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SummitTIMES

Vol 05 | Issue 10 | Gangtok | Sunday | 12 January 2020

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

Melli reaches semis of inter-constituency football tournament



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

Melli has reached the semi-final round of the ongoing Inter-Constituency Football Tournament today.

The third quarter-final match played at Jorethang ground in South Sikkim, Melli edged past

Lachen-Mangan 3-2 to secure its place in the semi-final round of the tournament.

The last quarter-final match of the tournament will be played between Soreng-Chakung and Upper Tadong on Sunday.

Zoom-Salghari and Barfung are already in the semi-finals.

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CM proposes tourist permit system in districts to ease traffic in Gangtok

Suggests setting up of committee to address traffic congestion in Gangtok

GANGTOK, 11 JAN (IPR):

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang (Golay) today suggested setting up of a committee that would work towards solving the crisis of traffic congestion in the State capital. He also proposed the creation of tourist entry permit systems from the districts and sub-divisions so that public visits to the state capital can be brought down, thereby decreasing the congestion on the roads as well.

He said this while chairing a meeting at the conference hall of New Tashiling Secretariat today in regards to the existing traffic management issues in the capital Gangtok and the possible remedies.

The meeting was attended by Cabinet Ministers, Chief Secretary, Director General of Police, Heads and representatives of the concerned departments and government agencies, and members and representatives of civil society and

the Chamber of Commerce.

The primary aim of the meeting was to discuss and deliberate upon the traffic problem plaguing the state capital and the various solutions being considered towards solving this public menace.

Chief Minister, Mr Tamang while addressing the meeting, reiterated the commitment of the State government towards solving the rising problem of road congestion in the State capital and stated that unless bold and concrete measures are initiated, this problem will continue to remain unsolved.

He took note of all the possible solutions that are being considered and explored by the concerned departments and government agencies and said that any project that is solution oriented should be immediately worked upon. He communicated that the problems being faced by the general public are being taken up as top priority



by the State government and stringent measures are being considered and will be formulated soon to bring relief to the common citizens.

The Chief Minister took note of all the possible alternate routes that are being proposed towards decongesting

the roads in the capital and also suggested the opting of one-way routes for the traffic in the state capital.

He also directed the stakeholder departments and agencies to carry out public sensitisation drives and drills before implementing major changes

regards the vehicular movement in the capital. He suggested the relocation of certain taxi stands and government services outside of the main town and took note of the feedback received from the officials and stakeholders in this regard.

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High Court rejects insurance co's appeal, enhances compensation

Family of 10-yr-old who died in accident to get Rs 8,28,739 plus interest

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 JAN:

The High Court of Sikkim has turned down an appeal filed by National Insurance Company against compensation awarded by the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal to the family of a 10-year-old boy killed in a road mishap at Nagi in South Sikkim on 03 Feb, 2018.

The child died from injuries sustained after being hit by a Bolero.

The Tribunal, in its order passed in November last year, had directed National Insurance Company, which had insured the vehicle in

question, to pay the victim's family Rs 7,88,739 plus interest at 10% per annum from the date of filing of the claim petition [14 May, 2018] till full and final payment.

As has become the norm, the insurance company appealed against this decision of the Tribunal and its appeal was heard in the High Court of Sikkim on 06 December, 2019.

Pronouncing the judgment on 17 December, Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan rejected the appeal and upheld the Tribunal's award in favour of the accident victim's family.

What is more, Justice

Pradhan also noticed that MACT had not included a "filial consortium" while calculating the compensation to be paid out by the insurance company.

"Non-grant of filial compensation would not be just compensation," the judgment records while ordering that National Insurance Company pay an additional Rs 40,000 to the accident victim's mother "as loss of filial consortium."

In layman's terms, filial consortium can be explained as the emotional quotient a child brings to his/ her parents, the emotional component

and the companionship a parent loses in the event of a child's death.

Legally, filial consortium is the right of the parents to compensation in the case of an accidental death of a child, the agency it causes them and the years of love, affection and companionship snatched away from them.

The insurance company's appeal against a Rs 7,88,739 compensation awarded by MACT has thus ended in it now staring at paying out Rs 8,28,739 plus 10% interest per annum from the date of filing of the claim petition till full and final payment.

CS reminds babudom of jurisdictions and procedures

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

Chief Secretary SC Gupta, in a circular issued on 09 Jan, has reminded government officials about what can only be called the basics of departmental functioning, spelling out rules codified in the Sikkim Government Rules of Business first notified by the Home Department on 16 May, 1975.

The Circular opens with the clarification that Heads of Departments, whether secretaries, additional chief secretary, principal secretary or commissioner-cum-secretary, shall be deemed to be secretaries for the purpose of the rule mentioned earlier.

Similarly, Ministers, he reminds, are "primarily responsible

for the disposal of business pertaining to that Department and can issue standing orders and directions to his department.

Any matter in which consultation with other departments is required under the rules shall be decided by the Ministers or the Council of Ministers.

The Circular also reminds that no department can authorise any order which effects the finances of the State without proper consultation with the Finance Department. The orders in question here relate to creation of posts, making appointments, committing financial liabilities, involving any grant of land or assignment of revenue etc.

Exercise of finan-

cial powers are subject to specific provisions in the budget, proposals processed by the Finances and Planning & Development departments and when expenditure sanctioned in non-recurring, the Circular details

The Circular further reminds that the Council of Ministers is collectively responsible for all executive orders issued in the name of the Governor which can be authorised by individual Ministers on matters pertaining to his portfolio or by the Council of Ministers in its meetings.

Noticeably, the Circular then reminds government officials that all papers relating to any matter that is required to be sub-

mitted to the Cabinet or to the Chief Minister should be submitted through the Chief Secretary who can also ask to see any paper relating to any case in any department and submit it with his comments to the Minister concerned or CM.

All cases of confusion when it comes to departmental jurisdictions are to be referred to the CS for a decision. The Circular directs all departments to bring these rules to the notice of all concerned and ensure strict compliance.

"The HODs will be responsible for compliance of the rules both in letter and spirit without any deviation from the prescribed procedure," the CS signs off.



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Redressal of complaints against entities regulated by RBI / any Department of RBI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up various fora for grievance redressal at their Offices across the country. Any member of public who has a grievance relating to deficiency in service by the entities regulated by RBI viz; Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Co-operative Banks or Non-Banking Financial Companies (registered with RBI under Section 45-IA of the RBI Act, 1934), Digital Transactions conducted through non-bank entities regulated by RBI (under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007), Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) or against any Department of the RBI, may file his / her complaint online through the **Complaint Management System (CMS)** at <https://cms.rbi.org.in> >> **File a Complaint** along with full details / facts and supporting documents.

Complaints from any member of public who has a grievance as stated above and cannot apply online can also be submitted by post / hand delivery / e-mail at the following address provided for respective forum as given below:

1. Consumer Education and Protection Cell (CEPC)

(for redressal of complaints not covered under Ombudsman Schemes of RBI)

Name & designation of Officer:

Shri R.V. Sangvai, General Manager & Officer-in-Charge
Address: Reserve Bank of India, Tseyang Dzong Building, Amdo Golai, Tadong, Gangtok – 737102

Telephone No 03592-281118 / 281117

Fax No 03592- 281113

Email ID: cms.cepcgangtok@rbi.org.in

Office time: 09:30 hrs. to 17:45 hrs.

2. Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 2006 (BO Scheme) 2006

(for redressal of complaints against banks covered under and on grounds listed in Clause 8 of BO Scheme)

Office of the Banking Ombudsman (Kolkata)

C/o Reserve Bank of India

Address: 4th Floor, Reserve Bank of India, 15 Netaji Subhash Road, Kolkata-700001

Telephone No 033 2230 6222/5580 Fax No 033 2230 5899

E-mail Id cms.bokolkata@rbi.org.in

Office time: 09:30 hrs. to 17:30 hrs.

3. Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC-O Scheme), 2018

(for redressal of complaints against NBFCs covered under NBFC-O Scheme and on grounds listed in Clause 8 of NBFC-O Scheme)

NBFC Ombudsman (Kolkata Zone) *

C/o Reserve Bank of India

Address: 4th Floor, Reserve Bank of India, 15 Netaji Subhash Road, Kolkata-700001

Telephone No 033 2262 8772 Fax No 033 2230 5899

Email ID: cms.nbfcokolkata@rbi.org.in

Office time: 09:30 hrs. to 17:30 hrs.

Note: - *The Jurisdiction of NBFC Ombudsman for Kolkata Centre/Zone covers West Bengal, Sikkim, Odisha, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Bihar and Jharkhand.

NOTE: Complainant MUST indicate his/ her name, address and contact number in the complaint.

4.Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions (OSDT, 2019)

_(for redressal of complaints against system participants as defined under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 covered under and on grounds listed in Clause 8 of OSDT)

Ombudsman for Digital Transaction (Kolkata)

C/o Reserve Bank of India

Address: 4th Floor, Reserve Bank of India, 15 Netaji Subhash Road, Kolkata-700001

Telephone No 033 2262 8772 Fax No 033 2230 5899

Email ID: cms.odtkolkata@rbi.org.in

Office time: 09:30 hrs. to 17:30 hrs.

5.Complaints against Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)

For complaints against DICGC, members of public can lodge the complaint at following address/e-mail Id:

Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)

The General Manager

DICGC, Complaint Redressal Cell

RBI Building, 2nd Floor

Opp. Mumbai Central Railway Station

Mumbai – 400 008.

Complainant can also approach Smt. Rita Sarkar Moria, General Manager on Telephone No. 022-23019633 Ext. No. 8201 or through e-mail dicgc@rbi.org.in

Note 1: For filing complaint under the BO Scheme, 2006 or NBFC-O Scheme, 2018, OSDT 2019 or CEPC, the complainant may please note that he / she should first approach the branch of the bank / NBFC/ system participant for redressal of his / her grievance. If the grievance regarding deficiency in service listed in Clause 8 of the respective Ombudsman Schemes against any bank / NBFC/ System Participant is not redressed within 30 days or if complainant is not satisfied with the reply given by the bank / NBFC/ System Participant concerned, he / she can approach the concerned Ombudsman anytime within one year of receipt of reply from the bank / NBFC/ system participant or where no reply is received, anytime within one year and one month from the date of representation to the bank / NBFC/ system participant.

Note 2: Complaints to the Ombudsman against banks/ NBFCs/ System Participants and to the CEPCs against bank/ System Participants can be filed on the basis of location of branch or office of the respective entity. For centralized operations and complaints to CEPCs against NBFCs, the complaint can be filed before the forum within whose territorial jurisdiction the billing / declared address of the customer is located.

Appeal against decision of Ombudsman

Appeal against decision of Banking Ombudsman / NBFC Ombudsman / Ombudsman for Digital Transactions can be filed online on CMS at <https://cms.rbi.org.in> >> **File an Appeal** or sent to the Appellate Authority, Reserve Bank of India, Consumer Education and Protection Department, Central Office, 1st Floor, Amar Building, Sir P M Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 001 within 30 days of receipt of the communication of the respective Ombudsman's decision, only if the complaint is closed under the appealable Clauses of the respective Schemes.

Hindustan Aeronautic Sporting Club signs up Nima and Robin

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 11 JAN:**

Two Sikkimese footballers have been selected to play for Hindustan Aeronautic Sporting Club, Bangalore.

In facebook post, former Indian football team skipper, Bhaichung Bhutia, writes, "It's a beautiful day here in Gangtok today and I'm so

thrilled to announce that I'll be sending these two talented boys Nima Tamang, 20 and Robin Chettri, 22 from Kabi Lungchok to play for the very reputed Hindustan Aeronautics Sporting Club in Bangalore. The technical support is provided by BBFS. Good Luck lads. Make me proud."



ATK have plenty at stake against Kerala Blasters

KOLKATA, JAN 11 (PTI): ATK are set to lock horns with Kerala Blasters in what should be an electric Hero Indian Super League (ISL) clash at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan here on Sunday.

ATK, two-time champions, and Kerala Blasters, two-time runners-up, have some history between them in the ISL. On both occasions that ATK won the title, it was the side from Kochi that they vanquished in the final.

However, Kerala are unbeaten in the last five matches against ATK and the home team will want to turn the tables this time, especially given that Kerala defeated them 2-1 in the reverse fixture in Kochi in the opening game of the season.

"In the opening game, they didn't know anything about us and we didn't know anything about them. This game I know exactly where their weaknesses are and how are they scoring. I have a good game plan. I have never lost against ATK. So, I hope to get another win," said Kerala Blasters coach Eelco Schattorie.

ATK have been in brilliant form this season, with the in-form duo of

Roy Krishna and David Williams powering their attack that has scored 21 goals in 11 matches -- second only to FC Goa.

Krishna and Williams alone have contributed 13 goals.

However, Williams' participation in this game is doubtful, after he picked up an injury.

"We don't know whether Williams will play. We will decide before the match. But my idea of football is not dependent on individuals," said ATK coach Antonio Habas.

Habas received telling contributions from their Indian players, with Pronay Halder and Michael Soosairaj scoring in their win over Mumbai City FC in the last match. The likes of Prabir Das and Sumit Rathie have also impressed.

"I understand perfectly the Indian players. We have good Indian players. For us it is easy. Pritam (Kotal), Arindam (Bhattacharya), Prabir are all good players. Sumit is a top player too. He has good ideas and is a good defender. (Give him a) couple of years more, he could be in the national team," said Habas.

It is no surprise that they sit third on the table with 21 points and will go level with FC Goa at the top with a win.

Kerala Blasters also have an in-form strike partnership in Raphael Messi Bouli and Bartholomew Ogbeche which has contributed 11 goals so far. But their defence has been plagued by injuries and inconsistencies that has seen them pick just two wins in 11 matches.

The second of those wins came in the last match, a resounding 5-1 win in which both Messi and Ogbeche found the net.

"We are the only team with seven foreigners and out of them, six have been injured (at some point in time). We have struggled with our defence. In the midfield also we have had to make constant changes. I have not been able to field the same XI in two successive games," said Schattorie.

Now placed eighth on the table, they badly need a win to take them within 2 points of fourth-placed Mumbai City.

Kerala will hope to repeat their feat from last season and boost their top-four hopes while ATK will look to continue their impressive form while exacting a measure of revenge.

year. I see myself coming in anywhere for 5 to 7.

"I had opportunities in the World Cup to take it a bit deeper - one against South Africa stands out to me - to be that match winner," the Australia vice-captain noted.

Australia had won the last ODI series in India 3-2 and Carey says they are determined to improve upon their performance.

"These are some really tough conditions over here playing in India and some exciting challenges in the next week. Me personally and the rest of the boys are really determined to back up the series we had last year," he said.

Carey also said that Australia in the past have shown that they are good enough to play in India.

"It's going to be some great, tough cricket coming up. We've got some world-class players in Warner, Smith, Marnus is coming off lots of runs, and Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, so I don't think we need to doubt our abilities. We've shown in the past we're good enough over here," he said.

"We have some world-class players in the top with (Aaron) Finch, (David) Warner, (Steve) Smith and Marnus Labuschagne is playing so well. Peter Handscomb had a great series here last

SikkimSCAN

Shillong's Rynthi FC enters semis of CM's Gold Cup

CHITISH CHETTRI

JORETHANG, 11 JAN:

Rynthi FC, Shillong, has entered the semi-final of the 9th All India Chief Minister's Gold Cup International Football Tournament 2020 underway at Jorethang, South Sikkim. The Shillong club thrashed Sikkim Youth Club by 5-1 goals to secure its berth in the semi-finals.

Chief guest of today's programme was former Deputy CM, PT Lucksom along with the guest of honour SKM Incharge Rangang Yangang, RK Basnet and South Dis-

trict Football Association (S DFA) members.

Sheen Sohktung, jersey no 7 scored two goals, Donald Diengdon, jersey no 50, Ronald Lyngdon, jersey no 46 and Manbha Lawphniaw, jersey no 15 scored a goal each for Rynthi FC, Shillong, whereas Tsheten Bhutia, jersey no 21 scored the lone goal for Sikkim Youth Club.

Sheen Sohktung, jersey no 7 of Rynthi FC, Shillong, got the title of "Hero Of the Match" along with the cash prize of Rs. 10,000.

S DFA also felicitated



the chief guest and guest of honour during the programme.

SSB Rhenock distributes Solar Street Lights

GANGTOK, 11 JAN (PIB):

Distribution of Solar Street Light ceremony of Civic Action Programme in North East Region was organized by 69th Bn Sashastra Seema Bal Rhenock on 10 Jan, 2020, by chief guest Deputy Inspector General, BK Pal, SHQ SSB Gangtok in community hall Rongli under the AOR of 69th Bn SSB.

During the ceremony, Second-In Command Offg Commandant, Vikas Kumar and Dy Commandant, Niraj Kumar Singh and Dy Commandant (MO), Dr Doma Lachenpa and Asstt Commandant, Amit Sharma along with civil guest, BDO REGU, Bheem Pradhan and Forest Officer Rongli, Revenue Officer Rongli and president Regu Rongli,

Shivkumar.

During the distribution of Solar Street Light, chief guest, Mr Pal, thanked all participants and distributed solar street lights to all participants. A medical civic camp was also organized by Medical Officer of 69th Bn SSB at Rongli and distributed life saving medicines coming the people.



Mixed reactions to demolition of apartment complexes

KOCHI, JAN 11 (PTI): Reactions were mixed from among the thousands who watched the demolition of two illegal apartment complexes at Maradu here on Saturday, with one saying it was a stern warning to those flouting rules and others saying it has only created serious ecological and financial issues.

As the two complexes were reduced to rubble in seconds through controlled implosion, a youth from Alappuzha hailed the Supreme Court order and said it was a stern warning to those who undermine the legal system of the country and violate it using their money power.

"I came here early this morning from Alappuzha to experience the rarest of the rare visuals", he said.

Tony P Emmanuel, a social worker from Elanji in Ernakulam district, said such a strong decision

by the apex court would send across a message to people across the country that the law of the land should be respected.

"The Supreme Court intervened at the right time because such violations are rampant in coastal areas of Kerala.

I think none will now dare to violate rules for their vested interests," said Emmanuel, who watched the demolition of the apartment complexes live on TV.

However, some others said the buildings should not have been demolished as the owners had bought the flats spending their lifetime savings. "The law should be for the benefit and welfare of the people. By this demolition no one has benefited. On the other hand, it has created serious ecological issues," advocate N Nambiar said.

Sreekumar, a manag-



er in a private company in Idukki district averred that nothing would be gained from this exercise.

"The demolition has caused severe losses--both financially and ecologically", he said.

He reached Maradu this morning to watch the demolition, which he described as a "rare lifetime experience".

The two high rise apartment complexes--Holy Faith H2O and the twin towers of Alfa Serene Apartment-- were demolished on Saturday

using controlled implosion as authorities began implementing the Supreme Court order to bring down four waterfront structures in Maradu Municipality here.

The two other apartment complexes--Jain Coral Cove and Golden Kayaloram--will be brought down on Sunday in compliance with the Apex Court order.

A total of 343 waterfront flats were built in the complexes, violating Coastal Regulation Zone norms.

The Supreme Court had in September 2019 directed demolition of the apartment complexes within 138 days, a time line given by the Kerala government.

On May 8 last year, the apex court had directed that these buildings be removed within a month as they were constructed in a notified CRZ, which was part of the tidally-influenced water body in Kerala.

The court had passed the order after taking note of a report of a three-member committee, which said when the buildings were built, the area was already notified as a CRZ and construction was prohibited.

Though the residents staged protests for several days refusing to vacate, later they relented.

The court has ordered an interim compensation of Rs 25 lakh each to the owners of the

Carey keen to emulate MSD in winning close games

MUMBAI, JAN 11 (PTI): Wicket-keeper batsman Alex Carey wants to perfect the art of taking the games deep and finishing them off for Australia just like the legendary Mahendra Singh Dhoni has done it for India.

"I still have lots of areas in my game I want to improve on and get better at. I know I will probably bat middle to lower order so it's trying to finish games off for Australia. When you look at the best in the world like MS Dhoni, you want to learn as much as you can from him," said Carey.

"I was lucky enough to play against him (Dhoni) last year, just the way he took the game deep and won the games for India. I aspire to do that one-day," Carey told reporters here ahead of their first practice session at the Wankhede Stadium.

The 28-year-old Carey admits that the series against India will be a tough one, especially facing the likes of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami.

"Coming back to India, you know it is going to be a tough contest through the

middle. We will probably have lots of spin through the middle and then at the end with world-class bowlers like (Jasprit) Bumrah and (Mohammed) Shami.

"It's just about keeping it simple and playing my role. It's about wicket-keeping and playing middle to lower order. Three very tough games of cricket coming up for us and what a way to start in Mumbai," added Carey, who was Australia's second-best player in 2019 World Cup.

Saying that his team had world-class players at the top, Carey sees himself coming in lower down the order.

"I'm not too fazed where I come in. It's going to be a lot of the time dependent on situation of the game. Hopefully your No.5, 6 or 7 come in later in the innings and if I'm batting in one of those spots I am happy enough to do that.

"We have some world-class players in the top with (Aaron) Finch, (David) Warner, (Steve) Smith and Marnus Labuschagne is playing so well. Peter Handscomb had a great series here last

CM proposes tourist permit....

The Chief Minister also proposed the creation of tourist entry permit systems from the districts and sub-divisions so that public visits to the state capital can be brought down, thereby decreasing the congestion on the roads as well. Further, he pitched the idea of a carpooling system for all government officials during peak tourist seasons so as to lessen the vehicular burden on the roads.

In conclusion, he suggested setting up of a committee immediately that would work towards solving the crisis of traffic congestion in the State capital.

Chief Secretary, SC Gupta, while addressing the meeting, stressed on change in habits, infrastructural development and proper traffic management as the possible interventions for mitigation of traffic congestion in the State capital. He advised motivating parents of school children to shift from individualised vehicle system to sending their children in school buses. Keeping in view of certain schools as peak traffic points, he further suggested creating a system whereby parents who are sending their children to school on private vehicles are levied a parking fee collected by police authority for the temporary period of alighting on a monthly basis.

The Chief Secretary also suggested shifting the timing of garbage collection by GMC trucks to late evening to ease traffic woe in the capital. He further said that developing Ranka as a sub-city would also help in mitigating traffic issues with the relocation of general services stores in the said area. He outlined the importance of infrastructure development and traffic management for a paradigm shift in public convenience.

Stakeholder departments like the Urban Development & Housing Department, Rural Development Department, State Traffic Police Division, Transport Department and Roads and Bridges Department presented Power Points on their research and findings on the traffic congestion in the capital and the possible solutions and suggestions to ease it. Solutions like introduction of cable car systems, tunnel transport system, providing more road space, relocation of public services, shifting towards mandatory usage of school buses for students, making walking convenient for the public, reliable and universally accessible and friendly transport systems were discussed and deliberated upon at the meeting.

The Chief Minister took note of the solutions that were offered by the stakeholder departments and agencies and directed for extensive follow up to be done on these so that an immediate solution can be implemented to solve the woes of commuters.

Members and representations of the state civil society and the Chamber of Commerce that included retired bureaucrats, engineers, social workers and businessmen also briefed the meeting on their personal findings and offered suggestions that could be taken up by the state government to tackle the traffic crisis in the State capital.

They also expressed that the commitment and resolve of the state government towards the welfare of the Sikkimese is evident through the invitation to members of the civil society to actively participate in the process of state building.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

Roadside plots for sale at Adampool, Ranipool-Rumtek highway.

For details contact: 9083826462

FLAT FOR RENT/LEASE

Fully furnished 3BHK flat available for rent/lease at Church Road near DPH. Roadside and five minutes walking distance from MG Marg.

For more details: 9083826462 /9832556698

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College.

Flat Land no cutting required. Price 30 Lakhs (negotiable).

Contact: 9800201335

LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Roadside just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593373387 and 9434406761

LAND FOR SALE

An area measuring 1 acre at Sadam South Sikkim near Loretto Convent School at Gupti road. Price negotiable any one interested can contact:

78640-04501,62970-03235, 98320-48410

National Youth Day greetings from CM

GANGTOK, 11 JAN (IPR): Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] has extended warm greetings on the occasion of National Youth Day, celebrated on 12 Jan to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

In his message, the Chief Minister conveys that Swami Vivekananda was a great Indian saint, a pious figure with "high thinking and simple living". The ideals for which

he lived and worked have been a great source of inspiration for the youth. The youth play an imperative role in this transition of a high paced dynamic society to reap organizational and community benefits. The nation requires their participation to achieve the goals and help in taking the Country towards progress to determine the future of the nation.

Observance of National Youth Day seeks

to propagate the philosophy and ideals of Swami Vivekananda. Through his teachings, he wanted to imbibe the young minds with the power to recognize internal strengths and have an optimistic outlook on life.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister has appealed to the youth to implement the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and promote love, peace, and fraternity in the country.

Opportunity for Sikkim's youth to work in Japan



GANGTOK, 11 JAN (IPR): Chief Secretary, SC Gupta chaired a meeting today at the Conference Hall of Tashiling Secretariat organized by the Skill Development Department.

The main agenda of the meeting was to prepare local skilled manpower to be sent to Japan as on the Job Interns/Apprentices under Japan Technical Internship Programme (TITP) especially in IT, Hospitality, Nursing, Elderly Care Sectors. However, such persons should be conversant in Japanese Language and culture.

The Skill Development Department is made the Nodal Department

to carry forward the programme - Development of NE Region of India through Japanese investment under CSR Funding.

Advisor/Short Term Consultant, Tomio Isogai made a detailed presentation having common points between India and Japan for mutual cooperation.

Rajeev Gupta presented details of how to go about training in Japanese language in the Institute.

Chief Secretary, SC Gupta, in his address expressed optimism about the possibilities of exploring the possibilities to send Sikkimese youth to Japan TITP as Interns under CSR funding for preliminary training of the youth in learning Japanese languages.

The meeting had the presence and participation of Advisor/Short Term Consultant, Tomio Isogai, NSDC/Japanese Representative, Advisor, Kazuko Barisic, Founder, Rajeev Gupta, Japan Centre of Excellence, Guwahati, Principal Secretary, K Shrinivasulu, DG-cum-Secretary, Dr Pemba Tshering Bhutia, Director, Higher Education, Director, Commerce & Industries Department, Additional Secretary-cum-CA, Additional Director, Skill Development Department, Additional Director, SICB, OSD, Culture Department, JS-cum-SO, P.O, SICB among other concerned officials.

Abhijit Banerjee lauds Delhi govt schools for outperforming private peers

MUMBAI, JAN 11 (PTI): Education outcomes in state-run schools can be better than the private ones, Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee said on Saturday as he lauded Delhi government schools for "outperforming" their private peers.

He said state agencies have been "generous" with resource allocation for education, which is visible in aspects like teacher salaries and the system, and the focus needs to shift to making them perform better.

The comments from the MIT professor, whose work on poverty alleviation won him the coveted Nobel Prize recently, come

weeks ahead of the Delhi polls.

"Do I think that you can aspire to doing better in the government system relative to the average private school? Yes. The Delhi public schools have done it actually. Results in the Delhi public school system, the government school system like the municipal schools are better than the average private school in Delhi, he told reporters here.

Speaking ahead of delivering a lecture at education-focused NGO Pratham's 25th anniversary celebrations, Banerjee said the Delhi government schools have "outperformed" the private ones.

He said private

schools are "terrible" from an outcome perspective.

Education is largely a state subject under the federal structure of India, but stretched fiscal situations are generally "bad news" for the sector as lesser resources will be allocated, he said, answering a specific question on a Rs 3,000 crore reduction in the Central government's education allocations.

However, he said rather than financial resources, the Centre's focus should be on reforms in human resource development, University Grants Commission and syllabus setting.

He pitched strong-

Sikkim begins Khelo India Youth Games campaign



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JAN:

The third edition of Khelo India Youth Games 2020 started in grand

manner at Indira Gandhi Stadium, Guwahati, Assam on Friday evening.

Sikkim was represented at the opening

ceremony by Sports & Youth Affairs Secretary, Kuber Bhandari, and Director-cum-Nodal Officer, NK Pradhan, along with a six-member athletics team from Sikkim.

Chief Minister of Assam, S Sonowal declared the event open in the presence of Union Minister for Sports, Kiran Rijiju. It may be recalled that the Prime Minister was originally scheduled to attend the inauguration but his visit was cancelled in light of the protests in Assam.

The Sports & Youth

Affairs Department has fielded teams in three disciplines at the Youth Games.

A press communiqué from Sports & Youth Affairs Department informs that Sikkim teams for boxing and weight lifting will be leaving for Guwahati on 13 January.

This time, the Youth Games has 6,800 athletes from 37 States and Union Territories in 20 sports disciplines.

The six-member State athletics team has runners Chandra Kala Sharma, Rinchen Lepcha, Rahul

Darnal, Amisha Gurung, Ranjana Tamang and Sabina Rai, while only weight lifter from Sikkim is Pemba Tshering Sherpa.

Likewise, a six boxers will be representing Sikkim - Samikchya Chettri, Sandesh Mangar, Ani Hang Limboo, Prava Gjmer, Ganga Biswakarma and Krishna Kailash Rai.

Director, SYA, is leading the State contingent as the Chef-de-Mission accompanied by coaches Mukesh Rai, Vabhya Gurung and Phurba Sherpa and Dilip Kumar Chettri.

3,882 foreigners arrested in India in 2018

NEW DELHI, JAN 11 (PTI): In 2018, over 3,800 foreigners were arrested in the country with West Bengal alone reporting 35 per cent of the total crimes committed by them, according to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data.

Altogether, 3,822 foreigners -- 2,859 males and 963 females -- were arrested in 2018 across India, the data stated.

The NCRB recorded 2,128 crimes committed by foreigners in 2018 across the country, while the numbers stood at 2,242 in 2017 and 1,226 in 2016.

During the same year, 517 crimes were committed against foreigners in India, up from 492 in 2017 and 382 in 2016. Delhi alone reported over 36 per cent of such cases in 2018, the NCRB said.

Among all states and Union Territories, West Bengal reported 744 crimes committed by foreigners, constituting 35 per cent of the total number of such crimes across India.

Delhi reported 203 crimes (9.5 per cent) committed by foreigners, followed by 175 in Karnataka (8.2 per cent), 147 in Himachal Pradesh

(6.9 per cent), 138 in Goa (6.5 per cent) and 134 in Maharashtra (6.3 per cent), the data showed.

The maximum number of reported cases, 999 in number, were registered under the Foreigners Act, 1946, and Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, followed by 273 cases under the Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 148 under the Passport Act and 113 of cheating, the data showed.

There were also 16 cases of murder, seven of rape, six of kidnapping and abduction and five of human trafficking.



TENDER NOTICE

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Applications should be collected from the materials office on any working day between 10.00 A.M. - 5.00 P.M. within 25th January 2020. The management reserves the right to accept /reject any tender without assigning any reason whatsoever Sealed Tenders should reach the following address by 25th January 2020, 5.00 P.M.

**Finance Department, Cell No- 9832344451
Club Mahindra, Gangtok
Pin No - 737103.**



SIKKIM STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

Development Area, Gangtok: Sikkim

Phone: 03592-207753, Fax : 03592-207753

"MESSAGE".

Sikkim State Legal Services Authority is organizing National Lok Adalat on Saturday the 08th February, 2020 for the following types of pre-litigation and pending cases viz:

Pre-Litigation

- N.I Act cases under Section 138;
- Money Recovery cases;
- Labour disputes cases;
- Electricity and Water Bills (excluding non-compoundable)
- Maintenance Cases.

Pending in the Courts (which are reflected on National Judicial Data Grid)

- Criminal Compoundable Offences;
- N.I. Act cases under Section 138;
- Money Recovery cases;
- MACT cases;
- Labour disputes cases;
- Electricity and Water Bills (excluding non-compoundable)
- Matrimonial disputes (except divorce);
- Land Acquisition cases;
- Service matters relating to pay and allowances and retiral benefits;
- Revenue cases (pending in District Courts and High Courts only);
- Other civil cases (rent, easmentary rights, injunction suits, specific performance suits) etc. (please specify the category).

Any individual or any department having such matters either pending in Courts/Tribunals/Departments or in pre-litigation stage may approach directly before the Sikkim SLSA, District Lok Adalats or Taluk Lok Adalats for settlement on or before 29.01.2020 at the following address:

- Sikkim State Legal Services Authority, Development Area, Gangtok, East Sikkim. E-mail: sikkim_slsa@live.com Phone No.03592-207753.
- High Court Legal Services Committee, Development Area, Gangtok, East Sikkim. E-mail: sikkim_slsa@live.com Phone No. 03592-207753.
- District Legal Services Authority (East) District Court's Complex, Sichey Gangtok, East Sikkim. Phone No. 03592 284462.
- Taluk Legal Services Committee (East), District Court's Complex, Sichey, Gangtok, East Sikkim. Phone No. 03592 284131.
- District Legal Services Authority (North) District Court Complex, Mangan, North Sikkim. Phone No. 03592 234502.
- Taluk Legal Services Committee (North), Court of Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate, Pentok, Mangan, North Sikkim. Phone no.03592 234383/234514.
- District Legal Services Authority (South) District Court Complex, Namchi, South Sikkim. Phone No. 03595 264356.
- Taluk Legal Services Committee (South), Court of Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate, District Courts Complex, Namchi, South Sikkim. Phone no.03595 263145.
- District Legal Services Authority (West) District Court Complex, Kyongsa, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. Phone No. 03595 250061.
- Taluk Legal Services Committee (West), Court of Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate, Kyongsa, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. Phone no.03595 250061.
- Taluk Legal Services Committee, Court of Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate, Chungthang, Sub-Division, North Sikkim.
- Taluk Legal Services Committee (West), Court of Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate, Soreng, Sub-Division, West Sikkim. Phone n o: 03592-253200.

(published by Sikkim State Legal Services Authority).

R.O. No. 318/ipr/pub/classi/19-20 dt. 07.01.20

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Not Much to Cheer Here

...but the youth keep hope afloat

At a hundred and fifty days plus, we are now a democracy which boasts the ignominy of having shut a section of its people away from internet access for the longest period of time. We say “boasts” because for all the embarrassment this clamp down attracts, the leaders who ordered it and the supplicant institutions which allow it find pride in having shown Kashmiris their place. This is staggeringly unfortunate at all levels. Even when it comes to non-democratic countries, we are beaten in the rankings only by China and Myanmar, the icons of repressive regimes no country should emulate. That should not be the club any country aspires to join, but is now the axis our democratically elected government has made us part of. Is that a clique we are comfortable being bracketed in? The realities are so desperate that we grab at straws now, ferreting out hope even from developments which are routine and even underwhelming. The reference here is to the recent Supreme Court order in a case challenging the communication blockaded in J&K.

What did the Court say that was new? The observation that internet access was part of a citizen’s fundamental rights since it is a tool facilitating freedom of speech and freedom to pursue any trade had already been made by a High Court before the apex court made the observation on 10 Jan. Yes, the Supreme Court observed that internet shutdowns and bans on assembly of people cannot be indefinite and that such denials of the fundamental rights require control and apt justification, they should come under judicial review. This order plays both ways – the government claiming that by not overturning the Centre’s decision to end its J&K clampdown, the Supreme Court had upheld the priority of the move and the free speech petitioners claiming victory because the government was reminded of the rules. They are both right and yet the whole incident is disheartening. The fact that the Courts have to tell the legislative and the executive of what democracy demands and point out that dissent is not mutiny and that Section 144 cannot be imposed just to refuse a protest. Simply put, it cannot be the go-to position every time the authorities want to avoid being called out or when the powers-that-be don’t want to be embarrassed or exposed. But wait, they had to be reminded of this fact? In a democracy? And therein lies the unfortunate reality of our times.

To go on, most of the discussion on the communication constriction centres around people’s right to free speech, but communication platforms are about more than that. Internet is now an important constituent of commerce, of accessing opportunities like applying for courses or employment, even accessing healthcare or travelling... everything actually. Dangling the suspicion that fake news and paranoia will be spread on the same channels cannot be adequate justification for such repressive denials. But the shutdown continues and even now, all that the authorities are required to do is “review” their decision within a week; the same authorities who were convinced that this was necessary to maintain public order! The legality of the restriction has still not been conclusively decided upon and unless those who have issues with it continue running to the Courts and waiting for dates, this will continue because what the order also recognizes is that the right in question can be reasonably restricted, provided the procedures established by law, as pointed out by the court, are followed. This is too subjective and we have all experienced, many times over now, how the current dispensation views its powers and privileges and what it considers a threat. In effect then, we are back to square one and the demands on the citizens to question and challenge have grown stronger.

And that is where one draws hope – in the conviction of the youth to stand up for what they value and their refusal to make compromises that the generation above them has allowed to get institutionalized. A generation sidelined as Facebook-Warriors has reiterated again that it will hit the streets and stay there for issues that matter. They did so with the Jan Lokpal movement, and again with the Nirbhaya protests and demand better from the nation’s collective conscience. The fact that there are noticeably more women holding power to account and staring down regression and bigotry gives India hope. Otherwise, if the established institutions had their way, even the band-aid will be provided only after the bleeding had stopped... or bled out.

WRITE US:

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

Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

Flight PS752: A Deadly Combination of Iran’s Recklessness and Incompetence

AUREL BRAU
THECONVERSATION.COM

The crash of Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752, with the loss of all 176 people on board, including 15 children and 63 Canadians, was a horrific tragedy. It may also prove to be deeply revelatory regarding several seminal issues involving Iran.

Flight PS752 went down shortly after it took off from the Tehran airport, just hours after Iran fired some 15 ballistic missiles at two large bases in Iraq that housed American and allied forces, as retaliation for the U.S. drone strike that killed Qassem Soleimani.

The coincidence of the airline crash and the Iranian retaliation resulted in speculation and suspicion. The Iranian regime immediately and implausibly claimed mechanical problems as the crash cause. Then, as telling evidence emerged that the aircraft actually was brought down by Iran’s own anti-aircraft missiles, Iran’s Civil Aviation Organization chief, Ali Abedzadeh, adamantly denied that the crash was caused by missiles. And then the story changed again: Iran finally admitted that it “unintentionally” shot down the airliner and blamed “human error.”

NO WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Certainly, initial claims by Western intelligence that the airliner was brought down by Iranian missiles deserved careful scrutiny. “Intelligence-based” assertions by George W. Bush and Dick Cheney that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, after all, proved to be starkly wrong.

Nonetheless, it seemed a reasonable conclusion when extremely cautious leaders like Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau asserted



that on the basis of strong evidence, including from Canadian intelligence services, it was highly likely that Iranian missiles shot down the airliner — an assertion backed by the British prime minister.

There was also a video verified by the New York Times that appeared to show an Iranian missile hitting a plane in the air near Tehran’s airport, and by a video trending on Iranian social media showed the same.

Further, there were reports that Iran has been bulldozing part of the crash site, that it did not secure the site as protocol would require, that much of the ground evidence is now gone and that Tehran is refusing to hand over the black boxes to Boeing, the plane’s manufacturer, as normal procedure would demand.

It all strongly reinforced the impression that the Iranian regime was dissembling about the cause of the crash.

LARGER PICTURE OF IRANIAN REGIME

But what’s likely to be most disturbing to the Iranian people is the larger picture of the behaviour of the Iranian regime and its long-term implications.

The theocratic regime has efficiently and violently suppressed all domestic dissent, and carefully but brutally fostered an image of re-

gional and internal invincibility. It’s moved relentlessly to create a Shia arc controlled from Tehran, stretching from Iran to the Mediterranean. There was an aura of invulnerability around Soleimani, who led the Quds Force, representing the tip of the spear of Iranian imperial regional ambitions, domestic repression and world support for terrorism.

Soleimani seemed untouchable. Yet the Americans managed to so effectively reach him and remove him.

The Iranian regime, which threatened “hard revenge” for his targeted killing, settled for symbolic and feckless face-saving. Some of its ballistic missiles malfunctioned and others, either by design or prudent allied defence measures, failed to inflict any casualties when fired at U.S. bases in Iraq.

The response revealed something more than just fecklessness. The efficiency that the Iranian regime has repeatedly demonstrated in repressing any internal dissent seems to have evaporated when faced with an unpredictable, narcissistic and vindictive opponent like U.S. President Donald Trump, who chose not to play the game by the old rules.

The Iranian response was not only uncharacteristically weak but it reflected the fear of an all-out confrontation. Iranian overreach met Trumpian unpredictability.

RECKLESS AND INCOMPETENT

The admission by Iran that its missiles brought down the flight is more than just a terrible tragedy.

It’s also revealed a deadly combination of the regime’s breathtaking recklessness and monumental incompetence. That the Iranian regime did not shut down air traffic when it was firing missiles at Iraqi bases, as any normal procedure requires, was nothing short of gross negligence.

The deaths of so many civilians, mostly Iranians, demonstrates the regime’s weakness, incompetence and callous disregard for the safety of its own citizens.

To be sure, the regime in the future may well engage in asymmetrical warfare. Iranian military leaders are bloviating and making dire threats against the United States and the West, but the image of the regime’s invulnerability has been forever punctured by its corruption, melded with its carelessness and incompetence.

For now, the U.S. is imposing additional sanctions on top of the already devastating ones, and Soleimani is gone.

The people of Iran have been demonstrating en masse for months, making it clear they don’t want to die fighting for Iraq, Syria or Lebanon or spend scarce resources that are so desperately needed at home.

They may now more openly begin to blame the regime and become more emboldened.

Perhaps the tragedy of Flight PS752 may also finally convince the Iranian theocratic dictatorship that it’s time to stop pursuing dangerous foreign adventures.

[the writer is Professor, International Relations and Political Science, University of Toronto]

Weinstein Jurors Must Differentiate Between Consent and Compliance

VANESSA K. BOHNS
THECONVERSATION.COM

Did the women accusing Harvey Weinstein of sexual assault consent to his sexual advances of their own free will, or were they coerced?

Jurors’ answers to this question will be critical in determining the outcome of Weinstein’s trial, which began jury selection in New York on Jan. 7.

I’m a scholar of social influence, compliance and consent, and I’ve found that people often fail to fully appreciate the coercive dynamics of situations from the outside.

THE JURY’S TASK

Although more than 80 women have publicly accused Weinstein of sexual harassment and assault, the New York trial comes down to two accusers who say Weinstein sexually assaulted them.

Weinstein has argued that the encounters were consensual and claims as evidence emails and texts showing an ongoing, intimate relationship with one of his accusers following the alleged assault. Weinstein’s lawyer, Donna Rotunno, for her part, has stated, “I believe women are responsible for the choices they make.”

His defense team’s strategy, it appears, will be to cast doubt on the accusers’ accounts, depicting their actions as more autonomous and self-directed than the women claim their actions to have been.

To tease apart these competing accounts, jurors are likely to ask themselves, “Could these women have tried harder to avoid or remove themselves from these situations? Could they have said ‘no’ more forcefully?”

Unfortunately, research suggests that the answers people tend to come up with to these hypothetical questions don’t accurately capture how someone would actually behave in a such a situation.

We tend to imagine that people – including ourselves – would behave in bolder and more forceful ways in response to offensive and inappropriate behavior than people actually do when confronted with such behavior.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

In a classic study, researchers asked one group of women how they would respond to being asked a number of sexually inappropriate questions in a job interview.

When these women thought about this situation hypothetically, 68% said they would refuse to answer at least one of the questions, 62% said they would tell the interviewer the question was inappropriate and 28% said they would walk out of the interview.

However, when the researchers invited another



group of women to take part in what they believed to be a real job interview and actually subjected them to the same questions, not a single interviewee refused to answer even one question, and hardly any explicitly addressed the inappropriate nature of the questions with the interviewer.

Moreover, participants who contemplated being asked these questions hypothetically imagined feeling angry. However, participants who actually found themselves in this situation reported feeling more afraid. Instead of confronting the interviewer out of anger, as anticipated, participants facing the interviewer in reality instead tried to appease him by smiling.

My colleagues and I have similarly found that people fail to appreciate how hard it is for someone to refuse inappropriate, intrusive and romantic requests.

In one of our studies, 86% of participants believed a “reasonable person” would say “no” to an invasive request to unlock and hand over their phone to us to look through, and 72% said they themselves would refuse to do so. However, when we asked participants to do just that, only 3% actually refused.

In another study, participants overestimated by 56% the number of students on a college campus who would refuse to vandal-

ize a library book when asked to do so, and in yet another, we found that targets of romantic advances felt more uncomfortable saying “no” than perpetrators of such advances realized.

COMPLIANCE VERSUS CONSENT

What all of this means is that while people frequently feel coerced into doing things they don’t want to do, others tend not to recognize these coercive pressures.

As a result, we tend to view others’ actions as freer and more autonomous than they experience them. We assume someone must have wanted to go along with something on some level; otherwise they would just have just said “no,” or said “no” more forcefully.

The jury selection process is supposed to uncover potential biases in the hopes of assembling an impartial jury. Much has been made of the difficulty of putting together an impartial jury due to jurors’ preexisting biases against Weinstein.

However, the widespread bias toward interpreting compliance as consent means that jurors are just as likely to have biases against his accusers’ version of events. Unfortunately, these more entrenched psychological biases are less likely to come out during jury selection.

[the writer is Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior, Cornell University]

Modi and Mamata meet at Raj Bhawan



KOLKATA, JAN 11 (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee met on Saturday at Raj Bhawan, amidst ongoing protests across the city against the amended Citizenship Act.

The agenda of the meeting has not been disclosed.

The politically significant meeting between the two leaders took place a short time after the PM arrived in the city on a two-day visit.

The meeting comes at a time when new citizenship law has emerged as the latest flashpoint in the state, with Banerjee's Trinamool Congress opposing the contentious legislation tooth and nail, and the BJP pressing for its implementation.

PM Modi, who will be in Kolkata on Saturday and Sunday, is scheduled to attend the function marking the 150th anniversary of Kolkata Port Trust on January 12 and other programmes.

Modi arrives in Kolkata amidst protests against CAA

KOLKATA, JAN 11 (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in the city on Saturday evening on a two-day visit amidst protests against the contentious CAA and "Go back" slogans.

Modi on his arrival was greeted at the NSC Bose International Airport by Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, city Mayor and state Municipal Affairs Minister Firhad Hakim, West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh and other senior BJP leaders.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was not present at the airport.

The PM's visit comes at a time when West Bengal has been witnessing widespread protests against the contentious Act.

Hundreds of protesters holding black flags demonstrated outside Kolkata airport gate number one crossing.

The police had put up a barricade to prevent them from crossing over to the airport side.

From the airport he took a chopper to the Royal Calcutta Turf Club (RCTC) and from there left for the Raj Bhavan.

As his convoy emerged outside the sprawling RCTC, protesters stood at the AJC Bose Road flyover flank and waved national flags and black flags and shouted slogans against CAA.

During his visit, Modi held a one-on-one meeting with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday evening.

The meeting assumes significance as the new citizenship law has emerged as the latest flashpoint in the state. Banerjee's Trinamool Congress is opposing the contentious legislation tooth and nail and the BJP is pressing for its implementation.



SFI activists assembled near Jadavpur University, Golpark, College Street, Hatibagan and Esplanade areas of the city with placards which read 'Students Against Fascism.' They burnt effigies of PM Modi and union home minister Amit Shah protesting against the "divisive Act".

The Left Front activ-

ists staged protests on Saturday against the new citizenship law in various parts of North 24 Parganas district.

The prime minister will dedicate to the nation four refurbished heritage buildings in Kolkata -- the Old Currency Building, the Belvedere House, the Metcalfe

House and the Victoria Memorial Hall.

The Culture Ministry has renovated these iconic buildings and put up new exhibits, while curating the old galleries.

Modi will also participate in the sesquicentenary celebrations of the Kolkata Port Trust on Saturday and Sunday.

The prime minister and the chief minister will share the dais at programme at Netaji Indoor Stadium. West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar will also be present.

Modi is likely to spend the night at Belur Math, the headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission, on Saturday night.

The West Bengal administration has made elaborate security arrangements for the visit.

Heavy deployment of police personnel was made in different crucial points of the city namely Dharmatala, College Street, Golpark, Hatibagan, Jadavpur, Central Avenue owing to planned protests by several organisations affiliated to the Congress and Left Front parties against the CAA and the proposed countrywide National Register of Citizens.

Police in Bangladesh make arrest in connection with alleged rape of student

HAROON JANJUA

DHAKA, 11 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: Police in Bangladesh have arrested a man in connection with the alleged rape of a student at Dhaka University amid angry protests on campus.

More than 2,000 students and human rights activists – some brandishing placards asking: "Tell me, am I next?" – demonstrated this week following the alleged rape of the 21-year-old student. They demanded the death penalty for anyone found guilty of rape.

Four students went on hunger strike.

"Rape incidents have been increasing in Bangladesh due to leniency in the justice system and I demand speedy justice by hanging of the people committing rape," Sagufta Bushra, a female demonstrator and stu-

dent leader in at the university, told The Guardian.

"This is the way the crime would be stopped," Nurul Haque Nur, vice-president of the university's central students' union, said: "We will call for country-wide demonstrations to ensure justice and demand the early conviction of the culprit through judicial trial."

"We are concerned about our basic rights. I am against the death sentence but rapists should not be spared strict punishment."

Kazi Haque, the local chief of police, confirmed a man had been arrested in connection with the alleged rape and said the investigation was ongoing.

The victim was attacked on the way to a friend's house on the

outskirts of Dhaka on Sunday. She is still being treated for her injuries.

"She is still in trauma and unable speak about the incident," said a friend.

More than 17,000 rape cases have been registered in Bangladesh since 2014, according to a government minister.

Rights groups said the number of rape cases has almost doubled over the past two years, from 732 in 2018 to 1,413 last year.

Prosecution and conviction rates remain low and can take several years to come to trial. A women rights organisation, Naripokkho, conducted a study of reported rape cases in six districts in Bangladesh from 2011 to 2018. It found that only five of 4,372 reported cases resulted in a conviction.

Rape convictions in Bangladesh carry a maximum of 10 years' imprisonment.

Countrywide demonstrations were held in Bangladesh in April last year following the murder of a 19-year-old student, Nusrat Jahan Rafi, who was doused in kerosene and set on fire at her school after alleging that she had been sexually harassed by her headteacher. The police and the school ignored her complaints.

Sixteen people were later convicted and sentenced to death, including Rafi's teacher.

After the brutal murder, the government ordered an estimated 27,000 educational institutions in the country to form five-strong committees, headed by female teachers, to combat sexual violence and harassment.

HC directs 'Chhapaak' makers to give credit to acid attack survivor's lawyer for inputs to film

NEW DELHI, JAN 11

(PTI): The Delhi High Court on Saturday directed the makers of Deepika Padukone-starrer 'Chhapaak' to give credit to a lawyer, who represented acid attack survivor Laxmi Agarwal on whose life the film is based, for inputs she shared with them.

Justice Prathiba M Singh said the changes be made in the movie slides in multiplexes by January 15.

The court pronounced the order on a plea by Fox Star Studio, the producer of the movie, challenging a trial court's Thursday order asking it to acknowledge the contribution of advocate Aparna Bhat.

The film was released in theatres on Friday.

While hearing the plea on Friday, the court had asked the filmmakers as to why they have not acknowledged the lawyer for inputs she shared with them.

It had asked where was the difficulty to acknowledge the advocate and why did the makers even go to her seeking her inputs.

To this, senior advocate Sandeep Sethi, appearing for film director Meghna Gulzar, had said there was no contract between the parties and seeking inputs did not confer any legal right on her to be acknowledged.

Senior advocate Rajiv Nayar, representing film producer Fox Star Studios, had said the trial court did not hear them before passing an order and an ad-interim

ex-parte injunction was passed which is unusual.

Senior advocate Sanjay Parikh, appearing for Bhat, had said she had fought the case for Laxmi pro-bono and was not seeking any publicity and she was approached by Gulzar to get some authenticity in the movie.

He had Bhat's assistance was based on her communication with Gulzar that her contribution would be acknowledged.

The trial court, on Bhat's plea, had directed that the film 'Chhapaak' carry the line "Aparna Bhat continues to fight cases of sexual and physical violence against women during the screening of the film".

The film producer challenged the trial court's order before the high court saying it was

passed one day before the release of the film and if not vacated or modified, it will cause grave injustice and irreparable harm.

The producer sought setting aside of the trial court's injunction order, saying it was passed without any notice or summons issued to them and they were not given an opportunity to contest it.

Bhat, in her plea before the trial court, had said that despite representing Laxmi in courts for several years and helping in the movie making, she was not given credit in the movie.

She had said the filmmakers took her help in the entire process of writing and shooting the movie, but did not give the credit.

act, members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities, who have come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014 and are facing religious persecution there, will not be treated as illegal immigrants but given Indian citizenship.

Delhi court puts TMC MP Mahua Moitra on trial in defamation case filed by Zee Media

NEW DELHI, JAN 10

(PTI): A Delhi court Friday put Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Mahua Moitra on trial for allegedly defaming Zee Media Corporation Ltd.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Vishal Pahuja framed the charges against the politician under section 499 and 500 (related to criminal defamation) of Indian Penal Code.

The court accepted the arguments advanced by advocate Vijay Aggarwal, the counsel for Zee Media, that there was enough evidence against Moitra to put her on trial.

The offence of defamation provides a simple imprisonment which may extent up to two years.

The court had on December 17 granted bail to the politician on a personal bond of Rs 20,000, after she appeared before it in pursuance to the summons issued against her.

The court had earlier asked the parties whether there was possibility of settlement between the parties.

The suggestion was, however, denied by Moitra who said they had a "substantive" case separately going on in another court.

Zee News filed a defamation complaint against Moitra for allegedly making statements against the channel to the media.

The alleged defamatory statements against the channel were made by the MP while she was



speaking to reporters on allegations against her.

Prior to that, Moitra had filed a criminal defamation complaint against Zee News and its editor-in-chief, Sudhir

Chaudhary, in connection with a show aired by it on one of her speeches delivered in Parliament.

The court had on November 4 summoned the accused in the case filed by the politician.

Mamata joins TMC dharna against CAA after meeting PM

KOLKATA, JAN 11 (PTI):

Minutes after holding a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday attended a sit-in demonstration organised by Trinamool Congress students' wing against the CAA and NRC.

The TMC supremo took centre stage among the agitating students who raised slogans against the amended Citizenship Act and the NRC

at the Rani Rashmoni Road here, a few metres away from the Raj Bhavan, where she met the PM.

She said at the dharna that CAA notification will be only on paper which her government will not implement in the state.

Earlier, after meeting Modi, the TMC president had said she told PM to rethink on the issue of amended Citizenship Act and urged him to withdraw CAA, NRC and NPR.

Citizenship on religious basis 'antithetical' to Constitution: Owaisi

HYDERABAD, JAN 11

(PTI): AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Saturday claimed that citizenship granted on "religious basis" was "antithetical" to the Constitution, which was enough reason to oppose the controversial CAA.

He was responding to comments of Home Minister Amit Shah

that opposition was spreading falsehood on the legislation and that the Act was meant to give citizenship and not take it away.

Owaisi also said if a law provides citizenship to six groups but "excludes one," then it is only meant to deny citizenship.

"If a law confers citizenship on 6

groups but excludes one, then its a law to deny citizenship, Shah sb may not like the Constitution, but he has to work within its limits.

Citizenship on religious basis is antithetical to our Constitution & that's reason enough to oppose it," Owaisi tweeted.

According to the

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Djokovic pulls out of Adelaide International

ADELAIDE, JAN 11 (AFP): Novak Djokovic on Saturday pulled out of the upcoming Adelaide International in a big blow to the new tournament.

The world number two has been leading Serbia at the ATP Cup team event in Sydney, where they face Russia in a semi-final on Saturday.

No explanation was given by officials who confirmed his absence from the ATP-WTA tournament, whose women's field is headed by top-ranked Ashleigh Barty.

"We know how disappointed Novak is about not being able to play in Adelaide this year and we hope to welcome him to the tournament next year," tournament director Alistair MacDonald said.

"We understand his decision and wish him the very best of luck for the remainder of the ATP Cup and the upcoming Australian Open."

Djokovic had planned to use the hardcourt tournament in South Australia, starting Sunday, as a final tune-up for the Australian Open Grand Slam, which begins a week from Monday.

Resilience meets resurgence as Indian Arrows host TRAU

VASCO, JAN 11 (PTI): All India Football Federation's developmental side Indian Arrows will host TRAU FC in the I-League here on Sunday.

The Arrows, after six games, find themselves rooted to the bottom of the standings. However, the young Arrows have shown signs of resilience, giving every team a run for their money until the final whistle.

Despite falling short against Mohun Bagan in their previous game, Shanmugam Venkatesh, head coach, Indian Arrows reflected on the positives.

"Mohun Bagan had a difficult time against us and it was not an easy outing at all. Our boys fought neck-to-neck until the final whistle and the experience will surely bear fruits for us in the upcoming matches," he said.

Weighing in on their Sunday opponents, he added, "TRAU, in their last match, found the taste of victory and facing them now would be really challenging. "They are improving constantly and we have to be at the top of our game to get some points."

TRAU, on the other hand, lifted themselves off the foot of the league standings following their maiden victory over city rivals Neroca. Another stat to be taken into account is that the Tiddim Road outfit have been unbeaten for three games now, with their last defeat dating back to almost a month ago, when they lost to Kolkata giants East Bengal on December 14. Speaking ahead of the match, Dimitris Dimitriou, head coach, TRAU FC said, "My boys all are pumped up and it was a great win for us against Neroca. Now we have to start fresh and from scratch. We are looking forward to the game against Indian Arrows match and like any other fixture, this one is very important to us."

Arsenal's Mikel Arteta pleased with commitment of 'terrific' David Luiz

NICK AMES LONDON, 11 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: David Luiz is showing his worth as a leader, according to Mikel Arteta, who believes the player's vast experience should be a powerful force in Arsenal's dressing room.

The centre-back has performed well in the three weeks since Arteta took over as head coach, contributing to some broadly improved defensive showings. He had, along with the rest of Arsenal's backline, shouldered considerable criticism in a disastrous first few months of the campaign, but Arteta has urged him to wield his influence more forcefully and believes the penalty has dropped.

"That's what I wanted to demand of him," Arteta said. "He's a player that has won more trophies than anybody else in that dressing room. We have to use that in a very powerful way. I wanted him to step up, I wanted him to put all his qualities – his personality and his experience – towards the team and he made a big



step forward. I am very, very pleased with him."

Consistency has long been perceived as an issue in David Luiz's career even though, at 32, he arrived at Arsenal last summer with a raft of major honours from spells with Chelsea, Benfica and Paris Saint-Germain. Those early appearances under Unai Emery did little to dispel such notions but Arsenal have kept three clean sheets in their past five matches and Arteta believes the Brazilian can continue turning out commanding performances

every week.

"In the games he has played under me so far he has been terrific," he said. "His attitude in training, the way he communicates with his teammates, his desire to still learn, it's superb. I am delighted with him."

Arteta has taken an intensive, hands-on approach to tightening up a defence that had been calamity-prone in Emery's latter days, tailoring specific training schemes to ensure they can carry out his instructions in and out of possession.

"I have to share my principles and what I ex-

pect from them in every situation on the pitch, which might be a little different from what they do with other managers, but positionally they have to understand what I expect from them," he said.

"For me the most helpful thing for [eradicating errors] is communication. If you are consistently communicating with your teammates around you it makes you stay focused on what is happening all the time. If you don't talk to each other there are always moments or gaps when your focus can go, and

the back four can't have those moments."

Another player from whom Arteta wants a big second half of the campaign is Dani Ceballos, who has shown flashes of form during his spell on loan from Real Madrid but has not played since injuring a hamstring in early November. The attacking midfielder returned to the bench for the New Year's Day win over Manchester United and should be involved in Saturday's match at Crystal Palace.

"Now he is getting much closer to the fitness levels I expect from him to be competing with his teammates," he said. "Obviously he had a long-term injury, he had an adaptation to this league. I know him really well from Spain, I watched him many times. He is a player that can fit our style and now he needs to make a step forward and make things difficult for me and my selection. Now he is ready to step in."

Another creative player, Emile Smith-Rowe, has joined Huddersfield Town on loan for the rest of the season.

'I'm not special,' Jürgen Klopp says, but 'some I work with at Liverpool are'

PAUL WILSON LIVERPOOL, 11 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: It seems Jürgen Klopp can do no wrong at the moment. His Liverpool team are runaway league leaders, victory at Tottenham on Saturday would set a record for the best start to a league campaign in this country and around Europe, and even his youth team proved capable of knocking Everton out of the FA Cup this week. Klopp must have been doing something right in his four years in England, yet on the occasion of another meeting with the erstwhile special one José Mourinho in London the Liverpool manager insists he remains the completely normal one.

"I am 100% normal, nothing special," Klopp said. "This morning, for instance, I woke up, went into the kitchen, made a coffee for my missus, a tea for myself and gave the dog some food. Maybe Pep Guardiola was doing the same, I don't know. I don't know if I have any special talent for management either; I just know that I am busy, I am interested, and I have sensational people around me.

"I make it my job to have smart people around me and I am really skilled at listening to them. That makes life not so difficult, but

I must say the people who own this football club have not put me under any pressure. I didn't have to win a title in my first season, or even the second. The steps we had to make were clear: we wanted to always be in the Champions League, because that gives the club the opportunity to develop, that allows the club to speak to different players. From that everything else has fallen into place."

Klopp is now among the longest-serving of Premier League managers, but denies he has overseen a revolution at Liverpool. Other managers have suggested the time he has been allowed is the crucial factor in Liverpool's resurgence, though every coach knows that the only thing that can buy time is results.

"We have changed a lot of things since I have been here but we have kept a lot of things too," Klopp said. "We have brought some good players in but many of the ones I inherited are still here. The group was already exceptional when I arrived in 2015; competitiveness has never been an issue. The training has always been on a really high level and the better the players around you the better the standard should be.

"What is really impressive at the moment



is that the young boys are closing the gap on the older players. We like to play old versus young on the training pitch when we can – we play the length of two 18-yard boxes and the players love it. For each of the last three years, olds have won easily, by a country mile, maybe 25-10 or something. At the moment, though, the young lads are winning by one. That shows the development and means the players are pushing like crazy in training."

Klopp continues to insist his mind is not set on records despite the prospect of reaching a record 61 points from a possible 63. Manchester City stumbled at this point two years ago in their record-breaking season that saw them

finish on 100 points, but though Liverpool could conceivably surpass that achievement Klopp argues that being single-minded about each game is what has proved successful so far.

"If we had been thinking about breaking records all this time we would not have won the number of games we have," the Liverpool manager said. "All I want to think about at the moment is Tottenham, the way they play, the way they might play against us. We know they will be well organised, and even though they will be without Harry Kane they still have plenty of other players who can create situations"

Liverpool will be back to a more recognisable lineup after the wholesale

changes so successfully made against Everton in the Cup. Klopp recognises that the performance at Anfield was a terrific advertisement for the quality and coaching ability that lie behind a settled first team, though he stresses he did not deliberately set out to embarrass Everton by beating them with a virtual youth team.

"It was just a question of sending out a strong, fit side," he said. "Naby Keita and Xherdan Shaqiri were injured, otherwise I would have used them. I wanted to win the game, and I wanted a team on the pitch to make Everton work. That happened, though don't forget we could have been three goals down at half-time. Adrián saved our lives before we scored our goal."

Man City fans given five-year bans over Sterling racist abuse



LONDON, JAN 11 (AFP): Two Manchester City supporters have received five-year bans from football matches and lifetime suspensions from the Premier League champions' stadium after being found guilty of racist abuse.

Ian Baldry, 58, made a racist comment towards City and England winger Raheem Sterling as he celebrated scoring a goal in a Premier League game against Bournemouth at the Etihad Stadium in December 2018.

The defendant from Yorkshire pleaded guilty in September to causing racially aggravated intentional harassment, alarm or distress.

On Friday, he was sentenced at Manchester Magistrates' Court and also ordered to complete 200 hours of community service and pay 170 pound court costs.

In a witness statement against the defendant another supporter present at the match told police "it was disgusting in this day and age that this was going on.

"I was shocked and offended and felt sick to my stomach when I heard it," Baldry's friend, James McConnell, from Manchester, was heard making racist remarks about two match stewards at the same game. Witnesses de-

scribed McConnell as being drunk and abusive throughout the first half and regularly using foul language to insult the players on the pitch, said Greater Manchester Police.

The 57-year-old went on to make a comment about the race of a Bournemouth player, reportedly defender Tyrone Mings.

A fellow fan confronted McConnell about his behaviour and later reported him to stewards.

McConnell was also spotted shouting similar comments at a City player who took a corner at a home game against Newcastle two months earlier, said police.

He was also sentenced in Manchester after pleading guilty.

Racism continues to scar football, with England's Euro 2020 qualifier in Bulgaria twice stopped due to racism in the stands earlier this season, while Gareth Southgate's team encountered the same issue in another match in Montenegro.

Last season, a banana was thrown at Arsenal striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang by a Tottenham fan, while Sterling was subjected to alleged racist abuse in a match at Chelsea. Numerous football fixtures in Italy have also been marred by racism.

Rodgers doesn't expect England return for Vardy

LONDON, JAN 11 (AFP): Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers doesn't expect Jamie Vardy to end his England retirement despite his prolific form this season.

Vardy has been linked with a return to international football after Three Lions captain Harry Kane ruptured a tendon in his left hamstring that requires surgery.

With Vardy sitting top of the Premier League's goal charts with 17 this season, it would be natural for England boss Gareth Southgate to consider trying to tempt the Foxes star out of his self-imposed exile.

Vardy stepped back from England duty in August 2018, but Southgate recently admitted the 32-year-old is "a ready-made player who could come in if we felt that was the right thing".

With Kane absent for the March friendlies with Italy and Denmark, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that Southgate could lure Vardy back.

Rodgers, though, does not see that happening and he said. "Jamie has made his decision on that. He has always been clear

and I don't see that changing to be honest."

Yet Rodgers has no doubt Vardy could still do a job for the Three Lions. He added: "The question is not whether he can play for England, he can, there is absolutely no question about that. It is whether he wants to."

Rodgers has noticed the benefits of a fresher Vardy not being away on international duty, with the high-flying Foxes reaping the rewards this season.

"I don't think it's just the playing, but sometimes it's the travelling. Sometimes when you go away internationally, you might not train as much, but it is all the travelling and everything else around it," Rodgers said.

"It has given him a chance to refresh, spend some time with his family, do some work in isolation at the club, and obviously when we start back he is always fit and raring to go.

"Any player that gets towards that stage will tell you that later on in their career, when they come out of international football and they have that extra time to recover, that definitely helps them.

Osaka battles, Kvitova cruises to Brisbane semis

BRISBANE, JAN 10 (AFP): Naomi Osaka battled for two hours while Petra Kvitova cruised to victory on Friday as both players booked spots in the season-opening Brisbane International semi-finals.

Osaka's form slipped after the first set but the world number four eventually saw off sixth seed Kiki Bertens 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 at Pat Rafter Arena.

Bertens was on the attack in the second but lost control in the decider when she began to struggle with her first serve.

It was a more straightforward affair for fifth seed Kvitova, who downed American qualifier Jennifer Brady 6-4, 6-2.

Kvitova, a two-time Wimbledon champion who won her first WTA title in Brisbane in 2011,

was in superb touch against Brady, who beat Maria Sharapova and Ashleigh Barty in the first two rounds but was never in the hunt.

"I didn't serve well at all the first game, but since then I served much, much better and that's helped me a lot through this match today for sure," Kvitova said.

"My body's still not falling apart yet, so that's good as well," Osaka, who

burst to stardom by winning consecutive Grand Slam crowns at the 2018 US Open and 2019 Australia Open, will next play either defending champion Karolina Pliskova or unseeded American Alison Riske.

Kvitova faces Madison Keys, who cruised past fellow American Danielle Collins 6-4, 6-1 to secure her berth in the final four.

Collins seemed flat

after two impressive victories in the opening rounds and her opponent never ceded control of the match.

"I don't think Danielle played her best tennis today, but I think I did a really good job taking care of my side of the net," Keys said.

"I served well, returned fairly well, especially in the second set. So I think overall it was just a pretty solid match.

Former Boeing CEO gets \$62.2 million but loses some benefits

WASHINGTON, JAN 11 (AP): The Boeing CEO who was ousted last month for the company's botched response to two crashes and the grounding of its best-selling plane will walk away with 62.2 million, the company disclosed Friday.

Boeing said, however, that Dennis Muilenburg will not get additional severance or a 2019 bonus, and will forfeit stock awards worth 14.6 million.

Muilenburg, who spent more than 30 years at Boeing, also has unexercised stock options that he has held since 2013 and that are worth more than 18.5 million at Friday's closing price.

Muilenburg was fired in late December after failing to get the company's 737 Max jetliner back in the air.



Boeing board Chairman David Calhoun will take over as CEO on Monday. He is a former General Electric and Nielsen executive with a reputation as a turnaround specialist.

Calhoun, 62, will get a

base salary of 1.4 million but potentially several million more in bonuses and stock awards, including 7 million if he gets the Max back in service.

The Max was grounded last March after crashes in Indonesia and Ethi-

opia killed 346 people. It has taken far longer than Boeing expected to fix the plane. This month, Boeing will halt production until it is clear when changes to the plane will be approved by regulators.

Muilenburg was named CEO in 2015 and presided over a rapid rise in the Chicago-based company's stock price. The shares have dropped 26% in the last 10 months, however, as the Max's recovery stalled.

Months before Muilenburg's ouster, some lawmakers and relatives of passengers who died in the Max crashes had asked him to resign or take a cut in pay.

At a congressional hearing in October, Muilenburg parried questions about his compensation by saying it was set by Boeing's board. A few days later, he announced he would not take a bonus for 2019 that he would walk away from tens of millions of dollars as a signal that he was taking responsibility for correcting problems with the Max.

Iran says unintentionally shot down Ukrainian airliner

TEHRAN, JAN 11 (AFP): Iran on Saturday said it unintentionally shot down the Ukrainian airliner that crashed this week killing 176 people, calling it an "unforgivable mistake".

The Ukraine International Airlines plane came down on Wednesday shortly after Iran launched missiles at bases hosting American forces in Iraq in response to the killing of Qasem Soleimani, one of Iran's top generals, in a US drone strike.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran deeply regrets this disastrous mistake," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani tweeted.

"Armed Forces' internal investigation has concluded that regrettably missiles fired due to human error caused the horrific crash of the Ukrainian plane & death of 176 innocent people," he added.

"Investigations continue to identify & prosecute this great tragedy & unforgivable mistake."

Earlier, Iran's offi-



cial IRNA news agency had published a statement from the military saying the Boeing 737 was mistaken for a "hostile plane" at a time when enemy threats were at the highest level.

The admission came a day after Iran's civil aviation chief denied claims that the plane had been shot down, as international pressure mounted on Tehran to conduct a credible investigation after several Western governments blamed a missile strike.

The disaster came

as tensions soared in the region after the Soleimani killing, and fears grew of an all-out war between the United States and Iran.

Washington has said the Soleimani strike was carried out to prevent "imminent", large-scale attacks on US embassies. Iran had vowed "severe revenge" for Soleimani before launching missiles at the bases in Iraq.

"Human error at time of crisis caused by US adventurism led to disaster," Iranian

Foreign Minister Javad Zarif tweeted.

"Our profound regrets, apologies and condolences to our people, to the families of all victims, and to other affected nations." Iran has invited the United States, Ukraine, Canada and others to join the crash investigation.

The majority of passengers on UIA Flight PS752 which had just taken off from Tehran were Iranian-Canadian dual nationals but also included Ukrainians, Afghans, Britons and Swedes.

It was Iran's worst civil aviation disaster since the US military shot down an Iran Air plane over the Gulf by mistake in July 1988, killing all 290 people on board.

Video footage of the UIA 737, which the New York Times said it had verified, emerged and appeared to show the moment the airliner was hit.

A fast-moving object is seen rising at an angle into the sky before a bright flash appears, which dims and then continues moving forward. Several seconds later, an explosion is heard and the sky lights up.

Many airlines from around the world cancelled flights to and Iran in the wake of the crash, or rerouted flights away from Iranian airspace.

Nations around the world have called for restraint and de-escalation, and fears of a full-blown conflict have subsided after US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that Iran appeared to be standing down after targeting the US bases in Iraq.

Oman ruler backs policy that made kingdom vital mediator

11 JAN: Oman's new royal ruler pledged Saturday to follow the non-interference policy that made the kingdom a vital regional mediator under his late cousin Sultan Qaboos who reigned for half a century.

Haitham bin Tariq, the culture minister, was sworn in shortly after modern Oman's founding father was laid to rest after his death on Friday at the age of 79.

"We will follow the path of the late sultan," Haitham, 65, said in his first public speech which was aired live on state television.

He expressed support for "our country's foreign policy of peaceful living among nations and peoples... and not interfering in the internal affairs of others, respecting nations' sovereignty and international cooperation."

Qaboos transformed the Arabian Peninsula nation from a backwater into a modern state with a thriving tourism indus-

try, thanks to the country's crystal waters and scenic mountain ranges.

But it was the sultan's policy of neutrality and non-interference that elevated Oman's standing as a "Switzerland of the Middle East" and made him an important go-between.

Qaboos, the longest-serving leader of the modern Arab world, came to power in 1970 when he deposed his father in a palace coup. His death came after a long illness and he was believed to be suffering from colon cancer.

The late sultan, who was unmarried and had no children, left no apparent heir. Under the constitution, his successor was to be selected in a meeting of the royal family.

If they could not agree, the person chosen by the sultan and named in a sealed letter was to succeed him. State TV said that the letter had been opened, without elaborating as to why.

"Haitham bin Tariq was sworn in as the new sultan of the country... after a meeting of the family which decided to appoint the one who was chosen by the sultan," the government said in a tweet.

- Smooth succession - Many experts had expected the throne to go to Asad bin Tariq, another cousin, who was appointed deputy prime minister for international relations and cooperation affairs in 2017 in what was seen as a clear message of support.

However, analysts said the swift handover boded well for a smooth succession, at a time of heightened regional tensions with the United States facing off against Iran.

"This portrays externally a show of unity that is very important in a volatile region and vis-a-vis concerns that neighbours would have liked to interfere in the process. Instead they closed ranks," Cinzia Bi-

anco, a research fellow at the European Council for International Relations.

Haitham, a sports enthusiast, was appointed to lead the heritage and culture ministry in the mid-1990s and also serves as head of the committee for Oman's "Vision 2040", a roadmap for social and economic reform.

"This is crucial because socioeconomic reforms and reforms of political economy are the most important challenges for Oman, struggling with high deficits, international debt, youth unemployment," Bianco said.

- 'Profound legacy' - Sultan Qaboos was laid to rest at the royal cemetery on Saturday after his coffin, draped in the Omani flag, was driven through the streets of the capital Muscat.

Thousands of people, including members of the royal family and state officials, were present for prayers at the main mosque which is named

after the sultan.

The royal court announced a mourning period that will see businesses and government offices close for three days.

Many Western and Arab diplomats see the sultanate, with its moderate but active foreign policy that includes healthy relations with the US as well as with regional powers Iran and Saudi Arabia, as a model of balance.

As the Gulf's discreet go-between, Oman played a role in Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers while preserving its membership in the Saudi-led Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

"He was a stable force in the Middle East and a strong US ally. His Majesty had a vision for a modern, prosperous, and peaceful Oman, and he willed that vision into reality," former US president George W. Bush said in a message of condolence.

Taiwan votes with future of its democracy on the line

TAIPEI, JAN 11 (AP): The future of Taiwan's democracy is on the line as the self-ruled island's 19 million voters decide on whether to give independence-leaning President Tsai Ing-wen a second term.

Voting began at 8 AM Saturday and wraps up at 4 PM. The vote count will begin soon after, with results expected later in the evening.

Tsai and her main challenger, Han Kuo-yu of the Nationalist Party, both voted shortly after polls opened. Han voted in Kaohsiung, the city in southern Taiwan where he is mayor.

I hope every citizen can come out and vote," Tsai said after casting her vote in Taipei, the capital. You should exercise your rights to make democracy stronger in Taiwan."

For many in Taiwan, months of protests in Hong Kong have cast in stark relief the contrast between their democratically governed island and authoritarian, communist-ruled mainland China.

Tsai said at a final campaign rally Friday night that the election was a chance to protect Taiwan's democracy.

Let us tell the world with our own votes that Taiwanese are determined to defend sovereignty, determined to guard democracy and determined to persist in reforms, she said.

The Nationalist Party's Han has said Taiwan should be more open to negotiations with China, in contrast to Tsai, who has dismissed Beijing's overtures. At his last rally, attended by hundreds of thousands of people in the southern port city of Kaohsiung, he focused on

practical issues such as improving education and the economy.

I want to attract massive investments. I want products to be exported non-stop, he said.

China and Taiwan separated during civil war in 1949, but Beijing still claims sovereignty over the island and occasionally threatens to use force to seize control if necessary.

The Hong Kong protests have undermined Taiwan support for the one-country, two-systems approach Beijing has championed for governing both that former British colony and Taiwan.

Fears of Chinese interference in Taiwan's politics and an uptick in the economy have helped Tsai regain an edge after a dire electoral setback for her Democratic Progressive Party 14 months ago.

The reason why I vote for her is for upholding the value of Taiwan's freedom and democracy and that should not be affected by the other side of the strait (China), Lucy Ting, a college student, said at Tsai's rally on Friday.

The Nationalists have struggled to find candidates who can fire up their pro-China supporters and win over young Taiwanese who increasingly favor the DPP.

Still, the election of former lawmaker Han as Kaohsiung's mayor in December 2018 helped to re-energize the Nationalists, who lost their hold on power four years ago.

Shortly after taking office, Han traveled to China to sign deals to sell 5.2 billion New Taiwan dollars (USD 165 million) worth of Taiwanese agricultural products.

Ukraine demands punishment, compensation for airliner downed by Iran

11 JAN:

President Volodymyr Zelensky demanded Saturday that Iran punish those responsible for the downing of a Ukrainian airliner, pay compensation and apologise.

"We expect Iran... to bring the guilty to the courts," the Ukrainian leader wrote on Facebook, calling also for the "payment of compensation" and the return of remains.

Tehran admitted Saturday that it accidentally downed the Ukraine International Airlines (UIA) plane, killing all 176 people on board on Wednesday, shortly after launching missiles at bases hosting US forces in Iraq.

"We hope the inquiry will be pursued without deliberate delay and without obstruction," Zelensky added.

He urged "total access" to the full inquiry for 45 Ukrainian experts, and in a tweet also sought

an "official apology".

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said earlier Saturday that Tehran "deeply regrets this disastrous mistake".

UIA chief Yevhenii Dykhnne also posted on Facebook, saying: "We never had any doubt that our crew and our plane could be the cause of this terrible catastrophe. They were the best."

Ukraine said Friday its experts dispatched to Iran had been granted access to the flight's black boxes, debris from the plane, the crash site and to recordings of conversations between the pilot and the airport control tower.

Iran's official IRNA news agency published a statement from the military saying the Boeing 737 was mistaken for a "hostile plane" at a time when threats were at the highest level.

Tehran has invit-

He also met with leading officials for relations with Taiwan, including the head of the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office, Liu Jieyi, and ranking Communist Party officials in Hong Kong.

That reinforced his image as a candidate backed by and friendly to Beijing. While Han is not expected to win, his party is fighting hard to overturn the DPP's majority in the 113-seat parliament, officially known as the Legislative Yuan.

A win by Tsai is anticipated to draw more diplomatic, economic and military pressure from Beijing on the island, in a continuation of President Xi Jinping's campaign to compel her administration to endorse its insistence that Taiwan is a part of China.

Tsai has refused to do so, maintaining that Beijing has no claim over Taiwan, although her government has repeatedly called for the reopening of talks between the sides without preconditions.

Since its transition to full democracy beginning in the 1980s, Taiwan has increasingly asserted its independent identity from China even though it is not recognized by the United Nations or any major nation.

The island of more than 23 million people exercises all the roles of a sovereign nation, issuing its own passports, maintaining its own military and legal system and serving as a crucial hub in the global high-tech supply chain.

If reelected, Tsai will face challenges in trying to reform the government and economy and push through unpopular cuts in generous civil service pensions.

ed the United States, Ukraine, Canada and others to join the crash investigation.

The majority of passengers on UIA Flight PS752 from Tehran to Kiev were Iranian-Canadian dual nationals but also included Ukrainians, Afghans, Britons and Swedes

Many in Kiev have compared the crash to the 2014 downing of Malaysian Airlines MH17 killing 298 people over eastern Ukraine where pro-Russian separatists are fighting government forces.

Moscow has denied the findings of international investigators that a Russian BUK missile hit the Malaysian flight.

"Iran has shown itself more civilised than Russia," pro-western Ukraine MP Volodymyr Arieiev wrote on Facebook.

"Tehran has admitted its guilt in three days while Russia continues to try to get out of it."

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Ford Mustang driven by Steve McQueen in 'Bullitt' sells for \$3.4 million

11 JAN:

(Reuters) - The 1968 Ford Mustang GT that Steve McQueen drove in the classic car chase from the movie "Bullitt", one of the most famed cars from American cinema, sold for \$3.4 million at auction in Florida on Friday, Mecum Auctions said.

It was the highest price ever paid for a Ford Mustang at auction, according to David Morton, marketing manager for the auction house in Kissimmee, near Orlando. The buyer has not been publicly identified.

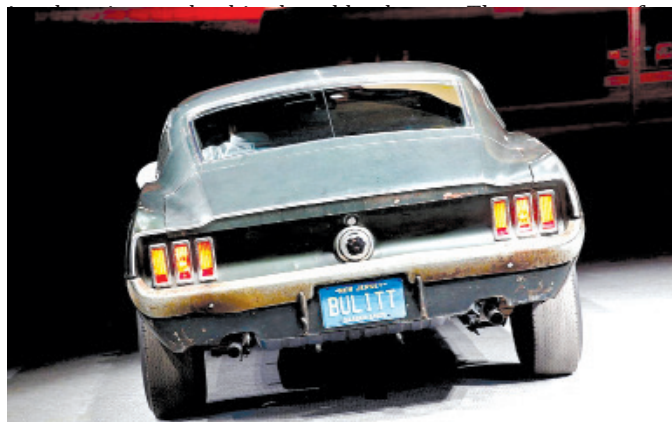
"The hammer dropped at \$3.4 million, but with buyers' fees, the total cost is \$3.74 million," he said, adding it shattered the auction house's previous record set last year of \$2.2 million.

The unrestored muscle car, its "highland green" paint looking rusty and black upholstery splitting apart, starred in a 10-minute sequence in the 1968 film, getting airborne a few times as it sped through the hilly streets of San Francisco.

The car was auctioned without a reserve, or minimum sale price, a risky decision that could have forced the owners to sell low.

McQueen filmed with the window down so viewers could see he was behind the wheel. Although credited as the driver, McQueen actually shared the wheel with Hollywood stunt driver Bud Ekins, according to the movie database IMDB.

Many movie buffs view the chase as ground-breaking for



"I would like very much to keep it in the family, in its original condition as it was used in the film, rather than have it restored; which is simply personal with me."

McQueen died in 1980 at age 50. Robert Kiernan never responded to McQueen's letter, which Sean Kiernan still has, the Times said.

Sean Kiernan told Mecum in a promotional video that his mother drove the car until the clutch failed in 1980. It went nearly 40 years without being driven until recently, with 65,000 miles on the odometer, Kiernan said.

Meghan Markle, Prince Harry Separated From Royal Family Due To Controversial Instagram Pic, Source Says

11 JAN:

Meghan Markle and Prince Harry were driven to resign as "senior members" of the Royal Family, limit their royal duties, and live in Canada part-time due, at least in part, to a controversial Instagram photo the Windsors posted, according to The Times of London. The photo shows the "Line of Succession" to the British throne, and doesn't include Harry or Archie.

Earlier this week, as reported by The Inquisitr, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex shocked the royal-watching world when they announced that they were "stepping back" from their royal duties. While they didn't give an official reason, the couple has been bedeviled by rumors of a rift between their family and the rest of the Windsors, to say nothing of Meghan's souring relationship with her subjects back in Old Blighty.

However, The Times of London pos-

its that the final straw for Harry and Meghan came when the Royal Family's official Instagram account posted a photo of Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles, Prince William, and Prince George.

Those four people are the current monarch and the three who will almost certainly succeed her on the throne, barring any abdications or early deaths. The photo is symbolic, says the Times, of Prince Charles' vision of a "slimmed down" and "less expensive" monarchy.

Neither Prince Harry nor Prince Archie was in the photo. Both are far enough down the line of succession that the odds of either of them every occupying the throne are vanishingly small.

Still, it was their absence from the photo, as well as the absence of any photos of Harry's corner of the family on Queen Elizabeth's desk in her televised Christmas message, that caused

the Sussexes to feel as if they were being excluded from the family.

Public relations expert Nick Ede said that there's no reason for Harry and Meghan to feel excluded. In the light of the family's PR nightmare concerning Prince Andrew, it should not be surprising that Prince Charles, who will almost certainly be king in the next few years, is keen to present a Royal Family free of people so far removed from the throne.

"I think it was a direct way of showing they are streamlining, they are thinking about what do do about taxpayers' money. When the Queen goes, it is going to change, no matter what anyone says," Ede says.

Meanwhile, Megxit, as its being called on Twitter, is moving quickly. Madam Toussad's Wax Museum has removed the figures of Harry and Meghan. On Friday it was reported that Meghan had already arrived in Canada.

What Ever Happened to Josh Hartnett?

11 JAN:

In 2001, at 22, Josh Hartnett was supposed to become the next Leonardo DiCaprio or Matt Damon. His back-to-back roles in Michael Bay's "Pearl Harbor" and Ridley Scott's "Black Hawk Down" catapulted him onto the A-list. He graced magazine covers, the paparazzi stalked his personal life and directors pursued him for blockbusters and comic-book vehicles. But it was too much.

Instead of studio projects, Hartnett spent the rest of his 20s veering toward independent movies — such as "Wicker Park," "Lucky Number Slevin" and "The

Black Dahlia." He turned down the role of Superman in Bryan Singer's 2006 reboot (which starred Brandon Routh instead) and he was on Christopher Nolan's short list to play Batman (before Christian Bale).

Then he seemed to fall off the public radar. In the last decade, he's resurfaced here and there, in some short films and small indies. Hartnett co-starred in "Penny Dreadful," the 2014 horror series that aired on Showtime for three seasons. And he took a break from acting to raise his two kids. Hartnett, now 41, seems to be making a gradual come-

back, with more projects on the horizon, including Guy Ritchie's upcoming drama "Cash Truck." His latest role is in "Inherit the Viper" (now in theaters in limited release), a drama about a family grappling with the opioid crisis.

Hartnett spoke to Variety by phone from London, where he lives part time. "We have a place in the States, too, and we go back and forth," Hartnett said. "My partner" — the actress Tamsin Egerton — "is English. When we started having children, she wanted to be near her family, so we're here a lot of the time to make that happen."

Neil Peart, Rush Drummer Who Set a New Standard for Rock Virtuosity, Dead at 67

Neil Peart, the virtuoso drummer and lyricist for Rush, died Tuesday, January 7th, in Santa Monica, California, at age 67, according to Elliot Mintz, a family spokesperson. The cause was brain cancer, which Peart had been quietly battling for three-and-a-half years. A representative for the band confirmed the news to Rolling Stone.

Peart was one of rock's greatest drummers, with a flamboyant yet precise style that paid homage to his hero, the Who's Keith Moon, while

expanding the technical and imaginative possibilities of his instrument. He joined singer-bassist Geddy Lee and guitarist Alex Lifeson in Rush in 1974, and his musicianship and literate, philosophical lyrics — which initially drew on Ayn Rand and science fiction, and later became more personal and emotive — helped make the trio one of the classic-rock era's essential bands. His drum fills on songs like "Tom Sawyer" were pop hooks in their own right, each one an indelible

his lengthy drum solos, carefully constructed and packed with drama, were highlights of every Rush concert. In a statement released Friday afternoon, Lee and Lifeson called Peart their "friend, soul brother and bandmate over 45 years," and said he had been "incredibly brave" in his battle with glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer. "We ask that friends, fans, and media alike understandably respect the family's need for privacy and peace at this extremely painful and difficult

time," Lee and Lifeson wrote. "Those wishing to express their condolences can choose a cancer research group or charity of their choice and make a donation in Neil Peart's name. Rest in peace, brother." A rigorous autodidact, Peart was also the author of numerous books, beginning with 1996's The Masked Rider: Cycling in West Africa, which chronicled a 1988 bicycle tour in Cameroon — in that memoir, he recalled an impromptu hand-drum performance that drew an entire village to watch.



HAPPY RARE RELEASE DAY! The "Look At Her Now" singer, Selena Gomez gets excited at her album release party at the iHeart Radio theater in Burbank, Calif.

'Modern Family' star Julie Bowen says she needs to keep working because of recent divorce

11 JAN:

Julie Bowen is in no position to put the brakes on her acting career.

The "Modern Family" star attended the ABC Winter Television Critics Association winter tour this week and was asked if she was prepared for the popular ABC sitcom to come to an end.

"Do you know what divorce is in the state of California?" she quipped about her pricey split from ex-husband Scott Phillips (via Us Weekly).

"I love working and I joke about that and I'm actually very good friends with my ex-husband and he knows very well," Bowen continued to the outlet about Phillips. "Like, I would work, no matter what, I would work."

Bowen and Phillips called it quits in February 2018 after 13 years of marriage. According to reports at the time, Bowen and the real estate investor hadn't been spotted together publicly since one year prior.

In 2016, Bowen and Phillips raised eyebrows when her husband did not attend the Emmy Awards with her.



"We just had our anniversary on the day of the Emmys, which was hilarious," Bowen told People at the time. "He's come every year, he's been so supportive and this year he was playing in a tennis tournament and I wasn't nominated as an individual so I said, 'What do you want to do on our anniversary?' I mean it's such an honor to be nominated and to go, but it's tough to be a purse holder."

It was announced this week that "Modern Family" will air its finale after 11 seasons on April 8, and there are no spin-offs in the work involving its latest cast.

The show, also starring Sofia Vergara, Sarah Hyland and Ariel Winter, was an immediate hit and holds the record with "Frasier" for snagging five straight Emmy Awards as television's best comedy.

Aries:

The world drains us in so many ways, Aries. For instance, the constant use of technology and the incessant demands of others. Given that we are under the spell of the full moon and the eclipse, you're likely to feel particularly sensitive today. Be mindful of what you are consuming and who you are letting into your space. It's best to stick to familiar environments and spend time in the company of those who feel like home. Make sure you commune with Mother Nature while you're at it. There is no better way to ground yourself.

Taurus:

James Garfield once said, "The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable." Your thoughts exactly, Taurus. But stage one doesn't have to be this toxic. Seek comfort in familiarity. If you have been taking your mental health for granted, approach a healer or therapist. This will help you look at the situation in an objective manner. Remember, it's not the world first and then you. Self-care requires you to work inside out.

Gemini:

Here's to 3am friends who provide tequila thera-

py, 6am friends who show up at your door with kale smoothies, and the gypsy souls who talk to you about the stars and the moon. You've got quite the coven, Gemini. Each part of the puzzle adds to the beauty and grace of your life in its own unique way. This weekend, you're being asked to celebrate your soul circle and let them know just how grateful you are. PS: For some, this may be a time of introducing their special someone to the crew.

Cancer:

Transformation is seldom easy. But you knew you had to push through in order to strip away the false layers and get in touch with your most authentic self. The Universe is giving you a gold star for showing up even on the days when you were tempted to give it all up. Rising to your power is helping you restore the balance in your relationships. You no longer feel obliged to play the role of the giver and the nurturer in every relationship. Allow others to show up for you in a way they never have.

Leo:

Move beyond the physical identity and become aware of the energy that flows within you. We are

all an amalgam of yin and yang, masculine and feminine, Shiva and Shakti. Each plays an integral role in our consciousness. Therefore, each part needs to be honoured and acknowledged. Today, the cards are urging you to return to a state of divine balance.

Virgo:

Instead of thinking of it as 'me time' versus 'we time', find a balance between the two. Take yourself out for dinner or stay in and do nothing at all. Solitude is sacred, Virgo. It is in these moments that you will have deep revelations and reconnect with your core. The things about being in a good place mentally and emotionally is that it helps you bring your best version of yourself to table. Recognise that what you have is truly a gift.

Libra:

The cards are talking about peace, love and harmony. If you and your boo have been seeing each other for a while, express your innermost feelings. If you two have just got together, you still have the permission to express your feelings. When it comes to matters of the heart, there are no rulebooks, Libra. Trust that they are invested in the future of this relationship as you are. So,

will things work out in the long run? Life doesn't come with a warranty card, and if it did, things would be terribly boring.

Scorpio:

"It is not your job to make something happen— Universal Forces are in place for all of that. Your work is to simply determine what you want." Let this Esther Hicks classic remind you of the importance of single-minded focus. This is a time of inner transformation. You are making a shift from lack to abundance.

Sagittarius:

An Elif Shafak classic that perfectly describes where you are in your journey: "Every true love and friendship is a story of unexpected transformation. If we are the same person before and after we loved, that means we have not loved enough." Your interpersonal relationships are taking centre-stage, Sagittarius, the kind that nurture and inspire you to be a better version of yourself. Give thanks for all the love you have and all that is yet to come.

Capricorn:

'Quality over quantity' is a philosophy that you are now applying to your personal life as well.

You've had your share of party-hopping and being seen at the right places. What your soul desires now is meaningful conversations with you inner circle. Remember, these are dark times that we have found ourselves in. The world around is on the edge for a reason. So practice kindness and compassion with friends and strangers alike.

Aquarius:

Are we the masters of our destinies or are we playing out a script that was handed to us in the beginning of time? Aquarius, there is no doubt that some things are predetermined. But a large part of what will unfold here depends on our free will. The real question is: how do you plan to exercise the power entrusted upon you? Look around you. YPisces: Every once in a while, find the time to look at the stars. The darker the night, the brighter they shine. This simple meditation will bring with itself the reminder that you are a microcosm in a Universe that is infinite in its glory. There is hope for a better tomorrow, Pisces, no matter how bleak things look right now and in this moment. Let this thread of hope help you find that lost sense of purpose and consciously create your own potion of happiness.