of 12 Assembly constituencies in the East District with 214 polling stations.

He said that from today onwards, the District Control Room will be functional 24/7 and that all the field teams have also been deputed for enforcement of Model Code of Conduct.

The field teams comprise of two Sector Officers for each Constituency, totaling to 24 Sector Officers holding Magisterial powers in the East District.

These Sector Officers



are deputed to ensure that the MCC is enforced properly and under these Sector Officers there are 30 Flying Squad teams to be deputed in the field for implementation of MCC and dealing with any violation.

The Superintendent

of Police, East District, Hemraj Rai, in turn informed that Sector Police Officers and Sub-Sector Police Officers will also be deputed for vigilance and monitoring.

Apart from these teams, Expenditure Monitoring teams, Vid-

eo Surveillance Team, Video Viewing Team, Accounting team are also in place for strict adherence to the Code of Conduct and for monitoring election expenditure.

As for the law & order requirements, the SP East informed that apart from

the state police force, 10 additional companies of paramilitary forces are being sent to the state.

It was informed that sensitive polling stations will be given extra security. He further stated that at present, 77 polling station locations have been

identified as sensitive, critical and vulnerable areas, and this number could change through the course of campaigning.

The District Collector, who is also the Returning Officer/ East District also informed that this year, Biraspati Parsai Senior

Secondary School, Ranipool would be the venue of the Strong Room and poll day works for East district.

Later in the afternoon, the DC briefed representatives of different political parties about various issues related to the General Election like security arrangements, hoardings, pamphlet distributions, venues for holding election campaign meetings etc.

He also informed that no public meetings with regard to elections will be allowed at Paljor Stadium this year.

The DC also said that there should be no election-related event held without the permission of the DC Office including permission of campaigning vehicles and public meeting venue permissions.

He stated that pre-certification of social media related to political advertisements is necessary from the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC).

41 of 141 polling stations marked 'critical polling booths' in West



GYALSHING, 11 MAR (IPR): In a press conference called by the DC-cum-DEO, Karma R Bonpo along with SP West, Tenzing Loden Lepcha mentioned that since the General Elections has been declared by the Election Commission of India the Model Code of Conduct has come into

play since the declaration made on 10 Mar, 2019.

The DEO mentioned to the press that in the West District there are 141 Polling Stations out of which 41 Polling stations have been identified as 'Critical Polling Booths', 6 Women Specific Polling Booths have been identified which

would be manned exclusively by Women Personnel.

He informed that a total of 160 Polling teams, 19 Sector Magistrates, 16 Flying Squads, 16 Static Surveillance Teams, 8 Video Surveillance Teams and 8 Video Viewing Teams have been formed to conduct

peaceful elections. He also informed that Control Room would start to function as soon as possible from 11 Mar, 2019.

He mentioned that Nominations and Scrutiny process would be conducted at the Office of the District Collector, DAC. Only 3 vehicles are allowed to be brought by the candidate and would not be allowed to park outside the DAC Gate. A total of 4 persons including the Candidate are to accompany to the Office of the District Election Officer-cum-DC.

He also informed that Identity cards would be given to all the candidates, Polling Agents and Officers attached to the Election Process for restricted entry to the Election Office Premises. He

turn to pg02

Kalimpong District crosses 2 lakh voters

SUMMIT REPORT

KALIMPONG, 11 MAR:

After the imposition of Code of Conduct, it was known from the District Magistrate, Dr. Viswanath that Kalimpong District has 2,03,332 voters.

Out of the total, there are 1,12,086 male voters while there are 1,02,034 female voters and 02 third gender voters.

It was also informed that there are 261 polling booths under Kalimpong District Administration. There are 11 polling

booths at far-flung places which are officially termed as P-2 polling booth, with 7 in Kalimpong block and 4 in Gorubathan Block.

There are 49 Sectors, with 22 in Kalimpong-I, 15 in Block II and 12 in Gorubathan Block.

"The notification will be issued on 19th March and the last date of filing nomination is on 26 March, the Scrutiny of nominations is on 27th March, while the last date of withdrawal of the candidate is on 29th

March," said Dr. Viswanath who also said that the administration is ready for the elections.

The police S.P later said that they have been following all the instructions of the Election Commission.

"We have been doing everything mandated by the election commission, we are sending the weekly reports, also, the general law and order situation is peaceful as of now," said the Superintendent of Police, Dhurva Jyoti De.

Number of voters, polling stations go up; 1.5 crore new voters join

NEW DELHI, MAR 11 (PTI): The number of people eligible to vote in Lok Sabha polls beginning next month has increased by 8.4 crore as compared to 2014 general election, and these include 1.5 crore "young voters" who are in the 18-19 age group and would exercise their franchise first time, according to the Election Commission.

The total electorate in the country this year has increased to approximately 90 crore compared to 81.5 crore in 2014.

"This marks an increase of more than 8.4 crore electors," the Commission said. Over 1.5 crore voters are in the age group of 18-19 years. These "young voters" constitute 1.66 per cent of the total electors.

The poll panel had allowed enrolment of "transgender persons" with gender mentioned as "Others" in the electoral rolls since 2012.

The number of voters enrolled in this category is 38,325.

The panel will set up nearly 10.35 lakh polling stations in the country, as compared to nearly 9.28 lakh set up during 2014 polls. This marks an increase of 10.1 per cent.

"The increase is largely due to rationalisation of polling stations, which the Commission undertook in the recent years," the EC said. Nearly 39.6 lakh electronic voting machines and 17.4 lakh paper trail or voter verifiable paper trail machines would be

used in these polling stations. These include reserves.

One control unit and at least one ballot unit where buttons are placed constitutes EVM. This time, the visually impaired and blind voters will be provided with braille voter slips to cast their vote.

Braille is a script with raised dots that can be read with fingers by people who are blind or who have low vision. It is a tactile reading and writing system used by blind and visually impaired people who cannot access print material. As part of its strategy framework for 'accessible elections', the Commission has told all chief electoral officers to issue accessible photo voter slips with braille to voters who are visually impaired or blind.

The braille enabled slips were used in recently held assembly elections too.

Electronic voting machines already have the braille feature. The ballot paper pasted on the machine with name and symbol of candidates is braille-enabled. The Election Commission also plans to provide braille election photo identity cards to visually challenged voters across the country.

Lok Sabha elections will begin on April 11 and continue for over a month till May 19 across seven phases. The counting of votes will be held on May 23, the Election Commission announced Sunday, kick-starting a mega electoral battle.

SummitTIMES IN NEPALI



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Facebook at the Summit Times Daily Page.
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can improve.
Thank You**



SKM constitutes Parliamentary Committee

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 MAR:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has constituted its Parliamentary Committee in a high level meeting conducted today. The meeting was chaired by the party president, PS

Tamang [Golay].

The Parliamentary Committee has PS Tamang (Golay) as chairperson, SG Kelyon, Kunga Nima Lepcha, MP Subba, Arun Upreti, Kala Rai and RK Basnet as Members, an SKM release informs.

Warne like drift makes Kuldeep more difficult than Chahal: Hayden

KUSHAN SARKAR

NEW DELHI, MAR 11 (PTI):

A “Shane Warne like drift” makes Kuldeep Yadav a more difficult bowler to face compared to Yuzvendra Chahal, feels former Australia opener Matthew Hayden, who says wrist spinners like the two Indians are becoming more relevant because of finger spinners’ lack of “courage.”

Kuldeep and Chahal, the two Indian wrist spinners, have troubled the world’s best batsmen in the shorter formats.

So what makes them special?

“Leg spinners provide option and variety. In particular, if you look at Kuldeep, his strength is not how far he turns the ball but his strength is how the ball just like Shane Warne’s deliveries arrives at the batsman. It has a distinct curve in the air,” Hayden told PTI during an interview. Chahal can, however, be negotiated, feels Hayden, who was hugely successful against Harbhajan Singh and Anil Kumble at their peak.

“Chahal is a different bowler. He is a very stump-to-stump. He bowls much flatter and straighter. He doesn’t get the drift. If I was a player, I would prefer facing Chahal because he doesn’t get the drift,” said Hayden, who has 8000-plus Test and 6000 plus ODI runs for Australia.

The finger spinners are not much in demand in the 50-over format and Hayden blames it on the restrictive approach which has been their undoing. “What has happened is that off-spinners have learnt the art to contain batsmen,

which had kept them in play for a certain period of time. “But now, the players have got used to the flatter trajectory of the off-spinners. Off-spinners have lost the art of being able to get the pace to drop (vary pace),” said Hayden.

He then cited Nathan Lyon’s approach in the second ODI in Nagpur, comparing the two spells from the off-spinner.

“During his second spell, the speed was like 80-82 kmph compared to 90-92 kmph in the first spell. So that’s a celar drop of 10kmph. All of a sudden, he looked unplayable.” There is no doubt in his mind that the bowlers have to show guts to make a move like that in limited-overs cricket.

“They have this courage issue where they don’t want to give away runs. In Tests, they become wicket-takers compared to being run-savers. That’s the difference.” Working as an analyst during the ongoing series, Hayden was seen working with the junior members of the Australian team, especially, Ashton Turner, who has now become an overnight sensation winning the fourth ODI with a scintillating knock.

“It’s not my doing,” Hayden said with a lot of modesty.

“The boys have worked very hard on their game and that created the change. I have been working more with younger boys like Ashton Turner,” he added.

The veteran of 103 Tests and 161 ODIs is of the opinion that revisiting their scoring options during the third ODI helped Australia bounce back.

Pulwama terror attack...

been in constant contact with Khan, officials said.

Piecing together evidence gathered so far, security officials said 23-year-old Khan, an electrician with a graduate degree and a resident of Pulwama, arranged the vehicle and explosives used in the terror strike.

A resident of Mir Mohalla of Tral, Khan joined the JeM sometime in 2017 as an overground worker and was later drawn into the terror outfit by Noor Mohammed Tantray, alias ‘Noor Trali’, who is believed to have helped the terror group’s revival in the Kashmir Valley.

After Tantray was killed in December 2017, Khan disappeared from his home on January 14, 2018, and was active since then.

After completing his graduation, Khan did a one-year diploma course as electrician from an Industrial Training Institute (ITI).

The eldest son of a labourer, Khan is also believed to be involved in the terror strike at the army camp in Sunjawan in February 2018, in which six personnel and a civilian were killed.

His role has also come under lens in the Lethpora attack on a CRPF camp in January 2018 that left five CRPF personnel dead.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA), which is probing the February 14 terror attack, had carried out searches at the residence of Khan on February 27.

41 of 141 polling...

further informed that the EVM Strong room would be made at the Kyongsa Girls Senior Secondary School and randomization of the EVMs would be done on 15 Mar, 2019 (Tentatively).

The Dispatch of the EVM to the Polling Parties would be done by 10 April, 2019. The EVM Strong Room would be under strict surveillance and manned by 1 Platoon of CAPF for optimum security.

The phone numbers of the District Control Room are: 03595-250639; 03595250888. The Official phone number of the District Election Officer is: 9733365905.

SMIT’s annual fest ‘Kaalrav 2019’ concludes

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 MAR:

Kaalrav, the annual cultural fest of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT) concluded with three-day cultural extravaganza at Majhitar, Sikkim. With over 15 colleges from in and around the state participating in about 30 different events, Kaalrav 2019 boasts of being the largest collegiate event in the state, as per a press release.

The mega event kicked off with the inauguration ceremony which saw the presence of Dean SMIMS, Brig (Dr) Vijay Kumar Mehra, Director SMIT, Prof (Dr) Ashis Sharma, Dean (Student Affairs) SMIT, Prof (Dr) Ratika Pradhan, Dean (Academics), Prof (Dr) BB Pradhan along with HODs and HOOs of different departments.

The opening ceremony was also attend-



ed by Panchayat President, Maya Cintury, SDM Rangpo, Prem Kamal Rai and other dignitaries of the area. The three-day event started with lamp lighting and beautiful

cultural performances by students of the college.

The evening of the first day saw the students dance to the EDM played by guest performer, Julia Bliss. Hailing from Rus-

sia, she rocked the stage playing a mix of English and Hindi songs.

The second day of the event saw the start of literary and sports events wherein events

were taking place all around the college. Some of the notable events were Eastern/Western Singing, Group Dance, GK Quiz, Fashion Show and many more.

The YouTube sensation, Shirley Setia was the star performer of Day 2. Her mix of oldies and latest hits was enjoyed by all. On public demand, she sang BIBA, her latest collaboration with Marshmello.

The third day saw the finals of Mr and Miss Kaalrav, Solo/Duet Dance, Battle of Bands and many other events. The prize distribution ceremony had the presence of Director SMIT, Dean (SA) SMIT and Bharati Sharma [2nd Runners Up, Miss Sikkim 2018]. The host college took a sizeable number of prizes but other colleges like SMIMS, Shyamparasad College, Kolkata, SRM Sikkim, etc., gave tough competition.

The final day of the event was the performance of Nalayaak Band which mesmerized the crowd with their soulful songs.

32 from Sikkim participating in NEYEP



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 MAR:

A 32-member team from Sikkim is going to participate in North East Youth Exchange Programme (NEYEP) at Udaipur, Rajasthan, a press release informs. The programme is organised by Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, Min-

istry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with North East Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

The team has 8 members from each district of Sikkim. The programme will start from 13-17 Mar, 2019 at Udaipur, Rajasthan India.

The programme will

also be attended by participants from other 7 North Eastern States of India.

NEYEP in this programme, the youth were drawn from eight North Eastern States to visit other important places of the country.

The basic objective of the programme is to provide opportunity to the

youth of North Eastern States to visit important places of the country to understand the socio economic status, cultural ethos, language, lifestyle of the people, the release mentions.

The NEYEP has already been conducted in the year 2016-17 and 2017-18 at five locations of the country.

Punit Pathak wins “Khatron Ke Khiladi 9”

MUMBAI, MAR 11 (PTI):

Choreographer-actor Punit Pathak has emerged as the winner of the ninth season of adventure-reality show “Khatron Ke Khiladi”.

In the grand finale, Punit, competing with Aditya Narayan and Ridhima Pandit, performed better than the duo to bag the title.

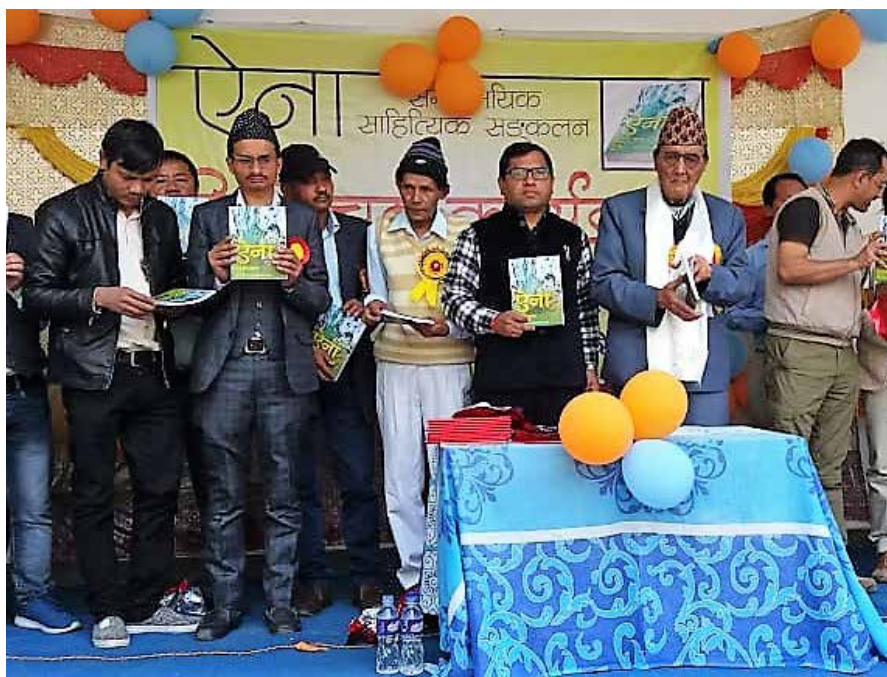
“Nothing comes easy for me, this win was due to sheer hard work, focus, determination and self believe. It feels great to be crowned as the ultimate winner of Khatron Ke Khiladi 9.

“Winning a show that directs its participants to face their fears and overcome them, does wonders to their confidence,” Punit said in a statement.

The Colors show was hosted by filmmaker Rohit Shetty and he said watching participants “push their boundaries” has always been an incredible experience.

“Punit Pathak has been a well deserving winner as he fought all odds and took all the challenges head on.

Nepali book ‘Aina’ released



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 MAR:

Aina, a Nepali book printed under the banner of Aina Sahityik Manch Rangpo, Sikkim was released today with poem recitation program from the poets, literary figures and renowned personalities from Darjeeling, Siliguri, Kalimpong, Kurseong and different parts of Sikkim, a press release informs.

The program was organised at Rangpo, Majhigaon under the supervision of literary figure, Nar Bahadur Da-

hal, where Professor, TB Chettri from Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College was present as the chief guest.

The program was hosted by writer of ‘Aina’, Bipal Ghaley while the publisher, Bijay Bantawa gave a brief introduction about the book.

According to Patron, Chandan Gurung, Founding Member, Tshering Sherpa and other members of the Manch, this organization was established in November 2018 to provide a platform to local literature enthusiasts.

BP Bajgai and Tika Bhai from Kalimpong illustrated the connection of youth, literary service and society which was followed by presentation of compositions by Manoj Bogati, Kalimpong, Vishal Rai, Teesta, Nishant Dulal, Singtam, Sabir Ghaley, Sagarmani Dhakal, Shiv Darnal, Bikash Bantawa and many more. Along with retired Forest Officer, CB Gurung, literature enthusiasts Kushal Chettri, Bishal Thakur, Gajendra Rai and members of Biswadeep Samaj were also present in the program.

Choose between Mahatma’s India and Godse’s India: Rahul

NEW DELHI, MAR 11

(PTI): The choice is between Mahatma Gandhi’s India and Nathuram Godse’s India with love on one hand and hate on the other, Congress president Rahul Gandhi told his party’s booth workers here on Monday, a day after the Lok Sabha polls were announced.

In an all-out attack against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Gandhi flayed him on a host of issues such as the Rafale deal, Doklam, employment generation, national security and the alleged agrarian distress.

“You have to decide, you want Gandhi’s India or Godse’s India. On one hand, there is love, brotherhood, on the other is hate, fear. Gandhiji was fearless, stayed in jail for years, but spoke with the British with love, while (Veer) Savarkar wrote letters to the British apologising and asking to be let off,” he said.

Hitting out at the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on the issue of national security, the Congress chief said 40 CRPF personnel were killed in the February 14 Pulwama terror attack carried out by the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), whose chief Masood Azhar was released from jail by the saffron party.

“These people with 56-inch chests, you would recall, in their previous government, the current National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, went in an aircraft with Masood Azharji and handed over Masood Azhar in Kandahar,” he said sarcastically.

“Two of our prime ministers were martyred. We don’t bow before anyone,” he added.

Azhar, along with two other terrorists, Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar and Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, was released from jail in 1999 by the then BJP-led NDA government headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee in exchange for the passengers held hostage on board the IC 814 flight, which was hijacked to Kandahar in Afghanistan.

The BJP latched on to Gandhi’s reference to the JeM chief as “Masood Azharji” to hurl a “Rahul

loves terrorists” barb at the Congress president. The opposition party hit back, accusing the saffron party of deliberately twisting Gandhi’s comments, which it claimed were made sarcastically.

Gandhi also slammed Modi over the Rafale fighter jets deal, saying five years ago, the “chowkidar” (watchman) had come to power and said he had a “56-inch chest” and would fight corruption.

“People earlier used to say, ‘acche din ayenge’... now you just say ‘chowkidar’ and everyone else says ‘chor hai’ -- this is due to the Congress,” he said.

The prime minister spoke for an hour-and-a-half in Parliament, but could not answer four questions on Rafale fighter jets, he added.

“He talked about the Congress, Rajiv Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, but did not utter Anil Ambani’s name,” Gandhi said in a reference to the allegation that the industrialist was favoured in the Rafale deal.

The Congress chief said Modi kept talking about Make in India, but his shirts, shoes and phone, with which he took selfies, were made in China.

He also asserted that the Congress would come to power in the upcoming general election and fix a minimum income for all the citizens of the country.

Rattled by the Congress’s announcement of minimum income guarantee, Modi had announced Rs 3.5 a day for farmers, Gandhi claimed.

The Congress waived farm loans within two days of coming to power in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, he said.

Taking on the prime minister over his China policy, Gandhi claimed that the Chinese prime minister gave a “clear message to the PM that I know you, you are a weak person, I will send the Chinese army to Doklam and you cannot do anything”.

Modi bowed before China and offered a truce, he claimed.

Training programme at Sikkim Judicial Academy

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 11 MAR:

A training programme for the Ld Chief Judicial Magistrates, the Ld Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrates and Ld Advocates in the Bar Association of Sikkim was organized on 10 Mar, 2019 (Sunday) at Sikkim Judicial Academy, Sokeythang, Gangtok, a press release informs.

Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan, Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Judge In-charge, Sikkim Judicial Academy was the resource person for the aforementioned programme.

The Training Programme was on “Framing



of Issues”. Framing of Issues is an important procedure in civil litigation which involves both an advocate and the judicial officer

therefore, to learn better how to frame issues, the Sikkim Judicial Academy under the guidance of Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan,

Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Judge In-Charge, Sikkim Judicial Academy formulated a new method in this learning process which

was more of interaction and discussions about the provisions involved in framing issues, under the Code of Civil Procedure 1908.

Punjab govt giving funds directly for sikhs benefit in a Shillong locality resented

SHILLONG, MAR 11 (PTI): The Meghalaya government on Monday took exception to its Punjab counterpart providing funds for benefit of people residing in Punjabi Lane here without informing the state government. The issue was raised in the state legislative assembly by Meghalaya’s Urban Affairs department minister Hamlet Dohling.

The minister informed the House that the Punjab government had sanctioned Rs 1.5 lakh for treatment of 10 Sikh widows in 2015.

It (Punjab government) had also sanctioned Rs 10 lakh for the construction of the Guru Nanak School at Bara Bazar in 2016, he added.

“I am surprised to see that the government of Punjab has sanctioned funds directly to the East Khasi Hills district deputy commissioner (on the two counts) without informing the state government,” he told the house while replying to a supplementary question raised by opposition Congress legislator from East Shillong Amarendra Lyngdoh.

On the utilization of the funds, the minister said the school had submitted the utiliza-

tion certificate on July 31, 2017 and the construction work has been completed. Shilling had witnessed large-scale violence in June last year following clashes between Sikhs living in the Punjabi lane and local tribals over an incident of eve-teasing and subsequent assault of a person from a local tribal community.

The hill station Shillong had experienced curfew for months after the clashes. Punjab government had raised the matter of security of their community members with the Meghalaya government then.

Lone Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) legislator Saleng A Sangma attacked the state government over the issue saying it reflects its irresponsible attitude.

“I am not against development programmes by other states...

Now this issue has been there for many years if the state government is allowing (such funds to come in), we are asking for trouble in the future,” Sangma warned.

He asked whether the state government would also accept if Nepal decides to take up development programs at Langpih. Sangma also sought assurance from the state

government to look into the matter seriously to which the minister replied in the affirmative.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma assured the house that he will take up the issue of income tax paid by tribal youths working outside the state with the Union government.

As per the laid down provisions, tribals of the Northeast are exempted from paying income tax in their states. But, the tax is collected from them while working outside the state. The Chief Minister also informed that three projects have been sanctioned under the North Eastern Council (NEC) in the state during 2018-19 financial year.

The projects are construction of a hostel for a boarding school at Pynursla in East Khasi Hills district (Rs 194 lakh), construction of new building blocks for St Mary’s College of Teacher Education in the city (Rs 334.18 lakh) and for construction of Rymbai-Bataw-Borghat-Borsora-Jalalpur Road (40km) in East Jaintia Hills district at a cost of Rs 94.19 lakh, he said.

Conrad said Rs 10 lakh for each projects has been received as first installment.

Swine flu menace continues unabated in the country; death toll 75



NEW DELHI, MAR 11 (PTI): Seventy-five swine flu deaths were reported last week, pushing the death toll due to the virus to 605 this year, Union Health Ministry data showed Monday, as the menace continued unabated across the country. Over 19,380 people have tested positive for the virus, according to the data compiled until Sunday. Rajasthan reported the highest number of swine flu cases (4,551) and deaths (162) followed by Gujarat (118 deaths and 3,969 cases), the data showed.

Delhi was third with 3,362 swine flu cases and seven deaths. Swine flu claimed 71 lives and infected 357 people in Madhya Pradesh. In Maharashtra, 52 people died due to the virus while 675 were affected by it.

Himachal Pradesh reported 34 deaths and 298 cases; Punjab 31 deaths and 517 cases, Uttar Pradesh 18 deaths and 1,431 cases while Haryana reported 14 deaths and 982 cases.

Karnataka reported 14 deaths and 825 cases of swine flu and Telangana 12 deaths and 818 cases. As the number of swine flu cases has been on a rapid increase, the Health Ministry has asked state governments to bolster their surveillance for early detection of the disease and keep beds reserved in hospitals to deal with acute cases. States have

been advised to involve district collectors to enhance public awareness and outbreak response.

The Drug Controller General of India has been asked to coordinate with drug manufacturers and monitor the availability of Oseltamivir, the medicine recommended by WHO to treat swine flu infection, in various states. The Health Ministry has recommended vaccination for health-care workers and other priority groups.

Seasonal influenza (H1N1) is a self-limiting viral, air-borne disease spread from person to person, through large droplets generated due to coughing and sneezing, indirect contact by touching a contaminated object or surface and close contact, including handshaking, hugging and kissing.

The dos and don’ts mention covering nose and mouth with disposable tissue or handkerchief when coughing or sneezing, washing hands with soap and water frequently, avoiding crowded places, maintaining isolation, drinking plenty of liquid and consulting a doctor.

According to the advisory, one should not touch the eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands, or hug, kiss or shake hands while greeting, or spit in public places, and dispose of used napkin or tissue paper in open areas.



Sanitary Pad Awareness and Donation Drive


SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 11 MAR:

The Rotaract Club of Gangtok hills today organized “We for Her 2.0”, a Sanitary Pad Awareness and Donation Drive, initiated by Rotaract Club of Guwahati Luit and Siliguri Greater.

During the event 2,100 pieces i.e. 300 packs of Sanitary Napkins were distributed in Aho Senti School, which is approximately 1hr 30mins from the main town, a press release informs.

The Sanitary Napkin awareness was conducted by Dr Reena Subba who was our resource person for the event. An interactive session was held between the students, teachers, staffs, rotaractors and the resource person.

The basic motive of this program is to spread awareness for menstrual hygiene and do away with the social dogma and traditional methods used during menstruation, the release mentions.



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
SOCIAL JUSTICE, EMPOWERMENT & WELFARE DEPARTMENT
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
5th Mile Tadong- Lumsey
Gangtok, East Sikkim

NOTICE

On the recommendation of Selection Committee, the following candidates on merit basis are hereby offered appointment in different capacity under POSHAN ABHIYAAN for the period of one year. The selected candidates are directed to report to the Office of Principal Director within seven days from the date of issue of this notice.

Name of post	No of post	Sl.No.	Name of the selected candidates
Accountant	1	1	Ms. Mona Rai
District Coordinator	4	1	Ms Sonam Uden Lepcha
		2	Mr. Sailendra Chettri
		3	Mr. Pranay Sharma
		4	Mr. Sangay Tamang
Project Coordinator	13	1	Ms.Sangita Chettri
		2	Ms. Uma Gurung
		3	Ms. Ambika Chettri
		4	Ms Deepti Sharma
		5	Ms. Sonamit Lepcha
		6	Ms. Ringzing Ongmu Bhutia
		7	Mr. Santosh Rai
		8	Ms. Gita Chettri
		9	Mr. Nitant Chettri
		10	Ms Saprina Pradhan
		11	Ms. Upeksha Chettri
		12	Mr. Deewakar Sewa
		13	Ms. Rojalina Rai.

By Order

Sd/-
(P.Bhutia)
Principal Director
Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare Department
Government of Sikkim.

R.O. No. 776/IPR/Pub/Classi./18-19
Date:11.3.19

PNB scam: ED files fresh chargesheet against Nirav Modi, others



NEW DELHI, MAR 11 (PTI): The Enforcement Directorate has filed a fresh chargesheet against diamondaire Nirav Modi, an accused in the USD 2-billion PNB scam, and others under the anti-money laundering law, officials said Monday.

They said the chargesheet or the prosecution complaint has been filed before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Mumbai a few days ago and it is understood that the agency has underlined the role of Modi’s wife Ami and funds routed by her in the latest document.

This is a supplementary chargesheet against Modi and few others and the agency has recorded additional evidence

gathered in the case and attachments made including charges pressed against him under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, they said.

Other details of the chargesheet were not available immediately.

The development is being seen in the backdrop of a recent British daily report that said Modi is living in a swanky 8-million pound apartment in London’s West End and is now involved in a new diamond business.

Modi, 48, is currently living in a three-bedroom flat occupying half of a floor of the landmark Centre Point tower block in London, where rent is estimated to cost 17,000 pounds a month, The Telegraph has reported.

On Saturday, ED said the United Kingdom’s home secretary recently referred India’s request for extraditing the tainted businessman to a court for initiating legal proceedings against him. The ED filed the first chargesheet in the case in May last year.

The agency and the CBI are investigating Modi, his uncle Mehul Choksi and others for alleged money laundering and corruption to perpetrate the alleged scam in the Brady House branch of PNB in Mumbai, that was unearthed last year.

It has also attached his assets worth Rs 1,873.08 crore under the PMLA and has seized assets linked to him and his family worth Rs 489.75 crore.

In the court of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Namchi

Whereas, I Shirmati. Indra Maya Rai, wife of Shri Ratna Bhadur Rai age about 22 years, by faith Hindu resident of Namchi bazar South Sikkim do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that-

That prior to my marriage with my husband Shri. Ratna Bahadur Rai my name was Smt. Indra Maya Subba but after my marriage I have embraced the caste and religion of my husband and now I am known as Smt. Indra Maya Rai which is my correct name.

I do hereby verify and declare that what I have stated above is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I have signed this Affidavit at Namchi, South Sikkim on this 28th day of June 1994.

Sd/-
Identifier
Sd/-
Deponent

PAYING GUEST AVAILABLE

PG available for working women & girls at EPCS Church premises, near Primula Lodge at Chruuch Road, Gangtok, Sikkim. Contact: Mob: 9064804782/ Whatsapp No: 9641549764.

FAQ

EVM with VVPAT Unit

Ballot Unit (BU)

Control Unit (CU)

VVPAT

Q 1. What is an Electronic Voting machine? In what way its functioning is different from the conventional system of voting?

Ans. Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) is an electronic device for recording votes. An Electronic Voting Machine consists of two Units- a Control Unit and a Balloting Unit -joined by a five-meter cable. The Control Unit is placed with the Presiding Officer or a Polling Officer and the Balloting Unit is placed inside the voting compartment. Instead of issuing a ballot paper, the Polling Officer in-charge of the Control Unit will release a ballot by pressing the Ballot Button on the Control Unit. This will enable the voter to cast his vote by pressing the blue button on the Balloting Unit against the candidate and symbol of his choice.

Q2. When the EVM was first introduced in elections?

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Saying Hi to Electors

This campaign, let's hear more than allegations and claims

Sikkim is prepped for an election. With the announcement of election dates, the model code of conduct has come into force as well. There are several aspects to the MCC, and one of them covers the tone and tenor of campaigning. Guidelines for the Model Code of Conduct provided by the Election Commission of India, when commenting on “general conduct”, details that: “criticism of other political parties, when made, shall be confined to their policies and programme, past record and work. Parties and candidates shall refrain from criticism of all aspects of private life, not connected with the public activities of the leaders or workers of other parties. Criticism of other parties or their workers based on unverified allegations or distortion shall be avoided.”

These guidelines are easy enough to understand, but what would politics be in India without the barbs, wit and mudslinging that make for this circus. Accept it, Golay or Bhaichung or the many more contenders holding their tongues on Chamling or Chamling refraining from taking digs at them when wooing voters would make for a boring campaign. Even duller would be the sidekicks going easy on everyone else and their minions. But one need not hold any such worries because the barely one month run-up at hand to push some kind of a momentum leading to 11 April will undoubtedly force a lot of panic outbursts and overstepping of the model code of conduct. And come on, the MCC has not really flexed any muscle thus far in Sikkim, so expect a lot of belligerence and even some over-the-top histrionics. There is after all a lot at stake. The party in office wasted precious initial years of the latest term in office sulking and has the scare of 2014 still fresh in public memory. There is obviously desperation in the SKM camp because its leaders and supporters don't want another five years in the Opposition. HSP has a lot to prove and the other parties realize that time has come for them to prove that they are not just fringe players. So yes, the campaigning is going to get intense and if 2014 was any indication, also violent. Hope the latter does not happen.

Returning to the guideline for “propah” criticism and civilized debates during electioneering, the electorate expects passion and even abrasive aggression in campaign speeches, but elections should be about more than just entertainment. While sarcasm is fine till it is used to embellish a marathon speech, it becomes vacuous when derision becomes the only content. Such speeches might keep the audience engaged while they are being delivered, but leave them with nothing to mull upon once the loudspeakers are switched off.

Political parties in Sikkim are receiving an opportunity again to not only speak about what they plan for Sikkim and its people. At least the more serious contenders have their support base, but now arrives the time to reach out with a wider vision and not just rants about the years that have passed [and this applies to both the ruling and the Opposition]. Since development continues to remain the dominant demand, every political party in the fray has to clearly explain how it intends to achieve this.

Elections should be contested on the basis of promises and performance and not criticism and complaints. The Opposition in Sikkim, which used to conveniently go into hibernation after every election, has again been forced out of slumber, has a lot of catching up to do. The abbreviated campaign period could work in the Opposition's benefit because a longer duration would have been difficult to sustain. The ruling front also benefits because it can leverage its organisational strength better while others are still trying to get a bearing.

That said, to start and end the campaign with a long list of allegations reflects a half-baked strategy. After the allegations, they have to illustrate how they are going to do or are doing things differently. An election campaign cannot wallow in the past because the people would rather be looking ahead, weighing what futures are possible.

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: news@summittimes.com

Donald Trump's use of humiliation could have catastrophic consequences – a psychologist explains why

SIMON MCCARTHY-JONES
theconversation.com

World War II opened the gates to hell. In 1948, the nations of the world tried to bolt them shut again. They did so with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognised the inherent dignity of all people and provided the basis on which international human rights law was built. When this bolt was subsequently loosened in countries such as Cambodia, Rwanda and Bosnia, catastrophe ensued.

President Donald Trump could be viewed as toying with this bolt again through his repeated use of humiliation – of individuals, groups and nations. Although this tactic may have benefited him, humiliation is dangerous for both the humiliator and the humiliated. As Nelson Mandela noted, there is nobody more dangerous than one who has been humiliated. Indeed, humiliation has been argued to be the most underappreciated force in international relations.

Not only is humiliation a violation of human dignity, its consequences are unpredictable. The “humiliation” of Germany following World War I arguably led, in part, to World War II. President Trump's use of humiliation should hence be of concern to both America and the world.

RESTORING FACE

Crucial to Trump's victory in the 2016 US presidential election were white, working-class voters. While it is not yet entirely clear why so many of these voters supported him, Trump's appeal to their economic interests and promise to restore their social status may both have been important. One argument is that Trump rode a wave of anger in white working-class voters, which resulted from their feelings of humiliation. This humiliation is proposed to have stemmed from a loss of both financial and cultural status.

Trump vowed to halt the humiliation of this group. He also vowed to end what some of these voters saw as America's humiliation. In both cases, Trump turned the tables by humiliating the perceived humiliators.

The list of those deemed responsible was long

and distinguished. Candidate Trump targeted men and women, Republicans and Democrats, Americans and non-Americans, individuals and corporations, the powerful and the vulnerable.

President Trump continued this approach. He stands accused of running the White House as a reality show, using tactics of humiliation for ratings. Former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe described the “extended humiliation of my family and me that the administration, and the president personally, have engaged in”.

President Trump has also humiliated his former attorney general, his cabinet and other world leaders. He has even attempted to humiliate entire countries.

AN EMOTION OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Humiliation can lead to war and conflict. Hitler rose to power on a promise to dispel the humiliation Germany had suffered after World War I. Henry Kissinger's explanation of why the US did not foresee the Yom Kippur war was that “our definition of rationality did not take seriously the notion of [Egypt and Syria] starting an unwinnable war to restore self-respect”. Militant Islamists use feelings of humiliation to promote jihad.

On the face of it, this is surprising. Humiliation often leads to shame, which is associated with a desire to withdraw, hide or submit. But in individualistic cultures – such as the US – experiencing shame often leads to anger.

This is because in individualistic cultures shame is to be avoided. It signals flaws and dependence upon others' opinions. To avoid the appearance of flawed character, shame is often converted to the more acceptable emotion of anger. In other countries, such as Japan, shame is less likely to be transformed into anger.

Some individuals who are shamed will explode with humiliated fury. This is more likely if the person has high levels of narcissism. Such people have grandiose views of themselves, a strong sense of entitlement, and seek to exploit others. They are strongly motivated to maintain their self-esteem and deflect shame by placing blame on others, whom they rage against.

Of course, shame isn't necessary to feel anger after humiliation. If you believe that what was done to you was not deserved you will likely feel anger without having to suffer shame beforehand.

The results of humiliation-induced anger are also unpredictable. They may help contribute to positive activist movements, such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo. However, it can also yield genocide, mass-killing, and terrorism.

Trump's use of humiliation has the potential, then, to trigger an extreme and unpredictable reaction, including on the global stage. It also risks setting a social norm in which humiliating people is acceptable. All this undermines the concept of inherent human dignity and risks a conflict in which people are accorded no inherent value.

FIGHTING FOR DIGNITY

Trump is not alone in humiliating people. Neither are parts of the white working-class the only people who have felt humiliation. Indeed, the main focus of Hillary Clinton's identity-based 2016 election campaign was to remedy the deep seated systematic humiliation experienced by many women and African-Americans.

But why are so many people either feeling humiliated or humiliating others? Humiliation is a weapon of hierarchy. Part of the answer hence lies in the power disparities present in the hierarchical structure of American society. Trump's policies will only increase these.

Dignity will not be restored through tax cuts and economic growth alone. Americans' trust in their fellow citizens and government is low. Inequalities in income and education levels are high. People will not cease to feel humiliated until communities are rebuilt both financially and socially.

The term “dignity” does not appear in the US Constitution. Yet, over the past two centuries, Supreme Court Justices have used the term in more than 900 opinions. America is already on the side of dignity. It just needs to ensure it. For its own sake and the world's.

[the writer is Associate Professor in Clinical Psychology and Neuropsychology, Trinity College Dublin]



Venezuela's economic collapse is laid bare when you look at how little energy the country is consuming

ANTÓNIO CARVALHO
& JAN DITZEN
theconversation.com

The country with the most oil reserves on the planet is facing a total economic crash, with wildly conflicting inflation estimates – as high as 10,000,000% if the IMF's projections for this year are correct. There has been much discussion about the collapse in Venezuela's oil exports, intensified by US sanctions against the state oil company PDVSA, which substantially prevents any oil trading between the two countries and takes away a steady income stream for the country. To understand the scale of the crisis, however, it is vital to look at what has been happening to energy consumption inside the country itself.

Oil consumption in Venezuela fell 37% in five years up to 2017, a reminder that the country was struggling under the Maduro administration long before the latest sanctions, which came after opposition leader Juan Guaidó announced himself the country's rightful president in January. Unfortunately, the oil decline is not an environmental achievement but a worrying symptom of Venezuela's economic conditions – GDP is expected to have fallen 50% between 2015 and 2019.

In a country where economic data is scarce, different oil products can be used as proxies for different kinds of

economic activity. Venezuela's oil and fuel oil export numbers give insights into the country's incoming cash flow from abroad, for instance, while diesel consumption is a partial indicator for transport, industry and the power sector. Gasoline is a proxy for transport activity as well.

Diesel consumption declined by 11% on average each year in 2013-17, and gasoline shows a similar pattern with an average annual decline of 7% or by 27% over the same five-year period. Together, the two fuels account for approximately 70% of total oil demand in the country. From the graphic below, you can see that the collapse in oil consumption and GDP are staggeringly similar.

This is not to say that the oil consumption estimates from the likes of BP are anywhere near perfect. Multiple Venezuelan official energy statistics ceased to be published between 2012 and 2015, leaving experts to build the best possible estimates from multiple sources.

BP figures for total oil consumption have been consistently revised downwards every year in recent history, as reality always punches below expectations. You can see this in the following graph, where each coloured line represents a different year of the BP Statistical Review and the estimates included for Venezuelan oil consumption: the yellow line represents the 2018 edition, whose numbers are mostly lower than the

estimates in previous years' editions.

THE VIEW FROM THE GROUND

People are not driving around anymore in Venezuela. To make things worse, 90% of buses were reportedly out of action by mid-2018. This is a society that just doesn't go out for work or travel. Businesses are also using less transportation, since they produce fewer goods than they used to – including food. The last implication is terrifying, and can easily be missed when solely looking at numbers. It is possible to survive without a car, but not without food. A litre of milk can now easily cost a tenth of a monthly salary.

Energy prices have been severely distorted by a combination of explosive inflation and heavy fuel subsidies. By mid-2018, you could buy 3.5m litres of gasoline for a single US dollar, but could barely buy any basic food item. Yet even if you have enough money to fill up your tank, it is increasingly difficult to find fuel – and the cost of spare parts is exorbitant.

The future of oil output looks equally bleak. Production is quickly collapsing, with refineries only running at an incredibly low 22% of capacity. The power system is actually taking a double hit: the part that depends on fossil fuels in the form of natural gas, diesel and some fuel oil is crumbling while the part driven by hydropower is being undermined by very low rainfall caused by changing climate patterns. The net result has been thousands of

power failures. A dry year could aggravate things further, requiring extra fossil fuels that the country is incapable of producing or affording.

As the sanctions continue to bite and hyperinflation rages on, Venezuela's oil consumption decline looks set to reach levels last seen in the 1990s. The country began rationing gasoline in February, and is now in the awkward position of importing refined fuels from Russia, India and Spain at “horrific” premiums, according to an executive of PDVSA. One consequence of the sanctions is that they have affected Venezuela's ability to transport heavy oil from its own oil fields, since this is made easier by adding diluting agents that are often imported from the US.

The perfect storm of sanctions, inflation, production problems and climate change risks to power supply leaves us wondering how long it might take before the energy system comes to a total halt. As new oil statistics are published in the coming months, everyone from energy analysts to Washington policy hawks will be poring over them to try and understand where the country goes from here.

[António Carvalho is Research Associate (Centre for Energy Economics Research and Policy), Heriot-Watt University; Jan Ditzén is Research Associate (Centre for Energy Economics Research and Policy), Heriot-Watt University]

A gritty mom who battled social odds to become India's first woman bone marrow donor

SUDIPTO CHOWDHURY KOLKATA, MAR 11 (PTI): She is not only a mother, but a gritty woman who pulled out all stops to become the country's first female unrelated bone marrow donor to give new lease of life to an ailing three-month-old infant, doctors claimed.

It took a lot of courage for the 26-year-old Masilamani, hailing from a nondescript village of Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, to come out and donate her bone marrow to save a baby from New Delhi.

Masilamani, the mother of a thalassemia major girl, was in the city on a personal visit.

She is ecstatic at what she has achieved recently. "I believe I'm blessed. I managed to break away from the misconceptions of our society to save a child. I feel like I am the mother of the child. I would say it is my child too as now I have given him a second chance to live. I pray to the almighty that he must recover fast and should never suffer again. He must be healthy," Masilamani told PTI.

Talking about her fight against social myths when she decided to go ahead with the bone marrow donation, Masilamani recalls, "My village is a very remote one at the foot of the Velliangiri hills with very less exposure to any modern amenities. There are very few educated people there.

Therefore, anything new, be it a thing or a



thought, is always resisted in the village."

Hailing from Mudhalipalayam, a hamlet in Coimbatore, Masilamani got married at the age of 20 to R Kaviarasan, a fabricator.

"Within a year, my daughter was born and a few months later she was diagnosed with thalassemia major. We both (husband and wife) have our swabs to identify human leukocyte antigen (HLA) to check if we could be of any match to our daughter at DATRI - the blood stem cells donor registry. There I found a match to become a donor for a baby boy."

Excited but confused, Masilamani shared the piece of information with her husband who agreed that it was a great opportunity to help another parent in distress.

But we could not take

a decision so easily. My mother-in-law and sister-in-law resisted saying if something went wrong, who will take care of your children?

"The in-laws were all the more worried as I have a daughter with a chronic illness. Even my relatives and neighbours advised me not to go ahead with the donation as there could be side effects in the future, if not immediately.

I was confused," Masilamani said.

Masilamani, who gave birth to a boy three years later, sought expert advice on bone marrow donation.

"My doubts were cleared and I was glad to know there are no short-term and long-term side effects. I could finally convince my family and take a decision to donate bone marrow

to save a life," she says. Masilamani thanked her husband profusely for supporting her when it mattered most.

"There are men who would leave their partners if the child is found to be having any such fatal disorder. But Kaviarasan has been a responsible father and a great partner," she said.

Describing bone marrow donation as a simple process without side effects, Masilamani hopes that her act would encourage other women to come forward.

"I understand that women have more compulsions to back out from donations than men. But I am an example that nothing is big enough to stop us from gifting a life. After undergoing the procedure, I can vouch that it is very simple and has no side effects. Many

people discouraged me saying you may not walk properly, you may get bedridden, marrow will be taken from spine etc," she pointed out.

Asked if she was willing to donate again, Masilamani said she would be more than happy to do it.

"They say the greatest gift is the gift of life and it is a golden opportunity to gift it if you are found to be a match. I will definitely donate".

As of now, India has a total of 1,36,244 female donors, which is about 34 per cent of the total registered donors, official data say.

The total number of women who backed out from donations in the last two years (January 2017 to February 2019) were 129, according to DATRI data.

"I feel privileged to have Masilamani as India's first lady bone marrow donor from DATRI. It makes me proud to say that while women are excelling in every field, there are a few who are doing extraordinary and phenomenal contributions to the human kind such as donating their blood stem cells to save lives. In the true sense, it is like giving birth, but not biologically," DATRI founder and CEO Raghu Rajagopal said.

DATRI is engaged in finding willing matched donors for patients suffering from fatal blood-related disorders and in need of a blood stem cell transplant.

Mizoram's first Lokayukta chairman sworn-in



AIZAWL, MAR 11 (PTI): Retired IAS officer C Lalsawta was sworn-in as the first Chairman of the newly-constituted Lokayukta in Mizoram on Monday, officials said.

He was sworn-in at the Raj Bhawan here, they said.

State governor Jagdish Mukhi administered the oath of office to Lalsawta, an official

said. Chief Minister Zoramthanga, other ministers, Mizoram Assembly Speaker Lalrinliana Sailo, legislators and senior officials were present on the occasion, he said.

The function was presided over by state Chief Secretary Lalnunmawia Chuango, younger brother of the new Lokayukta chairman. Lalsawta is a 1981 batch

Bihar cadre IAS officer. He was the principal secretary of finance department in the state from 2008 to 2011.

After returning to Bihar, he was made the vigilance commissioner of the state, the official said, adding, he retired in 2015.

The Lokayukta would function from a rented building here.

Prices of BLF fall in most tea producing states in February

KOLKATA, MAR 11 (PTI): Prices of CTC tea produced by the bought leaf factories (BLF) across the major tea producing states of the country have shown a decline in February as compared to January this year, Tea Board sources said.

In January 2019, the average prices obtained by BLF across all the districts of Arunachal Pradesh was 138.97 per kilogram, as compared to Rs 108.36 per kilogram in the same state in the following month, they said.

Prices at BLF in the largest tea producing state of Assam also showed a decline in some areas.

While in January, the prices at Cachar was 144.43 per kilogram, it declined to 130.50 per kilogram in the subsequent month.

In Goalpara in Assam, the prices registered in February was the highest across all BLFs in India at



Rs 137.95 per kilogram, it was lower at Rs 111.17 per kilogram in the previous month, the sources said. Regarding West Bengal, prices had fallen in February as compared to those in January.

In January 2019, the prices of tea at BLFs were Rs 114.46 per kilogram in Darjeeling plains, whereas for the subsequent month this had been Rs 100.54 per kilogram.

Similar trend had been observed at Coochbehar and Jalpaiguri where the prices for January and February were Rs 110.75 (Rs 118.69) and Rs 104.66 per kilo-

gram (Rs 117.91), according to sources.

In the last month December of 2018, the prices of BLF was the highest at Rs 191 per kilogram registered in Arunachal Pradesh, while in Assam it was Rs 155.51 per kilogram while in Darjeeling plains in West Bengal it was Rs 124 per kilogram, they said.

The apex industry body of tea planters Indian Tea Association (ITA) had expressed concern that the proportion of production by BLFs were in excess of 50 per cent of the overall which had the potential to cause disruption in the market.

Kerala HC prohibits use of flex, other non-biodegradable materials for LS campaigning

KOCHI, MAR 11 (PTI): The Kerala High Court Monday prohibited the use of flex and other non-biodegradable materials for campaigning throughout the state ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

A division bench, comprising Chief Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice A K Jayasankaran Nambiar, gave the interim order while considering a plea seeking a ban on the use of flex and other ecologically harmful materials for the upcoming polls.

In his petition, Shyam Kumar from Aattungal in Thiruvananthapuram district sought the urgent intervention of the court to prohibit their use in the state in the ongoing election campaign.

He submitted that such ecologically harmful materials would be widely used in the election campaign if there was not an urgent intervention of the court.

Political parties and the candidates have already started the campaign for the elections to the 17th Lok Sabha, being conducted in seven phases across the country from April 11 to May 19.

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Cong to sound LS poll bugle from Modi's home state at CWC meet



AHMEDABAD/NEW DELHI, MAR 11 (PTI): The Congress is set to give final shape to its strategy for Lok Sabha elections at its working committee meeting in Ahmedabad on Tuesday and will sound the poll bugle from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state, party leaders said.

The day-long meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the party's highest decision-making body, assumes significance as it comes barely two days after declaration of poll schedule for the general elections.

Sources said the Congress is seeking to give a strong political message to the entire nation from the land of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel, with the party leadership scheduled to hold a prayer meeting Sabarmati Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad, followed by the CWC meet at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel national memorial there.

The CWC meeting is being held in Gujarat after a gap of 58 years. It was last held in the state at Bhavnagar in 1961.

The party will also hold a public meeting in Adalaj in Gandhinagar district of Gujarat with the slogan of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan". Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is also likely to address this meeting in her first public rally af-

ter entering politics. Patidar leader Hardik Patel, who shot to fame by spearheading a quota stir in the state and is set to fight the Lok Sabha polls, will also join Congress at the meeting in presence of the party chief Rahul Gandhi.

Besides giving final shape to its Lok Sabha election strategy, the party will demand answers from Prime Minister Modi and the BJP on what they call "failures" and "unfulfilled" promises of the government.

Top Congress leadership, led by Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and former prime minister Manmohan Singh, and other senior leaders will deliberate on key issues for the national elections beginning April 11. The party leaders will also discuss ways to corner Modi and his government on issues of governance, agrarian and economic crisis, unemployment and lack of job creation, national security and women safety.

The party is of the view that the narrative for the general elections needs to be steered towards real issues and problems confronting people of the country, from what its leaders see as the "propaganda" plank of the current regime, especially after Pulwama attack and subsequent air strike on terror camps in Pakistan. Sources said the party will issue a state-

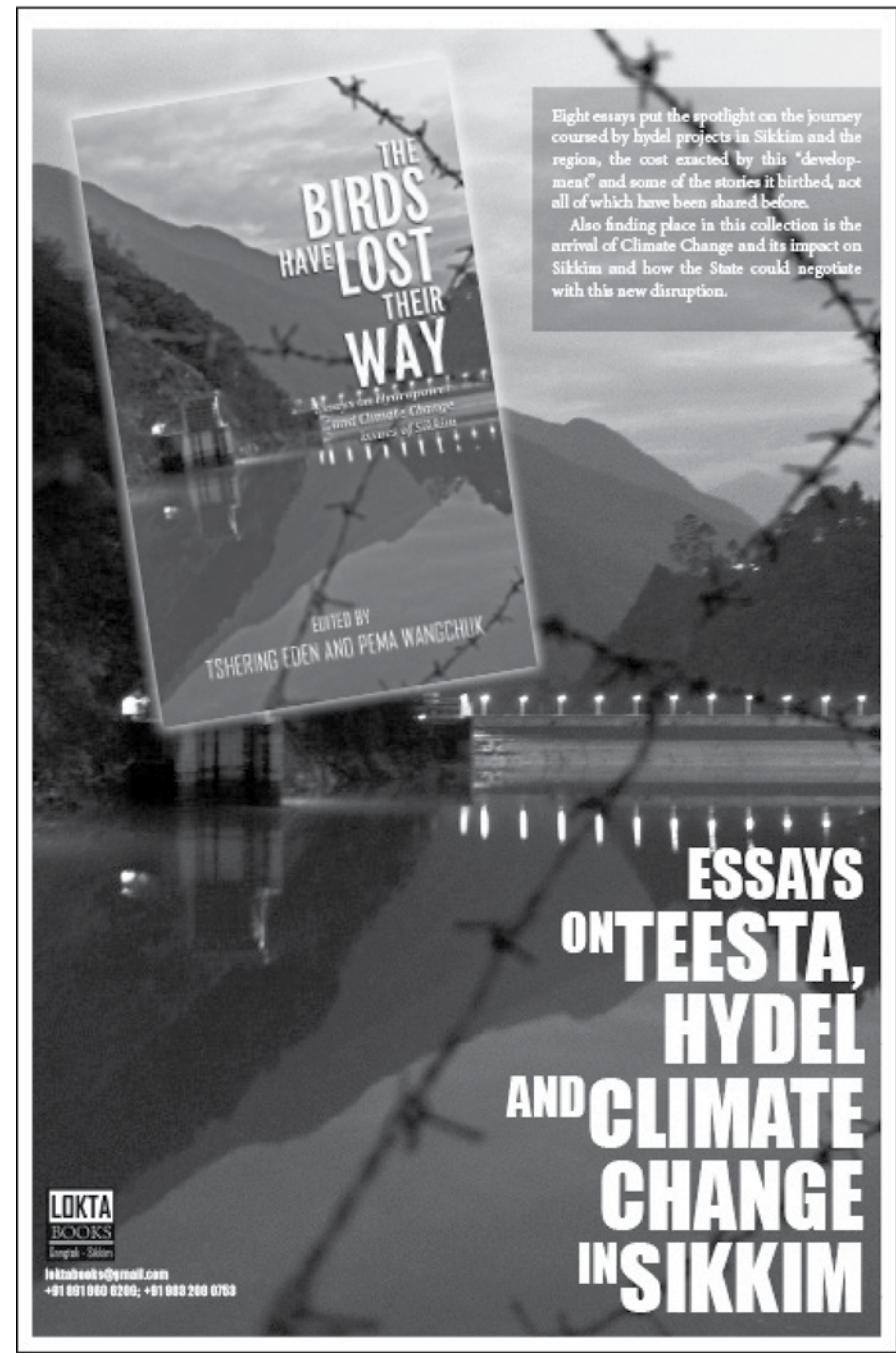
ment after the CWC, covering all these issues.

The Congress leaders feel that the party needs to demand answers from the prime minister on status of the promises made by him five years ago and on his governance track record.

After the CWC meeting, senior Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and former prime minister Manmohan Singh, as well as current and former party chief ministers will attend the 'Jan Sankalp' rally, state party unit chief Amit Chavda said.

The party has been alleging that Modi has "fooled" the people with his "false propaganda" and "boastful claims" and has not delivered on his promises. It has also alleged that the Modi government has inflicted pain and misery on the poor, the unemployed and the farmers during its five years of power, which needs to be made an election issue.

They will start their day by paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi as March 12 marks the launch of the historic Dandi March by him from the Sabarmati Ashram here in 1930. Besides, 2019 is also being celebrated as the 150th birth anniversary year of the Father of the Nation.



“Vicious disinformation” campaign surrounding Bose’s death confuses people: author

DUBAI, MAR 11 (PTI): A “vicious disinformation” campaign surrounding the death of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose has left people “confused”, author and grandnephew of the Indian nationalist leader has said. Speaking to PTI on the sidelines of the Emirates Festival of Literature here, journalist and author of the book ‘Laid To Rest: the controversy over Subhas Chandra Bose’s death’ Ashis Ray said he was fed up with the massive disinformation campaign mounted by people having vested interests about what had happened to Bose.

Asked what prompted him to write the book, Ray said he wanted to “dispel” “one big misconception” that Bose had “died as a result of a plane crash”. “It’s a tragedy but the truth,” he said.

The nationalist leader, who was among the foremost Independence movement leaders, reportedly died in an air crash at Taihoku airport on August 18, 1945. This was not accepted by some members of his family and supporters. Conspiracy theories appeared within hours of his death and have persisted since then.

According to Ray, the reason behind there being no closure in the case begins with Bose’s older brother Sarat Bose’s premature death.

“Had he lived longer, he would have settled the matter. He was the final arbiter. Thereafter a vicious disinformation campaign over seven decades has confused people,” he said. “I needed to support his only child Professor Anita Bose Pfaff’s plea to the Indian government to bring her father’s mortal remains from Tokyo where they have been lying now for 73 years to India for a final disposal,” he said.

Ray conceded that a section of Bose’s extended family in India was also responsible for putting the Indian government on the back foot. “But now that all government of India files pertaining to Bose have been declassified and these have confirmed the truth, there is no reason for Indian authorities not to comply with Professor Pfaff’s wishes. She is the only legal and moral authority on the matter,” said Ray, who is based in London.

Morata finding his feet after Atletico offer fresh start



MADRID, MAR 11 (AFP): Alvaro Morata has made a habit of looking lost and aggrieved during five years wandering Europe’s biggest clubs but in Atletico Madrid he may finally have found one to call home.

Three goals in two games and another couple ruled out by VAR mean Morata looks a player revived since his January loan move from Chelsea.

He started well there too, before confidence shrivelled to the point where faith from fans and coaches turned to frustration, and a belief he was contributing to his own decline.

Yet there is reason to suspect the early surge at Atletico may be longer-lasting, with a return to Juventus in the Champions League on Tuesday

offering a reminder of how one of the game’s most enigmatic talents is, aged 26, still to deliver on his potential.

“Alvaro has fantastic assets that suit our game,” said Diego Simeone last month.

“Hopefully he can continue the way he has started.”

Strong in the air, hardly sluggish, good with his feet and, at his best, decisive in front of goal, Morata has still struggled to convince an impressive list of managers he is a striker to rely on.

From Jose Mourinho, Carlo Ancelotti and Zinedine Zidane at Real Madrid, to Max Allegri at Juventus, and Antonio Conte and Maurizio Sarri at Chelsea, none were prepared to make him their number one for an

extended period of time. - **HIGH EXPECTATIONS** -

In seven seasons, including three at Real and two each at Chelsea and Juve, Morata made 97 appearances as a substitute and only 84 in the starting line-up.

Between the age of 19 and 26, he has invariably been looking in from the outside. The problem has not been so much technical or physical -- although some believe he could do more with his 6ft 2in frame -- but mental, a tendency to feel sorry for himself and hide. The result was too often games, and weeks, passing him by.

At Chelsea, the contrast was all the more stark given he followed Diego Costa and, less directly, Didier Drogba, who each set the stan-

dard for the kind of warrior-striker that not only scores goals but fights, harries and hurts the opposition too.

“People expect a lot from Chelsea’s number nine,” Sarri’s assistant Gianfranco Zola said, before Morata left in January.

“They expect goals and great performances. Alvaro has to get used to it.”

In that sense, Morata will not find any more sympathy at Atletico, where Costa has returned and is now his rival for a place alongside Antoine Griezmann, who would surely post more remarkable figures himself, were he not asked to do so much defensive work.

- **TRUSTING COACH** -

But Simeone has welcomed Morata with open arms, supporting him before he even arrived

while a minority of fans scoffed at his history with Real Madrid.

“People can say what they want,” said Simeone in January.

“I look for players that serve the club and the team.” When Morata joined, perhaps because of his time at Real, Atletico seemed eager to frame him as the childhood fan coming home.

This was the ball-boy at the Vicente Calderon and during his official presentation, they put on a montage of his journey through the club’s youth teams.

There were photos of him with Fernando Torres while Morata posted a picture of himself online as a child wearing the Atletico kit. “With the enthusiasm of a kid,” read the caption.

But for all the talk of his roots, it is performances that will win over the supporters. Simeone cannot afford to be sentimental, with Atletico already seven points behind Barcelona in La Liga and chasing a Champions League final inside their own Wanda Metropolitano. Juventus have a 2-0 deficit to make up in Turin.

For Morata too, feeling at home is likely less about the past and more about the present, a fresh start and the chance to feel wanted again.

“Sometimes you take a lot of turns and I needed a group like this, a coach and a team that trust me,” Morata said. “I’m finally here.”

Always knew Ashton could do it at international stage: Handscomb



MOHALI, MAR 11 (PTI): Peter Handscomb, one of the architects of Australia’s record breaking run-chase against India in the fourth ODI here, was confident that young Ashton Turner could replicate his big-hitting exploits in domestic cricket at the international stage.

Turner on Sunday smashed unbeaten 84 off 43 balls as Australia chased down a mammoth target of 359 with four wickets in hand and 13 balls to spare to level the five-match series 2-2.

The series-deciding fifth and final ODI will be played in New Delhi on Wednesday.

“Ashton (Turner) is an amazing player. We have seen what he has done in the Big Bash League (for Perth Scorchers) for the past couple of years. We knew he can get the job done. The way he operated against Bumrah was quite amazing. This knock will give him so much confidence going forward,” Handscomb said after the famous win on Sunday night.

He said that once Turner started hitting, everyone in the dressing room became superstitious.

“That was awesome. No was moving around with all those superstitions coming into play. That’s incredible. To see him come in at international stage and play an innings of this kind is phenomenal.”

On personal front, Handscomb termed Australia’s four-wicket victory in the fourth ODI against India as the “best match of his career”, something that will give them momentum ahead of World Cup in England.

Handscomb hit his maiden ODI hundred and added 192 with Usman Khawaja to set up the platform for rookie Turner to launch a furious final assault.

“It is a lovely feeling. I have no words to describe my feeling. This was the best match of my career so far. This win will give us a great momentum for the decider and then the World Cup in England. I am just glad that I contributed in the victory,” Handscomb said after the match.

On his maiden century, he said: “I am happy, I did not know I was going to play ODI again and it’s funny how things change. It’s nice to get opportunity to play for Australia and take it. The faith of selectors to keep me in that was nice. To get it today was pretty special.”

As the dew set in, Handscomb felt that he and Khawaja could play their natural game as there wasn’t much spin on offer.

“The dew definitely made it difficult for India’s wrist spinners (Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal). Conditions became difficult for them. They are very good bowlers but I think today, we also played them very well,” he said.

During their 192-run stand, he and Khawaja didn’t talk much, revealed the right-hander.

“Uzzi (Khawaja) and I didn’t talk much. We just left each other to play our own games. It was a very good batting pitch. Once the dew came on, we noticed there wasn’t much spin, which helped us play our natural game,” he said.

Handscomb was also happy with the fact that they have been able to chase down big totals in the tour irrespective of formats.

“High scoring chase is always special. It just gives you so much competition. We chased down 189 in Bengaluru (in second T20 International) and today we proved that it wasn’t a fluke,” he said.

Past champions Nadal, Federer advance at Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS (UNITED STATES), MAR 11 (AFP): World number two Rafael Nadal raced into the third round of the ATP Indian Wells Masters as Roger Federer made a less speedy but still successful start to his quest for a sixth title. Nadal, a three-time Indian Wells winner, needed just 72 minutes to get past overmatched Jared Donaldson 6-1 6-1 on Sunday. Federer, who is seeking to break out of a tie with top seed Novak Djokovic for most titles in the California desert, looked set for a similarly easy time of it, but had to turn back a second-set challenge from German Peter Gojowczyk in a 6-1 7-5 win.

Fourth-seeded Federer said he was relieved not to go to a second-set tiebreaker after falling behind 3-1 to the free-swinging German who is ranked 85th in the world.

The Swiss regained the break and, after saving four break points to make it 4-4, he broke Gojowczyk for a 6-5 lead, the German double-faulting on break point to give Federer a chance to serve it out. “I struggled a little bit with my serving in that second set and that gave him chances. Because he was serving bet-

ter he started to swing more freely and then it was tough,” Federer said. “I’m really happy I found a way in that second set.” Federer could find himself fighting for a fourth-round berth against fellow Swiss Stan Wawrinka, a three-time Grand Slam champion currently unseeded as he continues his return from injury.

Wawrinka took on 29th-seeded Hungarian Marton Fucsovics.

- **‘POSITIVE STEP’** -

Nadal, playing his third tournament of a year that started with a crushing loss to Djokovic in the Australian Open final and included an early exit in Acapulco, converted five of his six break chances against Donaldson and never faced a break point himself.

He next faces Diego Schwartzman, who beat Spain’s Roberto Carbralles 6-3, 6-1. Nadal is 6-0 against the Argentinian. “Today was a very positive step for me, and next one going to be against a player that we know each other very well, we practiced a lot of times, and we played some tough matches,” Nadal said.

“(He is) one of the best talents of the sport today so it’s going to be a tough one against Di-

ego.” In other early matches, sixth-seeded Kei Nishikori of Japan survived a scare in a 6-4 4-6 7-6 (7/4) victory over France’s Adrian Panarin. Mannarino, ranked 52nd in the world, served for the match at 6-5 in the third.

He couldn’t muster a match point and double-faulted on break point and that was enough of a window for Nishikori. “I think in the tiebreak I played the best tennis of the match, I was really focused,” said Nishikori, who opened 2019 with a title in Brisbane and then reached the quarter-finals of the Australian Open. Nishikori next faces 67th-ranked Hubert Hurkacz of Poland, who defeated France’s Lucas Pouille 6-2 3-6 6-4.

Eighth-seeded American John Isner routed Australian qualifier Alexei Popyrin 6-0 6-2, the most lopsided win of Isner’s career. He’ll play Guido Pella, who won his first title at Sao Paulo last week. Pella ended the hopes of another Aussie qualifier, Alex Bolt, 7-6 (7/5) 2-6 6-3. Tenth-seeded Croatian Marin Cilic downed Serbian Dusan Lajovic 6-3 6-4 to book a meeting with 19-year-old Canadian Denis Shapovalov, the 24th seed who beat American Steve Johnson 6-3 6-4.

Boeing 737 MAX planes: Civil aviation min, DGCA to discuss steps following Ethiopia crash

NEW DELHI, MAR 11 (PTI): The government will discuss with aviation regulator DGCA on action that needs to be taken regarding Boeing 737 MAX planes being operated in India following the crash of the aircraft in Ethiopia that killed 157 people, a senior official said Monday.

This is for the second time in less than five months that a Boeing 737 MAX 8 plane crashed. In October 2018, an aircraft operated by Lion Air crashed killing over 180 people in Indonesia.

Against the backdrop of full-service carrier Jet Airways and budget airline SpiceJet operating 737 MAX planes, the DGCA has decided to seek information about the aircraft from Boeing as well as the two domestic carriers.

A senior civil aviation ministry official Monday told PTI it would discuss with the DGCA on the action that needs to be taken with

regard to 737 MAX aircraft. Jet Airways has placed orders for 225 737 MAX planes with Boeing and some have already been delivered.

SpiceJet, which has embarked on ambitious expansion plans, has a deal with Boeing for up to 205 aircraft, including at least 155 737 MAX 8 planes.

The two airlines did not offer any immediate comments regarding the MAX planes.

The 737 MAX is the fastest selling airplane in Boeing’s history.

Currently, SpiceJet has 13 737 MAX 8 planes and Jet Airways has 8 such aircraft in their fleets, as per data available with planespotter.net website. On Sunday, 157 people, including four Indians, were killed when a Nairobi-bound Ethiopian Airlines’ 737 MAX aircraft crashed after taking off from Addis Ababa.

In the wake of the incident, various jurisdictions and airlines have initiated actions, including



grounding of the 737 MAX aircraft. The Civil Aviation Administration of China has asked its local carriers to stop commercial flights with 737 MAX 8 planes and Ethiopian Airlines has grounded its fleet of

such aircraft.

Last December, the DGCA asked Jet Airways and SpiceJet to immediately report any “abnormal” issues related to the MAX plane’s Manoeuvring Characteris-

tics Augmentation System (MCAS), following the Lion Air crash.

MCAS is a kind of stall-recovery system that is used in Boeing 737 MAX aircraft and generally alerts the pilot in case there is stalling

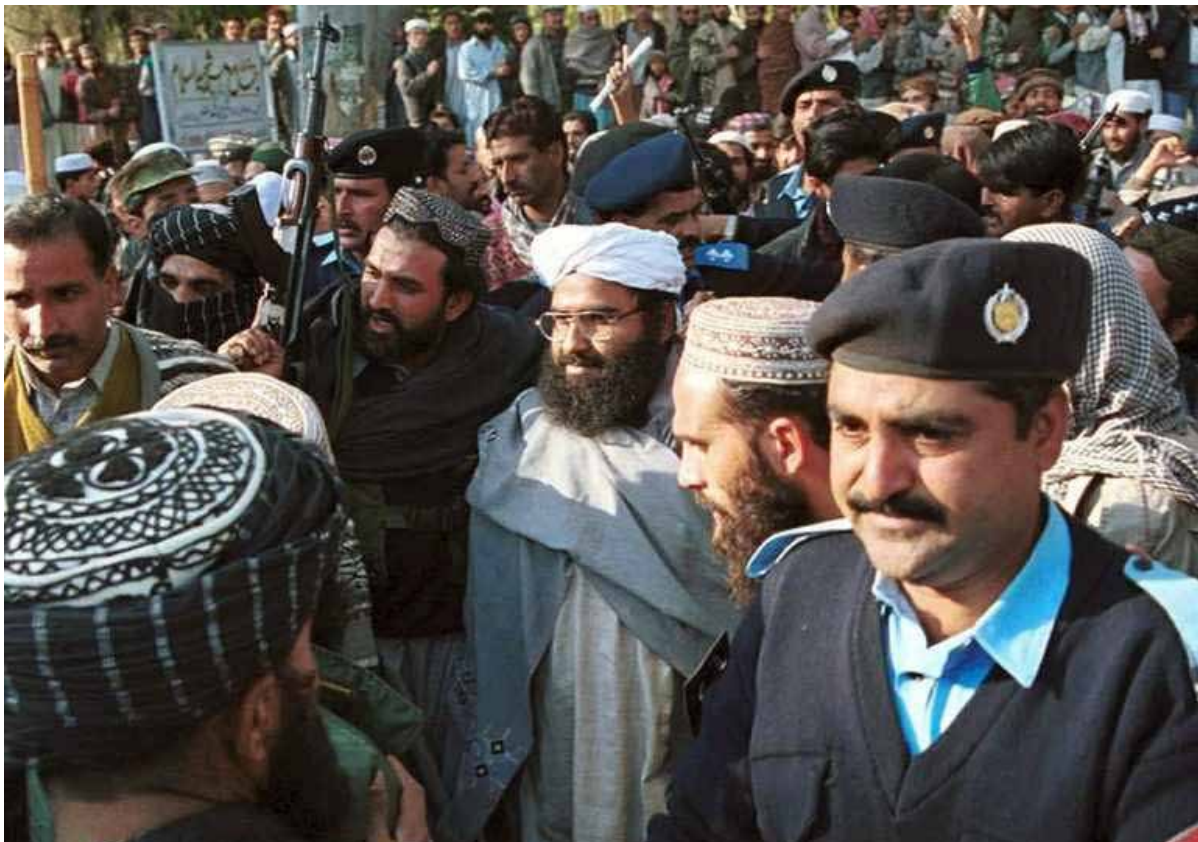
of the plane or fall in speed, among others. Prior to that, the DGCA, in November 2018, asked the two carriers to take corrective action to address possible issues with their 737 MAX planes that could lead to “significant altitude loss” of the aircraft.

After the crash in Ethiopia, Boeing, on Sunday, said it was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of the passengers and crew on Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, a 737 MAX 8 airplane.

“A Boeing technical team will be travelling to the crash site to provide technical assistance under the direction of the Ethiopia Accident Investigation Bureau and US National Transportation Safety Board,” the aircraft maker said in a statement.

“The 737 MAX is the fastest selling airplane in Boeing history, accumulating nearly 4,700 orders from more than 100 customers, worldwide,” according to Boeing website.

UN ban on Azhar: China says ‘responsible solution’ can only come through talks



BEIJING, MAR 11 (PTI): Amid reports that the resolution to declare Pakistan-based JeM chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist would come up in the UN Security Council on March 13, China on Monday said “a responsible solution” can only come through discussions.

Beijing also said security issues constituted an “important topic” in its talks to ease tensions between Pakistan and India following the Pulwama terror attack.

The US, the UK and

France had moved a proposal at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) after the Pulwama terrorist attack to designate the chief of the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) which claimed responsibility for the Pulwama terror attack, as a global terrorist.

According to reports the resolution was expected to be taken by the 1267 committee of the UNSC on March 13. China, which has blocked three times such moves by India and other members of the UNSC, is yet

announce its stand.

Asked about India’s appeal and China’s stand on the issue, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told media here, “First I would like to say that the UNSC as a main body of the UN has strict standards and rules of procedures. Some reports have knowledge of inside information the UNSC. I don’t know that can be counted as an evidence,” he said.

“China’s position on the designation of a terrorist by the 1267 Sanctions Committee is con-

sistent and clear. China adopted a responsible attitude, follows the rules of the procedure of the committee and participated in the discussions in a responsible manner. Only through discussions can we come up with a responsible solution,” he said.

Recently Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Kong Xunyou travelled to Pakistan and held talks with Prime Minister Imran Khan and Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and other officials.

India on Saturday said all the UNSC mem-

bers were aware of the JeM training camps and the presence of Azhar in Pakistan, and urged the nations to designate him as a global terrorist.

To another question whether Azhar’s ban issue figured in China’s talks with Pakistan, Lu said “recently India and Pakistan has experienced a lot. We think those incidents are not in the interest of peace and stability in the region”.

“We have engaged in mediation efforts with both sides and held talks to promote the easing of tensions. We made enormous efforts. While exchanging ideas security is an important topic and I can say that our talks were wide ranging quite deep,” he said. Tensions flared up between India and Pakistan after a suicide bomber of JeM killed 40 CRPF personnel in Kashmir’s Pulwama district on February 14.

Amid mounting outrage, the Indian Air Force carried out a counter-terror operation, hitting the biggest JeM training camp in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan on February 26.

The next day, Pakistan Air Force retaliated and downed a MiG-21 in an aerial combat and captured Indian pilot, who was handed over to India on March 1.

Malaysia court frees woman in North Korea murder case



SHAH ALAM (MALAYSIA), MAR 11 (AFP): An Indonesian woman accused of assassinating the North Korean leader’s half-brother was freed Monday after Malaysian prosecutors dropped a murder charge against her, in a shock decision a year and a half after she went on trial.

Siti Aisyah smiled as she was ushered through a pack of journalists and into a car outside the court, where she had been on trial alongside a Vietnamese woman for the murder of Kim Jong Nam at Kuala Lumpur airport in February 2017.

“I feel happy. I did not know this will happen. I did not expect it,” said Aisyah, who was wearing a red headscarf.

It was a surprise move as the Shah Alam High Court, outside Kuala Lumpur, had been due only to hear Huang’s testimony on Monday. Her lawyers said they were seeking an adjournment.

The women, in their 20s, had always denied murder, saying they believed they were taking

part in a prank and were tricked by North Korean agents into carrying out the Cold War-style hit using VX nerve agent.

Their lawyers had presented them as scapegoats, saying that authorities were unable to catch the real killers.

Four North Koreans - formally accused of the murder alongside the women - fled Malaysia shortly after the murder.

The trial, which began in October 2017, was due to resume Monday with the defence stage of proceedings after a break of several months.

But at the start of the hearing, prosecutor Muhammad Iskandar Ahmad requested that the murder charge against Aisyah be withdrawn and that she be given a discharge.

He gave no reason for the request.

“Siti Aisyah is freed,” judge Azmin Ariffin told the court, as he approved a request. “She can leave now.” Indonesian ambassador to Malaysia Rusdi Kirana told reporters outside court:

Morocco repatriates eight alleged jihadists from Syria



RABAT, MAR 11 (AFP): Morocco said Sunday it had repatriated eight of its nationals from Syria, who will be investigated for “suspected involvement in acts linked to terrorism”.

“The competent Moroccan authorities proceeded on March 10 to repatriate a group of eight Moroccan citizens who were in conflict zones in Syria,” the interior ministry said in a statement.

lowed the Moroccans to return to their home country safely, the ministry added.

In 2015, the number of Moroccans in jihadist ranks in Iraq and Syria was estimated at more than 1,600.

Those who return are arrested and receive sentences of 10 to 15 years in prison.

Syria’s multi-fronted war has killed more than 360,000 and displaced millions since it erupted in the wake of the government’s bloody repression of street protests in 2011. The SDF wants foreign fighters and their families to be repatriated by their countries of origin.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, which is spearheading a final offensive against the Islamic State group’s last redoubt, confirmed its involvement in the transfer.

The force “handed over some citizens from Morocco who used to stay in camps of north-east Syria to the Moroccan government,” SDF spokesman Mustefa Bali wrote on Twitter.

Backed by an international military coalition, the SDF has arrested thousands of IS jihadists who have fled the shrinking stronghold.

Many of those flooding out of IS territory are foreign fighters and their families -- including some Moroccan women, according to AFP journalists on the ground.

Sunday’s operation had a “humanitarian character” and al-

lowed the Moroccans to return to their home country safely, the ministry added.

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Rabat’s move was praised by the United States, which said such actions “should encourage other nations to repatriate and prosecute their citizens” who have joined IS.

“Repatriating foreign terrorist fighters to their countries of origin is the best solution to prevent them from returning to the battlefield,” State Department spokesman Robert Palladino said.

Washington last month said it would not allow a US-born woman who had joined IS in Syria, Hoda Muthana, back into the country and declared she was not an American citizen.

Seoul closely monitoring N Korea for ‘missile launch’: military



SEOUL, MAR 11 (AFP): South Korea’s military said Monday it was closely monitoring North Korean facilities after a series of satellite images triggered international alarm that Pyongyang might be preparing a long-range missile or space launch.

Analysis indicates increased activity at two key sites -- the Samundong missile research facility and the Sohae rocket-testing facility.

Any launch could send stuttering talks on denuclearisation into disarray.

South Korea is “closely tracking and looking into all activity for possible scenarios including a missile launch” across the border, in close coordination with the US, said Kim Joonrak, spokesman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Satellite images of Samundong taken on February 22 showed cars and trucks at the site, as well as rail cars and cranes at a yard, US news outlet NPR reported.

“When you put all that together, that’s really what it looks like when the North Koreans are in the process of building a rocket,” Jeffrey Lewis, a researcher at the

Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, was quoted as saying.

Located on the outskirts of Pyongyang, the Samundong facility was built in 2012 to support development of long-range missiles and space-launch vehicles.

As well as developing the Hwasong-15 ICBM, which analysts agree is capable of reaching the whole US mainland, Samundong constructed the long-range rockets that were then transported and successfully launched from the Sohae satellite launch station in 2012 and 2016.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un agreed last year to shutter the Sohae site at a summit with the South’s President Moon Jae-in in Pyongyang.

Satellite pictures in August suggested workers were dismantling an engine test stand at the facility.

But the Washington-based Center for Strategic Studies and International Studies suggested last week rebuilding was progressing quickly at the facility.

A moving structure that had been used to carry vehicles to a launch pad on rails has

been restored, said respected research website 38 North project.

It added the work had started before last month’s failed meeting on denuclearisation between Kim and US President Donald Trump.

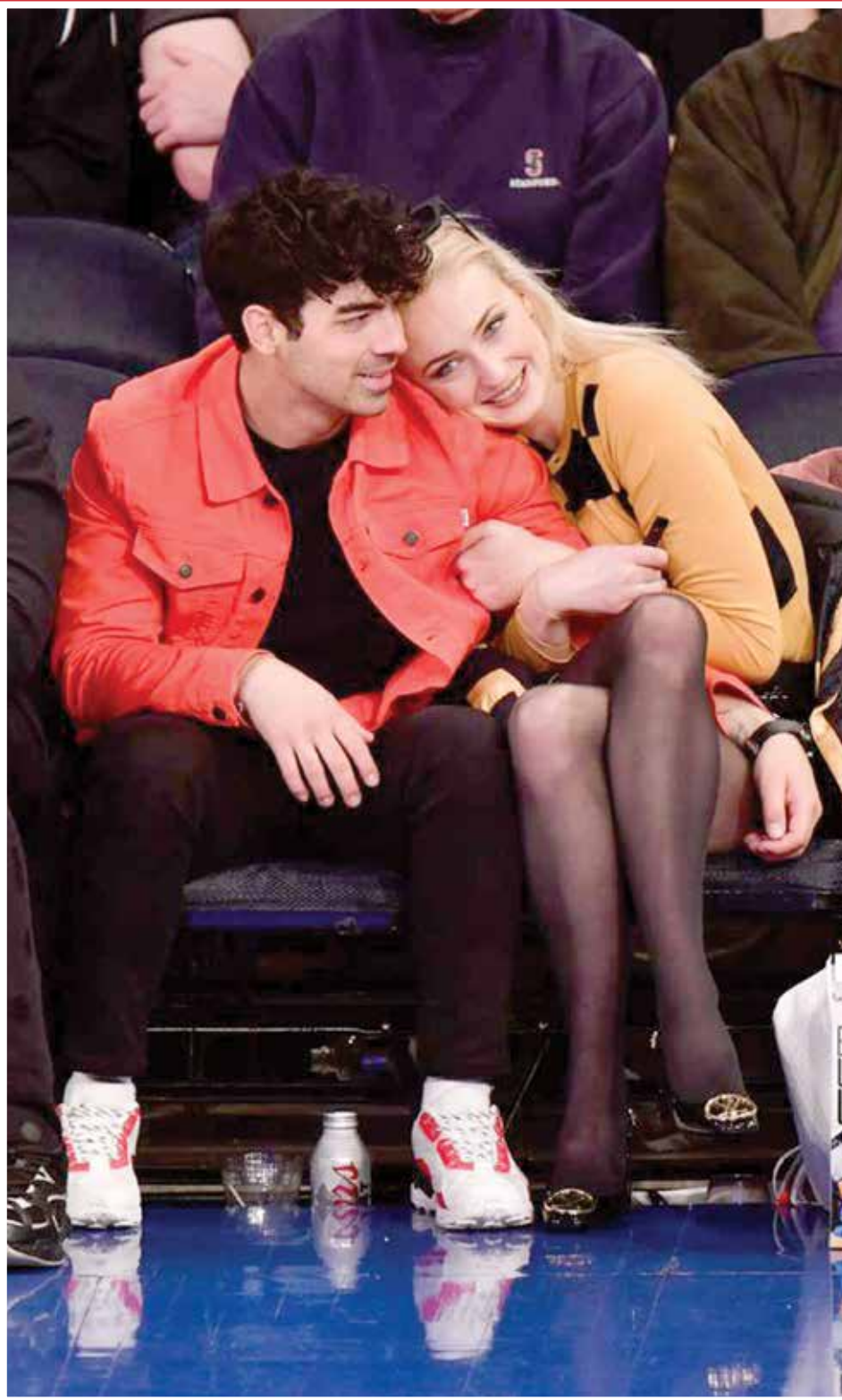
John Bolton, President Donald Trump’s national security adviser, said Sunday the US sees “exactly what they are doing” in regard to possible missile or rocket launch moves by the nuclear-armed state.

“We see it unblinkingly, and we don’t have any illusions about what those are,” he warned, adding his boss would be “pretty disappointed” if a nuclear-armed state conducted a new missile test.

North Korea has been banned by the UN security council from carrying out space launches, as some of its technology was similar to that used for intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs.

Since the collapse of the Hanoi summit, Trump has been cautious in his forecasts, continuing to suggest a deal remains possible.

Trump said Kim promised he would carry out no more missile or nuclear testing, adding, “I take him at his word.



Joe Jonas & Sophie Turner show some PDA at the Sacramento Kings v New York Knicks game at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

Emmy Rossum Reflects on Shameless Before Her Final Episode

It was a big night for Emmy Rossum.

Rossum's final episode of *Shameless* aired Sunday, and she took a moment to reflect on her career on the show and what it all means to her. Rossum, who plays the character Fiona Gallagher, shared a still from the pilot episode where she's wearing a blue coat, blue and red scarf and holding a flip phone. Remember what those are?!

"Here is a picture taken eight years ago during our pilot," she captioned the picture. "Today, 110 episodes later, I am filled with gratitude for my shameless family and for our faithful audience." Rossum continued, "I'll be watching with love and can't wait to see what comes next."

The Cold Pursuit actress shocked fans in August when she announced she would be leaving the show. Rossum revealed the news in a long Facebook post where she described the meaningful relationships she's made from the show and how her life has changed because of it.

"This business is always an adventure,

full of travel and opportunities to tell stories. Usually as an actor, every few months, you travel to a new place, start a new project, build a new character, learn new rhythms,



new inside jokes with your crew, make new friends," she wrote. "Until 'Shameless' came into my life 8 years ago, I led that kind of transient wonderful life of an actor. And I never realized how much I actually craved the kind of continuity that this show has given me. And given all of us in the crew."

She added, "There are these real connections, real friendships that bring us back season after season after season."

'Andhadhun' to release in China as 'Piano Player'

MUMBAI, MAR 11 (PTI): Sriram Raghavan's "Andhadhun", one of the most talked about thrillers of Bollywood in 2018, is all set to release in China.

The film will release with the title 'Piano Player' in China, which is emerging as a significant market for Indian mainstream films.

Produced by Viacom18 Motion Pictures & Matchbox Pictures, "Andhadhun" stars Tabu, Anyushmann Khurrana and Radhika Apte.

The story of the film revolves around Simi, a desperate small time actor-turned wife to a yesteryear star. The story takes a turn when she is caught disposing of her husband's body in front of a presumably blind pianist Akash.

It is for the first time that Raghavan's film is releasing in China and the director is suitably excited to present his film to a new audience.

"I am super thrilled that 'Andhadhun' is releasing in China. Ten years back, on a visit to China, I walked into a Beijing Cafe and was zapped to see Nasir Husain's 'Caravan' playing on a big screen. Dubbed in Chinese except for the songs. I was told the film was the favourite Indian film of that generation. I am curious how the Chinese audience responds to our musical thriller," Raghavan said in a statement.

Viacom18 Studios along with Eros International has now partnered with Tang Media Partners to release the thriller in China.

"I am happy to announce that Via-

com18 Studios has secured its maiden release in China and that too with our favourite film 'Andhadhun'. I am very excited about our film's prospect at the China box office and celebrating what

of the most anticipated release. Fans in the country can now witness the magic of Andhadhun unfold in theatres across the country," added Kumar Ahuja, President - Business Development, Eros In-



VIACOM18 MOTION PICTURES PRESENTS
A MATCHBOX PICTURES PRODUCTION
ANDHADHUN

is a major first for the studio," Ajit Dhanare, COO, Viacom18 Studios, said.

"China being a home to many Bollywood lovers, has made Andhadhun one

ternational. Kevin Tang of Tang Media Partners said "Andhadhun" would be the first India movie in thriller genre to release in China.

Didn't join Bollywood to make films with stars: Tigmanshu Dhulia

Filmmaker Tigmanshu Dhulia has a solid clarity of what he wants to do: make films which have his trademark style and never chase stars to get his dream on celluloid.

The director, who has helmed mid-budget but critically acclaimed films like "Paan Singh Tomar" and "Saheb Biwi aur Gangster" series, has learnt over the years on how to avoid the pressure of having a star to headline his film.

"I don't want to sound pompous but I want my films to be a 'Tigman-shu Dhulia Film.' Whether it's a hit or a flop, doesn't matter. I came to this industry to make films, not to make films with stars.

"Now I've learnt to not approach those producers with those kind of scripts where they will ask me to get a star. I don't fall into that trap anymore," Tigmanshu told PTI.

The pressure on a director to get a star on board can be quite daunting.

Tigmanshu first hand experienced this while making his upcoming directorial, "Milan Talkies", which earlier had several names attached to it, from Shahid Kapoor and Priyanka Chopra to Imran Khan.

Though conceptualised around 2011, Tigmanshu had to cross several roadblocks to finally make the film.

"Earlier UTV was supposed to do it but I had a fallout with them because they weren't releasing 'Paan Singh Tomar'. There was a gap then and Ekta pushed really hard. I'll give

it up to her. "Despite actors saying yes and no, dillydallying about it, she held on to it. But they needed a star. I requested her let me make it with whoever because otherwise this will never get made and she did."

The filmmaker is now ready to release "Milan Talkies" on March 15, featuring Ali Fazal, Shraddha Srinath, Sikander Kher and Ashutosh Rana, among others.

The director, however, had to tweak the writing a bit as the film kept on getting delayed.

"I started writing it in 2010-2011, that's why the film is also set in that period, where we had prints in theatres. Suddenly because of digital, the romance of cinema goes. I had to show the projectors, the equipments."

Tigmanshu has often set his films, including "Milan Talkies", in small towns and he says the reasons is that most of the intriguing stories come from there.

"If you take up the films set in small town and try to make it in Mumbai, it'll not work.

Small towns bring a lot of conflicts of various kinds.

Apart from Mumbai and probably Bangalore, every city in this country is a small town anyway, where values and traditions still exist. "Despite Delhi being the capital of the country, people there have small town mentalities. But not Mumbai. Mumbai is an office, not a home.



ARIES: The higher you climb, the more support you need. Today's productive angle between the confident Sun and structure junkie Saturn could illuminate a great coach, mentor or consultant who can guide you up the next rung of the ladder. It's not a sign of weakness to ask for help (need we remind you again, Aries?)

TAURUS: Yes, Taurus, it's your turn to call out the neon pink elephant in the room. But relax: Today, people are actually ready to hear it. They've known for a while that something was off, and it's been affecting the morale of the entire team. If there wasn't an actual mutiny on your hands, people have certainly been drifting.

GEMINI: Power surge! Today's Sun-Saturn collaboration blesses you with an added measure of authority. With the Sun amping up your leadership skills and Saturn in your intuitive eighth house, listen to your gut. People will follow your lead, Gemini, so step up and take charge. You don't have to show your entire hand or spend all day justifying the decisions you make.

CANCER: Relationships will benefit from unapologetic honesty today, Cancer, but there's just one hitch. Don't confuse your opinions with the gospel truth. The way something SEEMS may not reflect the way it actually is, but you run the risk of flinging false accusations based on assumptions. If you are unhappy with a partnership, lay down your weapons and advance with curiosity..

LEO: Forget about going with your best guess today, Leo. A precise angle between the illuminating Sun and structure hound Saturn insists that you take exact measurements in all that you do. Do the cost breakdown of an upcoming project or travel plan. You may need to simplify or tweak an aspect to keep within budget. If you "heard it through the grapevine," do your detective work. Unless you have facts and empirical data to back up the case, consider it an unsolved mystery—and perhaps even "fake news."

VIRGO: Right swipe! Today's lust-positive angle between the flirtatious Sun and

steady Saturn could bring a hot prospect with staying power. You certainly won't meet this person while clearing out your Netflix queue. Follow the Sun's motivation to dress up and meet friends out on the town. Coupled Virgos, don't get lazy. Take a pause from co-hibernating and reserve a table for two.

LIBRA: Go ahead, Libra, let your inner control freak have the wheel today. With the can-do Sun productively angled to structure fanatic Saturn, you could really whip a plan into shape. Be a stickler for the details. If people's promises aren't making sense or their deadlines don't seem realistic, call it out. You don't have to go along with the first offer people make.

SCORPIO: WYou're a creative force today, Scorpio, so use that magnitude to push a project to the finish line. You'll create some real tremors if you dare to color outside the lines. Don't just do this for shock value, however. With a message behind your "madness," you can wake people up to important issues or ideas they haven't thought of yet.

SAGITTARIUS: So many people, so little time. You've been spreading yourself thinner than angel hair pasta lately, Archer. The person suffering most is you, and if you keep running at this pace, you won't have anything left to give others. Be firm when a close friend or family member pushes for more of your time than you have to give. Today, make sure your schedule includes plenty of pauses in between appointments, a longer lunch break and a spot of time tonight to soak in the tub, listen to music and just relax!

CAPRICORN: You've been mulling over some pretty big ideas ever since hard-hitting Saturn entered Capricorn on December 19, 2017. Today, take another step toward putting those visions into words. With the expressive Sun forming a propitious angle to Saturn, take time to write out your thoughts, even if you're scrawling in your journal or typing into a private Excel document. You might find it helpful to bounce these visions off of more experienced people. Do your research. Some not-so-random Googling

could unearth a Eureka!-level discovery.

AQUARIUS: Lift your nose from the grindstone and give your personal life attention today, Aquarius, as the Sun gets a supportive boost from your co-ruler, structured Saturn. If your house isn't in order—literally and metaphorically—it's going to be difficult to focus and be productive. Even cleaning your space can be meditative. Or maybe it's time to hire a cleaning service to deal with the dust bunnies you simply don't have the space to clear away anymore..

PISCES: Take charge of a floundering mission and get everyone focused and inspired again. With the expressive Sun in Pisces at a propitious angle to can-do Saturn, people won't mind when you assert yourself or call out what's broken about the current state of affairs. As long as you follow up with a proactive idea for FIXING things, you won't lose your battalion of support. But do take care to word your critiques so that they don't hit anyone below the belt. Be more of a dolphin than a shark.