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SummitTIMES

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

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Sikkim beats Mizoram by 105 runs in Ranji Trophy



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 DEC:

Sikkim beat Mizoram by 105 runs in their Ranji Trophy match today at Jorhat DSA Stadium, Assam.

With this win, Sikkim has won three matches so far in the tournament and stands in the third position in the points table with 19 points.

The match started on 14 December with Mizoram winning the toss and elected to field first.

In the first innings, Sikkim scored 332 runs in 89.5 overs with Milind Kumar top-scoring with 139 runs, Bipul Sharma contributing 50 runs, Ashish Thapa 42 runs and Jahan Uddin 35 runs. Then it was the turn of the bowlers who restricted the opponents to just 161 runs with Ishwar Chaudhary scalping 5 wickets, Bipul Sharma and Milind Kumar 2 wickets each and Dinesh Rai 1 wicket.

In the second innings, Sikkim scored 170 runs and consolidated a lead of 341 runs. Bipul Sharma top-scored with 65

runs, Ashish Thapa 45 runs and Nilesh Lamichaney 28 runs.

Again in the second Innings, Sikkim bowlers displayed exception striking prowess Ishwar taking 6 wickets, Milind 2 wickets and Bipul 1 wicket.

"It was good teamwork overall where players gave their best in all aspects of the match, especially Milind, Ishwar, Ashish and Bipul who were exceptional and helped Sikkim win the match comfortably by 105 runs. We are looking forward to the remaining two matches of the tournament and will be giving our best on and off the field and want to end the Ranji Season with on number two or three of the League points table," said Coach Sanjeev Sharma.

So far in the Ranji Trophy Season 2018-19, Sikkim's Milind Kumar is on the top of the most runs table with 1,017 runs and bowler Ishwar Chaudhary number two on the most wickets chart with 40 wickets.

1984 riots: Delhi HC convicts Cong leader Sajjan Kumar, sentences him to life imprisonment

NEW DELHI, DEC 17 (PTI): The Delhi High Court on Monday reversed the acquittal of Congress leader Sajjan Kumar in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case and sentenced him to life imprisonment for criminal conspiracy to commit murder.

A bench of justices S Muralidhar and Vinod Goel also convicted Kumar for the offences

of abetment, delivering speeches instigating violence against Sikhs and disrupting communal harmony, saying "truth will prevail and justice will be done".

The court said the life sentence awarded to the Congress leader would be for the "remainder of his life" and directed him to surrender by December 31.

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Singer Mohit Chauhan performs for SSB jawans in West Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 DEC:

Bollywood playback singer, Mohit Chauhan along with the crew of India TV News channel performed a gala musical concert at 36th Bn. Hqrs Yangtse, Gyalshing on 16 Dec. The singer is visiting high altitude border locations of SSB Gyalshing, Yuksom and Rangpo (Sikkim) and will spend a day with the soldiers of SSB.

The musical show was dedicated to the soldiers of India who are guarding the country's borders as well as playing a vital role in maintaining peace within the country. At the outset of the programme, Deputy Commandant 36th Bn, Joy Gopal Namasudra welcomed the famous singer Mohit Chauhan and his wife Prarthana Gahilote, Commandant 36th Bn, Raj Narayan Mishra, Vinod Kala and Pradeep Khatri of India TV and other dignitaries.

Commandant 36th Bn, Raj



Narayan Mishra, in his welcome speech apprised about the brief history of SSB and its duties and said that the troops of 36th Bn SSB recently returned after conducting the Assembly Election at Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and J&K. The troops are exhausted and this musical programme by Mohit Chauhan will

certainly refresh the troops and will boost them for further assignments, he added.

SSB uniform was presented to Mohit Chauhan and he said that wearing the uniform he felt like a soldier. He performed various Bollywood songs as well as patriotic songs wearing the SSB uniform.

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Collaborating with children to build a disaster resilient Sikkim

State level Consultation on Child Centered Disaster Risk reduction in school curriculum

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 DEC:

"Children need to be made an integral part of all measures taken towards Disaster Risk Reduction and in Sikkim, we have already taken steps towards that. If we can sensitize the children and students on various aspects of disaster preparedness, the knowledge and skill will remain with them when they grow as citizens of our country," said Special Secretary, Department of Land Reforms and Disaster Management, Rinzing Chewang.

He was addressing the "State level Consultation on Child Centered Disaster Risk reduction into school curriculum" jointly organised by SSD-

MA, NDMA, UNICEF and Oxfam India in Gangtok, Sikkim today.

The consultation was attended by academicians, teachers, students and functionaries from various departments of Government of Sikkim.

Vice Chairperson of SSDMA, Prof VK Sharma, mentioned that there is a strong need to sensitize and empower students on various aspects of disaster preparedness and we need to develop a 'culture of disaster management' in Sikkim. Emphasizing on the exponentially good performance of Sikkim as a state to ensure biodiversity, he stressed on the importance of a mission driven journey to institutionalize disaster pre-



paredness in schools.

Chief- DRR, UNICEF in India, Lars Bernd, focused on the participation of different stakeholders and emphasized on inculcating environmental friendly values among children by incorporating aspects of Disaster Management in school education. UNICEF has made a global commitment in disaster

risk reduction and climate change mitigation and has pointed out that India has lot of capacity to respond to disaster. A lot of efforts to ensure micro-zoning and safety of structures especially school buildings are essential in mitigating some major disaster issues. He appreciated Sikkim for adopting many environment friendly ini-

tiatives in the state especially banning of plastic and encouraging organic farming. He also emphasized on the need for an education that could empower children to create a sustainable living space.

Mayor of Gangtok, Shakti Singh Choudhury, focused on the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate

change. He highlighted the initiatives taken at Sikkim for making it the first state in the country to form a climate change monitoring committee. Sharing the key findings from a study regarding climate change in the state, he mentioned that Sikkim is on the path to become a carbon neutral state of the country.

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tender invited from the interested firm/ individual for the Auction of the Vehicle belonging to Sikkim Tourism Development Department Corporation bearing the following description :-

Particulars of the Vehicle			
1	Make / Model	Toyota Innova	Year of Manufacture
	Engine No-	2KD 6401834	Nov-09
	Chassis No	MBJ11JV4007194845	
	Life of the Vehicle	09 Years	
Vehicle Registered No		SK-01-Z-0048	
Offset value as vaulted by SNT Division Transport Deptt, Govt of Sikkim:-Rs 2,10,000/-			
3	Make / Model	Toyota Innova	Year of Manufacture
	Engine No-	2KD 6402065	Nov-09
	Chassis No	MBJ11JV4007195018	
	Life of the Vehicle	09 Years	
Vehicle Registered No		SK-01-Z-0051	
Offset value as vaulted by SNT Division Transport Deptt, Govt of Sikkim:-Rs 2,10,000/-			
2	Make / Model	Toyota Innova	Year of Manufacture
	Engine No-	2KD 6403743	Nov-09
	Chassis No	MBJ11JV40071954567	
	Life of the Vehicle	09 Years	
Vehicle Registered No		SK-01-Z-0049	
Offset value as vaulted by SNT Division Transport Deptt, Govt of Sikkim:-Rs 2,10,000/-			

On "as in where is basis" Lowest amount of the tender should not be below then Rs 2,10,000/- (Two Lakh Ten Thousand Only) /- . Sealed tender should reach to the Office of Chief Executive Officer, Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation, Hotel Mayur, P.S.Road, Gangtok.

Duly accompanied by the earnest money in the form of TDR of Rs10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand Only) drawn in favour of Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation as on 19th December 2018.

The tender will be opened on the next day (i.e. 20th Dec 2018) between 15.00 hrs -16.00 hrs in the presence of Tender Committee and interested parties at Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation, Head Office, Hotel Mayur, P.S.Road, Gangtok

The Vehicle can be inspected at Burtuk Helipad with the permission of the Assistant Manager, Burtuk Helipad during working hour between 10.00 hrs to 15.00 hrs. Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all tender without assigning any reason thereof.

Tender forms could be collected by paying Rs 1000/- (Non Refundable) from below mentioned addresses/ (During working hour between 10.00 hrs to 15.00 hrs.)

- Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation, Head Office, Hotel Mayur, P.S.Road, Gangtok
- STDC, Travel Division Office, M.G. Marg, Gangtok
- STDC Burtuk Helipad

Sd/-

Chief Executive Officer,
Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation
Hotel Mayur, 1st Floor
P.S. Road, Gangtok

Gangtok on Tuesday, 18Dec

Temp: 15°C/06°C
Forecast: Sunny to partly cloudy with a little rain in the evening, then a shower in spots

Sunrise: 06:05 AM
Sunset: 04:42 PM

Sailo to be elected Mizoram assembly speaker unopposed

AIZAWL, DEC 17 (PTI): The ruling Mizo National Front (MNF) legislator Lalrinliana Sailo would be elected unopposed as Speaker of the new Assembly on Tuesday, an official said.

Sailo, a former minister in the previous Congress government, is the only candidate to file nomination till 3.30 pm Monday, the deadline for doing it, Assembly secretary S R Zokhuma said.

Protem Speaker Lalrinawma would conduct the Speaker's election after oath taking of newly elected legislators is concluded, he said.

The 49-year-old Sailo had quit the Congress and the assembly on October 3 and joined the MNF.

He was elected to the Assembly for four consecutive terms since 2003 and was a cabinet minister keeping portfolios like health and trade and commerce.

Election of deputy speaker would be held on Thursday, the third and last day of the first session of the eighth state assembly.

Governor Kumanam Rajasekharan would deliver his customary address in the assembly on Tuesday, the first day of the session. The motion of thanks on his address would be deliberated on Thursday.

1984 riots: Delhi HC...

The bench also said Kumar will not leave the city of Delhi from now till December 31.

With the direction, the court said it has partially allowed the Central Bureau of Investigation's appeal against Kumar's acquittal by the trial court in a case related to the murder of five members of a Sikh family -- Kehar Singh, Gurpreet Singh, Raghuwender Singh, Narendra Pal Singh and Kuldeep Singh -- in Raj Nagar area of Delhi Cantonment on November 1, 1984, after the assassination of then prime minister Indira Gandhi.

In the same case, the high court upheld the convictions and awarded varying sentences to former Congress councillor Balwan Khokhar, retired naval officer Captain Bhagmal, Girdhari Lal and former MLAs Mahender Yadav and Kishan Khokhar.

They were also convicted for criminal conspiracy to burn down residences of Sikh families and a gurdwara in the area during the riots.

The court also directed them to surrender by December 31 and not leave the city before that.

With the direction, the bench dismissed the appeals of the five against their conviction and punishment awarded by the trial court.

The trial court in May 2013, while acquitting Kumar, had awarded life term to Balwan Khokhar, Bhagmal and Lal, and a three-year jail term to Yadav and Kishan Khokhar.

Though the high court upheld Balwan Khokhar, Bhagmal and Lal life sentences, it extended the sentences of Yadav and Kishan Khokhar to a 10-year jail term.

The high court had on March 29 last year issued show cause notices to 11 accused, including Yadav, in five other 1984 anti-Sikh riots cases which were earlier closed. The matter is being heard by another division bench.

The accused, who were acquitted of the charges, were asked as to why should the court not order re-investigation and retrial against them as they faced allegations of "horrific crimes against humanity".

Singer Mohit Chauhan...

An interactive session with the soldiers was also held. The SSB Jawan enjoyed and danced during the programme.

The programme was recorded by India TV and will telecast few days later.

At the end of the programme, a memento was presented to Mohit Chauhan by Raj Narayan Mishra. The programme was attended by all the SSB Jawans and their family members, local dignitaries and people of Yangtey village and surrounding area.

SSB organizes study tour for girl students



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 DEC:

A four eleven-day Study Programme "Discovering India with SSB" was flagged off today at Gyalshing, West Sikkim. The study tour, organized by 36th Bn. SSB, has 20 girls of Indo-Nepal bordering areas of West Sikkim

and West Bengal under SSB Frontier Siliguri, a press release informs. The flag-off ceremony was attended by DIG SHQ Gangtok, B.K. Pal, as chief guest.

The programme started with lighting of inaugural lamp by B.K. Pal. While addressing the programme, Comdt 36th

Bn., R.N. Mishra highlighted the history and present role of SSB at Indo Nepal Border.

Speaking on this occasion, the chief guest, Mr Pal, said that this study tour would be a golden opportunity to all the girl students in terms of exposure and learning

of the rich cultural heritage of our great country. He further urged the participants of this study tour should take the most benefit from this tour and to implement knowledge gained for making their career and future brighter.

Mr Pal added that apart from its mandated duties, SSB is regularly serving the people of border areas. In the times of need they are always helpful towards the people of border villages of West Sikkim, he said.

The 20 girls will visit important places in Delhi and Agra under the study tour programme. On 23 Dec, they will have an interaction with the Director General SSB on the occasion of 55th Anniversary of SSB, the release adds.

Health Minister gives Rs 50,000 to Jorethang school band team



JORETHANG, 17 DEC (IPR): Minister Health & IPR Departments cum MLA Salghari Zoom constituency, Arjun Kumar Ghatani visited Jorethang Senior Secondary School today.

He extended his best wishes and financial support of Rs 50,000 to the students of band display team before their departure for New Delhi to represent Sikkim in National Inter School Band Competition to be held on 21 Dec. The team

had won the Northeast Zonal Inter School band competition held at Guwahati after securing first position in the competition amongst all schools in the state of Sikkim.

School Principal, Archana Gurung wholeheartedly expressed gratitude to the Area MLA for his initiatives, guidance and support to constitute Band display team and National Cadet Corps in the school who have reached National

level within short span of two years. Eight students from NCC also have been selected for RD National level camp, she informed.

While interacting with the staff and students minister took details and requirements of the school and further discussed to set an example in academic performance as well.

He also assured to address requirement of an auditorium on priority basis.

Sikkim Sangeet Kala Kendra conducts practical exams



SUMMIT REPORT

RANGPO, 17 DEC:

Sikkim Sangeet Kala Kendra conducted day-long practical examinations for the session

2018-19 at its centre in Rangpo on 16 Dec. About 50 students from Rangpo, Gangtok, Pakyong, etc., appeared in the examinations for various

subjects that included Hindustani Classical Vocal, Tabla, Kathak Dance and Bhav Sangeet, a press release informs.

Affiliated to the Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Allahabad, Chandana Dhar and Manav Chakraborty from Cooch Behar were the examiners appointed for the day. The exam was conducted by the teachers of the institute, Randheer Sharma and Ketan Mangla under the supervision of Centre In-charge, Ram Chandra Sharma. It was also supported by Tularam Gurugai and Bhoj Raj Pradhan.

The examiners were formally welcomed into the institute with khadas and welcome speech by Bhoj Raj Pradhan. Centre In-charge, Mr. Sharma said that the institute would always try to propagate classical music in the area as he announced that admissions for the upcoming session open.

SAATHI holds SMC workshop for schools of South District



SUMMIT REPORT

NAMCHI, 17 DEC:

Sikkim Against Addiction Towards Healthy India (SAATHI), a project initiative under Chief Minister's Youth Empowerment Mission conducted a one day SMC (School Management Committee) Workshop for schools of South District. The program was held on 17 Dec at Namchi Boys Sr. Sec. School.

Fifty-two SMC members from 20 Government Secondary and Senior Secondary schools of South Sikkim attended the workshop. The program was attended by Chairperson of Namchi Municipal Corporation, Udai Rai, as chief guest.

The programme started with a welcome address by teacher coordinator of Namchi Sr. Sec. School, Gauri Singh,

followed by SAATHI's impact and its achievement at school level by Principal, Namchi Sr. Sec. School. He had mentioned how schools had handled cases and succeeded in recovering the students who were into addiction.

The program was then taken forward by Motivator cum General Secretary of VBDAS, Deepak Rai, who explained in detail about the role of SMC members at school level.

He also mentioned about the growing popularity of alcohol and asked everyone to discourage alcohol consumption during local festivals.

O.D. Lepcha, one of the SMC members, spoke about guidance and counseling. He said that, proper guidance can lead children to become bet-

ter citizens.

The peer educators of Namchi Boys Sr. Sec. School had presented skit on harmful effect of substance abuse.

Chief guest, Udai Rai, gave short speech on importance of SAATHI program. He talked about the popularity of the SAATHI program and SMC members should coordinate with schools and work diligently to eradicate substance abuse from our state.

He said that, because of SAATHI, substance abuse cases have declined at school level, but local community members also have to know about the consequences of substance abuse. He also urged everyone to maintain gender equality and support every child to become a healthy and wise citizen.

Namprikdang Namsoong Tribal Festival concludes



WANGCHUK BHUTIA

DZONGU, 16 DEC:

The valedictory function of the Namprikdang Namsoong Tribal Festival 2018 was held today with Deputy Speaker, area MLA Sonam Gyatso Lepcha, accompanied by ADC (DEV/ North) KR Limboo, former chairman NT Lepcha, TRI, OSD, TT Lepcha, SDM Dzongu, TD Bhutia, BDO Dzongu, other officers, members of NNCC.

The former chairman,

in his address, informed that he had established a Lepcha Boongthing (Mun) school/ institute at Naga, North Sikkim, and that a Bongthing teacher had also been managed and interested students could apply for admission.

TRI, OSD, in his address, thanked to all the funding agencies for making the Namprikdang Namsoong Tribal Festival such a resounding success and highlighted how

the event was not just a celebration but also an exchange of social, cultural, traditional and literary aspects of tribes and provided a positive platform to the younger generation.

The chief guest, in his address, informed that while the Chief Minister was unable to visit the Namprikdang Namsoong Tribal Festival, he has reiterated his support towards development and employment.

Artists and social workers from Sikkim and Darj honored by Bharatiya Dalit Sahitya Akademi

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 DEC:

Artists and social workers from Sikkim and Darjeeling were honoured for contributions in their respective fields during the 34th anniversary celebrations of Bharatiya Dalit Sahitya Akademi in New Delhi recently.

The awards function had the presence of renowned personalities from different fields.

The team from Sikkim and Darjeeling was led by Geeta Ruchal to

the function.

Renowned singer Heera Rasaily from Darjeeling was conferred with the Baba Saheb Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar National Fellowship Award, Ramna Chettri from Gangtok received the Dr Ambedkar Distinguished Service Award and Sarita Thatal from Rabongla was honoured with the Virangana Savitri Bai National Fellowship Award.

Likewise, Akal Bahadur Biswakarma from West Pendam, Dup Tshering Lepcha from

Ralung and Homiya Kami from 8th Mile Lingdok received Baba Saheb Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar Fellowship.

Ms Ruchal stated that artists and social workers from Sikkim and Darjeeling were felicitated in recognition of their contributions in social work, music, singing, painting and government service.

She also expressed her immense happiness on the conferment of the prestigious award on Heera Rasaily.

Bihar and Sikkim Chamber of Commerce reps meet Governor



SUMMIT REPORTS GANGTOK, 17 DEC:

A special meeting of Bihar Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Sikkim Chamber of Commerce was held at the Conference Hall of New Raj Bhavan in the evening on 15 Dec. The meeting attended by

Governor of Sikkim, Gan-ga Prasad had the presence of 12 delegates from Bihar Chamber of Commerce and Industries led by its president, P K Agarwal and 15 members of Sikkim Chamber of Commerce led by its president, Ashok Sarma. It was the first ever

meeting of representatives of both organisations in Sikkim. The meeting deliberated on wide range of issues and policies of trade and industries in both the States and resolved to explore mutual interests which will be beneficial to both the States. Both

the organisations also agreed to have more rounds of talk to prepare the frameworks of business and exchanges in near future.

The Bihar Chamber of Commerce and Industries showed keen interest to have direct trade engagements with Sikkim being

brand name in organic and tourism sector and invited their counterparts from Sikkim to visit Bihar for formalisation of plan of action.

Addressing the delegates of both the chambers, the Governor highlighted the specialties and strengths of both prospective partner States and stressed on the effective collaboration to harness potential of trade between both States.

He reiterated that the plan of action must take into account the business interest of both Sikkim and Bihar and should be mutually beneficial. The Governor outlined the achievements of Sikkim on various sectors and how Sikkim is fast emerging as the global hub of organic farming and tourism.

The program also saw the felicitation of the Governor by both organisations.

SSKA wins 15 medals at NE Karate c'ship



SAGAR CHETTRI GANGTOK, 16 DEC:

Sikkim Karatekas returned home after an impressive outing at the 6th North East Karate Championship held at Assam Rifles Training Centre, Dimapur, Nagaland, from 10 to 12 Dec. Sikkim won 3 Gold, 5 Silver and 7 Bronze medals in the championship.

A twenty-one member team of Sikkim State Karate Association [SSKA] represented the State in the championship. The team was accompanied by the Team Coach Puran Limboo and

SSKA General Secretary cum Technical Director, Bidhan Ballav Subba.

Babyana Gurung won a gold medal and a silver for the state, while Avinash Rai and Anurodh Rai bagged a gold medal each in the championship.

The silver medalists are Manisha Chettri, Bhargavi Cintury, Anurag Subba and Phung Wangma Subba.

Likewise, Sheelu Pradhan won 2 bronze medals and Yogesh Rai, Pravesh Dhungel, Parikshit Ohal, Choden Bhutia and Yabesh Rai won a bronze

medal each for Sikkim.

While congratulating the team, SSKA president Bijoy Gurung highlighted that even though it was a debut for most the team members in the regional championship, they impressed everyone in the championship with their outstanding performance.

He lauded the performance given by young Karatekas of Sikkim.

On behalf of the association, he encouraged everyone to continue with their training and performance to shine the name of the State and the country in near future.

SBJM Central Body election on 20 Dec

SUMMIT REPORT RANGPO, 17 DEC:

Sikkim Bihari Jagaran Manch [SBJM] Central Body election is going to be held at Singtam Bihari Dharmasala on 20 Dec. The election shall be conducted under the guidance of the adhoc election committee, a press release informs.

The nomination process will be held from 9 a.m. to 11.30 a.m., followed by the voting process from 1.30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Counting cum announcement of the new team shall also be completed on same day, the release adds.

Namsoong Football update: Timburbong USCT enters final at Karthok

SUMMIT REPORT, SORENG, 16, DEC:

The open football tournament on the occasion of Naam-all Namsoong Lossong organised by the Lepcha organisation, Zear Chhumi Shezum, at Karthok playground under Soreng-Chakung constituency its approaching its final game.

The semifinal played between Timburbong (USCT) and Thongling (MSC) saw USCT win 4-1 and make its way to the finals scheduled to be held on 17 Dec. The winners will receive a cash prize of Rs 40,000 and the runners-up Rs

30,000 along with the trophies.

SDF's West District publicity in-charge, Padam Singh Limboo, was present as the chief guest for the semifinal match accompanied by Health Department Advisor, Dr AD Subba, HM, SD Dahal, Karthok, Panchayat members etc.

The organizing committee informs that a men's 10 KM open marathon will also be organised on the theme, "Say No to Foreign Liquor", the prize money for which has been sponsored by Health Deptt Advisor, Dr Subba.

'Car Swachh Bin' for a swachh car



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 DEC:

Marwari Yuva Manch Gangtok City Branch today organised a program to introduce 'Car Swachh Bin' for vehicles in Gangtok. The portable Car Swachh Bin can be placed in

taxi or private vehicles for collection of waste.

ASP Gangtok Traffic Police, Ongmu Bhutia, Gangtok Mayor, Shakti Singh Chaudhary, president Press Club of Sikkim, Joseph Lepcha, attended the program today.

LOST

I Sonam Palzor Lepcha, DOB: 15.03.1983, S/o. Mr Aching Lepcha, R/o. Mangan North Sikkim have lost my hand bag in which my class X passed Certificate of CBSE Board bearing Roll No: 3120242 passed out in the year 1999 and Serial No: 00305268. So if found kindly contact on: 9609861871.

FLAT AVAILABLE FOR RENT

Fully furnished, 3 Bedroom flat available for rent at Church Road, Near Diesel Power House. Conveniently located by the roadside and a 5-minute walk from M.G. Marg. Suitable for Corporate Office and Guest House.

For further details please
Contact: 9434117687 / 9083826462

LAND FOR SALE

BL Plot, 60x60, both side road, Lower Syari, Near Ranipool, Land is almost flat. Contact 7384620040, 7477406169.

KUTSE SHEGU

The Kutse Shedu of Late Namgyal Dolma who left for her heavenly abode on 03 Nov falls on 21 Dec. All well-wishers, friends and family are invited to attend the prayers at our residence, Tumin Kothi, Tumin, East Sikkim. We also take this opportunity to thank all those who stood by us in our time of bereavement and regret our inability to do so individually.

Karma Tenzing Namgyal [son] and family
9933441234

Marking a community Losoong Festival in Passatanga



NITESH R PRADHAN GANGTOK, 17 DEC:

The scenic village of Passatanga under Assam Lingzey GPU today marked a community Losoong celebration.

Organised by Pema Choki Choling Mani-Lakhang with the help of the local community, the program featured colourful cultural performances.

Area MLA, BB Rai, was present as the chief guest and congratulated the organisers for conducting such a program where all communities have taken active part and shared the common Sikkimese ethos of brotherhood.

He also informed that the demand for construction of a Mani Lakhang in the area has already been sanctioned by the State Government for Rs 10 lakh.

He further claimed that it was only because of the Sikkim Democratic Front Government's strict line on secularism that all religious institutions, including Buddhist Monasteries, Hindu Temples, Churches, Mosques and other religious establishments receive continuous grants from the state government.

Mr. Rai also lashed out at the opposition for harbouring a feeling of communalism and appealed to voters to support the SDF to keep "communal people" out of power.

President of the Mani Lakhang committee, Dat-up Bhutia, in turn stated that construction of the Mani Lakhang was a priority for the community.

He also thanked Chief Minister Pawan Chamling for the grant

provided for the construction. He further informed that the present Mani Lakhang was a temporary structure which required urgent transfer to a pucca building.

The villagers also stated that urgent attention needs to be paid to the roads and drinking water facilities in some areas.

Former MLA Kunga Zangpo Bhutia was also present for the function and stated that in order to keep the present developmental journey, SDF was the only option.

He stated that the opposition has no plans for the future of Sikkim.

The youth of the area stated that the community at large should come together and celebrate festivals together in order to acknowledge the oneness of all human beings.

Education Career Fest begins in Namthang



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 DEC:

Two-day Education Career Fest is being organised by Sikkim Democratic Front's student wing of Namthang Rateypani Constituency which began today at Namthang Senior Secondary School, South Sikkim, a press release informs.

On the first day, Speaker, KN Rai, was the chief guest while Area MLA Tilu Gurung

was present as a special guest. Also present were HRDD officials, BDO and School Heads.

Students from class VIII-XII of all government schools of the Constituency participated on the first day of the fest.

Stalls were set up by different Universities and Colleges like Ramasamy Memorial University (SRM), ICAFI, ITI, Vinayak Mission University, Sikkim Manipal Uni-

versity, Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) and Sikkim United Youth Organisation.

Resource persons on the day were Marathon Man, Amar Subba, Sanjay Rai, Dewakar Basnett of 24 Hours Inspired Learning and, Gurmila Bhutia and Bijay Subba from Positude.

On 18 Dec, the fest will be organized for school dropouts, parents and college students.

Sikkim BJP wants Rahul to apologise for Rafale allegations


SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 DEC:

Bharatiya Janata Party's Sikkim unit has demanded that the Congress president, Rahul Gandhi, apologise immediately for "misleading" the people of the country

on the Rafale Deal.

The party alleged that the "propaganda" of the AICC president was responsible to some extent for BJP governments getting voted out of office in three States in the recent assembly elections.

Addressing a press conference here today, BJP state-unit spokesperson, JB Darnal, interpreted the recent verdict the Supreme Court as suggesting that there was nothing wrong in the Rafale deal.



ADMISSION OPEN

STUDY ZONE
Mr. Dawchung Lepcha (Chairperson)

OUR COURSE OUTLINES:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
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OUR COURSE OBJECTIVES:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Greater emphasis would be to excel. 5. Last minute suggestion tips as per board requirements
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For further details please contact: 9002163719, 7319565616, 7432036651
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SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Collaborating For a Better Town

Gangtok might be clean by national standards, but it could be so much better

When they experimented with MG Marg, the policy-makers had hoped that the litter & spit free zone would eventually encompass all of Gangtok, and if that happened, dream even bigger and extend it to all of Sikkim. The mission has succeeded to the extent that Sikkim went on to become the first Nirmal Rajya (open defecation free state) and has also bagged a Safaigiri award for its obviously better garbage management credentials than most other states of the country. But that is hardly a comparison to boast about or be satisfied with since Sikkim has the benefit of its small size and abundant finances to devote to waste management, a luxury, which say a Bihar does not enjoy. So, while the State, its government and its people deserve credit for being better, they should now aim to become really good as well.

What better place to begin than the capital itself. Gangtok remains a town of contradictions where the residents continue to live comfortably in the company of stinking jhoras which they themselves have clogged with all types of household refuse (yes, that still happens) and even the occasional sewage release (yes, and that too). Instinctive cleanliness around public spaces is thus perhaps too much to expect. Gangtokians might live in pine-wood paneled houses that they themselves rub with mansion polish every day, but are oblivious to their civic duties as they prove with clockwork regularity as the corners and roadsides continue to mimic public dustbins and the jhoras have become a study of consumption patterns. This, despite a reasonably functional garbage collection service being in place. This is unfortunate because with even a few collaborative efforts, this town could be much better. A keener sense of responsibility towards public spaces would help and the right awareness at the school level could easily address the problem of irresponsible littering. It is after all not enough to reach a garbage bag to the UDHD trucks in the morning and then spend the rest of the day littering the town with wrappers and other refuse or surreptitiously empty septic tanks into neighbourhood jhoras.

What is required is an attitudinal shift which displays more collective consideration. Gangtok is not really a city yet, but it is already overflowing with brash disregards; house-owners are lavish with their own accommodations but cramp the floors below with pigeonholes and common toilets and bathrooms; Gangtok drivers are among the most impatient and insensitive, as are their VIP vehicles. Such mindsets, which disregard common intent or pursuits, continue to rear up in all engagements and personal aggrandisement thus becomes a driving force. An immediate fall out of this has been the noticeable rollback in aesthetic nuances. Aesthetic appeal is after all for public consumption and extravagance for personal indulgence. No prizes here for guessing which option Gangtok takes on a daily basis. Bigger cars, higher buildings and increased consumption have left Gangtok an ugly town.

Take any back-lane and one will be confronted with innumerable case-studies of how private greed has encroached upon public space and convenience. The capital is exploding with private decisions thumbing their collective noses at public courtesies.

With too much ugliness already permanent in the form of concrete, the least that can be done is to leave the open spaces [which are mostly the roads and shortcuts now in Gangtok] free of litter. Maybe starting with this conscious effort, Gangtok could begin the process of becoming and town more becoming of its hill station status and more true to its cleanliness credentials.

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

Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

The importance of thoughtful resistance in the age of Trump

AJIT PYATI

theconversation.com

As resistance to Donald Trump's presidency continues to dominate American political life, it's worth asking the question: what exactly is being resisted?

Answers can range from Trump's reckless and erratic behaviour to his racist and xenophobic views and the outright corruption of his administration, to name just a few.

This means what people resist and also the way they resist can be varied, although outrage is often its dominant emotion.

Despite the legitimate need for resistance, however, resisting Trump angrily feeds into his victim complex, strengthening his appeal to his base.

Given this reality, those resisting need to be aware of whether their acts of resistance offer real alternatives to Trumpism or rather play into the president's hands by further amplifying anger and division.

To make resistance more effective, it is important to rediscover contemplative forms of activism. This type of activism has played a prominent role in the history of social change but has been less popular in the age of Trump.

CONTEMPLATIVE ACTIVISM

What I mean here by "contemplative activism" are forms of social action that emphasize critical, first-person inquiry. In this way, our internal thoughts and emotions are linked to creating positive change in the outer world. Numerous examples exist in human history, such as Mohandas K. Gandhi's civil disobedience campaign in the Indian independence struggle and Martin Luther King Jr.'s pacifist approach to civil rights.

In the same vein as Gandhi and King, a lesser-known figure in American contemplative activism is Thomas Merton. Merton, a Trappist monk, prolific writer and social justice advocate, involved himself wholeheartedly in the pressing issues of his time, including civil rights, the Vietnam War and nuclear proliferation.

So significant was Merton's impact that Pope Francis, during his 2015 address to the U.S. Congress, mentioned Merton as a notable American and source of inspiration for many.

How might the work of Merton and other contemplative activists be relevant in the age of

Trump? Specifically, Merton does not shy away from addressing our own individual complicity in the creation of the violence and despair around us.

Diving into the horrors of his own time in the essay "Is the world a problem?", Merton writes:

"The world is ...a complex of responsibilities



and options made out of the loves, the hates, the fears, the joys, the hopes, the greed, the cruelty, the kindness, the faith, the trust, the suspicion of all. In the last analysis, if there is a stupid war in Vietnam because nobody trusts anybody, this is in part because I myself am defensive, suspicious, untrusting..."

In addition, the contemplative activism of Merton helps us more clearly see the underlying realities of complex social problems, such as the enduring persistence of fear and greed.

TRUMP IS NOT AN ANOMALY

This type of contemplative clarity can help us understand how Trump is not an anomaly in American history. While he may behave differently than many modern U.S. presidents, this difference is based more on style than substance.

For instance, Trump's policies are largely within the Republican mainstream, and he represents some basic and ugly truths about American history (all which far predate him), whether it's white rage and resentment, delusions about America's greatness or the savage effects of inequality in a predatory capitalist system.

In essence, Trump represents the stereotypical

"ugly American" that many U.S. citizens have played a role in creating. Trump unmasks the ugliness of the United States and lays it bare for all to see.

With this realization, Americans must reflect on what resistance means when the "enemy" is its own history and its own collective ugliness. In-

stead of seeing this situation as debilitating, it can be seen as liberating, as it frees people to resist and create alternatives to Trump in a less reactive way.

So while many of Trump's policies need to be challenged and resisted, Trump is more a symbol and symptom of a larger dysfunction, rather than its root cause.

WE ARE THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION

This month marks the 50th anniversary of Thomas Merton's death. His call to fight injustice through a clear-eyed assessment of our collective social condition and critical self-examination is needed now more than ever.

It's time to move beyond seeing Trump as the defining problem, by both contextualizing his place in the American social fabric and understanding how our actions can either alleviate or worsen toxic political climates in the United States and around the world.

Beyond resistance, it is more powerful to work for an inspiring vision of change. In the effort to defeat Trumpism and movements like it, we can be either part of the problem or the solution.

[the writer is Associate Professor of Information and Media Studies, Western University]

Disappointment about gifts is good for kids who have enough

NIKKI MARTYN & ELENA MERENDA
theconversation.com

Disappointment is a natural human emotion that occurs after a perceived failure. For our young children, this perceived failure can look like not getting the toy they wanted, not being invited to a classmate's birthday party or losing their favourite stuffed animal.

It is essential for children's mental health, well-being and overall development that they experience how to deal with disappointment well. But this can be difficult for parents to handle, particularly around holidays that have grown to involve consumerism, gift-giving and expectations.

Families often mistakenly link love and happiness with material goods such as toys; the Santa story promises magical wish fulfilment. This can cause conflict for parents when children do not get the "right" gift.

On holidays, there's social and personal pressure to provide "happiness" and "joy" to children through material objects, which can be confused with providing the necessities. For parents who do not have the resources to provide the "perfect" or "desired" gift this can cause additional stress, shame, guilt and fear around disappointment.

Parents may feel as though they have let down their child and that they have impacted the child's experience or memory of their "special day."

This is especially true if the child has difficulty with or is learning to regulate emotions and expresses disappointment through tantrums or sulking.

These behaviours can affect parents profoundly, often leading them to feel badly about themselves or that the child does not love them.

FOCUS ON TRADITIONS OVER GIFTS

The holiday season should be about love, connection and spending time together. This is at the core of all family traditions and what children will remember and bring with them as they develop and eventually have their own families.

Traditions and rituals are important for creating meaning and a sense of belonging.

Being a part of something greater than yourself or your immediate fam-

ily and creating positive loving memories and security are all important for children's emotional, social and cognitive development.

To help children understand the "true" meaning of a holiday season, you might delve more into your own traditions. Or you might like to create new family traditions that provide opportunities to connect with each

ments in life become more profound.

When parents support children in dealing with disappointment it can lead to the development of adaptation and resilience, which are both important for children in order for them to bounce back from difficult experiences throughout life.

Here are some more ways you can help children deal with disappointment:



other and your wider community.

Experiences such as baking for others and donating to a food bank or toy drive can help children to understand that the holidays are for making a positive difference.

EMPHASIZE GIVING, NOT RECEIVING

Changing our focus from giving rather than receiving can help our children develop and appreciate the strength in gratitude.

Research has linked gratitude to significant health and wellness benefits such as improving self-esteem, improving sleep and developing empathy.

The other thing to know is that although disappointment feels awful, it is a part of life and is actually a positive and healthy emotion that's central to children's emotional, cognitive and social development throughout their lives.

Parents naturally try to protect their children from pain, to make them feel better from what we deem as negative emotions such as anger, sadness and disappointment.

But it is important for us to equip them with the tools to manage "special" day and day-to-day disappointments. Because ultimately, as they grow older, those disappointing mo-

1. ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CHILD'S FEELINGS

Let them know that you understand. It is important to label and validate children's feelings.

Tell your child that you recognize why they are feeling disappointed and that it's OK to express this emotion.

In order for children to develop a positive sense of self, empathy and social skills, they need to be able to feel, label and talk about all feelings.

2. SHARE YOUR OWN DISAPPOINTMENTS

Often times, when children are disappointed about not receiving what they wanted, they also feel badly because they are told to feel fortunate and thankful for what they have.

To encourage children to embrace and express their emotions, it is helpful to share a story of a time when you also felt disappointments.

Perhaps you can remember a holiday when you were young, when you too were disappointed over a dream gift that never arrived. Empathizing with your child's emotional experience will remind them that they are not alone and that their emotions are valid.

3. BE MINDFUL, STAY PRESENT

It's always important, but especially during the holiday season, to be intentional about the expectations you set for your children. Instead of talking about the gifts under the tree, you could talk about the fun they will have with friends and family during your holiday traditions.

Be present through the disappointment and the behaviour. Disap-

pointment can feel awful for children. The emotion and the behaviour will pass and your child will be stronger and more resilient when they know the boundaries.

4. DON'T LABEL YOUR CHILD

During this time, it is important to be mindful of your own language and attitudes. Don't say: "You're acting like a baby."

Although it is difficult, try not to label your child, even if the label describes what he or she has done. You can use questions to motivate change, such as "Are your actions safe?" or "Are your words kind?"

Although the holiday season brings out the best and worst in all of us, if we want to support our child's growth and development it is important that we help them learn to manage and deal with their disappointments everyday.

Through loving, caring relationships our children will always grow and prosper.

[Nikki Martyn is Program Head of Early Childhood Studies, University of Guelph-Humber; Elena Merenda is Assistant Program Head of Early Childhood Studies, University of Guelph-Humber]

As Vasundhara Raje loses power, Mamata Banerjee is now the only woman chief minister in India



NEW DELHI, DEC 17 (PTI): Mamata Banerjee, who is being seen as a major centre in the country's political power-play ahead of next year's general elections, is now the only woman chief minister in India.

The year started with three women chief ministers but after the recent elections, Banerjee is the only one to be in office. While, Vasundhara Raje Scindia lost power in Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir's Mehbooba Mufti resigned in June after ally BJP withdrew support from her government.

"Each woman chief minister, including me has won elections and then lost. Once you have lost, you have to leave. I am happy that Mamata Banerjee represents all of us women at the moment as the chief minister of Bengal and of course as a part of the opposition, she will have a role in the upcoming elections," Sheila Dikshit, who was the longest serving chief minister of Delhi, serving from 1998 to 2013, told PTI.

Banerjee, the eighth and current chief minister of West Bengal since 2011, is the first woman to hold the office. Known for her fiery speeches and keen political acumen, people close to her refused to comment on her achievements through the prism of her gender, but chose to highlight her political activism instead.

"She has led struggles for people's issues over decades, including a historic 26-day hunger strike. She has served as a seven-term MP, a three-time Union Cabinet Minister and twice-serving chief minister. Her courage, conviction and accomplishments are her credentials," said Derek O'Brien Trinamool's Parliamentary party leader in the Rajya Sabha, listing Banerjee's achievements.

Banerjee's political rivals too seem to see her as a politician first

Declare 1984 anti-Sikh riots as genocide, says LS member

NEW DELHI, DEC 17 (PTI): A Shiromani Akali Dal member in the Lok Sabha Monday demanded that the 1984 anti-Sikh riots should be declared as a genocide and accused the Congress of protecting the guilty.

The member Prem Singh Chandumajra made the remarks during the Zero Hour, soon after the Delhi High Court sentenced Congress leader Sajjan Kumar to life imprisonment in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case.

Innocent Sikhs were

and a woman later. CPI(M)'s lone politburo member Brinda Karat said that Banerjee's style of governance did not benefit women.

"In politics it is not biology but ideology and political programmes that determine whether women as chief ministers are successful or not. What is of concern to me is that the number of women MLAs have decreased. There is no use having a woman on top and no women at lower levels of governance.

"As far as Mamata is concerned, her politics is one of authoritarianism and women cannot benefit from that," she said.

Ahead of the 2019 elections, Banerjee is being seen as one of the major centres of power in the nation's electoral politics. She has floated the idea of federal front in an effort to bring the regional parties together to take on the BJP. From holding meeting in Kolkata with Telangana's K Chandrashekar Rao, to supporting Arvind Kejriwal's sit-in at Delhi Lieutenant Governor's home, Banerjee is leaving no stone unturned.

Recently, the Congress even attacked her after she stopped short of congratulating the party or its chief for victories in the three Hindi heartland states. Congress leaders said these victories are giving sleepless nights to Banerjee's supporters, who want her to be the next prime minister.

Political analysts that PTI spoke with said that while as Bengal chief minister she has emerged as a force to reckon with, her role in the national level will depend on her final equation with the opposition leaders.

"Its too premature to comment on her role in the opposition. However she is and will always remain a significant player," said a senior political analyst, who didn't want to be named.

killed and the riots should be declared as a genocide, he said, adding that everybody should welcome the court's verdict.

He also said that someone facing allegations of being part of the riots is going to become the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, an apparent reference to Congress leader Kamal Nath.

During the Zero Hour, BJP members raised slogans demanding that the guilty in the riots should be punished.

FIELDWORK REFLECTIONS



An extraordinary way of celebrating Namsoong

MONGFING LEPCHA

Namsoong is the Lepcha festival which marks the beginning of a new year. The origin of this celebration has its own unique story in Lepcha mythology. Namsoong celebration symbolizes the killing of the demon king, Laso Mung Puno. The Lepchas, under the leadership of Zor Bongthing fought for twelve years before gaining victory over the demon king who also happened to be a shape shifter. Every year the demon king would transform into different animal forms and bring great torment to the Lepchas. Eventually, the demon king's reign came to an end liberating the people from the long suffering. The concept of the festival is about bidding farewell to the past year and welcoming the New Year. The literal meaning of Namsoong is "Nam" means "year" and Soong" means "to celebrate". Among the Lepchas the concept of "Nam" or year is based on the twelve different animal forms of the demon king and the years are named after the animals accordingly. So, it is a cycle of twelve different "Nams" or years and each "Nam" completes a cycle in every twelve years. Apparently, among the Lepchas the age of a person is calculated based on the "Nam" or year he/she has been born in. If a person is born in the year of pig, his/her "Nam" or year of birth would be "pig" and the age is calculated accordingly.

I was born in a Lepcha family and grew up celebrating the festival with great zeal. Right from preparing different food items especially khajay (hand-made flour cookies, which seems to be a borrowed cultural trend and has now become a part of Lepcha culture), to participating in the Laso group which is basically a dancing and singing group who go door to door from the second day of the new year for merriment and in return the host offers them snacks and some cash as blessings (the offering of cash is again a recent trend). On the eve of the Nam aal / new year, in every individual household, the bongthing or the head of the family (male) performs the ritual called Pik-Sut, which is offering of prayers to the guardian deities to banish bad omen and for a fruitful healthy year ahead. The prayers are also offered to the guardian deities as gratitude for all the good things of the past year. So, basically the festival is about people having get-togethers inviting one another for meals, preparation of delicious food and merriment. In villages traditional foods are also prepared. However, a family will avoid celebrations if there has been a death in the family. In such case, some do not celebrate Namsoong for a year and some for at least three years. Why I emphasizing on these things is only because my idea of celebrating Namsoong was limited to what I been exposed to since I was a child until I witnessed something

extraordinary in my field area which was in a village named Chawang or Sowang, in North Sikkim. This is the same village of which I have talked about in my previous article. So, after spending almost a week in the field area, the day of celebrating Namsoong arrived. Like every other Lepcha village, in this village too there is a trend of celebrating Namsoong but the trend seems to have started only in the year 1990, when the first Namsoong committee of the village was formed. The initiative was taken by Mr. Lochoy Lepcha, Mr. Ongdi Lepcha, Mrs. Chung Lhamu Lepcha, Mrs. Sarkit Lepcha and Mrs. Khimo Lepcha who were the first core members of the Namsoong committee. The committee is formed every year before the Namsoong and they are responsible for organizing the Namsoong celebration event in the village. The first committee's members started the Namsoong celebration by organizing Namsoong picnic and gradually it became a huge celebration which is organized every year during Namsoong. The football tournament is the main attraction of this celebration where teams from different places participate. For a week the villages turn into a social hub of the area during the football tournament. Now, talking about the extraordinary thing which I witnessed was the burning of the effigy of Laso Mung Puno. I had never witnessed one because as per my understanding the trend of burning the effigy is not followed in all villages I have been to, I never heard of such a ritual being followed. Talking with one former Namsoong committee member of the village, it was known that earlier the entire village used to gather around at a chosen venue in the village premises and burn the effigy but with the change of committee members there had been some inconsistency in the trend but of course it had not vanished. Now, the burning of effigy is upto an individual household. While he was explaining that, my mind was busy trying to relate that with the burning of the Ravana's effigy during Dussehra. Although, the stories are different, people are different and places are different yet the trend and symbolic meaning seems to be so similar. In fact, we can always find some similarities in the cultural trends which tend to give rise to lots of questions and possibilities in our minds. The burning of effigy symbolizes the killing of Laso Mung Pano which also marks the beginning of new era or New Year.

The morning of the Namsoong eve was a usual one and the preparation started only in the second half of the day. The house where we were staying did burn the effigy. Some of the close relatives of the family came and helped with setting up of the effigy which was made out of bamboo and straw. Later in the evening, a bongthing was invited to perform the ritual. For this ritual as well the required items were just chi, butter, flowers and incense. The bongthing was

all dressed up in traditional Lepcha attire making him look professional which he was indeed. After, a very long ritual of offering prayers, the effigy was finally burnt. The effigy was huge and I am sure the flames were visible from the opposite hills. While the effigy was set on fire, people gathered and received blessings from the bongthing. After the ritual was over,



everyone sat around the fire and enjoyed hot cup of tea. It took hours for the effigy to turn into ashes as it was stacked with dried logs as well. Sitting around the burning effigy I was wondering about the similarities and dissimilarities of cultural trend of the same community; how a culture is prone to transformation, being influenced or at times fading away. Although, the burning of effigy is practiced in other villages as well, yet in all those years I had never witnessed one and I am sure many others from the same community may not have till now. I do not know whether the trend is a recent influence or transformation on something old to something new, yet the symbolic meaning behind the burning effigy is valid enough which depicts the end of something bad and beginning of something new with a hope and faith that the new beginning will be better than yesterday. And the warmth that the burning effigy gave on that cold winter day somehow made me think that the end of something bad surely is comforting at least till the ashes turn cold.

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

Bangla main opposition alliance promises to safeguard rights of people if voted to power

ANISUR RAHMAN

DHAKA, DEC 17 (PTI):

Bangladesh's main opposition alliance unveiled its poll manifesto Monday, promising to safeguard the opinion and rights of people if it was voted to power in the December 30 general elections.

The National Unity Front (NUF), a political alliance of opposition parties including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of imprisoned former prime minister Khaleda Zia, promised to ensure "peoples' ownership".

"When the people no longer have control of the government, it is taken over by vested interests and release its domestic and foreign groups... you have felt this in your bones," NUF convenor and eminent jurist Kamal Hossain said. The NUF, in line

with the constitutional principle, would not only ensure peoples' ownership over the government but also the stake of defeated parties in the governance process, he said.

"If we win the election and are given the responsibility, the Jatiya Oikya Front will govern for the welfare of all citizens. Our principles will be unity, integrity and lack of vengeance. "The NUF government will safeguard the opinions and rights of those it defeats in the election as well," Hossain said.

Though the BNP is part of the NUF alliance, it will release its manifesto separately on Tuesday, the day Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League plans to unveil its manifesto. The Awami

League is focusing on new voters considering their stake in the voters list, a ruling party leader told PTI.

The BNP's manifesto will be released in the absence of Zia and her son Tarique Rahman, who has been termed as the party's "fugitive" acting chief.

Rahman, who lives in London, was given life imprisonment for masterminding a grenade attack on an Awami League rally in 2005 in which 24 people were killed. According to the election commission officials, around 100 million people are eligible to cast their votes in December 30 general elections.

Zia, 73, who is serving a 10-year jail sentence on corruption charges, has been barred from contesting the polls.

BJP to protest across Bengal against govt's decision on 'rath yatra'

Kolkata, Dec 17 (PTI): The Bharatiya Janata Party has decided to take out rallies across West Bengal to protest against the Trinamool Congress government's decision to deny permission for its 'rath yatra'.

As part of its protest programme, the party has organised a "ganatantra bachao (save democracy) andolan" in Arambagh area of Hooghly district on Monday. The BJP leaders have also threatened to organise a "civil disobedience" campaign in the state if they were stopped from holding the protest rallies.

"We will take out rallies across Bengal to protest against the state government's decision. We will inform the masses about the undemocratic atmosphere prevailing in the state and the need for

the 'save democracy' rally at this hour.

"If we are stopped or denied permission to hold such rallies, then we will be forced to organise civil disobedience movement," state BJP president Dilip Ghosh said at a press meet here.

Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani was also present at the meet. "It seems that the state government is afraid to see the voices of democracy coming together to fight against the government," she said.

The Mamata Banerjee-led government had on Saturday denied permission for the BJP's 'rath yatra' on the ground that it might cause communal tension. The yatra, touted as the saffron party's "save democracy" programme, was scheduled to start from Cooch



Behar district.

BJP president Amit Shah, who had set a target of 22 Lok Sabha seats in the state, was scheduled to flag off three chariots from as many places. The chariots were meant to travel across all 42 parliamentary constituencies in the state over the next one-and-a-half months.

At the conclusion of the 'yatra', the party had planned a massive rally here, which was likely to be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PTI PNT RMS

Teen Spirit: Young guns call shots in Indian shooting

ABHISHEK HORE

NEW DELHI, DEC 17 (PTI): As the year grew old, the ages of India's shooting champions got younger and if the medals won and world records owned by the incredibly talented teenagers are anything to go by, better days await the sport.

While the podiums and records are a fair reflection of shooting's unprecedented upswing over the last 12 months, the soaring expectations from its young guns speak volumes about the talent at its disposal.

Manu Bhaker won almost everywhere, the rare blip being her inexplicable meltdown at the Asian Games finals. The 16-year-old girl was favoured to beat women double her age and experience in the showpiece and when the script did not unfold on expected lines, she exited the 25m range teary-eyed.

Heightened expectations from a teenager competing in a top-flight senior event is rare, but the breed that Bhaker belongs to is also rare. Teen pistol sensation Saurabh Chaudhary, who can now do without an introduction, is a shooter of Bhaker's ilk.

Out of nowhere, Esha Singh, 13, announced her arrival in spectacular fashion, nonchalantly trouncing the established names, Bhaker included, as well as Heena Sidhu on her way to winning three gold medals at the Nationals.



In the same tournament, Mehuli Ghosh's partner in winning the junior mixed team and youth mixed team air rifle events was a 10-year old Abhinav Shaw.

Taking the sport by storm was Chaudhary, who is as young as Jhajar girl Bhaker and equal in skill and achievements. He not only won medals, he won them in gold, and with records to boost on a couple of occasions.

The teenaged shooters dominated the sport as if they had been pulling the trigger for years.

Anjum Moudgil, Mehuli, Saurabh, Bhaker, Anish and Esha Singh -- in descending order of age -- are among the string of young talents who made headlines.

The progress has left everyone hopeful of good times ahead, including India's lone

individual Olympic gold medalist, Abhinav Bindra.

"In shooting we are pretty developed. There were 27 medals in the World Championship in which we did fantastically well. We just need to keep our heads focused and continue that process," Bindra said recently.

"We seem to be quite fortunate because we have a string of young shooting athletes, coming through day in and day out, and I think that's a very positive sign for the long-term development of shooting," the 36-year-old added.

Saying that the sport enjoyed a phenomenal year, simply riding on the teenagers, would be appropriate.

On her part, Bhaker said, "We saw the youth power this year, it feels really good that teenagers are doing so well

and achieving their goals. We have set our goals and are working on that only. It is very surprising that suddenly all of us are doing so well."

Bhaker and Chaudhary became household names, winning five and six international gold medals in the year respectively, including the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, Youth Olympic Games, ISSF World Cup (both junior and senior) and Asian Championship Gold medals between them.

The 23-year-old Angad Veer Singh Bajwa did what no other skeet shooter had done before at the Asian Shotgun Championships.

He shot a perfect 60 out of 60 in the final to own the world record, beating the score of 59 achieved multiple times by American two-time Olympic champion, world champion and skeet legend, Vincent Hancock.

Angad had been in and out of the Indian team for more than two years, has come up the junior ranks and has done what no other Indian skeet shooter has ever done -- winning an Asian Championship gold and owning the skeet world record.

Given that his teammates Sheeraz Shaikh and Mairaj Khan are also shooting good scores consistently, Angad's achievement bodes well for the future. Similarly, in rifle, teenagers Mehuli Ghosh and

Elavenil Valarivan showed their class by winning a host of medals including gold in the Junior and Senior World Cups and Junior World Championships as well as in the Youth Olympic Games.

The 24-year-old Anjum Moudgil emerged as the country's top woman rifle shooter, winning a World Championship silver and bagging the country's first Tokyo Olympics quota place in the process and then ending with a clean sweep of the air rifle titles at the Shooting Nationals.

Young Akhil Sheoran, 22, also won an ISSF World Cup gold in men's air rifle in the beginning of the year, which means the likes of Deepak Kumar and Ravi Kumar, India team regulars, will be on their toes at all times.

What has also excited shooting enthusiasts is the quality of the bench strength.

India will finish the year with as many as 11 world records, two of them in the senior category.

Away from the range, National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) president Raninder Singh became the first Indian to be elected vice-president of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF).

The iconic Bindra was conferred the sport's highest honour for his services as the chairman of the apex body's Athletes Committee.

Australia on course for series levelling win after Indian batsmen stutter



CHETAN NARULA

PERTH, DEC 17 (PTI): Australia were on course for a series-levelling win in the second Test after another below-par batting performance from India undid the good work done by their bowlers on day four here on Monday.

Chasing 287 on a testing surface, India were 112 for five at stumps with skipper Virat Kohli's (17) dismissal in the 20th over of the second innings dealing a massive blow to the away team's hopes.

The last specialist pair of Hanuma Vihari (24) and Rishabh Pant (9) were in the middle when stumps were drawn and they will have to bat well in the first session on day five for India to have any chance of scoring the remaining 175 runs.

The ordinary batting effort came after a sensational performance from pacer Mohammad Shami, who took a career best six for 56 in Australia's second innings to bring India back into the contest.

Shami removed the set Usman Khawaja (72) and Tim Paine (37) to trigger a batting collapse that saw Australia being all out for 243 after the duo batted out the entire morning session.

At tea, India were reeling at 15 for two and following the break it got worse for the visitors as they lost wickets in a bunch. Murali Vijay (20) and Virat Kohli (17) added 35 runs for the third wicket before things went into a downward spiral.

Kohli was the first to go, with Lyon inducing him forward and the batsman edged it to slip as the Australian players broke into celebration.

Two overs later, Lyon (2-30) got an off break to jump off the rough and Vijay was bowled going for a drive as India were reduced to 55-4.

Ajinkya Rahane (30) came out playing his shots and took on the bowling with two fours as well as a six. He put on 43 runs for the fifth wicket with Vihari as India started thinking of at least taking the fight into day five.

But it was not to be, as Rahane hit a drive straight to point off Josh Hazlewood (2-24) and India plunged to 98-5.

Before tea, KL Rahul (0) played another indecisive stroke and was bowled off Starc on the fourth ball of the second innings. The bigger moment came when Hazlewood had Cheteshwar Pujara (4) caught behind off a faint edge in the fourth over to leave India leaning on Kohli once again.

This was after a fiery spell from Shami brought India back into the game. With his stellar effort,

Shami surpassed Anil Kumble's record of most wickets taken by an Indian bowler in away Tests during a calendar year. Shami has taken 42 wickets to Kumble's 41.

Post lunch, Australia collapsed in a heap as they lost five wickets for 15 runs in the space of eight overs.

Shami was the wrecked-in-chief, taking 4-26 after lunch, as his express pace combined with short stuff bamboozled the Australian lower order.

Skipper Paine was the first go, unable to negotiate sharp bounce and gloving to Kohli at second slip.

Fit-to-bat Aaron Finch (25) came out to bat next, but lasted only one ball, clipping down leg side and caught behind. Shami was on a hat trick for the second consecutive Test, but missed out.

An over later though, using the second new ball, he got rid of Khawaja with another sharp rising delivery to pick his fourth five-wicket haul in Test cricket.

Eight balls later Jasprit Bumrah (3-39) got rid of Pat Cummins (1), bowled off a delivery keeping too low.

Lyon (5) hit out and took Australia past 200, but Shami knocked him over in similar fashion to the rest as he picked his best figures in Test cricket. His previous best was 5-28 against South Africa in Johannesburg in January 2018.

The last wicket pairing of Mitchell Starc (14) and Josh Hazlewood (17 not out) frustrated the Indian team though, and added 36 golden runs for the 10th wicket, taking the lead past 280.

In the morning session, Paine and Khawaja had continued their overnight fifth wicket as Australia reached 190-4 at lunch. Starting from overnight 132-4, the two batsmen negotiated the first hour in a sedate manner. They didn't look in any rush as only 19 runs came forth.

Bumrah was pick of the bowlers once again, getting the ball to rear up from length and beating the batsmen on many occasions, in particular Khawaja. But the outside edge continued to elude him.

The duo stepped up on the scoring rate a bit more in the second hour of play, and added another 39 runs to the total.

Indian skipper Virat Kohli and Paine were once again involved in a verbal exchange, with umpire Chris Gaffaney stepping in to ask the duo to get on with the game.

Australia had scored 326 runs in their first innings, and India replied with 283 runs, thanks to Virat Kohli's 25th Test hundred, thus conceding a lead of 43 runs.

Jaipur Literature Festival announces line-up for musical evenings

NEW DELHI, DEC 17

(PTI): As Jaipur gears up for the 12th edition of the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF), the Jaipur Music Stage, which will run parallel to the literary event, has announced its line-up of performances by Indian and international artists.

Starting from the evening of January 24, the Jaipur Music Stage will feature a variety of artistes from the international spectrum showcasing a multi-genre abundance in style, sound, and history.

"Be it world music, ghazals, funk, rock or the Blues, the Jaipur Music Stage 2019 is a music festival like no other; embodying variety, excellence and collaboration," the organisers said in a statement.

Famous sufi singers Nooran Sisters, leading Carnatic vocalist Mahesh Vinayakram in collaboration with Dub FX (Ben-

jamin Stanford), Punjabi folk singer Jasbir Jassi with Kutle Khan, and folk-rock band Indian Ocean are some of the artistes who will be performing at the Jaipur Music Stage.

"The Jaipur Music Stage celebrates music in all its forms. From Carnatic to the Blues, and Punjabi to Sufi electro, we've got it all. This year, Jaipur will see unbelievable collaborations between diverse artistes, as well as workshops and a music bazaar, in against a vibrant carnival-like backdrop," Sanjoy K Roy, Managing Director of Teamwork Arts, said.

Apart from several musical performances, the Jaipur Music Stage will also feature workshops, masterclasses, talks and sessions, giving music-lovers a chance to interact with musicians.

The Jaipur Music Stage will conclude on January 27.

Kohli, Paine resume verbal duel; umpire issues warning

PERTH, DEC 17 (PTI):

Warring captains Virat Kohli and Tim Paine on Monday resumed their verbal duel, forcing on-field umpire Chris Gaffaney to warn both the players on the fourth morning of the second Test between India and Australia here.

During the 71st over bowled by Jasprit Bumrah, the respective captains were seen exchanging words after Kohli decided to field close to the non-striker and Gaffaney had to step in.

"You're the one that lost it yesterday. Why are you trying to be cool today?" Paine told Kohli.

"That's enough, that's enough," Gaffaney interrupted.

"Come on, play the game. You guys are the captains. Tim, you're the captain."

Paine replied: "We're just having a conversation. There's no swearing



... keep your cool Virat."

Kohli said something which couldn't be picked up by the microphones.

A couple of balls later, the warring duo almost came close to chest bumping when the India skipper walked in front of Paine while he was completing a run.

Kohli later appeared to plead his case to square-leg umpire Ku-

mar Dharmasena as Paine and Usman Khawaja continued to extend Australia's second-innings lead.

"I reckon it's a sign Kohli is starting to lose it," former Test bowler Damien Fleming said on SEN radio.

India commentator Sanjay Manjrekar wasn't too pleased with Kohli's behaviour but former

Australian skippers Ricky Ponting and Michael Clarke said they had no issue with the verbal exchange between the two captains and that no line has been crossed so far.

Tensions had flared-up towards the end of day three with Kohli and Paine exchanging verbal volleys as the game headed for a nail-biting finish.

White House closer to partial shutdown with wall demand

WASHINGTON, DEC 17 (AP): Pushing the government to the brink of a partial shutdown, the White House is insisting that Congress provide USD 5 billion to build a wall along the US-Mexico border despite lawmaker resistance from both parties. Without a resolution, parts of the federal government will shut down at midnight Friday. "We're going to do whatever is necessary to build the border wall to stop this ongoing crisis of illegal immigration," White House senior adviser Stephen Miller said Sunday.

Asked if that meant having a government shutdown, he said: "If it comes to it, absolutely." Trump said last week he would be "proud" to have a shutdown to get Congress to approve a USD 5 billion down payment to fulfill his campaign promise to build a border wall.

But the president doesn't have the votes from the Republican-controlled Congress to support funding for the wall at that level. Both parties



in Congress have suggested that Trump would likely need to make the next move to resolve the impasse. The House is taking an extended weekend break, returning Wednesday night. The Senate returns Monday after a three-day absence.

Democratic congressional leaders, Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, have proposed no more than USD 1.6 billion, as outlined in a bipartisan Senate bill.

The money would not go for the wall but for fencing upgrades and other border secu-

rity. Democrats also offered to simply keep funding at its current level, USD 1.3 billion.

Showing no signs of budging, Schumer said Sunday that it was up to Trump to decide whether the federal government will partially shut down, sending thousands of federal employees home without pay during the holidays.

About one-quarter of the government would be affected, including the departments of Homeland Security, Transportation, Agriculture, State and Justice, as well as national parks. "He

is not going to get the wall in any form," Schumer said. Trump had neither accepted nor rejected the Democrats' proposal as of Friday, according to the Democrats, telling them he would take a look.

Trump will need Democratic votes either way, now or in the new year, for passage.

Wyoming Sen. John Barasso, the No. 3 Republican in the Senate, said Republicans remain hopeful they can come up with a proposal that can be acceptable to Trump and pass both chambers. He suggested that could take the

Germany to compensate hundreds who fled Nazis as children

BERLIN, DEC 17 (AP): Germany has agreed to one-time payments for survivors, primarily Jews, who were evacuated from Nazi Germany as children, many of whom never saw their parents again, the organisation that negotiates compensation with the German government said Monday.

The New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany said the government had agreed to payments of 2,500 euros (USD 2,800) to those still alive from among the 10,000 people who fled on the so-called “Kindertransport.” This year is the 80th anniversary of beginning of the transport of the children to Britain from Nazi Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

About 1,000 survivors are thought to be alive today, with about half living in Britain, and the payment is seen as a “symbolic recognition of their suffering,” Claims Conference negotiator Greg Schneider said. “In almost all the cases the parents who remained were killed in concentration camps in the Holocaust and they have tremendous psychological issues,” Schneider told The Associated Press.

Following the Nazis’ anti-Jewish pogrom in



November 1938 known as Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, the British government agreed to allow an unspecified number of Jewish children as refugees from Nazi Germany or territories it had annexed.

Jewish groups inside Nazi Germany planned the transports, and the first arrived in Harwich on December 2, 1938, according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The last transport from Germany left September 1, 1939 the day World War II broke out with the Nazi invasion of Poland and the final transport from continen-

tal Europe left the Netherlands on May 14, 1940, the same day Dutch forces surrendered to the Nazis.

In all, about 10,000 children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland were taken to Britain, about 7,500 of whom were Jewish, according to the museum.

About half were placed with foster families, while the others stayed in hostels, schools or farms.

In addition to those who remained in Britain, many resettled in the US, Israel, Canada, Australia and elsewhere, Schneider said.

Today, survivors are at least in their 80s and

most continue to look back on their escape as the defining moment of their lives as they were put alone onto trains into the unknown, saying goodbye to parents and siblings often for the last time, Schneider said.

“This money is acknowledgement that this was a traumatic, horrible thing that happened to them,” he said.

Some survivors already received small payments in the 1950s but that will not bar them from receiving the new benefit, the Claims Conference said.

The Claims Conference carries out continuous negotiations with Germany to expand the

number of people eligible for compensation.

Since 1952, the German government has paid more than USD 80 billion to individuals for suffering and losses resulting from persecution by the Nazis.

In 2019, the Claims Conference will distribute approximately USD 350 million in direct compensation to more than 60,000 survivors in 83 countries, the organisation says.

In addition, it will provide some USD 550 million in grants to social service agencies that provide home care, food, medicine and other services for Holocaust survivors.

North Korea warns on US sanctions

SEOUL, DEC 17 (AFP): Nuclear-armed North Korea condemned the United States over its latest sanctions measures, warning Washington’s approach could “block the path to denuclearisation on the Korean peninsula forever”.

After a rapid diplomatic rapprochement this year that culminated in the Singapore summit in June between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump, progress has stalled in talks on Pyongyang’s nuclear arsenal. In Singapore the two men signed a vaguely-worded statement on denuclearisation, but have since disagreed on what it means.

Now Pyongyang is demanding sanctions relief and condemning US insistence on its nuclear disarmament as “gangster-like”, while Washington is pushing to maintain the measures against the North until its “final, fully verified denuclearisation”.

Washington last week added three senior North Korean officials to those subject to sanctions over human rights abuses, including Choe Ryong Hae, who has been considered a right-hand man to Kim.

In a statement carried by the official KCNA news agency, the North said Trump had repeatedly expressed his desire to improve relations with Pyongyang, but the US State Department was “bent on bringing the DPRK-US relations back to the status of last year which was marked by exchanges of fire”.

DPRK is the acronym for the North’s official name. In recent months high-ranking US politicians including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had “almost every day slandered the DPRK out of sheer malice”, added the Sunday statement by the policy research director of the foreign ministry’s Institute for American Studies.

Using sanctions and pressure “to drive us into giving up nuclear weapons” would be the “greatest miscalculation”, it added, and would “block the path to denuclearisation on the Korean peninsula forever”.

A second summit between Trump and Kim -- who exchanged personal insults and threats of war throughout 2017 -- is expected to be held next year, with the US leader facing criticism over the planned talks since North Korea has taken few concrete steps to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

Pyongyang has long said it needs the weapons to deter a possible US invasion, and has spent decades developing them, at a heavy cost in both resources and the imposition of multiple sets of UN, US, EU and other sanctions.

But on Monday its nuclear assets were conspicuous by their explicit absence from coverage of the seventh anniversary of the death of Kim’s father and predecessor Kim Jong Il, on whose watch Pyongyang carried out its first two nuclear tests.

Alongside extensive

coverage of commemorative events across the country, the Rodong Sinmun newspaper, the mouthpiece of the ruling Workers’ Party, published a lengthy editorial lauding Kim Jong Il’s efforts to secure a “firm military assurance for peace and prosperity”.

A year earlier, the same newspaper praised his “immortal feat” in building a “Juche nuclear power state”.

Its front page was dominated by a large picture of soldiers and officials including Kim paying their respects at his father’s mausoleum, a sprawling palace on the outskirts of the capital.

It was the leader’s first public activity in two weeks after visiting a shoe factory in Wonsan earlier this month.

Trump played down hopes Friday for any imminent deal to persuade Pyongyang to give up its nuclear arsenal but he also expressed optimism, saying North Korea’s economy has “wonderful potential” and that Kim “sees it better than anyone and will fully take advantage of it for his people”.

In actions required by Congress, his administration said last week it would seize any US assets of the three officials for suppressing freedom of speech.

Such restrictions may have little effect on individuals in one of the world’s most closed countries but have symbolic impact as North Korea seeks greater acceptance by the United States.

UK PM to warn against ‘damage’ of second Brexit vote

LONDON, DEC 17 (AFP): Prime Minister Theresa May will on Monday warn MPs against supporting a second referendum, saying it would do “irreparable damage” to British politics.

“Let us not break faith with the British people by trying to stage another referendum,” she is expected to tell parliament, according to extracts from her speech released by Downing Street. “Another vote... would do irreparable damage to the integrity of our politics,” she will say, adding that a second vote “would likely leave us no further forward”.

She will warn that another referendum would also “further divide our country at the very moment we should be working to unite it”.

Britain voted to leave the European Union in a referendum in 2016 and is set to leave on March 29 next year, although May is struggling to get parliament to accept a divorce agreement she struck last month.

May has faced calls for a second referendum to resolve the impasse but has argued that this would betray the 2016 result and undermine public confidence in politics.

Campaigners for a referendum said May’s comments on Monday showed that the idea is being taken seriously.

“A new public vote would be different from the referendum in 2016 because we now know more about what Brexit means,” said Margaret Beckett, an MP from the main opposition Labour Party and “People’s Vote” supporter.

Saudi Arabia slams US Senate vote as “interference”

RIYADH, DEC 17 (AFP): Saudi Arabia on Monday slammed as “interference” US Senate resolutions over its war in Yemen and critic Jamal Khashoggi’s murder, warning that the move could have repercussions on its strategic ties with Washington.

The Republican-controlled Senate voted on Thursday to end American military support for a Riyadh-led war in Yemen, and separately held Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman responsible for Khashoggi’s killing.

The largely symbolic vote dealt a fresh warning to President Donald Trump, who has staunchly backed the Saudi regime in the face of intense global outrage that analysts say has left the kingdom diplomatically weakened.

“The kingdom condemns the latest position of the US Senate that was based on unsubstantiated allegations and rejects the blatant interference in its internal affairs,” the foreign ministry said in a statement released by the official Saudi Press Agency.

On the Yemen measure, which more broadly attacks the president’s prerogative to launch military action, 49 Democrats or their allies voted in favour, along with seven Republicans, while another three Republicans abstained.

The Senate also approved a resolution condemning Khashoggi’s murder and calling Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia’s de facto ruler, “responsible” for it.

The Saudi ministry warned that the kingdom



would not tolerate any “disrespect” of its rulers.

“This position by the US Senate sends the wrong messages to all those who want to cause a rift in Saudi-US relationship,” the ministry said.

“The kingdom hopes that it is not drawn into domestic political debates in the US to avoid any... significant negative impact on this important strategic relationship.”

A day after the Senate vote, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo again defended US ties with Saudi Arabia on national security grounds, saying the kingdom was a bulwark against common foe Iran.

The Senate resolution acknowledged the US-Saudi ties were “important” but called on Riyadh to “moderate its increasingly erratic foreign policy”.

“Prince Mohammed and Saudi Arabia, even prior to introduction of the Senate resolution, were discovering that the Khashoggi killing had weakened the kingdom internationally and had made it more vulnerable to pressure,” said James Dorsey, a Middle East expert at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore.

The resolutions can-

not be debated in the House of Representatives before January, and would likely be vetoed in any case by Trump.

But the Senate votes send a strong message to the White House over anger on both sides of the aisle towards Riyadh.

Khashoggi, a Saudi contributor to the Washington Post, was killed on October 2 shortly after entering the kingdom’s consulate in Istanbul in what Riyadh called a “rogue” operation.

The murder has tarnished Riyadh’s international reputation, and Western countries including the United States, France and Canada have placed sanctions on nearly 20 Saudi nationals.

UN chief Antonio Guterres on Sunday called for a “credible” probe into the murder.

Anger at the human cost of the war in Yemen has also prompted a harder line in Congress about the US military’s role in backing Saudi-led coalition strikes against Huthi rebels.

Since the coalition launched its campaign in 2015, the conflict has killed nearly 10,000 people, according to the World Health Organization. But some rights groups believe the toll to be far higher.

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ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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METALLIC MOTO! Actress Jaime King is seen in a metallic gold motorcycle jacket and high-waisted jeans at the TINGS Magazine Issue 2 Launch Event Hosted By Rae Sremmurd at 10AK in West Hollywood.

Rajkummar Rao to play goon in his next horror comedy

MUMBAI, DEC 17 (PTI): After the success of "Stree", actor Rajkummar Rao has signed another untitled horror comedy to be creatively directed by "Fukrey" helmer Mrigdeep Singh Lamba.

The film will be backed by Dinesh Vijan, who also produced "Stree" and is currently working with Rajkummar on "Made In China".

"Raj plays a small-time goon whose plans go haywire when he discovers that he might be in store for some supernatural encounters. You can be sure he will be as riveting as Stree's ladies' tailor, chasing after a ghost," Dinesh said in a statement.

The horror-comedy, which rolls early next year, also features Varun Sharma. It will be filmed in Muradabad, Uttar Pradesh.

It chronicles the story of two village idiots who get stuck in a frightful situation but their fool-hardy shenanigans never stop.

Mrigdeep says Raj and Varun are a "stellar combination" that nobody has explored.

"Though Raj has proved his comic timing in films like 'Bareilly..,' and 'Stree', here he will have to shed every bit of himself and get into the skin of this self-proclaimed village hero, who is actually a fool," he says.



The female lead has not been locked yet and Dinesh says much like "Stree", the female character will be "the focal point and game changer for the film." The film is aiming for a January 2020 release.

ARIES: Rise and shine, Ram! Today's starmap occurs just once a year, but when it does, it stokes your fiery essence. The Sagittarius Sun in your adventurous ninth house syncs up with the moon in your sign, encouraging you to focus on some of your grandest dreams. Now's the time to come up with concrete steps you can take to make one of them a reality instead of keeping it tucked away "for future reference."

TAURUS: Whatever you get up to today, one thing's for certain: It won't be superficial under today's emotionally charged cosmic confab. The Sun in your eighth house of mergers (financial and physical) is aligned with a trailblazing Aries moon in your mystical twelfth house.

GEMINI: Let's hear it for the Gemini squad! Today's exuberant mashup of a fiery Sun and the moon in your collaborative zones revs up your team spirit. Any group activity or shared project will be extra rewarding, and all those problems you were "pre-worrying" about will

be nowhere to be found. And should you hit any minor speed bumps, try to find the humor in the situation.

CANCER: Got a to-do list as long as your arm? Today's powerful fire trine between an ambitious Aries moon in your career corner and the self-assured Sun in your organized sixth house lets you tackle projects large and small without breaking a sweat. The trick is to not get overwhelmed by the enormity of it. Break everything down into manageable chunks.

LEO: Don't be coy about your desires today, Leo. An invigorating angle between a fiery Aries moon in your adventurous ninth house and the frisky Sun (your ruler) in your amorous fifth house injects some toe-curling excitement back into your love life. It's easy to take your key relationships for granted, but lasting unions require effort to keep their sheen. Luckily, with these chart sectors lit up, that "effort" is less about, say, couples therapy than glamping up for a date night—or peeling off layers behind closed doors.

VIRGO: Need a relationship reboot? Today, a rare and invigorating alignment of the Sun in your fourth house of family and the moon in your intimate eighth house can help you get a union back on track. If you haven't been seeing eye-to-eye with your S.O., a relative or close friend, this one-day transit can hit a cosmic reset button.

LIBRA: Today's supportive sync-up of a passionate Aries moon and the big-hearted Sun in your people houses fills your day with feel-good vibes. It'll be hard to stay in a pouty mood or let the petty stuff get to you. Share this overwhelming sense of connectedness with your loved ones. If you're in a relationship, shower your other half with extreme amounts of attention and affection.

SCORPIO: What's still on your "gotta do in 2018" task list? Today's industrious alignment of a motivated Aries moon in your organized sixth house and the focused Sun in your practical second house helps you tick off some of the bigger boxes. If you've stalled on certain household

or work projects because you can't find an easy entry point, this starry sync-up will illuminate the perfect way in.

SAGITTARIUS: Today's stars roll out the red carpet for any Archers wishing to take a walk of fame. With the Sun in your sign for five more days, you'll easily draw an audience for anything you put into the public. And now, with el Sol sending a supportive beam to the Aries moon in your passionate fifth house, the message is all about self-expression.

CAPRICORN: Looking for answers? Check within. Today's starmap invites introspection—and being extra gentle with yourself. As the Sun in your internally focused twelfth house shoots a supportive beam to the sensitive moon in your home and family zone, work might take a backseat to your relationships, especially with the women in your life. The intimacy you desire may require some forgiveness, though: either of another person or possibly of yourself. Make an extra effort to connect with your emotions. And if tears well up, let them flow!

AQUARIUS: The best way to your heart isn't through your stomach, Water Bear-er, but through your mind! As the moon in your thoughtful third house aligns with the Sun in your friendship corner, nothing will turn you on more than stimulating conversation. Don't second-guess it if you find yourself attracted to a wildly different type. (Variety has always been the spice of your life.) Couples will feel especially in sync, so if there's something to sort out, initiate a dialogue now.

PISCES: It's an exciting day for your professional life, Pisces, as long as you don't rest on your laurels. In a rare and galvanizing trine, the Sun in your tenth house of career ambition syncs up with a trailblazing Aries moon in your financial zone. Reaching your grandest goals could happen in record time. This is a day when many of those seeds you planted, watered and nurtured will start to bear fruit. Go ahead and treat yourself to something fabulous—or least open a special savings account for the splurge.

Muhammad Ali was on the short list to play Superman in 1978 film

LOS ANGELES, DEC 16 (PTI): Boxing legend Muhammad Ali and veteran actors Al Pacino and Dustin Hoffman were on the short list to play Superman in the 1978 film, producer Ilya Salkind has said.

According to the Hollywood Reporter, Salkind made the revelation on the commentary track in the newest edition of the film which was recently released to coincide with its 40th anniversary.

"One of the conditions with DC Comics was I had to make a list of actors to play Superman that they had to approve.

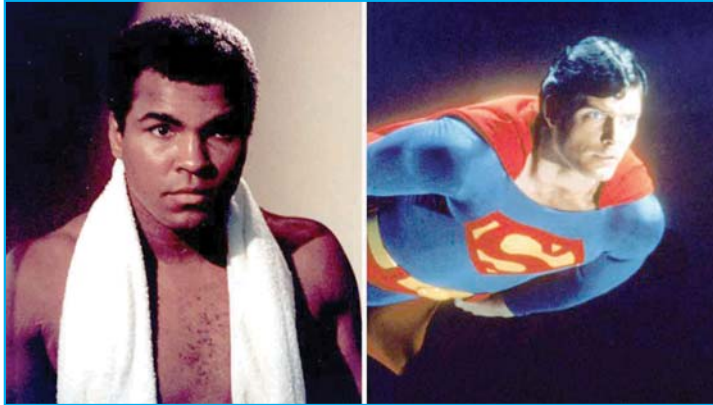
"I had a made a list that was absolutely hilarious because they had approved people like Cassius Clay then, they had approved Al Pacino, they had approved Dustin Hoffman. They had approved them, they could play Superman," Salkind said.

Christopher Reeve played the iconic DC superhero, but Ali and Superman teamed up in the comics to defeat an alien invasion of Earth.

The comics titled "Superman vs Muhammad Ali" also released in 1978.

Salkind shared the casting process was "complex" and

confusing at times. "One side, they were extraordinarily protective (of the character's image) and on the other side, they weren't so aware of reality because as much as Dustin Hoff-



man is a fantastic actor, I don't think he would have been a great Superman. Perhaps he could have been."

Hoffman was also considered for the role of Lex Luthor.

"We met with Dustin at Cannes... We had dinner with Dustin to play Lex Luthor, which would have been pretty exciting. But it didn't work out," Salkind said.

The role went to Gene Hackman.

I don't want to be embarrassed in my grave about work I do: Swara

MUMBAI, DEC 16 (PTI): With every character she does and the films she chooses, Swara Bhasker makes a statement; and the actor says her biggest fear would be doing work which would embarrass her when she looks back.

Swara gained prominence by featuring in the "Tanu Weds Manu" franchise and "Raanjhanaa" before headlining critically-acclaimed films like "Nil Battey Sannata" and "Anaarkali of Aarah".

The actor says she has been very principled regarding the films she wants to do even when

"I think 'Veere' furthers the feminist cause in a very round about way, by showing four girls in all their flaws, doing their own thing. It's giving space to women for making mistakes, mess up and figure out themselves," Swara says.

The actor says, unlike "Veere", her latest web series "It's Not That Simple" season two delves into a female psyche.

"This is a very mature series. It delves into more details than perhaps a commercial film can. It talks about a single mother waiting to get divorced, having two affairs emotionally," she adds.

Directed by Danish Aslam, the Voot original revolves around a modern day woman Meera (played by Swara) and addresses power play, gender roles and infidelity.

Swara says her character's motivation and choices were so beyond her that she, even being a complete liberal, ended up judging her.

"I had lots of fights with the director. I was like 'what is she up to, she's such a mess' and he used to say it's ok, she's struggling, why can't a woman be confused and make mistakes. In doing this, despite me being this great progressive liberal, I am still judging this woman.

"I was judging my own character. Which is why I feel it was a very humbling experience. If a part you play makes you reassess some of your own thoughts, it means you're leading as a person," she adds.

The series, which started streaming on Voot recently, also features Sumeet Vyas and Purab Kohli.



David Walliams was 'starstruck' by Jennifer Aniston



LONDON, DEC 17 (PTI): British actor-comedian David Walliams has said he was starstruck by Jennifer Aniston while working on Netflix film "Murder Mystery".

The 47-year-old comic said he initially had no idea what to say to the "lovely" Hollywood star, reported Contactmusic.

"She is a dream. I was so starstruck because she's so, so famous. I was like, 'Oh my God, it's Jennifer Aniston. What do I say to her?' But she's so charming and lovely," Walliams told Heat magazine.

The "Britain's Got Talent" star revealed his friends were hoping that he may start dating Aniston during the filming.

"Some of my friends were saying, 'You should go out with her' but I think it would be a bit of a comedown from Brad Pitt and Justin Theroux. I wouldn't wish that on her," he said.

"Murder Mystery" also stars Adam Sandler.