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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## CM and Cabinet take oath of office afresh in Delhi

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 01 DEC:**

Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] took Oath of office and secrecy afresh at a ceremony held at Sikkim House, New Delhi, late on Saturday evening. A day later, on Sunday morning, the Cabinet followed suit and was sworn in again, also at Sikkim House in New Delhi.

The ceremony had to be held in New Delhi because the Governor is indisposed and recuperating there and could not return to Sikkim. The swearing-in, it may be recalled, was originally announced for 26 November but was rescheduled, without any public announcement, because the Governor was unable to return in time for the ceremony.

An official press communiqué from Raj Bhawan informs that fresh appointment and subsequent swearing -In was necessitated following the completion of Mr Tamang's six month term in office as Chief Minister during which he was elected to the Sikkim Legislative Assembly in the Assembly by-election in October.

Mr Tamang's six-month term ended on 27 November and the original scheduled date for his fresh swearing



was a day ahead of this date. Mr Tamang and the SKM MLAs flew to Delhi on Saturday, a day after the two-day Assembly session.

The press release informs that earlier on Saturday, the Legislative Party of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha submitted a formal resolution to Governor Ganga Prasad reposing their continued faith in Mr Tamang as their leader and unanimously electing him the Leader of the SKM Legislative Party.

Given the lack of official comment on this development until the swearing in ceremony was held, there was much speculation in Sikkim about what was afoot. It did not help matters that the SKM, in its only official comment on the Delhi visit, insisted that the entire SKM legislature was in Delhi on official business and to pursue Sikkim's long-pending demands with the Central Government. This statement made no mention of the swearing-in ceremony

scheduled for Delhi or offered any explanations on why this was necessary.

Following Mr Tamang's late Saturday evening swearing in, the SKM Govt's Cabinet, unchanged since it was first constituted, was also administered oath of office and secrecy by the Governor at Sikkim House on Sunday morning.

The communiqué from Raj Bhawan

explains that the swearing-in ceremony was necessitated at Sikkim House, New Delhi, due to travel restrictions on Governor Ganga Prasad on account of his health concerns.

The Governor is currently undergoing treatment in New Delhi and has been advised against travelling and is under medication and bed rest following concerns and diagnosis related to his spinal cord since 26 November.



## Nangzey Dorjee elected president of Mahabodhi Society of India

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 01 DEC:**

Nangzey Dorjee, who retired as Secretary to the Govt of Sikkim, was yesterday elected President of the Mahabohi Society of India. He becomes only the second person from Sikkim to hold this post since Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal.

Mr Dorjee was serving as Secretary, Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee. He is the 128-year-old Mahabodhi Society

of India's 17th president. Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka and Bhutan have held this post in the past.

General Secretary, Mahabodhi Society of India, P Sewalee Thero, is his letter to Mr Dorjee congratulating him on his election, conveys that "to maintain the legacy, the prominent leaders of the Society have the august duty to take steps forward once again to lead the Buddhist organisation in the

country and abroad in continuation of the Mission and Vision of its Founder, Bodhisattva Angarika Dharmapala."

"We do hope that during the tenure of your Presidentship, the Society shall be benefitted by your valuable services and advice to give shape to all-round development and to spread the Teachings of Buddha in upliftment of Human Consciousness for the peace and harmony in the world," the letter concludes.

## Voda Idea to raise mobile call, data charges from Dec 3 by up to 50%

**NEW DELHI, DEC 1 (PTI):** In a first mobile tariff hike in past four years, telecom operator Vodafone Idea on Sunday announced new plans under which call and data charges will be dearer for its prepaid customers by up to 50 per cent from December 3.

Besides this, Vodafone Idea will also charge 6 paise per minute for every outgoing call made by customers on to the network of other operators.

"Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL), India's leading telecom service provider, today announced new tariffs/plans for its prepaid products and services. New plans will be available across India starting 00:00 hours of 3 December 2019," the company said in a statement.

The company will increase its entry level unlimited plan with a year-long validity by about 50 per cent to Rs 1,499 from with 24 GB of data instead of Rs 999 plan, which comes with 12 GB data usage limit.

The price of plan with 365 days validity in the same category with daily data usage limit of 1.5 GB per day will cost 41.2 per cent more at Rs 2,399 from December 3 as against 1,699 at present.

Vodafone Idea has only revised rates of plan promising unlimited mobile and data services and also introduced some new plans.

A company official explained all the existing plans in unlimited category will be replaced by the new plans from December 3 and new plans will be introduced or revised based on market response.

Though the company classifies a set of plans in 'unlimited' category, these actually come with usage limit for data at a promised speed and 100 SMS per day limit.

The highest rate of increase of 41.2 per cent has been announced by the company in annual unlimited category plan which will cost Rs 2,399 instead of 1,699 at present.

The starting plan with data

offering of 1.5 Gb per day with 84 days validity in "unlimited" category will cost around 31 per cent more at Rs 599 compared to Rs 458 at present. The company will raise the price of Rs 199 unlimited plan, which offers 1.5 Gb data per day, by about 25 per cent to Rs 249.

Vodafone Idea which is reeling under massive debt of around Rs 1.17 lakh crore had earlier cited acute financial stress on the company behind the decision to raise mobile call and data charges.

Vodafone Idea last month reported a consolidated loss of Rs 50,921 crore -- the highest ever loss posted by any Indian corporate -- for the September quarter on account of liability arising out of the Supreme Court's order in the adjusted gross revenue (AGR) case. The company has estimated liability of Rs 44,150 crore post the apex court order, and made provisioning of Rs 25,680 crore in the second quarter this fiscal.

## Residents of Hyd rape & murder victim's colony turn away politicians

**HYDERABAD, DEC 1 (PTI):** Mounting public anger over the rape and murder of the woman veterinarian here saw residents of the colony where she stayed turning away political leaders and others who wanted to call on her family on Sunday to express their sympathies.

The residents locked the gates of the colony at Shamshabad on the outskirts of the city and held aloft placards that read No Media,

No Police, No Outsiders, - No sympathy, only action, justice.

Condemning the incident, a woman asked why Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao had so far not reacted to the incident, which occurred on Thursday.

Police have said they nabbed the four accused who have confessed to their crime. Why is the Chief Minister not ensuring quick justice?

Why is the same treatment not

being meted out to them (accused) for what they have done to the girl?" she asked

Another woman asked why the Prime Minister has not yet tweeted on the incident.

Former CPI(M) MLA J Ranga Reddy and his party workers, who were asked by the residents to go back, told PTI that he and his colleagues squatted at the gates of the colony for some time, expressing support for the family.

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Date: 08.11.2019



## Proper bridges on Singtam-Dikchu stretch, people relieved



### SUMMIT REPORT DIKCHU, 01 DEC:

The residents of Dikchu and its surrounding areas are relieved that single lane bridges at traditional inconveniences like Zin Khola have been replaced with more durable and wider bridges on the Singtam-Dikchu-Rangrang axis. The bridges have been constructed by 87 RCC of the Border Roads Organisation under whose watch this stretch falls.

## Sikkim athletes leave for National School Games



### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 01 DEC:

The Sikkim contingent of 12 athletes and three officials left for the 65th National School Games Athletics U-17 Boys & Girls Championship today.

The tournament is being held at Sangrur in Punjab from 04 to 08 December, an official press release informs.

While the girls contingent is made up of Priya Limboo, Ranjana Tamang, Suchita Rai, Sabana Rai, Rinzing Ongmu Lepcha and Amisha Gurung, the boys team comprises of Yabesh Subba, Sameer Pandey, Rinchen Lepcha, Rahul Darnal, Dev Kant Chawdhary and Yalam Subba.

The athletes were selected from the recently held state-level Annual School Sports Competitions organized by the Sports & Youth Affairs Department. Today, Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari, sent them off at a function held at Paljor Stadium.

## Pankaja Munde's FB post raises eyebrows

**AURANGABAD, DEC 1 (PTI):** BJP leader Pankaja Munde's social media post on her "future journey" in view of changed political scenario in Maharashtra caused a flutter on Sunday.

Pankaja, who had served as a minister in the erstwhile BJP-led Maharashtra government, has also invited her followers to Gopinathgad on December 12 on the occasion of the birth anniversary of her late father Gopinath Munde, a BJP stalwart.

Gopinathgad is a memorial of Gopinath Munde in Beed district. "Looking at the changed political scenario in state, there is a need to think and decide the way ahead. I need time for some 8-10 days to communicate with myself. Our future journey need to be decided against the backdrop of current political changes.

"What to do next? Which path to be taken? What can we give to people? What is our strength? What are expectations of people? I will think about all these aspects and come before you on December 12," Pankaja wrote in her post, which is in Marathi.

In the assembly elections held on October 21, Pankaja lost to her cousin and NCP rival Dhananjay Munde in a bitter contest from Parli seat in Beed district.

Pankaja wrote that she had accepted her defeat in the polls and

moved on.

"I had attended the meetings of the party (BJP)," the former Parli MLA wrote.

Maharashtra BJP spokesperson Shirish Boralkar told PTI on Sunday that Pankaja will continue her work to make the BJP stronger in the state.

"I have read the Facebook post of Pankaja Munde. This post nowhere conveys that Pankaja is not happy with the BJP.

She attended the core committee meetings of the BJP. She is a daughter of Gopinath Munde who had contributed immensely in building the BJP in the state," he said.

Boralkar said Pankaja is with the BJP.

Pankaja could not be contacted despite repeated attempts.

Maharashtra politics witnessed many a twists and turns after the assembly poll results were declared on October 24.

Scripting a new political chapter in the state, the Shiv Sena ditched its old ally BJP, which had won maximum 105 seats, and joined hands with former rivals NCP and Congress to form a Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government.

Sena president Uddhav Thackeray took oath of the new MVA government on Thursday. The alliance government won floor test on Saturday comfortably with the support of 169 MLAs in the 288-member Assembly.

# Performance of SHGs and Producer Groups of Paykong and Parakha Blocks reviewed

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 01 DEC:

Principal Secretary, Rural Development Department, CS Rao, and Commissioner/ SMD, Dr P Senthil Kumar, visited Paykong and Parakha Blocks accompanied by Sikkim Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) officials on 30 November to review the activities of Self Help Groups, Ward Development Societies and the progress of producer groups, an official press release informs.

SRLM is operating under the Rural Development Department and attempting to facilitate people acquire, stabilize and pursue livelihood options in an economically sustainable manner with the objective to re-



duce poverty in rural areas, the release explains.

There are 1,841 SHGs formed under SRLM in East and North districts and these are federated at the ward level as Ward Development Societies. These institutions are functioning with "Panch Sutra Principle" of week-

ly meetings, regular savings, regular lending, regular repayment and regular book keeping.

These institutions are supported with startup funds, revolving funds and community investment funds and training and capacity building programs.

During the official visit yesterday, an interactive meeting was held at Upper Bhasme, East Pandem and North Karthok GPUs of Pakyong Block and also at SHGs of Parakha Block.

At all three meetings, the Principal Secretary asked SHG members to

detail their activities and assessed their performance and records. He encouraged them to utilize the support available under SRLM to enhance their income, the release informs.

He also expressed satisfaction with the

performance of SHGs and their federation and assured them all support of the Rural Development Department.

At North Karthok, the meeting focused on the formation of Vegetable Producer Groups.

The PG groups were assured necessary support from SRLM to create a marketing link with SIMFED, Sikkim Supreme and other buyers for selling their vegetables in bulk.

The SRLM assured a hut/facility for field level processing and grading and also a custom hiring center to the PGs. These custom hiring center will be provided with equipment which individual farmers cannot afford on their own.

## Fadnavis Oppn leader in Maha Assembly; Patole elected Speaker

**MUMBAI, DEC 1 (PTI):** Former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis was on Sunday named Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly, while Congress MLA Nana Patole was elected Speaker of the House.

Patole, 57, who was earlier in the day elected unopposed as the speaker after BJP's Kisan Kathore withdrew from the fray, announced that Fadnavis is the new Leader of Opposition in the Assembly.

"It is poetic justice that those who wanted non-existence of the opposition will now have to work as an effective opposition," Patole said.

The Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government passed the floor test in the state Assembly on Saturday.

Altogether 169 MLAs voted in favour of the motion of confidence after the BJP, which has 105 MLAs, staged a walkout before the head count began in the 288-member

House.

For Fadnavis, 49, this is his fifth term as an MLA, while it is the fourth one for Patole.

NCP minister Jayant Patil appreciated the "spirit of understanding" shown by the BJP in withdrawing its candidate and ensuring that Patole was elected unopposed.

Speaking in the Assembly after Patole announced the appointment of Fadnavis, Uddhav Thackeray taunted the former CM over the latter's impassioned pre-poll "Me punha yein" (I will return) assertion which had evoked many social media memes.

"I never said I will come back, but I came in this House," Thackeray said. "I can assure this House and people of Maharashtra that I will not do anything at midnight. I will be working for the interests of the people," he said.

Thackeray's swipe was apparently about the early morning hush hush

swearing-in of Fadnavis as CM on November 3, along with NCP leader Ajit Pawar as deputy chief minister, after night-long dramatic political developments in Mumbai and Delhi.

Patil also targeted Fadnavis.

"He (Fadnavis) said he would return, but didn't say where he will sit (in the House)," Patil said.

"Now he has returned and is occupying this top post (of Leader of Opposition) which is of the same level as CM post," Patil said.

The NCP leader expressed confidence that Fadnavis won't be part of any efforts to dislodge the Thackeray-led government of the Sena-NCP-Congress combine.

Responding to the barbs over his "Me punha yein" remarks, Fadnavis said he forgot to announce a time table about his return (as CM).

"Mera paani utarte dekh kinare par ghar mat

bana lena, mein samundar hoon, laut kar vapis aaoonga ((Thinking the tide has ebbed, don't you dare build your house on the coast, for I am the sea, and I will come back)," he said, quoting a famous sher (couplet).

Thackeray said he won't call Fadnavis an 'opposition leader', but a 'responsible leader'. "If you would have been good to us then, all this (BJP-Shiv Sena split) would have not happened," he added.

"I have learnt a lot of things from Fadnavis and I will always be friends with him. I am still with the ideology of 'Hindutva' and won't ever leave it. In the past five years, I never betrayed the (BJP-Sena) government," he said.

The BJP could not come to power in Maharashtra despite emerging as the single largest party as "political arithmetic prevailed over merit, Fadnavis said in the Assembly after a resolution was moved to congratulate him on being

appointed the leader of opposition.

The resolution was moved by Thackeray and supported by members of other parties.

"The BJP got people's mandate as ours is the single largest party. Our strike rate was 70 per cent in the October 21 Assembly polls, but political arithmetic prevailed over merit. Those who got around 40 per cent marks in the election have formed the government," Fadnavis said.

"We are accepting it as part of democracy," he said.

"I did say 'I will come back', but forgot to give you the time-table for it. But I can assure you one thing, you need to wait for some time."

"I not only announced several projects in the last five years, but started work on them as well. You never know, I may come back to inaugurate them," he said.

Fadnavis also assured the House of functioning

within the constitutional and legal framework.

"My opposition to the government will be on some of the principles, and without any personal agenda," he said.

Governor BS Koshiyari, in his address to the joint sitting of state legislature later, said the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress combine's government was concerned over unemployment.

He said the state government will enact a law to ensure 80 per cent reservation in private sector jobs for the "sons of the soil".

Meanwhile, Sena MP Sanjay Raut in his weekly column 'Rokhtok' in party mouthpiece 'Saamana' said Fadnavis' haste to grab power and "childish comments" sank the BJP in the state and the latter became the opposition leader.

In a veiled attack on BJP leaders, he said Maharashtra did not bow down to the "mob-rule" like functioning of Delhi.

### Residents of Hyd rape & murder..

He demanded that the Chief Minister take steps to ensure a quick response by police to prevent crimes against women.

A number of politicians and others, including some film actors had called on the victim's family members since the tragic incident occurred on Thursday.

The charred body of the woman, working as an assistant veterinarian at a state-run hospital, was found under a culvert in Shadnagar near here on November 28 morning, a day after she went missing.

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# AIDS Day in Rangpo



## SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 01 DEC:

Sikkim Drug Users Forum, Sikkim State AIDS Control Society, India HIV/AIDS Alliance, Lions Club of Rangpo, Rangpo All Taxi Drivers Welfare Association and Sik-

kim Rehabilitation and Detoxification Society organised a daylong testing and awareness camp today as part of World AIDS Day observance at Rangpo Bazaar.

The camp saw ac-

tive participation of the public who volunteered for blood testing and receive counseling from resource persons, a press release informs.

Free condoms were distributed to generate awareness about

safe sex. Awareness pamphlets and posters were distributed regarding prevention and precautions related to AIDS and the steps that could be taken if one is found HIV-positive.

A candlelight rally was also organised.



**MARWARI GROUP REACHES ASSISTANCE TO SICHEY FIRE AFFECTED FAMILIES:** Gangtok Marwadi Yuva Manch's Prerna Branch, the women's wing of the organization, visited families affected by the fire at Upper Sichey here on Sunday. The Prerna Manch team had arranged essential items like clothes, blankets, bed sheets, utensils, ration and other basic items for the seven families which lost everything in the recent fire, a press release informs. After handing over these items, the Prerna Manch members also interacted with the affected families and assured to provide further help if required.

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**LITTER-FULL:** The town authorities have provided garbage collection service, installed dustbins and appointed Safai Karmacharis at all wards under Singtam Nagar Panchayat, and yet the habit to litter and spread waste seems hard to beat. The Singtam riverside is fast becoming a garbage dump for bazaar residents. [from YOGEN THATAL]

## Honey-trap case: Raid at local bizman's home, media firm

**INDORE, DEC 1 (PTI):** Madhya Pradesh Police along with the Indore district authorities raided the home, media firm and three other establishments of a local businessman in connection with the honey-trap case, an official said on Sunday.

The raids were conducted at businessman Jitendra Soni's home, hotel, restaurant and night club here late Saturday night, he said.

"Soni also owns a local evening. The investigators also went to his newspaper's office," the official said.

The authorities have so far not shared any details of the searches conducted at Soni's premises.

His media firm was of late publishing news about some audio-video clips allegedly linked to the honey-trap case. Meanwhile, some

local organisations of journalists condemned the raid on Soni's media firm, saying the exercise was aimed at "intimidating" the fourth pillar of democracy.

Five women and a man were arrested from Indore and Bhopal in September for allegedly running the honey-trap and blackmailing racket.

The racket was busted after an engineer of the Indore Municipal Corporation approached the police, claiming he was being blackmailed over some objectionable video clips by the accused who were trying to extort about Rs 3 crore from him.

The accused - Aarti Dayal (29), Monika Yadav (18), Shweta Vijay Jain (39), Shweta Swapnil Jain (48), Barkha Soni (34) and Omprakash Kori (45) - are currently in judicial custody.

## Blocked roads then bullets: Iran's brutal crackdown in its City of Roses

**MICHAEL SAFI**

**TEHRAN, 01 DEC [AP]:**

"What are you scared of?" the woman in the black coat shouts. "Help me to understand." She marches up to a man in uniform guarding the petrol station. "You're ruining us," she screams, as the man walks away.

The exchange comes from footage taken around 1am on Friday 15 November in the south-central Iranian city of Shiraz. Hours earlier, in a surprise announcement, Iran's government had said it was raising the price of fuel by up to three times, adding to the strain on a population already struggling with an economy suffocated by US sanctions.

The petrol-price hike would trigger what may have been the largest-scale unrest in the 40-year history of the Islamic Republic. Iranian officials this week estimated 200,000 people were involved in the protests and riots which led to 7,000 arrests and, by some estimates, the regime's deadliest-ever response to demonstrations. Amnesty International have confirmed 15 deaths in Shiraz; those on the ground say the toll is much higher.

Like the rest of Iran, Shiraz was cut off from the world by an unprecedented five-day internet blackout. Precisely what transpired in the heartland of Persian culture known as the City of Roses is still unclear.

But interviews with activists inside and out-

side Shiraz, as well as analysis of social media posts, give a glimpse of what is thought to have been one of the largest protest outbreaks in the country, incurring one of the highest known death tolls.

Before the woman in the black coat leaves the petrol station, she turns to the other drivers in line, exhorting them to park their cars in the middle of the roads to protest the price increase. "On Saturday, whoever is a real man will park their car in the middle of the street," she declares from the door.

By Saturday morning, people were heeding the woman and others calling for mass civil disobedience. At least one major road in Shiraz had become a parking lot. "People are protesting and have blocked the streets completely," says a voice, surveying the sea of cars in both directions in an industrial area of the city. Drivers gather in groups outside their cars, chatting. The vehicles curve along the palm-lined road to the edge of the frame.

As the day went on, protesters were pouring into the streets of outer-lying areas across the city, according to activists. Social media footage shows significant unrest in at least six spots. The two most prominent incidents were in the suburb of Sadra and on Maliabad Boulevard, a long thoroughfare of banks and retailers that cuts across northern Shiraz.

The rallies were peaceful, and at first, so was the state response. Footage shows demonstrators applauding as police in riot gear are handed flowers. Protesters say they sat in groups on the road, chanting and playing cards.

Later, a protester would record a voice message to the US-based Iranian activist Masih Alinejad, reflecting on the morning. "Everything was going well and people were all smiling and happy," he said. "I saw people giving roses to the police, the first days was very peaceful and it was all good. Even the police were fine."

It did not last. Footage that activists believe was shot on Maliabad Boulevard the same day appears to show security personnel charging through crowds, sending people fleeing. Clouds of what appears to be tear gas can be seen forming.

There also appears to have been rioting: a video said to have been shot in the city shows fires burning in several spots, a handful of shops gutted, and the road scattered with paper and debris.

"The youth has no future in this country with these thieves in power," a protester tells Alinejad in a voice recording heard by the Guardian. "They couldn't take it anymore and they were full of rage. They took things to another level."

"Things started to

escalate when the police started to beat people up. We had to make our weapons to defend ourselves and that was it. It was all because we had to defend our lives."

The protesters, including many from working-class neighbourhoods, brawled with security personnel in some areas, using nails pushed through bottle caps as makeshift spikes to puncture the tyres of police motorcycles and cars.

At some point that afternoon, the police started shooting. Activists have posted footage from Saturday that shows gunshots going off near a Maliabad Boulevard police station.

"This is Shiraz and the armed forces are firing at the people," says a man filming outside the police station in another clip. He pushes his way through a chanting crowd, who surround a bloodied man on the ground. It is Mehdi Nekouyee, 20, the first person confirmed to have been killed in Shiraz's protests.

Because the inter-

net was cut, Nekouyee's family overseas first learned of his death when someone inside Iran wished them condolences on social media. "[Mehdi] was quiet, very open minded," his uncle remembers. "He wanted freedom, freedom of speech."

Nekouyee's killing enraged the demonstrators. Activists say the protesters began to hurl rocks at the police station, tearing at its fence. By Saturday evening, the building was said to be alight.

"They were firing live rounds and tear gas, but people were really courageous and did whatever it took," a man's voice said in another recorded message sent to Alinejad. "We asked the people who were burning things [to stop], we don't know who they are, but people are full of rage and no one could stop them."

"It is really bad and everyone is running for their lives, and the armed forces have no mercy and I couldn't believe they were people from the same home-

land ... It was a violence that I've never seen before."

Throughout Saturday and the next day, demonstrations were erupting in different parts of the city. Golshan, a suburb in Shiraz's north-west that is home to many members of the Qashqai minority group, became "a war zone", one activist with contacts in the city said. "Security forces entered with heavy weapons and helicopters." All roads into the area were closed from Saturday until the following Tuesday, he said.

Protesters appear to have remained in control of Sadra for most of the weekend. On Sunday 17 November, demonstrators appear to have set fire to the office of the senior imam in the area, a direct attack on the country's clerical establishment.

Activists say the response to the arson was swift and included helicopters swooping over the crowds, firing bullets and tear gas, a tactic reported in several areas and filmed in Sadra.

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## Reservations – Promoting Lethargy or Improving Access

*Before the bouquet is increased, revisit why quotas were need*

This section has discussed the issue of quotas and reservations often, but given the near obsessive pursuit with which such “protection” is chased after, discussing this theme is perhaps never too much. So here goes one more. But a qualifier first – this publication believes that protection by way of reservations is still required in our country where gross inequality forced by accidents of birth and offensive prejudice directed against communities and regions still prevail. If anything, such extreme and irrationally hostile mindsets have seen a resurgence in recent years, reinforcing stereotypes and foisting easy partisanship. That is the reality we live with, but occasionally, as citizens of a free and secular nation, we can occasionally also aspire for more ideal scenarios to eventually arrive into.

This then, is as good a time as ever to delve into the near passionate ambition of all communities to get included in some category or the other. We have in our country, quite a wide range of categories to choose from – there is the Scheduled Tribes list, the Schedule Caste recognition, the OBC, now even MBC and some years ago, Bihar introduced us to the EBC grouping – and one can rest assured that more such segregations will be dreamed up in the coming years as privileged communities which still dominate have someone made political currency out of their imagined persecution. It is that situation where the traditionally privileged, get frightened and feel threatened as more of the underdogs rise above the conditions of their birth through hard work and some hand-holding. To them, growing equality feels like oppression. Unfortunately, no one tells them otherwise because “reservation” has now become an aspiration that every citizen feels a right to aspire towards and has become an easy springboard to launch political careers from.

So, why the categorizations?

Given the history that India had emerged from in 1947, where caste alienation was extreme and tribals genuinely under-privileged and oppressed, a policy was required to overcome a legacy of injustice and to provide everyone in this country with a broad measure of equal opportunities. Since equal opportunities would not have been willingly granted and communities with centuries of oppression behind them could not be expected to benefit from an equal footing, reservations were eked out. Over the years, the reservations were extended to include more communities and even women. The idea was to provide these communities with the first stepping stone to equality – access. Access to education, to jobs, to positions of power and access to exposure. This target has been met relatively well and as far as access is concerned, a wide sweep has been achieved.

The obvious next step would have been to pull communities which have benefited enough out of the reserved categories and make more room for those communities which still lag behind. This is easier said than done. For one, there is no easily quantifiable way to decide when a community has “developed” enough to make it on its own steam sans reservation, and for the other, there is the vote-bank politics in which saner decisions in genuine public good would be political hara-kiri. So, the nation is left with an ever overflowing baggage of reserved sections and shrinking opportunities.

This is where the whole policy has failed. Instead of making people competitive with improved access, it has made them lazy with increased quotas. Little wonder then that more and more communities want to fit into some category or the other. In fact, in the present times, when jobs are rare and competition even for education tough, it would be foolish for community leaders not to work for a quota for their people. And so the demands keep pouring in.

This is not to belittle the aspirations of any community to find a new grouping for itself, but just a suggestion that maybe it is time the country and Sikkim paused to re-read the principles why reservations and special categories were first drafted, whether its expressed aims are being met or not, and also whether the people who genuinely deserve reservations are actually getting it or not in the first place.

# Your big brain makes you human – count your neurons when you count your blessings

SUZANA HERCULANO-HOUZEL  
theconversation.com

Here's something new to consider being thankful for at the dinner table: the long evolutionary journey that gave you your big brain and your long life.

Courtesy of our primate ancestors that invented cooking over a million years ago, you are a member of the one species able to afford so many cortical neurons in its brain. With them come the extended childhood and the pushing century-long lifespan that together make human beings unique.

All these bequests of your bigger brain cortex mean you can gather four generations around a meal to exchange banter and gossip, turn information into knowledge and even practice the art of what-not-to-say-when.

You may even want to be thankful for another achievement of our neuron-crammed human cortices: all the technology that allows people spread over the globe to come together in person, on screens, or through words whispered directly into your ears long distance.

I know I am thankful. But then, I'm the one proposing that we humans revise the way we tell the story of how our species came to be.

**BRAINS MADE OF CELLS, BUT HOW MANY?**

Back when I had just received my freshly minted Ph.D. in neuroscience and started working in science communication, I found out that 6 in 10 college-educated people believed they only used 10% of their brains. I'm glad to say that they're wrong: We use all of it, just in different ways at different times.

The myth seemed to be supported by statements in serious textbooks and scientific articles that “the human brain is made of 100 billion neurons and 10 times as many supporting glial cells.” I wondered if those numbers were facts or guesses. Did anyone actually know that those were the numbers of cells in the human brain?

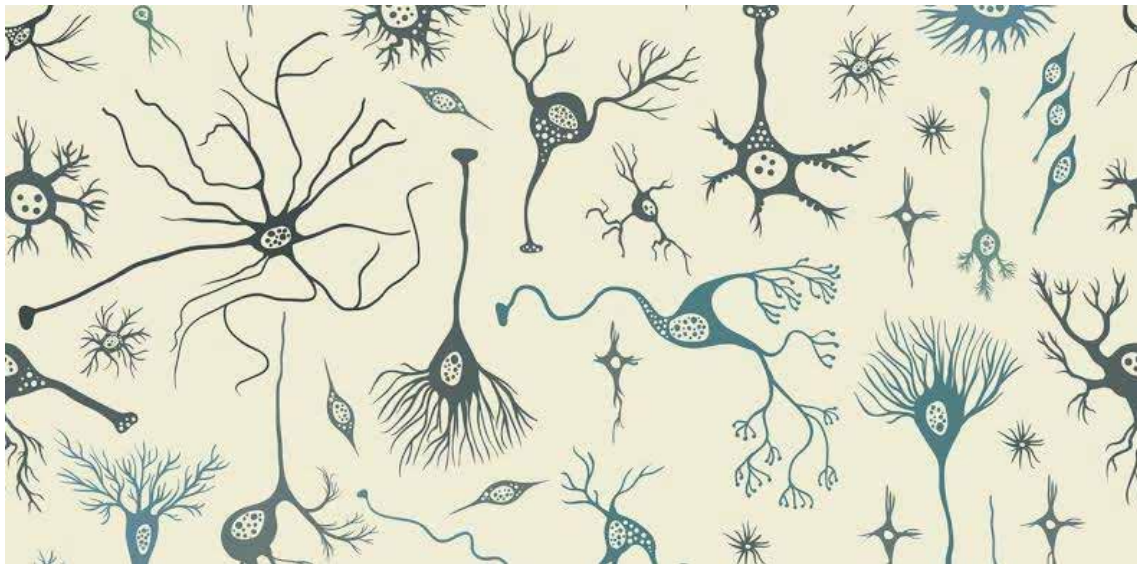
No, they didn't.

Neuroscientists did have a rough idea. Some estimates suggested 10 to 20 billion neurons for the human cerebral cortex, others some 60 to 80 billion in another region called the cerebellum. With the rest of the brain known to be fairly sparse in comparison, the number of neurons in the whole human brain was definitely closer to 100 billion than to just 10 billion (far too little) or 1 trillion (way too many).

But there we were, neuroscientists armed with fancy tools to modify genes and light up parts of the brain, still in the dark about what different brains were made of and how the human brain compared to others.

**COUNTING UP NEURONS IN BRAIN SOUP**

So I devised a way to easily and rapidly count



how many cells a brain is made of. I spent 15 years collecting brains and then turning them into soup that I examined under the microscope. That's how I got the hard numbers.

As it turned out, there are many ways to put brains together: Primates like us have more neurons in the cerebral cortex than most other mammals, no matter the size of the brain. A brain can be large but made of relatively few neurons if those neurons are huge, like in an elephant; primate neurons are small, and bird neurons are even tinier, so even the smallest bird brains can hide lots of neurons. But never as many as the largest primate brain: ours.

When comparing brains, we care about numbers of neurons in the cortex because it's the area of the brain that lets us go beyond the simple detection and response to stimuli, allowing us to learn from the past and make plans for the future.

Because neurons are the Lego pieces that build brains and process information, the more cortical neurons a species has, the more flexible and complex that species' cognition can be, regardless of size. And not just that: I recently found that the more cortical neurons, the longer the species takes to develop into adulthood, just like it takes longer to assemble a truckload of Legos into a mansion than a handful into a little house. And for as yet unknown reasons, along with more cortical neurons comes a longer life.

Getting more cortical neurons thus seems to be a two-for-one bargain: Buy more mental capabilities, and along comes more lifetime to learn to use them.

**POWERING ALL THOSE NEURONS**

Lots more neurons cost lots more energy, though.

If people had kept exclusively eating raw foods,

like all other primates do, they would need to spend over nine hours every single day searching, collecting, picking and eating to feed their 16 billion cortical neurons. Forget about discovering electricity or building airplanes. There would be no time for looking at the stars and wondering about what could be. Our great ape cousins, ever the raw foodies, still have at most half as many cortical neurons as we do – and they eat over eight hours per day.

But our ancestors figured out how to cheat nature to get more from less, first with stone tools and later with fire. They invented cooking and changed human history. Eating is faster and much more efficient, not to say delicious, when food is pre-processed and transformed with fire.

With plenty of calories available in much less time, new generations gained bigger and bigger brains. And the more cortical neurons they had, the longer kids remained kids, the longer their parents lived, and the more the former could learn from the latter, then from grandparents, and even great-grandparents. Cultures soon flourished. Technology bloomed and lived on through schooling and science, becoming ever more complex.

With so much culture to share, what makes us modern humans has become about much more than our human biology. Being born with lots of neurons gives us the potential for a long and slow life, one where each of our brains gets a chance to be educated by what the generations before us have learned, and to educate the next ones. We will remain modern humans so long as we are willing to convene around dinner tables to celebrate our differences and to share our hard-earned knowledge, stories of success and failure, our hopes and dreams.

*[the writer is Associate Professor of Psychology, Vanderbilt University]*

# Are you as grateful as you deserve to be?

RICHARD GUNDERMAN  
THECONVERSATION.COM

As a physician, I have helped to care for many patients and families whose lives have been turned upside down by serious illnesses and injuries. In the throes of such catastrophes, it can be difficult to find cause for anything but lament. Yet Thanksgiving presents us with an opportunity to develop one of the healthiest, most life-affirming and convivial of all habits – that of counting and rejoicing in our blessings.

**GRATITUDE'S BENEFITS**

Research shows that grateful people tend to be healthy and happy. They exhibit lower levels of stress and depression, cope better with adversity and sleep better. They tend to be happier and more satisfied with life. Even their partners tend to be more content with their relationships.

Perhaps when we are more focused on the good things we enjoy in life, we have more to live for and tend to take better care of ourselves and each other.

When researchers asked people to reflect on the past week and write about things that either irritated them or about which they felt grateful, those tasked with recalling good things were more optimistic, felt better about their lives and actually visited their physicians less.

It is no surprise that receiving thanks makes people happier, but so does expressing gratitude. An experiment that asked participants to write and deliver thank-you notes found large increases in reported levels of happiness, a benefit that lasted for an entire month.

**PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS**

One of the greatest minds in Western history, the Greek philosopher Aristotle, argued that we become what we habitually do. By changing our habits, we can become more thankful human beings.

If we spend our days ruminating on all that has gone poorly and how dark the prospects for the future appear, we can think ourselves into misery and resentment.

But we can also mold ourselves into the kind of people who seek out, recognize and celebrate all that we have to be grateful for.

This is not to say that anyone should become a Pollyanna, ceaselessly reciting the mantra from Voltaire's “Candide,” “All is for the best in this, the best of all possible worlds.” There are injustices to be righted and wounds to be healed, and ignoring them would represent a lapse of moral responsibility.



bility.

But reasons to make the world a better place should never blind us to the many good things it already affords. How can we be compassionate and generous if we are fixated on deficiency? This explains why the great Roman statesman Cicero called gratitude not only the greatest of virtues but the “parent” of them all.

**RELIGIOUS ROOTS**

Gratitude is deeply embedded in many religious traditions. In Judaism, the first words of the morning prayer could be translated, “I thank you.” Another saying addresses the question, “Who is rich?” with this answer: “Those who rejoice in what they have.”

From a Christian perspective, too, gratitude and thanksgiving are vital. Before Jesus shares his last meal with his disciples, he gives thanks. So vital a part of Christian life is gratitude that author and critic G.K. Chesterton calls it “the highest form of thought.”

Gratitude also plays an essential role in Islam. The 55th chapter of the Quran enumerates all the things human beings have to be grateful for – the Sun, Moon, clouds, rain, air, grass, animals, plants, rivers and oceans – and then asks, “How can a sensible person be anything but thankful to God?”

Other traditions also stress the importance of thankfulness. Hindu festivals celebrate blessings and offer thanks for them. In Buddhism, gratitude develops patience and serves as an antidote to greed, the corrosive sense that we never have enough.

**ROOTS EVEN IN SUFFERING**

In his 1994 book, “A Whole New Life,” the Duke

University English professor Reynolds Price describes how his battle with a spinal cord tumor that left him partially paralyzed also taught him a great deal about what it means to really live.

After surgery, Price describes “a kind of stunned beatitude.” With time, though diminished in many ways by his tumor and its treatment, he learns to pay closer attention to the world around him and those who populate it.

Reflecting on the change in his writing, Price notes that his books differ in many ways from those he penned as a younger man. Even his handwriting, he says, “looks very little like that of the man he was at the time of his diagnosis.”

“Cranky as it is, it's taller, more legible, and with more air and stride. And it comes down the arm of a grateful man.”

A brush with death can open our eyes. Some of us emerge with a deepened appreciation for the preciousness of each day, a clearer sense of our real priorities and a renewed commitment to celebrating life. In short, we can become more grateful, and more alive, than ever.

**PRACTICING GRATITUDE**

When it comes to practicing gratitude, one trap to avoid is locating happiness in things that make us feel better off – or simply better – than others. In my view, such thinking can foster envy and jealousy.

There are marvelous respects in which we are equally blessed – the same Sun shines down upon each of us, we all begin each day with the same 24 hours, and each of us enjoys the free use of one of the most complex and powerful resources in the universe, the human brain.

Much in our culture seems aimed to cultivate an attitude of deficiency – for example, most ads aim to make us think that to find happiness we must buy something. Yet most of the best things in life – the beauty of nature, conversation and love – are free.

There are many ways to cultivate a disposition of thankfulness. One is to make a habit of giving thanks regularly – at the beginning of the day, at meals and the like, and at day's end.

Likewise, holidays, weeks, seasons and years can be punctuated with thanks – grateful prayer or meditation, writing thank-you notes, keeping a gratitude journal and consciously seeking out the blessings in situations as they arise.

Gratitude can become a way of life, and by developing the simple habit of counting our blessings, we can enhance the degree to which we are truly blessed.

*[the writer is Chancellor's Professor of Medicine, Liberal Arts, and Philanthropy, Indiana University]*



## fieldworkReflections

## Changing Food Culture in Sikkim

RAKCHA RANA

Food is the most important part of our lives. Three square meals, and how can we forget tea time which is the most favourite time to enjoy an evening with tea and snacks after work. I still remember my schooldays, when, after returning from school, I always looked for snacks and puddings that my mother always prepared for me.

The simplest definition of food as far as we can understand is that 'food is what people and animals eat to survive.' Food usually comes from animals or plants. It contains the nutrition required to stay healthy. The consumption of food is enjoyable to humans. It contains protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, water and minerals.

So this is the basic definition of food, a balanced diet is a must for a healthy body and mind where every nutritionist and even common people give an advice to everyone.

But what does food mean now? If we look at today's generation and their understanding of food, it is no longer just three meals a day or a balanced diet. These do not suffice anymore. Food is now evolving and taking the place of culture where everyone wants to join and showcase. At some level, it is becoming a show business where everybody uploads instagram stories with hashtags like #pizza or something, put it up as their WhatsApp status, post pics on Facebook etc. Most of us want to highlight the food we are eating. I still remember that the elders used to remind us to offer food to our ancestors and god before we ate it ourselves. Most of us do not do that anymore and prefer to take a photo and post it before we sup. Another point our elders used to make was that if a stranger was staring at our food, we would get a stomach ache because of the negative thoughts he must be harbouring or because he was craving the food as well.

But now everything is changing. Our



elders ate because they were hungry and needed energy for the very physical lives they lived, but now we are increasing eat to enjoy ourselves, experience new tastes, and then advertise. Food has thus become a business with the focus not just on its nutrient value but also its taste and looks... 'food art'.

Sikkim is a lively and happy place and visiting tourists not only enjoy the sights, but also the culinary delights. People want to taste the foods of Sikkim, they are curious and as tourism has increased, so have the number of restaurants and hotels. I have noticed that even local residents are growing increasingly interested in exploring their own foods at eateries here. It is not just the tastes, but the whole experience of how well guests are served, presentation of the dishes, the cutlery, ambience etc. People notice small details now, even the music that is played.

And as tastes become more eclectic, the nature of restaurants is also becoming more specialised. Chinese cuisine was always

popular, but now Sikkim has Korean themed restaurants, pure-veg restaurants apart from a range of restaurants serving a range of ethnic treats.

In Sikkim, one can even order food online now. The point I am making is that food is evolving here and is not only about nutrition or fulfilling your hunger anymore and has become about one's personal life, personality, even status. Some people like fine dining and some prefer cosy settings and everyone likes good food.

Despite being a small state, the food culture of Sikkim is also embracing cuisine from across the world. Then there are the homestays which I like the most and even the tourists appear to prefer for the homely environment and where they get the opportunity to engage with locals and taste authentic local food and supporting "Organic Sikkim." Food culture is a network which connects many cultures at the same place and sometimes on the same table.

*[The writer is a research scholar, Deptt of Anthropology, Sikkim University]*

## Balochistan insurgency likely to intensify: NSAB member

**HYDERABAD, DEC 1 (PTI):** Insurgency in Balochistan is likely to intensify as the current generation of young and dynamic leadership was now leading the struggle against the Pakistan government, Member of India's National Security Advisory Board(NSAB), Tilak Devasher said on Sunday.

In his address at a seminar on "Pakistan: The Balochistan Coudrum" here, he said every successive generation of Balochi population has been revolting with insurgent activities and lost faith in the Pakistani administration.

"Pakistan is attempting to crush the insurgency with its mighty military power, more than finding a political

solution.

The insurgency is not the real problem, but Baloch's nationalism is the real challenge to both Pakistan army and government," a release issued from Hyderabad-based organisation Social Cause, which organised the event quoted Devasher as saying.

Baloch people, he alleged were facing "multiple forms of violations, including economic exploitation and severe human rights violations."

A large number of young activists were missing since a decade and only their bodies were surfacing.

"The people are being exposed to ethnic, sectarian, secessionist and discriminative attitudes of the Pakistan govern-

ment.

The policies adopted by Pakistan since the last 70 years is only leading to alienation of the local population," he claimed.

Devasher further said the people of Baloch were now apprehensive about losing their identity and challenging the Pakistan leadership that they could survive and prosper without them.

The NSAB member also cautioned Pakistan against use of military force to resolve Balochistan's insurgency problem.

After the creation of Bangladesh, the very basic concept behind creation of Pakistan on the basis of religion no more remained relevant, the release added.

## BJP's negative thoughts leading to its fall: Gehlot



**JAIPUR, DEC 1 (PTI):** Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday claimed that that the graph of the BJP is going down because of its "negative thoughts".

Their thought is negative, not positive. Therefore they are being exposed gradually and will be more exposed, Gehlot told reporters here.

Their graph is going down. People will understand that they talk only such things which nationalists like. Who is not a na-

tionalist? All are nationalists; but they want to create division on this count also, he said.

Gehlot said the economy of the country was suffering but the government was not bothered about it.

The GDP and growth rate have suffered. What former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said during demonetisation has come true. The business has been hit, people are losing jobs and the exports too has suffered. The

government should wake up now, the chief minister said, while talking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme at Govind Devji temple here.

He also said his government was serious to curb the food adulteration and was planning a major campaign against it.

Our government is committed to check adulteration. Those who are involved in adulteration be it in food, medicines or other things, should get death penalty, he said.

## Idols, items of worship fished out from Brahmaputra

**GUWAHATI, DEC 1 (PTI):** Altogether 42 items used in worship and metal idols have been fished out from the Brahmaputra here, top police officials said.

Idols of gods and goddesses, lamps, conches, temple door latches were retrieved from the river near Uzan Bazar-Umananda ferry ghat on Saturday while an iron statue was recovered on Sunday.

Personnel of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been engaged for carrying out underwater searches, an official from Latacil police station said.

Guwahati Commissioner of Police Deepak Kumar told reporters that an enquiry was on to find out how the objects made its way to the Brahmaputra, and whether the articles were stolen from temples.

Reports of theft cases in temples were also being checked, he said.

Two of the items have already been identified as that of a temple, he said.

Director General of Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, who visited the site on Sunday, said that he has called for investigations to find out how and from where the articles made its way to the river.

The discovery of the puja items was made accidentally by an employee of a tea stall, near the ferry ghat, when he was bathing in the river on Saturday morning.

The person, identified as Sanu Ali, said while bathing near the river bank, he received



injuries on his feet, caused by sharp objects under the water.

On taking a dip, Ali found an idol of Lord Shiva and suspecting it to be a stolen item, he informed the police.

The police personnel asked him and two locals to conduct a search operation under water.

The three men fished out idols of Kali, Shiva, Krishna, Brahma, Tara Devi, Buddha, Ganesh, Laxmi, Radha- Krishna.

Plaques with Devanagiri scripts, tridents, oil lamps, door latches and conches were also recovered from the river, a police officer said.

The State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel recovered items, including 29 idols, the officer added.

Ali said, a few days ago some persons were seen throwing sacks into the river and they had told the tea stall employee that the bags contained useless things.

A person identified as Nirendra Kumar Seal of Chandan Nagar of Beltola area in the city claimed

that one of the idols was stolen from a temple within his house premises on October 18 last.

A case had been filed about it in Dispur Police Station.

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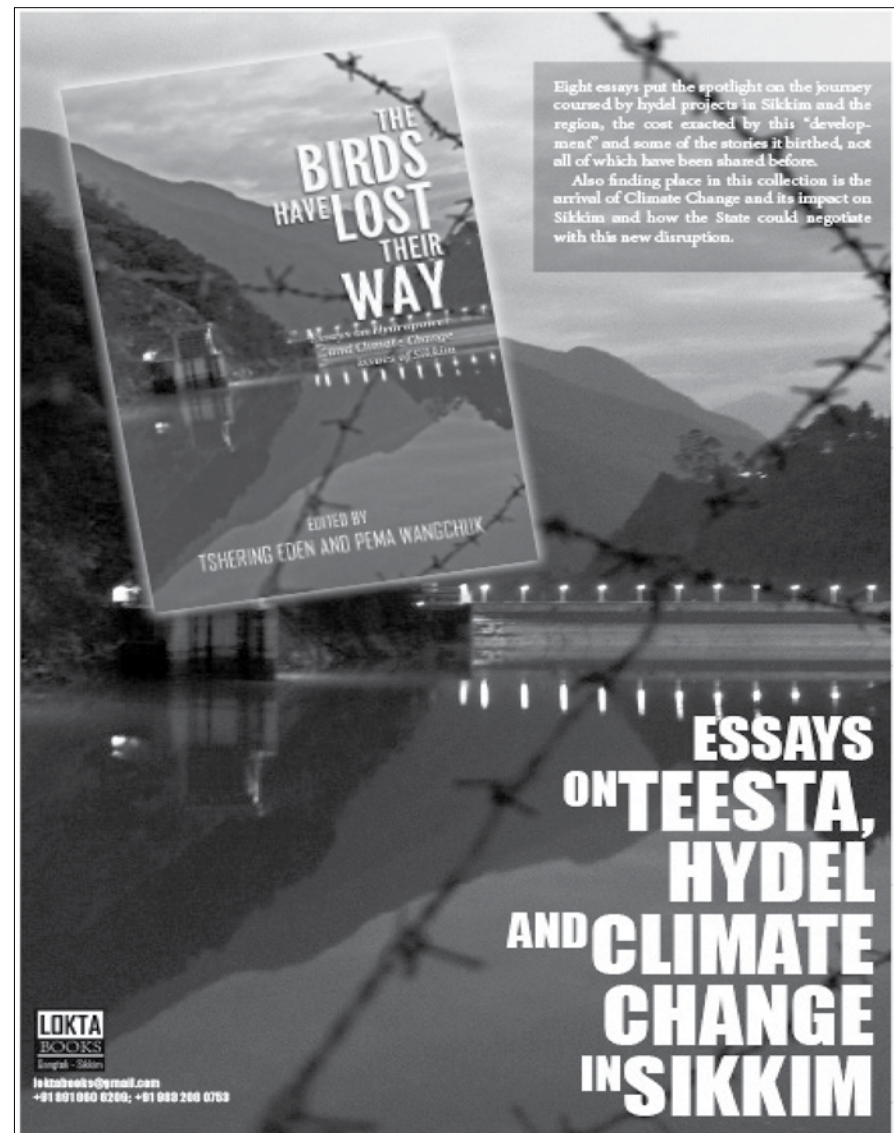
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## Messi and Rapinoe expected to take Ballon d'Or honours

**PARIS, DEC 1 (AFP):** The biggest names in world football will descend on Paris on Monday for the 2019 Ballon d'Or ceremony, with Lionel Messi and USA women's World Cup superstar Megan Rapinoe tipped to leave with the honours.

It would be an enormous shock if Rapinoe did not depart the Chat-elet Theatre with the women's prize as she returns to the country where she was the driving force on and off the field for the United States as they retained their title.

The suspense surrounds the identity of the men's winner, 12 months after Croatia's Luka Modric claimed the crown thanks to his exploits in dragging his country to the World Cup final and winning the Champions League with Real Madrid.

That ended a decade in which Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo had won the Ballon d'Or five times each, but the smart money now is on the Barcelona man claiming number six.

There are 30 nominees in total for the prize, organised by France Football magazine and voted for by 180 journalists from around the world.

- THE CASE FOR VAN DIJK -

Among the names is Ronaldo, as well as several of the stars of the Liverpool side who won the Champions League, chief among them Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk.

At one point he looked like the favourite, but Messi already pipped him to FIFA's The Best title in September.

The 32-year-old top-scored in La Liga last season with 36 goals as Barcelona won the title. He did not have a great Copa America with Argentina, but his genius is undeniable.

"If you give the Ballon d'Or to the best player of this generation then you should give it always to Lionel Messi. That's how it is," admitted Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp.

"But if you give it to the best player of last season, then it was Virgil van Dijk. I don't know exactly how it will work but that is how I see it."

The value of individual honours in football is debatable, and the timing unsatisfactory, coming midway through the European club season.

Yet surely nobody could suggest Rapinoe would not be a deserving winner of just the second women's Ballon d'Or, an award voted for by a panel of 48 journalists.

Norway's Ada Hegerberg won it in 2018 but will not retain her title after missing the World Cup.

Among the stars of that tournament to be nominated are England's Lucy Bronze, Netherlands striker Vivianne Miedema, Australia's Sam Kerr and the USA trio of Alex Morgan, Rose Lavelle and Tobin Heath.

# Bailey double sinks Bayern as Leipzig go top in Germany

**BERLIN, DEC 1 (AFP):** Leon Bailey scored twice as Bayern Munich crashed 2-1 at home to 10-man Bayer Leverkusen, while RB Leipzig top the Bundesliga after a nervous 3-2 win at bottom side Paderborn.

Hansi Flick lost for the first time in five games as Bayern's interim coach after Jamaica winger Bailey scored first-half goals for Leverkusen.

Mid-table Leverkusen finished with 10 men after defender Jonathan Tah saw a late red card for fouling Philippe Coutinho.

Leipzig's win over Paderborn allowed them to open a two-point lead over Borussia Moenchenglabach.

Elsewhere, Jurgen Klinsmann started his tenure as Hertha Berlin's interim boss with a 2-1 home defeat to 10-man Borussia Dortmund at the sold-out Olympic Stadium.

Flick, put in charge until at least January, had won his first four games with 16 goals scored and zero conceded -- the best start by a coach in Bayern's proud history.

However, little went right at the Allianz Arena for Bayern, who are fourth and trail Leipzig by three points.

"I didn't flip out after winning four games and I won't now," said Flick.



"We knew Leverkusen were good on the counter and they took their chances mercilessly; we didn't take ours."

Bayern hit the woodwork three times, had 75 percent possession and 24 shots on goal, twice as many as Leverkusen.

The visitors were ahead on 10 minutes as Bailey glided past Benjamin Pavard after a brilliant Kevin Volland pass.

After Serge Gnabry, then Ivan Perisic had hit the woodwork, Thomas Mueller equalised on 33 minutes, but Bayern were level for just 113 seconds as Bailey this time motored past Javi Martinez to beat Manuel Neuer.

- BLANK FOR LEWANDOWSKI -

Bayern had little luck and even Robert Lewandowski, who

scored four goals in 15 minutes in Tuesday's 6-0 thrashing of Red Star Belgrade, failed to score.

Lewandowski fired wide, an unusual sight for the Poland star who has 27 goals in 21 games, then he hit the post in added time as Munich suffered only their second home defeat this season.

On Sunday, Moenchenglabach can reclaim top spot by beating Freiburg.

In Paderborn, Leipzig romped to a 3-0 half-time lead thanks to goals by Patrik Schick, Marcel Sabitzer and German striker Timo Werner, who netted his 13th league goal this season.

However, it was a completely different story after the break.

Paderborn, who earned a 3-3 draw at Dortmund last weekend,

roared back with goals by striker Strelci Mamba and captain Klaus Gjasula, but Leipzig held on.

"We made it more tense than necessary," admitted Leipzig sports director Markus Kroesche.

In the capital, ex-Germany and USA head coach Klinsmann saw his Hertha team lose despite Dortmund playing the entire second-half with 10 men after Mats Hummels was sent off.

Dortmund are fifth -- four points behind Leipzig -- with their win easing the pressure on coach Lucien Favre.

"We gave everything. It wasn't easy to defend in the second half with ten men," said Favre.

Jadon Sancho backed up his superb Champions League strike at Barcelona in midweek with a fine finish after 15 minutes, then

Thorgan Hazard made it 2-0 a minute later by stabbing home a Achraf Hakimi cross.

- 'WE DESERVED MORE' -

Vladimir Darida pulled a goal back for Hertha on 34 minutes while Hummels was sent off just before half-time for a clumsy foul on Davie Selke.

Selke had a second-half goal ruled off-side and Dortmund hung on.

"We deserved more," Klinsmann insisted as Hertha dropped into the relegation places.

"We didn't push hard enough."

There were eight cards in the first-half -- equalising the league record -- as Cologne drew 1-1 at home to Augsburg and both teams were reduced to ten men in the first 45 minutes.

Cologne goalkeeper Timo Horn saved a penalty by Andre Hahn after only nine minutes, then the hosts had defender Rafael Czichos sent off on 39 minutes for a second yellow.

Augsburg striker Florian Niederlechner scored, then Hahn was sent off just before the break for a second bookable offence.

Cologne finally poached a point when substitute striker Jhon Cordoba equalised four minutes from time.

## Liverpool stretch lead as Man City, Chelsea stumble



**LONDON, DEC 1 (AFP):** Liverpool extended their lead at the top of the Premier League to 11 points with a nervy 2-1 win over Brighton as Manchester City slipped up once more in a draw at Newcastle on Saturday.

Chelsea missed the chance to go level on points with second-placed City as Frank Lampard's men suffered a shock 1-0 home defeat by West Ham, while Tottenham's winning run under Jose Mourinho continued as Dele Alli scored twice in a 3-2 win over Bournemouth.

Virgil van Dijk is hoping to beat Lionel Messi to the Ballon d'Or on Monday and showed he can score goals as well as stop them with two towering headers from Trent Alexander-Arnold set-piece deliveries to put Liverpool 2-0 up inside 25 minutes.

However, goalkeeper Alisson Becker was sent off 14 minutes from time for handling outside his area and Brighton reduced the deficit from the resulting free-kick through captain Lewis Dunk.

But the 10 men held out for another vital three points to edge closer to a first league title in 30 years.

While Liverpool have made a habit of winning games when not at their best, not for the first time this season, City let points slip away to further dent their title chances after a 2-2 draw.

- CITY TWICE BLOW LEAD -

Twice Pep Guardiola's men led at St James' Park through Raheem Sterling and a brilliant Kevin De Bruyne strike eight minutes from time.

But Newcastle responded quickly on both occasions as Jetro Willem's cancelled out Sterling's strike before Jonjo Shelvey swept home a well-worked free-kick two minutes from time.

"We do the same

work we have done over the last few seasons. We tried to score more goals but it did not happen," said Guardiola, whose side failed to capitalise on nearly 80 percent of possession.

City's slip-up gave Chelsea the chance to go level on points with the champions and Leicester, who host Everton on Sunday.

However, the Blues failed to replicate their fine form over the past two months as West Ham won for the first time in nine games to ease the pressure on Manuel Pellegrini.

Aaron Cresswell scored the only goal three minutes into the second half with a tidy finish as he cut inside onto his weaker right foot.

But it was the Hammers who were the more likely to add to the scoring as the second period wore on with Kepa Arrizabalaga keeping them at bay with a string of saves, while Michail Antonio had a goal ruled out after a VAR review for handball.

Tottenham are up to fifth and within six points of Chelsea in the battle for a top-four finish as the in-form Alli preserved Jose Mourinho's perfect start.

The scoreline should have been far more convincing for Mourinho's men, who led 3-0 with 17 minutes left as Alli's fine form continued with a goal either side of half-time before Moussa Sissoko scored for the first time in over two years.

But Tottenham have conceded twice in all three of Mourinho's matches in charge and were left hanging on as Harry Wilson scored a double for the visitors.

Crystal Palace secured their first win in six games to move into the top half as Wilfried Zaha and Jeffrey Schlupp were on target in a 2-0 win at Burnley.

## Pasalic double seals Atalanta win at Brescia, Fiorentina fall to Lecce

**MILAN, DEC 1 (AFP):** Mario Pasalic scored twice to get Atalanta back to winning ways with a 3-0 Lombardy derby victory at struggling Brescia as Fiorentina fell to a third consecutive defeat at home to promoted Lecce.

Pasalic nodded in the opener on 26 minutes for Atalanta, before grabbing a second after an hour with Josip Illicic firing in a late third to end the Bergamo side's four-match winless run in the league.

Atalanta, boosted by claiming their first ever Champions League win against Dinamo Zagreb in midweek, are now level on points with fourth-placed Cagliari and Roma, who play later this weekend.

Gian Piero Gasperini's side had not won in Serie A since their 7-1 victory over Udinese a month ago.

Italy forward Mario Balotelli returned to the Brescia line-up having being dropped last weekend for a lack of commitment in training.

But apart from hitting the crossbar on 55 minutes, Balotelli rarely threatened as the promoted side fell to their sixth consecutive defeat to stay rooted to the bottom of the table.

# Anthony Joshua the businessman determined to regain his belts

**SEAN INGLE**  
**THEGUARDIAN**

"You hear all the stories," says Anthony Joshua, whispering slowly and painfully, as if each word is bruised with scar tissue. "Larry Holmes having to get a bus home after a title fight. Mike Tyson losing a lot of his money. Evander Holyfield ..." He pauses. "And these are the greatest."

There are at least 60 million reasons why Joshua is putting his gold-plated reputation on the line in a heavyweight title rematch against Andy Ruiz Jr in Saudi Arabia next Saturday. Ultimately, though, it boils down to this. Too many fighters have made the turbulent journey from glory to penury. He does not want to be one of them. So the biggest purse of his career trumps whatever criticisms are fired his way from human rights groups.

"Honestly, one of my main objectives in this sport was to not be owned, not be taken advantage of," he says. "That's why the decisions I've made have been as a professional man, not a professional boxer. When I decided to become a man, I just knew in boxing I was going to conduct myself like a business."

"You pay a lot to the tax man," he says, warming to his theme. "A lot to the trainer. And before you know it you're left with, in reality, 30 or 40%. So it's not all what it really seems. You have to manage yourself and not get flustered about what you



think is yours, because 50 or 60 or 70% isn't."

Suddenly he turns to his promoter, Eddie Hearn. "Don't you remember when I met you, Ed-die?" he says, laughing. "I was: 'You're not like Don King, are you?'"

Joshua has always been sharp and engaging company. But six months on from his shock defeat by Ruiz, blinking and stumbling like a man in a waking nightmare before being stopped in the seventh, that sharpness now possesses a more jagged edge.

"After I took the loss, I started hearing what people really thought of me," he says, bristling. "But this is fighting. One loss doesn't take the spots off a cheetah. I've been world champion, I've been Olympic champion, I've been world silver medalist."

Still the words keep tumbling out. "It was clear to see that I was the man on the table with four of the rings out of the five and people were still debating where my position was in the heavyweight di-

vision," he says, although now he sounds more astonished than angry.

All of a sudden, though, Joshua's aggression strays into outright crassness when talking about the "hustle" of being the WBA, IBF and WBO heavyweight champion. "It's like killing, isn't it?" he says. "Bang; next one. Bang; next one. Bang; next one."

It is a horribly ill-judged line, especially given the deaths in the ring in recent years and certainly not one to expect from someone regarded as one of the sport's more eloquent participants.

Joshua, who is expected to come in lighter and faster for the rematch, also takes exception to claims he took Ruiz too lightly after the Mexican-American replaced his original opponent, Jarrell Miller, after he failed a drugs test six weeks before they were due to meet.

"People don't really know what went into my last training camp," Joshua says. "I hear what people say about me and it's

like: 'Put some respect by our name.' We don't play games when it comes to boxing, we're serious and now after the loss I've had time to reflect, it's like: 'I took this shit seriously.'"

So why did people underestimate him? "Because we make it look easy."

Those close to Joshua say he has always been dedicated but this dedication has now become an obsession. Another difference is that he is regularly in contact with Wladimir Klitschko, the fighter he vanquished in 2017, absorbing his advice on how to make it back to the summit. "He's helped me with loads of stuff, including diet and training," Joshua says. "Maybe that's why -- because I've adapted some of his teachings -- that my weight may fluctuate. Wlad was definitely ahead of the game."

Joshua insists his trainer, Robert McCracken, remains a vital part of his entourage: a prime dispenser not only of boxing knowledge but of life

wisdom. "I respect Rob a lot," he says. "He's more than just a coach. We talk and we never fall out over money or training. I'm quite a solid, secure person. If Rob thinks some of my ideas are shit, he can tell me. I don't have yes men around me."

There is an obvious

hunger for redemption, a deep yearning to put right what happened at Madison Square Garden in June. Yet Joshua insists he misses nothing about being world champion. For him the belts were a by-product of success -- not jewellery to wear around his waist and let go to his head.

"You see certain fighters get to championship level and their whole demeanour changes," he says. "You see the cars, the chains. I've also seen people go to the club with their belts but I don't really do that kind of stuff. I'm not really someone who has the big trophy cabinet or something like that. This is hustle, this is grind, this ain't about patting myself on the back."

It remains to be seen whether Joshua's analysis of his defeat by Ruiz -- that he merely got caught with a "punch from the gods" after dropping his opponent in the third -- is too superficial. But there is no doubt he is thirsting to be the main man in the heavyweight division again. "I want to take it more seriously because I'm going to that next level," he says. "And when I win, I will be like: 'Fuck everybody.' With that he sticks up both his middle fingers."



*'Laziness has won': Apostrophe society admits its defeat*

**LONDON, 01 DEC [AP]:** A society dedicated to preserving the "much-abused" apostrophe is to be shut down as its chairman said "ignorance and laziness" had won.

John Richards, who worked in journalism for much of his career, started the Apostrophe Protection Society in 2001 after he retired.

Now 96, Richards is calling time on the society, which lists the three simple rules for correct use of the punctuation mark.

Writing on the society's website, he said: "Fewer organisations and individuals are now caring about the correct use of the apostrophe in the English language.

"We, and our many supporters worldwide, have done our best but the ignorance and laziness present in modern times have won!"

Richards started the society after seeing the "same mistakes over and over again" and hoped he would find half a dozen people who felt the same way.

He said: "I didn't find half a dozen people.

"Instead, within a month of my plaint appearing in a national newspaper, I received over 500 letters of support, not only from all corners of the United Kingdom, but also from America, Australia, France, Sweden, Hong Kong and Canada."

***Iran begins registering candidates for parliamentary polls***

**DUBAI, DEC 1 (AP):** Iran's official IRNA news agency says registration has begun for candidates running in the country's parliamentary elections set for February 2020.

The elections will be a gauge for the popularity of the moderate and reformist camps that President Hassan Rouhani represents.

It comes after unrest over government-set petrol price earlier in November.

Iran has not released any figure on the death toll, though Amnesty International says at least 161 were killed in the protests. An Iranian lawmaker has said more than 7,000 were arrested.

The elections will be held February 21 and the new parliament will begin working in May.

Candidates run in 208 constituencies for 290 seats.

A constitutional watchdog, the Guardian Council, vets and must approve those wishing to run in the elections.

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# K-pop stars jailed for gang-rape in South Korea

**SEOUL, 01 DEC [AP]:** A South Korean court has sentenced two K-pop stars to six and five years in prison for gang-rape and additionally convicted one of them for distributing videos of the assaults and other sexual encounters.

Jung Joon-young, a singer-songwriter, and Choi Jong-hoon, a former member of the boy band FT Island, were found guilty of gang-rape two different women in two incidents in 2016.

Separately, 30-year-old Jung was convicted of filming himself having sex with other women without their knowledge and sharing the footage without their consent.

It is the highest-profile example of an epidemic of spycam crimes in South Korea, which have prompted widespread anger and led to women demonstrating in Seoul chanting: "My life is not your porn."

Jung distributed his videos in mobile chatrooms with recipients including a fellow K-pop star, Seungri of BigBang, who has been accused of illegal gambling in connection with a sex and drugs scandal.



nection with a sex and drugs scandal.

Jung was jailed for six years and Choi, 29, for five. Seoul central district court rejected the defendants' claim that the sex was consensual.

"Jung and Choi took part in gang-rape of victims who were intoxicated and unable to resist," the verdict said, according to Yonhap news agency. "It is hard to fathom the extent of suffering the victims must have gone through."

The court said the

two singers had seen the victims as "sexual objects" to be exploited, adding: "They should assume social responsibility in proportion to their fame and wealth." Both men wept when the sentences were announced.

While the minimum sentence for rape in South Korea is three years, most online commentators said the penalties were too lenient. "The victims have to live in agony for the next 60 years, not just six," one poster wrote on the country's largest portal

site, Naver. Another added: "I hear they burst into tears at sentencing. The victims will live in tears for the rest of their lives."

Jung rose to fame in 2014 when he came third in an audition show, Super Star K, and he had a number of solo hits before the video scandal broke in March, when he announced his retirement.

At that time the rape accusations had yet to emerge, and he said he had "committed crimes that cannot be forgiven."

There was no immediate statement from his lawyers or his record company on Friday.

Known as molka, South Korean spycam videos are largely made by men secretly filming women in schools, toilets and elsewhere, although the term can also be applied to clandestinely shot footage of consensual sex.

Last weekend Goo Hara, a former member of the girl group Kara, died in an apparent suicide a year after she was blackmailed over revenge porn.

Goo's ex-boyfriend threatened to "end her entertainment career" by leaking the footage, and a CCTV clip showed her kneeling before him apparently begging him not to. He was convicted of blackmail.

In conservative South Korea, women who appear in such videos often feel deep shame despite being the victims, and face the threat of ostracism and social isolation. Around 5,500 people were arrested for molka offences last year, 97% of them men, according to police data.

## China's accuses UN rights chief of 'inappropriate' interference

**GENEVA, DEC 1 (AFP):** China has accused UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet of "inappropriate" interference in the country's affairs after she called for investigations into alleged excessive use of force by police in Hong Kong.

China's mission to the UN in Geneva said on Saturday an op-ed written by Bachelet in the South China Morning Post was "erroneous" and "violates the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

The article contains "inappropriate comments on the situation of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ... (and) interferes in China's internal affairs," said the Chinese mission's statement.

It added that China had "lodged strong representations" with the UN rights office in Geneva.

In the article published earlier on Saturday, Bachelet urged authorities in Hong Kong to conduct "a proper independent and impartial judge-led investigation into reports of excessive use of force by the police."

Hong Kong's protests are fuelled by years of seething anger over China's perceived erosion of liberties in the semi-autonomous city. There have been repeated violent clashes between police and protesters, who have called for police accountability and fully free elections.

Beijing denies stamping out Hong Kong's liberties and has portrayed the protests as a foreign-backed "colour revolution" aimed at destabilising mainland China.

China's mission to the UN said Bachelet's article "will only embolden the rioters to conduct more severe radical violence."

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## Shenzhen, vaping capital of the world, holds its breath as health concerns spiral

**MICHAEL STANDAERT SHENZHEN, 01 DEC [AP]:** Online e-cigarette sales looked like a promising industry for Edwin Wong when he started his venture a year ago. The 34-year-old had studied Shenzhen's businesses and products since 2012, and saw a sure bet. Soon, he had developed a loyal base of more than 600 repeat customers and business was steady.

But suddenly, everything changed. Overnight his 2.2m yuan (£240,000) investment in a startup, called KiwiPod, disappeared.

"A lot of people have gone into this business who never knew anything about the business before, they just threw money into it. Most just thought it was hot, very profitable, and now they are gone," he says.

Searching Chinese e-commerce platforms such as Taobao or JD.com for "e-cigarettes" – something that would normally yield thousands of options – revealed nothing. It was as if the online shops never existed. Rumours were rampant of at least two suicides among the throngs of small-time sellers whose business model had disappeared.

The day everything changed was 7 November, when Chinese authorities suddenly imposed a de facto ban on e-cigarettes, issuing an order discouraging online sales to protect children from the hazards of smoking. The order came out just before China's biggest annual online



shopping holiday, on the 11th.

China is the world's biggest manufacturer and exporter of e-cigarettes, according to the China Electronic Cigarette Chamber of Commerce. In 2018, more than 2 million people worked in the industry, with annual sales worth 33.7bn yuan (£3.7bn) and exports worth 28.7bn yuan (£3.2bn).

In Shenzhen, a city just north of Hong Kong, about 90% of the world's vaping and e-cigarette devices are designed and manufactured in about 1,000 factories. Thousands more companies form the supply chain throughout Guangdong province and China.

The industry is in damage control after an outbreak of vaping-related respiratory ailments led to at least 39 deaths across the US. The US Center for Disease Control is blaming the additive vitamin E acetate used in some e-liquids, and says most of the cases were associated with smoking of THC oils, the main psychoactive com-

pound in marijuana.

US president Donald Trump is meeting industry and health representatives, amid indications that the final policy in the US would balance health concerns with economic ones. The US market has already shrunk by about a quarter.

Last week, New York City lawmakers voted to ban flavoured e-cigarettes. The measure, which Democratic mayor Bill de Blasio says he supports, bans all e-cigarette and e-liquid flavours except tobacco. It is expected to take effect in July next year.

**A CITY IN LIMBO**

In Shenzhen, the bigger players have fared better than the smaller sellers, and life for them goes on as normal, for now.

The six-storey Teslacigs factory is easily missed from the road in Shajing, sitting behind a tangle of tropical brush and amidst a cluster of similar dust-stained buildings.

Inside, about 400 workers quietly assemble new pods and other

vaping devices in a pristine, dust-free, temperature-controlled environment, a far cry from the dusty world outside.

The factory shows no signs of slowing down. The Chinese market still has potential, managers say, but all eyes are on what the US will do.

"We're investing in our company, and we're waiting to see what happens with US regulation," Xiang Jie, vice general manager of Teslacigs tells the Guardian during a visit to the facility. "Even with the China regulation, it will eventually be the biggest market, and there are other markets growing, in south-east Asia, the Middle East."

The US is currently the biggest market but also the wild card, those in China's industry believe. Manufacturers are waiting to see if the US bans flavoured e-cigarettes and what the Food and Drug Administration's [FDA] policy will be on approving tobacco products (known as a pre-market tobacco product application, or PMTA).

## Freed Taliban prisoner recounts SEAL rescue attempts

**SYDNEY, DEC 1 (AP):** An Australian teacher held captive with an American colleague by the Taliban for more than three years believes US Navy SEALs tried and failed six times to free them.

Timothy Weeks was released last month in a prisoner swap along with Kevin

King, ending an ordeal that began with their abduction in 2016 outside the American University in Kabul, where they worked.

Weeks, 50, told a news conference on Sunday he believed SEAL teams tried repeatedly to rescue them, sometimes missing them only by "hours" after the

two hostages were moved to other locations by their captors. "I believe, and I hope this is correct, that they came in six times to try to get us, and that a number of times they missed us only by hours," Weeks said.

One attempt came in April this year. Weeks said he was woken at 2 am by

his guards, who told him they were under attack from Islamic State fighters, and moved him into a tunnel beneath where they were being held. "I believe now that it was the Navy SEALs coming in to get us," Weeks said.

"I believe they were right outside our door. The

moment that we got into the tunnels, we were 1 or 2 metres underground and there was a huge bang at the front door. And our guards went up and there was a lot of machine-gun fire. They pushed me over the top into the tunnels and I fell backwards and rolled and knocked myself unconscious."

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**PUSSYCAT DOLLS REUNITE ONSTAGE AFTER A DECADE:** The Pussycat Dolls made everyone's hearts flutter when they hit the stage during The X-Factor: Celebrity finale on Saturday in London. As if that weren't exciting enough, the female group not only performed live for the first time in nearly a decade but they debuted a new song, "React."

## Martin Scorsese on why series format wasn't ideal for 'The Irishman'

**LOS ANGELES, DEC 1 (PTI):** Veteran filmmaker Martin Scorsese does not believe that his latest directorial "The Irishman" could have been told in a series format.

With a runtime of three hours and 29 minutes, the film is one of the longest features of recent times.

Some people have argued that the film's story could have played in a mini-series format or developed over two seasons.

But Scorsese never envisioned "The Irishman" as a series, since he wanted to tell the story in one go.

"You could say, 'This is a long story, you can play it out over two seasons' -- I saw somebody mention that. Absolutely no. I've never even thought of it. Because the point of this picture is the accumulation of detail," he told Entertainment Weekly.

"It's an accumulated cumulative effect by the end of the movie -- which means you get to see from beginning to end (in one sitting) if you're so inclined. A series is great, it's wonderful, you can develop character and plot lines and worlds are recreated. But this wasn't right for that," he added.

"The Irishman" features veteran actors Robert De Niro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci in the lead.

The film, based on Charles Brandt's 2004 Sheeran memoir, "I Heard You Paint Houses", chronicles the life story of



legendary hitman for the Bufalino crime family, Frank "The Irishman" Sheeran (De Niro) and his role in the disappearance of the powerful Teamster Jimmy Hoffa (Pacino).

It started streaming on Netflix from November 27.

## Zoë Kravitz's New Pixie Cut Proves That Short Hair Isn't Just a Summer Style

**New hair, who dis?!**

Zoë Kravitz is already ahead of the "new year, new me" trend that starts to circulate around the holidays, because she just debuted a gasp-worthy pixie cut. That's right, she traded her long locs for a shorter 'do.

"hair," she simply captioned her Instagram post on Tuesday evening with the scissors emoji. Moreover, the Big Little Lies actress shared a selfie that showed off her fresh chop (and radiant skin).

In the snapshot, Kravitz is perched on her bed wearing a white spaghetti-strap tank-top and several gold jewelry pieces, which made her overall look seem ultra-chic and picturesque. If anything, her major transformation proves short hair isn't just a summer style and can easily be rocked during the cold, winter months.

As for the mastermind behind the 30-year-old star's new 'do? It appears celebrity hairstylist, Nikki Nelms, who frequently works with Janelle Monáe, Yara Shahidi and La La Anthony, did the honors. For her lips, she prefers a warm rose-toned lipstick: "They have this new lipsticks I'm obsessed with called the Rouge Couture Slim. What I like about these is that you can kind of blur them out a little bit," the actress stated, using her finger to smudge the product close to edge of her top lip. "It almost looks like maybe you've been making out with someone," she added, light heartedly.



## Akshay Kumar to present Bhumi Pednekar-fronted 'Durgavati'

**MUMBAI, NOV 30 (PTI):** Superstar Akshay Kumar on Saturday announced that he is attached to present thriller "Durgavati", featuring Bhumi Pednekar in the lead.

Akshay and Bhumi both took to their respective Twitter accounts to announce the film, which will go on floors in January next year.

The movie will be directed by Ashok. "Excited to announce @bhumpednekar in and as #DURGAVATI. A scary-thriller, going on floor mid-January. Presented by #CapeOfGoodFilms and @itsBhushanKumar, produced by @vikramix and directed by Ashok. Need your love and luck @TSeries @Abundantia\_Ent," Akshay tweeted. Bhumi thanked her 52-year-old "Toilet: Ek Prem Katha" co-star for believing in her.



"I have waited so long to share this one with you. So excited to announce my next film #DURGAVATI. A scary-thriller going on floor mid-January. Thank you @akshaykumar sir for your constant belief in me. I am so excited for this one @itsBhushanKumar @vikramix

"Cant wait to collaborate with you Ashok sir. This one comes with great responsibility. Need all your blessings @Abundantia\_Ent @TSeries #CapeOfGoodFilms" she posted on the microblogging site.

Bhumi is currently awaiting the release of "Pati Patni Aur Woh" which also stars Kartik Aaryan and Ananya Panday. She will also be seen in Vicky Kaushal-starrer "Bhoot part one: The Haunted Ship" and Karan Johar's "Takht".

## It's a wonderful script: Karen Gillan on 'Guardians 3'



**LONDON, DEC 1 (PTI):** "Guardians of the Galaxy" star Karen Gillan says she is happy to have James Gunn back as the director of the third installment in the superhero franchise.

In March, Disney reinstated Gunn as the director of the "Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol 3" almost a year after he was fired by the Marvel Studios' parent company when his old, offensive tweets resurfaced on social media.

"We're all really excited that James is back to complete the trilogy because it wouldn't

have felt right without him," Gillan told Yahoo Movies UK.

The Scottish actor, who plays Nebula in Marvel Cinematic Universe, revealed that Gunn has penned a "wonderful" script for the third part.

"I can say that I've read it and it's amazing. It's a wonderful, wonderful script," she added.

The star said Chris Pratt's Star-Lord and Dave Bautista's Drax will also return for the upcoming film.

## Kid Rock removed from stage after tirade against Oprah Winfrey

**LOS ANGELES, DEC 1 (PTI):** Singer Kid Rock was taken off stage during a performance at Nashville after he launched an abusive tirade against Oprah Winfrey.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the 48-year-old musician was performing at Honky Tonk bar when he started using derogatory language in reference to the media mogul.

Winfrey was not the only one Rock targeted during his performance. He used derogatory words for veteran comedian Joy Behar and TV presenter Kathie Lee Gifford.

In a video clip that went viral on social media, the crowd appeared to be shocked by the musician's rant.

Someone can be heard saying in the vid-



eo, "This is crazy. He's racist. Look at him he's blacked-out drunk as f\*\*k."

Towards the end of the clip, Rock is physically removed from the stage by a uniformed officer.

He later took to Twitter and again targeted Winfrey.

"My people tried to get me to do 'The Oprah Winfrey Show' years ago and her people wanted me to write down five reasons why I loved her and her show...I said f\*\*k that and her. End of story," Rock tweeted.

This is not the first time that Rock has spoken against Oprah. In a 2008 interview with The Independent, he had referred to her as his "real-life villain".

**DEAR READERS,**  
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**ARIES:** Spoiler alert, Aries: they want you as much as you want them. This phase of your life requires you to be the most proactive version of yourself. Let your desires be known. Somebody who really wants to make things work will be happy to meet you halfway.

Tip: Let your desires be known, wild one.

**TAURUS:** This is a challenging time for you, Taurus. Beware of making the loss, pain and separation part of your narrative. Today brings with itself the reminder that all is not lost. It is your misunderstandings that are creating a veil of separation.

Tip: Communicating your needs is sure to lessen the pain.

**GEMINI:** You are many things, Gemini, but a victim is certainly not one of them. Feeling that you are at the mercy of your circumstances is keeping you from seeing the grand opening. Let go

of the fear that each action will take you a few steps back. Resolve to move out of your comfort zone, no matter how safe it feels to stay inside. This is the week to rediscover your wings.

Tip: Realise your true potential.

**CANCER:** It's not always calling each other every day or making grand declarations on social media. It's about showing up when it matters the most, Cancer. The Universe is reminding you who your real friends are. Remember, it's okay to reach out when you need a sounding board. Those in committed relationships will find that they are stepping into a time of harmony and emotional stability.

Tip: Reach out of you need a sounding board.

**LEO:** The true test of compatibility? How you survive the stormy weather. Be warned: sudden changes are on the cards. Changes that could pull the rug

from beneath your feet and make your question the foundation on which you have built your life.

Tip: Make love to the winds of change.

**VIRGO:** The secret to long-lasting relationships: open and honest communication, respect for each other's journey, trust, acceptance and unconditional love. You might not have got it right the first time around, but you're learning to perfect your recipe with time.

Tip: You have built a solid foundation for yourself.

**LIBRA:** There's nothing wrong with fun and games if you're both on the same page, Libra. Allow yourself to be wooed and pursued. Allow yourself to be treated like Cleopatra reincarnated. Coupled Venetians will find that this is a time of renewed passion.

Tip: Get in touch with your wild side.

**SCORPIO:** "Maybe our girlfriends are

our soulmates and guys are just people to have fun with." What Carrie Bradshaw said, Scorpio! This day calls for joy, celebration, and madness. Don't let the Gregorian calendar be the reason you put fun off until the weekend. Is there a certain friend who is planning to visit you soon?

Cosmic tip: Call on your girlfriends for that much needed support and cheer.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Why are we so quick to judge, Sagittarius? Despite how things appear on the outside, you will discover that there are more similarities than differences. Open your heart, Sag. Your soul circle is ready for an upgrade.

Tip: Expand your social circle.

**CAPRICORN:** You know what's sexy? The ability to take life by the horns, not back down in the face of adversities, and continue to believe in your dreams. It is this attitude that is making

both the Universe and your suitors weak in the knees. Coupled Capricorns, this is the time to adopt a no hold barred policy in the bedroom.

Tip: Grab life by the horns.

**AQUARIUS:** What's keeping you from making that bold move? Don't let fear and inhibitions dampen your spirits. You have come so far, Aquarius. Continue to choose love over everything else. Some of you may be struggling to listen to your inner voice.

Tip: Turn down the noises outside.

**PISCES:** You know what enhances the flavour of your relationship? Shared experiences. Stop adulting already, Pisces. The cards are reminding you of the importance of letting your hair down and experimenting with the new. Is there a new brewery you've been meaning to visit?

Tip: Let your hair down.