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# SummitTIMES



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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## India conveyed to Karmapa its readiness to issue him visa; he is yet to apply: sources

**NEW DELHI, DEC 27 (PTI):** India has conveyed to Karmapa Gyen Trinley Dorje, considered the most influential Tibetan religious leader after the Dalai Lama, on multiple occasions that it was ready to give him a visa on his newly acquired passport of Commonwealth of Dominica, sources said Thursday.

However, the Karmapa, who is understood

to be in the US, is yet to approach the Indian authorities for visa. Sources strongly rejected reports that he was not being able to come to India as he was not given a visa. [Interesting though that this is not being confirmed on record.]

The influential Buddhist religious leader came to India in 2000 after his dramatic escape from Tibet. He was

around 14 years old then.

The Karmapa has not approached India for a visa though he has been saying that he wants to come to India, the sources said.

The religious leader of the Karma Kagyu sect, who was living in India as a Tibetan refugee, picked up a passport of the Commonwealth of Dominica in March, a Caribbean island nation.

He had reportedly left India in May last year on a three-month visa.

The sources said he has not yet conveyed to India about his Dominica passport, the identity certificate automatically became invalid, it is learnt.

Sources said there was no issue relating to the identity certificate as the condition for the issuance of the document was very clear that

it becomes invalid when anyone obtains a foreign passport.

India issues identity certificate to Tibetan refugees and the Karmapa was also given one but as he had acquired a foreign passport, the identity certificate automatically became invalid, it is learnt.

Sources said there was no issue relating to the identity certificate as the condition for the issuance of the document was very clear that

it becomes invalid when anyone obtains a foreign passport.

They said "explicit instructions" were issued to Indian consulates in the US about grant of visa to the Karmapa.

At present, around 1.8 lakh Tibetan refugees are living in India.

Asked whether India was ready to give him multiple-entry visa, the sources evaded a direct reply.

## CEPCS members call on CM



**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 DEC:**

On Christmas eve, members of the Council of Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Sikkim [EPCS] called upon Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling at his official residence, Mingtokgang, a press release informs.

The newly elected office bearers of the Council of Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Sikkim who were elected for the term of three years were introduced to the Chief Minister.

The new body has Rev. T. Targain of EPCS Vok, South Sikkim as Moderator, Rev. Yozan Sherpa of EPCS Dentam, West Sikkim as Deputy Moderator, Pemba Lepcha of EPCS Gangtok, East Sikkim as General Secretary and Lawrence Lepcha of EPCS Gangtok, East Sikkim as treasurer.

On the occasion, the General Secretary read out a letter of gratitude before the CM for his unceasing support towards the members of EPCS and the Christian Community for the last 24 years and for his able governance. The new committee members placed few grievances before the CM who assured to look into the matter and fulfil it accordingly at the earliest.

The Chief Minister assured the community of his continued support in the days to come, the release mentions.

A Christmas cake was offered with prayers by senior most pastor Rev. P.S. Tingbo to the CM. The meeting concluded with the final prayer for the CM and benediction by Rev. Targain, Moderator CEPCS.

## Sikkim's road to Nepal nearing completion in West dist

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 DEC:**

The road connecting India and Nepal from Chewa Bhanjyang in West Sikkim is in the final stages of the completion.

This road project has already received official consent from the Indian and Nepal governments, but due to delay in environmental clearance from the Ministry of Forests and Environment, progress on it had stalled. Now, after receiving the NOC from MoEF, after five years since applying for the same, work has progressed on a fast clip.

The project has been taken up under the Border Road Development Scheme of the Government of Sikkim and will enter Nepal from the international border at Chewa Bhanjyang above Uttarey in West Sikkim.

The work was ten-

dered in 2011, and under this project, a 35 KM road is being carved from Dentam to Chewa Bhanjyang.

Construction has been undertaken at a cost of Rs 18.75 crores.

The Maneybong-Dentam MLA, UD&HD Minister NK Subba, has also taken keen interest in the project and now the road is likely to be officially opened in early 2019.

It is informed that the main works under the project were at Chewa Bhanjyang and Sopakha which fall under Wildlife, Reserve Forest and Kanchenjunga National Park and since environmental clearance was delayed, so was the project.

Contractor PK Subba informs that after receiving the NOC finally earlier this year, work was pushed forward on a war-footing and was now on the verge of completion.

He added that people of Sikkim and even in Ne-



pal were very happy and excited about this road. He added that the road will be very beneficial for tourism stakeholders, businessmen and pilgrims from both countries.

It is informed that people from neighbouring Taplejung, Bhojpur,

Ilam and surrounding areas of Nepal will also benefit from this road.

The road will also come as a big relief for SSB and Sikkim Police personnel, as earlier provisions had to be taken to the forward posts by head-loads or yaks and mules.

## Kohli surpasses Dravid for most overseas runs in calendar year

**MELBOURNE, DEC 27 (PTI):** Captain Virat Kohli Thursday bettered Rahul Dravid's long-standing record of most runs scored by an Indian in a calendar year overseas, adding another feather to his illustrious cap.

"With 82 runs today, @imVkohli has surpassed Rahul Dravid (1137) to register most number of runs in a calendar year in overseas Tests #King-Kohli," the BCCI tweeted.

With this 82 at the MCG on the second day of the third Test, Kohli now has 1138 runs to his name. Dravid held the record for scoring 1137 runs in Tests away from home in 2002.

Besides Kohli and Dravid, Mohinder Amarnath notched up 1065 runs in 1983 while the great Sunil Gavaskar had scored 918 runs in 1971 to make the top four in the list.

## Tarey Bhir to host Kite Festival

**NITESH R PRADHAN Namchi, 27 Dec:**

The picturesque Tarey Bhir in Sadam, South Sikkim is all set to host a Kite festival from 31 Dec to 01 Jan.

According to Chairperson, Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation, Rup Narayan Rai informed that the Kite festival aims to make Tarey Bhir a major tourist destination.

Further he informed that president, Kite Society of Ahmedabad, Ujjwal Saha, will be the judge for the competition which will also have cash prizes.

Chief Minister Pawan Chamling is scheduled to attend the event as the chief guest.

President, Kite festival organising committee, Milan Gurung stated that many artists will also perform during the



festival and helicopter joyride will also be on offer.

They further informed that Tarey Bhir will see more growth with paragliding being developed along with eco-friendly accommodation.

Tarey Bhir is one of the most beautiful view points in Sikkim with mesmerising views of surrounding mountains in South, West and East Sikkim along with neighbouring Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of West Bengal.

### NEW FRIENDS SNOOKER CLUB

### 5TH WINTER OPEN SNOOKER CHAMPIONSHIP 2019

This tournament is organised in order to enhance and experience the beauty of the game and also inspire the younger generation to learn and excel.

Players from: Delhi, Nepal, Bhutan, West Bengal & Assam

Venue: New Friends Snooker Club, Bhutia Busty, Namchi  
Date: 5th to 9th January 2019  
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LADIES- 100  
COUPLES- 300

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## Shanti Colony Samaj women help nab drug peddling couple



**YOGEN THATAL  
SINGTAM, 27 DEC:**

On Christmas, women of Shanti Colony Samaj, Singtam helped the police nab a couple who were peddling contraband substances in the area.

The couple had been on the radar of the Samaj, whose members informed the police, following which a raid was conducted in the couple's rented accommodation at Bhanu Park.

On searching, police

recovered 434 bottles of cough syrup, 24,280 Spasmoproxvon capsules and 78 N-10 tablets along with cash Rs 1,16,390.

While the husband [38] was arrested, the wife managed to escape. Police are on the lookout for the 32-year-old woman.

The market value of Spasmoproxvon for one file, containing 08 capsules is Rs 200, Rs 250 – 300 for a single bottle of cough syrup and Rs 450 – 500 for one file containing ten N-10 tablets.

## 30 families join SDF in Dzongu



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA  
DIKCHU, 27 DEC:**

Twenty families from Gor ward and 10 families from Tareng ward of Lum/Gor/Sangtok Gram Panchayat Unit of Dzongu joined Sikkim Democratic Front on 26 Dec.

The joining programme was held in the presence of Deputy Speaker SLA cum MLA Dzongu, Sonam Gyatso Lepcha along with the Panchayats and Zilla Panchayat.

The Area MLA welcomed them and handed

over the party's flag. Out of 20 families from Gor ward, 7 families were from Sikkim Krantikari Morcha while 13 families were from other parties.

The Deputy Speaker highlighted about the party's policies and programmes and also informed about the Chief Minister's pro poor vision for the development of the State.

He also urged everyone to be united for development and expressed his happiness on their joining SDF.

## Sports activities & winter sports Coaching Camp underway in Gangtok

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 27 DEC:**

Sports Activities & Winter Sports Coaching Camp 2018-19 under 'Sports for Peace and Development' [Vertical of Khelo India] in different sports disciplines are currently underway at different venues in and around Gangtok.

The camp, which started on 24 Dec, is being organised by Department of Sports & Youth Affairs, government of Sikkim and Khelo India District Level Executive Committee, East District and sponsored by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, government of India.

The camp has 12 disciplines of Athletics, Archery, Basketball, Boxing, Cricket, Football, Karate,

Kick Boxing, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Wushu and Weight Lifting for the age group from 9 to 17 years boys and girls.

These camps are underway at Paljor Stadium ground, Paljor Stadium indoor gymnasium hall, White Hall Complex, Tathangchen Archery Field and Tashi Namgyal Senior Secondary School playground. The coaching camp will conclude on 09 Jan 2019.

It is informed that similar activities will also be conducted from 03 to 17 Jan 2019 at St Xavier's School ground for children under Pakyong Sub Division and at Regu PYKKA Ground, Rhenock School Ground, Rongli Mela Ground and Rongli Auditorium under Rongli Sub Division.



## Chit fund company managing director sentenced to 5 yrs RI

**BERHAMPUR (ODISHA), DEC 27 (PTI):** The managing director of a chit fund company in Odisha's Ganjam district was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for five years by a special court here Thursday for duping investors.

The judge of the designated court handling chit fund cases, Dipti Ranjan Kanungo also convicted six others associated with the company -- SS Credit Cooperative Private Limited -- and pronounced two years jail term for each of them.

The court also slapped a fine of Rs 11.5 lakh on the company's managing director Santosh Kumar Tiwadi and Rs 2 lakh each on six others.

The convicted in the case included the company's directors Soudamini Tripathy, Sekhar Suman Tripathy, partners P Sanjeev Patra and T Rajiv Patra and two agents - Sushant Satapathy and Kuna Behera.

The court sentenced all the seven accused persons holding them guilty under the Odisha Protection of Interest of Depositors (OPID) Act after examining at least 24 witnesses, special public prosecutor Bijay Kumar Pradhan said.

Tiwadi had collected around Rs 50 lakh from at least 43 people in the area with assurances of giving them double the amount of their deposits, police said.

As the ponzi scheme company did not refund the money to the depositors, one of them had lodged an FIR with police at Buguda on December 5, 2014, police added.

## Gangtok MLA leads UDHD team on inspection drive

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 27 DEC:**

A team of engineers from Urban Development & Housing Department [UDHD] conducted an inspection of the ongoing works in and around Gangtok on Wednesday to ensure timely completion of the projects.

The team was led by Gangtok MLA, Pintso Chopel Lepcha, accompanied by Mayor GMC, Shakti Singh, and Councillor Tibet Road, SD Pulger. They first inspected the Bhanu Park where there is a statue of Adikavi Bhanu Bhakta Acharya. The annual Bhanu Jayanti is celebrated at Bhanu Park.

"We have started beautification work here so that the area looks good since we celebrate Bhanu Jayanti here every

year. We inspected the work so that it is completed as early as possible and quality work is done," said the Gangtok MLA.

Similarly, the team inspected the ongoing work at TNA flyover to know about the progress of the work.

"There are many arterial roads in Gangtok like the road connecting Kazi Road and Tibet Road. We inspected the roads and have told the department to start restoration works wherever the roads are damaged," said Mr Lepcha.

He added that the team also inspected the pending works in and around Gangtok with the engineers of the concerned department and told them to complete the pending works



## Lok Sabha passes Triple Talaq bill, Opposition walks out

**NEW DELHI, DEC 27 (PTI):** Lok Sabha Thursday passed the bill which criminalises the practice of instant triple talaq, with the government rejecting the contention that it was aimed at targeting a particular community.

The opposition, which had been demanding that the bill be referred to a 'joint select committee', staged a walkout when its demand was rejected by the government.

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill 2018 was passed by the Lower

House with 245 voting in favour and 11 opposing the legislation.

The bill will now go to Rajya Sabha for approval.

Piloting the bill, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said that there should be no politics on the bill, stressing that it was not against any particular community.

"Don't weigh the bill on the scales of politics. The bill is about humanity and justice," he said, urging lawmakers of different parties to speak in one voice to support the legislation.

He regretted that opposition parties were creating hurdles in its passage due to "vote bank politics".

The fresh bill will supersede an earlier bill passed in the Lok Sabha and pending in the Rajya Sabha.

The Bill to make the practice of triple talaq among Muslims a penal offence was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 17 to replace an ordinance issued in September.

Under the proposed law, giving instant triple talaq will be illegal and void, and will attract a

jail term of three years for the husband.

In view of the opposition by some parties in the upper house, the government had then cleared some amendments, including introduction of a provision of bail, to make it more acceptable.

Congress, TMC, AIADMK and RJD staged walk-out soon after Prasad concluded his reply. Several amendments moved by opposition were negated by a division that was insisted by opposition members.

Responding to demand of opposition parties,

including the Congress and the Trinamool Congress, that the bill be sent to a select committee for study, Prasad said the government has already taken note of concerns expressed by members earlier and amended the bill accordingly.

Prasad said the bill has made the offence compoundable, meaning that the case can be withdrawn if the man and his estranged wife reach a compromise, and that only the wife and her close relatives can file an FIR, ruling out the law's misuse.

He said as many as 477 cases of triple talaq have been reported since January 2017 and cited a case where a professor gave talaq to his wife over Whatsapp.

Whereas another muslim man gave talaq to his wife for attending the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally, the Union Law minister said, urging if the House unitedly can pass a bill for capital punishment for rape of girls below age of 12 years, then why not this legislation.

Leader of Congress Party in Lok Sabha, Mal-

likarjun Kharge said that bill was against the spirit of the Constitution and has violated several articles dealing with the rights of individuals.

Congress MP Sushmita Dev said the real purpose of the bill was not to empower Muslim women but to "penalise" Muslim men.

Demanding that the bill be referred to the joint select committee of Parliament, Dev said criminalisation of triple talaq goes against the Supreme Court verdict.

AIADMK leader P

Venugopal, TMC's Sudip Bandhopadhyay, AIMIM's Assaduddin Owaisi and Supriya Sule (NCP) also made similar demands.

Union minister Smriti Irani said if Parliament can enact laws to ban dowry and the practice of sati, it can also approve the bill to ban instant triple talaq.

Defending the penal provisions in the bill, Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said it was important to instil fear in the minds of those still practising it and rejected suggestions that it was against any religion.



# FPAS meet discusses hosting FPAI award function in Gangtok



REBYNA RANA  
GANGTOK, 27 DEC:

The Football Players Association of Sikkim (FPAS) held a meeting today at Paljor Stadium to deliberate on increasing the activities of the organisation.

The meeting was attended by FPAS president, Nirmal Chettri, executives Nim Tshering Lepcha, Sanju Pradhan, Mayal Dok Lepcha and other members of the association.

At the outset, the FPAS president reiterated the aims and objectives of the FPAS. He

shared that the FPAS is 'for and by' the footballers of Sikkim and strives to work for the welfare and betterment of local players. He also stressed on increasing activities and including more footballers through membership drives.

The meeting, based on the inputs from the members present, decided to focus on membership drive so that most of the footballers, both present and former including women footballers, are made part of the FPAS family. The existing members would be reaching out to football-

lers and seek their participation as members in the FPAS.

Another important agenda in today's meeting was registration of the FPAS with the government. It was decided that the association will move for documentation and seek registration with the government within one and a half months.

The urgency to register the FPAS was born out of the need to execute the programmes lined up for the betterment and welfare of the Sikkimese footballers in a transparent, organised manner. Among the activities

lined up include hosting the annual Indian football awards function of Football Players Association of India (FPAI) in Gangtok next April-May.

The FPAS and FPAI are holding discussions on possibility of hosting the prestigious FPAI award function in Gangtok. This matter was discussed during the meeting today with the members also keen on having the FPAI award function in Gangtok.

The FPAS would be further communicating with the FPAI regarding the award function and explore the way forward.

## Badminton coaching camp in Jan 2019

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 DEC:

Badminton Association of Sikkim is organising a month-long Winter State Badminton Coaching Camp 2019 for children in the Under-13 & Under-15 [Boys & Girls] age-group from 04 January to 04 February here at the Indoor Badminton Hall of Paljor Stadium Complex.

The camp will be conducted by Badminton World Certified Coach of Sikkim along with assistant coaches and trainers, informs a BAS press release.

BAS will also provide free special diet to all the players during the camp along with shuttles and certificates on completion of the camp. BAS has invited interested young shuttlers of the State to contact the association for the registration.

### HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email  
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# Governor attends annual function of Sikkim Kalyan Ashram

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 DEC:

Governor, Ganga Prasad, today attended the Annual Function-cum-Parivar Milan function at Sikkim Kalyan Ashram, Ranipool.

The function had the presence of All India Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram joint general secretary, Vishnu Kant, president Sikkim Kalyan Ashram, P.S Subba, other executive members, representatives of various NGOs, teachers, students and inmates of the Ashram, special invitees and well-wishers,



informs a press communiqué from Raj Bhavan.

Seven personalities from various walks of life were felicitated by

the Governor for their invaluable contribution towards Sikkim Kalyan Ashram and its initiatives.

Addressing the function, the Governor expressed his pleasure on getting the opportunity to attend Pari-

var Milan and meet the inmates, management and well-wishers of the Sikkim Kalyan Ashram. He stated that Sikkimese society has always exemplified brotherhood, harmony and mutual respect among various communities and religious groups.

Appreciating the objectives of Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, the Governor mentioned that Kalyan Ashram, through its various initiatives, is working towards strengthening social fabric and national integration.

In order to ensure that

our society remains united and conscious towards their national duties as citizen of this great country, we must rise above the linguistic, religious and regional barriers, the Governor added.

Lauding the efforts of donors and well-wishers who have contributed to the Ashram in the past, the Governor also urged every-

one to join hands and contribute generously to the Yagna of nation building.

The Governor also donated 30 blankets to the inmates of the Ashram and cash grant of Rs 25,000 during the function. The program had colourful cultural presentations and Veda Path and was also addressed by various speakers.

# SMC workshop organized at Deorali School

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 DEC:

School Management Committee workshop was organized at Deorali Girls Senior Secondary School by Sikkim Against Addiction Towards Healthy India (SAATHI) on 26 Dec. The workshop was attended by 84 SMC members of Government Schools of East District and had MP, Lok Sabha, P.D. Rai as chief guest, a press release informs.

The programme started with welcome address by SAATHI team, followed by SAATHI's impact and its achievement at school level by teacher coordinator, Deorali Girls Sr. Sec. School, Devabrata Biswas.

Two peer educators shared their experience and mentioned that they have learnt to love and support the people who are vulnerable and affected instead of ignoring them, the release mentions.

SMC Chairperson of Nandok Sec. School, Umakant Sharma had explained roles and responsibilities of SMC and why



it is so important for every school. He also mentioned about 2011 census literacy rate and the role of government in education.

The peer educators of Deorali Girls Sr. Sec. School presented short role play to create awareness regarding substance use. Devika Bista (SMC Member of Bojoghari Sr. Sec. School) shared that SAATHI has not only helped schools but also villages and the community together. She requested for introduction of music and sports in every school so that every

student can get motivated. She also informed everyone about effort and achievement of Bojoghari Sr. Sec. School towards issues of substance abuse.

MP, Lok Sabha, P.D. Rai, in his address, talked about the initiation of SAATHI program. He briefed about demand and supply side of substances and also explained about present scenario of substance abuse in the State. He urged everyone to take the problem of substance abuse seriously.

## Anthyesti Kriya

The Anthyesti Kriya of Late **Captain Modugu Vasudev Reddy** who passed away peacefully on the 20th December 2018 falls on the **31st December 2018**.

All relatives, friends and well wishes are requested to join us once again to offer prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Entel Motors Complex, 6th Mile, Tadong, Gangtok.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who extended their kind help and moral support in our hour of bereavement.

Priya Reddy Ladakhi (daughter)  
Guru T. Ladakhi (son-in-law)

## West Sikkim girls football teams humble East clubs

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 DEC:

Two clubs from West Sikkim have shown their strong presence with easy victories today in the ongoing 1st All Sikkim Women's Football Tournament here at Paljor Stadium. A total of sixteen goals were scored in two matches of the tournament on Thursday.

In the third quar-

ter-final match played on Thursday, Soreng Girls Academy thrashed Corinthian Girls FC, Pakyong 6-0 to secure its place in the semi-final round of the tournament. Likewise, Maneybong Dentam Girls Academy humbled Himalayan Girls Football Club, Gangtok 10-nil in the last quarter-final match of the tournament today.

Both semi-final

matches will be played on Friday.

The first semi-final match will be played between Dzongu Girls Football Club, North Sikkim and Soreng Girls Academy, West Sikkim at 12 noon. In the second semi-final, Maneybong Dentam Girls Academy will take on Pragati Sangha, Soreng at 1:30 PM.

## LAND FOR SALE

BL Plot, 60x60, both side road, Lower Syari, Near Ranipool, Land is almost flat.  
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## NATIONAL HYDROLOGY PROJECT INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) E-Procurement Notice NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Bid No: NHP-01 Online Re-Tender-02 of 2018-19.

- The Government of India has received financing from the **World Bank** towards the cost of **National Hydrology Project** and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts<sup>2</sup> for construction of works as detailed below.
- Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding procedures agreed with the World Bank. Bidding is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers, January 2011.
- Bidders from India should, however, be registered with any State Governments/ Government of India, or State/Central Government Undertakings. The bidders/sub-contractors should also possess valid license to undertake specialised works as per Section III, (1.3). Bidders from India, who are not registered as above, on the date of bidding, can also participate provided they get themselves registered by the time of contract signing, if they become successful bidders. **Bidders are advised to note the clauses on eligibility (Section I Clause 4) and minimum qualification criteria (Section III – Evaluation and Qualification Criteria), to qualify for the award of the contract.** In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 of the World Bank's Guidelines setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.
- Bidding documents are available online on [www.sikkimtender.gov.in](http://www.sikkimtender.gov.in) (website) from 31/12/18 to 31/01/19. The bidders would be responsible for ensuring that any addenda available on the website is also downloaded and incorporated.
- Bids must be submitted online on [www.sikkimtender.gov.in](http://www.sikkimtender.gov.in) on or before 11:00 hours on 31/01/2019 and the 'Technical Part' of the bids will be opened online on 31/01/2019 at 11:30 hours.

Name of Work	Bid Security (Rs.)	Cost of Document (Rs.)	Period of Completion
Construction of State Water Resources Information Data Centre under National Hydrology Project at Sahaydurg, Tadong.	250000.00	5,000.00	18 months

R.O. No. 556/IPR/Pub/Classi/18-19  
Date: 26.12.18



### ADMISSION OPEN

STUDY ZONE  
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#### OUR COURSE OUTLINES:

1. Winter Crash Courses running successfully for classes X, XII (CBSE, ICSE, ISC)
2. Study Materials provided according to the standards of the board.
3. Mock Test and Pre Board examinations for the students
4. Revision notes for the students to make them much more effective
5. Doubt clearing Sessions held by respective teachers
6. Separate hostel facilities for boys and girls.

#### OUR COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To give clear concept of the chapters
2. To give the students proper guidance to excel in their examinations
3. To Prepare and deliver answers effectively and efficiently
4. Greater emphasis would be to excel.
5. Last minute suggestion tips as per board requirements

For further details please contact: 9002163719, 7319565616, 7432036651  
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# SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

## Empowered Women

*Since they vote more, shouldn't they be listened to more as well?*

The 50/50 power-sharing arrangement between the sexes has been instituted in Sikkim at the panchayat and urban local body levels, with even the top posts being equally apportioned between the men and women. Just as the 50% seat reservation for women in Sikkim panchayats marked a new milestone for rural empowerment in Sikkim, so does their equal representation at the top panchayat level. While the verdict is still awaited on how effectively this mandated by law empowerment has been leveraged, what is significant is that women in Sikkim have consistently embraced their stake in Sikkim, an involvement they have proven with how enthusiastically they have turned out to vote.

By turning out to vote in larger proportions than men, Sikkim's ladies have displayed that they are keen to have a larger stake in governance and policy-making. Election 2014 was for the second consecutive election that women voters outperformed men in Sikkim. In 2009, against an 81.46% male voter turnout, Sikkim's women posted 82.77%. In 2014, 81.40% of the women voters exercised their franchise to help decide the government for the current term against 80.57% male voters.

This is one statistic that should make every Sikkimese sit up and take notice because make no mistake, stepping out, braving the heat and the rain later in the evening to vote, is a sign of empowerment. What is more, this is no flash in the pan episode, but appears to be a process which has sustained and grown over the past decade and a half. In Elections 1999, women voter turnout was five percentage points lower than men [79.10% versus 84.36%], and as women's empowerment efforts progressed in earnest [and the SDF government deserves credit for it], in Elections 2004, male and female voter turnout were almost level – 77.01% against 77.99%. As already mentioned, the women turned the tables on male voters in 2009, and have retained the bragging rights for the last election as well. Even as the women voters rank higher in percentage turn-out, they are not very far behind when it comes to absolute numbers either. Against a total of 1,53,425 men who voted in Sikkim in 2014, slightly over 1.46 lakh ladies pressed the EVM buttons.

The numbers prove the heightened involvement with which women in Sikkim have taken to participatory democracy.

Generalisations, admittedly, are by nature inaccurate and unscientific tools to draw conclusions, but if one were to surmise on what factors led to more women voting in Sikkim, there would be a multitude of factors, but one of the most substantial motivators must have been the increased attention being paid to women in Sikkim which convinced them that they had a stake in governance and the need to sustain it. Factors such as improving literacy, increased representation [in panchayat and urban bodies] and a slew of other women-centric interventions contribute to this increased voter turn-out, and even as one frowns at sops and quotas, these must be working towards empowerment because that is what the data is posting. This is perhaps also a trend whose time has come, and one which would automatically require political planners to position there stands with improved consideration of women interests. Because women's participation in voting is on the rise, their mandate will require delivery more than rhetoric. There are however still many politicians, who, even if they have shed overt male chauvinism, remain insensitive towards women's issues and some have even displayed boorish poor taste in the recent past. For anyone with any serious political ambitions, gender sensitivity will be a good investment to make. While this used to be consciously included in the activities of most political outfits till a few years back, it has all but vanished from political deliberations in post-election Sikkim. The sooner the wannabe leaders recognise the due rights and aspirations of women, the better it will be for their political futures.

Sikkimese women have established that henceforth, their endorsement will be required by every aspirant and every candidate, in every constituency in Sikkim. This power cannot be ignored because while women voters are in majority in five assembly constituencies, in actual turnout [not just percentage points] they outnumbered male voters in as many as nine Assembly constituencies in 2014. Even the most basic political calculation will thus recommend that political parties in Sikkim allow more women into representative politics roles, in positions which are more than just token. The parties, for their own survival, need to appreciate the power that women now wield in Sikkim and this means that women's issues can no longer be sidestepped. Political power is no longer possible without catering to the women voters, and given the centuries of prejudice and offensively male-centric system that has been imposed on women, one hopes that this vote-bank stands separate from the caste and community divisions that short-sighted politicians tend to carve out.



## From the ashes of shame arises an Australian men's cricket team to make us proud

CHRIS WALLACE  
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2018 has been miserable in so many respects, yet it ends with hope, and from the least expected quarter: the Australian cricket team.

Australian cricket and Australian public life have declined in tandem over the past few years, dragged down by the same bogies. Their tempers became foul, the mindset and rhetoric malign, and winning at all costs, driven by a voracious hunger for money, became everything.

People with decent values had their stomachs turned. We turned off the cricket, and turned away from the Liberal and National parties, which have been, and look set to continue, getting the electoral hidings of their lives.

Then summer arrived and with it, the touring Indian Test team. The Adelaide Test was engaging. The unexpectedly tight, clean contest kept us – and this felt surprising – watching just another over, and then another, until we surprised ourselves even more by watching the whole match.

Who were these batsmen? Most of the surnames were barely known. Some looked barely old enough to shave. They were fresh-faced, unpocked by the pestilence that marked the big, old and now ugly names of Australian cricket tarnished by a toxic sledging culture and, in the case of former captain Steve Smith and former vice-captain David Warner, outright cheating that shamed the nation.

Travis Head from the little South Australian country town of Gawler, north of Adelaide, embodied this new moment in Australian cricket. The young left-hander walked onto Adelaide Oval with boyish hope quietly written on his face that he

could make a century for his country playing on his home ground for the first time in only his third Test match ever. He top-scored in the first innings with a fighting 72. When he walked from the field, one felt like giving him a hug and telling him not to drop his head – to keep it high. He had done well, played cleanly, made the country proud.

Some of the reportage around Head created what seemed like a wormhole into a previous Australia. His family and friends were concerned about the train timetable between Gawler and Adelaide, and whether it meant they would have to stay overnight in Adelaide so as not to miss any play. Could they afford it if they had to? That Australia still exists, and to hear it discussed in the context of the glittering, money-soaked world of international cricket was just the sort of philosophical corrective of which it needs more.

The Australian fightback to nearly win the Adelaide Test from an apparently hopeless position was another surprise, the kind that brought us back to the second Test at the new Perth Stadium. The Perth wicket was an enigma: playing up then quietening down in an unpredictable pattern, keeping bowlers and batsmen on their mettle and interest high. As commentator and former England cricketer Isa Guha said, the Perth wicket had its own entire narrative in the game.

And that was another pleasant surprise, the normalisation of women commentators mixed in with the usual wall of men: Isa Guha on Foxtel, and presenter Mel McLaughlin, former Australian Test player Lisa Sthalekar and regular BBC cricket commentator Alison Mitchell on the Seven Network.

Tone really matters. Australian captain Tim Paine is the man of the hour. While the male cricket commentators gush over Virat Kohli, Paine is the

one showing outstanding leadership in the best Australian tradition rather than the ugly one. He is getting little recognition for it.

The fact is, Paine is a better captain than Steve Smith ever was. The team is in good psychological shape and his pleasant, matter-of-fact persona doesn't detract from an unequivocal competitiveness that delivered a convincing Australian win in the second Test.

Kohli looked ridiculous with his machismo-driven attempted chest bump when India couldn't overwhelm the Australian batting line-up at Perth. Paine was magnificent, refusing to take the bait and instead just getting on with an emphatic win.

Compare and contrast with Prime Minister Scott Morrison's embarrassing performance on his visit to Australian troops in Iraq just before Christmas. "So how good's the 7th Brigade?" he posed, both thumbs up Trump-style, to 7th Brigade ADF troops assembled uncomfortably for a prime ministerial picture opportunity.

Reluctant to be revved up, US-style, in Morrison's political interest, they gave him a delayed and barely audible murmur in reply. "That wasn't a very enthusiastic response!" he boomed back, raising his thumbs and his volume higher to demand again, forcefully: "How good is the 7th Brigade?"

Australians don't like forced rah-rah. We don't like cheats and clowns either. If the Australian cricket team can unexpectedly regenerate, after public revulsion made the wrongdoers pay a proper price and forced a clean-out of the administration that pushed them down the wrong path, maybe there is hope for Australian politics too. Happy Boxing Day and here's to a good New Year.

[the writer is ARC DECRA Fellow, Australian National University]

## When you look up, how far back in time do you see?

MICHAEL J. I. BROWN  
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Our senses are stuck in the past. There's a flash of lightning, and then seconds pass until we hear the rumble of distant thunder. We hear the past.

We are seeing into the past too. While sound travels about a kilometre every three seconds, light travels 300,000 kilometres every second. When we see a flash of lighting three kilometres away, we are seeing something that happened a hundredth of a millisecond ago. That's not exactly the distant past.

But as we look further afield, we can peer further back. We can see seconds, minutes, hours and years into the past with our own eyes. Looking through a telescope, we can look even further into the past.

### A SECOND BACK IN TIME

If you really want to look back in time, you need to look up.

The Moon is our nearest celestial neighbour – a world with valleys, mountains and craters.

It's also about 380,000km away, so it takes 1.3 seconds for light to travel from the Moon to us. We see the Moon not as it is, but as it was 1.3 seconds ago.

The Moon doesn't change much from instant to instant, but this 1.3-second delay is perceptible when mission control talks to astronauts on the Moon. Radio waves travel at the speed of light, so a message from mission control takes 1.3 seconds to get to the Moon, and even the quickest of replies takes another 1.3 seconds to come back.

### MINUTES AND HOURS



It's not hard to look beyond the Moon and further back in time. The Sun is about 150 million km away, so we see it as it was about 8 minutes ago.

Even our nearest planetary neighbours, Venus and Mars, are tens of millions of kilometres away, so we see them as they were minutes ago. When Mars is very close to Earth, we are seeing it as it was about three minutes ago, but at other times light takes more than 20 minutes to travel from Mars to Earth.

This presents some problems if you're on Earth controlling a Rover on Mars. If you're driving the Rover at 1km per hour then the lag, due to the finite speed of light, means the rover could be 200 metres ahead of where you see it, and it could travel another 200 metres after you command it to hit the brakes.

Not surprisingly, Martian Rovers aren't breaking any speed records, travelling at 5cm per second (0.18kph or 0.11mph), and on-board computers help with driving, to prevent rover wrecks.

Let's go a bit further out in space. At its closest to Earth, Saturn is still more than a billion kilometres away, so we see it as it was more than an hour ago.

When the world tuned into the Cas-

sini spacecraft's plunge into Saturn's atmosphere in 2017, we were hearing echos from a spacecraft that had already been destroyed more than an hour before.

### YEARS

The night sky is full of stars, and those stars are incredibly distant. The distances are measured in light years, which corresponds to the distance travelled by light in one year. That's about 9 trillion km.

Alpha Centauri, the nearest star visible to the unaided eye, is at a distance 270,000 times the distance between Earth and the Sun. That's 4 light years, so we see Alpha Centauri as it was 4 years ago.

Some bright stars are much more distant still. Betelgeuse, in the constellation Orion, is about 640 light years away. If Betelgeuse exploded tomorrow (and it will explode one day), we wouldn't know about it for centuries.

Even without a telescope we can see much much further. The Andromeda galaxy and the Magellanic Clouds are relatively nearby galaxies that are bright enough to be seen with the unaided eye. The Large Magellanic cloud is a

mere 160,000 light years away, while Andromeda is 2.5 million light years away. For comparison, modern humans have only walked the Earth for about 300,000 years.

### BILLIONS

With the unaided eye you can look millions of years into the past, but how about billions? Well, you can do that at the eyepiece of an amateur telescope.

Quasar 3C 273 is an incredibly luminous object, which is brighter than individual galaxies, and powered by a huge black hole.

But it's 1,000 times fainter than what the unaided eye can see because it's 2.5 billion light years away. That said, you can spot it with a 20cm aperture telescope.

A bigger telescope allows you to peer even further into space, and I once had the pleasure of using an eyepiece on a 1.5-metre diameter telescope. Quasar APM 08279+5255 was just a faint dot, which isn't surprising as it's 12 billion light years away.

Earth is just 4.5 billion years old, and even the universe itself is 13.8 billion years old. Relatively few people have seen APM 08279+5255 with their own eyes, and in doing so they (and I) have looked back across almost the entire history of our universe.

So when you look up, remember you aren't seeing things as they are now; you're seeing things as they were.

Without really trying, you can see years into the past. And with the aid of a telescope you can see millions or even billions of years into the past with your very own eyes.

[the writer is Associate professor in astronomy, Monash University]



Prime accused in activists’ assault surrenders in Meghalaya

**SHILLONG, DEC 27 (PTI):** The prime accused in the attack on Meghalaya rights activist Agnes Kharshiing and her aide, has surrendered before the police in East Jaintia Hills district, a police officer said Thursday.

Nidamon Chullet, who is a leader of the ruling National Peoples Party in East Jaintia Hills district and the prime

accused in the assault of the two women, surrendered before the Superintendent of Police, Sylvester Nongtynger on Wednesday, the SP said.

Another accused, identified as Cheerful K Rynghkhem, also surrendered before the SP on the same day, Nongtynger said.

Earlier, the police had arrested six persons in

connection with the attack.

The RTI activist had suffered injuries after she was allegedly assaulted by a group of people suspected to be belonging to the coal mining mafia in East Jaintia Hills district on November 8.

Kharshiing and her aide Amita Sangma had gone to the area to capture photographs of illegal coal mining and were

stopped by the miscreants on their way back.

The 58-year-old activist was intercepted and accosted near Tuber Sohshrieh, from where she was later found in an unconscious state. Her companion too was injured.

Sangma had written to Governor Tathagata Roy seeking arrest of Chullet, who she had claimed, was the “mas-

termind” of the attack.

The duo had demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry into the case to identify all the accused and trace the people who were sponsoring the alleged illegal mining racket in the state.

Chief Minister Conrad Sangma had condemned the incident and asked the police to nab the culprits.

Violence in any form would not be tolerated and the government would take all necessary steps to ensure that those behind the attack were arrested, the chief minister had said.

The state government had also approved a proposal for a judicial probe into the matter, but has not come out with an official notification yet.

Assam tea one of the best: Viv Richards

**GUWAHATI, DEC 27 (PTI):** Cricket legend Vivian Richards Thursday said he will take home Assam tea as he considers it to be one of the best.

The former West Indies skipper also praised the weather of Assam and opined that there are many things common between Antigua and India.

“It is a beautiful experience to come to Guwahati. When I arrived here from Kolkata, the air was very fresh. I liked the beauty of the place.

“Your tea is special. Whenever I come here, I have it.

It is world renowned. Whenever I go somewhere, I try to find out what’s special there. Tea

is special here,” Richards said at a press conference here.

He informed that he is going to get some tea back home as the “tea in Assam is one of the best in the world”.

Talking about the weather, Richards said: “The weather here is very special these days in this part of the world.

Wednesday at night when I went out, the coolness of breeze was wonderful. We have something in common.”

He said that coming to India is always special for him as there are many things common between his country and India, including the passion for cricket.

No chicken or pork, Kumarikata village in Assam sells rat meat

**KUMARIKATA, DEC 27 (PTI):** A weekly rural market in Assam’s Baksa district exclusively sells rat meat as the finished rat, cooked as a spicy gravy dish or nicely browned, is considered a Sunday delicacy.

A traditional food item among some ethnic communities in the northeastern region, rat meat is sold at the same price as broiler chicken at Rs 200 per kg, the sellers said.

Buyers throng the Sunday market at Kumarikata village, along the Indo-Bhutan border, about 90 km from Guwahati, to buy their favourite meat of freshly trapped rat.

Rat is more popular than chicken and pork with the customers at the Sunday market.

A rat vendor said that the meat is mainly sourced from neighbouring Nalbari and Barpeta districts of Assam.

Local farmers hunt the rats, weighing more than a kg each, at night during the harvesting season with traps made of bamboo, to prevent their fields from being damaged by the rodents that eat paddy and other crops.

The farmers claimed that the trapping of the rats was helping them to curb the growing menace of rodents in recent times.

Explaining the method of trapping the rats, a seller said the rodents are hunted at night when they come out of their holes and walk straight into the traps placed by the farmers at the entrance of the rat-holes.

Rat meat is usually sold by the economically challenged people of the Adivasi community to augment their income earned from working in tea gardens, where plucking of tea leaves reduces during the winter season, the sellers said.

“Business is good as we can trap rats weighing 10kg to 20kg a night for selling it in the market,” they said.



UN chief calls on stakeholders to ensure peaceful general elections in Bangladesh

**YOSHITA SINGH UNITED NATIONS, DEC 27 (PTI):** UN chief Antonio Guterres has asked all stakeholders in Bangladesh to ensure that the upcoming general elections are held in an environment free of violence and intimidation, amid reports of arrests and targeted attacks carried out by the ruling party activists.

General elections will be held in Bangladesh on December 30. It will be the 11th election held in the country.

In the run-up to the general elections, UN Secretary General Gu-

terres reiterated the continued commitment of the United Nations for a peaceful and democratic Bangladesh.

“All Bangladeshi citizens, including minorities and women, must feel safe and confident in exercising their right to vote. Civil society and electoral observers should be fully supported to play their role in the process,” a statement issued Wednesday by the Secretary General’s spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

He “calls on all stakeholders to ensure an environment free of violence, intimidation and

coercion before, during and after the elections, so as to enable a peaceful, credible and inclusive poll,” it said.

Last week, Dujarric said the UN was concerned by incidents of electoral violence and arrests of opposition members in Bangladesh just days ahead of the general elections and had called on all stakeholders to ensure the election is inclusive and transparent.

“We are all following these developments very closely and we’re concerned by the reports of incidents of electoral violence and arrests

of opposition members and we call on all stakeholders to do their part to make sure that the election is inclusive and transparent,” Dujarric had said Friday.

He said it is very important that the security forces act to ensure free and unhindered campaigning by all candidates.

At least six people have been killed and several hundred injured in election-related violence since December 10 when the campaigning began for the polls. Both opposition and the ruling Awami League blame each other for the attacks.

According to media reports, most attacks were carried out by the ruling party activists who were often backed by the police.

The opposition alleged that police have arrested some 10,500 of their activists in a crackdown ahead of elections with an intention to create a “climate of fear”.

The police, however, said no one has been arrested without specific charge and warrant.

Rights group Human Rights Watch has said a repressive political environment in Bangladesh ahead of the national elections

was undermining the credibility of the process.

It said widespread electoral violence started as soon as the candidate lists were formally approved, and campaigning began.

Much of the campaign violence has targeted the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP) and the opposition coalition Jatiya Oikya Front (National United Front).

UAIPF demands Arunachal govt withdraw recent announcement to grant PRC to non-tribals

**ITANAGAR, DEC 27 (PTI):** Hundreds of activists under the banner of United Arunachal Indigenous Peoples Forum (UAIPF) Thursday staged a protest rally here demanding the state government to withdraw its recent announcement to grant PRC to non-tribal communities in Namsai and Changlang districts.

The Arunachal Pradesh governments decision to grant permanent residency certificate (PRC) to six non-tribal communities along with people from Gorkha community residing in both the districts had evoked strong resentments among various community based organisations (CBOs) including students bodies of the state.

The activists demanded that the state government withdraw the statements made by Chief Minister Pema

Khandu and Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein for granting PRC to non-Arunachalees residing at Lekang in Namsai district and Vijojnagar in Changlang district.

The forum also demanded the state government to strengthen the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873 for better and stronger protective measures for the welfare of the indigenous people of the state.

It also demanded for maintaining transparency in the Joint High Powered Committee by including more members from community based organisations.

The state government had constituted the committee under Environment and Forest Minister Nabam Rebia to study the issue and to submit its report to the government for further action.

Shelter home scandal, political volatility sum up Bihar this year

**NACHIKETA NARAYAN PATNA, DEC 27 (PTI):** The Muzaffarpur sex scandal cast a long shadow over Bihar in a year in which the state lived up to its reputation for political volatility as many smaller players made unexpected moves while the heavyweights strove for consolidation.

Not known for achievements in the field of sports, Bihar was nonetheless done proud by shooter Shreyasi Singh winning gold at the Commonwealth Games while cricket lovers felt gratified with the Bihar team playing Ranji Trophy after nearly two decades.

The NDA’s hopes of emerging stronger following the return of Chief Minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar last year took a beating as Hindustani Awam Morcha founder Jitan Ram Manjhi walked out and joined the opposition Grand Alliance which was followed, months later, by a similar but much more publicised and bitter exit of Rashtriya Lok Samata Party chief and former Union minister Up-

endra Kushwaha.

Although all RLSP members in the state’s bicameral legislature have revolted against Kushwaha’s decision and asserted that they would remain in the NDA, the BJP has nevertheless been jolted by his exit which came at a time when the party is smarting under the loss of power in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh besides relentless opposition attacks over the Rafale deal.

Ending suspense over seat-sharing, BJP president Amit Shah along with Nitish Kumar and Ram Vilas Paswan appeared before media in New Delhi to make the world know on December 23 that while the first two will field candidates on 17 seats each in Bihar and Paswan’s party on the rest six.

The Grand Alliance, which now has many regional players on board and is exploring an electoral understanding with the Left to augment its striking power, however has been beset with its own problems.

Its largest constituent,

the RJD, remains crisis-ridden on account of imprisonment and illness of its chief Lalu Prasad, who is serving sentences in a number of fodder scam cases.

Prasad’s younger son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav led the party to some spectacular by-poll victories and showed the ability to marshal resources by staging an impressive demonstration at Jantar Mantar over the Muzaffarpur scandal wherein bigwigs like Rahul Gandhi, Arvind Kejriwal and Sitaram Yechury took part burying their ideological differences.

The scion, whom LJP heir apparent Chirag Paswan recently called a “younger brother” - to the chagrin of alliance partners in the NDA, has his own share of woes which includes cases lodged by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate.

His family, which controls the RJD, is also under strain as rumours of his elder brother Tej Pratap Yadav and eldest sister Misa Bharti feeling uneasy under his leadership keep afloat.

Moreover, mercurial Tej Pratap Yadav’s decision to seek divorce from his wife of six months, his sudden and frequent sojourns in places of pilgrimage and a petulant refusal to visit the home of his mother Rabri Devi over her coming out in support of his spouse have only made matters worse for the family, triggering fears of turmoil within the party.

Conviction of two sitting MLAs - Ilyas Hussain in a corruption case and Raj Ballabh Yadav in a rape case - did not make matters better for a party that has often been accused of patronising people with criminal antecedents.

The world woke up to a horror story in a state-run short stay home at Muzaffarpur where over 30 minor girls were subjected to untold sexual abuse in the hands of the owner of the NGO Brajesh Thakur.

Jolted by the Muzaffarpur home episode, the Bihar government took corrective measures like doing away with outsourcing of shelter homes’ upkeep to NGOs.

Complaints of misuse of draconian provisions of the prohibition law were addressed to some extent through amendments in the same. Liquor ban law was brought in by Nitish Kumar government in 2015 and the year saw many arrests and seizure of huge quantity of illegal alcohol from outside.

The shelter home sex scandal also cost social welfare minister Manju Verma her chair and she landed in jail along with her husband Chandrashekhar Verma, both of whom have been booked under Arms Act as a CBI raid at their home led to recovery a huge cache of ammunition.

There was also an impression of deterioration of law and order with incidents like recovery of bombs from a park in Bodh Gaya at a place where the Dalai Lama gave a discourse a little while ago, low-intensity communal clashes spread across several districts, sporadic instances of mob lynching and killings of several political activists - not necessarily because of political rivalry.





# Ronaldo rescues point for 10-man Juventus at Atalanta

**MILAN, DEC 27 (AFP):** Cristiano Ronaldo came off the bench to score a late equaliser as 10-man Juventus salvaged a 2-2 draw at Atalanta to move nine points clear of Napoli at the top of Serie A.

Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli missed the chance to cut the gap to the reigning champions after Inter Milan substitute Lautaro Martinez hit a stoppage-time winner in an ugly 1-0 victory at the San Siro marred by racist chants towards Senegalese defender Kalidou Koulibaly.

Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri decided to rest Ronaldo as the former Real Madrid man did not start a league game for the first time since moving to Italy, but the 33-year-old was needed to level in the 78th minute after Duvan Zapata's double had put the hosts in front following Berat Djimsiti's own goal.

Ronaldo's efforts keep Juventus unbeaten in Serie A, ahead of the final game before the winter break against Sampdoria on Saturday.

"It's a shame because we still wanted to win, but the team did well," said Allegri.

Everything appeared to be going to plan for Juve when they grabbed the lead in only the second minute when Atalanta centre-back Djimsiti completely miskicked



Alex Sandro's deflected cross into his own net.

But Zapata put a spanner in the Juve works with a fantastic individual goal midway through the first half, spinning centre-back Leonardo Bonucci with ease before drilling a left-footed strike into the far corner.

Douglas Costa fired wide just after the half-hour mark as the visitors looked to restore their advantage, but the Turin giants were reduced to 10 men eight minutes after half-time when Rodrigo Bentancur was shown a second yellow card for a

poor tackle on Timothy Castagne.

Colombian striker Zapata wasted little time in making Bentancur pay, bundling in from almost on the goalline to put Atalanta ahead and score his ninth league goal of the season.

Allegri sent on Ronaldo with 25 minutes remaining, and less than 60 seconds after Robin Gosens wasted a golden opportunity to seal victory for Atalanta, the Portuguese star pounced to nod home from close range.

In Milan, Martinez turned in a bouncing cross in the 91st minute

as Inter closed to within five points of Napoli, who finished with nine men after Kalidou Koulibaly and Lorenzo Insigne were both sent off late on.

Koulibaly was dismissed with 10 minutes left after two yellow cards in quick succession -- the second for sarcastically applauding the referee.

The Napoli centre-back had repeatedly been the target of monkey noises made by home fans throughout the match.

"We asked three times for the match to be suspended and there were three announcements, but the match continued,"

Ancelotti told Sky.

"The player was irritable, he wasn't in the best state of mind. Usually he's a very calm and professional player but there were these noises throughout the game."

"It looks like an excuse but the player was agitated and irritable. It's not good, not for us, nor for Italian football," he added.

Inter's winning goal came just after their goalkeeper Samir Handanovic pulled off a terrific double save and a follow-up shot by Piotr Zielinski was cleared off the line by Kwadwo Asamoah.

## Napoli asked for halt to Inter game after racist chants



**ROME, DEC 27 (AFP):** Napoli coach Carlo Ancelotti said the club asked Serie A game against Inter Milan to be stopped a number of times following racist chants towards Senegalese defender Kalidou Koulibaly.

Koulibaly was sent off 10 minutes from the end of Napoli's 1-0 defeat at the San Siro, with substitute Lautaro Martinez scoring a stoppage-time winner for Inter.

Centre-back Koulibaly was initially booked for a foul on Matteo Politano and then shown another yellow card in the aftermath for sarcastically applauding the referee.

The 27-year-old had been subjected to monkey noises from home supporters throughout the match.

"We asked three times for the match to be suspended and there were three announcements, but the match continued," Ancelotti told Sky.

"The player was irritable, he wasn't in the best state of mind. Usually he's a very calm and professional player but there were these noises throughout the game."

"It looks like an excuse but the player was agitated and irritable. It's not good, not for us, nor for Italian football," he added.

"The solution exists. You have to stop the match. You just have to know when, after how many announcements. And if we don't know, then next time we may have to stop play ourselves."

# Pujara's classy hundred puts India in command in third Test

**MELBOURNE, DEC 27 (PTI):** The redoubtable Cheteshwar Pujara produced yet another classy hundred and combined with captain Virat Kohli (82) to put India in command on the second day of the third Test against Australia here Thursday.

The scoring rate was a shade better than the overnight effort, which fetched them 215/2, and India declared at 443/7 before Australia responded with 8/0 in six overs.

Pujara was the dominant figure with his second century of the series, a dogged but faultless 106 off 319 balls, which ensured that India consolidated the good start. It was though his slowest hundred in Test cricket yet.

Kohli, who contributed a significant 82 off 204 balls, made a surprising declaration in the 70th over with Rohit Sharma at 63 not out off 114 balls. Kohli's knock helped him to a personal milestone as he surpassed Rahul Dravid (1137) for most number of runs in a calendar year in overseas Tests.

Rohit's knock, in-

cluded five fours, while Pat Cummins was the pick of the Australian bowlers, taking 3/72 in a back-breaking effort of 34 overs.

At stumps, openers Aaron Finch and Marcus Harris were unbeaten on 3 and 5 respectively.

It was a solid batting effort by the Indians, something that was emphasised endlessly by Kohli in his pre-match statements. What stood out for the visitors was the patience they showed in the first two sessions, which ultimately left them in an assured position at close.

Post tea, India were also helped by a comedy of fielding errors by Australia. The home side missed three easy chances, all off Nathan Lyon (1/110), in what proved to be a frustrating 48 overs from him.

First, in the 147th over, substitute fielder Peter Siddle put down Rohit (on 15 then) at backward square leg as the batsman played a wild sweep. A ball later, Ajinkya Rahane (34) was



lucky when on 32 as Travis Head was caught napping at short leg when the ball sailed past him.

Rahane got unlucky shortly afterwards though as one delivery from Lyon kept too low and he was plumb lbw.

Rishabh Pant (39) played an uncharacteristic defensive innings, and the only aerial stroke he played was in the 159th over off Lyon when Cummins spilled the chance at

long on. He was on 15 then.

Australia took the third new ball in the 167th over and it worked as Pant looped up a catch to Usman Khawaja behind the wickets off Mitchell Starc (2/87).

The accelerating burst before the declaration never came as skipper Kohli called the batsmen in when Ravindra Jadeja (4) was caught behind off Josh Hazlewood (1/86).

Rahane and Rohit took India to 346/4 at tea after Australia removed both Pujara and Kohli in the space of four overs.

Post lunch, Kohli-Pujara took their third-wicket partnership to 170 runs before the game turned.

The Indian skipper took medication for some back issue and then stepped through the gears as he brought out two pulls against Mitchell

Starc (1/68) in the 123rd over. He pressed on the accelerator a tad too much, and cut straight to third man, much to the bowler's delight.

Four overs later, in the 126th over, Pujara got a delivery from Cummins that kept a tad low and knocked back his stumps as India were suddenly reduced to 299-4.

Rahane then took charge of proceedings and played a breezy

knock, not allowing the Australian attack to get on top.

In comparison, Rohit was more sedate and took his time at the crease, even as Tim Paine targeted him with some banter. There wasn't any major change in the pace of scoring though, with 36 runs coming in the first hour after lunch, and 33 runs in the second.

In the morning session, Pujara scored his 17th hundred as India reached 277/2 at lunch.

Starting from overnight 215/2, India looked ready for another hard day's grind, with Kohli reaching his 20th Test half-century, off 110 balls, in the very first over of the day.

The two batsmen scored quickly in the first hour and kept the scoreboard ticking over, before Australia went back to their tactic of cutting runs.

Cummins bowled another wonderful spell, extracting most out of the pitch than any other Australian bowler, and he beat the edges of both batsmen on a couple occasions but

without any luck.

Lyon bowled with a predominantly leg-side field and into the batsmen. His duel with Pujara was quite remarkable, as the batsman kept turning him to the onside again and again, whilst stepping out on occasion to play him through the offside.

Australia kept a tight leash on the scoring rate as 62 runs came in this morning session. Even so, they could not deny Pujara who reached his second hundred of this series off 280 balls just prior to lunch.

In doing so, he went past his previous best tally of runs scored in an overseas Test series. He had scored 309 runs in Sri Lanka in 2017, and currently has 325 runs in the current series.

On day one, debutant Mayank Agarwal scored his maiden Test half-century after India won the toss and opted to bat.

The four-match series is pegged at 1-1, after India won the first Test in Adelaide by 31 runs and Australia took the second Test in Perth by 146 runs.

# All three results possible in third Test: Finch

**MELBOURNE, DEC 27 (PTI):** Australian opener Aaron Finch Thursday said the MCG pitch is deteriorating quicker than anticipated and all three results are possible in the third Test despite a slow Indian first innings that finished at 443 for seven.

The hosts were eight for no loss at stumps in response.

"It's not your traditional Australian wicket where you have three slips and a gully all day and you bang away, and the ball seams and carries like we saw in Perth. There, a lot of dismissals were behind

the wicket," Finch said.

At the end of day's play, he added, "On such pitches, I think you've just got to adapt your gameplan and regardless of what the wicket is, you've got to be good enough to adapt and change your plans and execute on the day."

Finch said, "This wicket is probably deteriorating more than we thought it would. Even tonight it was skidding through, there were a couple that took off. So it's still game on if we bowl well and put India under pressure (in the

second innings).

"I think all three results are still on the table, 100 per cent, India (victory), Australia (victory) and a draw."

Finch praised the Australian attack for bowling nearly six sessions on the first two days, and in particular singled out Pat Cummins for praise, who picked up 3-72 in 34 overs before padding out to be night-watchman if the early wicket fell.

"I think Patty Cummins was 34 overs for the innings and then to strap the pads

on to be night-watchman is a pretty brave effort.

"I think the way that Pat keeps fronting up and coming back is a real testament to his fitness."

"He probably didn't get the rewards he deserved in the first two Tests, but you've heard every coach say it, you can bowl a lot worse and get a lot more wickets," Finch said.

Cummins took the wicket of centurion Pujara, after dismissing Mayank Agarwal and Hanuma Vihari on the first day.

"I'm sure his rewards will

come. There's pace, there's bounce, when there's not a lot happening he seems to be the guy who can make something out of nothing. Touchwood that continues for a long time."

"He's a super player, talent with the bat, with the ball, in the field, although he dropped one today that's beside the point. He's just a super package as a cricketer and an even better bloke as well."

Australia toiled in the field for almost two days, bowling 169.4 overs to the

Indian batsmen.

Talking about the bowling unit as a whole, Finch said, "It was a long stint. I think having Mitch Marsh there was a real crucial part of that bowling attack, the way he controlled the run rate as well."

"The amount of work the guys did bowling to plans it would've been easy particularly in that second session today to let the game really get away from us. Before you know it they're 450-500 just after tea and it's a tough way back into the game then."

"The way they were grinding away and rolled up their sleeves and did the hard work was outstanding. Obviously they're tired, no doubt."

Finch said that he wasn't surprised after India declared with 25 minutes remaining in the day.

"After Kohli and Pujara fell, I think their plans changed a bit. They were 300-odd for five wickets down and I think we sniffed an opportunity. Their middle order played well, and it is still well and truly game on."



## Israeli parl votes to disband, hold April 9 election

**JERUSALEM, DEC 26 (AP):** The Israeli Knesset has voted to dissolve the current parliament and scheduled new elections for April 9.

In what was largely a formality, the Knesset voted late Wednesday in favor of dissolving by a 102-2 margin.

Earlier this week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that he was disbanding his coalition and taking the nation to new elections six months ahead of schedule. The country now heads into a three-month campaign.

Opinion polls have suggested that Netanyahu's nationalist Likud Party will easily win re-election.

But those bright prospects could be hurt by a looming decision by the country's attorney general on whether to file charges against Netanyahu.

Netanyahu is suspected in a series of corruption allegations. An indictment would put heavy pressure on the long-time leader to step aside.

## UAE to reopen Damascus embassy after 7 years: official

**DAMASCUS, DEC 27 (AFP):** The United Arab Emirates will reopen its embassy in Damascus Thursday, an official said, seven years after it severed ties with Syria over the violent repression that triggered the war.

An official at the information ministry invited journalists "to cover the re-opening of the Emirati embassy in Damascus today".

The move is seen as another step in efforts to bring the regime of President Bashar al-Assad back into the Arab fold after years of diplomatic isolation. A visit to Damascus by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir earlier this month had been interpreted by some observers as a sign of that trend.

Rumours of the Emirati embassy reopening have circulated in recent days as renovation work was spotted getting underway at the building.

The UAE broke ties with Syria in February 2012, as the repression of nationwide protests demanding regime change was escalating into a war which has now killed more than 360,000 people.

# Indonesia hikes danger level for deadly tsunami volcano

**CARITA, DEC 27 (AFP):** Indonesia on Thursday raised the danger alert level for an erupting volcano that sparked a killer tsunami at the weekend, after previously warning that fresh activity at the crater threatened to trigger another deadly wave.

Authorities also widened a no-go zone around rumbling Anak Krakatoa to five kilometres (three miles) -- up from a previous two kilometres -- and warned shell-shocked residents to stay away from the coast, after more than

400 were killed by Saturday night's killer wave.

Plumes of ash burst into the sky as pyroclastic flows -- hot gas and other volcanic material -- flowed down the crater, threatening anyone too close to the volcano and raising the risk of rough seas for boats in the vicinity.

"There is a danger of more eruptions," said national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho.

"People (near the volcano) could be hit by hot rocks, pyroclastic flows and thick ash." Author-

ities raised the crater's status to high alert, the second-highest warning on the country's four-point danger scale, while aviation officials ordered flights to be redirected away from the area.

"We've raised the status of (the volcano) since this morning because there's been a change in the eruption pattern," Kus Hendratno, a senior official at the Krakatoa observatory, told AFP Thursday.

The new flows posed no immediate danger to area towns as the volcano sits in the middle of

the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra islands.

But the status change sparked new fears with many residents already scared and refusing to return to their communities over fears of another tsunami.

"This worries me," said Ugi Sugiarti, a cook at the Augusta Hotel in hard-hit Carita.

"I've already left," Sukma, a security guard at the shattered Mutiara Carita Cottages, added: "Just please pray for us and that everything will be okay." A section of the

crater -- which emerged at the site of the Krakatoa volcano, whose massive 1883 eruption killed at least 36,000 people -- collapsed after an eruption and slid into the ocean, triggering Saturday night's killer wave.

At least 430 people were killed, with 1,495 people injured and another 159 were missing.

Nearly 22,000 people have been evacuated and are living in shelters.

On Wednesday evening, the disaster agency said that wind was blowing "ash and sand" from

the volcano to the nearby towns of Cilegon and Serang on Java, and advised residents to wear masks and glasses if they had to venture outdoors.

Torrential rains have sparked flooding in some areas, hampering the relief effort and heaping more misery on the stricken region, as thousands cram emergency shelters.

Medical workers have warned that clean water and medicine supplies were running low -- stoking fears of a public health crisis.

Indonesia, a vast Southeast Asian archi-

pelago, is one of the most disaster-hit nations on Earth due to its position straddling the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, where tectonic plates collide.

The tsunami was Indonesia's third major natural disaster in six months, following a series of powerful earthquakes on the island of Lombok in July and August and a quake-tsunami in September that killed around 2,200 people in Palu on Sulawesi island, with thousands more missing and presumed dead.

## Russia: Israeli strike on Syria threatened civilian flights

**MOSCOW, DEC 27 (AP):** The Russian military on Wednesday criticized an alleged Israeli airstrike near the Syrian capital, saying it has endangered civilian flights.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said that six Israeli F-16 jets launched a "provocative" raid at the moment when two civilian airliners were preparing to land in Damascus and Beirut, creating a "direct threat" to the aircraft.

Lebanon's acting Transport Minister Youssef Fenianos later on Wednesday confirmed Konashenkov's account, saying the two airplanes in Lebanese airspace "narrowly" escaped Israeli warplanes, averting a "human catastrophe."

Fenianos didn't provide details, but said he reported the incident to the prime minister-designate. He said the Lebanese government will present a complaint to the UN Security Council.



The Syrian military didn't fully engage its air defense assets to avoid accidentally hitting the passenger jets, Konashenkov said. He added that Syrian air traffic controllers redirected the Damascus-bound plane to the Russian air base in Hemeimeem in Syria's coastal province of Latakia.

Konashenkov said the Syrian air defense forces shot down 14 of the 16 precision-guided bombs dropped by the Israeli jets, while the remaining two hit a Syrian military depot 7 kilometers (about 4.3 miles)

west of Damascus, injuring three Syrian soldiers.

It wasn't clear if the Syrian military used any of the advanced S-300 air defense missile systems that Russia delivered in October to beef up its air defenses. The move followed the Sept. 17 downing of a Russian reconnaissance plane by Syrian forces responding to an Israeli air raid, an incident that strained previously warm ties between Russia and Israel.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry in a statement Wednesday accused Is-

rael of exacerbating the crisis in the country and standing in the way of the government's war on terrorism.

In messages sent to the U.N. secretary-general and the president of the Security Council, the ministry said the Israeli airstrike wouldn't have been launched if it wasn't for what it called "unlimited" U.S. support for Israel.

Israel has carried out dozens of airstrikes in Syria, most of them believed to have been aimed at Iranian arms

shipments to the Hezbollah militant group. Both Iran and Hezbollah have been fighting alongside the forces of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly warned that he will not allow arch-enemy Iran to establish a permanent military presence in postwar Syria.

Speaking at a military ceremony Wednesday, Netanyahu did not directly mention the alleged airstrike. But he repeated his position that he will not allow arch-enemy Iran to establish a permanent military presence in Syria, and said Israel's air force has unmatched capabilities and can reach arenas "near and far, very far." "We are not prepared to accept the Iranian military entrenchment in Syria, which is directed against us. We will act against it vigorously and continuously, including during the current period," he told a graduation ceremony of new air force pilots.

## China successfully tests Russia's S-400 missile air defence system

**KJM VARMA BEIJING, DEC 27 (PTI):** China has successfully tested the advanced S-400 air defence system imported from Russia for which India also signed-up recently despite concerns over threat of sanctions from the US.

It was the first time the People's Liberation Army (PLA) tested the system since it received the last shipments of the weaponry from Russia in July under a USD 3 billion contract signed in 2015.

China's People's Liberation Army Rocket Force last month tested the S-400 Triumf air defence system successfully shooting down a "simulated ballistic target" almost 250 kilometre away and moving at the supersonic speed of 3 kilometre per second, Hong Kong based South China Morning Post reported on Thursday, quoting Russian media reports.

Details of the location of the test have not been disclosed.

India signed a USD 5 billion deal with Russia to buy the same system in October this year despite concerns over threat of sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) instituted by the US Congress on arms purchases from Russia.

India wants the long-range missile systems to tighten its air defence mechanism, particularly along the 3488 km-long Sino-India border.

S-400 is known as Russia's most advanced



long-range surface-to-air missile defence system.

China was the first foreign buyer to seal a government-to-government deal with Russia in 2014 to procure the lethal missile system. Moscow has already started delivery of an undisclosed number of the S-400 missile systems to Beijing.

Russia says the S-400 is a cutting-edge air defence system that can detect and shoot down targets including ballistic missiles, enemy jets and drones up to 600 kilometre away at an altitude between 10 metres and 27 kilometres.

The system can simultaneously shell 36 targets moving at a speed of up to 4,800 metres per second with 72 ground-to-air missiles.

Commenting on the China's first test, Beijing-based military expert Li Jie said the reports showed that Moscow wanted to underscore the relationship at a time when the US was at loggerheads with both Russia and China.

"Despite pressure from the US, the Russian military will increase its

cooperation with the PLA in areas such as missiles, shipbuilding and other sectors," he said.

China and Russia have significantly boosted their military ties in the past decade as both the countries compete with the US for regional and global influence.

Song Zhongping, a Hong Kong-based military expert with a focus on the PLA, told the Post that the test was an "advertisement" by the Russian military to promote its S-400 system.

"But it's also clear that the PLA's Rocket Force is proficient in using the S-400 air defence system because they are already familiar with its predecessor, the S-300, which China has used since the '90s," Song said.

He said it was important to differentiate between "simulated ballistic target" and real hypersonic missiles.

"Hypersonic weapons boast features such as manoeuvrability gliding, for example and they are almost impossible to intercept because they are travelling at such high speed," Song said.

Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey coursed by hydel projects in Sikkim and the region, the cost exacted by this "development" and some of the stories it birthed, not all of which have been shared before.

Also finding place in this collection is the arrival of Climate Change and its impact on Sikkim and how the State could negotiate with this new disruption.

**THE BIRDS HAVE LOST THEIR WAY**

Edited by TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

ESSAYS  
ON  
TEESTA,  
HYDEL  
AND  
CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
IN  
SIKKIM

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# MILEY CYRUS, LIAM HEMSWORTH CONFIRM MARRIAGE

**LOS ANGELES, DEC 27 (PTI):** Singer Miley Cyrus and actor Liam Hemsworth have officially confirmed their marriage.

Days after reports of the couple tying the knot surfaced over the weekend, the couple made things internet official on Wednesday.

Cyrus, 26, shared black-and-white images from the intimate ceremony, reported to have been held on Sunday, on social media.

She posted a series of photographs of her with Hemsworth. They first started dating after meeting on the sets of Nicholas Sparks' 2010 film "The Last Song".

In one of the pictures, the

duo can be seen embracing each other, with a wedding ring visible on the 28-year-old actor's finger.

In a flash forward-like sequence, an apparent nod to their once on-again off-again relationship, Cyrus shared a photo captioned: "10 years later..."

The couple became engaged in 2012 but broke it off the following year and separated. They reconnected in 2015 and announced their engagement later.

Hemsworth also took to Twitter where he shared one of the images from the nuptials, that reportedly took place at their home in Franklin, Tennessee.



lin, Tennessee.

He captioned the photo:

"My love," with a heart emoji.

Sparks also congratulated

the couple.

"This makes me so

happy. Congratulations @MileyCyrus and @LiamHemsworth. #TheLastSong," he tweeted.

Musician Mark Ronson, with whom Cyrus collaborated on a version of John Lennon and Yoko Ono's "Happy Christmas (War is Over)" recently, also wished the couple with a video of "Here comes the bride".

"Special here comes the bride cyrus/hemsworth remix for 2019. Congratulations you two xo @MileyCyrus @LiamHemsworth," Ronson tweeted.

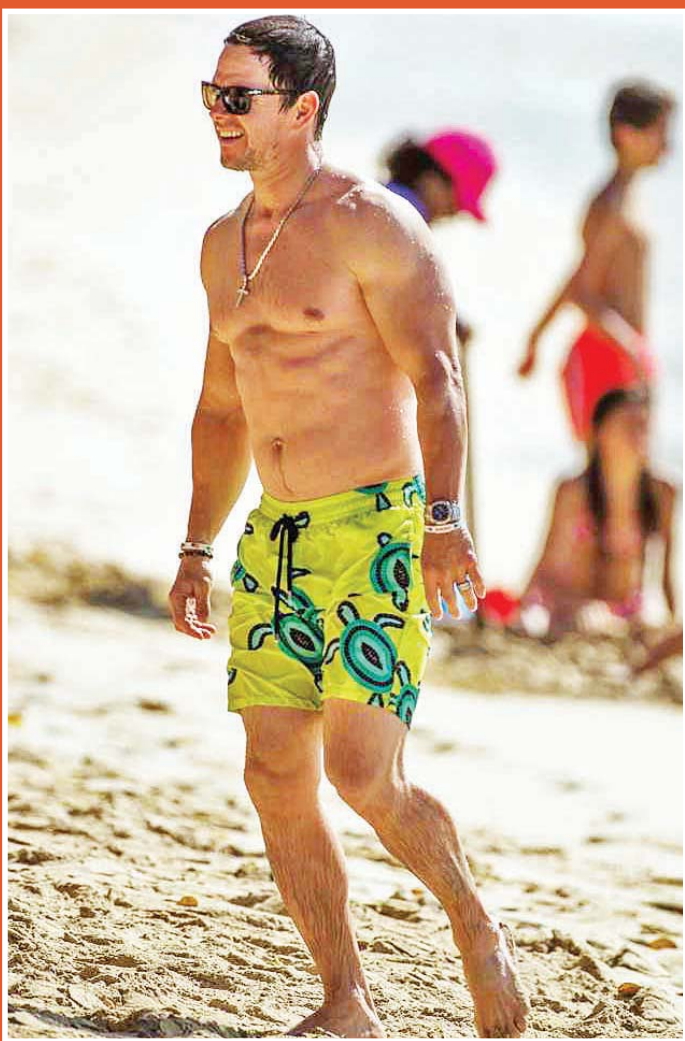
Over the weekend, several pictures of the two were shared by their surfer friend

Conrad Jack Carr on his Instagram Story where in one of the photographs Hemsworth and his brothers Chris and Luke were seen doing a "shotski", with 'Mr and Mrs' balloons in the background.

Another picture had the couple dressed in traditional white and a tux, respectively in front of a white cake and cupcakes, with the singer's mother, Tish in the frame.

The singer's sisters Noah and Brandi were also in attendance at the party.

Until recently the couple lived in their Malibu home, which burned down in one of the three wildfires that blazed through California.



**BEACH BABE!** Actor Mark Wahlberg has some fun in the sun on the beach in Barbados.

## Robin Thicke, April Love Geary engaged

**S**inger Robin Thicke and model April Love Geary are engaged.

Geary, 23, announced their engagement on Instagram on Tuesday.

She shared a black-and-white photo, where she can be seen hugging Thicke in front of a Christmas tree.

The model captioned the picture: "YES YES 1000x YES".

Thicke, 41, proposed to Geary on Christmas Eve in the presence of loved ones, of which she also shared a video.

The couple are parents to Mia (10 months old) and are expecting their second child, another daughter, in March.

They started dating in 2014 following Thicke's divorce from wife, actor Paula Patton.



## A transgender Bond would be cool, says Dominic West

**W**ith Daniel Craig set to say goodbye to James Bond after the 25th film, many names are floating as a possible replacement but British actor Dominic West believes it would be "cool" to have a transgender actor play the fictional spy.

Craig will return as Bond for the fifth time in Bond 25, which was earlier set to be directed by Danny Boyle but is now being helmed by Cary Fukunaga.

"Maybe a transgender Bond would be cool," West said in interview with The Sunday Times as quoted by IndieWire.

The actor is currently promoting his role in the BBC's new "Les Misérables" adaptation.

The "Affair" star said he got the idea from his indie film "Colette" where he starred opposite Keira Knightley and Jake Graf, a transgender actor who played a cis male (a person whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned at birth) in the movie.

"There's a very cool woman who's the wife of an actor in Colette' who is a captain in the electrical engineers, the highest-ranking transgender soldier in the army, West said.

She's a beautiful blonde girl who could be Bond, yes. That's actually a brilliant idea. They should have a transgender Bond because there are a lot of

transgender people in the army. They'd be ideal because they can do everything, he added.

West was referring to Graf's wife, Hannah Winterbourne, a high-ranking officer in the British Army, who transitioned from male to female.

Fans, meanwhile, want Tom Hardy to replace Craig in the next film and West is okay with that choice too.

"I think Tom Hardy could be a good Bond. I'd be happy to see him do it. You need an actor who can put a bit of wiggle into it that's what makes Bond, he said.

Production on Bond 25 kicks off in 2019 with a February 14, 2020 release date in mind.



## 'This Is Us' season four to premiere on Jan 15

**T**he fourth season of popular dramedy "This Is Us" is set to premiere on January 15, 2019.

The "Big 3" from NBC's award-winning show - Justin Hartley, Chrissy Metz and Sterling K Brown - made the announcement on Twitter in a video wishing a happy holiday season to the fans.

"Here's a gift from us to you,

We hope your Christmas is anything but blue.

We'll be back in the new year. "Here's to today, full of cheer. #HappyHolidays from #ThisIsUs!" read the caption of the video posted on the show's official account.

The third season of the series premiered on September 25, 2018.



**ARIES:** Could we get a shot of truth serum with that brandied eggnog? Today, as expressive Mercury butts up against nebulous Neptune, niceties and small talk won't be your thing. But don't hammer people with any harsh feedback, even if your fuse is short as you rush around to prepare for the celebrations. Compassion is what's called for! Tonight, cross-cultural connections could heat up.

**TAURUS:** Let Vixen and Cupid valet your sleigh this Christmas Eve. With Mercury blessing your sultry eighth house, celebrations could take a seductive turn. Position yourself under the mistletoe and just relax. And don't let anyone pressure you into playing elf! With foggy Neptune throwing Mercury shade, it's high time you passed the entertainment director's baton to someone else in your squad.

**GEMINI:** Dreaming of a glamorous Christmas? With your ruler, Mercury, holding court in your decadent and romantic seventh house, forget about puttering around in your cozy yoga pants. Dress to the nines and hit the party

circuit—or host a spontaneous soiree 'round your tree. For coupled Gemini's, Santa's big day could end with a pledge of exclusivity or even a proposal! Have you always felt an attraction to a certain friend of yours?

**CANCER:** 'Tis the season for giving, Cancer, and with Mercury moving through your sixth house of service, your generous spirit is fully awakened. But today, a nudge from healing Neptune reminds you to add yourself to the list of people who deserve some generosity. While you want to make everyone's holiday merry and bright, that's just exhausting.

**LEO:** It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas—and those twinkly lights aren't fading anytime soon. With social Mercury buzzing through your fun-loving fifth house for the rest of the year, you're the star on top of everyone's tree. Feel free to assume the role of entertainment director and make Christmas Eve, and the days that follow, lively for yourself and all those around you.

Just make sure you do so inclusively! Someone else in your squad may want to play organizer as well. Be sensitive to that and plan together so this doesn't devolve into a draining rivalry.

**VIRGO:** Toss a Yule log on the fire and cozy up with your favorite plus-one(s). With your ruler, convivial Mercury, in your sentimental fourth house this Christmas Eve, you'll prefer the company of your innermost circle. Volunteer to make a special dinner tonight or just go around making sure everyone's cup is filled and that the playlist of carols doesn't repeat too many times. Thanks to soothsayer Neptune's influence, your Spidey senses will be strong.

**LIBRA:** Make people your priority this Christmas Eve, Libra. Who cares if you don't hand-wrap every gift or if you're wearing a dress you were already photographed in this season? If that opens up time for you to go mingle and share a cup of cheer, it's worth it, even if you have to set aside some of your trademark perfectionism. People prefer the pleasure

of your company!

**SCORPIO:** Valet that sleigh! A little holiday hedonism is sanctioned by the stars—as long as you don't start Prime!necases of Veuve after your second glass of bubbly! If you're doing a last-minute gift grab, carry cash instead of buying on credit. That way, you won't blow through your budget as you rush to stuff everyone's stocking. Treating yourself today?

**SAGITTARIUS:** You're the most famous reindeer of all this Christmas Day, Sagittarius, as buzzy Mercury zips through your sign! But with charitable Neptune ping the messenger planet from your heartfelt fourth house, use that influence for good. Pick a "cause celebre" and post about it on social media. Make a donation, perhaps in lieu of physical gifts for the minimalists in your life.

**CAPRICORN:** You're dreaming of a cozy Christmas! Huddling with your nearest and dearest will be especially heartwarming under today's nostalgic skies—as long as everyone has a clear understanding about evening plans. Du-

eling agendas (with a friend, sibling or someone else in your party) could create friction, especially if you get swept into a situation that involves making small talk with random people!

**AQUARIUS:** With buzzy Mercury in your ultra-social eleventh house this Christmas Eve, chilling at home could spark serious cabin fever. At the very least, get some group bonding in early today. If you're working, organize a holiday lunch or mid-afternoon cookie break. Or meet up with your squad for a champagne toast before everyone goes their separate ways.

**PISCES:** Tradition, tradition! Thanks to a spate of planets in your tenth house, you're up for a Christmas Eve with all the trimmings. As your co-ruler, compassionate and creative Neptune, chimes in, put a fresh spin on celebrations. How about hosting a spontaneous "Friendsmas" for your pals who have nowhere to go tonight, or an afternoon gift-wrapping party? Make it ugly-sweater themed and spike the eggnog with something top-shelf. Who knows?