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SummitTIMES

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

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**TV producers
seek restart
of DD NE
commission
programme**

SHILLONG, Nov 16 (PTI): A group of North East TV producers on Friday sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to re-initiate the Doordarshan Commission programme for North East, which was stopped in 2012.

A group of producers met Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma at his office here conveying through him to the PM the plight of the TV producers and the TV technicians in the region.

In a formal petition, 29 TV producers from all NE states said, "Many TV technicians like Cameraman, Video Editor, Music Director... are without any job after the commission programme of Doordarshan was stopped in 2012. It is only befitting to reinitiate the North East Special Software Development package, which was started in 1996."

The chief minister assured them that he will take up the matter with appropriate authority.

He said, "In view of the Act East Policy of Government of India, it is only appropriate that the North East is showcased in right earnest to the rest of the country and the world."

**Baby given
date for heart
surgery in
2024 by AIIMS,
gets help
from HCFI**

New Delhi, Nov 16 (PTI): Three-month-old Nancy, who was given a date for heart surgery in February 2024 by the AIIMS, will now undergo an operation next week at a private hospital after her parents approached the Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) for help.

Nancy has a hole in her heart and required an urgent surgery, a senior HCFI official said.

According to her father, Ajay Kumar, a resident of Faridabad, the baby had a cough and breathing problems following which she was admitted at Safdarjung hospital where she was diagnosed with large VSD with severe pulmonary artery hypertension.

Safdarjung authorities advised Nancy's family to take her to AIIMS for surgery following which they visited the premier hospital mid-October.

She underwent several tests which confirmed that she had a hole in her heart and the doctors at AIIMS said that she needed to undergo a surgery for the same.

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Health Dept personnel need to step up, says Chamling

**CM announces pension
for journalists**

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 NOV:

Chief Minister Pawan Chamling today expressed his displeasure over the lackadaisical approach of the Health Department and urged its personnel to live up to the expectations of the public to make Sikkim's healthcare system world class. He was speaking at a National Press Day function held at Chintan Bhawan here.

"If the work culture of our healthcare personnel does not improve, the proposed 1000-bed super-specialty hospital with state-of-the-art facilities at Sichey will go to waste," the CM said.

Mr Chamling stressed determined leadership, effective bureaucracy, responsible citizens and responsible journalism

to be of paramount importance and urged all to work in the interest of the nation.

He said that the newly constructed hospital at Sichey will be functional from Jan 2019 and will be ready for inauguration by mid-Dec next month. He said that some of the funds required for the project was taken as soft loan payable in long term with minimum interest.

The National Press Day function was jointly organized by the Department of Information & Public Relation and Press Club of Sikkim.

While addressing the gathering of college students, media-persons and bureaucrats, Mr Chamling said that his government, in the last 24 years, has not left a single stone unturned



to provide basic minimum needs and there has been no instance of death due to hunger or lack of shelter.

Speaking on women's empowerment in the State, Mr Chamling said, "Women in Sikkim are empowered on all parameters as compared to the rest of the country which

is one of the best examples of our governance."

Responding to the issues raised by media fraternity, the CM directed the concerned government departmental heads to clear all pending dues against State government advertisements by the end of this financial year, adding that

if there is shortage of funds, the departments should make provisions in the supplementary demand of grants.

He ensured that all the dues will be cleared by the end of this financial year.

He also appealed to the media of the State to be responsible add-

ing that journalism will bring about betterment in the lives of the people.

During the function, senior journalist, Bhim Rawat, was conferred with Late YN Bhandari Best Journalism Award today. The award carried a Rs 2 lakh cash component along with a citation, shawl and a

memento. Mr Rawat is bureau chief of Himalaya Darpan for Sikkim.

Besides this, Gramin Patrakarita Award instituted by Press Club of Sikkim was conferred on Sikkim Reporter/ Sikkim Express district correspondent, West, Kushang Leewang. The award

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Stakeholder consultation held on making Sikkim zero waste eco-tourism State

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 NOV:

A stakeholder consultation on "Shaping State's strategy to make Sikkim a zero waste eco-tourism state--enabling jobs and inclusive growth" was organized at Hotel Tashi Delek in Gangtok today with Mayor, GMC, Shakti Singh Choudhury, as chief guest, a press release informs.

The consultation was organized by Development Alternatives and Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim [ECCOSS] in partnership with the Integrated Mountain Initiatives [IMI], Green Economy Coalition and with the support of the European Union.

The consultation aimed to get multi-stakeholders together to explore gaps and challenges in making Sikkim a zero-waste eco-tourism



state and also identify opportunities and potentials for the way forward.

The consultation had the participation of representatives from the Department of Tourism & Civil Aviation, Urban Development & Housing Department, Rural Management & Development

Department, Gangtok Municipal Corporation, PMIU Asian Development Bank Project, Department of Science & Technology, Department of Tourism Sikkim University, Travel Agents Association of Sikkim, Sikkim Hotel & Restaurant Owners' Association

and NGOs namely MLAS, WWF, Green Circle, Chalamthang Ecotourism, and Echostream amongst others.

The first session focused on entrepreneurship and job creation in tourism sector. Some of the pertinent challenges identified included lack

of innovation in entrepreneurship amongst youth as manifested by more preference also by the Banks as well as high inclination of majority of youth to opt for luxury taxi owners as business in Sikkim under the Chief Minister's Start Up scheme.

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13 dead, 81,000 hit in TN, Puducherry due to cyclonic storm 'Gaja'

NEW DELHI, NOV 16

(PTI): At least 13 people have lost their lives and over 81,000 others were affected after Cyclone 'Gaja' hit the Tamil Nadu coast early Friday, the National Emergency Response Centre (NERC) said.

Six districts of Tamil Nadu and two in Puducherry were hit by the cyclonic storm which also brought heavy rains in the southern state and the union territory.

Altogether 81,948 people were affected by the cyclone in which so far 13 people have lost their lives, the NERC said in a statement.

Soon after Gaja's landfall, Home Minister Rajnath Singh called up Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami and assured him of all assistance to deal with the situation arising out of the cyclonic storm.

The home minister also directed Home Sec-

retary Rajiv Gauba to monitor the situation in Tamil Nadu and provide all help to the state administration.

"Spoke to CM Shri K Palaniswami regarding the situation in the cyclone affected areas of Tamil Nadu. Assured all possible assistance from the Centre in mitigating the situation arising due to cyclone. Asked the HS to monitor the situation & provide all help to the state admin (sic)," Singh tweeted.

A release issued in Chennai by the Tamil Nadu government said a "detailed report" will be sent to the Centre on the damage caused by the severe cyclonic storm.

"Chief Minister Palaniswami explained in detail the measures taken by the state government, the damage caused by 'Gaja', and the relief measures being taken up on a war-footing," it said.

Chhetri-less India take on Jordan in Asian Cup tune-up

AMMAN, NOV 16 (PTI): India, despite missing their talismanic striker Sunil Chhetri, will fancy their chances when they take on hosts Jordan in an international football friendly here on Saturday.

The match at the Jordan capital is in preparation for the AFC Asian Cup, scheduled to be held in January-February next year.

India are ranked 97th while Jordan are placed 112th in the

FIFA rankings. Even though they will be without Chhetri, the country's all-time leading scorer, Stephen Constantine's men will take confidence from their goalless stalemate in their previous friendly against higher-ranked China, managed by World Cup-winning coach Marcello Lippi.

Chhetri's absence has been dubbed a "big blow" by coach Constantine, under whom India enjoyed a dream 14-match

unbeaten run till it was broken by Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek.

With only about two months to go for the Asian Cup, the upcoming friendly provides Constantine among the last opportunities to analyse his squad and ready his backup plans.

Goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu will lead the backline which will have Pritam Kotal, Sandesh Jhingan, Narayan Das and probably Subhashish Bose.

India's defence impressed

against Lippi's China but Constantine will be banking on his midfield and attack to have an influence in the match against a Jordan side whose form has been patchy.

Jordan, who are ranked 15 spots below India in the rankings, last won a match in May when they defeated Cyprus 3-0. In their last four games, they have had two draws and two defeats, capping with a 1-2 loss to Croatia in October.

For India, mid-fielder Jackichand Singh and left back Nishu Kumar were on Thursday included in the 22-member squad for the away international FIFA fixture.

The likes of Udanta Singh, Pronay Halder, Halicharan Narzary and Anirudh Thapa are likely to control possession in the midfield against a Jordan side that will look to hit on the counter in the absence of a few attacking players.

In the absence of Chhetri, experienced men like Jeje Lalpekhlua and Balwant Singh will need to take up the mantle up front. While the former has struggled in front of goal, the latter's form is encouraging.

Ahead of the match Constantine said, "We want to do well in the AFC Asian Cup and the clash against Jordan will aid us. Jordan are a good side and they have a number of good players in their ranks."

Now a song on Gangtok's traffic jams!



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 NOV:

Rapper duo Anrig and Mamba who go by the name "Thembers" released a music video of their

song 'Gangtok ko Jam' on Youtube today. The song is inspired by the traffic jams that plagues Gangtok these days. The music video has been produced by AS Presentations.

TMC's 'purification' rally to follow BJP 'rath yatra': Mamata

KOLKATA, Nov 16 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Friday ridiculed the scheduled 'rath yatra' of the BJP as 'ravan yatra' and called for cleansing of areas through which the saffron party's chariots would pass. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo also urged people to "ignore the event as just another political gimmick".

"I have asked my party workers to conduct 'purification and unity yatra' to cleanse the areas through which the chariots pass. I wonder what sort of yatra it would be with chariots equipped with five-star facilities. It is 'ravan yatra', not 'rath yatra'," she quipped.

The state BJP leadership was quick to hit back, claiming that Banerjee was suffering from "fear psychosis" as it dreads losing to the BJP in the next Lok Sabha polls. "It seems Mamata

Banerjee and the TMC is suffering from fear psychosis. They are feeling threatened by the 'rath yatra' as it is aimed at restoring democracy in the state," BJP state president Dilip Ghosh said.

Amit Shah, the national president of the saffron party, is set to kick off three 'rath yatras' - which will cover all 42 Lok Sabha constituencies in Bengal - on December 5, 7 and 9. At the conclusion of the 'yatra', the party plans to hold a massive rally in Kolkata, likely to be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Buoyed by its performance in the last panchayat polls in Bengal, Shah has set a target of winning at least 22 parliamentary seats in the state. Reacting to the row over political 'yatras', senior CPI(M) leader and former MP Samik Lahiri said the TMC-led government should cancel permission for the rally instead of making "tall claims".

Demonetisation biggest scam in independent India: Rahul Gandhi



SAGAR, Nov 16 (PTI):

Congress president Rahul Gandhi Friday termed demonetisation as the biggest scam in the history of independent India, adding it would be proved that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "robbed the poor of their hard-earned money and given it away to a few rich".

Addressing a campaign rally for the November 28 Madhya Pradesh Assembly polls, Gandhi said Modi does not talk about being a "chowkidar (watchman) of the country and of tackling corruption.

"If Modi says he is a chowkidar, people will respond that chowkidar chor hai," he said, addressing a rally at Deori in Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh.

Gandhi claimed that Modi "cancelled the Rafale deal of 126 fighter aircraft with Dassault Aviation and HAL at a price of Rs 526 crore per plane" without informing the Indian Air Force and the then defence minister Manohar Parrikar.

"The then French president Francois Hollande has said the Indian government had asked for Anil Ambani to be taken on board for the deal," the Congress chief said.

"Modi gave Rs 30,000 crore to Anil Ambani in this deal. This is the chowkidari he has done," Gandhi said.

After the note ban, Modi made honest and hardworking citizens to stand in queues outside banks, Gandhi said.

"He (Modi) allowed the rich like Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi, Vijay Mallya to flee the country with your money and made you stand in queues outside banks. Time will prove how Modi had robbed you and gave your money to few rich," he said.

"These days, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speeches don't have any mention of (eradicating) corruption, a tall promise that he had made before coming to power," Gandhi said.

Modi had claimed that he will be the chowkidar (watchman) of the country but he turned out to be chowkidar of a few industrialists, like Ambani, he said.

SikkimSCAN

Delegates from Korean manufacturing company visit ICFAI Sikkim

REBYNA RANA

GANGTOK, 16 NOV:

A team from the DMIC Engineering & Manufacturing Co Ltd from the Republic of Korea, represented by Setiawan Cho, Don IB Jang and Hemant Swarop from the Trade Office, Embassy of the Republic of Korea, along with Principal Chief Engineer/ Secretary, Water Security & Public Health Engineering Department, Sonam Dadul Bhutia, and Additional Chief Engineer [North/East], Praveen Kumar Pradhan, visited ICFAI Uni-



versity Sikkim campus on 15 Nov.

The Korean delegates are in the State to meet Chief Minister Pawan Chamling with

regard to State's developmental works.

Vice Chancellor, ICFAI Sikkim, Dr Jagannath Patnaik, discussed cross cultural-student exchange

programmes which will give Sikkim students a chance to explore Korean culture and education system and vice versa.

The visit concluded

with a round of interactive session between one of the Korean delegates, Don IB Jang, and the faculty members of ICFAI Sikkim.

UP district adopts unique way for primary education

BAHRAICH (UP), Nov 16 (PTI):

The Bahraich district administration in Uttar Pradesh has embarked on a campaign to give a new dimension to imparting primary education, roping in people across different fields to interact with the children for almost one hour a week.

Elaborating about the campaign, 'Vidyaa Daan, Ek Aadarsh Daan' (Imparting Education, An Ideal Donation), District Magistrate Mala Srivastava said: "Intellectuals of the society, be it the government officials, retired employees, teachers in schools and colleges, educated housewives or youngsters, were urged to join the campaign (which was started in September).

"Today, in more than 400 government primary schools, the campaign has started giving positive results and people themselves are taking out time to teach the children."

She added that concrete efforts were being made to provide quality education in the government primary schools.

Plans are also on to build 10 'aadarsh vidya-

alaya' (model schools) in each of the developmental blocks of the district. These schools will be known by the school structure, creative research by the teachers, hold children parliament and children cabinet, and give meritorious results, the official said.

The district magistrate said the model schools would not only impart education to its students, but also become a demonstration schools for rest of the 3,400 government primary schools in the district. Primary schools are from Class I to Class V.

When contacted, state Basic Education Minister Anupama Jaiswal told PTI, "Almost four months back, I was chairing the review meeting of the district, along with the district magistrate, and I wanted that such system (where the intellectuals teach the kids) should evolve. Until and unless the society forges a direct relationship with government schools, people will continue to remain indifferent towards it."

She said it was not necessary to go and teach the children, suggesting

they could share their experience, interact with the children, even narrate a story and inquire the well being of the kids.

"I want that such campaigns should be gradually replicated across the state. And, for the first time, it seems that people have started to realise that they will change the perception and picture of education system in the government schools," the minister said, adding that "basic shikshaa, buniyadi shikshaa hai" (basic education is underlying education).

"We have named this unique initiative as 'shikshaa ki door, Bahraich ki oar' (thread of education towards Bahraich)," she added.

Last week, the Niti Aayog tweeted, "#EducationForChange: In the #AspirationalDistrict Bahraich, over 700 youth, doctors, retired teachers & government officials volunteered for the 'Vidyadaan Campaign' last month. @DMBahraich Mala Srivastava is looking forward to developing 200 demonstration schools in the district."

People protesting Citizenship Bill stopped from proceeding towards Assam secretariat

GUWAHATI, Nov 16 (PTI):

Thousands of people attempted to march towards the Assam Secretariat here Friday against the proposed Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, but were halted by the security forces.

People from 70 organisations were part of the march held as part of their 'Janata Bhawan Gherao' programme.

On not being stopped security personnel, the protestors squatted on the Last Gate Road, behind the secretariat, blocking traffic on the busy thoroughfare for several hours, police said.

Members and supporters of the organisations, led by the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and Assam Jatiyatibadi Yuba Chhatra Parishad (AJYCP), had congregated here Friday morning to gherao the secretariat.

Barricades had been placed around the government building and personnel from the Assam Police and the CRPF were deployed in large numbers to prevent the protestors from staging their 'Sankalpa Shikha

Jatra' against the Bill.

The demonstrators held a massive rally on the road with leaders of the organisations speaking against the BJP-led governments at the state and the Centre for "imposing the bill on Assam", despite prohibitory orders under Section 144 Cr P C imposed here since Thursday.

They also criticised Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal for "remaining silent on the issue despite repeated protests against the bill".

On Guwahati Police Commissioner Pradip Chandra Saloi's request to the demonstrators to withdraw their protest, the agitators demanded that he carry their message to the government for holding talks with them on the Bill, within seven days.

When Saloi assured them that he would convey their message to the government, the demonstrators cleared the road.

KMSS chief Akhil Gogoi, however, said, "Our agitation programmes will continue against the Bill".

He also accused the state government of

"working against the interest of the indigenous people of the state by imposing the bill threatening the identity, language, culture of the indigenous people and unity of Assam". The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was introduced in the Lok Sabha to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to grant Indian citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians who fled religious persecution in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan and entered India before December 31, 2014.

Speaking on the occasion, All Minority Students Union (AAMSU) president Ajjur Rahman said, as per the Assam Accord of 1985, Hindus or Muslims from Bangladesh and Pakistan who came to the state after March 24, 1971 would have to leave. Large sections of people, organisations in the northeast and leading political party AGP, which is an ally of the ruling BJP, are opposed to the Bill.

They claim that it will nullify the provisions of the Assam Accord which fixed March 24, 1971 as the cut-off date for deportation of illegal immigrants irrespective of religion.

West Bengal assembly session begins

KOLKATA, Nov 16 (PTI):

The West Bengal Assembly was adjourned Friday after obituary references were made to several prominent personalities including former Lok Sabha speaker Somnath Chatterjee and former Leader of opposition of state assembly Pankaj Bandyopadhyay.

Speaker Biman Banerjee read out obituary references of Somnath Chatterjee, Pankaj Bandyopadhyay and others

who passed away during the past few months.

Chatterjee, 10-time Lok Sabha MP, was the first communist leader to become the Lok Sabha Speaker in 2004. He passed away in August.

A founding member of the ruling Trinamool Congress, Bandyopadhyay passed away in October. He was also former leader of the opposition in the assembly from 2001-2006.

The session will continue till November 29.

Stakeholder consultation...

The session further deliberated that this will further aggravate traffic congestion and cause higher pollution levels in Gangtok city.

In comparison to this, it was noted that loans and support from homestays were minimal with having to compete with low-collateral based taxi loans.

Another huge gap was discussed on the lack of data and evidence of tourism related trends in the state. There is a huge need for Government in partnership with the Universities to conduct surveys and systems in place to track actual trends and impacts of tourism in the State. This has resulted in lack of informed policy and planning.

Handicrafts, traditional food & practices and marketing/advertising agency for local homestays were some of the high opportunity areas in the context of local livelihood generation.

The consultation hence deliberated that the State of Sikkim has not invested enough in conserving traditions and cultural heritage and it is important for locals to benefit from the tourism sector and that traditional handicraft sector has to be revived.

In the second session, discussions were focused on solid waste management in Sikkim. Many participants highlighted the urgency to deal with the issue beyond just collection and transportation of waste to the landfill.

It was mentioned that the newly built sanitary landfill that was supposed to be of use for 17 years is now likely to be filled up in just 07 years. Segregation of waste at source was an area which had seen little success in spite of distribution of separate dustbin and required renewed effort as was implementing the plastic bag ban which had become diluted over the years and also because of the rampant use of the cloth like PP Bag, another form of plastic. Food waste from hospitality sector was considered of high concern and an opportunity for preventing human-wildlife conflict if managed with responsibility.

It was further added that multilayered plastic such as seen in chips packets, shampoo sachets and instant noodles was the most rampantly seen plastic waste and there was an urgent need to make the manufacturers responsible for setting up take back mechanisms for the waste created from the use of their products. Behavioral change was mentioned as the major bottleneck in waste management in Sikkim.

The consultation also identified some critical steps including education and capacity building for proper sensitization and hand-holding of communities. Decentralization of waste management, specifically organic compostable waste through community engagement and ownership is considered to be the most instrumental need for zero-waste management in Sikkim.

Further, it was felt that government needs to engage with hotel associations and find ways and mandates for hotels to practice minimal use of single-use plastics and waste management at source by the hotels. Alternative green packaging materials and a sense of pride in managing waste were some other points mentioned at the consultation.

The consultation led to an enriching discussion amongst CSOs, Governments and Entrepreneurs.

Representatives from the Department of Tourism and Aviation concluded by mentioning that they will engage more with tourism stakeholders on implementation of State Tourism Policy 2018 in Sikkim for the interest of State and its youth.

Health Dept personnel...

consists of Rs 10,000, citation and a memento. The Department of Information & Public Relation also awarded five journalists of the State with positive journalism grants of Rs 50,000 to freelancer, Khagendra Mani Pradhan, Summit TIMES correspondent, Bikash Chhetri, Samay Dainik reporter, Jagan Nath Dahal, Sikkim Express reporter, Dichen Bhutia, and Sushma Mangar of Himali Deepanjali.

The CM also announced the construction of Press Club of Sikkim building by the State Government. He directed the IPR Secretary and Building & Housing Department Secretary to prepare a DPR and move to make financial provision in the next Supplementary Demands of Grants to be put on vote at the end of this year.

The Press Club of Sikkim has been running out of a rented premise since 2002 and has been demanding a permanent site for a long time.

He also announced pension for journalists of the State. Journalists of 60 years and above will be granted pension from April 2019. The CM directed the Department of Information & Public Relation and Social Justice & Family Welfare to frame the modalities and policy for the same.

Mr Chamling also announced that pension for Sikkim Sahitya Akademi Awardees will be doubled from the next financial year, adding that the State Government has decided to introduce pension for awardees of Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan at Rs.10,000, Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 20,000 per month respectively from the next financial year.

The CM was also felicitated by Press Club of Sikkim on the National Press Day for the Future Policy Goid Award.

Baby given date for...

"They asked us to deposit Rs 57,000 but gave us a date for surgery in February 2024, citing long waiting period. We cannot wait for so long as our daughter is in lot of pain," Kumar alleged.

The family then approached the Heart Care Foundation of India, a registered charitable trust, for help.

The HCFI team of experts examined the child and decided that she needed immediate surgery.

"We wrote to the AIIMS administration requesting them to expedite the process and give an early date but there was no response. Despite writing several times, the administration did not take any action following which we approached Medanta hospital. The management has agreed to admit the patient and conduct the surgery," Yogesh Pant, a project manager at HCFI, said.

The surgery would be funded under the HCFI's initiative Sameer Malik Heart Care Foundation Fund, which assists financially weak people requiring heart surgery.

"We had lost all hope when AIIMS gave us a date in 2024 but it was then the HCFI came to our help. We hope that the surgery takes places soon and our daughter becomes fine," said Kumar, a driver by profession.

Gangtok on Saturday, 17 Nov
Temp: 20°C/06°C
Forecast: Times of sun and clouds, not as warm; a couple of afternoon thundershowers
Sunrise: 5:57 AM
Sunset: 4:44 PM

SC to hear plea challenging constitutional validity of Article 370 in April

NEW DELHI, Nov 16 (PTI): The Supreme Court Friday said it will hear in April a plea challenging the validity of Article 370 of the Constitution, which gives special status to Jammu and Kashmir, following a request by the state and the Centre. A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and M R Shah said it will hear the matter in the first week of April 2019 after Attorney General K K Venugopal, appearing for the Centre, sought adjournment on the ground that the current situation is very sensitive.

"The political situation in the state is such that the matter should not be heard at this time," he said. Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi and advocate Shoeb Alam, appearing for Jammu and Kashmir said that a letter has been circulated seeking adjournment due to the ongoing nine-phase Panchayat polls in the state.

To this, the bench said that it can tag the matter along with a batch of pending petitions challenging Article 35A of the Constitution, under which special rights and privileges are granted to the "permanent residents" of the state.

The suggestion of the bench was opposed by the counsels for the state saying that the two issues are different entirely and the plea should not be tagged along with Article 35A pending petitions. The bench then posted the matter for further hearing in first week of April, 2019.

On April 3, the apex court had said that Article 370 of the Constitution is not a temporary provision. The top court had said that in its earlier verdict of 2017 in the SARFESI case, it has been already held that Article 370 was "not a temporary provision".

"The issue concerned is covered by the judgement of this court in the 2017 SARFESI matter, where we have held that despite the headnote of Article 370, it is not a temporary provision," the court had said.

ICFAI Sikkim conducts workshop to encourage students towards entrepreneurship



REBYNA RANA GANGTOK, 16 NOV: ICFAI University Sikkim in collaboration with Director General of Foreign Trade [DGFT] under Niryat Bandhu initiative organized daylong workshop for students as potential entrepreneurs at the university campus in Gangtok today.

The workshop was attended by Zonal Additional [DGFT], Ministry

of Commerce, Anindita Sengupta, Assistant Director General of Foreign Trade, Dr Rahul Singh, as resource persons.

Zonal Additional [DGFT], Ms Sengupta, spoke on various aspects of Ministry of Commerce, e-market and promotion of exports while ADG, Foreign Trade, Dr Singh, gave a presentation on international trade and spoke on issues related

to it in detail.

The programme was also addressed by entrepreneur, Tenzing Nyentsey, who is a graduate from National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad and has been a part of design studio "Echostream" for the past ten years, shared his story and experience with the gathering.

Similarly, co-founder of Shoten Group, Abhi-

manyu Dhakal, also shared his success story. Mr Dhakal is an entrepreneur who has started a premium food & beverage start-up under the brand name "Earthier". At present, "Earthier" is working directly with the growers in Sikkim to create products which are showcased at the most premium retail chains and five star hotels in the country.

Chaos prevails in Lankan Parliament as leaders hurl chilli power, furniture

COLOMBO, Nov 16 (PTI): Sri Lanka's Parliament witnessed complete chaos on Friday as rival lawmakers threw chilli powder and furniture at each other, disrupting the proceedings for the second day, forcing the Speaker to summon police inside the House and adjourn the session until Monday. The brawl occurred a day after Speaker Karu Jayasuriya announced there is no prime minister or government following a no-confidence motion against disputed prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. Friday's proceedings were to repeat the floor test which was disrupted on Thursday.

Ousted prime minister and United National Party (UNP) leader Ranil Wickremesinghe warned of anarchy if the situation in the country was not resolved.

The status quo must return to what it was before October 26, he was quoted as saying by Colombo Gazette.

President Maithripala Sirisena, who installed Rajapaksa as prime minister last month in a controversial move, had agreed to a floor test with the leaders of ousted prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's coalition during crisis talks last night.

The MPs supporting Rajapaksa took over the seat of the Speaker, delaying the proceedings, officials said. They shouted slogans against Jayasuriya and broke fur-

niture. Some Rajapakse loyalists were also seen throwing chilli powder at rival legislators and police, the report said.

The Speaker called police inside Parliament chamber after 45 minutes of disruption. One of the rioting MPs Arundika Fernando occupied the seat of the Speaker with more MPs surrounding it. Gamini Jayawickrema Perera, a senior parliamentarian, was injured in the melee as he was attacked with chili powder.

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna MP Vijitha Herath had also come under a chili powder attack, Daily Mirror reported.

The rioting United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) members demanded the arrest of two legislators of the Wickremesinghe's UNP.

They charged that two UNP legislators, Palitha Thewarapperuma and Ranjan Ramanayake were carrying knives during the brawl on Tuesday in which UPFA MP Dilum Amunugama was injured.

Police protected Jayasuriya from the rioting MPs as he called the Tamil National Alliance lawmaker MA Sumanthiran to propose the suspension of the standing orders.

Jayasuriya on the basis of a voice vote announced that the motion against Rajapaksa was defeated as physical voting could not take place due to the brawl.

The rioting MPs threw books at the po-

lice. Jayasuriya immediately suspended the sittings until November 19 and left the House in police protection.

President Sirisena said that he would not "prorogue the Parliament under any circumstances".

"I urge all Parliamentarians to uphold principles of democracy parliamentary traditions at all times. I will not prorogue Parliament under any circumstances," the president tweeted.

The trouble began in Parliament on Thursday when the Speaker agreed to a request from Wickremesinghe's UNP that a vote be taken on a statement made by Rajapaksa demanding fresh polls.

Jayasuriya allowed Rajapaksa to make a statement as a lawmaker after stating that he does not recognise the claim of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) leader who lost a no-confidence motion on Wednesday.

Rajapaksa's side has disputed the no-trust motion, saying proper procedure was not followed and accused Jayasuriya of bias towards his party.

Parliament on Wednesday passed the no-confidence motion against Rajapaksa after the Supreme Court overturned the presidential decree to dissolve the House and hold snap polls on January 5.

Amid raucous scenes, Parliament on Wednesday met for the first time since October 26, when

Emission fiasco: NGT directs Volkswagen to deposit Rs 100 crore

NEW DELHI, Nov 16 (PTI): The National Green Tribunal Friday directed Volkswagen to deposit an interim amount of Rs 100 crore with the CPCB in a case related to allegations against the German auto major for using 'cheat device' in emission tests of its diesel vehicles.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel also formed a committee comprising officials of

the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Ministry of Heavy Industries, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Automotive Research Association of India to calculate the actual quantum of the environmental loss.

The green panel directed the committee to submit the report within a month and asked the company and the petitioner in the case to appear before the panel within seven days with

their contentions.

The tribunal was hearing pleas filed by a school teacher Saloni Ailawadi and a few others seeking ban on sale of Volkswagen vehicles for alleged violation of emission norms.

The automobile giant had earlier submitted a roadmap before the tribunal to recall over 3.23 lakh vehicles in the country fitted with a 'defeat device' meant to fudge emission tests.



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Namgyal Institute of Tibetology
Gangtok, Sikkim
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NOTICE

SUBJECT – SIX-WEEK INTENSIVE SHORT COURSE ON UMA ZHIGYA PA (BODHISATTAVA DEEDS)

The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology will be conducting a six-week intensive short term course in English on UMA ZHIGYA PA (BODHISATTAVA DEEDS) by Dr. Jigme Losal with effect from 7th January, 2019 to 16th February, 2019.

All interested candidates who are registered college students or graduates in any discipline may submit their application to the Joint Director, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology on or before 17th December, 2018 paying the requisite registration fee of Rs.700/-. The application must be accompanied by authentic documents to prove their qualifications for the course. Online application will also be accepted subject to submission of scanned copies of their qualification certificates and on payment of registration fee in the office of the Joint Director prior to taking admission. This is also open to devotees and other individuals who are interested in the course and have the requisite qualification to attend the classes.

Uma Zhigya pa deals mainly with Bodhisattava deeds on virtuous practices. The literal meaning of Uma is middle and as the book contains 400 stanzas it is referred to as Uma Zhigypa. The main contents of the text concerns abandonment of belief in permanence, pleasure, cleanliness etc.

For syllabus content and application form, kindly see the 'latest news' on the homepage of the NIT website www.tibetology.net.

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Maha Assembly completes historical 4 years without Dy Speaker

MUMBAI, Nov 16 (PTI): The 13th Maharashtra Legislative Assembly will go down in state history as the one without a deputy speaker for the longest gap of four years. The BJP government led by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis assumed office on October 31, 2014 and won the trust vote on November 12.

Prior to the trust vote, BJP leader Haribhau Bagade was unanimously elected Speaker. The Shiv Sena joined the government in December, 2014.

The Lower House of

the state legislature has met 15 times since then, and on Monday will meet again for the 16th time for a two-week winter session. Speaking on the absence of a deputy speaker, legislature officials said it is a Constitutional post with laid down procedures for its election.

However, these officials added, it was up to the government of the day to fill the post.

During the Sena-BJP rule between 1995-99, Sharad Motiram Tasare of Congress from Teosa Assembly

constituency was the Deputy Speaker.

Later, during the 15-year rule of the Congress-NCP, the speaker's post was with the NCP while the Congress had its nominee on the deputy speaker's post.

However, of the 22 deputy speakers so far, a majority have been from the Congress party. Gajananrao Raghunathrao Garud, who was deputy speaker between March 21, 1978 and April 5, 1979, was an Independent MLA. Suryakant Dongre, who held the post

between April 7, 1979 and June 9, 1980 belonged to the Republican Party of India (Kshobragade group).

Kamalkishore Kadam (March 1, 1985 to June 22, 1986) was from the Congress (Socialist) which at the time was headed by current NCP supremo Sharad Pawar.

Laxman Alias Anna Joshi, who was the deputy speaker from October 20, 1990 and July 3, 1991, was from the BJP while Moreishwar Termude (July 19, 1991 to March 11, 1995) was from the Janata Party.

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Sikkim Deserves More Professional Promotion

Just word of mouth will not suffice any more

A quaint tourist festival concluded recently at Temi Tea Estate. Except the invited guests, their respective entourages and the handful who caught the news in local rags, it is unlikely that too many others knew of it or made the time to visit. Admittedly, there was a more handsome attendance this year, but nothing close to what a Tea & Cherry fest has potential for. There used to be a music fest of huge potential hosted in Mangan for some years until that too fell silent. The Maghe Mela attraction has lost its sheen even before it was leveraged for the tourism prospects it carried. The winter fest in Gangtok is so erratic that no one appears to even bother to promote it even among locals. Sikkim is now an Organic State for all intents and purposes, but this USP has still not been dovetailed into its introduction as a tourist destination. It should be obvious by now that left to the babus, Sikkim will continue to move from event to event, lacking the coherence and cohesion required to launch a collaborative promotion.

Tourism is all about promotion, which, in today's information-age, translates as advertisements. Without promotion in the right places, conveying the right message, tourism potential will remain but a tantalising prospect of the boom that could have been. Of course word of mouth plays a role in promoting a destination and flawless services go a long way in establishing tourism credentials, but for these factors to kick in, one needs the right promotion. More tourists land in Malaysia than the flights bring into India. We obviously offer a much more varied experience, and yet, even tiny Malaysia beats us with the "Truly Asia" slogan [of much older vintage than the Incredible India tag line]. Tourism is booming in Malaysia, and if anything, the destination's increasing popularity has triggered even more aggressive advertising across all mediums, from television channels to websites to newspapers to magazines to Facebook to wherever it is that a prospective visitor might look. They have obviously recognised the importance of promotion.

Promotion and planning have however been consistently ignored by Sikkim, most noticeable so in the tourism sector. Yes, brand ambassadors have been roped in, but that is not enough in itself. When was the last time you saw a slick spot on TV, or a captivating spread in a magazine or newspaper or a sponsored message popping up on your Facebook feed tempting a prospective audience with a holiday in Sikkim? The State is lucky that enough people are smitten by the land and its people to keep arrivals high, save the hiccup of neighbourhood troubles.

Tourism has grown in the State despite a shoddy and extremely unprofessional approach to promotion. An increasing number of Sikkimese are investing in the hospitality industry, a huge number converting residential buildings into hotels. The number of destinations has not increased by much in the recent past, so one is essentially looking at selling the same "points". What this means is that repeat-visitors will soon start tiring out and to ensure that businesses do not fail and the target numbers are achieved, Sikkim will need to promote itself much better, much more.

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.

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Why covering the environment is one of the most dangerous beats in journalism

ERIC FREEDMAN
theconversation.com

From the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Kashoggi by Saudi agents to President Trump's clashes with the White House press corps, attacks on reporters are in the news. This problem extends far beyond the politics beat, and world leaders aren't the only threats.

At Michigan State University's Knight Center for Environmental Journalism, we train students and professional journalists to report on what we view as the world's most important beat. One hard fact is that those who cover it are at heightened risk of murder, arrest, assault, threats, self-exile, lawsuits and harassment.

In a recent study, I explored this problem through in-depth interviews with journalists on five continents, including impacts on their mental health and careers. I found that some of them were driven away from journalism by these experiences, while others became even more committed to their missions.

IN THE CROSS-HAIRS

Covering the environment is one of the most hazardous beats in journalism. According to one estimate, 40 reporters around the world died between 2005 and September 2016 because of their environmental reporting – more than were killed covering the U.S. war in Afghanistan.

Environmental controversies often involve influential business and economic interests, political battles, criminal activities, anti-government insurgents or corruption. Other factors include ambiguous distinctions between "journalist" and "activist" in many countries, as well as struggles over indigenous rights to land and natural resources.

In both wealthy and developing countries, journalists covering these issues find themselves in the cross-hairs. Most survive, but many undergo severe trauma, with profound effects on their careers.

As one example, in 2013 Rodney Sieh, an independent journalist in Liberia, disclosed a former agriculture minister's involvement in a corrupt scheme that misused funds earmarked to fight the parasitic, infectious Guinea worm disease. Sieh was sentenced to 5,000 years in prison and fined US\$1.6 million for defamation. He served three months in Liberia's most notorious prison before an international outcry pressured the government into releasing him.

In the same year, Canadian reporter Miles Howe was assigned to cover protests by the Elsipotog First Nation in New Brunswick against hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. Howe worked for an independent online news organization that sought to spotlight unreported and underreported stories.

"Many times I was the only accredited journalist witnessing rather violent arrests, third-trimester pregnant women being locked up, guys tackled to the ground," he recalls. Howe was arrested multiple times, and during one protest a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police pointed him out and shouted, "He's with them!" His equipment was seized, and police searched his home. They also offered to pay him for providing information about upcoming "events" – in other words, spying



on the protesters.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS

The relatively few studies that have examined attacks on reporters show that such treatment can have lingering impacts, including post-traumatic stress disorder and depressive and substance use disorders. While some journalists are able to cope and recover, others live in a state of fear of future incidents, or suffer survivor guilt if they escape and leave relatives and colleagues behind.

"Overall, journalists are a pretty resilient tribe," Bruce Shapiro, executive director of the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma at Columbia University, told me. "Their rates of PTSD and depression are about 13 to 15 percent, which is comparable to rates among first responders. Environmental or social justice reporters often have a higher-than-average sense of mission and purpose and a higher level of skill," beyond that of some of their peers on other beats.

But this attitude can translate into reluctance to seek help. Most journalists I interviewed didn't seek therapy, usually because no services were available or because of the profession's machismo factor. Gowri Ananthan, a lecturer at the Institute of Mental Health in Sri Lanka, calls journalism "a profession in denial," even as some victims acknowledge the price they've paid.

For example, Miles Howe suffered serious psychological problems following his arrests. "What did it do to me? It made me upset, angry," he says. Howe didn't seek therapy until he left journalism more than two years later, but in hindsight regrets not acting sooner.

Others told me their experiences recommitted them to their missions as journalists. Rodney Sieh says his stint in prison "really elevated our work to an international level that we would never have had if I weren't arrested. It made us stronger, bigger, better."

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS VERSUS PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Environmental controversies often involve indigenous rights. In South America, for example, indigenous journalists and "ethno-communicators" are playing an increasingly vital role in uncovering vast exploitation of natural resources, forests and land.

Despite professional codes calling for balanced, impartial coverage, some reporters can feel compelled to take sides on these stories. "We saw that

clearly at Standing Rock," says Tristan Ahtone, a board member of the Native American Journalists Association, referring to protests on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

"NAJA had to put out ethical guidelines for journalists. We saw it mostly with young Native reporters who were happy to blow the ethical line," Ahtone says. "A lot of it is having a different world view."

One such reporter, freelance journalist Jenni Monet – a tribal member of the Pueblo of Laguna in New Mexico – was arrested while covering the protests but acquitted of trespassing at trial. She also has covered deforestation and logging in a tribal area in Brazil's Amazon region. "Most times I'm with indigenous people (on such stories), and I see things through their eyes," she told me.

BETTER TRAINING AND LEGAL PROTECTION

Many of these issues need further research. From a craft perspective, how do these experiences affect journalists' approach to reporting? How do they deal with sources afterwards, especially if those people are also at risk? How do editors and news directors subsequently treat reporters in terms of assignments, story placement and salaries?

These findings also raise questions about how press rights groups can successfully protect and advocate for environmental reporters. In my view, more environmental journalists need the type of safety training that many war and foreign correspondents now receive.

Pollution and natural resource damage affect everyone, especially the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. The fact that journalists who report on these issues are so vulnerable is deeply disturbing. And their abusers often operate with impunity.

For example, there have been no convictions in the 2017 murder of Colombian radio journalist Efigenia Vásquez Astudillo, who was shot while covering an indigenous movement to take back ancestral land that had been converted to farms, resorts and sugar plantations. As the Committee to Protect Journalists observes, "Murder is the ultimate form of censorship."

[the writer is Professor of Journalism and Chair, Knight Center for Environmental Journalism, Michigan State University]

Survivors of sexual violence in South Africa are finally finding their voices

LYN SNOODGRASS
theconversation.com

The story of Cheryl Zondi, the brave young woman who took the stand in a South African court to testify against Nigerian pastor and rape accused Timothy Omotoso has recently dominated news headlines. The evangelist and senior pastor of the Jesus Dominion International Church faces multiple charges. These include rape, human trafficking and racketeering.

Under harsh, degrading, cross examination, Zondi, a 22-year old university student, courageously faced her alleged abuser and his jeering congregants to tell her story of alleged sexual assault that started when she was 14. In coming forward to testify in open court – despite death threats and attempts to silence her – she was not just another faceless victim of sexual violence.

There are many such faceless victims. According to the Crime against Women in South Africa 2018 report, there has been a 53% increase in sexual offences against women in a short period - from 31 665 in 2015/16 to 70 813 in 2016/17. And the real numbers are probably higher; as is the case across the globe, many incidents of sexual assault go unreported. So the statistics don't paint a full picture.

Based on the available data, the number of women raped in South Africa is 138 for 100 000 women. These numbers are among the highest in the world.

So, why don't girls and women come forward to tell their stories of sexual assault? Research shows that the reasons are complex and influenced by a web of inter-related, social-psychological factors. These include feelings of shame and humiliation, self-blame, fear and even denial. These are influenced by the pre-

vailing patriarchal and cultural norms of societies and communities that suppress, silence and shame these girls and women.

In a highly gender unequal and patriarchal country like South Africa, violent and entrenched masculinities legitimise men's power over women. This exacerbates sexual violence. Naturally, women



Cheryl Zondi bucked the trend of rape accusers staying anonymous in South Africa.

have severe anxieties about the repercussions and backlash if they speak out.

Another factor is that South Africa's intractable history of political and gender-based violence has resulted in deep distrust of the justice system. According to Statistics SA, satisfaction in the police and the courts has continued to fall since 2013/14.

But there are indications that the tide is turning in South Africa: not only in the way women are coming forward but how people rallied around Cheryl Zondi.

THE TIDE IS TURNING

Zondi's courage garnered the respect and overwhelming support of ordinary South Africans, the government, civil society and women's groups. The Minister for Women in the Presidency supported

her during the trial, as did the Women's League of the governing African National Congress (ANC), among others.

Contrast this with another high profile sexual assault trial in 2006, which took a very different turn. A young woman named Fizekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo, then known only as Khwezi accused ANC deputy president Jacob Zuma of rape.



She was vilified, marginalised and threatened by Zuma's supporters and the ANC Women's League turned their back on her. She was denigrated and slut-shamed by the patriarchal court system, shunned, and fled the country after the trial. Zuma was acquitted and went on to become the country's president.

A great deal has changed in the ensuing 12 years.

Women at the country's universities have been at the forefront of speaking out about a culture of rape on campuses, "naming and shaming" the perpetrators. This has gained momentum in the wake of the #FeesMustFall mass student movement that swept the country in 2015, demanding deep change at universities.

Survivors of campus rape want to tell their stories on their own terms. One such event was the Rape Textile, which used performance art, monologues, dance and poetry to narrate the trauma of a violent campus rape of two Nelson Mandela University students.

Higher Education and Training Minister, Naledi Pandor recently informed Parliament that 47 students had been raped on campuses in 2017 and named the institutions involved. There is an urgent need for universities to discuss the ways in which to address sexual assault and rape on campuses.

FIGHTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Strategies to fight gender-based violence must educate society about why and in what ways sexual violence affects everyone. Men's voices are critical in the fight and, here, role models are especially important. South African campaigns should also look at holding the public accountable for preventing gender-based violence.

Technology is a game changer in fighting gender-based violence in the 21st century – think of the powerful #MeToo and #WhyIDidn'tReport and other social media campaigns. But technologies like safety apps and global hashtags that include shared text messages, pictures and videos in private groups must be made more accessible to all South African women.

The availability of economical, lightweight mobile technologies could empower South African girls and women to share their stories and name their perpetrators. It is not only prevention but prosecution that is pivotal in getting justice for the country's women.

[the writer is Professor and Head of Department of Political and Conflict Studies, Nelson Mandela University]

Govt sets up tribunal to decide on ban on 2 Tripura militant groups

NEW DELHI, Nov 16 (PTI): The Centre has set up a tribunal, headed by Delhi High Court Judge Justice Suresh Kait, for adjudicating whether or not two Tripura-based militant outfits should be declared banned organisations under the law.

The decision has been taken by the Home Ministry exercising the powers conferred under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, an official notification said.

“...the central government hereby constitutes ‘The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal’ consisting of Hon’ble Shri Justice Suresh Kait, Judge of Delhi High Court, for the purpose of adjudicating whether or not there is sufficient cause for declaring the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) as unlawful associations,” it said.

A fresh ban of five years were imposed on the two insurgent groups

of Tripura by the central government last month for their “violent and subversive activities”, which aim at establishment of an independent nation by secession of Tripura from India through armed struggle.

The Home Ministry said the NLFT and the ATTF have been engaging in subversive and violent activities, undermining the authority of the government and spreading terror and violence among people for achieving their objectives.

The rebel outfits, formed in 1990 with the objective of “expulsion of all foreigners who entered the state after 1956”, were first banned in 1997 following large-scale ethnic riots involving tribals and non-tribals in Khowai subdivision in Tripura, in which both outfits intervened on behalf of the tribals.

Tripura shares an 856-km boundary with Bangladesh.

HC orders appointment of counsellors in all WB schools

KOLKATA, Nov 16 (PTI): The Calcutta High Court Friday directed authorities to appoint counsellors in about one lakh educational institutions in West Bengal to help safeguard students against sexual abuse.

Justice Nadira Patherya ordered that counsellors will have to be appointed to all educational institutions in the state in a phased manner within one year.

The judge observed that progress in implementation of a report by an amicus curiae, assisted by a court-appointed panel of educationists, on safeguarding pupils in educational institutions from sexual abuse needs to be monitored from time to time.

Justice Patherya directed that the report placed by am-

icus curiae Phiroze Edulji be kept on record and steps be taken to implement its suggestions. She directed the state and the Centre to file a progress report after six months.

Upon placing the report before the court, additional advocate general Abhratosh Majumdar, who was representing the state, submitted that it would not be able to implement the recommendation regarding appointment of counsellors to every educational institution as the state has around one lakh schools.

He claimed that it will be difficult to find so many trained counsellors.

The guideline proposed by the amicus curiae said, “Every school must appoint a person, who is an expert in child psy-

chology, psychiatry or sociology and who has been actively involved in child welfare activities for a period of at least two years, as a counsellor for children in school.”

The judge, however, said though the AAG has sought a relaxation in appointment of counsellors, a direction for the appointments was required to be passed in the interest of the children.

The Centre on Thursday told the court that it was agreeable to the guidelines on safety of students in schools as proposed by the amicus curiae.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Kaushik Chanda told the court that Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 already provides for security measures

of school students, but the government was, nevertheless, agreeable to the Standards of Procedure (SOP) proposed by the amicus curiae as an additional initiative.

AAG Majumdar on Thursday also agreed to the SOP, while suggesting minor changes. Justice Patherya had Wednesday asked the Centre and the West Bengal Government to convey their views on proposed guidelines to prevent sexual offences against pupils in educational institutions affiliated to central and state boards in West Bengal.

The judge, while hearing a case relating to alleged sexual misconduct against two physical education teachers of a city-based school, had appointed lawyer Edulji as amicus curiae

and formed a panel of educationists for suggestions.

The panel included educationists from six leading schools in the city, the chairperson of West Bengal State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) and representatives of UNICEF and National University of Juridical Sciences.

The amicus curiae submitted a 100-page report to the court on Monday suggesting formation of a nodal body under the SCPCR, which would work for spreading awareness among school staff, sensitise parents and set up a syllabus for awareness of staff, students and parents.

It also suggested stringent background check of a person before appointing him or her to any position in a school.

Tribal conclave begins in Jamshedpur



JAMSHEDPUR, Nov 16

(PTI): The tribal cultural heritage of 25 states and 11 countries is being showcased in a five-day tribal conclave here.

The conclave, inaugurated Thursday, is presenting tribal cultural heritage with emphasis on their art and craft, cuisine, medicines and music. About 230 participants are displaying their handicraft, cooking recipes unique to their tribes and traditional healing techniques in the event named ‘Samvaad’.

This apart, 33 international guests are attending the conclave,

while over 400 participants are part of various troupes to present their cultural heritage in the event, said its host Tata Steel.

The purpose of holding ‘Samvaad’ is to bring leaders and members of tribal communities under one platform to facilitate them to share their ideas, thoughts and perspectives on developmental challenges in the country and beyond, company spokesman Sourav Roy said.

A total of 1700 tribal people are participating in the fifth edition of the conclave, he said.

Meghalaya minister’s PSO held for assaulting two truck drivers

SHILLONG, Nov 16 (PTI):

A personal security officer (PSO) of Meghalaya cabinet minister Krymen Shylla has been arrested along with his aides in West Jaintia Hills district for allegedly assaulting two truck drivers, a senior police officer said here Friday.

Constable Thmubait I Dhar and his aides, Chanky Lhuid and Deibormi, attacked the two truckers, who were part of a fleet transporting coal to Bangladesh from Bhutan via Dawki in Meghalaya, he said.

“The arrests were made around 3.30 am on Thursday after the Jowai police control room received a call about a ruckus at a roadside dhaba in Riat Turiem area of the district. The PSO has been suspended following his arrest,” the officer told PTI. Shylla, when contacted, said he was yet to gather details about the incident.

The social welfare minister also asserted that the “the truth will come out only after police inquiry”.

The injured drivers -

Passang Dorji from Bhutan and Jity Kami from West Bengal - had to seek medical aid from a nearby clinic, the senior police officer said.

“In his complaint, Kami said three persons in civil dresses, claiming to be all policemen, entered the dhaba and engaged in a heated altercation with them. One of them took out a pistol and hit them with its lever after lining them up in front of the trucks,” he stated quoting the FIR.

Kami also alleged that Dhar and his aides damaged the headlights and the indicators of their trucks, the officer said, adding that police were on the lookout for the constable’s pistol that went missing after the incident.

According to Shacha Wangchuk, one of the truck drivers who witnessed Thursday’s incident, Bhutan has been regularly exporting coal to Bangladesh via Dawki-Tamabil, ever since the National Green Tribunal banned mining and transportation in Meghalaya.

Security beefed up for secretariat gherao programme in Assam

GUWAHATI, Nov 16

(PTI): Prohibitory orders were clamped in three police districts of the city and security beefed up in view of the Assam secretariat gherao programme called by several organisations on Friday against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016. Barricades were placed around the secretariat and Assam Police and CRPF forces were deployed in large numbers to prevent the protestors from staging their Sankalpa Shikha Jatra against the Bill.

The ‘Janata Bhawan Gherao’ called by the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS), a peasant organisation, and Assam Jatiyatibadi Yuba Chhatra Parishad (AJYCP), a student organisation, was likely to see the participation of 68 other organisations from other parts of the state during the day, the organisers said.

KMSS leader Akhil Gogoi along with members of 70 organisations staged a protest meeting on the premises of the Dispur Press Club, adjacent to the secretariat, accusing the Sarbananda Sonowal-led BJP Assam government of working against the interests of indigenous people of the state by supporting the bill.

The bill threatens the identity, language and culture of the indigenous people and unity of Assam, he charged.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was introduced in the Lok Sabha to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955.

Large sections of people, organisations in the northeast and leading political party AGP, which is an ally of the ruling BJP, are opposed to the bill saying it will nullify the provisions of the Assam Accord of 1985, which fixed

March 24, 1971 as the cut-off date for deportation of illegal immigrants irrespective of religion.

Prohibitory orders under section 144 of CrPC had been imposed in the three police districts of Guwahati city with immediate effect on Thursday, ahead of the gherao programme against the Citizen (Amendment) Bill, 2016. Other speakers at the meeting alleged that protestors who had taken out motorcycle rallies from different parts of the state were not allowed to proceed to Guwahati.

Stating that the organisers had prior police permission for holding the meeting, the demonstrators accused the administration of imposing the prohibitory order “to muzzle the democratic voice of the citizens”.

Accusing the chief minister of functioning “under the orders of the RSS”, the

speakers urged Sonowal to “give up his Hitlerian rule as it was against the people of Assam”. Bike rallies starting from Jonai, Diphu, Sadiya and Dhubri were allowed to proceed to Guwahati one at a time and not in a group as permission for Friday’s meeting was given for a gathering of 1,000 people and it had already exceeded that number, police said.

Protestors travelling from Sadiya, Dhubri and Diphu travelling by trains to participate in the protest alleged that they were not allowed to board trains and instead detained to prevent them from proceeding further.

Assam Director General of Police Dr Kuladhar Saikia had Thursday warned that the administration would take strong action against anyone trying to break the law and strict vigil would also be kept in Guwahati.

NDA destroying key institutions, TMC to save country: Mamata



KOLKATA, Nov 16 (PTI):

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Friday slammed the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre for allegedly destroying key Indian institutions such as the CBI and the RBI.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) could play a vital role in saving the country from such destructions, the party supremo said.

“They (the NDA government) are destroying institutions. They are trying to change the way the RBI and the CBI function. The party that has made ‘building statues’ its poll agenda will itself become a statue after the coming Lok Sabha election,” she told a party meeting here.

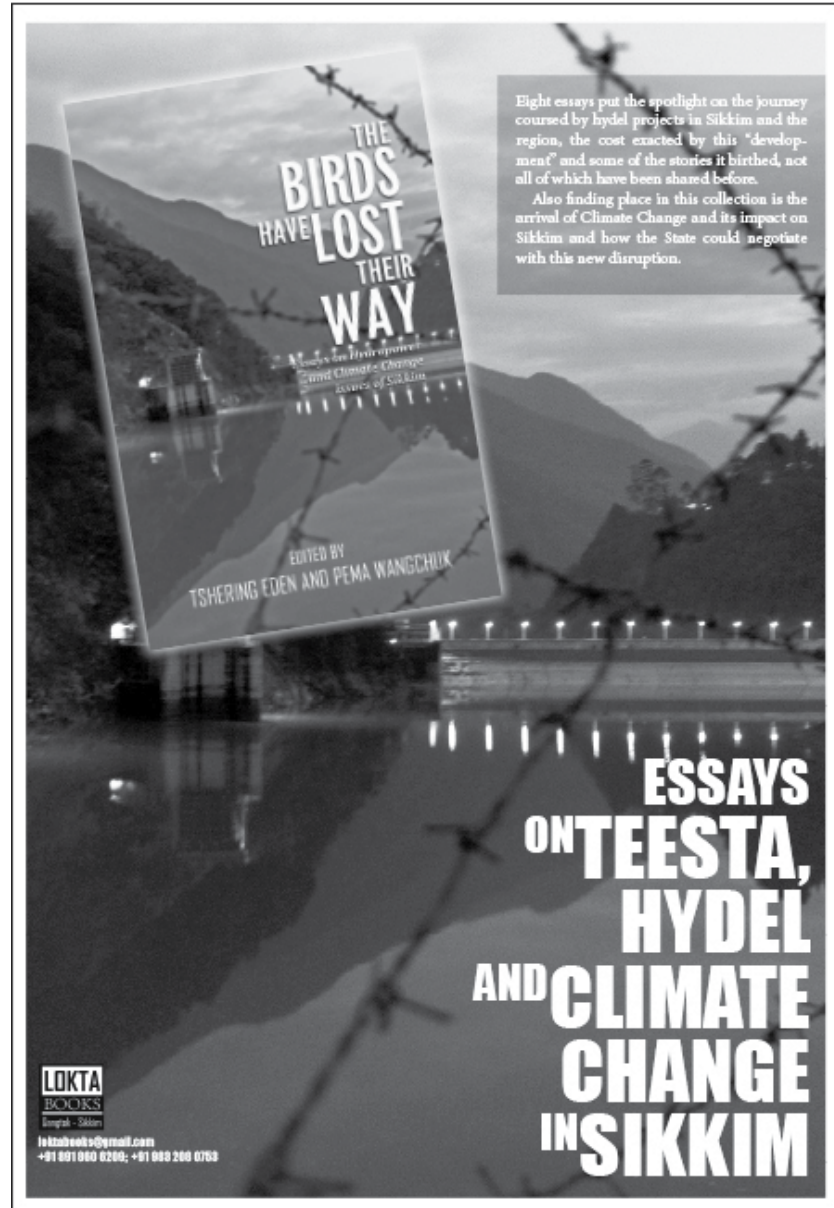
Banerjee, who gave a call for a mega rally at the Brigade Parade Ground

here in January, said the saffron party is only interested in creating communal divisions by updating National Register of Citizens (NRC).

“The TMC will not tolerate such exercises. The party will play a bigger role in the coming days to save the country from the BJP,” she asserted.

The CM also said that she would invite all opposition leaders to the TMC rally in January and put up a united fight against the BJP. “BJP hatao, desh bachao will be our slogan at the rally,” she stated.

Referring to the BJP’s scheduled ‘rath yatra’ in the state next month, Banerjee said, “The saffron party is organising a political ‘yatra’. Our workers, on the other hand, will organise ‘ekta yatra’, aimed at uniting all communities.”



Pakistan selectors announce squad for Hockey World Cup in India

KARACHI, NOV 16 (PTI): Pakistani selectors have made just one change to the national hockey squad for the forthcoming World Cup in Bhubaneswar, with Mohammad Rizwan Sr leading the side.

Chief selector Islahuddin Siddiqui while announcing the squad said that the experienced Rashid Mehmood had replaced Rizwan junior in the squad that recently played in the Asian Champions Trophy in Muscat and shared the title with India.

"Rashid was playing overseas in professional league when the Asian Champions Trophy was held but now he is available and he is one of our most experienced and best midfielders," Islahuddin said.

The former Olympian is also confident that with a little bit of luck Pakistan is fully capable of winning the World Cup in India.

Islahuddin himself was part of the Pakistan team that won the 1971 and 78 World Cups but Pakistan's last World Cup title came way back in 1994 at Sydney.

Since then Pakistan has fared poorly in World Cups and didn't even qualify for the 2014 edition and finished last in the World Cup held in New Delhi in 2010.

But Islahuddin noted that the team included some senior players and the players had been playing as a unit for a while now.

"The Asian Champions Trophy performance has also come as a boost and my effort is to see these players go to India after having all their dues cleared by the Pakistan Hockey Federation so that there is no burden on their minds," he said.

The Pakistan squad has been selected after two-day trials in Lahore.

The 14th edition of the World Cup featuring teams from 16 nations divided into four pools is being staged in the Indian city of Bhubaneswar from Nov 28 to Dec 16.

The chief selector acknowledged that Pakistan's pool in the presence of Germany and the Netherlands is very tough, but insisted, "Our players on a given day have the ability to stun any side of the world."

Mohammad Rizwan Senior and Ammad Shakeel Butt have been retained as captain and vice-captain, respectively. The Pakistan squad is likely to leave for India on Nov 22 or 23 after getting visa, the process for which is currently ongoing.

Squad: Imran Butt, Mazhar Abbas (goalkeepers); Mohammad Irfan Senior, Aleem Bilal, Mubashar Ali, Mohammad Tauseeq Arshad, Tasavwar Abbas, Rashid Mahmood, Ajaz Ahmed, Ammad Shakeel Butt (vice-captain), Mohammad Irfan Junior, Mohammad Rizwan Senior (captain), Ali Shan, Faisal Qadir, Abubakar Mahmood, Umar Bhutta, Mohammad Atiq Arshad, Mohammad Zubair

Wayne Rooney tears stop Gareth Southgate's England dressing-down

Gareth Southgate shelved plans to criticise his players for their second-half performance in victory over USA after Wayne Rooney stole the stage by delivering a tearful post-match speech in the dressing room as he called time on his England career.

Southgate had been dissatisfied with aspects of the team's display after half-time, his thoughts already turning to Sunday's deciding Nations League match against Croatia where England can either claim their three-team group or, should they lose or score draw, be relegated to League B. Southgate intended to point out the team's shortcomings immediately after the final whistle, only for Rooney to take to the floor to thank the group for welcoming him back into the fold.

"There were some good moments but I didn't like us as much without the ball, and they got through us too easily in the second half," said



Southgate as he assessed what ended up a comfortable victory.

"We didn't play with discipline in the end. We were wide open and, if we do that on Sunday, we will lose. We haven't had that discussion yet because Wayne gave a really nice speech at the end and I didn't want to rain on his parade, but we'll be making that point before Sunday.

"If we want to be a top



team we can't get to 3-0 and suddenly decide not to play without the ball. We have to play with intelligence right through the game.

"We were very keen that we moved on from the World Cup as quickly as possible, but it has been a brilliant year. Whatever happens on Sunday, we've got real shoots of progress and have achieved some outstanding results and re-



ally good performances, and bled a lot of new players. "There's depth and competition for places. But everyone wants to go another stage and get to a semi-final out of a group that is as tough as there is in this competition. So Sunday is a good game to look forward to, with a sellout crowd and a game with plenty riding on it. Someone is probably sitting in Geneva patting himself proudly on the back"

Rooney's 120th and final cap amounted to a 32-minute cameo, and a shot with virtually his last touch which Brad Guzan did well to save, as the nation's record goalscorer bowed out after a glittering 15-year career at this level. "It went as I imagined it, really," he said. "It's been great the last few days, to see how they're working and improving. It's great the Football Association are

celebrating players who have left a mark on international football in England. It's the right thing to do and I'm sure it will happen again.

"Before playing the game I asked Harry Kane to present me with the award because I believe he will beat my goalscoring record and I look forward to presenting him with the trophy. It was a special day for me and my family" Southgate said: "It's

difficult, even as a senior player, to walk back into a dressing room where there are new staff and a lot of players he hadn't played with, but he's been brilliant. "The time he's giving to all the players, the little conversations with some of the younger ones ... he spoke about what playing for England had meant to him, and what it should mean to the three debutants. Then there was the humility he showed in training, tracking back in the five-a-sides as if his life depended on it.

"He had some lovely touches tonight, too, and some exquisite through balls, and ended up a yard to the left of Brad Guzan from a fairytale ending. "We wanted to test some young players, and we had a very inexperienced team out there, but they've come through and learned a lot, and we've paid our respects to one of our greatest ever players. We did that in a way we felt was fitting."

Rookie Manisha outclasses two-time bronze medallist Christina Cruz

PHILEM DIPAK SINGH NEW DELHI, NOV 16 (PTI): Rookie boxer Manisha Moun punched above her weight to outclass Christina Cruz of the United States in an unanimous verdict to advance to the 54kg pre-quarterfinals of the AIBA Women's World Championships here on Friday. The 20-year-old Haryana boxer, who was making her debut in the World Championships, was in complete control during the whole of first round against the American, who is almost twice her age.

The 36-year-old from New York is a two-time World bronze medallist but Manisha was not the one to be intimidated by the reputation of the opponent.

Manisha, who had won a gold at the India Open and a silver in the Silesian Women's Boxing championship in Poland this year, was the clear winner as she dominated all the three rounds.

The five judges have her a unanimous decision (29-28, 30-27, 30-26, 30-26, 29-28).

In the pre-quarterfinals on Sunday, Manisha now faces reigning world champion Dina Zholaman of Kazakhstan, whom she had beaten in the Poland event.

Manisha's mother Usha Rani and grandmother Saroj Devi, who had come all the way from Kaithal, were at the stands to watch her bout at the K D Jhadav Stadium.

"I am very proud for winning my first bout in the World Championships. I have proved that I can be at this stage. I will give my best and see how far I can go. I am confident of doing well in the coming rounds," she said.

"My next bout is against the world champion but I have beaten her in Poland. It will be tough but I can beat her," she added.

Asked about the

strategy for the bout, she said everything went according to plan.

"My coaches told me to play from a distance. Her (Cruz's) right was very strong so coaches told me to watch here right. I tried to miss his punches from the right and attacked from the left. That was the plan and I did just that," she said.

"The first round was about observing my opponent and find out what to do and what not to do. In the second round, I went with the plan and I was able to land my punches. In the third round, I went for attack and gave the best attack and won the bout," she added.

Zholaman, who beat Muzuki Hiruta of Japan 4-1, said Manisha was a "good" boxer.

"I lost to her (Manisha) in Poland but that is boxing, it happens. She is a good boxer," said the Kazakh.

Team India departs for Australia



Mumbai, Nov 16 (PTI): Eyeing a maiden Test series win Down Under, the Indian cricket team left for Australia Friday for a gruelling tour, which will see them play four matches in whites, three ODIs and as many T20 Internationals.

Various members of the team took to Twitter to share their feelings ahead of their departure with chinaman Kuldeep Yadav terming it an "exciting challenge".

"Exciting challenges ahead. Off to Australia with the boys #TeamIn-

dia," tweeted Kuldeep, who posted a picture with his teammates comprising young wicketkeeper and batsman Rishabh Pant, Rohit Sharma and others.

Pacer Jasprit Bumrah tweeted his picture and wrote, "Off we go! #Australia #Travelbound".

"Taking off to head down under," wrote Krunal Pandya on the micro blogging site as he posted snaps with team mates.

At the pre-departure press conference on Thursday, Kohli emphasised on the need for the

batsman to step up. Head coach Ravi Shastri categorically said that there won't be any chopping and changing in the ODI team from now with just 13 games remaining before the World Cup.

Experts and former players are seeing this tour as India's best bet to defeat Australia in Tests as the hosts will be without their two key batsman, Steve Smith and David Warner, who are facing a year long ban for their involvement in ball tampering scandal in South Africa.

Du Plessis urges Australia to keep the aggression

BRISBANE, NOV 16 (AFP): Australia have clearly toned down their sledging since a ball-tampering scandal broke, South Africa captain Faf du Plessis said Friday, but urged them not to totally sacrifice their confrontational approach.

Coach Justin Langer and Test skipper Tim Paine have both pledged to change the win-at-all-costs culture that was rampant when Australian players tried to cheat in Cape Town this year.

Their attempt to alter the ball with sandpaper rocked the game, led to bans for Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft and saw a

clean-out of executives at Cricket Australia.

Du Plessis, who has just led the Proteas in three one-dayers against Australia, said there had been a marked change in their on-field behaviour and the baiting of opposition players had receded.

"The series in South Africa (earlier this year) was like that, especially that first Test in Durban. It was a feisty one," he said in Brisbane ahead of a one-off Twenty20 on Saturday.

"Then comparing that to now, you can see they're obviously trying to minimise that a bit more, and let the cricket do the talking.

"I think that's the way the game's moving anyway. These days, chirping's not as big a part of cricket. Obviously the stump mics, TVs, there's a lot of emphasis from the ICC that it needs to be a gentleman's game.

"There's a lot of kids watching the game... so chirping, swearing, all that stuff has been really toned down, so I think it's a general thing that's happened in the game.

"But if you compare the two series then yes, there's been a big difference in the way that they talk on the field."

One of Australia's strengths in the past had been their aggres-

sive and "in-your-face" approach, unsettling batsmen and bowlers with their back-chat.

Since moving away from that and adopting a "be nice" policy, their results have nosedived.

Du Plessis, who once referred to the Australians as being "like a pack of wild dogs," said he revelled in the confrontation and urged them not to totally abandon traits that had brought them so much success.

"I've always believed that you must never take away your uniqueness as a strength. If your strength is to be in guys' faces, then you must use that," he said.

TM Krishna to perform at AAP govt's event in Delhi on Nov 17



NEW DELHI, NOV 16 (PTI): Carnatic music vocalist TM Krishna, whose concert in the city was scrapped by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), will perform at the Garden of Five Senses on Saturday evening on an invitation of the AAP government, an official said.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia announced Delhi government's invitation to Krishna, saying no artist should be denied an opportunity to perform. After Krishna's November 17 concert to be held at Nehru Park was cancelled by AAI, the AAP government had on Thursday stepped in to

organise another performance by Krishna, who often finds himself in the cross-hairs of controversy over his outspoken views.

Krishna will perform at the event -- 'Awam ki Awaz' -- hosted by the Delhi government at the Garden of Five Senses at 6.30 pm on Saturday, said a senior government official.

Sisodia said on Twitter, "No artist should ever be denied an opportunity to perform. I have invited @tmkrishna to perform on November 17 for the people of Delhi. It's important to maintain the dignity of the Art and Artists".

Krishna's concert organised by the AAI was allegedly cancelled following a troll campaign against it for hosting the vocalist, a Magsaysay award winner who has been called an "urban Naxal" and "a converted bigot" among other epithets. The AAI and cultural organisation Spic Macay, which were organising Krishna's concert jointly, said the event was not cancelled but "postponed".

The AAI was the major sponsor, said Rashmi Mallik from Spic Macay. They were informed by AAI that the event had to be postponed due to "some internal challeng-

es within AAI", she said.

"It has not been cancelled. It has been postponed. We will be working out the new dates and share them," she had said.

Krishna, considered one of the finest proponents of Carnatic music, has often been the subject of hate trolls for his critical views on Hindutva and the establishment.

The artist, who is credited for being one of those taking the 600-year-old Carnatic musical tradition forward, is also an activist who has worked on creating egalitarian spaces for music and breaking down caste barriers.

Khmer Rouge leaders found guilty of genocide in landmark ruling

PHNOM PENH, Nov 16 (AFP): Two top leaders of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge regime were found guilty of genocide on Friday, in a landmark ruling almost 40 years after the fall of a brutal regime that presided over the deaths of a quarter of the population.

The Khmer Rouge's former head of state Khieu Samphan, 87, and "Brother Number 2" Nuon Chea, 92, are the two most senior living members of the ultra-Maoist group that seized control of Cambodia from 1975-1979.



The reign of terror led by "Brother Number 1" Pol Pot left some two million Cambodians dead from overwork, starvation and mass executions but Friday's ruling was the first to acknowledge a genocide.

The defendants were previously handed life sentences in 2014 over the violent and forced evacuation of Phnom Penh in April 1975.

But the judgement at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) also found Nuon Chea guilty of genocide against the ethnic Vietnamese and Cham Muslim minority group, among a litany of other crimes.

"The chamber finds that Nuon Chea exercised ultimate decision-making power with Pol Pot and... therefore finds Nuon Chea is responsible as a superior for all the crimes," presiding judge Nil Nonn said.

"This includes the crime of genocide by killing members of Cham ethnic and religious group."

Khieu Samphan was also found guilty of genocide against ethnic Vietnamese, though not against the Cham, he added.

Both parties were sentenced to "life in prison", merging the two sentences into a single term, Nil Nonn said.

Hundreds of people, including dozens of Cham Muslims and Buddhist monks, were bussed to the tribunal located in the outskirts of Phnom Penh to attend the hearing.

The events covered by the verdict span the four years of the Pol Pot regime and include extensive crimes against humanity.

"The verdict is essentially the Nuremberg judgement for the ECCC and thus carries very significant weight for Cambodia, international criminal justice, and the annals of history," said David Scheffer, who served as the UN secretary general's special expert on the Khmer Rouge trials from 2012 until last month.

The revolutionaries who tried to recreate Buddhist-majority Cambodia in line with their vision of an agrarian Marxist utopia attempted to abolish class and religious distinctions by force.

The verdict read out by Nil Nonn presented a society where

minorities were targeted and killed, Buddhist monks forcibly defrocked and groups of people executed, while men and women were coerced into marriages and forced to have sex to produce children for the regime.

The atrocities fell under the additional list of charges, which the two men were found guilty of as well.

Los Sat, a 72-year-old Cham Muslim man who attended the verdict hearing with his wife, said he had lost "too many" family members under the regime.

"I am really satisfied with the sentences," he said, beaming as he left the court. "They brought suffering to my relatives." Youk Chhang, head of the Documentation Center of Cambodia -- a research organisation that provided the court with evidence -- said the verdict will "affirm the collective humanity of the victims and give recognition to the horrible suffering".

"It can provide a sense of closure to a horrible chapter in Cambodian history," he said.

The hybrid court, which uses a mix of Cambodian and international law, was created with UN backing in 2006 to try senior

Khmer Rouge leaders.

Only three people have been convicted by the court, costing more than USD 300 million.

Former Khmer Rouge foreign minister Ieng Sary and his wife died without facing justice, while Pol Pot passed away in 1998.

The number of allegations against Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan was so vast the court split the trials into a series of smaller hearings in 2011.

Many believe Friday's decision will be the last for the tribunal, which has been marred by allegations of political interference.

Prime Minister Hun Sen -- himself a former Khmer Rouge cadre -- has repeatedly warned he would not allow more investigations to proceed, citing vague threats to stability.

Clair Duffy, a senior teaching fellow at Australia's Bond University who monitored the tribunal for years, said the court's "excessively high" bill compared to other tribunals was due to "persistent political barriers to justice erected by the Hun Sen government".

The court has launched investigations into four more Khmer Rouge cadres, though one was dismissed in February 2017, highlighting the difficulties of bringing lower level members of the brutal regime to justice.

Craig Etcheson, who previously served as an investigator in the tribunal, said that despite the "expensive, slow, complex" process of the tribunal, the ECCC has provided some form of symbolic justice to the victims.

"It is not enough, perhaps, but some justice is better than no justice," he said.

California Fire death toll hits 63; sheriff says hundreds still missing



CHICO (US), Nov 16 (AP): At least 63 are now dead from a Northern California wildfire, and officials say they have a missing persons list with 631 names on it in an ever-evolving accounting of the missing after the nation's deadliest wildfire in a century.

The high number of missing people probably includes some who fled the blaze and didn't realise they had been reported missing, Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea said. He added that he was making the list public so people could see if they were on it and let authorities know they were safe.

"The chaos that we were dealing with was extraordinary," Honea said of the early crisis hours last week.

"Now we're trying to go back out and make sure that we're accounting for everyone."

Some 52,000 people were displaced to shelters, the homes of friends and relatives, to motels and to a Walmart parking lot and an adjacent field in Chico, a dozen miles away from the ashes.

At vast shelter parking lot, evacuees from California's deadliest fire wonder if they still have homes, if their neighbours are still alive and where they will go when their place of refuge shuts down in a matter of days.

"It's cold and scary," said Lilly Batres, 13, one of the few children there, who fled with her family from the forested town of Magalia and didn't know whether her home survived.

"I feel like people are going to come into our tent" The Northern California fire that began a week earlier obliterated the town of Paradise and caused such carnage that searchers continued to pull bodies out of incinerated homes and cremated cars. The toll

had reached 63 dead and 9,800 homes destroyed.

The fire was 40 per cent contained, but there was no timeline for allowing evacuees to return because of the danger. Power lines are still down, roads closed, and firefighters are still dousing embers, authorities said.

On Thursday, Anna Goodnight of Paradise tried to make the best of it, sitting on an overturned shopping car in the parking lot and eating scrambled eggs and tater tots while her husband drank a Budweiser.

But then William Goodnight d began to cry.

"We're grateful. We're better off than some. I've been holding it together for her," he said, gesturing toward his wife.

"I'm just breaking down finally." More than 75 tents had popped up in the space since Matthew Flanagan arrived last Friday.

"We call it Wally World," Flanagan said, a riff off the store name.

"When I first got here, there was nobody here. And now it's just getting worse and worse and worse. There are more evacuees, more people running out of money for hotels."

Word began to spread Thursday that efforts were being made to phase out the camp by Sunday by gradually removing donated clothing, food and toilets.

"The ultimate goal is to get these people out of tents, out of their cars and into warm shelter, into homes," said Jessica Busick, who was among the first volunteers when she and her husband started serving free food from their Truckaroni food truck last week.

"We've always known this isn't a long-term solution." A Sunday closure "gives us enough time to maybe figure something out," said Mike Robertson, an evac-

uee who arrived there on Monday with his wife and two daughters. It's unclear what will be done if people don't leave Sunday, but city officials don't plan to kick them out, said Betsy Totten, a Chico spokeswoman.

Totten said volunteers not the city had decided to shut down the camp. Walmart has added security to the location and is concerned about safety there, but it is not asking people to leave, spokeswoman LeMia Jenkins said.

Some, like Batres' family, had arrived after running out of money for a hotel. Others couldn't find a room or weren't allowed to stay at shelters with their dogs or, in the case of Suzanne Kaksonen, her two cockatoos. Kaksonen couldn't remember how long she had been there, but she said it felt like forever.

"I just want to go home," she said.

"I don't even care if there's no home. I just want to go back to my dirt, you know, and put a trailer up and clean it up and get going. Sooner the better. I don't want to wait six months. That petrifies me." Some evacuees helped sort immense piles of donations that have poured in.

Racks of used clothes from sweaters to plaid flannel shirts and tables covered with neatly organised pairs of boots, sneakers and shoes competed for space with shopping carts full of clothes, garbage bags stuffed with other donations, boxes of books, stuffed animals yellow, purple and green teddy bears and a menagerie of other fuzzy critters sitting on the pavement.

Food trucks offered free meals and a cook flipped burgers on a grill. There were portable toilets, and some people used the Walmart restrooms.

Julian Assange charged in US: WikiLeaks

Washington, Nov 16 (AFP): WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who was behind a massive dump of classified US documents in 2010, has been charged in the United States, WikiLeaks said Thursday.

Prosecutors revealed the existence of the sealed indictment inadvertently in a court filing in an unrelated case, WikiLeaks said.

The exact nature of the charges against Assange was not immediately known.

"SCOOOP: US Department of Justice 'accidentally' reveals existence of sealed charges (or a draft for them) against WikiLeaks' publisher Julian Assange in apparent cut-and-paste error in an unrelated case also at the Eastern District of Virginia," Wikileaks wrote on Twitter.

The still unsealed charges against Assange were disclosed by Assistant US Attorney Kellen Dwyer as she made a filing in the unrelated case and urged a judge to keep that filing sealed.

Dwyer wrote, "due to the sophistication of the defendant and the publicity surrounding the case, no other procedure is likely to keep confidential the fact that Assange has been charged," according to The Washington Post.

Later, Dwyer wrote the charges would "need to remain sealed until Assange is arrested."

Tajikistan launches giant dam to end power shortage

Rogun, Nov 16 (AFP): Tajikistan on Friday inaugurates a USD 3.9 billion hydro-electric power plant, a mega project that will enable the impoverished country to eliminate domestic energy shortages and export electricity to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Built on the Vakhsh River in southern Tajikistan, the plant championed by President Emomali Rakhmon is expected to reach a height of 335 metres (1,099 feet) in a decade, becoming the world's tallest hydro-electric dam.

The first of six turbines in the Rogun hydroelectric dam goes online on Friday, with the power plant expected to reach capacity of 3,600 megawatts -- the equivalent of three nuclear power plants -- when completed.

At present, Rogun still resembles a vast construction site, with rocky earth covering the territory from which the powerful Vakhsh flowing through the Pamir mountains was diverted.

In 2016, Rakhmon, who is a former collective farm boss, climbed into a bulldozer at a groundbreaking for the dam, in a sign of the president's personal attachment to the project.

It will double energy production in the country of nearly nine million people, alleviating a long-lasting, debilitating national energy deficit. Surplus energy will be sold to neighbours such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Plans to build a dam in southern Tajikistan date back to the Soviet

era, but the project was scaled up following the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

In 2017, Tajikistan raised USD 500 million from an inaugural international bond to help finance the construction.

Authorities hope that once the dam goes online it will generate money to finance further construction. Observers say the project is hugely significant for a country that lost tens of thousands of people in a civil war in the 1990s when rebel groups including Islamists rose up against the government. Rogun has become "a concept for national consolidation," political analyst Abdugani Mamedzimov told AFP.

There have been calls by public figures to rename the dam after Rakhmon. Saidjafar Usmonzoda, chairman of the ruling People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan, told AFP such a tribute would only be fitting given Rakhmon's "heroic accomplishment" making Rogun a reality.

If it ever reaches the planned height of 335 metres, the dam will be 30 metres taller than the recently-built Jinping-1 Dam in China and 35 metres taller than Tajikistan's own Soviet-era

Nurek dam, also on the Vakhsh River. The project overseen by the Italian company Salini Impregilo has a number of risks.

Observers warn that the Tajik authorities do not appear to concern themselves with the environmental sensitivities of Rogun, given Rakhmon's close involvement. Rogun is located "in a highly seismic area, and several geological studies have warned about the risks of building such a large dam in this setting," Filippo Menga, a lecturer in human geography at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom, told AFP.

Modi-Xi summit in Wuhan removed several misconceptions between India and China: Indian envoy

KJM VARMA BEIJING, Nov 16 (PTI): The Wuhan summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping has removed several "misconceptions" between the two countries which would enable them to work together on many issues like globalisation, India's envoy here has said.

In Wuhan, Modi and Xi spoke to each other for almost 10 hours, which is characterised as a strategic communication by both sides, Ambassador Gautam Bambawale said. "Both leaders were very keen to have this kind of (informal) meeting. The reason why we did an informal summit was that we wanted the two leaders to talk to each other for the maximum amount of time," he said on the April 27-28 summit.

"We removed several misconceptions may have about each other. I think a lot of things bring India and China can do together. There are only few things where we differ with each other," Bambawale told the state-run China Global Television Network on Thursday. He said both the countries are beneficiaries of multilateralism and India is a votary for globalisation like China.

The two countries agree that they



are developing countries who are focused on improving the living standards of about 2.4 billion people.

"India and China have similar view points on global issues. We both want to have an open system where multilateral system works," he said, adding that both the countries can work on many issues like globalisation.

He said the issue that divides the two countries is the unresolved boundary question. "But even as we work for the resolution of the boundary problem between us, we have agreed that we

To a question about Japan and China deciding to undertake a joint project in third countries, Bambawale said New Delhi and Beijing are also trying out such a cooperation and pointed to the recent decision to jointly train Afghan diplomats.

"At the Wuhan summit, Xi and Modi have agreed that India and China will do a joint project in Afghanistan. Here is yet another example of two Asian countries working together to help another Asian country. So, I think the future is bright as far as this aspect is concerned," he said.

To a question about India-China trade and investment moving to a fast lane, he said, "Yes, I agree, not just trade but also investments increasing between India and China."

"We are seeing more Chinese companies interested in investing in India and beginning to invest in India," he said and pointed to big strides made by Chinese companies like Xiaomi.

Huawei too has a research base in India employing about 6,000 Indian engineers.

He also spoke about Indian films like Dangal making big inroads in China.

He said filmstar Aamir Khan has become a "super star" in China.



TROLLIN' AROUND! The mother-daughter duo, Coco Austin & Chanel, have some fun at DreamWorks Trolls The Experience Rainbow Carpet Grand Opening in NYC.

JK Simmons to star in 'Veronica Mars' revival

Los Angeles, Nov 16 (PTI): Veteran actor JK Simmons has joined the cast of Hulu's "Veronica Mars" revival.

According to the Hollywood Reporter, Simmons will play an ex-con named Clyde Prickett in the series.

Clyde served 10 years for racketeering and was the first inmate in Chino to offer protection to Neptune real estate developer Big Dick Casablanco (David Starzyk) when he entered the prison.

After getting free Clyde started working as the elder Casablanco's fixer. He is the smarter and more dangerous of the two and has a network of fellow ex-cons he uses to do his dirty work.

The eight-episode Hulu series also features Dawnn Lewis, Patton Oswalt, Clifton Collins Jr and Izabela Vidovic.

Series veterans Kristen Bell, Enrico Colantoni, Jason Dohring, Percy Daggs III, Francis Capra, Ryan Hansen, Max Greenfield and Daran Norris are all returning.

The new season revolves around a series of murders around spring break parties in Neptune. The family of one victim asks Veronica (Bell) to look into the case, exposing the class divide in Neptune once more.



ARIES: It may be time to look at where you are in life, Aries. Are you where you thought you'd be? If so, congratulations. This is a real accomplishment. If not, take heart. Many people discover that they aren't anywhere close. The key is to write down solid goals and the steps needed to reach them. It's your life after all. Mapping out your route is up to you.

TAURUS: If you're feeling irritable and wrung out today, Taurus, it may be a result of putting far too much pressure on yourself. It might be wise to take a look at the expectations you have of yourself. Consider if you would you place the same demands on those closest to you. If the answer is no, it's time to revamp your life to suit the one you're closest to - you.

GEMINI: Consider whether or not you're spending enough time with everyone who's special to you,

Gemini. If more hours are going to work colleagues, friends, or partner, there might be an imbalance that you need to look at. Sit down and create a chart of where your time has gone lately. If one portion is considerably larger than the others, make a point of spending some time with the people represented by the smaller portions.

CANCER: If your partner acts quickly on his or her passions today, Cancer, you will probably want to slow things down a bit. "Nice and easy" is the phrase of the day for you, so create an environment that will allow for more time in such circumstances. Let your partner know how you feel and what you'd like to see happen. No one is a mind reader. There's far less chance of any misunderstanding when there is open communication.

LEO: Consider planning a ro-

mantic interlude, Leo. With the influence from today's planetary aspects, it will be easy to connect with that special someone. Go out for dinner with your spouse or partner or make a date with someone new who's caught your eye. Don't let shyness or insecurity stand in your way. If you're single, consider loving the most important person in your life - you - by doing something special.

VIRGO: If someone takes too long to do something today, Virgo, your temper may flare up. Patience isn't always your strong suit, and you may believe in the "if you want it done right, do it yourself" philosophy. This isn't always fair. Others need to do things at their own pace, and in some cases, it's essential that you give them the room to do so. Take a deep breath if you have to, and be patient.

LIBRA: You might find it rather tough to take criticism today, Libra. This is something that's hard for many to hear, but it truly depends on your perspective. Rather than view it as a personal attack, try to see the value in the criticism. If you're honest with yourself and recognize that you could learn and grow from critique, seize it as an opportunity. If you find that it's out in left field, then leave it there.

SCORPIO: Be careful not to fall prey to your own idealism today, Scorpio. While this is one of your most admirable qualities, as it contributes to your romantic, creative nature, too much of anything can be harmful. It's important to see things as they are, despite how much you may wish them to be different. The real world doesn't always go hand in hand with your ideal place. If something feels off, it probably is. Trust your instincts.

SAGITTARIUS: Don't be surprised if you feel a real need for some breathing room today, Sagittarius. As much as you enjoy the company of others, you need to have time to yourself as well. See if you can work in a private space or simply shut your door. If you need to move in order to be alone, hop in the car and go. Irritability is a good indicator of when you need to get away from the crowd.

CAPRICORN: If things haven't been going too well with those you spend most of your time with, Capricorn, it might be time to consider your expectations of them. Ask what kinds of demands you place on others and if they're fair. Is it possible that you expect the same from others that you give, but perhaps they aren't able to match your level of performance? Consider talking with the people involved to find out

how they feel.

AQUARIUS: A little romantic time with your special someone may be in order today, Aquarius. With the day-to-day chaos of working and living, it can be tough to get some quality time alone. If you don't make specific plans, it can be months before this happens. Take the situation in hand and make those plans. If you're single, consider making arrangements for a date or spending time with a friend.

PISCES: Take it slow and easy today, Pisces. With the energy from the day's aspects, rushing around isn't likely to get you too far. In fact, you're more apt to make mistakes or leave a bunch of things unfinished. Make your to-do list and go about each thing one at a time at an even pace. Even if you don't finish everything, what you accomplish will be done well.

Wedding pictures of Deepika Padukone-Ranveer Singh out after long wait

A public announcement, two weddings and a long tease later, Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh released the first pictures as husband and wife on Thursday.

The marriage, one of the most awaited events in Bollywood calendar, was an intensely private and synchronised affair at scenic Lake Como's Villa del Balbianello in Italy. The couple honoured their South Indian and North Indian origins with twin nuptials.

Both Deepika and Ranveer shared the photographs simultaneously on their respective social media accounts.

In the South Indian style wedding, Ranveer can be seen wearing a cream-white and golden kurta-dhoti, while Deepika looked gorgeous in what appears to be a maroon Kanjeevaram sari. The couple is seen sharing a hearty laugh in the picture.

In the second picture, the couple twinned in red and gold outfits. Deepika wore a dupatta that had the blessing 'Sada Saubhagyavati Bhavah' inscribed on it in gold letters. This picture has the couple engaged in a deep conversation.

Deepika's favourite couturier Sabyasachi designed the outfits for both the couple. The bride, for once, managed to force Ranveer to mellow down from his quirky, flamboyant style.

Media, both national and international, was stationed outside the venue but could only manage a series of grainy images and videos, mostly of the guests and family members, doing little to quench the thirst of the stars' fans.

Though the wedding date announcement was made public in October, the wedding itself was one of the most secretive celebrity nuptials in Bollywood as even guests, who were ensconced in resorts tucked high above the lake ringed by mountains, were asked to keep the phone camera away.

Singer Harshdeep Kaur, who reportedly performed at the sangheet ceremony Tuesday, had to take down a picture from social media, that showed her standing near the lake with her husband.

The couple were sheltered from the prying camera eyes of the paparazzi during the ceremony with the help of black umbrellas, which the guests carried with them. They also flanked Deepika and Ranveer as the rituals were underway, with the media guessing that the wedding was over only through cheers and fireworks.

Like everything, the theme was also colour-coordinated - gold and cream, followed by red and gold on day two.

The wedding date Thursday also marks the fifth anniversary release of their first film together - "Ram Leela" - on

whose sets their love story is said to have taken off. The couple has been in a relationship for six years.

Deepika and Ranveer will host a reception each in Bengaluru and Mumbai on November 21 and 28, respectively.

"Such a stunning, gorgeous and beautiful couple. Nazar utar lo. Badhai ho. Love you both. Here is to a lifetime of love and joy, filmmaker Karan Johar tweeted Wednesday, later ad-



mitting that he too was eagerly waiting for the pictures.

The actors, who have also worked together in Bajirao Mastani and Padmaavat, were photographed at the Mumbai airport leaving for Italy on November 10 in a blaze of camera flashes and they will reportedly stay there till November 17.

On November 10, Ranveer's stylist Nitasha Gaurav posted teasers of the pre-wedding rituals on Twitter.

No pictures but it was love personified to see them together today. Couldn't stop my tears, but these were tears of happiness and so I hope they never do. #DeepVeerKiShaadi #RanveerKishadi #foreverlove, she wrote on the microblogging site.

Next big wedding in Bollywood is that of Priyanka Chopra, who is reportedly set to tie the knot with American singer Nick Jonas in December.

Actor Anushka Sharma, who married Indian cricket skipper Virat Kohli last year, was one of the firsts to congratulate the married couple.

"Wishing you both a world of happiness and beautiful journey together. May the love and respect you have in each other grow leaps and bounds. And welcome to the club," she wrote on Twitter.

"Lots of love and congratulations my RV and Dips," wrote Parineeti, who made her debut with Ranveer's film.

Bipasha Basu tweeted, "Love a great love story. So happy to see this beautiful couple together forever. Congratulations."

Andy Serkis, Christian Bale to visit Mumbai for world premiere of 'Mowgli'

MUMBAI, Nov 16 (PTI): Actor-director Andy Serkis is coming to India for the world premiere of his Netflix film "Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle" along with the stars of the film -- Christian Bale, Frieda Pinto and newcomer Rohan Chand.

"Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle" is the first time India will be the destination of a major Hollywood motion picture premiere with its lead cast in attendance.

Serkis also voice stars as the fun-loving bear, Baloo and Bale lends his voice to the sombre panther, Bagheera - the man-cub's friend.

The voice cast also includes Cate Blanchett as Kaa, Benedict Cumberbatch as Shere Khan, Naomie Harris as Nisha, Peter Mullan as Akela, Jack Reynor as Mowgli's brother Wolf, Eddie Marsan as Vihaan, Tom Hollander as Tabaqui and Matthew Rhys as Lockwood.

The trailer of "Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle" was launched at Netflix's 'See What's Next: Asia' event held last week in Singapore.

Serkis has maintained that the film is closest to the Indian roots of Rudyard Kipling's classic, and when he was quizzed about India release plans, the

director was secretive.

"Well, I can't tell you what's happening. The film will be seen in India. I'm not sure if I can release the timings. But there will be very significant moment where this film begins its life in India," Serkis told

PTI in Singapore. "Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle" is produced by Jonathan Cavenish, Steve Kloves and David Barron.

The film will be available to Netflix members worldwide starting December 7, 2018.

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