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SummitTIMES

Ancient monastery renovated in Nepal

KATHMANDU, OCT 24 (PTI): A 1,250 years old Buddhist monastery in Nepal's famous tourist destination Muktinath has been renovated at a cost of Rs 2.85 crore.

The ancient monastery, Narsing Gumba, built from stone and mud, although repaired few years back, had started leaking and its walls had become wobbly.

Buddhist preacher Rimpochhe is credited for constructing this monastery at Muktinath, a famous pilgrim site which attracts thousands of Buddhist and Hindu pilgrims annually.

The monastery has been renovated at a cost of Rs 2.85 crore, said Muktinath Area Development Committee president Hira Bahadur Thakuri.

The grant assistance for the renovation of the monastery was provided by the Department of Archaeology; Ministry of Culture and Tourism; then District Development Committee, Mustang; the Muktinath Kshetra Development Committee; the local conservation committee and the Water-induced Disaster Management Committee.

The devotees have placed the idols of various gods and goddesses inside the monastery.

India's first engine-less train set to hit tracks on Oct 29

CHENNAI, OCT 24 (PTI): Train 18, the country's first engine-less train which is being regarded as a successor to the 30-year-old Shatabdi Express, is set to hit the tracks for trials on October 29.

Driven by a self-propulsion module sans a separate locomotive, the train, capable of running at a speed of up to 160 kmph, comes with technical features for enhanced quick acceleration.

The swanky 16-coach prototype without a locomotive (engine) will cut travel time by 15 per cent compared to the Shatabdi.

Developed by the city-based Integral Coach Factory in 18 months, the full AC train is designed in such a way that passengers can have a look at the driver's cabin.

ICF General Manager Sudhanshu Mani told PTI that it cost nearly Rs 100 crore to build the prototype and subsequent production would bring down the cost.

It has a potential to travel up to the speed at 160 kmph as against 130 kmph of Shatabdi and would result in the travel time being reduced by around 15 per cent once the tracks are fit to suit Train 18's speed.

Train 18 has diffused lighting, automatic doors and footsteps besides GPS-based Passenger Information System.

Chenrizig statue at Sangachoeling slated for 01 Nov inauguration



Cultural Affairs Minister conducts final inspection

GYALSHING, 24 OCT [IPR]: The final joint inspection/coordination meeting regarding the inauguration of Chenrizig Singkham Riwo Potala at Pelling in West Sikkim, which is set to be inaugurated on 01 Nov, was held today at the project site by Minister for Cultural Affairs & Heritage and Roads & Bridges, GM Gurung, accompanied by Member of Legislative Assembly, Chandra Maya Subba, Chief Administrator, Rinchen Ongmu, Additional District Collector, Gyalshing, Karma Lodey Lepcha, Sub Divisional Police Officer, Manish Kumar Verma, and other officials of different line departments.

Mr Gurung inspected the project site extensively along with the officials and asked them to give their best prior to the inauguration programme. He reminded all the line department officials that the project was of great value and

hence the inaugural will be historical for Sikkim and as such needs to be planned and executed in a proper manner.

"The once thought impossible task is nearing its completion phase hence everything needs to be prim and proper prior to the scheduled opening by the Chief Minister," said Mr Gurung.

He further instructed the Police and the District Administration to chalk out the roles which needs to be given to the respective departments during the inaugural ceremony.

The Minister thanked the CM for making the State an abode of peace where all religions and cultures have learnt to live in harmony. He also congratulated the CM on his recent accolade received from the United Nations in Rome.

Chief Administrator, Ms Ongmu, advised the district officials to work in cooperation amongst themselves for the inaugural function which is scheduled to be held on 01 Nov.

SDF to start 2019 election campaign post-Diwali

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 OCT:

Sikkim Democratic Front [SDF] will be launching its campaign for the 2019 elections after Diwali, party sources inform. The SDF president, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, will be kicking off the campaign from West Sikkim, it is learnt.

Sikkim will be going to polls in April-May next year.

SDF party sources inform that the party high command has directed all the party cadre and frontal organizations to be ready for election campaigning although the dates are yet to be finalised.

All Ministers and MLAs including party officials

have been directed by Mr Chamling to list out the development brought about during the last 25 years of the SDF government and ensure that the issues reach every corner of the State to help the public decide the next government, it is informed.

Meanwhile, the main opposition party Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has been active since August with party activities focusing on West and South districts of the State.

SKM leader, PS Tamang has said that the party is ready to go to poll and the party is open for dialogue with other political parties as pre-election alliance without any conditions.

Choreographer Dharmesh to judge Sikkim's Dancing Icon S2 finale

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 OCT:

Popular Indian dancer and choreographer, Dharmesh Yelande, will be the judge for the grand finale of Sikkim's Dancing Icon 2018 season 2 scheduled to be held on 26 Oct here at Manan Kendra. He will be reaching Gangtok on Thursday evening.

Sikkim's Dancing Icon is being organised by Ranipool based Creative Illusion Dexterity Studio in East Sikkim. Top six dancers each in junior and senior categories will take on each other in the grand finale for



the title. Dharmesh Yelande will be assisted by another talented dancer, Mingma D Lepcha, from Namchi, South Sikkim

in the grand finale. The theme of the competition is 'Say No to Drugs and Yes to Dance'.

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Centre sets up GoM to look into sexual harassment at work place

NEW DELHI, OCT 24 (PTI):

A Group of Ministers, headed by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, has been constituted by the government to strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks to deal with and prevent sexual harassment at workplace.

The members of the GoM are Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi, a home ministry official said.

The GoM will examine the existing legal and institutional frameworks for dealing with matters of sexual harassment of women at workplace.

It will recommend action required for effective implementation of the existing provisions, as well as for strengthening the existing legal and institutional frameworks for addressing issues related to sexual harassment at workplace, the official said.

The GoM has been set up in the wake of #MeToo movement where several women have publicly named people who had harassed them at their workplace.

Former editor MJ Akbar had to resign as Minister of State for External Affairs following allegations of sexual harassment against him by former colleagues.

State Govt at World Mountain Forum as special invitee to address GLOF

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 OCT:

Government of Kyrgyz Republic in collaboration with University of Central Asia is organizing World Mountain Forum 2018 "Mountains in a Changing World: Strengthening Partnerships and Pathways towards a Thriving Mountain Future" in Kyrgyzstan from 23-26 Oct. The forum is also being attended by Government of Sikkim as special invitee, a press release informs.

The State Government has been invited to share experiences and learnings on the pilot project on "Reducing Risks and Vulnerabilities due to Glacial Lake Outburst Flood [GLOF] at South Lhonak Lake in North Sikkim".

This initiative is being supported by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation-United Nations Development Programme [SDC-UNDP]

Project on Strengthening State Strategies on Climate Actions.

The State Government was represented by Special Secretary, Land Revenue & Disaster Management Department, Rinzing Chewang Bhutia, Additional Director, Science & Technology & Climate Change Department, Dharendra Gopal Shrestha, and Technical Expert, Disaster Risk Reduction, UNDP, Keshav Koirala.

Mr Chewang also informed the gathering about Sikkim's organic mission and recent recognition accorded to Chief Minister Pawan Chamling by the Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO] at Rome in Italy.

He then gave a presentation on the GLOF Risks in Sikkim and the mitigation work carried out by the State Government in collaboration with SDC-UNDP 3SCA Project.

turn to pg03

Now, 'King' Kohli is fastest to 10,000 ODI runs



ABHISHEK HORE VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT 24 (PTI):

Virat Kohli Wednesday became the fastest to score 10,000 runs in One-day Internationals, rewriting, fittingly enough, the iconic Sachin Tendulkar's record and compounding the cricket community's conundrum to find the right superlatives for his phenomenal batting.

'King' Kohli comfortably bettered the record set by the man who was to Indian cricket for over two decades what the 29-year-old has been for the past few years.

Tendulkar took 259 innings to get there, while Kohli has so far batted in 205 innings. Fortune, too, was on Kohli's side as West In-

dies skipper Jason Holder dropped his Indian counterpart on 44.

Seventeen summers ago, Tendulkar had ventured into what was then an uncharted territory, during a match against Australia. On Wednesday, Kohli became the 13th batsman to reach the milestone.

Not long ago, while the cricket world struggled to look for words to aptly describe Kohli's phenomenal batting, his coach Ravi Shastri thought it would be wise to visit the bookstore, buy the latest edition of the Oxford dictionary and look for the adjectives that befit the captain and his superhuman feats.

"If I were you, I would visit the bookstore and

pick up the Oxford dictionary," Shastri had said after a Kohli century guided India to victory over South Africa in February.

Some years ago, Tendulkar, after scoring his 100th international century, said he would love to see an Indian -- someone like Kohli or Rohit Sharma -- break his records.

At a venue set amidst picturesque hills, Kohli reached the mark when he played Ashley Nurse for a single in the 37th over of the second ODI against the West Indies.

Entering the game 81 short of 10,000, with this achievement the run machine added another feather to his illustrious cap.

Kohli has been in sublime form across formats this year and has scored over 900 runs in ODIs alone. He is currently the world's No.1 batsman in both the Test and one-day formats.

Kohli's journey has been awe-inspiring, from his first-class debut, winning the U-19 World Cup, captaining the Indian team, to rewriting batting records at will.

With his unbeatable performances, Kohli has won several accolades including the Arjuna award, ICC World Cricketer of the year and multiple BCCI

international Cricketer of the Year awards.

"It's an incredible achievement by Virat to complete 10,000 runs ODI before he is even 30 years old. It's only expected that Virat will reach many more batting milestones in future," BCCI acting president CK Khanna said.

In the first match against the Caribbean side, Kohli notched up his 36th ODI hundred as he stroked his way to a breezy 140, helping the home team take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

Besides Tendulkar and Kohli, Sourav Ganguly, Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Rahul Dravid are the other Indian cricketers to cross 10000 runs in the format.

HSP raises questions on Future Policy Gold Award received by Sikkim

REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 24 OCT:

Hamro Sikkim Party [HSP] leaders today addressed a press meet at their party office in Deorali with regard to the United Nations' Future Policy Gold Award received by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling on behalf of Sikkim in Rome recently.

The meet was addressed by HSP spokespersons Biraj Adhikari and Punya Koirala, and party executives, Tirtha Sharma and DS Limboo.

Questioning the absence of senior representatives of the Government of India at the awards function in Rome, Mr Koirala said, "It is an honour for Sikkim to have received an international award, but



why were no senior representatives from Indian government present at the award function? Why was the achievement of the State not flashed on national television channels?"

He also demanded

clarifications on the parameters set for the selection of Sikkim for the award.

"All these need to be clarified to the public and the State Government must issue a white paper on it," he added.

He further stated that all national and international awards received by the State in the past 25 years should not be kept in the house of one person but rather displayed in a museum for public display and so that

the coming generations have a knowledge about the awards.

Addressing the press, HSP spokesperson, Mr Adhikari, alleged that vegetables from outside the State are still being sold although the State

Government had earlier put a ban on the sale of non-organic vegetables.

HSP party executive Mr Limboo stressed on provision of better market for organic vegetables of farmers from the villages of Sikkim.

"This factor is more important than the award. Farmers will feel proud only when their organic vegetables are sold readily in the market. Only then the organic mission and awards will be meaningful. Vegetables from outside Sikkim are still being sold and consumed. The award should not bring disrepute to the State in future. Are the 60,000 odd farmers as cited in the award report really benefiting from organic farming?" questioned Mr Limboo.

Rs 98 lac compensation for Himagiri HEP explosion affected

WANGCHUK BHUTIA
DIKCHU, 24 OCT:

A total of 85 houses suffered major and minor damages due to the explosion at Magazine house site of Himagiri hydro-electric project at Tigda area under Block Lingzya and Laven under Dzongu Sub Division in Upper Dzongu, North Sikkim on 24 Mar earlier this year.

The damages were caused at Upper and

Lower Lingzya of Sakyong-Pentong Gram Panchayat Unit and Laven village of Lingthem-Lingdem GPU. An amount of around Rs 98 lakh in total will be disbursed.

The cheques are scheduled to be disbursed on 02 Nov at Panchayat Ghar in Lower Lingzya by the district administration and the representatives from HHE private Ltd, it is informed.

Purple tea fetches record price at Guwahati Tea Auction Center

GUWAHATI, OCT 24 (PTI): The Guwahati Tea Auction Center on Wednesday claimed to have sold about 1.2 kg of purple tea at a record price of Rs 24,501 per kg, an industry source said here.

The purple tea, produced by Donyio Polo Tea Estate of Arunachal Pradesh, was sold to Dugar Consumer Products Pvt Ltd here, the source said.

"This is the first time purple tea is being manufactured in India. The tea was sold by Contemporary Tea Brokers Pvt Ltd here at the highest price," Guwahati Tea Auction Buyers Association secretary Dinesh Bihani told PTI.

The Guwahati Tea

Auction Center, which has recently added purple tea in its basket, sells various types such as golden tips, silver needles and other speciality teas.

Bihani said Dugar Consumer Product Pvt Ltd sells tea under the brand name 'Uphaar', one of the "largest tea packet sellers in the North East region".

Around 10,000 purple tea leaves are required to make a kg of purple tea, another industry source said.

Donyi Polo had in August sold the golden needles tea variety at a record Rs 40,000 per kg, consisting of a 1.1 kg lot, the source added.

Women devotees move HC for police security to worship at Sabarimala

KOCHI, OCT 24 (PTI): Four women in the menstrual age group have approached the Kerala High Court seeking a direction to the state government to provide them security to offer prayers at Lord Ayyappa temple in Sabarimala.

When the petition filed by AK Maya Krishnan (37), Rekha S (45), Jalajamol PS (35), and Jayamol PS (28) came up Wednesday, a division bench of justices P R Ramachandra Menon and Devan Ramachandran directed the state government to spell out its stand on the matter.

The bench then posted the plea for hearing to Monday.

In their petition, the women, including two lawyers, submitted that

despite a judgement of the Supreme Court permitting entry of all women into the hill shrine, the hopes of the female devotees of Lord Ayyappa are still in limbo.

The petitioners alleged that the thanthis (priests) and Pandalam royal family who are bound to act under the directions of the TDB were committing contempt of court by protesting in support of those challenging the fundamental rights declared by the Supreme Court in favour of woman of all ages.

The very act of protest to prevent the women of all ages from enjoying their fundamental right is a challenge of the established law of the country, they alleged.

Preventing women

from exercising the religious right of worship was punishable with imprisonment of three years under Sec 295A of The Indian Penal Code (IPC), they added.

The Sabarimala temple, which opened for the monthly pooja on October 17 after the Supreme Court order, had witnessed a stand-off over the issue with angry devotees preventing at least a dozen women in the "barred" age group from entering the shrine.

On September 28, a five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court, headed by then chief justice Dipak Misra had lifted the centuries-old ban on the entry of women of menstrual age into the shrine.

Cancer more than doubled in India over last 26 yrs, breast cancer most common: Report

NEW DELHI, OCT 24 (PTI): Cancer burden in India has more than doubled over the last 26 years, the highest increase amongst all therapy areas, with breast cancer being the most common among Indian women, according to a recent report.

The Breast Cancer Landscape in India, a white paper by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), which aims to provide insights regarding status and challenges in breast cancer care will be released Thursday by Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel.

As per the ICMR data, India had 14 lakh cancer patients in 2016 and this number is expected to increase. The government has laid down four priori-

ty cancers -- breast cancer, cervical cancer, oral cancer and lung cancer which together constitute 41 per cent of cancer burden, the report mentioned.

"Breast cancer is currently the most common cancer among Indian women, both in terms of incidence as well as mortality, with proportional prevalence in younger age-groups being higher than the global average. Age standardised rate is approximately 25.8 per one lakh women and is expected to rise to 35 per one lakh women in 2026," the report stated.

However, this number, the report stated, could be an underestimate as at present only 15 per cent of the population is covered by cancer registries.

"As per interviews with key stakeholders, there could be an under-reporting of nearly 50-100 per cent varying with every state," it said.

Nearly 60 per cent patients with breast cancers are diagnosed in advanced stages. Breast cancer burden is not only limited to disease burden and mortality, but also leads to economic loss for the nation.

India, lost nearly USD 6.7 Billion in 2012 due to cancer, amounting to 0.36 per cent of the total GDP.

Indian breast cancer patients are younger females with a median age of diagnosis being 46.2 years and nearly 48 per cent being diagnosed in pre-menopausal age, which implies a more aggressive disease.

CBI reshuffles team probing case against Asthana

NEW DELHI, OCT 24 (PTI): The CBI has overhauled the team probing allegations of corruption against its former Special Director Rakesh Asthana, bringing in completely new faces, officials said Wednesday.

Changes have been effected from the investigation officer to the supervisory level, they said.

M Nageswar Rao, a 1986-batch Odisha cadre IPS officer, who took over the duties and functions of CBI director late last night, appointed Satish Dagar as superintendent

of police to probe the case, they said.

Dagar has earlier probed cases against Dera Sachcha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim.

His first supervisor will be Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Tarun Gauba, who investigated the Vyapam cases.

At the joint director-level, V Murugesan has been brought in. He will hold additional charge as joint director, Anti Corruption-I, in the CBI headquarters.

The Supreme Court had reposed faith in

Murugesan in the coal scam probe, officials said.

The previous investigating officer, Deputy SP AK Bassi, has been shunted to Port Blair in "public interest" with "immediate effect", they said.

Asthana had alleged in his complaint to the Central Vigilance Commission that Bassi was carrying out "roving inquiries" against him on the directions of Alok Verma, the CBI director who has been divested of all powers by the government along with him.

In another order, the

CBI transferred Joint Director-Policy Arun Kumar Sharma and posted him as joint director of the Multi-Disciplinary Monitoring Agency (MDMA), probing former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination case.

Senior officer, A Sai Manohar, has been transferred and posted as joint director Chandigarh zone while Amit Kumar, DIG Economic Offence-III, will hold additional charge of joint director-policy.

CBI director and special director sent on leave

NEW DELHI, OCT 24 (PTI): Feuding CBI Director Alok Verma and Special Director Rakesh Asthana have been divested of their powers and sent on leave, capping overnight discussions that led to the agency's reins being handed to a joint director as an interim measure early Wednesday.

It is the first such case in the history of the investigating agency, sources said as Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told reporters that the government's decision

to remove the CBI's two top officers was based on the Central Vigilance Commission's (CVC) recommendations.

Joint Director M Nageswar Rao, a 1986-batch Odisha cadre IPS officer, was appointed to look after the "duties and functions" of the director with "immediate effect" as an "interim measure".

A late night order Tuesday from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent Verma and Asthana on leave.

On Tuesday evening, the CVC recommended after a meeting that Verma and Asthana be sent to leave and a Special Investigation Team (SIT) be formed to probe the allegations against them.

An SIT will look into the charges and both officers will "sit out" the duration of the probe, Jaitley told reporters after a cabinet briefing, adding that they have been sent on leave as an interim measure.

He said it is absolutely essential to restore the agency's institutional integrity and credibility.

The allegations by the top two officers of the country's premier investigation agency had led to a "bizarre and unfortunate" situation, he said.

In a lengthy statement issued later in the day, the government claimed that Verma was not cooperating with the CVC.

It defended its decision to send him on leave, saying an "extraordinary and unprecedented" situation had arisen due to "grave allegations of corruption" against senior functionaries of the agency.

Govt, opp engage in verbal duel on removal of CBI director

NEW DELHI, OCT 24 (PTI): Opposition parties Wednesday launched a blistering attack on the government over the removal of the CBI director with the Congress describing the decision as the "last nail" in the independence of the agency but the Centre defended its move as "absolutely essential" to maintain CBI's institutional integrity.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley also asserted that the government's decision to send Alok Verma and his deputy Rakesh Asthana was based on the recommendations of the Central Vigilance Commissioner.

A late night order on Tuesday from the Ap-

pointments Committee of the Cabinet led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent Verma and Asthana, who were at loggerheads, on leave.

Leading the attack against the government on the issue, Congress president Rahul Gandhi alleged that Verma was forcibly sent on leave as he was collecting documents relating to the Rafale 'scam', adding the country and its Constitution were in danger under the ruling dispensation.

"Modi govt buries the 'last nail' into the independence of CBI. Systematic dismantling and denigrating of CBI is now complete. Once a premier investigating

agency, PM ensures that CBI's integrity, credibility and reliability is buried and dead," Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said.

Jaitley dismissed as "rubbish" allegations that Verma was removed because he was collecting documents on the Rafale fighter jet deal.

"I regard this charge as rubbish. The fact that opposition parties are saying we know what agency was going to do next itself casts a doubt on the fairness process. I don't believe what they are saying is true, but if they did have access to what was going on in the mind of a person that itself demolishes the integrity of the

person they are trying to support," he said.

Besides sending Verma and Asthana on leave, the government also transferred several CBI officials and appointed M Nageswar Rao as the interim chief of the agency.

In a tweet, Gandhi said, "CBI Chief Alok Verma was collecting documents relating to the Rafale scam. He was forcibly sent on leave."

"The Prime Minister's message is very clear that whoever comes near Rafale (issue) will be removed, wiped out," he charged.

A number of opposition leaders including TMC's Mamata Banerjee, CPI(M)'s Sitaram Yechury, BSP's Mayawa-

ti, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and CPI's D Raja were among those who attacked the government over removal of Verma.

"CBI has now become so called BBI (BJP Bureau of Investigation) - very unfortunate!" Banerjee tweeted.

Mayawati also attacked the government on the issue, alleging that the Centre's "vindictive, casteist and communal policies" have put not only the CBI, but other agencies as well under similar problem.

DMK president M K Stalin too slammed the government for removing Verma, alleging that institutional freedom was facing serious threat under the Modi government.

"Director Alok Verma being sent on leave at a crucial time appears motivated with #RafaleScam under the scanner. The appointment of a corrupt officer as interim head of #CBI is equally questionable," he tweeted.

In his reaction, Yechury alleged that the government removed Verma to protect its 'handpicked' officer Asthana.

"The illegal removal of CBI chief by Modi government to protect their own handpicked officer, against whom serious charges of corruption are being investigated, points to attempts at a serious cover-up to protect his direct links to the BJP's top political leader-

ship", tweeted Yechury.

"To ensure that the CBI is not a 'caged parrot', the Supreme Court had granted protection to its chief from govt's whims and fancies by giving him a two-year tenure. What is Modi govt trying to hide by its panic move?" he asked.

Delhi Chief Minister and AAP leader Kejriwal echoed him.

"What are the reasons for sending CBI director on leave? Under which law did the Modi govt get the authority to initiate action against the chief of an investigating agency appointed as per the Lokpal Act? What is Modi govt trying to hide?" he asked on Twitter.

CPI leader Raja de-

scribed the situation in the CBI as one akin to a "coup" that has shocked the nation and demanded that Modi, as head of the government, explain the truth to the people.

"What is happening in the CBI is like a coup that has shocked the entire nation. The CBI has been plunged into such a crisis. Its credibility stands completely destroyed. It is happening under the nose of the prime minister.

"There is speculation that it has something to do with the Rafale scam. People want to know the truth. The prime minister being the head of the government should explain to the people and the nation," Raja said.

Gangtok on Thursday, 25 Oct

Temp: 24°C/09°C
Forecast: Clouds giving way to some sun; occasional morning rain and drizzle, then a brief shower or two.
Sunrise: 05:41 AM
Sunset: 04:58 PM

Tata Motors launches nation-wide free service camp for commercial vehicles

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 OCT:
 To commemorate its National Customer Care Day which falls on 23 Oct, Tata Motors has initiated nation-wide free service camp 'Grahak Seva Mahotsav' for all Tata commercial vehicle owners across the country from 23-29 Oct, a press release informs.

During the service camp, owners can also avail attractive discounts on spare parts, labour and Profile Engine purchases. The company will also be launching Grahak Samvaad campaign starting from 24-31 Oct.

It may be mentioned here, Tata Motors CVBU division celebrates National Customer Care Day on 23 Oct every year to commemorate the day the company got its first customer.

SMU Asst Prof to be awarded PhD at next convocation

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 OCT:
 Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacology, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College [Jamshehpur], Deepanjana Dass, successfully defended her Ph.D. thesis on 15 Oct under the guidance of head of Department of Medicine, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences [SMIMS] & Central Referral Hospital [CRH], Professor [Dr] Bidita Khandelwal, and Scientist "E" [Deputy Director-Medical], Regional Occupational Health Centre [ROHC-Eastern], National Institute of Occupational Health [NIOH], Indian Council of Medical Research [ICMR], Kolkata, Amit Chakrabarti.

A press release issued by Sikkim Manipal University informs that Ms Dass's Ph.D. research topic was "Prevalence and predictors of analgesic misuse: A controlled cross-sectional study among urban young adults of East Sikkim, North East India". She has been recommended for award of degree by the Board of Examiners of SMU.

The Doctor of Philosophy will be awarded to her during the forthcoming Convocation SMU.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?
 news @ summittimes.com

SAATHI conducts community outreach prog in Rangpo

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 OCT:

The Sikkim Against Addiction Towards Healthy India [SAATHI] team of Rangpo Mining Senior Secondary School organised a community outreach programme at Rangpo Mandi Bazaar in East Sikkim today, a press release informs.

Area MLA, Gopal Rai, attended the event as chief guest accompanied by Rangpo Nagar Panchayat President, Maya Cin-



tury, Vice President, Laal Kumar Rai, Councillors Savitri Pradhan, Pinku Prasad & Anjina Lahmu Tamang, and others.

Addressing the gathering, Principal, Rangpo Mining SSS, Dr Hanna Yonzon, explained the duties and responsibilities

of SAATHI in schools and society.

During the programme, SAATHI members presented a skit on

addiction followed by an open quiz competition.

Dr Gayatri Sharma from Health Department, who attended the event as resource person, highlighted on different types of addiction and facilities provided by the department.

Similarly, Sub Inspector, Rangpo Police Station, Sobit Khatri, informed about various Acts implemented by the State Government to curb drug abuse in the State.



SHRC Chairperson calls on Governor

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 OCT:

Chairperson of the Sikkim State Human Rights Commission, Justice Narendra Kumar Jain, called on Governor Ganga Prasad at Raj Bhavan on 23 Oct.

A press communiqué received from Raj Bhavan informs that it was a courtesy call during which Justice Jain apprised the Governor about the various activities and calendar

of events that the Commission has organised as part of its mandate.

The Governor expressed pleasure on knowing about the role of the Commission in contributing towards an informed and empowered citizenry and urged the Chairperson to take further initiatives towards making common people aware of their rights as guaranteed by the Constitution and their duties towards the nation.

George Telegraph moves into Gold Cup quarterfinals

SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 24 OCT:

George Telegraph, Kolkata, secured a berth in the quarter-final round of the ongoing 38th All India Governor's Gold Cup International Football Tournament 2018 here at Paljor Stadium. In the second pre-quarter-final match played today, George Telegraph edged past Armed Police Force Club, Nepal, by a solitary goal.

Both teams took to the field with an attacking game and maintained constant pressure on each other with a flurry of attacks and counter-attacks. However, both teams failed to convert any attack and the first half seemed to be headed for a goalless fare until Mahitesh Roy scored for George Telegraph in the dying minutes of the first half.

APFC players continued with their attacking game from the start of the second half, but could not breach the defence line of the Kolkata team.



In the seven-minute injury time, APFC-Nepal even received two direct free kicks from near the D-box area of the opponents but failed to capitalize on these opportunities.

Finally, George Telegraph won the match by a solitary goal with the final whistle by the referee.

George Telegraph will now take on an ISL team, ATK Kolkata [Reserve] in the quarter-final match on 28 Oct.

On 25 Oct, the third

pre-quarterfinal match will be played between home team Sikkim Aakraman Football Club and Sogolband United, Manipur.

Choreographer Dharmesh to judge Sikkim's Dancing Icon S2 finale

contd from pg01

Addressing a press conference here today, the event manager, Sangeet Pariyar, mentioned that this is the second season of the competition and around 550 dancers from Sikkim and its neighbouring hills and some other parts of the country took part in the auditions of the competition this time. He informed that auditions and other rounds of the competition were judged

by Sushma Yonzon and Shristi Pariyar.

Mr Pariyar stated that Creative Illusion Dexterity Studio started Sikkim's Dancing Icon last year to provide a bigger platform to youth to showcase their talent and further encourage them towards productive and creative path. He stated that the competition is an annual event of the academy and will continue to give exposure to talented dancers.

The dancing field

has immense opportunities for dancers of Sikkim to make a successful career in it, he added. He also urged the people of the State to recognize the skills and talents in their children and to send them to academies to further hone their talents.

The competition has cash prize, music video and other gifts for the winners.

State Govt at World Mountain Forum as special invitee to address GLOF

contd from pg01

installation of siphoning system to draw out water from the lake.

Additional Director, STCC Department, Mr Shrestha, spoke at length about the vulnerability of South Lhonak Lake to GLOF.

He explained the work done by Remote Sensing Centre under Sikkim State Council for Climate Change in research and monitoring the glacial lakes of Sikkim. He also emphasized on the State Government's resolve to operationalize the State Action Plan for Climate Change adding the Pilot Project on GLOF in Sikkim was an excellent example.

The release informs that Mr Shrestha was a member of the Working Group of experts formed by Department of Sci-

ence & Technology, Government of India to study the South Lhonak Glacial Lake and recommend suitable mitigation measure thereof. The Working Group gave its report in Aug 2014 wherein siphoning was recommended as one of the best suited mitigation measures.

Technical Expert, DRR, Mr Koirala, in his presentation, highlighted the overall goal and expected outcomes of the 3SCA Project in Sikkim. He explained the rationale behind taking up the Pilot Project on siphoning while laying emphasis on SAPCC and Working Group recommendations.

His presentation also focused on the challenging processes involved in successfully siphoning the glacial water from

South Lhonak Lake. He also spoke about the second output of the project which was building community resilience of the vulnerable communities by organizing programmes to educate, disseminate and build capacities. He also thanked the State Government in recognizing UNDP's role as partners to reduce the risks of disasters in the State of Sikkim.

Other speakers included representatives from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, University of Freiburg and University of Zurich.

This is the 4th World Mountain Forums following three previous World Mountain Forums, each in different mountain regions of the world - Switzerland [2011], Peru [2014], Uganda [2016].



SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Accident Care

More needs to be done in response to accidents and mishaps

Imagine a scenario in which a road mishap, say in remote West Sikkim, leaves a group of people injured and in immediate need of medical attention ranging from the routine first-aid to specialist interventions. You do not even have to stretch your imagination if you have been following news on a regular basis and are aware of such accidents in different parts of Sikkim. While accidents cannot be averted with certainty, what can be assured is that accident victims receive the required medical attention sans the red tape and without having to bounce through a circuitous route to medical attention. But that is invariably what happens.

Continuing with the scenario outlined earlier, the injured will first be rushed to the nearest PHC if they are far from the district hospitals. There can be no qualms with this since trained medical attention is necessary in the early hours to establish the nature of injuries. Of course, it would be ideal if the first responder teams to accident sites included doctors and paramedics so that such diagnosis could be made on the spot. After this, the injured will be taken to the nearest district hospital where they will be checked again and then, if required, referred on to STNM Hospital in Gangtok and chances are that from there they will be driven onwards to CRH down in Tadong. The more complicated cases will then be referred out of the State to Siliguri or Delhi.

From the time of the accident to their eventual discharge from hospital, the victims (the less injured ones) of a road mishap end up spending more time on the road, moving from one 'referral' to the next, than they spend recuperating or coming to grips with their trauma and grief. Sikkim's roads are a punishment for even able-bodied passengers, the trauma that injured bodies suffer careening from one medical inspection to the other should not be wished on anyone. The doctor with referral powers at the final end of the state is just as capable as the doctor who must have attended to the accident victims first. Why then, should the power to refer patients out of the State not rest with the first doctor itself depending on her prognosis. That would cut down on travel time substantially, and time is of essence in such cases, all will agree.

There is still more that needs to be done when it comes to handling accident trauma cases. Accidents, as mentioned, cannot be avoided, but what defeats all explanation is the scenario which definitely confounds everyone – the level of medical assistance available for accident victims in Sikkim. This basic facility remains unattained even though by now, speciality wings should have been added to district hospitals and even Primary Health Centres here at least on paper. Given the hilly terrain, poor driving etiquette and unreliable roads, every PHC in Sikkim should have reasonably advanced infrastructure and manpower to attend to accident cases. Tourist destinations in high altitudes [like Nathula and Gurudongmar] should have personnel and equipment to attend to visitors with high altitude sickness symptoms. This facility, one may add here, need not necessarily be provided and maintained by the Government and could even be sponsored by tourism stakeholders; after all, it is tourists who develop complications there, with the residents mostly acclimatized. Agreed the army assists in times of emergencies, but this should still be a service that is more accessible and specifically dedicated to tourist emergencies. These should already have been in place, and yet, one stares at a reality where in the event of a medical emergency, a victim's fate depends on the presence of mind of the people around, the speed at which the referral can be typed out and the road worthiness of the ambulance which zips the victim from one referral pit-stop to the other. Unfortunate...

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JEFFREY FIELDS
theconversation.com

The murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul has put the United States' relationship with the wealthy Gulf power under intense scrutiny.

After weeks of denying any knowledge about Khashoggi's fate, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman now says that Saudi agents strangled Khashoggi after a fistfight. Eighteen men have been arrested.

The Khashoggi affair highlights a persistent oddity in American foreign policy, one I observed in many years working at the State Department and Department of Defense: selective morality in dealing with repressive regimes.

A PANOPLY OF DICTATORS

The Trump administration is revoking the visas of some Saudi officials implicated in the death of Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist who lived in the U.S., Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced at an Oct. 23 State Department news conference.

Turkey claims to have audio and video evidence that the Saudis tortured, assassinated and dismembered Khashoggi. Many of those arrested have close links to Salman.

But Trump has been reluctant to confront Saudi Arabia over the killing of Khashoggi. For weeks, he and other White House officials reminded critics that Saudi Arabia buys billions of dollars in weapons from the U.S. and is a crucial partner in the American pressure campaign on Iran.

Their defense highlights why the U.S. has for decades maintained close ties with some of the world's worst human rights abusers.

Ever since the country emerged from the Cold War as the world's dominant military and economic power, consecutive American presidents have seen financial and geopolitical benefit in overlooking the bad deeds of brutal regimes.

CHANGING ALLEGIANCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST Before the Islamic revolution in 1979, Iran was a close U.S. ally. Shah Reza Pahlavi ruled harshly, using his secret police to torture and murder political dissidents. But the shah was also a secular, anti-communist leader in a Muslim-dominated region. President Nixon hoped that Iran would be the "Western policeman in the Persian Gulf."

After the Shah's overthrow, the Reagan administration in the 1980s became friendly with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. The U.S. supported him with intelligence during Iraq's war with Iran and looked the other way at his use of chemical weapons.

And before Syria's intense, bloody civil war –

which has killed an estimated 400,000 people and featured grisly chemical weapon attacks by the government – its authoritarian regime enjoyed relatively friendly relations with the U.S.

Syria has been on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism since 1979. But presidents Nixon, Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton all visited President Bashar al-Assad's father, who ruled from 1971 until his death in 2000.

WHY SAUDI ARABIA MATTERS

The alleged assassination of Khashoggi by Saudi operatives may seem surprising because of the 31-year-old crown prince's reputation as a moderate reformer.

Salman has made newsworthy changes in the conservative Arab kingdom, allowing women to drive, combating corruption and curtailing some powers of the religious police.

Still, Saudi Arabia remains one of the world's most authoritarian regimes.

Women must have the consent of a male guardian to enroll in college, look for a job or travel. They can-



not swim in public or try on clothes when shopping.

The Saudi government also routinely arrests people without judicial review, according to Human Rights Watch. Citizens can be executed for nonviolent drug crimes, often in public. Forty-eight people were beheaded in the first four months of 2018 alone.

Saudi Arabia ranks just above North Korea on political rights, civil liberties and other measures of freedom, according to the democracy watchdog Freedom House.

But its wealth, strategic Middle East location and petroleum exports keep the Saudis as a vital U.S. ally. President Obama visited Saudi Arabia more than any other American president – four times in eight years – to discuss everything from Iran to oil production.

AMERICAN REALPOLITIK

This kind of foreign policy – one based on practi-

cal, self-interested principles rather than moral or ideological concerns – is called "realpolitik."

Henry Kissinger, secretary of state under Nixon, was a master of realpolitik, which drove that administration to normalize its relationship with China. Diplomatic relations between the two countries had ended in 1949 when Chinese communist revolutionaries took power.

Then, as now, China was incredibly repressive. Only 17 countries – including Saudi Arabia – are less free than China, according to Freedom House.

But China is also the world's most populous nation and a nuclear power. Nixon, a fervent anti-communist, sought to exploit a growing rift between China and the Soviet Union.

Today Washington retains the important, if occasionally rocky, relationship Kissinger forged with Beijing. President Trump may be critical of Chinese trade practices, but he is largely silent on China's ongoing persecution of Muslim minority groups.

American realpolitik is not limited to the Middle East. After the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the U.S.

regularly backed Latin American military dictators who tortured and killed citizens to "defend" the Americas from communism.

US NOT 'SO INNOCENT'

U.S. presidents tend to underplay their relationships with repressive regimes, lauding lofty "American values" instead.

That's the language former President Barack Obama used in September to criticize Trump's embrace of Russia's authoritarian president, Vladimir Putin, citing America's "commitment to certain values and principles like the rule of law and human rights and democracy."

But Trump defended his relationship with Russia, tactically invoking American realpolitik. "You think our country's so innocent?" he asked on Fox News.

I can't say he's wrong.

The U.S. maintains close ties to numerous regimes whose values and policies conflict with America's constitutional guarantees of democracy, freedom of speech, the right to due process and many others.

It has for decades.

Saudi Arabia's brutal treatment of journalist Jamal Khashoggi is causing international outcry and some light retaliation by the U.S. government.

But American realpolitik suggests the tight U.S.-Saudi relationship will continue.

[the writer is Associate Professor of the Practice of International Relations, University of Southern California – Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences]

Cartoonists can be an important voice of dissent: but they can also be divisive

DANIEL HAMMETT
theconversation.com

Rwanda has introduced legislation which criminalises the public humiliation or insult – through gestures, writings or cartoons – of national authorities, public service officials or foreign state and international organisation representatives. This is a clear restriction to the freedom of political and editorial cartoonists.

Political cartoons are powerful spaces in which negotiations of power and resistance are expressed. They provide insights into power relations, key social issues and events. By mocking or ridiculing the excesses and failings of elites, cartoonists can hold leaders accountable.

While the intent – and reception – of cartoons can mobilise critiques of leaders and excesses of power, they can also be divisive and regressive. This is particularly true when cartoons fail to consider local history, cultural norms, and cultural or religious difference. Recent years have witnessed many of these controversies. These include the publication of editorial cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten which eventually led to protests around the world, including violent demonstrations and riots in some Muslim countries. Or the reaction by women's groups to South African cartoonist Zapiro's depictions of former South African President Jacob Zuma "preparing to rape" the "Lady of Justice". They said it was in-

sensitive in a country where rape is a daily occurrence.

Rwanda has huge sensitivities when it comes to political cartoons. Prior to the 1994 genocide, when an estimated 800,000 Rwandans were killed in the space of 100 days, a cartoon strip in the Kangura newspaper was seen as a propaganda tool to promote division and hostility. This has meant that in recent years, cartoonists remain cautious of crossing official and unofficial lines when covering political issues.

While all journalists try to balance tensions between free speech and causing division, this is particularly fraught for cartoonists. Their work can challenge us to question ourselves, provoke empathy for others and often relies on an emotional reaction – one not always intended to elicit laughter – to convey their argument.

ROLE OF POLITICAL CARTOONS Political and editorial cartoons are a key indicator of the democratic health of a country. They are the "canary in the coal mine", providing a public display of opposition and dissent. They use a unique art to raise questions and speak a truth to power in ways denied to others. In this role, political cartoonists highlight abuses and excesses of power, and hold governments and leaders accountable.

Witness, for instance, South African cartoonist Zapiro's many depictions of former President Zuma with a shower faucet attached to his head. These were drawn in the aftermath

of Zuma's rape acquittal. During his court case, Zuma admitted he showered after having unprotected sex as a means to prevent the spread of HIV. Long after the trial, the cartoon continued to act as constant reminder of the rape case, a motif the cartoonist used to question the legitimacy of Zuma's leadership.

Elsewhere, we see heads of state being ridiculed by being compared to animals: US President George W Bush as an ape, ex-British Prime Minister Tony Blair as a poodle, former Zimbabwean elites as snakes. All these images raised questions about the credibility of powerful office-holders.

CONTROL

Restricting and intimidating political cartoonists is often a key part of broader efforts to curtail press freedoms and free speech.

As elites seek to maintain control, political cartoonists face threats and intimidation for their work. In recent years, we have seen court cases against cartoonists all over the world, including in Malaysia, South Africa, Turkey, and Serbia. In the US contracts have been terminated amid suspicions of political influence.

In the case of Rwanda, the media landscape is marked by restrictions on press freedoms and various forms of censorship. It is classified by the Freedom in the World report as "not free", alongside countries including Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, and Venezuela. Reporters without Borders ranks Rwanda as 156th in the world for Press Freedoms, comparable with the

Democratic Republic of Congo.

But the country's context is important, the memory of the 1994 genocide remains strong and is ingrained in the national psyche.

Prior to and during the genocide, sections of the print and broadcast media were pivotal in promoting and deepening ethnic division and hostility. Central to such divisive tactics was the presentation of sections of the population as sub-human – as cockroaches – who needed to be exterminated.

It is therefore understandable that, as the country rebuilds, sensitivities remain around representation of individuals or groups which humiliate or degrade them.

FINE LINE

The critical voice of the political cartoonist can provide a vital safety valve for a society. They can give expression to frustrations, grievances and opposition. But cartoonists need to remain sensitive to local political and social histories.

It's a fine line between balancing the need to protect free speech and these concerns. Political cartoonists need to continue to speak truth to power, but in so doing must ensure they do not cause division and hostility which may threaten the most fundamental of rights – the right to life.

[the writer is Lecturer in Development and Political Geography, University of Sheffield]

GSI's app-based landslide-warning begins functioning in 3 West Bengal villages

KOLKATA, OCT 24 (PTI): From now on, whatsapp messages and sirens on mobile phone apps will alert inhabitants of three most landslide-prone villages of the country, at the slightest signals of landslides.

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has recently developed a Landslide Early Warning System (L-EWS) for the people of Giddapahar, Paglajhora and 14th Mile villages in Kurseong block of Darjeeling District in association with the district administration of West Bengal gov-

ernment, GSI Director Ashish Nath said.

The L-EWS is connected to mobile apps for fast dissemination of the alert to the people.

The system installed by the GSI in select villages, mostly in Kurseong block, has already started working, the director said. "After the immense loss of life and property in these three villages since 2003 mainly because of landslides, we decided to install the system here first," he said.

Studying the Kurseong area utilising the modern InSAR tech-

nology by placing five corner reflectors and rainfall threshold analysis for landslide initiation resulted in the development of the people-centric L-EWS, he said.

Earlier, in case of landslides triggered by rainfall, the GSI used to alert the administration and then it used to be passed on to the local population.

"But we felt there must be a change and we should alert the possible victims as soon as there is a trigger. We believe, this will help us in saving more lives," he said.

Eighteen such zones have been marked as extremely vulnerable to landslides and the three Darjeeling villages, where the warning system has been installed were on top of the chart, he stated.

Elaborating about the system, he said that it is ideal for warning landslides as spatio-temporal forecasting is extremely difficult, particularly from a remote area.

The prediction of the occurrences of landslides both in space and time does not happen because most of the key elements

like risk knowledge, monitoring, analysis, warning generation, dissemination and communication of warning and preparedness for timely response do not work in sync, Nath said.

"The difficulties are coupled with the variability in the intensity of trigger thus making forecasting quite difficult for the purpose of alerting the community at risk.

So the need of putting community-based landslide warning system was felt," he said.

Incidentally, in 2016, the Landslide Studies Di-

vision of Geohazards Research and Management (GHRM) Centre, GSI, Kolkata had studied this landslide zone in order to develop an early warning system.

In fact, before the deployment of the system, a few rounds of community landslide awareness programme, including mock-drills, were also conducted, Nath said.

A billboard showing details of landslide warning has been also erected in two places one at Giddapahar and another at Paglajhora to spread awareness among the people.

Innovator Sonam Wangchuk awarded honorary D.Litt degree



PUNE (MAHA), OCT 24 (PTI): Sonam Wangchuk, the Ladakh-based engineer whose life inspired a character in Bollywood blockbuster "3 Idiots", has been awarded an honorary D.Litt degree by a university here in Maharashtra.

He was awarded in recognition of his work as an innovator and educationist by the Symbolic International (Deemed University) here Tuesday.

President Ram Nath Kovind was the chief guest on the occasion.

After accepting the degree, Wangchuk, the real life 'Phunsukh Wangdu' of the Aamir Khan-starrer film, said he has not done anything big or special.

"I did what humanity demands people to do," said the engineer-turned-educationist who set up the Students' Educational and

Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL).

SECMOL is a non-traditional school which brought in educational reform in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir and improved the number of students clearing exams up to the intermediate level.

Wangchuk said when he saw students failing in the remote region of Ladakh, he decided to do something about it.

"For me, my house was on fire and young brothers and sisters were in distress. So when your house is on fire, there is nothing special in throwing water on it, it is your duty, and if you don't do it, that is surprising," he said.

He said it was out of humanity that he worked towards making the best use solar energy and creating artificial glaciers to address the problem of water scarcity.

IIT KGP students on mission mode to reduce plastics in campus

KOLKATA, OCT 24 (PTI): A group of students at the IIT Kharagpur is on a mission mode to reduce usage of single-use plastic within the campus.

The students, numbering around 30, are in the process of forming a students society which will tackle environmental issues and work towards creating awareness in collecting and disposing plastic waste, including e-waste, an IIT Kharagpur statement said Wednesday.

The students are themselves not using single-use plastic for over four months and now wanted to inspire other students in the campus to follow their example, it said.

Over 500 students have shown interest in joining the society and taken up the cause, the statement said.

The students' society, named 'Vision Prabaho', will be undertaking projects to come up with innovative ways of organic, inorganic and electronic waste disposal.

The group has also performed street plays in the campus market as part of the awareness campaign.

"We hold a great responsibility to actively participate in dealing with major environmental issues like irresponsible use of plastics, waste and resource management, conservation of water body, preserving bio-diversity and reducing carbon footprint in and around the campus," founding members of the group were quoted in the statement.

NBFC crisis may delay real estate's anticipated recovery

KOLKATA, OCT 24 (PTI): Besides the financial sector, the real estate business may also face the heat due to the ongoing crisis in NBFC sector, triggered by IL&FS default.

"As on March 2018, NBFC's exposure towards real estate is 7.5 per cent accounting for Rs 1.65 lakh crore," real estate consultant Anarock Capital MD & CEO Shobhit Agarwal told PTI.

"Post the banking systems freeze on real estate funding due to ris-

ing non-performing assets, NBFCs and HFCs are the sole source of funds for the cash-strapped developers," he said.

The NBFC crisis needs to be resolved as soon as possible or the real estate sector's much-anticipated recovery will be postponed by a couple of quarters, Agarwal said.

Now, NBFCs are struggling and their loan disbursements to developers have slowed down significantly, he said.

The repayment bur-

den is about 1.2 lakh crore (USD 16.3 billion) of commercial paper in October-December, near a record 1.46 lakh crore in August-October, according to available data.

The consultant quoting Credit Suisse report said NBFCs and Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) have played a major role in credit supply in recent years, accounting for nearly 25-35 per cent of incremental overall credit.

While bank credit growth in the last two

years averaged at a mere seven per cent, a strong 20 per cent-plus growth in NBFC credit aided overall credit expansion beyond 10 per cent.

"Despite residential sales gradually picking up q-o-q, they are nowhere near their peak levels. With substantial number of residential projects running behind schedule, the crisis could further exacerbate liquidity woes and impact project delivery time lines even more," Agarwal said.

As per Anarock data, more than 5.75 lakh residential units are running behind schedule across the top 7 cities since their launch in 2013 or before.

Many listed realty developers such as Puravankara, DLF, Prestige Group, Oberoi Realty and Godrej Properties have well-diversified portfolios and many of these have also reduced their debts and ventured into affordable housing where growth is currently the highest, he said.

Delhi's air quality slips to 'very poor', fire-fighting continues at Bhalswa landfill

NEW DELHI, OCT 24 (PTI): Delhi's air quality Wednesday dipped to 'very poor' barely two days after staying in the 'poor' category, even as firefighting operations continued at the Bhalswa landfill site.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recorded the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi at 312 at 11 am.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

The air quality in the capital had shown signs of improvement Monday as it moved from 'very poor' to 'poor' category, but experts said it could deteriorate in the coming

days due to toxic air coming out of the blazing fire at Bhalswa landfill site.

A Delhi Fire Service official said firefighting was still on at the garbage dump site.

"Due to continuous discharge of methane gas from the landfill, fire erupts randomly. Two fire tenders are currently working on containing the fire at the site," he said.

Fire has been raging at the massive dump site since October 20.

However, by Tuesday evening, the flames were somewhat brought under control and parts of the landfill smouldered, DFS officials had said.

The Centre-run System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) also reported an AQI in the 'very poor'

category.

On Sunday, the AQI had oscillated between 'poor' and 'very poor' categories.

On Saturday, a haze had engulfed the national capital and the worst air quality of this season was recorded at 324.

North Delhi Mayor Adesh Gupta and NDMC Commissioner Madhup Vyas had visited the landfill site on Tuesday and the civic body had announced a slew of measures, both long-term and short-term for remediation of the site.

Anumita Roychowdhury of CSE Monday said, toxic air emanating out of such landfill fires is likely to affect the air quality.

"If the wind speed is lower and the temperature dips, the pol-

luted air coming out of the landfill fires will get trapped, which would severely affect the air quality," she said.

The Supreme Court-appointed Environment Protection Con-

trol Authority (EPCA) Friday had held a meeting with officials of Punjab, Haryana and the Delhi governments to discuss the pollution situation in the national capital.

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In a first, India to play Jordan in football friendly on 17 Nov

NEW DELHI, OCT 24 (PTI): The Indian men's football team will square off against Jordan in a friendly match on November 17 in Amman, which will be the first such encounter between the two sides.

"All India Football Federation confirms an international friendly for the Indian senior national team against Jordan. The match will be played in Amman on November 17, 2018," the AIFF said in a press release.

The match will be played at the King Abdullah II International Stadium and will kick off at 9.30pm (IST).

Jordan, who went down 1-2 to World Cup runners-up Croatia in their last friendly earlier this month, are currently ranked 110th, while India are placed 97th.

The two teams have never met in an International Friendly ever, though the India U-16 national team did play Jor-

dan twice earlier this year. The Indian colts coached by Bibiano Fernandes won both their encounters.

The November friendly, which comes after India's gutsy goalless draw against China, will further set the pace for the national team's preparation for the AFC Asian Cup next year which kicks-off in UAE on January 5.

"The AFC Asian Cup is knocking at the door and as part of our preparation it's pertinent that the national team prepares in the best possible fashion by playing against stronger teams.

"Jordan are a very tough side who went down to World Cup runners-up Croatia 1-2 in their last match. It will be an acid test for us," Das said.

National Coach Stephen Constantine also felt that the match will be a "big test" for the team.

"This is going to be a really good game for several reasons. Firstly, Jor-

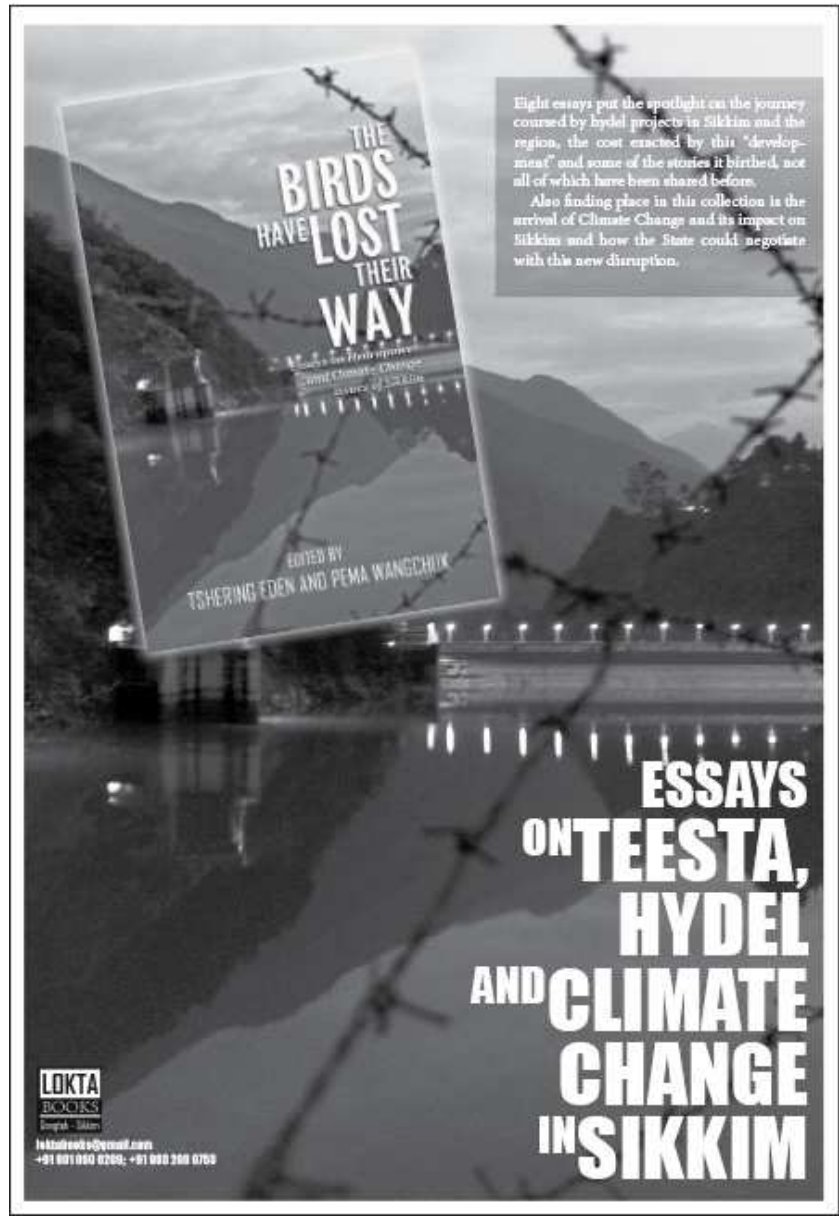
dan is a quality team as we saw them in their 1-2 loss to Croatia the other day.

"We have to understand the level we are going to face in UAE and to be able to deal with it, we have to face tests like this. The game against China was a big test, and Jordan will be another one as well," Constantine said.

India have been clubbed in Group A with UAE, Thailand and Bahrain. Constantine said the conditions in Amman are similar to the UAE which will eventually help the team get acclimatised for the continental championship.

"After we secured our qualification we knew we needed to play against those opponents who will put us under pressure from the start.

"Moreover, we'll play in Amman where the environment is very much similar to Abu Dhabi and Sharjah where we will play in January," he said.



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Federer digs deep to reach Basel second round

BASEL, OCT 24 (AFP): Roger Federer had to fight hard to hold off Serbia's Filip Krajinovic on Tuesday, edging to a 6-2 4-6 6-4 win to reach the second round of the Swiss Indoors.

The eight-time champion flirted with his earliest exit in Basel since his 1998 debut as a teenager, but came out on top in a nervy deciding set.

"I was up 6-2, 3-1, it could have ended very quickly," Federer said. "But I made life more difficult. I didn't have the best serving stats, maybe that caught up to me. But these are different balls, more altitude than in Shanghai, it's about getting used to it.

"And first rounds are always tricky, it's never a given that you are going to win."

Earlier, Jan-Lennard Struff ended the possibility of a rematch between Federer and his US Open conqueror John Millman by beating the Australian 7-6 (7/3), 6-2.

Krajinovic appeared to be on the way to a straight-sets loss in his first meeting with the 20-time Grand Slam winner before the momentum began to turn.

Up a set and a break, the Swiss lost serve in the sixth game of the second set before his opponent managed to square the match with a break in game 10.

The top seed went up an early break in the third and broke Krajinovic in an 11-minute game for a 5-2 lead, only to fail to serve out the match at the first time of asking.

But he clinched victory on his second match point to take his career record at the tournament to 67-9 as he bids to reach a 12th successive final at St. Jakobshalle.

"I'm glad I got through. These are the matches you have to win," said Federer.

"Things didn't really flow, but it was a hard-fought win. I feel good physically. I have a day off tomorrow so it was no trouble to play three sets. I'm happy where I am right now."

The 37-year-old Federer, who revealed earlier this week that he had been struggling with a hand injury since the grass-court season, last lost at the Swiss Indoors in 2013, going down to Juan Martin del Potro.

Seventh seed Daniil Medvedev, a semi-finalist last week in Moscow, saw off German Maximilian Marterer 6-3, 7-5.

Russian Medvedev stands at a career-high ranking of 20th, with three titles this season and will next face Andreas Seppi after the Italian defeated Japan's Taro Daniel 6-0, 6-4.

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Rampant Arsenal face Lisbon test, Chelsea sweat on Hazard



PARIS, OCT 24 (AFP): Amid a packed schedule Arsenal take a 10-match winning streak to Sporting Lisbon as their quest to win the Europa League continues Thursday, when city rivals Chelsea, possibly without the influential Eden Hazard, host BATE Borisov of Belarus.

After sealing an impressive 10th straight victory at home to Leicester in the Premier League on Monday, Unai Emery's outfit are the team to watch in Group E.

Arsenal and Sporting sit on six points apiece after two games, with Azerbaijan's Qarabag and fellow strugglers Vorskla of Ukraine still pointless.

Sporting are fifth in Portugal's top flight, four points off the top with former Manchester United star Nani having scored three goals from seven league outings.

If Arsenal needed more reason to believe

in their chances of going all the way, they need not look far. As coach of Sevilla in 2013-2016, Emery led the Spaniards to three consecutive Europa League titles.

"We are beginning to play with heart," Emery said after Monday's come-from-behind 3-1 win, in which Mesut Ozil scored and provided an

assist in a man-of-the-match performance.

"I think we played some sexy football," said the 30-year-old German.

Sporting, who won 2-1 away to Loures in the Portuguese Cup with Nani and Bruno Fernandes both on target, should be fresher having played on Saturday.

Arsenal played on

Monday and Emery, already set to make changes due to a packed schedule, is set to tinker further after both Nacho Monreal and Sead Kolasinac were ruled out.

"Yesterday was a very bad day for injuries," Emery conceded on Tuesday.

'WE CAN GO ALL THE WAY'

Having won both their

opening Group L matches, 2013 champions Chelsea can take a major step to the next round with a home win on Thursday, although they may have to do without Hazard.

The Belgian playmaker says he was kicked so much during Chelsea's 2-2 weekend draw with Manchester United that he will miss the Stamford Bridge game against BATE with a bad back.

"When I woke up on Monday I was stiff. Even during the second half I couldn't accelerate properly," he said.

With Spanish centre-forward Alvaro Morata struggling on just three goals this season, Hazard's absence could rob Chelsea of their main attacking threat after a blistering seven-goal start to the Premier League campaign.

Yet Brazilian winger Willian remains upbeat about their chances,

claiming the entire club has been given a lift by the arrival of new coach Maurizio Sarri.

"The way we are playing this season, we can go all the way," the in-form winger said of their Europa League campaign.

As Marseille prepare to face Lazio, the French side will be hoping the past experience of coach Rudi Garcia pays dividends as they bid for their first win of the group stage following a 2-2 draw at Apollon Limassol. He joined them from Roma, where he faced Lazio five times in the capital-city derby and never lost.

"Three wins and two draws in five games, I hope we can get a result like I used to in those Rome derbies," Garcia told AFP.

He added: "I'll always have a little bit of Roma in my heart so that gives us added inspiration, but

what counts here is winning, not punchlines."

FIXTURES

Group A: Zurich v Leverkusen, AEK Larnaca v Ludogorets Group B: Salzburg v Rosenborg, Leipzig v Celtic Group C: Zenit Saint Petersburg v Bordeaux, Kobenhavn v Slavia Praha Group D: Anderlecht v Fenerbahce, Spartak Trnava v Dinamo Zagreb Group E: Qarabag v Vorskla, Sporting CP v Arsenal Group F: AC Milan v Real Betis, Dudelange v Olympiacos Late kick-offs

Group G: Rangers v Spartak Moscow, Villarreal v Rapid Vienna Group H: Eintracht Frankfurt v Apollon, Marseille v Lazio Group I: Sarpsborg v Malmo, Besiktas v Genk Group J: Standard Liege v Krasnodar, Sevilla v Akhisar Group K: Jablonec v Astana, Rennes v Dynamo Kiev Group L: Chelsea v BATE Borisov, PAOK v Vidi.

Bayern made to work for 2-0 win over AEK

ATHENS, OCT 24 (AFP): Bayern Munich exploited a brief lapse in AEK Athens' determined defense to score twice in two minutes for a 2-0 win in the Champions League, easing pressure on the Bundesliga champions and coach Niko Kovac.

Shaking off a mistake-prone first half, Javi Martinez and Robert Lewandowski struck in the 61st and 63rd minutes at the Olympic Stadium for Bayern's second victory in Group E, as AEK suffered its third defeat.

"We knew the goals would come. We pressed, tired them out and it worked," Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer said.

"After their two goals, their morale suffered and we went on to win. ... We're in a better position but we're still making mistakes."

Bayern stayed on the attack for most of the night but center-backs



Dmytro Chygrynskiy and Vasilis Lambropoulos stopped them from creating chances.

While keeping AEK's back line busy, Arjen Robben had produced little threat until his shot helped break the deadlock. It struck a wall of defenders, and Martinez slotted in the rebound.

Lewandowski silenced the 55,000 home fans two minutes later.

Standout Serge Gnabry flicked the ball to Rafinha, who set up the Poland striker for the tap-in.

"We had a good first half but we were missing the finish. We insisted in our effort and in the end we prevailed and that's what's important," Robben said. "We took our chances when we could. We needed that win."

Bayern outshot the Greeks 2-1 and held two-

third of possession. Bayern's players have struggled to show their usual domestic dominance this season, and visibly relaxed after the goals. Lewandowski narrowly missed a third in the 67th when goalkeeper Vassilis Barkas scrambled to stop his effort on the goal line.

Germany striker Thomas Mueller played for the last 15 minutes but made little impact "The

players stood up very well to such a great side but after those two goals it was hard to fight back," AEK coach Michalis Ouzounidis.

"But I'm proud of their performance. They were very professional throughout the game."

AEK won Greece's championship last season after fighting back from bankruptcy and relegation to amateur football in 2013, and appeared delighted to be back in European competition despite Tuesday's result.

"It would be silly to compare ourselves with such a major team, but we were also a little unlucky to concede when we did. The players were a little tired and were late in falling back so we had a small gap in our reflexes," AEK midfielder Kostas Galanopoulos said. "But we did play well and now we'll see what we can do."

All eyes on Biles at world gymnastics in Qatar

DOHA, OCT 24 (AFP): More than 500 gymnasts descend on Qatar this week for the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships, but most eyes will be on the sport's biggest star, the USA's Simone Biles.

The quadruple Olympic gold medalist will make her return to front-line international competition after taking a year off following her triumphant showing in Rio in 2016.

Her self-enforced absence from the sport -- she returned to competition in July -- has only served to increase expectation for the 10-day championships, the first ever to be held in the Middle East.

Biles, 21, will become the first woman in history to win four world all-around titles if she takes gold in that discipline in Doha.

Her main competition is likely to come from teenage compatriot Morgan Hurd, the 2017 champion.

Biles could also take gold in the vault, floor ex-



ercise and beam competitions. She is a member of an exceptionally strong US team looking for its fourth consecutive straight world title, but their preparations have been anything but smooth.

Since Biles performed in the 2016 Olympics, it has been a tumultuous time for US gymnastics.

In July 2017, former team doctor Larry Nassar was sentenced to up to 175 years in prison on charges of sexual assault. In January this year, Biles revealed herself to be one of his victims.

In the fallout, US gymnastics chief executive Kerry Perry resigned be-

cause of her handling of the scandal.

And just this month, interim CEO Mary Bono resigned after just five error-strewn days in charge after posting a critical tweet alluding to Nike and its support for NFL star Colin Kaepernick, who triggered a political firestorm after kneeling during the US national anthem to protest racial injustice.

Biles was hugely critical of Bono, taking to Twitter to say "it's not like we needed a smarter usa gymnastics president or any sponsors or anything".

Doha presents the US with a chance to draw

a line under the chaos which has engulfed the team in recent years.

- Doubts as Uchimara returns -

Another notable return is that of Japan's Kohei Uchimura, a six-time all-around world champion.

The 29-year-old came back to competition earlier this year after suffering an injury at last year's championships in Montreal.

His preparations though were put in doubt after it was announced earlier this week he had pulled out of the individual all-around competition because of ongoing problems with his right ankle.

His injury in Canada last year, led to China's Xiao Ruoteng taking the title.

Another returnee is Russia's Aliya Mustafina, a double Olympic champion on the uneven bars, who missed the 2017 season after giving birth to a daughter.

Another mother, Uzbekistan's Oksana Chusovitana, will compete at her 16th world championships.

The 43-year-old has the chance of a medal on the vault, the apparatus on which she won a silver medal back in 1991.

Others who are likely to be competing for medals include Sanne Wevers of the Netherlands and Japan's Mai Murakami in the women's events.

Gold medal winners at the Rio Olympics, Kenzo Shirai of Japan and Britain's Max Whitlock are also expected to feature prominently in the men's disciplines.

As well as medals, Doha will be the first opportunity for competitors to qualify for the 2020 Olympics.

No Bharat Stage IV vehicle shall be sold across the country from April 1, 2020: SC

NEW DELHI, OCT 24 (PTI): The Supreme Court Wednesday said that no Bharat Stage IV vehicle shall be sold across the country with effect from April 1, 2020.

The Bharat stage emission standards are standards instituted by the government to regulate output of air pollutants from motor vehicles.

The Bharat Stage VI (or BS-VI) emission norm would come into force from April 1, 2020 across the country.

A three judge bench headed by Justice Madan B Lokur made it clear that only BS VI compliant vehicle shall be sold in the country from April 1st, 2020.

The bench said the need of the hour was to move to a cleaner fuel.

The BS IV norms have been enforced across the country since April 2017.

In 2016, the Centre had announced that the country would skip the BS-V norms altogether and adopt BS-VI norms by 2020.

The apex court was deciding whether grace period should be given to automobile manufacturers for the sale of BS-VI non-compliant vehicles after April 1, 2020.

At a previous hearing,

advocate Aparajita Singh, assisting the top court as an amicus curiae in the air pollution matter, had opposed the government's move to give time till June 30, 2020 to automobile manufacturers to sell their BS-VI non-compliant four-wheelers manufactured till March 31, 2020.

The amicus had also opposed the government's proposal to give grace period till September 30, 2020 for the sale of BS-VI non-compliant heavy transport vehicles.

The automobile manufacturers had justified the grace period to sell their vehicles contending that India was leapfrogging from BS-IV emission norms to BS-VI within a short span of time.

The manufacturers had argued that they were allowed to manufacture BS-IV vehicles till March 31, 2020 and they should be granted reasonable time to sell their stock.

Additional Solicitor General A N S Nadkarni, who had appeared for the Centre, had told the apex court that the government considered it fit to give three and six months to the manufacturers to sell their stock of BS-IV vehicles after April 1, 2020.

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Pakistan arrests

16 Indian fishermen

KARACHI, Oct 24 (PTI): Sixteen Indian fishermen have been arrested by Pakistani authorities for allegedly straying into the country's territorial waters, a security official said Wednesday.

They were arrested on Monday by personnel of the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) during an operation.

A security official told PTI that three boats of the fishermen were also confiscated.

A case has been registered against them at the Dock Police Station in Karachi.

Pakistan and India regularly arrest each other's fishermen who inadvertently enter into their waters due to absence of any proper technology to confirm the coastline border between Pakistan and India near Sir Creek in the Arabian Sea. They languish in jails until they are set free on certain occasions.

Saudi prince to give first speech since Khashoggi's slaying

RIYADH, Oct 24 (AP): The Saudi crown prince is to make his first international speech since the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

Mohammed bin Salman is to address the Future Investment Initiative summit in Riyadh on Wednesday afternoon.

The summit is the prince's brainchild, an effort to draw much-needed foreign direct investment into the kingdom to create jobs for its young population.

However, this year's summit has been overshadowed by the Oct. 2 killing of Khashoggi. Turkish officials say the writer was killed by a 15-man Saudi hit squad that included a member of Prince Mohammed's entourage on overseas trips.

Saudi Arabia has suggested, without offering evidence, that the team went rogue.

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3 Indian-Americans in Time's 'Worst Health Care 50 list

SEEMA HAKHU KACHRU
HOUSTON, Oct 24 (PTI):

Three Indian-Americans have been named in the Time magazine's 2018 list of the 50 most influential people whose work is transforming healthcare in the US.

The three Indian-Americans included in the list are Divya Nag, Dr Raj Panjabi and Atul Gawande.

To put together the list, Time's team of health editors and reporters nominated people



who made significant contributions to the state of healthcare in America this year.



The publication then evaluated their work on originality, impact and quality. The list was bro-

ken up into four separate categories, including public health, treatments, cost and technology.

The list included physicians, scientists, business and political leaders, whose work is transforming healthcare.

At not even 30, Nag is leading Apple's special projects focusing on health. Nag's team developed ResearchKit, an open-source app developer for doctors and researchers to share patient results and clinical data, and this fall it an-

nounced groundbreaking new tools for the Apple Watch: the Series 4 includes an emergency response system, in case the wearer falls and doesn't respond, and a medical-grade EKG heart-rate monitor.

A Harvard Medical School professor who came to the US as a refugee from Liberia, Panjabi co-founded Last Mile Health to recruit and train community health workers in areas that lack local health services. Last Mile's efforts were

crucial in fighting Ebola from 2014 to 2016, and now Panjabi is building Community Health Academy, a mobile platform for training health care workers remotely through video and audio instruction

Gawande was tapped to lead a new nonprofit health care venture that will cover the more than 1 million employees of Amazon, Berkshire Hathaway and JPMorgan Chase. Though few details are public, it's said to focus on transpar-

ent, low-cost corporate health care.

"The American health care system has been plagued for decades by major problems, from lack of access to uncontrolled costs to unacceptable rates of medical errors," the Time editors wrote in a report unveiling the list.

"And yet, real as those issues remain, the field has also given rise to extraordinary innovation," the editors added.

Trump calls Khashoggi murder 'worst cover-up in history' as US revokes visas of some Saudi officials

WASHINGTON, Oct 24 (PTI): Saudi authorities staged the "worst cover-up ever" in the killing of prominent journalist Jamal Khashoggi, President Donald Trump has said as the US announced its first punitive action in the case by revoking the visas of some of the senior Saudi officials involved.

Khashoggi, a columnist for The Washington Post, disappeared after he entered the Saudi consulate in Turkey on October 2 to collect a document for his upcoming marriage to a Turkish woman.

The Saudi government initially said he left the consulate through the back door.

Following a global outrage, Riyadh on Friday in a statement acknowl-

edged that Khashoggi was killed in a fistfight inside the consulate after an interrogation went wrong.

Trump offered his most stinging indictment yet of a Saudi effort to silence a dissident journalist, calling the series of events that led to Khashoggi's death "the worst cover up ever."

"They (the Saudis) had a very bad original concept. It was carried out poorly. And the cover-up was one of the worst in the history of cover-ups. Very simple. Bad deal. Should have never been thought of. Somebody really messed up. And they had the worst cover-up ever," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office Tuesday.

Khashoggi's death has severely dented the

international reputation of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Tuesday that the US had "identified at least some" of the Saudi officials involved in the killing of Khashoggi and was revoking their visas.

"These penalties will not be the last word on this matter from the United States. We will continue to explore additional measures to hold those accountable," Pompeo said.

"We're making very clear that the United States does not tolerate this kind of ruthless action to silence Mr Khashoggi, a journalist, through violence."

The US will continue to seek all relevant facts, consult the Congress, and

work with other nations, to hold accountable those responsible for the killing of Khashoggi, Pompeo told reporters.

Given the information, currently, available with the United States, the administration is taking appropriate actions, he said.

The visa revocation is the first punitive action the US has taken against Saudi Arabia since the death of Khashoggi, 60.

Responding to a question on the probe into the death of Khashoggi, Trump said, "And where it should have stopped is at the deal standpoint, what they thought about it. Because whoever thought of that idea, I think, is in big trouble. And they should be in big trouble."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said the "savagery murder" of the journalist was meticulously planned, and demanded that all those linked to the killing face punishment.

He, however, acknowledged Turkey was still searching for answers to key questions, including who gave the order.

Trump told reporters that Erdogan was pretty tough on Saudi Arabia.

He was pretty rough on Saudi Arabia, I would say. I haven't gotten a full recap, as you know. I have people in Saudi Arabia and other places, and they're all coming back as we speak, they're heading back, he said.

The Trump administration has sent CIA

Director Gina Haspel to Turkey and she is expected to be back soon in the US with details of the ongoing probe.

"I'll know, I think, everything in a very short period of time. It's a bad situation. But certainly, president Erdogan was not complimentary of what happened. That was a terrible thing that happened," Trump said.

Trump reiterated that he does not want to scrap the USD 110 billion mega arms deal with Saudi Arabia and the total investment of USD450 billion from that country, but did not rule out not taking any action against the Saudis.

I want to see the facts first. Look, Saudi Arabia's been a really great ally. They've been one of the

biggest investors, maybe the biggest investor, in our country.

"They are doing hundreds of billions of dollar's worth of investments. And, you know, so many jobs. So many jobs. Thousands and thousands of jobs," he said.

During his visit to Saudi Arabia in May 2017, Trump signed an agreement with the Saudis for them to purchase USD 110 billion of US weapons, although so far only USD 43 billion of that has been delivered.

The ultimate number is around USD450 billion. I think that's over a million jobs. A million to over a million jobs. So we do that, we're just hurting ourselves. We're just hurting ourselves," Trump said.

Indian in Singapore given 'stern warning' by police for posting image of torn flag

GURDIP SINGH SINGAPORE, Oct 24 (PTI): An Indian in Singapore has been reprimanded by the police for posting on Facebook an image of the country's torn flag to reveal the Indian flag underneath, a media report said Wednesday.

Avijit Das Patnaik, 44, who lost his job at Singapore's DBS Bank over the incident, on August 14 posted the picture on the Facebook page of the Singapore Indians and Expats group, showing the Singapore flag on a T-shirt being ripped up to reveal the Indian flag underneath.

"Following investigations, the police, in consultation with the Attorney-General's Chambers, has administered a stern warning," Channel News Asia quoted the police as



saying.

He was investigated under the Singapore Arms and Flag and National Anthem Rules which state that "no person shall treat the flag with disrespect", the police said.

The warning was given on October 3, about two months after a police report was made for his Facebook post, according to the report.

Patnaik has been a

Singapore permanent resident for nine years.

Some netizens commented that the post was offensive and insulting to Singapore. It was then taken down.

Patnaik, who lives here with his wife and two children, remains unemployed as the incident resulted in him losing the job at the DBS Bank following internal probe and disciplinary action.

NEW DELHI, Oct 24 (PTI): Gold prices spurted by Rs 150 to trade at this year's high of Rs 32,500 per 10 grams at the bullion market Wednesday on persistent buying by local jewellers amid a firm trend overseas.

Silver, however, shed Rs 20 to Rs 39,730 per kg owing to reduced offtake by industrial units.

Traders said increased buying by local jewellers to meet festive and wedding season demand and a firm trend overseas mainly lifted gold prices to this year's highest level.

Gold prices in overseas markets rose 0.11 per cent to USD 1,232.20 an ounce in Singapore. It touched USD 1,239.68 an

ounce Tuesday, highest since July 17 as geopolitical and economic uncertainty raised demand for the precious metals as a safe-haven.

Silver also moved up by 0.17 per cent to USD 14.83 an ounce.

In the national capital, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity advanced by Rs 150 each to Rs 32,500 and Rs 32,350 per 10 grams, respectively, its highest level this year. The yellow metal had gained Rs 130 on Tuesday.

The precious metal had traded at Rs 32,450 per 10 gram on May 15.

Sovereign too traded higher by Rs 100 at Rs 24,800 per piece of eight grams.

On the other hand, silver eased by Rs

20 to Rs 39,730 per kg and weekly-based delivery by Rs 50 to Rs 39,010 per kg.

Silver coins, however, spurted by Rs 1,00 to Rs 76,000 for buying and Rs 77,000 for selling of 100 pieces.

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SUIT UPI Model Gigi Hadid rocks a white pantsuit with a high ponytail and gold heels as she leaves her apartment in NYC.

Cardi B Says She Is "Sick and Tired" of Nicki Minaj's Fans Amidst Song Leak

Cardi B has a message for the Barbz.

Following the leak of Cardi's new song "Money" on Tuesday, the artist went on Instagram Live to address Nicki Minaj's fans.

In Cardi's brief IG Live video, she explained that her newest song was leaked two days early, much to her dismay. Cardi then alludes to the Barbz being the reason why she and her team decided to go ahead with the release in advance of it's planned date. "We tried to retract it, but you know the Barbz. They always posting me, they always post everything I do," she said. "They claim they hate me, but they really love me, because they be on my page before my fans."

The "Bodak Yellow" rapper continued, "So clearly, that seems like love to me, seems like you love me, so it's like, 'F--k it! I can't retract it, I might as well put it out.'"

Her battle with Minaj has been brewing for quite some time and came to a



head during New York Fashion Week this year, where Cardi and Nicki got into a fight at the Harper's Bazaar Icons event. Since then, Cardi said she has grown "sick and tired" of the Barbz. "They seem like my biggest f--king fans, always on my f--king page. Always doing the most," Cardi said.

And despite her disappointment over the song's leak, Cardi is staying positive. She pondered, "Maybe it was a blessing."

As her IG Live came to a close, the artist teased the re-

lease of a project she is working on, which is comprised of five to six songs, including two features. And in reference to her ongoing feud with Nicki, Cardi insisted, "They my songs (sic)."

The two rappers feud apparently started for many reasons, but when Cardi saw that Nicki liked a tweet questioning Cardi's parenting skills, she was heated.

And the internet is convinced Nicki is keeping the feud alive with a subtle diss aimed at Cardi in her song "Transformer."

'DDLJ' CROSSES 1,200-WEEK RUN AT MARATHA MANDIR

MUMBAI, OCT 24 (PTI): It has been 23 years but Maratha Mandir is still in love with "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge", which completed an uninterrupted run of 1,200 weeks at the city's iconic theatre.

The 1995 film saw Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol emerge as a romantic heartthrobs in Bollywood, with stellar performances by Amrish Puri, Farida Jalal, Anupam Kher, Satish Shah and Himani Shivpuri, among others.

Shah Rukh took to Twitter Wednesday to express his gratitude for the love and adulation.

"A special journey that began 23 years ago, goes on even today. Your love has kept Raj & Simran's story alive on the big screen for 1200 weeks non-stop. Thank you for falling in love with us so unconditionally for so



many years! #23YearsOfDDLJ (sic)," he tweeted.

Kajol added, "1200 weeks and still running! Thank you all for all the love that you have been showering on #DDLJ for so many years! It was, it is and will always be an incredibly special film for

all of us. @iamsrk @yrf #AdityaChopra."

Fondly called "DDLJ", the film is remembered for its picturesque European locales and Punjab's mustard fields, which went to become one of many signatures of the film.

Songs like "Na jaane

mere", "Tujhe dekha" and "Ruk ja" by Lata Mangeshkar, Udit Narayan and Kumar Sanu on memorable tunes by Jatin-Lalit still rule the hearts of diehard romantics.

Directed by Aditya Chopra, the film completed 20 years in 2015.

Steve Carrell joins Jennifer Aniston-Reese Witherspoon Apple drama

LOS ANGELES, OCT 24 (PTI): Steve Carrell has landed the male lead in Apple's untitled morning show drama starring Jennifer Aniston and Reese Witherspoon.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Carrell will play Mitch Kessler, a morning show anchor who is struggling to maintain relevance in a changing media landscape.

The role marks the actor's first TV regular appearance since he wrapped up the NBC



comedy, "The Office" in 2011. Aniston and Witherspoon will co-executive produce the show which is based on an

original concept by Michael Ellenberg and draw inspiration from Brian Stelter's book "Top Of The Morning: Inside the Cutthroat World of Morning TV".

The show has received a two-season, 20-episode order.

Kerry Ehrin is attached as showrunner on the series and will also exec produce. Stelter serves as a consultant.

Production is set to begin next week here.

ALI FAZAL TO STAR IN PRADEEP SARKAR'S 'ARRANGED MARRIAGE'



MUMBAI, OCT 24 (PTI): Ali Fazal has been roped in for Pradeep Sarkar's next directorial venture, "Arranged Marriage".

The actor will play the male lead in the film which is a modern-day love story.

The movie will explore the relationships in a family and their involvement during the process of an arranged marriage.

Ali said he is excit-

ed to work with Sarkar, whose last release was "Helicopter Eela", on the project.

"It's an honour and privilege to work with a veteran director and writer Pradeep dada who has given such powerful and meaningful cinema and has worked with some of the best talents of India cinema."

"... It touches upon some very essential

phases of love, relationships, families that are involved in marriage and how important it is that where what these families come from," the actor said in a statement.

The female lead is yet to be disclosed.

Shooting of the film is currently underway in Kolkata.

Ali will next be seen in Amazon Prime Video web series "Mirzapur".

Johnny Depp to play war photographer W Eugene Smith in 'Minamata'

LOS ANGELES, OCT 24 (PTI): Johnny Depp is set to portray the role of war photographer W Eugene Smith in the indie drama "Minamata".

According to Variety, the film revolves around Smith's work as a photographer for Life Magazine in exposing the poisoning of the people of Minamata, Japan.

To be directed by Andrew Levitas, the movie will begin with the war shutterbug as a recluse with the glory days of World War II far behind him.

But an old friend and a commission from Life Magazine editor Ralph Graves convince him to journey



back to Japan for a big expose: the annihilation of a coastal community through mercury poisoning.

"Minamata" is based on the book by co-written by

Smith and his wife, environmentalist Aileen Mioko Smith. It has been adapted by David K Kessler.

Levitas said working with Depp will give voice to those

who have been silently suffering and the project was a responsibility they do not take lightly.

Much like Eugene Smith in 1971, we could not feel more privileged or humbled to be tasked with the mission of bringing this incredible story to the world, the director added.

Principal photography starts in Japan followed by Serbia in January.

Besides "Minamata", Depp will also feature in "Waiting for the Barbarians". He will also produce the drama.

ARIES: The unexpected need to take a journey by air or spend a lot of time working could bring about an inconvenient separation from your partner. While the reasons for this situation and the projected outcome are very positive, it can cause a temporary upset in your relationship. Don't worry about it. The upset will pass, particularly when the desired results are attained. Concentrate.

TAURUS: Is your workplace upgrading its equipment? Are you in the process of increasing your technology skills? Today's planets show that success and advancement through technology are definitely in the offing for you, Taurus. If you've been thinking about purchasing a computer, do it today if you can. Whatever your goals, you can harness current innovations to help them along.

GEMINI: Some close friends could turn you on to a new interest or perhaps a group you might want to join. Intellectual stimulation through those closest to you could open the way to new plans and innovations. You might want to try combining artistic interests with technology, Gemini, perhaps expanding your knowledge of photography, computer graphics, or filmmaking. Success and good fortune are strongly indicated.

CANCER: Sudden, unexpected visitors could arrive today, perhaps by air or in a new car. You could host a group meeting of some kind at your house. A lot of exciting information and stimulating conversation could take place, Cancer, bringing fresh ideas that spark new interests. Expect a very busy but productive day, looking ahead toward the future rather

than back toward the past.

LEO: Short journeys in your neighborhood, perhaps connected with a group you're associated with, could take up a lot of your time today, Leo. Fascinating and stimulating emails or calls could arrive. Books and magazine articles could provide information that sends you in a new direction in some way. Write down your ideas! You will want to remember them all.

VIRGO: Unexpected money developments could brighten your day today, Virgo. Perhaps you will get a raise or an increase in some other form of income. Technology could be involved in some way, or a long-term goal you've been striving for finally brings in some benefits. There might be uncertainty about when it's coming or exactly how much it will be, but the outcome will be gratifying!

LIBRA: A surprising revelation, ei-

ther from within or from sources like books, the Internet, or communications from others could set you in an entirely new direction. You will have an increased sense of freedom, as well as a clearer and more progressive outlook. You might consider some pretty heavy changes in your life, Libra, but don't make any final decisions or arrangements today. Wait before putting your ideas into action.

SCORPIO: Discoveries made through occult sciences such as astrology or numerology could see you embrace some rather revolutionary ideas about yourself, the world, and life. You could become involved with a group associated with metaphysical studies or take a class or workshop of some kind. This could mean a new direction for you in some way, Scorpio. It might greatly enhance your life and thinking.

SAGITTARIUS: Sudden lucky breaks could come your way today, Sagittarius, possibly through friends or groups with which you're involved. A long-term goal you've been working toward might bring unexpected but wonderful results. Group activities, particularly those involving social or political issues, could take up a lot of your time. This promises to be a busy, productive day. Expect the unexpected!

CAPRICORN: Today you might feel the desire to break free from your daily routine, Capricorn, particularly regarding career matters. You might consider developing a business of your own, one that would give you a lot more freedom than you currently have. This is a good day to start looking into it. You might find that there are more possibilities out there than you expected.

AQUARIUS: A sudden and unexpected opportunity to take a journey by air could come your way today, Aquarius. This might be something you've wanted for a long time finally manifesting. Certainly adventure is in the air, although it might be mental adventure as much as physical. Some information could come your way that catapults you into a new and exciting field of interest. This promises to be a thoroughly stimulating day.

PISCES: Technology could pave the way for you to greatly increase your income, possibly through new skills or investments. This is likely to be a very positive development, setting the stage for future financial success. Some unusual, interesting dreams could come your way, bringing unexpected revelations about you and your past - and possibly your future.