



MOVIE TO MARK CENTENARY OF SARAT CHANDRA'S 'DATTA'
pg 08

WHY 'WOKÉ' NBA IS STRUGGLING TO BALANCE ITS VALUES WITH CHINESE EXPANSION
pg 04

JENNIFER ANISTON JOINS INSTAGRAM, POSTS PHOTO WITH 'FRIENDS' CO-STARS
pg 08



Summit **TIMES**

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Pages 8 | ₹ 5

SRP questions SKM-BJP alliance

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

Sikkim Republican Party president, KB Rai, has questioned the deliverability of the long pending political demands of the State placed by Sikkim Krantikari Morcha with Bharatiya Janata Party as part of their seat-sharing alliance. Addressing a press conference today, Mr Rai pointed out that the BJP high command, either at the national level and in the State, has yet not given a written undertaking on the issues or included it in the party's manifesto.

Mr Rai said that if this political alliance was just to provide backdoor entry to BJP into Sikkim and just for Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] to be able to contest elections, then it was a big betrayal of the people of Sikkim.

He mentioned that SKM has held up strong reasons for the alliance like seat reservation for Limboos and Tamangs in the State assembly, tribal status for leftout



communities, restoration of Nepali seats and other pending political demands. BJP leaders from the national and state units should now clear their stand on these issues, he added.

The SRP president mentioned that the people of Sikkim were apprehensive about the future of Sikkim following the alliance and stressed that this fear cannot be ignored.

He mentioned that the CM even tried to clarify

that this was not an alliance but just a seat-sharing arrangement for the elections and added that seat-sharing lays a strong foundation for an alliance government so the CM should not confuse and mislead the people.

He went on to argue that even SDF was part of the alliance since the party was responsible for the present political situation.

Mr Rai said that although the SDF president

has denied having sent his MLAs to BJP, a senior SDF leader, DT Lepcha, has claimed that they have joined BJP with the permission and consent of the party president.

Mr Rai also argued that although BJP was trying hard to lay a strong foundation in the State, it has not been able to win the hearts of the people. BJP's presence is based on the mandate received by SDF in the last election," he said.

CM attends Chikshey Kundrol at Ralang Monastery

RALANG, 16 OCT (IPR): Chief Minister, PS Tamang and madam, Krishna Rai attended the Chikshey Kundrol empowerment (Wang) event at Palchen Choeeling Monastery, Ralang.

Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche blessed the Chief Minister with holy wang on behalf of the entire Sikkimese people and for their unity and peace. He also enlightened the gathering with holy blessings and talks about the sacred life of Buddha to reflect on his teachings of compassion, peace and honesty.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha, MLA, TT Bhutia, Confidential Secretary to CM, Bikash Basnet, SDM Ravangla, BDO Ravangla, OSD to Buddha Park and other officials.

Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial Shield football tournament gets underway at TNA



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

The first edition of Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial Shield Football Tournament kicked-off here at Tashi Namgyal Academy today.

14 teams are participating in the tournament being organized by TNA Teachers Alumni and Sikkim Aakraman Football Club. The final of the tournament is scheduled for 26 October.

The opening cere-

mony was attended by TNA Director, MG Jacob, accompanied by other dignitaries. It is informed that the tournament will be an annual affair timed to coincide with Founder's Day of the school.

Sikkim Aakraman FC president, Jigmee Singey Wangchuk, shared today that TNA has a very rich footballing culture but the standard and interest has fallen in the recent past.

"We dedicate this

Shield to all the football legends and heroes of the glorious past so that we can preserve their contributions and revive and regenerate passion and interest in football among the up-coming generation," he said.

TNA Teachers Alumni and Sikkim Aakraman FC expressed gratitude towards the Principal and staff of TNA along with ex-Tenacians and everyone involved in making the initiative possible.





SHRI AMIT SHAH
National President, BJP



SHRI KIREN RIJIJU
Minister of State
(Independent Charge), Youth
Affairs & Sports Ministry
and MoS Minority Affairs



SHRI DB CHAUHAN
State President



Election Symbol

"Sikkim is not just a piece of land, it is the Devbhoomi. Every river is Ganga for us, every stone is Shiva."
-KIREN RIJIJU

Grand Public Meeting

of Shri Kiren Rijiju

in Sikkim
Today, 17 October, 2019



SHRI YT LEPCHA
Gangtok Candidate



SHRI SONAM VENCHUNGPA
Rumtek-Martam Candidate



SHRI PREM SINGH TAMANG
Chief Minister

**For an HONEST leadership,
For a Government you
can TRUSTWORTHY
Cast your valuable
vote for **MODI****



Vote for BJP

Public Meeting

Ranipool Truck Stand

Afternoon: 2:30 PM

Press the Lotus Button and make BJP victorious

Public Meeting

Ranipool Truck Stand

Afternoon: 2:30 PM

TMC regains control of Naihati municipality from BJP

KOLKATA, OCT 16 (PTI): The ruling Trinamool Congress regained control over Naihati municipality in West Bengal from the BJP following its victory in the trust vote on Wednesday.

TMC registered a 24-0 victory in the 31-member municipality, located in North 24 Parganas district, officials said.

The remaining seven councillors had refrained from voting.

After the 2019 Lok Sabha polls when BJP had bagged 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in the state, 18 out of the 31 councillors of the civic body including its vice-chairman had switched sides to BJP which gave the effective control over it to the saffron party.

But within two months 10 of the turncoats rejoined TMC and alleged that they were forced to join the saffron camp at gunpoint - a charge which was denied by the BJP.

Following their return TMC's strength in the municipal body has gone up to 23. Later on one more councillor joined the ruling party increasing its strength to 24.

"The BJP had unethically taken over the municipal body by using force after the Lok Sabha polls. We were confident that if a trust vote was held we will win back the municipality," TMC North 24 district president Jyotipriyo Mullick said.

The state government had in May appointed an administrator to oversee affairs of the civic body.

Reacting to the development in Naihati municipality, senior BJP leader Mukul Roy, who had played a key role in the defections, accused TMC of using both political and administrative powers to force the councillors to rejoin the party.

"They (the councillors) had joined BJP as they were fed up with the functioning of TMC. Since then they were being threatened by the police and goons. The TMC forced them to rejoin it. It has done the same in other municipal bodies too," he added.

According to state BJP sources, the party is miffed with the developments and feels that taking leaders of TMC and other parties without background check into its fold had led to the embarrassing situation.

Since the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year the BJP had taken effective control of seven municipal bodies including in Naihati, with a majority of the councillors of the civic bodies joining the BJP.

However, in the last two months except for Bhatpara municipality, which is BJP MP Arjun Singh's stronghold, all the six other municipal bodies have returned to the TMC's control.

Sikkim defeats J&K by 5 wickets in Women's T20

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

Senior Women's Team of Sikkim is currently playing in Women's Senior T20 Trophy 2019-20 at Nagpur, Maharashtra which has started from 15 Oct, 2019. Sikkim will be playing a total of six matches in this tournament against Vidarbha, J&K, Haryana, Rajasthan, Odisha and Railways in Group B.

So far two matches have been played and after a loss in the first match against Vidarbha, Sikkim came back strongly and won their second match



against Jammu & Kashmir today by 5 wickets.

Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) won the toss and elected to bat first. In the first innings, Sikkim re-

stricted J&K to 86 runs with the loss of 7 wickets in 20 overs. Sristi Rai and Shubhi Pandey took two wickets each; Pranita Chettri, Dichen Ongmu

Lepcha and Ananya Upendran took one wicket each and played an important role in restricting the opponent.

In the second innings,

Sikkim made 87 runs in 19.1 overs with Ananya Upendran scoring 29 runs, Tshering Ongmu Lepcha (20), Archana Das (9), Shubhi Pandey (7 not out), Purni Maya Gurung (5) and Pranita Chettri (1 not out), leading Sikkim to this win with earning 2 Point(s) and standing in fourth place in the Group Table.

The president of SICA is happy with today's performance by the team and very pleased with the win. He wishes luck to the team from the remaining matches in the tournament.

Enchen Boys beat Seven Warriors in Dikchu



SUMMIT REPORT
MANGAN, 16 OCT:

The fourteenth day of the 78th Foundation Year Celebration Open Men's football tournament at Dikchu Senior Secondary School saw Enchen Boys Pathuk take on Seven Warriors [Nam-

rang] and emerge victorious 6-4 in a match decided in a penalty shootout.

The day had Zilla Panchayat, Lumgor-Sangtok, Tshering Gyatso Lepcha, as chief guest, accompanied by ward panchayat Tibuk, Dilliram Limbu.

Second Randomisation and Commissioning of EVMs



NAMCHI, 16 OCT (IPR): The second randomisation and Commissioning of the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPATs) to be used for the ensuing By-Elections of Poklok Kamrang assembly constituency was done at the Conference Hall of the District Administrative Centre here today.

The randomisation and commissioning process was held in the presence of Returning

Officer (South), Ragul K, General Observer for 10 Poklok Kamrang Assembly Constituency, Alak Kumar Saharia, Assistant Returning Officer, Satyen K Pradhan, Sector Magistrates, and various election agents.

The entire procedure of randomisation was completed as per the directions of the Election Commission of India through the EVM Management System (EMS). It may also be mentioned that a total

of forty one numbers of EVMs and VVPATs have been allocated to 10 Poklok Kamrang Assembly Constituency.

After the randomisation, engineers from Electronics Corporation of India Ltd (ECIL) oversaw the commissioning and uploaded the symbols in the VVPATs. Similarly, following the commissioning of EVMs and VVPATs, the machines were sealed and shifted to the strong room which has been set up at annex building of DAC.

The EVMs and VVPATs were stored in the presence of General Observer, Returning Officer, officials of Election Department and agents of contesting candidates. The machines are stored under 24x7 CCTV surveillance and are guarded by armed security personnel.

Training for by-election Micro Observers in Namchi



NAMCHI, 16 OCT (IPR): Training for the Micro observers for the upcoming by-elections of Poklok Kamrang constituency under South District was held at the conference hall of Zilla Panchayat Bhawan today.

The resource persons for the day were SDM Gyalshing (HQ), Tushar Nihare, who is the Master Trainer and SDM Yangang, Sangay Gyatso Bhutia, who is the Nodal Officer and Training Co-ordinator.

Master Trainer Tushar Nihare, in his address, spoke about the imperative responsibilities of Micro Observers (MO) in the smooth conduct of polls. He stated that the tasks of MO revolve around reporting deviations in the polling process from the assigned polling station to the General Observer. He also added that the MO needs to observe the overall election process of the polling booth assigned to him and for performing his duties well, he needs to understand

the roles and responsibilities of official machinery of polling booth. He also made the trainees aware that if there is a possibility of any serious problem that arises during the poll day, information should immediately be conveyed by phone to the General Observer or the Returning Officer (RO).

The resource persons for the day also asserted that the MO's have to observe all complaints made to them by the polling agents, election agents and electors during the poll and understand the seriousness and nature of the complaints. Likewise, he also informed the MO's about senior citizens, infirm and differently-abled voters. Additionally, he also briefed the MO's regarding the management outside and inside the polling stations and the duties of the polling team. During the course of the training the MO's were apprised about EVMs, ballot unit, presiding officer and polling officers of the polling

team, voter's slip, ballot account, mock poll and other process.

During the later half of the training, a demonstration of EVMs and VVPATs followed by a hands-on session of the Control Unit and VVPATs were conducted.

General Observer for Bye Elections for 10 Poklok Kamrang Assembly Constituency, Alak Kumar Saharia in his address advised the Micro Observers to be vigilant and said that any serious deviation needs to be reported to him promptly. Directions regarding the presence of MOs in their respective polling booths throughout the polling day and observing all the processes of the elections as per the guidelines of Election Commission of India meticulously were also asserted by the General Observer. He also notified the MOs to be conversant with the laws and rules related to election conduct on the poll day and to ensure successful completion of polls.

Training for South's counting officials



NAMCHI, 16 OCT (IPR): A daylong training for Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistants for the by-elections 2019 for Poklok Kamrang assembly constituency was held at the Conference hall of Zilla Panchayat Bhawan today.

The resource persons for the day were SDM Gyalshing (HQ), Tushar Nihare who is the Master Trainer and SDM Yangang, Sangay Gyatso Bhutia who is the Nodal Officer and Training Co-ordinator.

Addressing the gathering, Master Trainer, Tushar Nihare gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the DOs and DON'Ts of the counting process while also adding that only authorized people will be allowed to enter the Counting Hall including the candidates their election agent and counting agents. Further, he instructed the counting supervisors and counting assistants to report to the Counting hall at the stipulated time on the day of the

counting. Mr Tushar also stated that the placement of counting officials will be conducted via randomization process after which they will be assigned to their respective counting tables for counting of votes. He further informed that there shall be a total of six counting tables wherein one counting Supervisor and one counting Assistant will be seated. Similarly, he highlighted the trainees about the guidelines stated in Part 1 and Part 2 of Form 17C and asked them to carry out the counting in an efficient and error-free manner.

It was informed during the training that usage of mobile phones inside the Counting hall is strictly prohibited on the day of the counting and any serious deviation needs to be reported to the Returning Officer.

The counting supervisors and counting assistants were also imparted a hands-on training on the usage of control unit and VVPATs.

Lions Club of Rangpo felicitates



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

Lions Club of Rangpo felicitated clubs ex-president, Hem Kumar Gurung for his selfless contribution towards the Club's activities today. The felicitation program had the presence of Lions Club International 322F Region Chairman, Namita Chettri, District Chairman, Sanjay Agarwal, Rangpo Club secretary, Gaurav Chettri along with cashier, Pramod Prasad and other members.

VK Nigam, Rakesh Agarwal, Suresh Prasad, Namita Chettri, Ishori Sharma and Dr Dixya Poudyal were also felicitated with Lions Pin for their active partici-

pation in every mission and program.

District Chairman, Sanjay Agarwal thanked all members who contributed, supported and helped in Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan and essential goods distribution in a children's home at Namchi.

The club has decided to organise an awareness program and check up camp in different places of Rangpo on the occasion of International Diabetes Day in November.

The club has also decided to organise a Corporate Social Award for industrial units that have been regularly encouraging members of the club by participating in programs.

Second round of inspection for Poklok Kamrang



NAMCHI, 16 OCT (IPR): The second round of inspection of accounts of election expenditure of the contesting candidates for Bye Elections 2019 for 10 Poklok Kamrang Assembly Constituency was conducted at District Administrative Centre (DAC), Namchi today. Present during this process were Expenditure Observer for 10 Poklok Kamrang Assembly Constituency, Kalrav Mishra, CPAO

South, Sunil Sharma and various other officials.

In this inspection, accounts of candidates were reconciled with the record maintained by the Assistant Expenditure Observer. It may be mentioned that the third inspection of accounts and re-conciliation for the contesting candidates of 10 Poklok Kamrang Assembly Constituency is scheduled to be conducted on 20 October at DAC.

Southwest Monsoon withdraws completely from country

NEW DELHI, OCT 16 (PTI): The Southwest Monsoon withdrew from the entire country on Wednesday, the India Meteorological Department announced, eight days after it started receding from north-west India. This is also perhaps the fastest withdrawal of the Southwest Monsoon, it said.

The IMD also announced onset of Northeast Monsoon that brings rainfall to Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.

"The Southwest Monsoon has withdrawn from the entire country and simultaneously Northeast Monsoon rains have commenced over Tamil Nadu and adjoining areas of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala," the IMD said in a statement.

A cyclonic circulation lies over east-central Arabian Sea off south Karnataka coast at lower levels. A trough runs from north Sri Lanka coast to above

cyclonic circulation at lower levels, the IMD said in a statement. A trough in easterlies runs from southwest Bay of Bengal off south Tamil Nadu coast to west-central Bay of Bengal at lower levels, it added.

Mahesh Palawat, Vice President (Meteorology and Climate Change) Skymet Weather, said the withdrawal of monsoon was "unusual" this year.

Usually it takes 45 days for the monsoon to withdraw completely, but this year it retreated in only eight days, he said.

Palawat said the Southwest Monsoon usually starts withdrawing from northwest India from September 1. By September 15, it withdraws from west Rajasthan, the Rann of Kutch, parts of Punjab and Haryana. By October 1, it retreats from the entire northwest India, east and west Uttar Pradesh, west Madhya Pradesh, entire Gujarat, central Maharashtra and Goa.

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WSOS-upgraded library inaugurated at Chujachen School

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

Pakyong ADC (Dev), Radha Pradhan, inaugurated the school library upgraded by Wandering Souls of Sikkim at Government Senior Secondary School, Chujachen, near Rongli in East Sikkim on 15 Oct.

WSOS had upgraded the library using books and cash support pooled from contributors both from within and outside the state, a press release informs.

As part of this upgradation, more than 2,000 books, three bookshelves and carpets for the library floor were added to the library of the school.

This is the third library upgraded by WSOS as part of the group's library Initiative.

Pakyong Division Level Quiz and Declamation Competition supported by the office of the ADC (Dev), Pakyong, under the Swachh Bharat campaign, was organized as part of the inauguration. Eight senior sec-



ondary schools under Pakyong and Rongli sub divisions participated in the competitions.

The team comprising of Gaurav Neopaney and Abishek Rai of the host school secured first position in the quiz competition followed by Nisha Gurung & Yangden Bhutia of Rolep Senior Secondary School in second position and Bishes

Subba & Ranjan Sharma of Dikling Sr Sec School in the third position.

Sayoun Rai of Rolep Sr Sec School was declared winner of the Declamation Competition followed by Reena Chettri of Chujachen Sr Sec School in second position and Esha Chettri of St Xavier's School, Pakyong in third position. The declamation competition

was themed on the Swachh Bharat Mission.

Chujachen School Vice Principal, Pramod Pradhan thanked WSOS for upgrading the library and called upon the teachers and students to take maximum advantage of the library.

Chief Guest, Radha Pradhan, ADC (Dev), Pakyong congratulated the school on having its library

upgraded and applauded the WSOS initiative.

The event was also attended by BDO, Regu, Bhim Pradhan, Swachh Bharat District Coordinator, Sunil Pradhan, Education Deputy Director, Dorjee Sherpa, AD, Narad Chettri, Rongli PI, Bishal Lama, Retired Secretary, KP Adhikari, panchayats, teachers, students & others.

Khatiwada backs SKM-BJP alliance

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

BJP member, NB Khatiwada, who has also contested an earlier Lok Sabha election on a BJP ticket from Sikkim, today extended support to the SKM-BJP seat-sharing alliance in the State and echoed the party-line of this coming together providing "double-engine" government to power development in Sikkim.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Khatiwada alleged that no concrete work or development has taken place in the State under previous governments and said that victory for the alliance in all three constituencies will address the genuine demands and issues of the State.

Mr Khatiwada stated that after providing a strong government, SKM has displayed political maturity by giving two seats to BJP for the by-polls and reiterated that victory would ensure further development for Sikkim and resolution of all pending issues of the State.

When asked to comment the recent incidents of political violence in the State and SDF's demand for President's Rule, Mr Khatiwada commented that it was "nonsensical" for former Chief Minister Pawan Chamling to raise such a demand after having failed to head a strong Opposition in the State even for a few months.

Responding to media queries, he argued that Article 371F was "totally different" from the Article 370 and that BJP would never dilute provisions of Article 371F. He alleged that some vested interests have been trying to create confusion on this issue.

All India Inter Zonal TT and Badminton Tournament begins



SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

All India Inter Zonal Table Tennis and Badminton Tournament, 2019 started here at indoor gymnasium halls of Paljor Stadium complex on Wednesday. The three-day tournament is being organized by Zonal Sports Promotion Committee [East Zone] of Food Corporation of India [FCI], Kolkata under the auspices of Sports Promotion Board of FCI headquarter and in cooperation with Department of Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Sikkim.

In the inaugural function of the tournament this morning, FCI general manager [General] and vice-president of Zonal Sports Promotion Committee [East Zone], Kolkata, PK Satapathy declared the tourna-

ment open. He also expressed his best wishes to all participating teams and players from different zones.

Secretary to Department of Sports & Youth Affairs, Kuber Bhandari expressed his best wishes to all players and encouraged them to give their best in the tournament. He also congratulated the organizers for organizing the event in a grand manner and further expressed best wishes for the success of the tournament.

The inaugural function was also addressed by FCI DGM [General] and secretary of Zonal Sports Promotion Committee [East Zone], Kolkata, Aloke Mukherjee. Mr Mukherjee is a legendary footballer who has represented India in more than 100 games includ-

ing in two Asiads and one Olympic.

The inaugural function also witnessed cultural presentation by students of Deorali Girls senior secondary school. The inaugural function was followed by commencement of matches in the tournament.

A total of 75 players, which includes FCI employees and meritorious sportspersons selected every year under FCI's stipend scheme, are participating in this three-day long tournament.

It is informed that the tournament has the participation of India ranking players in badminton and table tennis. National ranking players like Vaidehi Choudhari [AIR 4th in women's badminton singles], Uthsava Palit [AIR 11th in U-19 Girls Badminton Singles],

Varun Kapur [AIR 4th in U-17 Boys Badminton Singles], Frenaz Chipia [AIR 3rd in Table Tennis Women] Moinak Das [India No 6 Junior] and Satapurni Dr [India No 9 in Junior] are representing their respective zones in the tournament, it is informed.

The tournament is being organized annually on rotation basis by every zone. The tournament is played in a round robin league followed by knock-out round and winners in both individuals and doubles category would be awarded as per norms of the Corporation.

The winners thereafter represent FCI Team in national tournaments like All India Public Sector Tournament and All India Inter Institutional Tournaments, it is informed.

Lagstal online store and design studio launched



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

Designer, Chimi Ongmu Bhutia opened her design studio and online store 'Lagstal' on 02 Oct. The design studio is located at TNSSS school road.

"Lagstal is a brand which evokes traditional North East crafts in a contemporary style," according to Chimi.

Lagstal offers contemporary-chic, sophisticated, and affordable style for various areas of your life, from home decor to personal accessories.

"From luminescent

lamps to home decors a la mode, we have a lot to offer for various corners of your life," says Chimi.

Chimi is a Gangtok based designer who has studied fashion designing from National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) Kolkata.

"I am social and nature-nomics inclined entrepreneur. I believe in entrepreneurship that is pro nature and environment friendly. My work uses local resources in terms of raw materials and local manpower. Local artisans are encouraged to make use of

their traditional knowledge which later gets a contemporary touch," she says.

Her work uses local resources in terms of raw materials and local manpower. Local artisans are encouraged to make use of their traditional knowledge which later gets a contemporary touch.

According to Chimi, Lagstal is hopes to take Sikkim's traditional handicrafts to the national and international level.

You can check out her products online at www.lagstal.com.

Kalam Drishti - Jamboree of Innovation held at SMIT



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

The Institution's Innovation Council, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology organized the first edition of 'Kalam Drishti-Jamboree of Innovation', a day-long event which aims to ignite young minds and drive them towards ideation and innovation.

With more than 15 projectson display, the participation of the students was overwhelming as it saw students not only from the home institute, SMIT but also schools Govt Sr Secondary School, Mining, Govt Sr Secondary School, Chujachen and Biraspati Parsai Govt Sr Secondary School.

The opening ceremony saw the presence of the judges for the day, CEO, Prof (Dr) Tejbanta S Chingtham, AIC-SMUT-BI, and CEO and Founder, Echostream Pvt Ltd

and Tapestry Pvt Ltd, Tenzing Nyentsey which started with diya lighting followed by an official welcome to all the guests and dignitaries.

Convener, Dr Bikash Sharma, IIC, SMIT highlighted the objectives of IIC and shared its goals and ideals. The judges for the day, Prof (Dr) Tejbanta S Chingtham and Tenzing Nyentsey also shared their thoughts regarding innovation being the need of hour.

Dr Chingtham elaborated on the need and necessity for start-ups in India to boost the GDP and economic growth. Mr Nyentsey enlightened the audience on the key aspects of being an entrepreneur and shared his journey from a student to an entrepreneur.

The projects presented ranged from business models to scientific ideas for community welfare. Students as young as

grade IX participated whose ideas received accolades from the judges as well as the faculty and student audience.

The valedictory function was graced by the presence of Director, Prof (Dr) Ashis Sharma, SMIT, as the Chief Guest. All the participants were provided with participation certificates by the judges for the event. The projects from Govt. Sr. Secondary School, Mining bagged the first and second position who received a cash prize of Rs 15,000 and Rs10,000 respectively.

Director, SMIT handed over the prizes to the winners and also congratulated them for the achievement. He also encouraged the students to 'go wild' and cross boundaries when formulating an idea. The day ended with an official vote of thanks by Dr Bikash Sharma, Convener, IIC, SMIT.



Sikkim kick-boxers in team India for World C'ship

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 16 OCT:

Three kick-boxers from Sikkim are all set to represent Sikkim in the upcoming WAKO World Senior Kickboxing Championship, 2019 to be held at Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina from 19 to 27 Oct.

Phurba Sherpa, Phur Khandu Sherpa and Srijana Chettri from Sikkim are part of the 12-member India team to the world championship.

The team of three kick-boxers accompanied by chief technical director of Sikkim Association of Kick-

boxing Organizations [SAKO], Bidhan Ballav Subba met the Secretary to Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari this morning.

In an interaction, the Secretary congratulated and expressed best wishes to all three kick-boxers for representing the country in the world championship. He motivated them to give their best to win medals and laurels for the Country and the State. He mentioned that the department has provided all possible support to these three kick-boxers.

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Crime & Abetment

Sexual abuse of minors cannot be allowed to remain a minor issue

Turkey's child rape laws which seek to pardon such rapists if they "agree" to marry their victims has justifiably shocked the world. There has been unanimous condemnation of the proposed law which will not only allow child rapists walk away scot-free, but will also condemn the victims into lifelong sexual slavery. There is no way, save in some demented corner of the head which sees some sort of 'justice' in solemnizing rape for the victim, that such a move can be defended. And unless you have been living unplugged from the world, there is no way you would not have heard of this move or not had an opinion on it. And then there is Iraq, where short-term marriages, as in barely a few hours long, can be solemnized. This has been putting minors in harm's way and not even allowing them recourse to law.

Such policy makers are clearly messed up in the head, but even in such monstrous realities, there is at least a provision to register cases of sexual offences against minors and a recognition of how wrong such offences are, which is why rules are made to work around them. How do you think we measure up against what is clearly the nadir of child protection responses? Unfortunately, not too well, because past experience suggests that out here, in most cases, criminal charges are not even drawn up against the perpetrators, and when they are, convictions are rare.

Children fall prey to sexual abuse mostly at home or at school, the two places where adults can be among minors without raising any suspicion. These are two spaces which children are led to believe are safe for them because we, the responsible elders, are around to keep watch. But what use is this watch, if, whenever a child is violated, we either look away or fail to do enough? When was the last time we heard of a family member being charged under the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences Act? Never. And even the media, where there is no escaping from such reports, there has been only one instance when a grandfather was so charged, and that too when the Court became privy to the incident through another case. The standard response in the family even when children "report" the matter is advice to the child to "avoid" that "uncle". Sometimes, that relative might get ostracized, but never charged for what is now a cognizable offence. This is akin to punishing dereliction of duty with a transfer, only much, much more worse. Because the crime has not only not been punished, but not even recognized or exposed, the predator is allowed to roam free and continue to molest and rape more children. The situation in schools is not much different. Some teachers have been charged under POCSO Act, but follow-up has been poor. The public prosecution system has rarely invoked much confidence, but when it allows such cases to be compromised, they also attract disgust. And then there is the departmental action which tends to remain stuck in precedence and bureaucratise, not realizing that there is rarely precedence for such cases and not being brave enough to realize that the demands for evidence are not as strict for departmental action as they might be for courts. So, compulsory retirement is not action stringent enough. It has to be termination from service.

The reason this piece opened with the Turkey reference was because the intent was to make us squirm, make us uncomfortable and drive home the criminal neglect we are guilty of. For those who continue to believe that sexual assault should necessarily involve penetration, and feeling no shame in suggesting that molestation is not as "serious" as "rape", one needs to only point out that when it comes to five to eight year old victims, there can be no degrees of assault, all violations of their bodies, their emotions and their trust are equally traumatic for them. Oh, and by the way, the POCSO Act also recognizes even "touching with sexual intent" as sexual assault attracting between three to five years of imprisonment on conviction. It becomes "Aggravated Sexual Assault" when the perpetrator is part of the management or staff of a school. This carries a minimum imprisonment of five years. As for school managements or department officials who try to brush these incidents under the carpet or dodge responsibility by not reporting the crime, apart from failing in their moral responsibility towards minors, they are also legally within the ambit of "abetment" under the provisions of the POCSO Act. As per the Act, anyone who "intentionally aids, by any act or illegal omission, the act (of sexual abuse of a minor)" can be charged with abetment. Willful concealment of relevant facts and material evidence clearly attracts charges of abetment and even failure to report the crime by the in-charge of the school where the offence has taken place, attracts punishment of upto one year behind bars.

The law is clear on what constitutes sexual abuse of minors and could not be any clearer on what needs to be done by whom. Why is it then that we continue to fail the minors by not doing even what is prescribed to secure them some level of justice?

Why 'woke' NBA is struggling to balance its values with Chinese expansion

MARY-HUNTER MCDONNELL
theconversation.com

It's not easy being a for-profit organization these days.

Take the National Basketball Association. It found itself in a tricky situation in its second-largest market after Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey on Oct. 4 tweeted his solidarity with pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong. This naturally angered China, which led the NBA to label his comment "inappropriate" in the Chinese version of its statement. The Rockets' owner then made clear that the team is "not a political organization."

That was followed by another backlash, this time from fans, celebrities and media in the U.S. In fact, it produced a rare moment of political consensus, as both Republican and Democratic leaders piled on to shame the NBA for its kowtowing. As a result, the NBA commissioner on Oct. 8 issued a statement reasserting the organization's intent to stand by its values of diversity and support for free speech.

Both Apple and Blizzard Entertainment also found themselves in similar quandaries with China over the Hong Kong protests in recent days.

As a scholar of corporate strategy and social positioning, I believe that the NBA's bind illustrates the important tension modern companies face between geographic expansion and political advocacy.

THE 'WORLD'S WOKEST LEAGUE'

The NBA, called the "world's wokest professional sports league," has been applauded as a champion for social justice.

It notably backed its stars who expressed support for Black Lives Matter, in contrast to the harsh reprisals that met NFL players who stood with the movement by kneeling last season.

In the past, the organization has also pushed back against markets that threatened its values. In 2016, for example, the league responded to North Carolina's passage of a law that would restrict transgender individuals' access to identity-conforming bathrooms by pulling its All-Star game from the city of Charlotte. In doing this, it stated that its "activities [are] intended to be a global celebration of basketball, our league, and the values for which we stand."

The league's action sent a powerful message: As an organization whose activities are an authentic manifestation of core values, it couldn't in good conscious host its event in a political climate that was so overtly opposed to those values.

COMPETING TENSIONS

The NBA's recent run-in with China, however, shows there may be limits to how far it will go to stand up for these values.

That's because the Chinese market represents an incredible opportunity for NBA to grow its consumer base abroad. Its Chinese operations are presently worth more than US\$4 billion.

The episode illustrates the difficulty of expanding abroad while adhering to social and political values. Both offer potential profits and pitfalls.

Geographic expansion is one of the most favored strategies for a business to grow. It allows a business to continue to squeeze additional value out of its proven products by simply tapping into

ny's social engagement is driven by profit-seeking rather than moral motives, all of the benefits of social engagement go away. My own research demonstrates that people are especially averse to hypocrisy, which can lead to increased turnover, punitive reactions and attacks from activists.

LESSONS FROM THE NBA

It is easy for companies to stay true to their values in their home communities, where people tend to be like-minded.

As they expand geographically, however, they



new pools of consumers.

Companies are also feeling the pressure to stake a position on political and other issues in an increasingly polarized environment. The rise of consumer consciousness means that modern consumers tend to search for – and pay a premium for – products peddled by companies that share their values.

This means that another easy tool for growing profits is to define and declare a set of social values: to be a brand that stands for something. More and more companies are doing just that. For example, in 2015, hundreds of companies urged the Supreme Court to recognize gay marriage as a constitutional right. Just this year, hundreds more signed an open letter opposing a wave of legislation aiming to restrict women's reproductive rights.

Research shows that when people believe that a company shares their values, they reward it generously. Consumers are more excited to buy its products. Employees will be more engaged and demand less compensation.

But once people begin to think that a compa-

ny will eventually be enticed to explore markets where their values are less well aligned. In the extreme case, the price of entry to an attractive market that does not share a company's values is compromising those very values.

What leaders must recognize is that decisions that pit a potential opportunity to profit against an opportunity to stay true to their core values are the ones that define or defile their authenticity. Any gains to be won from bending to gatekeepers in a misaligned market must be balanced with the reputational losses that will be suffered at home among longstanding stakeholders.

In my view, the NBA's reputation as a "woke" enterprise is in tatters. Let this be a lesson to other companies that are struggling to stake political positions while expanding geographically. Companies should be wary of taking a position that they are not prepared to stand up for when it costs them – and ought to think twice about entering markets where their values don't resonate.

[the writer is Clarence Nickman Assistant Professor of Management, University of Pennsylvania]

Booker Prize: with two winners it's a double-edged victory – perhaps Bernardine Evaristo needed the recognition more

CLARE HUTTON
theconversation.com

For the first time since 1992 – and only the third time in the illustrious history of the Booker – the prize has been awarded to two novels: *The Testaments* by Margaret Atwood, and *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo.

In accepting the shared prize, both women were gracious. Atwood, at 79, felt that she was "too elderly", and was happy to share; and Evaristo was honoured to share with the feminist literary legend. The £50,000 prize is to be divided and Atwood has announced that her £25,000 will be donated to the charity Indspire, which aims to enrich Canada through Indigenous education.

The value of winning the Booker is not just the honour, of course. For most authors, the value is the cash prize and the huge increase in sales which follows from the win. Last year's winning title, *Milkman* by Anna Burns, has sold more than 500,000 copies and has changed Burns's life immeasurably, as she made clear in a moving speech at last night's black-tie awards dinner in London's Guildhall.

As the sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *The Testaments* is already a conspicuous and assured commercial success. Live launched in 130 cinemas worldwide on September 10, the hardback edition has sold more than 179,000 copies in the UK and has performed well in terms of downloads as well. Meanwhile, the other winning title – *Girl, Woman, Other* – has sold only 4,000 copies in the UK to date, according to Nielsen Bookscan.

JUDGING GRIDLOCK

The Booker Prize process takes novels of a very different kind and places them on the same list. A panel

of five judges is appointed each year and they spend most of that year reading submissions. This year, the panel, chaired by Peter Florence, got through 180 novels in 11 months. Having produced a longlist of 13 novels in July and a shortlist of six in early September, the jury's task was

mind the story of Philip Larkin, chair of the judges in 1977, who threatened to jump out the window if the title he preferred did not win (it did).

But Florence preferred consensus to coercion – and the panel wanted to signal that both winners are of particular note. That's the official line, anyway.



to choose one winner in accordance with the published rules which explicitly state that: "The Prize may not be divided or withheld."

This rule was established in 1992, because a committee chaired by Victoria Glendinning insisted on two winners: *Sacred Hunger* by Barry Unsworth and *The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje. Even a year later, this palled with the well-known literary agent Giles Gordon, who thought that the Booker is about "winning not sharing".

That a panel of five could not reach a consensus after hours of discussion elicited gasps of frustration and indignation from those who were at the Guildhall. It suggests that at least one panel member was exercising some sort of veto, and brings to

VERY DIFFERENT BOOKS

The Testaments and *Girl, Woman, Other* are very different kinds of books, by very different kinds of author and will appeal to different kinds of readers. For Florence, it may be a case of "double the joy" and "double the reading pleasure", but others will wish to choose.

The Testaments is assured, compelling, carefully plotted, slickly written and worthy of the hype. The structure of three different types of "testimony" – that of Aunt Lydia and two Gilead witnesses – is especially appealing and works well. It is a book which reads quickly and its appearance now, so many years after *The Handmaid's Tale*, is testament to Atwood's vision – and creative resilience.

Resilience has clearly been a huge issue for Evaristo, who is a longstanding advocate for the inclusion of people of colour in the arts. Born in London in 1959 to a white English mother and Nigerian father, Evaristo was educated at Rose Bruford Drama School and Goldsmith's College. She founded the Theatre of Black Women in 1982, and has written seven novels to date.

Girl, Woman, Other is a multi-stranded narrative which gives voice to the experience of being a black British woman through 12 interwoven stories ranging from Newcastle in 1905, through London 1980, Oxford in 2008 and Northumberland in 2017. The work abandons the conventions of standard paragraphing and punctuation, a technique which has led some readers to describe the form as "free verse".

But Evaristo's prose lacks the compression, lyricism and intensity of verse and this book often plays to very predictable cliché. This, arguably, is the point: cliché enables us to see beyond – and to think through – the issues of diversity and representation which are so central to individual racial experience.

Speaking last night, Atwood herself said: "I kind of don't need the attention." When she won the Booker in 2000 with *The Blind Assassin*, she had already been nominated on three other occasions, including in 1986 when *The Handmaid's Tale* lost out to *The Old Devils* by Kingsley Amis.

Perhaps the judges should have weighed these losses and gains in the balance. If Evaristo's work is worth honouring then surely it was worth the honour which would have come from being the sole recipient of the Booker Prize 2019.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer in English, Loughborough University]

Patna waterlogging: axe falls on senior officials

PATNA, OCT 16 (PTI): The Bihar government has removed Principal Secretary of Urban Development department Chaitanya Prasad and Patna Divisional Commissioner Anand Kishor from their positions apparently in the wake of prolonged waterlogging here triggered by incessant rain in September end.

Bihar Urban Infrastructure Development Corporation (BUIDCO) Managing Director Amarendra Prasad Singh has also been shifted to another post, according to a General Administration Department notification issued Tuesday evening.

Axe has fallen on the senior officials after the government had cracked whip on several middle level officials of the Patna Municipal Corporation and BUIDCO, responsible for upholding civic facilities in the capital city.

They were punished for lapses in discharge of their duties in dealing with the accumulation of water in several localities after heavy downpours for three days starting September 27 in Patna.

Waterlogging which continued for over a week in prominent localities like Rajendranagar, Kankarbagh and Patliputra colony, when boats of NDRF and SDRF were seen rescuing citizens from their inundated houses had drawn national outrage. The visual



of Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi being rescued from his flooded house in Rajendranagar with other family members was seen with awe across the country.

The issue had also resulted in some hot exchange of words between the ruling NDA partners-JD(U) and the BJP.

Chaitanya Prasad has been shifted to Science and Technology department as its principal secretary.

Prasad, a 1989 batch IAS officer, will continue to hold additional charge of the Parliamentary Affairs department, the notification said.

Patna divisional commissioner Anand Kishor has been made Secre-

tary in the urban development department. He will also hold additional charge of Managing Director of the Patna Metro Rail Corporation.

According to the notification, 2002 batch IAS officer Sanjay Agarwal, currently Transport Secretary, has been given additional charge of Patna divisional commissioner till further order.

He had earlier served as Patna District Magistrate.

BUIDCO MD Amarendra Prasad Singh has been transferred and made Administrator, Bihar State Road Transport Corporation, Patna while Chandrashekhar Singh, presently working as Additional Secretary in the

CM Secretariat, will replace him in BUIDCO. Choked drainage system after heavy rain in September end had caused massive waterlogging in many areas of the state capital.

The government had on Monday placed officials under suspension, withheld payment of their salaries and issued show-cause notices for lapses in discharge of their duties when the state capital was reeling under worst-ever waterlogging in three decades.

Chief Secretary Deepak Kumar had said the action followed a review meeting of the top government officials.

The new transfer order also saw change in

position of some other IAS officers.

Dr Dipak Prasad, currently Advisor, Bihar State Planning Board, has been made principal secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat department.

Science and Technology department's principal secretary Harjot Kaur Bamhara will be principal secretary-cum commissioner in the Mines and Geology department.

Pradeep Kumar Jha has been made Director, Information and Public Relations department till further order.

Jha will continue to hold additional charge as Special Secretary of Public Health and Engineering Department (PHED), it added.

U'khand: Jamrani dam gets environmental clearance

DEHRADUN, OCT 16 (PTI): The proposed Jamrani dam project of Uttarakhand, which has been hanging fire for over 40 years, has finally got environmental clearance from the Centre, Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said on Wednesday.

He said environmental clearance to the long-awaited project paves the way for its speedy implementation.

Attributing the progress towards implementation of the project to the joint efforts of the state government and the Centre, Rawat said

it will fulfil a long cherished dream of the residents of Bhabar area, a region south of the lower Himalayas and the Shivalik hills.

"People of Terai-Bhabar region will get gravity water from the project which will also irrigate over 5000 hectares of land in Uttarakhand," the chief minister told reporters.

The Rs 2,584-crore project proposed in the 1970s will provide water to people of Nanital and Udhampur Singh Nagar districts in Uttarakhand for both drinking and irrigation purposes be-

sides producing 14 mw of power, he said. Located on the Gola river in Nainital district, the dam will be nine-km-long, 130-metre-wide and 485-metre-high. The project got technical clearance from the Central Water Commission in February this year.

The forest department has already given 351.49 hectares of land for the project and the state government has sanctioned an initial sum of Rs 89 crore for the project.

The project is considered the lifeline of residents of Bhabar area.

DRI seizes 10.5 kg of smuggled gold, six arrested

KOLKATA, OCT 16 (PTI): The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials have seized 10.5 kg of smuggled gold along with Indian and Myanmar currencies in separate operations near here and in Siliguri town cumulatively valued at Rs 4.20 crore.

Six persons have been arrested in the two operations, DRI officials said on Wednesday.

Acting on intelligence, DRI officers ap-

prehended four persons, including a woman at Siliguri from two buses coming separately from Shillong and Guwahati on Monday.

On search, 38 pieces of gold biscuits and one gold bar weighing 7.3 kg were seized.

In addition to smuggled gold, Myanmar currency amounting to one lakh Burmese Kyat was also seized, they said. The collective value of the goods seized

was Rs 2.89 crore. In the other operation, DRI officers intercepted a bus near Ranaghat in West Bengal's Nadia district on Tuesday morning and apprehended two persons. Officials said that 20 pieces of gold biscuits each weighing 166 gm were recovered from them as well as Rs 21,600.

The total value of confiscated smuggled gold is Rs approximately Rs 4.20 crore, they added.

ITBP demands construction of bridges on glacial rivers

PITHORAGARH, OCT 16 (PTI): The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has demanded construction of bridges on glacial rivers like Lasar Yangti and Darma in Pithoragarh district for the safety and convenience of the border guards and people living in the area.

Citing the strategic importance of the route due to its proximity to the India-China border, ITBP DIG APS Nimbadia said construction of the bridges over the two glacial rivers is necessary as crossing them is fraught with danger for both security personnel and locals.

"The flow of Lasar Yangti river is too high during summer months. There are huge rocks in the river which make it even more difficult and risky for ITBP soldiers



and shepherds of villages like Tedang, Marcha and Sipu who have to cross it frequently with their livestock," he said.

"Lasar Yangti river flows near the border in Dhakar Damolia axis of Darma valley," he said.

Nimbadia, who recently wrote to the Pithoragarh district administration requesting construction of the two bridges, said the other bridge needs to be constructed on the river

Darma that flows 1500 metres west to the last ITBP camp at Daawe on the Indo-China border.

"Due to high speed of the river in summer months, our personnel have to take a lot of risk in crossing the river," the ITBP officer said.

The ITBP officer has demanded from the Pithoragarh district administration to construct the bridges for the convenience of the border guards and safety of peo-

Journalist hacked to death by gang in AP

AMARAVATI (AP), OCT 16 (PTI): A 45-year-old reporter of a Telugu daily has been hacked to death by an unidentified gang in East Godavari district, police said.

K Satyanarayana, reporter of Andhra Jyothy, died on the spot while the assailants fled after committing the crime at S Annaram village on Tuesday night, they said.

An official release

said the Director General of Police Gautam Sawang directed East Godavari district Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi to personally visit the scene of offence and unearth the facts.

The DGP instructed the SP to bring the culprits to book immediately, the release added.

"We will investigate the case from all angles," a senior police official said.

Much-awaited Northeast monsoon sets in over south India

CHENNAI, OCT 16 (PTI): The much awaited north east monsoon, which brings the bulk of rainfall to Tamil Nadu set in across south India on Wednesday, the regional weather office said.

The north east monsoon accounts for about 48 percent of Tamil Nadu's annual rainfall of around 945 mm and stretches till December.

"The north east monsoon has started from today in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and southern Andhra Pradesh," Director, Area Cyclone Warning Centre, S Balachandran said. He forecast heavy rains in one or two places in Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Ramanathapuram, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram, Cuddalore and Cauvery delta districts in the next 24 hours.

Further, intermittent rains were likely in



Chennai and its suburbs during the next 24 hours, he added.

In the last 24 hours, Poonamallee (Tiruvallur) and Pamban (Ramanathapuram) recorded 11 cm and 10 cm of rainfall, respectively. The average rainfall during the three month north east monsoon period starting October was 44 cm, he said.

He also advised fishermen against venturing into the sea in Kanyakumari on October 17 and 18. The setting-in of north east monsoon, like-

ly to be normal this year, has brought relief to the state, especially Chennai, as a deficit rainfall in 2018 had resulted in severe water shortage in this metropolis this year as the reservoirs feeding it had dried up.

The city's water managers had to resort to supply of drinking water through tanker lorries, especially during the summer, to meet the demand.

Good unseasonal rains earlier had, however, brought some respite to the citizens.

Rose Valley: CBI officials visit state secretariat

KOLKATA, OCT 16 (PTI): CBI officers visited the West Bengal secretariat on Wednesday as part of its ongoing probe into the multi crore Rose Valley chit fund scam.

This is the first time that the investigating agency personnel have visited the state secretariat in connection with the Rose Valley scam.

Sources said that the CBI personnel reached the state secretariat in the morning hours and submitted two letters - one for chief secretary Rajiva Sinha and the other for the officer on special duty to the land

department. The probe agency has asked the state government to submit all files related to the Rose Valley scam and summoned the OSD of the land department to appear before it by October 18.

"CBI is seeking details about land dealings which took place between the state government and the Rose Valley group," a senior official at the secretariat said on condition of anonymity.

"This is a routine visit to the state secretariat for the purposes of investigation", CBI sources said and sought cooperation from the state govern-

ment. The central probe agency has also asked the state government to provide details about the nature of dealings with the ponzi scheme company and also about the location of the lands, government officials said.

Thousands of common people were defrauded of their hard-earned money on promises of high returns in the Rose Valley case like the Saradha ponzi scheme scam.

Rose Valley had collected more than Rs 10,000 crore from the public through illegal schemes.

Man detained for posting derogatory comments on FB

SHILLONG, OCT 16 (PTI): A man was detained by police in Meghalaya's West Jaintia Hills district for allegedly posting derogatory comments against a Catholic priest on his facebook wall, a senior police officer said Wednesday.

The man identified as Rimialson Daw was detained after a complaint was lodged against him for posting derogatory comments against Archbishop of Shillong Rev Dominic Jala on Monday night, Superintendent of Police, Lakador Syiem said.

Jaladied in a car

accident in California, US, recently.

Daw was brought to the Jowai Police Station for questioning and was later sent for medical examination as his relatives claimed he was mentally unstable, Syiem said.

The SP said investigation into the case is in progress even as Daw's family members have tendered a public apology on his behalf.

According to the family members, Daw is suffering from Schizophrenia.

He was earlier arrested for posting derogatory remarks against a woman minister in 2013.

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Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey
courtesy by hydel projects in Sikkim and the
region, the cost exacted by this 'develop-
ment' and some of the stories it birthed, not
all of which have been shared before.

Also finding place in this collection is the
arrival of Climate Change and its impact on
Sikkim and how the State could negotiate
with this new disruption.

**THE BIRDS
HAVE
LOST
THEIR
WAY**

EDITED BY
TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

**ESSAYS
ON TEESTA,
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AND CLIMATE
CHANGE
IN SIKKIM**

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India's performance was no match to atmosphere at Salt Lake: Chhetri

KOLKATA, OCT 16 (PTI): India captain Sunil Chhetri on Wednesday said the team's underwhelming draw in the FIFA World Cup Qualifier against Bangladesh was no match to the electrifying atmosphere at the Salt Lake Stadium here.

A last-gasp Adil Khan header saved India the blushes as the higher-ranked fancied hosts struggled to a 1-1 draw here on Tuesday night, disappointing thousands of heads totting the stands at the mecca of Indian football. Hours after the game that turned out to be the team's worst of the campaign so far, Chhetri expressed his disappointment.

"We couldn't deliver a performance to match the atmosphere at the Salt Lake last night, and



the dressing room is very disappointed about it," Chhetri, one of the leading scorers in international football, tweeted.

He said the team couldn't make use of the opportunities, but

no less mediocre was India's defending. "We couldn't capitalise on the chances we got, but this is a process on the pitch and in the stands. You turned up, we'll keep attempting to." India came

into the game high on confidence after holding Asain champion Qatar to a goal-less draw away. However, the result was far from what Igor Stimac's wards had expected in the run-up to the

match. Saad Uddin gave Bangladesh the lead in the 42nd minute and the visitors looked like going back home with all the three points in the Group E match of the qualifying second round.

Khan, however, ensured that India secured a point from the home game as he rose high to nod home a Brandon Fernandes corner kick in the 88th minute. A defeat at home would have severely dented India's hopes of advancing to the next round.

India had lost to Oman 1-2 in their opening match before the big result against Qatar, the 2022 World Cup hosts.

India have two points from three matches, while Bangladesh stay at the bottom with one point from three outings.

Aussie cricketer Watson apologies for 'illicit' social media posts



SYDNEY, OCT 16 (AFP): Australian cricketer Shane Watson has apologised to fans after his social media accounts were flooded with "illicit" photographs of half-naked women and racist comments, seemingly the work of hackers.

The all-rounder, who plays for Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League, said in social media posts late Tuesday that both his Twitter and Instagram pages had been hacked in recent days.

Screenshots published by British tabloid The Sun showed revealing images of women in underwear posted on his personal Instagram account.

The West Australian reported that a hacker also posted racial slurs and fat-shaming comments to his Twitter account last week.

The 38-year-old, who has more than two million followers across the two platforms, apologised to his followers for the posts.

"My apologies to everyone for the illicit photos that have been posted on my Instagram account," he tweeted.

"First my Twitter account on Friday got hacked and now Instagram today." He also recorded a separate video, uploaded to Instagram, in which he slammed the content as "disgraceful".

Watson played 59 Tests and 190 One Day International matches for Australia before retiring from international cricket in 2016.

Koepka leads big guns rolling in for PGA Tour's Asian riches

Jeju (South Korea), Oct 16 (AFP): The US PGA Tour kicks off its new-look Asian Swing in South Korea on Thursday with the world's top golfers lured by megabucks in three tournaments with no cuts.

This week's 9.75 million CJ Cup, where four-time major winner and world number one Brooks Koepka is defending champion, will be followed by the Tour's first foray into Japan at the Zozo Championship next week with an identical purse on offer.

The swing concludes at the WGC-HSBC Champions in Shanghai, which has seen its prize fund beefed up to 10.25 million, and the tournaments are a chance to rack up Fedex Cup points early in the season.

Koepka will be joined at Nine Bridges on picturesque Jeju Island by drawcards such as Phil Mickelson, Jordan Spieth and Sergio Garcia who are all making their debut at the event, first held in 2017.

Fellow major champions Justin Thomas, the 2017 winner here, Jason Day, Patrick Reed, Graeme McDowell, Danny Willett and Gary Woodland are also among the world-class cast lifting the curtain on the three-week 29.75 million jaunt.

- DECISION TIME FOR WOODS -

Next week in Japan all eyes will be on the health of Tiger Woods as he makes yet another comeback, this time from arthroscopic knee surgery, and will be joined by world number two and PGA Tour Player of the Year Rory McIlroy. But it is also decision time for US Presidents Cup captain Woods, who will pick his four US team wildcards for December's showdown with the Internationals in Melbourne straight after the Zozo.

Should the 15-time major winner Woods be fit and firing in Japan, he may nominate himself to be the first playing captain since Hale Irwin at the inaugural Presidents

Cup in 1994.

But that would reduce his options to just three picks from the likes of Woodland, Tony Finau, Reed, Spieth, Mickelson, Rickie Fowler, Bubba Watson and Kevin Kisner. Although the out-of-form Mickelson has been a key member of the US Team for an amazing 24 consecutive team events, it seems certain that run will come to an end and he may be recruited by Woods as an additional vice-captain.

US Open champion Woodland is looking to nail down his spot having been runner-up here last year, while former number one Spieth and 2018 Masters champion Reed need a return to top form to spring them into contention.

- SPIETH TRIES TO SNEAK IN -

"Unfortunately, I didn't secure my own spot, so I have two weeks left to go out and prove that my game's in a good enough spot that I deserve a pick," Woodland said Tuesday.

Spieth, languishing at 38th in the world, thinks he may have a chance to sneak into Woods' thoughts with a couple of big weeks.

"Gary (Woodland) won the US Open and didn't get an automatic pick and Tiger didn't get in having won the Masters so that's a pretty competitive American environment," Spieth told AFP on Tuesday.

"But I think if I can really play well have a chance and maybe grab a win that may be enough to sneak in." International captain Ernie Els has also four to choose, and Day, badly out of form in 2019, still looks a shoo-in to make it an Aussie quartet in the 12-man team alongside Cameron Smith, Marc Leishman and Adam Scott.

Korea have eight players in the field and the home charge will be led by PGA Tour Rookie of the Year Im Sung-jae.

The 21-year-old knows the Jeju course this week better than anyone having grown up playing Nine Bridges.

South Africa's fit-again Kolbe ready to test Japan with searing pace

PAUL REES

theGuardian

Tokyo, 16 Oct: A side-effect of the crackdown on high tackles is that small is becoming beautiful again. As big hits become hazardous, off-loading is increasing, along with the pace of games.

Twenty-four years ago, Jonah Lomu redefined wing play when he stamped his way around South Africa, but here wide men of rather small stature made their mark in the group stage: Wales' Josh Adams, Japan's Kotaro Matsushima and Kenki Fukuoka, Scotland's Darcy Graham and Cheslin Kolbe, the Springbok speedster who has recovered from an ankle injury to feature against the host nation in Sunday's quarter-final at Tokyo Stadium.

"The ankle played up for a while, but I am back on the training field and confident," said Kolbe, who will turn 26 on the day of the second semi-final. At 80kg and 1.72m, he stands out for his relative smallness in the most overtly physical side in the tournament. "They say dynamite comes in small packages and I think that if you are playing well it does not matter what size you are or which country you are playing in, the coach will look at you."

If Japan's frenetic style of play has hooked neutrals, so has Kolbe's searing pace and his ability to step out of a

defender's reach at the point of contact, a trait rarely seen since Gerald Davies was dancing over try-lines in a Wales jersey in the 1960s and 1970s. Kolbe made his name in South Africa's sevens team and played for Western Province but his size prevented him from making an impact and in 2017, frustrated at his failure to make a breakthrough, he moved to France and joined Toulouse.

"It was a stage of my career where I had started a family and it was a tough decision," said Kolbe, who played at full-back when Toulouse defeated Clermont Auvergne to clinch the French Top 14 title last June. "I had the opportunity to go abroad and it was one I wanted to take. They welcomed me with open arms and made it easy for me. "Even though I moved to France, I still wanted to play for South Africa and my story shows that if you play at your best, you will get a chance. And now there is a World Cup final to look forward to against a Japan team who have been playing brilliant rugby. For the moment, it does not get any bigger than this."

Kolbe made his Test debut against Australia 13 months ago, but such has been his impact that when it was feared his ankle injury would rule him out of the quarter-final, it was seen as a considerable set-back for the team the bookmakers fancy will contest next month's final against New Zealand.

Jordan Henderson says England wanted to make racist fans 'suffer'

ED AARONS

theGuardian

London, 16 Oct: Jordan Henderson has admitted England's players decided to play on in the face of racist abuse from Bulgarian supporters during the Euro 2020 qualifier in Sofia on Monday because they wanted their opponents and their fans to "suffer".

With the match having already been halted twice before half-time following repeated monkey chants and Nazi salutes from more than one section of the Vasil Levski Stadium, the manager, Gareth Southgate, left it up to his team to discuss whether or not to come out for the second half in Sofia. But despite discussing before the match what action they would take should there be a repeat of the racist abuse which marred England's qualifier in the Bulgarian capital in 2011, Henderson insisted that the entire team was in accordance about continuing because they felt to do otherwise would have sent the wrong message. "I obviously wasn't happy with the situation that we were in, it wasn't



nice to be involved in and it shouldn't be happening in 2019, it is very disappointing," said the Liverpool midfielder. "But at the same time, I felt as though as a team we dealt with it so well, we touched on it before we came here just in case it did happen and unfortunately it did. So we spoke together and the decision was that we carried on because if you leave the pitch and stop the game they win, really."

Henderson added: "That is how we looked at it and what the message was in the dressing room

at half-time. We wanted to go out in the second half and make them suffer and make their team suffer on the pitch and I think we did that."

England's 6-0 victory was Bulgaria's biggest-ever home defeat, with Ross Barkley and Raheem Sterling both scoring twice either side of goals from Marcus Rashford and the captain, Harry Kane. Henderson paid tribute to the professionalism shown by Southgate's side in managing to rise above the racist abuse and singled out Tyrone Mings for

the way the Aston Villa defender handled the situation on his first appearance for his country at any level.

"It shouldn't be happening and will obviously tarnish that," he said. "But at the same time I thought he dealt with the situation so, so well. It was a top performance for his debut, I thought he was magnificent. That just shows the character in him and in the team and it will just make us stronger, no doubt. We stayed together like we should have and we spoke about it before, handled it well and if

one player didn't want to carry on we would have stopped playing, simple as that, no problem. But everyone wanted to carry on and we wanted to let football do the talking."

Henderson also praised the reaction of England's supporters after they were among the first to hear the abuse, responding with a chant featuring the words: "You racist bastards, you know what you are" as early as the 20th minute. "I thought our fans were brilliant. All night I thought they were out-

standing," he said. "They stood behind us like they always do. They are unbelievable all the time but it is times like that you want them right behind you and they certainly were. That just brings us together even more."

Henderson added: "We are obviously happy with the performance but still feel like it shouldn't be happening in this day and age. To hear the announcement about the racism and then the whole stadium whistling was a bit strange. I'm sure something will be done."

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Fire at California oil facility prompts health worries



CROCKETT (US), Oct 16 (AP): A fire at a fuel storage facility in the San Francisco Bay Area prompted a hazardous materials emergency Tuesday afternoon that led authorities to order about 12,000 people in two communities to stay inside with all windows and doors closed.

Emergency sirens blared and thick plumes of black smoke and flames filled the skyline around the NuStar Energy LP facility in Crockett, California, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) northeast of downtown San Francisco.

Video footage of the fire showed flames leading up to an explosion so strong it blew the lid of one of the tanks high into the air.

"This is a very dynamic, rapidly evolving situation," Capt. George Laing of the Contra Costa Fire Department said.

"We've got two tanks that are releasing chemicals that are still burning."

The primary con-

cern to the public was unhealthy air quality caused by hazardous particulates spewing from the fire.

The tanks were part of a cluster of fuel storage facilities along an industrial span next to the Carquinez Strait, a major shipping thoroughfare and a key oil hub. The NuStar facility is also close to Interstate 80, one of the busiest highways in the San Francisco Bay Area, which officials shut down Tuesday afternoon, causing massive backups at the height of evening rush hour.

The California Highway Patrol said the closure was expected to last at least until midnight.

Contra Costa Fire Department spokesman Steve Hill said the two burning tanks contained about 250,000 gallons of ethanol and firefighters were trying to keep the blaze from spreading to other tanks storing jet fuel.

At an evening news conference Hill correct-

ed an earlier report in which he had said three tanks caught fire.

Ethanol typically produces a blue flame, leading firefighters to assume the fuel in the tanks may be mixed with another fuel.

"What you're seeing behind you is obviously not a blue flame," Laing told KPIX-TV. "So it could be mixed material, it could be mixed fluids from multiple tanks."

There could be manifolds, valves and pipes down there. At this point, it's still actively involved in fire so I'm sure that's the number one thing they are finding out right now."

About 200 firefighters were battling the blaze, Hill said.

Crews were using water to cool tanks adjacent to the ones already burning to prevent the fire's spread, said firefighting expert Marcelo D'Amico of Texas-based Orcus Fire and Risk.

At the same time, foam was being sprayed

from fire trucks and delivered via a fixed system installed at the facility to help douse the flames, he said.

Ultimately fire officials might decide to switch to a "defensive approach" if it appears the flames won't spread, D'Amico said.

"If they hold the perimeter, they could say, 'hey, these tanks are already on fire, but there's a limited amount of time until the fuel burns itself out,'" he said.

Ethanol fires are not necessarily any more difficult to fight than blazes burning gasoline or diesel, according to D'Amico.

Petroleum experts were on the scene to assist in the firefight, county fire officials said.

A resident of Rodeo, Gabriel Iturbe, sat in bumper-to-bumper traffic as he tried to get home to his teenage son, who was home sick when he called his father to report a loud explosion.

"It literally rocked the house and then soon after, he heard what sound-

ed like a jet plane," Iturbe said, speaking from his cellphone in the car as he looked at "thick, black smoke." He said he was trying to reach his son and take him out to a less smoky location.

In a statement, NuStar Energy said it was cooling nearby tanks to minimize the spread of fire but provided few other details. The company is a fuel storage and pipeline operator based in San Antonio.

The Contra Costa Health Department posted on Twitter that there was a "hazardous materials emergency" in the towns of Crockett, home to about 3,100 people, and Rodeo, population 8,700. The department urged residents to stay inside and close all windows and doors.

"Cover any cracks around doors or windows with tape or damp towels. Stay off the phone unless you need to report a life-threatening emergency at your location," the department said.

Officials said they did not immediately know the cause of the fire and whether there was any connection to a 4.5-magnitude earthquake Monday night centered in the East Bay city of Pleasant Hill, north of Oakland.

That quake caused malfunctions at two nearby oil refineries operated by Shell and Marathon oil, Randy Sawyer, Contra Costa County's chief environmental health and hazardous materials officer, told KQED News. Some equipment at the Shell refinery was temporarily affected by the quake, spokesman Ray Fisher said.

Austrian man held in Dutch cellar family case

Dutch police were holding an Austrian man after the discovery of a father and his adult children who were believed to have stayed hidden in a remote farmhouse for years, officials said Wednesday.

The mystery surrounding the case in the village of Ruinerwold in the northern province of Drenthe also deepened with reports that one of the children had been active on social media this year.

Police said they discovered a father and five children aged between 18 and 25 on Monday and arrested a 58-year-old man.

The Austrian foreign ministry confirmed that a Austrian national from Vienna was being held in relation to the case, but said the man did not want to have contact with Austrian officials.

Ministry spokesman Peter Guschelbauer told AFP said they did not

know the exact grounds for his arrest. Dutch authorities said all others in the cellar case were Dutch, Guschelbauer added.

Dutch and Austrian media said the man was known as "Josef, the Austrian" and the one holding the group in the cellar, renting the house and planting vegetables for them in the garden.

According to media reports, the family had spent years "waiting for the end of time", with Ruinerwold's mayor telling journalists "I have never come anything like this before."

The oldest of the children, a 25-year-old who has only gone by the name of "Jan", kept a Facebook account and who for the first time in nine years posted an update in June, according to Dutch media.

"Started a new job at Creconat," popular daily tabloid De Telegraaf quoted him as saying.

The company is affiliated to another in the nearby town of Meppel and was raided by police

on Monday, the paper said, adding it belonged to the 58-year-old Austrian man.

"Jan" also posted pictures of himself "surrounded by trees" and in and near Ruinerwold, as well as links to products and rallies including the recent climate marches, the paper said.

On his site on the jobs site LinkedIn, meanwhile, he wrote that his parents had run a successful business until his mother died in 2004.

Local news station RTV Drenthe, which first reported the story, said police were alerted after "Jan" walked into a village bar on Sunday evening.

The dishevelled man, unwashed and wearing old clothes said "he has not been 'outside' for the past nine years," bar owner Chris Westerbeek told RTV Drenthe.

Upon investigation, police discovered a hidden staircase behind a cupboard leading to a cellar where the father and his children were hiding.

India halved its poverty rate since 1990s: World Bank

BY LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON, Oct 16 (PTI): India has halved its poverty rate since the 1990s and achieved a seven plus growth rate over the last 15 years, the World Bank said on Tuesday.

India is both critical to the success of global development efforts, including eliminating extreme poverty, and as an influential leader for global goods such as addressing climate change, the bank said ahead of the annual meeting between it and the International Monetary Fund.

The country has achieved annual growth exceeding seven per cent over the last 15 years, halved its poverty rate since the 1990s, and enjoyed strong improvements in most human development outcomes, the World Bank said.

Noting that India's growth is expected to continue and elimination of extreme poverty in the decade is within reach, it said at the same time, the country's development trajectory

nonetheless faces considerable challenges.

For this, the World Bank said, India will need to achieve greater resource efficiency as it sustains growth, given its resource endowments and large population.

Land will need to be used more productively in urban areas by the spatial transformation of cities achieving agglomeration economies and in rural areas by increased agricultural productivity, it said.

India's water management will need to provide for shifting water allocation to higher-value uses and policies to increase the value of water use within sectors. In addition, 230 million people are not properly connected to the electricity grid while generation will need to be less carbon intensive, the World Bank pointed out.

More generally, India's rapidly growing economy needs investment in infrastructure, an estimated 8.8 percent of GDP or USD 343 billion a year until 2030, it said.

Second, sustained growth will also need to accelerate inclusion, especially to create more and better jobs. While an estimated 13 million people enter the working age population each year, only three million new jobs are being generated on an annual basis, the financial institution said.

The World Bank said a particular challenge lies in India's declining female labour force participation, which at 27 percent is among the lowest in the world despite overcoming gender gaps in education.

Finally, India's public sector institutions will need to be modernised to deliver services and regulations that match the aspirations of a middle income country; this will entail improving accountability and effectiveness, improving the ability of the state to interface with the private sector, and strengthening the compact among tiers of government to improve service delivery, the bank said.

Japan typhoon death toll climbs, while floodwaters recede

TOKYO, Oct 16 (AP): Japan's government said Wednesday that the death toll from a weekend typhoon that caused widespread flooding has climbed to 63, with another 11 presumed dead.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters that another eight people were missing in typhoon-hit areas in central and northern Japan. At least 200 people were injured, 30 of them seriously. Suga said the government will spend 710 million yen (USD 6.5 million) from special reserves in the budget to cover food and other necessities primarily for evacuees.

The full extent of damage from the typhoon is still unknown, and the government is open to further spending if necessary, Suga said.

Typhoon Hagibis hit Japan on Saturday with historic rainfall that caused rivers to overflow and left thousands of homes flooded, damaged or without power. More than 200 rivers overflowed, and more than 50 of those now have damaged embankments.

Rescue work in hard-hit areas in Nagano and Fukushima is gradually shifting to cleanup as receding floodwaters

revealed more damage. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation said it is dispatching experts to investigate damaged embankments at seven large rivers including those in Nagano and Fukushima where massive flooding occurred. A panel of construction and river experts is expected to examine the cause and discuss reconstruction methods in coming weeks.

As of early Wednesday, 12,000 homes lacked electricity and more than 116,000 households lacked fresh water, Suga said. Water supply trucks were sent to storm-hit areas and residents were advised to not bathe or do laundry to reduce the burden on sewage capacity.

Television footage showed schoolchildren eating rice balls, delivered individually wrapped in plastic wrap instead of in a bowl, to conserve water. Life in Tokyo was largely back to normal, except for some neighbourhoods along the flooded Tama River.

A power outage at one high-rise apartment building, due to the flooding of its backup generation system in the basement, raising questions over safety and risk management at riverside buildings.

US House passes Hong Kong 'Democracy Act'

WASHINGTON, Oct 16 (AFP): The US House of Representatives passed a bill Tuesday sought by pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong that aims to defend civil rights in the semi-autonomous territory, prompting an angry response from China.

The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which will now move to the Senate before it can become law, has drawn rare bipartisan support in a polarized Congress.

The law would end the Hong Kong-US special trading status unless the State Department certifies annually that city authorities are respecting human rights and the rule of law.

China expressed "strong indignation" over the passing of the act, which also requires the US president to identify and sanction people who are responsible for the erosion of autonomy and serious abuses of human rights in Hong Kong.

"What Hong Kong faces is not the so-called human rights and democracy issue at all, but the issue of stopping violence, reinstating order and upholding the rule of law as soon as possible," said foreign ministry

spokesman Geng Shuang in a statement. Geng said the US should "stop meddling" and warned China would take "strong measures" to counter the proposed Hong Kong bill.

The act will now move to a similar vote in the Senate before it can become law.

"Today we're simply urging the Chinese president and the Hong Kong Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, to faithfully honor the government's promises" that Hong Kong's rights and autonomy would be protected, Republican Representative Chris Smith, prime sponsor of the bill, said Tuesday on the House floor.

China has frequently accused "external forces" of fuelling weeks of unrest in the global financial hub. Millions have taken to the streets of Hong Kong, initially against a now-dropped bid by its leaders to allow extraditions to the authoritarian Chinese mainland.

The months-long movement has expanded into a broader pro-democracy push in the territory where activists say freedoms are being eroded by Beijing, despite being written into a deal that governed Hong Kong's 1997 transfer to China from British colo-

nial rule. "The House just sent a strong message to the people of Hong Kong: We stand with you in the fight for democracy and justice," said Ben Ray Lujan, a House Democrat.

Republican House member Mario Diaz-Balart said the Act ensures "that the special relationship with Hong Kong endures only as long as Hong Kong retains the autonomy and freedoms that justify that special relationship."

The House also approved, by a similar voice vote, a related bill to prohibit the export of certain non-lethal crowd control items such as tear gas to Hong Kong.

Amnesty International has accused the city's officers of using excessive force, although the police say they have exercised restraint. A separate house resolution called on the Hong Kong government to begin negotiations to address the demonstrators' demands, which include universal suffrage and an independent probe into police conduct.

Prominent Hong Kong activists testified before a congressional hearing last month in support of the legislation approved by the House on Tuesday.

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Movie to mark centenary of Sarat Chandra's 'Datta'



KOLKATA, Oct 16 (PTI): A Bengali period film will mark the centenary of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's classic novel 'Datta'.

The movie by debutant director Nirmal Chakraborty is being shot at West Bengal's Birbhum district.

Chakraborty told PTI here on Wednesday he believes Bengali moviegoers still crave for cinematic adaptations of literary works if original storylines are followed.

Rituparna Sengupta has been cast as 'Bijoya', a liberated Brahmo lady, while Joy Sengupta will essay the role of 'Naren'.

Bangladeshi actor Ferdous Ahmed was to play the role of 'Bilash Bihari' and had even shot some sequences of the movie earlier this year. "Since Ferdous is having some difficulties in getting a visa, we might have to reshoot the sequences involving him, with a fresh

character. We will take a final decision in this regard by mid-November," Chakraborty said.

Sengupta said, after being offered the role, she re-read the novel and was struck by the character who was ahead of her times in many ways.

"The way Nirmal da has fleshed out my character in the script, I am identifying with Bijoya in many ways. We hope the film to be released by mid-2020," she said.

'Datta' had earlier been adapted into films in 1951 and 1976.

"Though my movie will also be a period film like the earlier works, it will have a distinct flavour which will be different from the past two adaptations," Chakraborty said.

Chakraborty will use songs of Rabin-dranath Tagore and Rajanikanta Sen in the movie.

Neil Patrick Harris boards 'Matrix 4'

LOS ANGELES, Oct 16 (PTI): Neil Patrick Harris has chosen to take the red pill as the actor has joined the cast of Keanu Reeves-starrer "Matrix 4".

Lana Wachowski, one half of the Wachowskis who directed all the three films in the franchise with sister Lilly, will write and helm the new project.

According to Variety, the details of Harris' role has not yet been disclosed by Warner

Bros. Reeves and Carrie-Anne Moss are reprising their roles as Neo and Trinity.

"Aquaman" star Yahya Abdul-Mateen will also star in the film in one of the lead roles. Plot details are currently unknown.

Aleksandar Hemon and David Mitchell have co-written the script with Lana Wachowski.

She is also attached to produce with Grant Hill. Warner Bros Pictures and

Village Roadshow Pictures will back the movie.

The first, "Matrix", released in 1999 followed by "The Matrix Reloaded" and "The Matrix Revolutions", depicted a dystopian future where artificial beings have taken over humanity, which is unknowingly trapped inside a simulated reality, called the Matrix.

The trilogy collectively earned over USD 1.6 billion worldwide.

Maha polls: Sanjay Dutt backs Aaditya, wishes for his victory

MUMBAI, Oct 16 (PTI): Actor Sanjay Dutt has backed Aaditya Thackeray, who is making his debut in electoral politics, and said he hopes the Yuva Sena leader wins by a huge margin as the country needs dynamic young leaders.

The 29-year-old Yuva Sena chief, who is the elder son of Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray, is contesting the October 21 Maharashtra Assembly polls from Mumbai's Worli constituency.

He is the first member of the Thackeray clan to contest an election.

In a video posted on Twitter, Dutt said Aaditya Thackeray is like "a younger brother to me".

"He comes from a fantastic lineage of Balasheb Thackerayji, who supported me and my family immensely and was like a father

figure to me. I can never forget that. Uddhav bhai is the same," the 60-year-old actor said.

"I wish Aaditya all the very best. I hope he wins with a huge mandate because we need dynamic young leaders in our country. Jai Hind, Jai Maharashtra," he added. Ever since

the Shiv Sena was founded by late Bal Thackeray in 1966, no member of the family ever contested any election or held any constitutional post.

Uddhav Thackeray's cousin and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray had earlier announced his intention to contest

the 2014 state Assembly polls, but later changed his mind. Notably, Sena founder late Bal Thackeray had supported Dutt when he was booked and arrested in connection with the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts case.



HOLDING ON TO SUMMER! The actress, Lupita Nyong'o does not shy away from bright hues during an event in The Big Apple.

Jennifer Aniston joins Instagram, posts photo with 'Friends' co-stars



LOS ANGELES, Oct 16 (PTI): Jennifer Aniston made a spectacular debut on Instagram that sent the social media site crashing.

In her debut, Aniston shared a photo of hers with fellow "Friends" alums -- Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, Matthew Perry and David Schwimmer.

"And now we're Instagram 'FRIENDS' too. HI INSTAGRAM," she captioned the photo, which has so far received over 7.7 million likes. Her bio line reads, "My friends call me Jen."

Within an hour of her debut, the actor's page attracted more than 116,000 followers and her first post garnered hundreds of thousands of likes before crashing, reported The Guardian.

Among those who welcomed the 50-year-old actor on Instagram were her "The Morn-

ing Show" co-star Reese Witherspoon, ex-husband Justin Theroux and Cox.

Witherspoon and Theroux both left a welcome message on Aniston's post.

"YASSSS!!! Welcome to Insta Jen!!" Witherspoon wrote.

While Theroux posted, "Woot-Woot," using the hashtag #first.

Cox shared a throwback photo of hers with Aniston on her Instagram page.

"Hi Jen! Welcome to the social media world...it sucks. You're gonna love it!" she captioned the photo.

This year, Aniston and the rest of "Friends" cast are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the fan-favourite show.

The NBC series ran for ten seasons from 1994 to 2004.

ARIES: If you are feeling stuck or unsure, there is no harm in asking for guidance. In fact, you are currently surrounded by people who would be more than happy to help you succeed. Yes, this is your project, and it will remain so. Asking a passer-by for directions will only help you reach your destination that much sooner.

Tip: Help from a mentor or co-worker can help speed up the process.

TAURUS: Your enthusiasm for the work you do is bringing along some amazing opportunities your way. Your bosses recognise your capability and are now offering you the opportunity to level up. Do you feel ready for it, Taurus? Truth is, everybody else feels like you are. Ride this wave of new and exciting energy. It will help you build a life of financial stability and freedom. If you're thinking about making a new investment, now is a good time to do it.

Tip: A new beginning is on the cards.

GEMINI: When the going gets tough, the tough get going. The pressure is on, Gemini. Your commitment to your dreams is being

tested in every moment. Challenge yourself to do more, but also know where to draw the line. Understanding your limitations will benefit you in the long run. Be sure to not think about things to the point of exhaustion.

Tip: It's okay to take a break every once in a while.

CANCER: The drama intensifies as the week progresses. If you thought you had dealt with the unexpected, think again. Take a closer look at your circle. Are you sure the people you trust the most won't throw you under the bus the first chance they get? Take your blindfold off and see them for who they truly are. If you're the one who has erred, know that it is never too late to clean up the mess.

Tip: Pick your battles.

LEO: You have been nurturing your business as if it were your child, and now it has finally reached a stage where it is providing you with the rewards you deserve. Continue to work towards your goals in a steady manner, and you will achieve them all.

Remember, you don't always get things in the first attempt. The second and third may

prove to be futile too. The qualities of practice and persistence will take you a long way.

Tip: Release the fear of failure.

VIRGO: Being in a position of authority comes with its own disadvantages. There is a constant need to be seen and excel at everything, which in turn makes us say yes to every task thrown our way. It is high time you learned to wield the power of saying 'no', Virgo. You don't want to bite off more than you can chew.

Tip: Learn to wield the power of saying 'no'.

LIBRA: Not everything that is being offered to you is to your benefit. Make a conscious effort to separate the wheat from the chaff as the 'admirers' convince you to do something you're not quite ready for. Discretion is the need of the hour. Lack of focus could also pose as a challenge for some. Ground your energy, Libra. Take ten minutes to stabilise yourself every morning.

Tip: Discretion is the need of the hour.

SCORPIO: Think of each team member as a piece of the puzzle. Realise how integral they are to the growth of the organisation,

and respect what they bring to the table. Create an environment that fosters growth, Scorpio.

Tip: Let teamwork become the secret to your success.

SAGITTARIUS: It's not about calling each other every day or about making grand announcements on social media. It's about showing up when it matters. Be cognisant of those who have been there for you consistently. Perhaps this is your chance to render support. As such, this is a time to strengthen your connection with the soul circle. Make time for both old and new friends today.

Tip: Show up for those who matter.

CAPRICORN: There is a lack of clarity about how things will pan out in the future, which is making you anxious. No hasty decisions, Capricorn. Take your time to do your research. Gather the facts and figures. Turn to a trusted friend or mentor, if need be. This will help you make practical decisions that will serve you in the long run. Once again, the cards are warning you against foes dressed in the garb of friends. Be mindful of who you share sensitive information with.

Tip: Find ways to gain clarity.

AQUARIUS: When was the last time you watched the sunset with your beloved or allowed yourself to be entranced by the flavours of your morning tea? Don't let the length of that to-do list keep you from enjoying simple pleasures. Open your eyes to realise just how much life to offer. Some of you may be on a healing journey at the moment. Continue to address the past wounds and release them with love. Express gratitude for the experiences that made you who you are today.

Tip: Practice mindfulness.

PISCES: Holding onto the past is not serving you well. Be aware of how it is sabotaging your present. Today brings with itself the opportunity to cleanse and purge. Listening to your inner wisdom will alleviate the healing process. Some of you may find yourself struggling with responsibilities. Have you taken on the load of others? Draw healthy boundaries where you need to, lest your body and mind have to bear the brunt of your decisions.

Tip: Let go of the past.

Script for 'Kingsman 3' ready, says Taron Egerton

LOS ANGELES, Oct 15 (PTI): Taron Egerton has revealed the makers have locked a script for the third film in the "Kingsman" franchise.

Fox Studios announced the film last September with Matthew Vaughn returning as writer and director.

Egerton said he always imagined the movies as a trilogy and the new film would be a perfect way to bid adieu to Eggsy, the character he plays in the action spy comedy films.

"That plan, at the moment, is that we'd like to do another one, one more time. It was the role that kind of started my film career so I'm always going to feel, you know, a great fondness for the part.

"I would like to do one more because frankly, I'd like to say goodbye to (Eggsy) in a befitting way and to finish the trilogy. All good things come to an end. It was always imagined as a trilogy and I think it'd be great to finish the story off because I've loved playing the character," the actor told Comic-book.com.

"Kingsman: The Secret Service", which released in 2014, introduced Eggsy (Egerton), a young street-smart ruffian handpicked by agent Harry Hart (Colin Firth) to join a secret academy that would train him to become part of Kingsman, an organisation filled with super suave super spies.

Its sequel, "Kingsman: The Golden Circle", released in 2017.

Vaughn earlier said he is planning to start production on the film later this year, with an expected release date of 2021.

"The King's Man", a spin-off prequel, is slated to hit the screens on February 14, 2020.

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