



## WEST DEO REMINDS BANK OFFICIALS OF POLL GUIDELINES

pg02

## THE INTERNET IS NOW AN ARENA FOR CONFLICT, AND WE'RE ALL CAUGHT UP IN IT

pg04

## KOFFEE WITH KARAN 6: EXPECT EXCITING REVELATIONS FROM UNSEEN FOOTAGE

pg08



# SummitTIMES

Vol 04 | Issue 71 | Gangtok | Thursday | 14 March 2019

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

## SDF candidates list within this week

### SKM-BJP alliance 'unholy' and contradictory: Gyaltsen

**SAGAR CHHETRI  
GANGTOK, 13 MAR:**

Sikkim Democratic Front will be announcing its candidates for the upcoming Assembly and Parliamentary elections in the State within this week. And even as the list is awaited, the party has begun its door-to-door campaigning in all constituencies in the State on a war-footing.

Sikkim Democratic Front spokesperson, KT Gyaltsen, mentioned that under the leadership of the party president Pawan Chamling, SDF has intensified its door-to-door campaign and has also been conducting meetings at ward, block

and other levels in all the constituencies.

The momentum, in fact, had picked up with the party's foundation day celebrations held at the constituency-level this level and which was a grand success, he said.

Meanwhile, Mr Gyaltsen informs that the party will be announcing its candidates within this week and added that careful consideration was being invested in the selection process.

He stated that the draft election manifesto was also ready and will be released soon after the announcement of the party candidates.

"SDF has always

maintained party-people connection so the party has a strong existing bond with the people at the grassroots level. Now, with the election, the party has started its door-to-door campaign to reinforce this connection," he said.

He added that the party will be going to the people with the promise of giving continuity to peace, security and development.

"This election is very significant for SDF to safeguard the identity and existence of Sikkim and its people. We are approaching this election in total interest of the people and future generations of Sikkim," Mr Gyaltsen said.

He urged the party workers to work hard and reach out to people at every polling station to ensure victory by huge margins.

"Our target is to maintain the peace and security and to give continuity to development to make Sikkim a Model State of the world. We will not allow anyone to disturb the peace and security of the State or to spread any hatred and foment communal or religious disturbance," he asserted.

Responding to queries on the SKM-BJP alliance, Mr Gyaltsen has

termed it 'unholy' and 'contradictory' to the political stand of BJP at the national level especially its anti-corruption claim. His reference was clearly to BJP allying with a party being led by a person convicted in a corruption case.

He also contended that the common minimum programme for the alliance was very contradictory.

He pointed out that the demand for protection of the Article 371F shows that SKM had doubts about BJP's stand on this sensitive issue.

As for Limboo-Tamang seat reservation and tribal status of eleven

left-out communities, he mentioned that while these were genuine demands of the people of Sikkim, the SDF government has been sincerely pursuing these with the Centre.

However, the Central government has not fulfilled this constitutional demand of the people and hurt the hopes and aspirations of the Sikkimese. In that sense, the Centre failed to uphold the principle of federal democracy, he said.

"We are very confident that the people of Sikkim will unite and support SDF in the coming elections to ensure the rule of Sikkim by Sikkimese people under the leadership of Pawan Chamling," Mr Gyaltsen said.

## SKM to release manifesto and candidates list soon

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 13 MAR:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has said that its list of candidates for the 2019 elections and party manifesto will be released in a week's time.

In a press release issued today, SKM has said that its election manifesto is on the verge of completion. Campaigning is also on

full swing with party workers at ward level, block level and constituency-level and even CEC members reaching out to different villages across the state.

"This time things are going smoother since the party has been registered and we have the election symbol. Even the organisation of the party is stronger," the release states.

## Sikkim Supreme enters soft drink segment



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 13 MAR:**

Government Fruit Preservation Factory (GFPF) better known as Sikkim Supreme has entered the carbonated soft drinks market with the launch of its orange and lemon flavored soft drink 'Cool Sip', a press release informs.

GFPF Managing Director, Pawan Awasthy informed that the plans for entering the soft drink segment had been conceptualized a year ago in order to give some competition to big brands.

The flavor launched now is orange and lemon since mandarin oranges from Sikkim have a unique taste & flavor, he said further adding that more exciting flavors are in the offing and shall be introduced in the market soon.

Sikkim Supreme has ambitions to market a range of carbonated soft drinks in Sikkim, North Bengal and North Eastern States. It had recently introduced carbonated soda which is already available in the market.

Sikkim Supreme products are currently distributed through its existing distributor network and are available at discounted prices from the factory outlet at Singtam, STDC outlet on MG road and SIM-FED outlet at Siliguri SNT complex.

Regarding introduction of more new products in the near future, the Managing Director informed that trials are being carried out for introduction of dehydrated fruit products and Sikkim Supreme would also like to enter the segment of fruit-based chocolates.

## JAP not to contest; Sajha Manch experiment fails

**SUMMIT REPORT  
KALIMPONG, 13 MAR:**

In a surprise announcement today, Jan Aandolan Party president Dr Harka Bahadur Chettri informed that JAP will not participate in the upcoming Lok Sabha election and will also stay away from the Sajha Manch.

With this move, the attempt for an 'all-party' consensus candidate appear to have fallen through.

The Sajha Manch, comprising of many political parties, was trying to come up with a consensus local candidate, but first CPRM and yesterday GNLF announced plans to field their own candidates even as the final meeting of the Sajha Manch was yet to take place. The meeting was scheduled for 15 March.

Dr Chettri believes that this was a golden opportunity to send a consensus candidate to the Lok Sabha given that Sajha Manch had developed as a strong coalition of 16 parties.

"Unfortunately, CPRM and GNLF declared their candidates while we were trying till yesterday for consensus. This election was not a fight for the MP chair but could have led the way for Gorkha's dignity, political solution, and many other important things, that is why we had made an effort for consensus," he said.

He feels that it is difficult for everybody to come together in politics but went on to advise that parties not to pitch people against people. He also warned that people not to be deceived again.

## Sikkim Progressive Alliance brings four parties together



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 13 MAR:**

Four regional parties of Sikkim have come together to form the Sikkim Progressive Alliance to contest the upcoming assembly and parliamentary elections in the State. The alliance was formed during a meeting of the four regional parties held in the capital today.

The meeting, which was chaired by Sikkim Sangram Parishad pres-

ident and former Lok Sabha MP, Dil Kumari Bhandari, was attended by leaders and representatives from Sikkim Sangram Parishad, Sikkim National People's Party, Sikkim Rajya Manch and Sikkim United Front.

After thorough discussion and deliberation, all four parties decided to contest the upcoming election together under Sikkim Progressive Alliance [SPA]. The meeting has unanimously select-

ed SRM president and Rangang-Yangang MLA, Rup Narayan Chamling as convener, SSP president, DK Bhandari as the chief advisor and SNPP president Delay Namgyal Barfungpa and SUF president Narendra Adhikari as advisors of SPA. SSP general secretary, DB Basnet has been appointed as SPA spokesperson.

It is informed that SPA will soon announce its list of candidates for the election.

## Ramroo Sanitary Cloth Pads offer eco-friendly alternative

**NITESH R PRADHAN  
GANGTOK, 13 MAR:**

North East Rural Livelihood Project Sikkim in collaboration with Eco Femme Tamil Nadu has come up with eco-friendly alternative Sanitary Cloth Pads.

Self Help Groups of NERLP South Sikkim were given training on stitching, production as well as education aspect of the project by partner agency Eco Femme, a social enterprise from Auroville, Tamil Nadu, informs District Project Manager (South), NERLP, Bishal Mukhia.

The project is under Science and Technology Interventions in the North East Region [STINER] Initiative of the Central Government funded by Ministry of DoNER, Government of India conducted and facilitated by Eco Femme, NERLP, South Sikkim and RuTAG, IIT.

The branding, packaging, pricing and quality checking is done by Sikkim Pragatisheel Nari Cooperative Society promoted by NERLP and very soon the product



will hit the markets in Sikkim under the already established brand name "Ramroo" Sanitary Cloth Pads. At present, the production unit is at the office of SPNCS situated at Nandugaon, South Sikkim. Two more production units at Ravangla and Yangang run by SHGs are in the pipeline.

Ramroo Sanitary Cloth pad is not just good

for the environment but also takes into consideration women's reproductive health and comes at a pocket friendly price. It has been used and tested by a number of SHG women in Sikkim and has received a good response. Reusable pads keep a lot of disposable products out of landfills. Hence these Cloth pads are

turn to pg02

## SummitTIMES IN NEPALI

<https://www.facebook.com/SummitTimesSikkim/>

Watch our Nepali news broadcast every evening on  
Facebook at the Summit Times Daily Page.  
Please like, Share, Comment and let us know how we  
can improve.  
Thank You





# Sedup Legseling Monastery committee in need of financial support



**ARPAN PRADHAN**  
**GANGTOK, 13 MAR:**

The Gumpa committee of Sedup Legseling Monastery situated at Roplep Arubotey under Gna-thang-Machong constituency in East Sikkim held a meeting on Tuesday discussed various issues particularly the need for funds to construct basic infrastructure.

The meeting which was held under the chairmanship of the Gumpa Committee president and the Head Monk of the Monastery, Chempo

Sangay Tenzing had the presence of all the members of the Gumpa Committee from around the area.

This monastery was established in the year 2014 with help from people of the area and the Gumpa Committee and Lamas.

The construction of the main building of the monastery was completed with the help of donations from local residents, social workers and others but there is still need to construct other

infrastructure. "We have been able to complete the construction work of only the main building with the help from individuals and social workers but there are many other infrastructures like housing for the monks, drinking water, footpath toward the monastery from the main road, approach road to the monastery, protection wall and many others which could not be taken up due to fund crunch," said Head Monk and president of the Gumpa

Managing Committee, Chempo Sangay Tenzing.

He further informed that an amount of Rs 3 lakh provided by the State Government was used for starting construction of the residential building for monks but it could not be completed as the funds were not enough and the building is still incomplete.

"We are hoping for some financial support from the government and public in order to complete the under

construction building and other infrastructure," he added.

The Gumpa committee has been requesting people for financial support to meet the various necessities of the monastery.

At present the monastery is being run by 12 monks and new monks are being trained and educated there, it is informed.

People belonging to Sherpa, Tamang, Gurung and Bhutia communities reside in the surrounding areas who are actively involved in managing and running the Gumpa at present.

The monastery has been named by Kyabje Chyadal Sangay Rinpoche from Nepal.

The meeting had the participation of members of the committee and others from Roplep, Gangtok, Pakyong, Parakha and surrounding areas. The Gumpa Managing committee has thanked all members for extending their support as well as the state government for the help that has been provided.

## First gall stone operation at new multispecialty hospital

**GANGTOK, 13 MAR (IPR):** First operation for gall stone (3 operations) was successfully conducted today at new STNM Hospital by Dr Passang Phempo. Anesthesia administration

was headed by HOD, Dr Nilima Pradhan and her team. It was a historical day for the new STNM multispecialty hospital, Sochakgang, the Medical Superintendent said.

## School intervention on menstrual hygiene



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 13 MAR:**

Martam-BAC in collaboration with ESS India conducted Awareness Campaign at Martam Sec School and Martam-Yangthang JH School on Menstrual Hygiene, a press release informs.

During the intervention, the team highlighted the reason for the occur-

rence of menstruation in a female, importance of maintaining health and hygiene, an evolution of sanitary products and their impact on health and also on disposal of the sanitary products and managing sanitary waste. Students of both the schools actively participated in the sessions, the release mentions.

### Ramroo Sanitary...

better for environment as well. Reusable Cloth Pads last much longer and stand up to multiple uses.

District Medical Superintendent, Dr Adhikari, Namchi District Hospital also visited the unit on 08 Mar, 2019 to inspect the product produced in the SPNCS Office at Nandugaon, Jorethang Block. The feedback by the doctor has been very positive and a certification from the Health Department is also in the pipeline, it was informed.

SPNCS is a Social Enterprise where business and social responsibility will go hand in hand.

"When you will invest in Ramroo Pads you are doing more than just buying another menstrual product. Our Cloth Pads are stitched by women SHG members enabling them to earn a better living," says Bishal Mukhia.

Furthermore, he adds that the purchases will support our outreach programmes which provide menstrual health education and free and subsidized pad to economically disadvantaged adolescent girls and women.

NERLP has been instrumental in bringing many small scale industries in Sikkim including a cutting tailoring unit at Jorethang and Yangang, handloom unit at Namchi, Food processing unit at Melli, Phenol and soap making unit at Ravangla.

More than 15000 women are members of the Sikkim Pragatisheel Nari cooperative society limited promoted by NERLP.

## 2nd round training for Presiding and Polling Officers in West Sikkim

**GYALSHING, 13 MAR (IPR):**

The third day of the 2nd round training to Presiding and Polling Officers concluded successfully at two venues here – the Zilla Panchayat Bhawan Conference Hall and SDM Office Conference Hall at Soreng today.

The trainings provided theoretical and hands-on practice on EVM and VVPAT sealing, testing, filling of forms, presiding diary and included a video demonstration on working procedures.

The master trainers for the training in Gyalshing were SDM (HQ), Tushar G Nihare, DE Power, KSC Tongden and Senior Wel-



fare Officer, Santosh Alley.

Amir Bhandari gave training for Pollstar application in Gyalshing.

Similarly, for Soreng the Master Trainers were SDM Soreng, Himmat Rai and DCSO West, Dillip Shar-

ma. The training for pollstar application in Soreng was given by US Elections, Sonam palmu Bhutia.

A total of 68 trainees attended the Gyalshing training while 44 were trained in Soreng.

## EC gives go-ahead to GST Council meeting on March 19



**NEW DELHI, MAR 13 (PTI):**

The Election Commission has given approval for holding the upcoming GST Council meeting on March 19 to consider various issues including the implementation of lower GST rates for the real estate sector.

The next meeting will be held through video-conferencing, sources said. Following the approval from the Election Commission, sources said, notices have been sent from the GST Council Secretariat to states for the 34th meeting of the Council on March 19, they said.

The nod from the Election Commission was required as the Model Code of Conduct has been in force since Sunday.

The meeting will be held to discuss only transition provision and related issues for the imple-

mentation of lower GST rates for the real estate sector, the sources said. In the previous meeting, the high-powered GST Council slashed tax rates for under-construction flats to 5 per cent and affordable homes to 1 per cent, effective April 1. Currently, the goods and services tax (GST) is levied at 12 per cent with input tax credit (ITC) on payments made for under-construction property or ready-to-move-in flats where completion certificate is not issued at the time of sale. For affordable housing units, the existing tax rate is 8 per cent.

GST collections in February dropped to Rs 97,247 crore from Rs 1.02 lakh crore in the previous month.

Of this, Central GST was Rs 17,626 crore, State GST (SGST) stood at Rs 24,192 crore, In-

tegrated GST Rs 46,953 crore and cess was Rs 8,476 crore. GST collections in the current fiscal till February totalled Rs 10.70 lakh crore.

The government has lowered the GST collection target for the current fiscal to Rs 11.47 lakh crore in the Revised Estimates, from Rs 13.71 lakh crore budgeted initially.

GST collection stood at Rs 1.03 lakh crore in April, Rs 94,016 crore in May, Rs 95,610 crore in June, Rs 96,483 crore in July, Rs 93,960 crore in August, Rs 94,442 crore in September, Rs 1,00,710 crore in October, Rs 97,637 crore in November, Rs 94,725 crore in December 2018 and Rs 1.02 lakh crore in January 2019.

For the next fiscal 2019-20, the GST collection target has been fixed at Rs 13.71 lakh crore.

# Second round election training for East



**GANGTOK, 13 MAR (IPR):**

In connection with the upcoming General Elections 2019 in East District, the second round of training to the Presiding Officers and 1st Polling Officers was held from 11-13 March at three venues namely the Conference Hall of DAC, Training Hall of Traffic Police and Conference Hall of Zilla Bhawan. The training consisted of three batches per day making it a total of nine batches in the three-day training course.

The Resource Persons for the training were ADC (East), Bharani Kumar, SDM (HQ), Sunil Mothay, SDM (Rangpo), Prem Kamal Rai, SDM

(Pakyong), Tenzing Dorjee Bhutia and DPO (Zilla), Yadav K Sharma.

The Presiding Officers and 1st Polling Officers were informed about their roles and duties, basic functions and workings of the EVM and VVPATs, importance of CRC, errors, basic precautions, commissioning and sealing, Mock poll exercises, commensurate entries in Form 17 C etc.

The District Election Officer/District Collector (East), Kapil Meena also addressed the gathering and emphasized on the responsibilities of the Presiding Officers and Polling Officers. He emphasized that the main objective of the training

is to instill confidence in operating the machines without any fear. He urged all the Polling personnel to perform their duties in a fair manner so as to help in the conduct of free and fair elections.

All statutory functions and responsibilities of both Officers were explained and they were also trained on all reporting formats of poll day. It was also informed that the third and final round of training will be conducted for full polling parties wherein a final briefing will be given to them before the actual day of poll.

The absentee polling personnel would be issued show cause notice, it was informed.



## West DEO reminds bank officials of poll guidelines

**GYALSHING, 13 MAR (IPR):** The DC-cum-DEO, Karma R Bonpo, along with ADC West, Karma L Lepcha, met bank officials of the West District at the DAC conference hall here today.

The DEO directed the banks to facilitate the opening of new bank accounts by various candidates for

election expenditure.

Any suspicious cash deposits or withdrawals of above Rs 1 lakh during the process of elections needs to be monitored, he added.

He directed the banks to follow the guidelines of election commission with regard to banking transactions.

## Many schools in Meghalaya have only two or four students: Minister

**SHILLONG, MAR 13 (PTI):**

Meghalaya Education Minister Lakhmen Rymbui told the Assembly on Wednesday that there are many schools in the state where there are only two or four students.

While the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:30, Rymbui said there are many Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) schools which are functioning with two teachers teaching only two or four students.

"We are in the process to rationalise teachers placement in SSA schools so that resources of the government is not wasted," he said.

In Meghalaya, there are 395 lower primary schools with 808 teachers and 508 upper primary schools with 1874 teachers, he informed.

On the delay of payment of salaries to school teachers, the Minister said the disbursement of salaries take place as and when the funds are



released from the Centre.

The Minister replying to a call attention moved by opposition Congress MLA Mayralborn Syiem on the delay in construction of an SSA lower primary school building at Khlieh Umwang village in Ri Bhoi District said the lower primary school building in the village along the inter-state boundary with Assam was demolished by Assam Police.

He said the incident had taken place in August last year wherein a departmental inquiry was made.

According to the report, some part of the building, which was under construction and sanctioned by the office of the Ri-Bhoi District Mission Coordinator for the year 2017-18 was destroyed by the Assam police.

The minister said the state government is taking the issue seriously and solutions to the problem are being explored so that social and educational developmental works could be implemented for the benefit of the children living in those areas.



# Model Code of Conduct guidelines



## SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 12 MAR [IPR]:**

With the announcement of Schedule for General Election to the 17th Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies including Sikkim, the Model Code of Conduct for guidance for Political parties and Candidates have come into force w.e.f 10 Mar, 2019.

The Chief Secretary of Sikkim held a meeting with all HODs and briefed them on enforcement of Model Code of Conduct and guidelines to be adhered by all Government Department and authorities.

The following instructions have been reiterated through Home Department Circular dated 11 Mar, 2019:

1. Conduct of Government

Servant:-No Government servant shall take part in party politics such as public meetings, campaigns, rallies, etc. and they will act in neutral manner in respect of political party.

2. Use Govt. Vehicles: There is a total ban on use of official vehicles for touring in districts by any political party, candidate or any person connected with election except officials performing election related duty. The ban is applicable to Government vehicles, Public Sector Undertakings, Cooperative

Societies etc.

3. Discretionary Funds: All spending from the discretionary fund is stopped immediately
4. Leave and transfer of government servants: leave of Government servants related to Elections to be avoided. Ban on transfer, appointment or promotion of all employees of government and Public undertakings.
5. The MCC prohibits any party or candidate from making use of any Government accommodation including office premises for the purpose of election propaganda

6. Schemes undertaken for tackling emergencies related to natural disasters should be done after prior approval of Commission.
7. Prohibition of announcement of new projects, programmes, new sanctions and concession of financial grants in any form. No work shall start in respect of which even if the work orders have been issued before the Model Code of Conduct came into effect, if the work has actually not started in the field.

Also instruction has been received for removal of all unauthorized political advertisement, all wall writings, posters, defacement in any other forms on Government property, public property and in public spaces. Further, no advertisement shall be issued in electronic and print media highlighting the achievements of the Government at the cost of public exchequer. All photographs of political functionary from official website have to be removed. Direction has been issued to all concerned departments to furnish a list of work which has already started on the ground and list of fresh work which has not started on the ground for development construction related activities to the office of the CEO/ DEO within 72 hours of date of announcement of the Elections.

## Governor confers Rajya Puraskar to Scouts and Guides



## SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 13 MAR:**

In a special function held at Raj Bhavan on 13 Mar, 2019, the Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad, also the Patron-In-Chief of Bharat Scouts and Guides, Sikkim, conferred 'Rajya Puraskar' to 15 Guides contingents and 07 Scouts contingents from nine different schools spread across three of districts of Sikkim, a press communiqué from Raj Bhavan informs.

The Governor also handed over Leader Trainer Certificate to CK Sapkota and Assistant

Leader Trainer Certificate to Bhim Subba on the occasion. Dr HP Chettri, State Chief Commissioner, Bharat Scouts & Guides, Sikkim, State Secretary and Treasurer of the organisation, Assistant State Training Commissioner of Guides were present on the occasion.

Dr Chettri provided detailed insight into the activities and camps of the Bharat Scouts & Guides in Sikkim, and the competitions for the nomination of Rajya Puraskar.

While addressing the contingents, the Governor

nor urged them to use the training for the service of society and the nation. He also stressed on the organisation's role in grooming the youth to be self-reliant and serve as a platform to motivate and encourage students to aim big in life. The organisation should train the scouts and guides in leadership and selfless service in society, the Governor added.

The awardees will now compete for next year's Rashtrapati Award through National Level Testing Camp, the release mentions.

## SAATHI awareness program on drug addiction



## SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 13 MAR:**

Sikkim Against Addiction Towards Healthy India (SAATHI), a project under the Chief Minister's Youth Empowerment and self-reliant mission, organized an awareness program at Nar Bahadur Bhandari Government college, Tadong here today. The program had the participation of 176 students, a press release informs.

The program commenced with a welcome address by the president of SAATHI, Tempo Bhutia welcoming the participants to the huge SAATHI movement.

Thereafter, Board Member SAATHI, Dr Satyadeep Singh Chettri gave the introduction to participants about the

aims and objectives of SAATHI, the future steps of SAATHI in the college level and highlighting the reality of people getting involved in substance abuse, by following the footsteps of elder one, because of boredom and out of curiosity. He welcomed interested students to join hands with SAATHI to fight against substance abuse in Sikkim.

Psychiatrist [STNM Hospital], Dr Bibhushan Dahal explained the medical aspect of substance abuse.

KC Nima from Freedom Facility discussed cases related to substance abuse starting with his own experience of how he himself was addicted to substances, the problems he went

through and how he overcame it and is now taking care of a rehabilitation center.

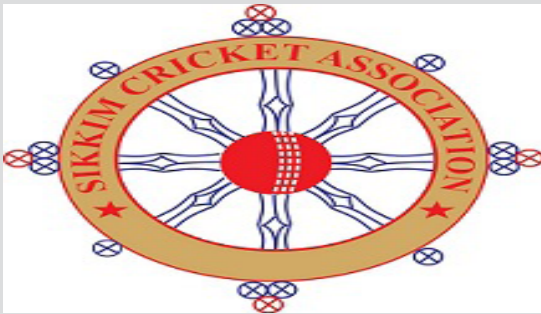
He motivated the participants by saying, "Save lives. To save a life you need not be a doctor".

He also pointed out that drug addiction and alcoholism is a disease which can be cured and this has been mentioned in the Mental Health Act 2017.

According to Mr Nima, the family, society wants to hide this problem of substance abuse but it should be brought to light and addressed.

Principal of Nar Bahadur Bhandari Government College, Bina Pradhan urged the participants to come forward to join hands with SAATHI and help curb the disease of substance abuse.

## SICA to conduct 2nd edition of inter-school tournament



## SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 13 MAR:**

Sikkim Cricket Association (SICA) intends to conduct Second Edition of Inter-School Tournament for Under 16 & 19 Boys and Under 19 Girls, a press release informs.

In 2017, SICA had conducted the first inter-school tournament zone-wise but in 2018 the tournament could not be held due to the participation of SICA in fourteen different National Level Tournaments conducted by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) as a full member.

This year SICA has sent invitations to Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools of Sikkim along with the tournament form and an article "Cricket as a Career". This invitation letter is posted on our Facebook page and our website [www.sikkimcricket.com](http://www.sikkimcricket.com) also.

Any school interested in participation should fill the form and send the scanned copy to our email - [sca@sikkimcricket.com](mailto:sca@sikkimcricket.com). The modalities will be worked out once the response from various schools is received, the release mentions.

The main motive behind this tournament is to promote the sport of cricket in Sikkim and also search new talents from every corner of the state and work on grooming these talents from the grass-root level and prepare individuals for national level tournaments of various categories.

## KUTSE SHEGU

The 21 day Shegu of Lt. Sachin Tamang who left for heavenly abode on 25th February 2019 falls on 17th March 2019 (Sunday).

All relatives, family, friends and well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence Barbotey, Tamang Gaon, Soreng, West Sikkim. We also express our sincere gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement.



**Mrs. Binu Subba (wife) 9647892791**  
**Ms. Jaikala Tamang, Ms. Sujata Tamang, Ms. Sweta Tamang (sisters)**  
**Mr. Rajen Tamang (brother)**  
**6297875142, 9734142686,**  
**8670576733, 9593388722**

## PAYING GUEST AVAILABLE

PG available for working women & girls at EPCS Church premises, near Primula Lodge at Churuch Road, Gangtok, Sikkim. Contact: Mob: 9064804782/ Whatsapp No: 9641549764.

### MCC IS IN EFFECT

## WHAT IS MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT?

Model Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for the conduct of political parties and candidates during elections. The Model Code of Conduct comes into force immediately with the announcement of the election schedule by the Commission for ensuring free and fair elections.

Visit the website: [eci.gov.in](http://eci.gov.in)

## FAQ

### EVM with VVPAT Unit

**Q2 When the EVM was first introduced in elections?**

**Ans. EVMS were first used in 70-Parur Assembly Constituency of Kerala in the year 1982.**

**Q3. How can EVMs be used in areas where there is no electricity?**

**CALL 1950 FOR ANY ELECTION RELATED QUERIES**

Contact Hours : 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM

[www.summittimes.com](http://www.summittimes.com) |  
[news@summittimes.com](mailto:news@summittimes.com) |  
[advertise@summittimes.com](mailto:advertise@summittimes.com)



## Curtailing Corruption

*Read, notice, realize and demand accountability*

In the year 2017, the Legislative Assembly was informed that a total of 515 corruption cases had been registered by the Vigilance Police in Sikkim in the past 23 years. This works out to an average of around 22 Vigilance “cases” every year. That works out to two per month with a December off. But averages can be misleading and it would be more interesting to also find out how these cases are spread out over the years, when they record a slump or when they surge. Meanwhile, something like 259 government servants and 256 private citizens have been implicated in these cases and chargesheets have been drawn up in 183 instances.

This is quite a number. But has it had any effect on corruption?

Corruption cannot be tackled by government agencies instituted directly to combat this problem, the noise about CBI in Sikkim is thus just that, noise. After all, these agencies, whether the CBI or the Vigilance, with their charter to investigate corruption, become convenient weapons of mass political destruction. In the hands of politicians, as we see often with CBI and many would claim even with Vigilance, this arsenal gets aimed at reputations and does not target the faulty system itself. The system, after all, outlives reputations and political dynasties and everyone in the political rat-race will want the system sustained in its murky existence so that it can be oiled to serve their needs when they command it. This explains why such agencies make raids, file FIRs and draw up chargesheets into major media events, but downplay the actual trial and verdicts or even the processing of such cases.

Even when earnestly implemented and enforced without bias, this approach addresses only one end of the corruption chain. A more effective option would be for those who feed this monster to decide otherwise. Corruption would get automatically contained. But that is easier said than done and would require a ground swell of civil activism, even the tremors of which not yet in the making; at least not in Sikkim yet.

Does that mean that corruption cannot be contained? What would life be without some optimism? Of course corruption can be contained; by deploying guerrilla tactics that seem to serve every de-prioritised issue so well. Instead of knocking on doors of anti-corruption agencies, the people should start studying documents produced by the non-aggressive arms of the executive like the CAG reports and the even the annual reports of respective departments with more interest. These documents encapsulate findings and claims and each links up with accountability. It is because people continue to ignore the importance of fixing accountability and demanding it that the system continues to corrode. The voters have to demand of their elected representatives to hold departments and its officials accountable. The leaders need votes and if the voters lay the condition of accountability in exchange for support, then their representatives will deliver them accountability. Once the message gets through that transgressions in handling of public accounts will no longer be excused with merely “don’t do it again” advise, things will start falling into line. Corruption would have been curtailed to a significant extent.

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

# The internet is now an arena for conflict, and we’re all caught up in it

**TOM SEAR**  
*theconversation.com*

Most people think the internet operates as a kind of global public square. In reality, it’s become a divided arena where conflict between nation states plays out.

Nation states run covert operations on the same platforms we use to post cat videos and exchange gossip. And if we’re not aware of it, we could be unwittingly used as pawns for the wrong side.

How did we get here? It’s complicated, but let’s walk through some of the main elements.

## THE AGE OF ENTANGLEMENT

On the one hand, we have an information landscape dominated by Western culture and huge multi-national internet platforms run by private companies, such as Google and Facebook. On the other, there are authoritarian regimes such as China, Iran, Turkey and Russia exercising tight control over the internet traffic flowing in and out of their countries.

We are seeing more cyber intrusions into nation state networks, such as the recent hack of the Australian parliamentary network. At the same time, information and influence operations conducted by countries such as Russia and China are flowing through social media into our increasingly shared digital societies.

The result is a global ecosystem perpetually close to the threshold of war.

Because nations use the internet both to assert power and to conduct trade, there are incentives for authoritarian powers to keep their internet traffic open. You can’t maintain rigid digital borders and assert cyberpower influence at the same time, so nations have to “cooperate to compete”.

This is becoming known as “entanglement” – and it affects us all.

## DATA FLOWS IN ONE DIRECTION

Authoritarian societies such as China, Russia and Iran aim to create their own separate digital ecosystems where the government can control internet traffic that flows in and out of the country.

The Chinese Communist Party is well known for maintaining a supposedly secure Chinese internet via what is known in the West as the “Great Firewall”. This is a system that can block international internet traffic from entering China according to the whim of the government.

For the majority of the 802 million people online in China, many of the apps we use to produce and share information are not accessible. Google, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter are blocked. Instead, people in China use apps created by Chinese technology companies, such as Tencent, Alibaba and Baidu.

Traffic within this ecosystem is monitored and censored in the most sophisticated and comprehensive surveillance state in the world. In 2018, for example, Peppa Pig was banned and the People’s Daily referred to her as a “gangster” after she became iconic of rebelliousness in Chinese youth culture.

## COMPLETE BLOCKING OF DATA IS IMPOSSIBLE

A key objective of this firewall is to shield Chinese society and politics from external influence, while enabling internal surveillance of the Chinese population.

But the firewall is not technologically independent of the West – its development has been reliant upon US corporations to supply the software, hardware innovation and training to ensure the system functions. And since the internet is an arena where nations compete for economic advantage, it’s not in the interest of either side to destroy cyberspace entirely.

As cyber security expert Greg Austin has observed, the foundations of China’s cyber defences remain

weak. There are technical ways to get around the firewall, and Chinese internet users exploit Mandarin homophones and emoji to evade internal censors.

Chinese economic and financial entanglement with the West means complete blocking of data is impossible. Consistent incentives to openness remain. China and the United States are therefore engaged in what Canadian scholar of digital media and global affairs Jon R Lindsay describes as:

“chronic and ambiguous intelligence-counter intelligence contests across their networks, even as the internet facilitates productive exchange between them.”

That is, a tension exists because they are covertly working against each other on exactly the same digital platforms necessary to promote their individual and mutual interests in areas such as trade, manufacturing, communications and regulation.

Since Russia is less dependent upon the information technology services of the United States and is therefore less entangled than China, it is more able to engage in bilateral negotiation and aggression.

## DIFFERENT STYLES OF INFLUENCE

If the internet has become a contest between nation states, one way of winning is to appear to comply with the letter of the law, while abusing its spirit.

In the West, a network of private corporations, including Twitter, Google and Facebook, facilitate an internet system where information and commerce flow freely. Since the West remains open, while powers such as Russia and China exercise control over internet traffic, this creates an imbalance that can be exploited.

Influence operations conducted by China and Russia in countries such as Australia exist within this larger context. And they are being carried out in the digital arena on a scale never before experienced. In the words of the latest US Intelligence Community Worldwide Threat Assessment:

“Our adversaries and strategic competitors [...] are now becoming more adept at using social media to alter how we think, behave and decide.”

The internet is a vast infrastructure of tools that can be used to strategically manipulate behaviour for specific tactical gain, and each nation has its own style of influence.

I have previously written about attempts by China and Russia to influence Australian politics via social media, showing how each nation state utilises different tactics.

China takes a subtle approach, reflecting a long term strategy. It seeks to connect with the Chinese diaspora in a target country, and shape opinion in a manner favourable to the Chinese Communist Party. This is often as much as about ensuring some things aren’t said as it is about shaping what is.

Russia, on the other hand, has used more obvious tactics to infiltrate and disrupt Australian political discourse on social media, exploiting Islamophobia – and the divide between left and right – to undermine social cohesion. This reflects Russia’s primary aim to destabilise the civic culture of the target population.

But there are some similarities between the two approaches, reflecting a growing cooperation between them. As the US Intelligence Community points out:

“China and Russia are more aligned than at any point since the mid-1950s.”

## A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN RUSSIA AND CHINA

The strategic origins of these shared approaches go back to the early internet itself. The Russian idea of hybrid warfare – also known as the Gerasimov Doctrine – uses information campaigns to undermine a society as part of a wider strategy.

But this concept first originated in the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA). In 1999, Chinese PLA colonels

penned a strategy titled Unrestricted Warfare, which outlined how to use media, government, pretty much everything, in the target country not as a tool, but as a weapon.

It recommended not just cyber attacks, but also fake news campaigns – and was the basis for information campaigns that became famous during the 2016 US presidential election.

In June 2016, Russia and China signed a joint declaration on the internet, affirming their shared objectives. In December 2016, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed off on a new Doctrine of Information Security, which establishes how Russia will defend its own population against influence operations.

Observers noted the striking similarity between the Russian document and Chinese internet law.

Russia and China also share a view of the global management of the internet, pursued via the United Nations:

“[...] more regulations to clarify how international law applies to cyberspace, with the aim of exercising more sovereignty – and state control – over the internet.”

The recent “sovereign internet” bill introduced to the Russian Parliament proposes a Domain Name System (DNS) independent of the wider internet infrastructure.

If the internet is now a site of proxy war, such so-called “balkanization” challenges the dominance of the United States.

Nations are competing for influence, leverage and advantage to secure their own interests. Russia and China don’t want to risk an all out war, and so competition is pursued at a level just below armed conflict.

Technology, especially the internet, has brought this competition to us all.

## WE’RE ENTERING TURBULENT WATERS

Despite its best efforts, China’s leaders remain concerned that the digital border between it and the rest of the world is too porous.

In June 2009, Google was blocked in China. In 2011, Fang Binxing, one of the main designers of the Great Firewall expressed concern Google was still potentially accessible in China, saying:

“It’s like the relationship between riverbed and water. Water has no nationality, but riverbeds are sovereign territories, we cannot allow polluted water from other nation states to enter our country.”

The water metaphor was deliberate. Water flows and maritime domains define sovereign borders. And water flows are a good analogy for data flows. The internet has pitched democratic politics into the fluid dynamics of turbulence, where algorithms shape attention, tiny clicks measure participation, and personal data is valuable and apt to be manipulated.

While other nations grapple with the best mix of containment, control and openness, ensuring Australia’s democracy remains robust is the best defence. We need to keep an eye on the nature of the political discussion online, which requires a coordinated approach between the government and private sector, defence and security agencies, and an educated public.

The strategies of information warfare we hear so much about these days were conceived in the 1990s – an era when “surfing the web” seemed as refreshing as a dip at your favourite beach. Our immersion in the subsequent waves of the web seem more threatening, but perhaps we can draw upon our cultural traditions to influence Australian society.

As the rip currents of global internet influence operations grow more prevalent, making web surfing more dangerous, Australia would be wise to mark out a safe place to swim between the flags. Successful protection from influence will need many eyes watching from the beach.

*[the writer is Industry Fellow, UNSW Canberra Cyber, Australian Defence Force Academy, UNSW]*

# Developing countries are bad at collecting taxes. What can help

**ROBERTO RICCIUTI, ANTONIO SAVOIA & KUNAL SEN**  
*theconversation.com*

The ability to raise revenues from taxes – called “fiscal capacity” – is a crucial aspect for the functioning of any state. Being able to tax citizens, and collect it efficiently, is a cornerstone of state formation and survival. Secondly, greater fiscal capacity implies greater access of the state to resources needed to provide public goods.

Developing countries are only able to raise a small share of taxes. Typically they collect only between 10% to 20% of GDP. The average in high-income countries is double this at 40%.

These low rates are the consequence of many problems. First, the large size of the informal economy. Second, a lack of investment in tax collection – most developing countries rely on sales taxes, which are easier to administer than personal taxes, but entail lower revenues.

Low tax collection rates have devastating consequences on development. They mean that governments aren’t able to invest in public goods such as health, infrastructure and education. Even the sustainable development goals, which aim, among other things, to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels have set mobilising revenues as a goal on its own.

In our paper on taxation in developing economies we focus on the question: why do they tax so little? We focus particularly on the role of the state in creating an environment conducive to collecting taxes. And we also try to offer some solutions.

We posit that political systems that place strong constraints on executive power would be more likely to lead to taxation systems that have a higher degree of accountability and transparency than heavy handed measures to enforce compliance.

## BASIC RELATIONSHIPS

We lay out some basic relationships

about how tax revenue as a share of GDP varies with per capita income and with the breadth of a country’s tax base. We then sketch a baseline model of what determines a country’s tax revenue as a share of GDP.

We begin with factors related to the economic structure of economies. But we argue that there’s also an important role for political factors, such as weak institutions, fragmented politics, and a lack of transparency due to weak news



media. In addition, sociological and cultural factors — such as a weak sense of national identity and a poor norm for compliance — can stifle the collection of tax revenue.

In each case, we suggest the need for a dynamic approach that encompasses the two-way interactions between political, social and cultural factors and the economy.

There’s no single answer to fixing a state’s ability to collect taxes. The reasons for not being able to do so efficiently depends on a number of factors. These include historical ones, such as internal or external conflicts, and political factors, such as weak institutions or a weak sense of national identity. And finally, economic factors like a country’s dependence on natural resources. **WHY CONTROLLING THE EXECUTIVE MATTERS** Holding executives to account mat-

ters for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it means that citizens can control and limit the executive’s access to resources. Citizens can also demand greater accountability from the state about what happens to the taxes they pay.

Greater constraints on the executive can also make a country’s tax system more transparent. Our findings, based on 47 countries, suggests that greater transparency and accountability may in fact be

more important in raising tax revenues than measures that only focus on coercing people into paying their taxes. This effect is sizeable. We found that there were significant improvements when constraints were put on the executive. For example, over nine years there was a 2.4% increase in total revenues and income tax revenues as shares of GDP.

One country we looked at was Tanzania. An inability to hold the executive to account, plus lack of transparency, seem to be the main drivers behind the country’s budgetary problems. Its tax collection rate is a mere 12.8%.

In March 2018 the Controller and Auditor General, Mussa Assad, presented his annual audit report for the 2016/2017 financial year. This showed that state institutions had diverted trillions of shillings into

ghost ventures. In particular, there was an unexplained mismatch between the collected revenue of TSh 25.3 trillion (US\$10.88 billion) and the TSh 23.8 trillion (US\$10.24 billion) government expenditure.

The Public Accounts Committee submitted a report in early February 2019 claiming:

“Our verification was limited by lack of supporting documents and adequate explanations from management (of the Ministry of Finance), which were necessary for ascertaining the accuracy and validity of amounts to be verified. For example, the Ministry was unable to provide documents such as the proper cash book for the consolidated funds and bank reconciliation statements that provide crucial underlying information for the figures under verification. The provided information was scattered in numerous sections and were subjected to frequent adjustments in the course of verification.”

This quote highlights two issues. First, Tanzania has a significant mismatch between planned and actual revenue and expenses, and it is unable to keep a record of its transactions. Second, public bodies are unwilling to share information with the public. Nor are they willing to be held accountable.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Building a fiscally capable state won’t bring benefits in the short term. Changing institutions takes time, and changes in the law don’t immediately translate into changes in behaviour. But it’s nevertheless key to consolidating working political institutions, providing strong checks and balances on the discretionary power of the executive and building confidence among taxpayers.

*[Roberto Ricciuti is Associate Professor of Economic Policy, University of Verona; Antonio Savoia is Senior Lecturer in Development Economics, University of Manchester; Kunal Sen is Professor of Development Economics & Policy, University of Manchester]*



# 116 additional I-T officers deployed in poll-bound NE states

**ITANAGAR, MAR 13 (PTI):** The Income Tax department has deployed 116 additional officials across seven North-eastern states to monitor election expenditure of candidates and flow of black money during the Lok Sabha poll process, official sources said Wednesday.

The Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax of North East Region (NER), Kavita Jha, has deputed the additional manpower of 116 I-T officers and inspectors to the Directorate of Income Tax (Investigation).

These 116 officials would join the existing 41 posted in 112 districts of the region.

The NER investigation wing on Tuesday issued orders for deployment of the 157 officials who will spread over seven states - Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, the sources said.

Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) of these states have been officially intimated about the deployment. "The deploy-



ment is under directions of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) in a bid to throttle the flow of black money to influence elections," a source said.

Lok Sabha elections would be held in various

phases in these seven states beginning April 11. Of the states, Arunachal Pradesh would also go for simultaneous Assembly polls on that day.

The IT sleuths would monitor movement of large sum of cash or other items suspected to be

used for bribing voters and conduct independent enquiry following information or complaint against any person.

They would also verify affidavits declaring assets and liabilities filed by the candidates besides their election

related expenses.

"Banks are also required to pass on information about withdrawal of more than Rs 10 lakh to the nodal officer of the Directorate, Subhrajyoti Bhattacharjee, additional director of Income Tax (Investigation), NER," the source said.

The Directorate has also activated Air Intelligence Units at all airports in the North-east and would monitor movement of cash or valuables.

State authorities and police are also required to report movement of suspicious cash to the I-T authorities.

Principal Director of Income Tax (Investigation) for NER, Sanjay Bahadur has issued instructions for heightened surveillance and intelligence gathering during elections.

Meanwhile, the police seized Rs 15.6 lakh in cash from three places - Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli - in Capital Complex Tuesday night, Capital Superintendent of Police Tumme Amo said Wednesday.

## C Lalrosanga Mizo National Front Lok Sabha candidate



**AIZAWL, MAR 13 (PTI):** The ruling Mizo National Front (MNF) Wednesday announced that C Lalrosanga, a former Director General of Doordarshan, would be the party's official candidate for the lone Lok Sabha seat in Mizoram.

Chief Minister and MNF president Zoramthanga announcing the name of Lalrosanga also said that the MNF would not have alliance with any party and would contest the Lok Sabha polls alone.

Lalrosanga is a former Indian Broadcasting Programme Service (IBPS) office and he re-

tired as Director General of Doordarshan.

Zoramthanga also announced that Zodintluanga, a former student leader would be the party's candidate for the byelection to the Aizawl West-I seat, which would be held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls.

The MNF president said the party would have no truck with the BJP or any other political party and would contest the polls alone.

Meanwhile, the BJP state unit president Prof John V Hluna announced that the saffron party would contest both the election to the lone

Lok Sabha seat and also the bypoll to the Aizawl West-I Assembly constituency. The National People's Party (NPP), which is also a constituent of the NEDA and the People's Representation for Identity and Status of Mizoram (PRISM) party had also announced their intention to contest the polls without forming any alliance.

The opposition Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) and the Congress party have decided to forge an electoral alliance for the parliamentary polls and also the Assembly bypoll by fielding common candidates.

## SC pulls up Assam govt over inadequate functioning of foreigners tribunal

**NEW DELHI, MAR 13 (PTI):** The Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the Assam government over inadequacies in the functioning of foreigners tribunals in the state and sought details on it by March 27. The government told a bench, headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, that 50,000 migrants were declared foreigners by the tribunal in the past 10 years.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Assam government, said around 900 people were kept in six detention centres of the state.

The bench, which also comprised Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna, said the state government would have to specify through an affidavit whether the foreigners tribunals functioning in the state were adequate and how they were functioning. The top court, however, added that it was not insisting on the presence of Assam chief secretary in the court at present.

The apex court was hearing a PIL filed by activist Harsh Mander through advocate Prashant Bhushan on the plight of foreigners in detention centres. The plea alleges that they were kept in detention indefinitely just because they were not Indians and were treated as "illegal aliens".

During the previous hearing, the court had expressed concern over thousands of illegal migrants being kept in detention centres for years in Assam without being repatriated or deported to their countries of origin. It had raised several issues connected with the detention centre and said the detainees could not be held for an indefinite period.

## Declare West Bengal 'super sensitive' state: BJP to EC



**NEW DELHI, MAR 13 (PTI):** The BJP Wednesday urged the Election Commission to declare West Bengal "super sensitive state" to ensure fair Lok Sabha polls and demanded that central forces be deployed at all polling stations in the state.

A BJP delegation, including Union ministers Ravi Shankar Prasad, Nirmala Sitharaman, J P Nadda and party's general secretaries Bhupender Yadav and Kailash Vijayvargiya, met top officials of the poll body and apprised them of their demands.

Briefing the media after the meeting, Prasad said, "We have requested the Election Commission

that the state of West Bengal should be declared as super-sensitive. And have also demanded that central forces should be deployed at all polling booths in the state."

He said the party has also requested the poll panel to transfer those police officers whose electoral impartiality is questionable as well as the withdrawal of former Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar from election duty.

Bhupender Yadav said the delegation brought to the EC's notice incidents wherein the state bureaucracy has become "completely subservient" to the TMC,

negating the "very doctrine of impartiality and fairness".

"The commission was apprised of the fact that General Elections 2014 & Assembly Elections 2016 reveal a pattern of intimidation, fear and violence, negating the very essentials of free and fair elections. (BJP) Urged EC for a fair environment for peaceful conduct of Lok Sabha polls," he tweeted.

The BJP is trying to make inroads into TMC's bastion state (West Bengal) which has 42 Lok Sabha seats. In 2014, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) won 34 seats, the Congress four, while the BJP and CPI(M) bagged

two seats each in the state. The state assumes importance for the saffron party as it aims to win a sizeable number of seats there.

The BJP delegation also alleged that Congress chief Rahul Gandhi broke the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and complained to the poll panel regarding the same.

"The party has requested the Election Commission to take action against Rahul Gandhi for levelling unverified allegations against the prime minister yesterday in Ahmedabad, where the model code of conduct is already in effect," Prasad said.

## Centre trying to levy income tax from ST people: Lalduhoma

**AIZAWL, MAR 13 (PTI):** Opposition Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) legislature party leader Lalduhoma Wednesday alleged in the Mizoram Assembly that the BJP-led government at the Centre was trying to levy income tax from Schedule Tribe people in the state.

Moving a Calling Attention Motion during Zero Hour Lalduhoma said Scheduled Tribe people were exempted from paying income tax under section 10 (26) of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

"The Ministry of Finance recently issued a notification instructing the public sector banks to collect 10 per cent of annual interest from Rs 10,000 or above," he said.

He said anyone who



wants to have Income Tax exemption certificate would have to go to Silchar in neighbouring Assam, the nearest Income Tax department office, about 150 km from Aizawl.

Accusing the BJP-led government of trying to remove concessions and

privileges of the tribal people, he urged the state government to take immediate action on this.

Replying to the statement made by Lalduhoma, Chief Minister Zoramthanga said the state government would make enquiries and then take appropriate action.

## Rose Valley investors can approach asset disposal committee for refund: Official

**KOLKATA, MAR 13 (PTI):** The Enforcement Directorate (ED), probing into the multi-crore Rose Valley ponzi scam case, has urged the duped investors to approach the asset disposal committee appointed by the Calcutta High Court to recover their dues.

According to an ED official, the investors, who were promised high returns on their investments by the ponzi firm, are free to approach the committee which was set up following a high court sug-

gestion in 2015. "In the Rose Valley ponzi scam case, so far the ED has attached properties worth Rs 4,600 crore," an ED official, who did not wish to be named, told PTI.

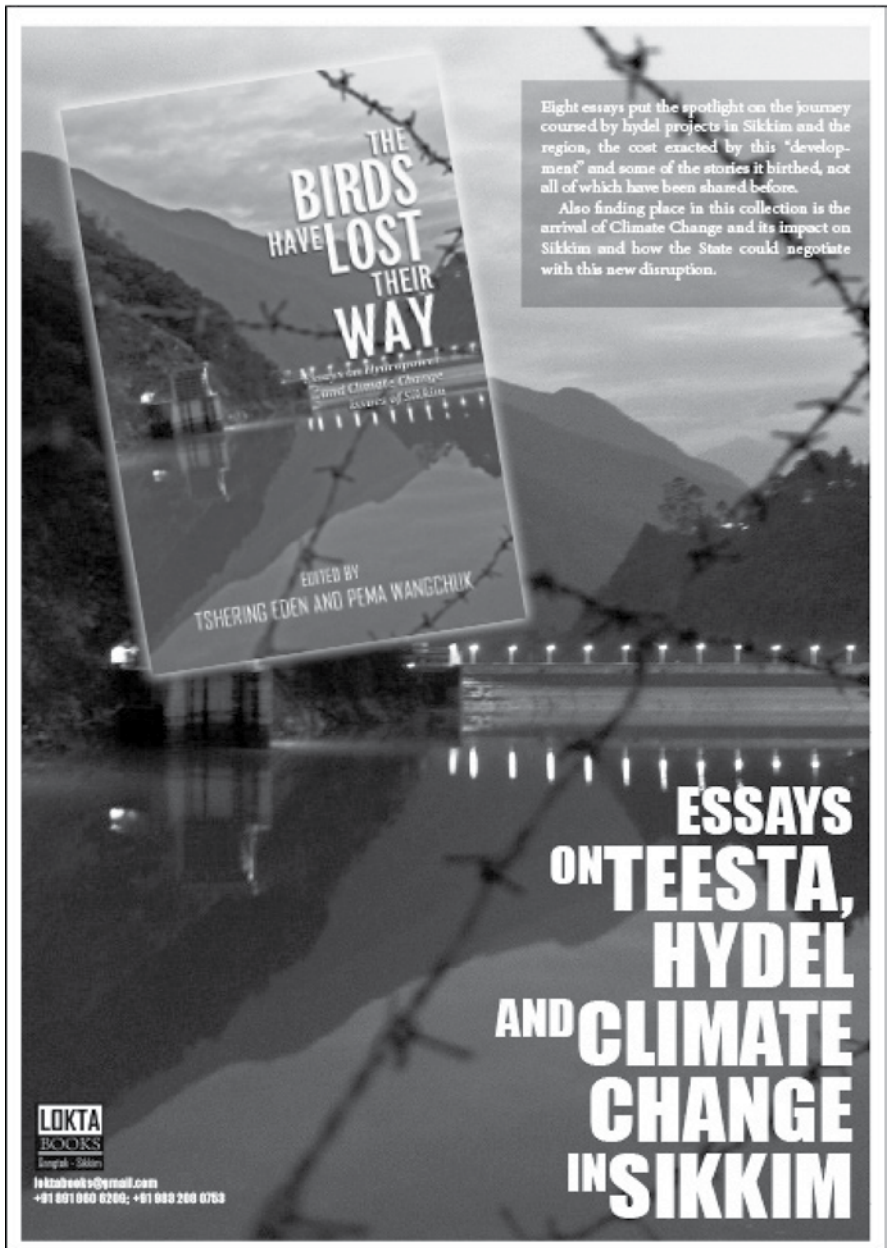
The enforcement agency attached Rese Valley properties worth Rs 2,300 crore in one go, including two dozen hotels and resorts, which till date is the single largest attachment in the case.

The assets are to be sold off via public auction and the proceeds would be used to repay the inves-

tors. The ED had registered an FIR against the firm, its Chairman Gautam Kundu and others in 2014 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Kundu was arrested by the agency in Kolkata in 2015.

Multiple charge sheets have been filed in the courts in Kolkata and Bhubaneswar by the ED in the case. The group had allegedly floated a total of 27 companies to run the chit fund operations, of which only 6 were active.





# Dipa eyes Olympic berth with strong performances

**NEW DELHI, MAR 13 (PTI):** India's Dipa Kar-makar will look to secure an Olympic berth with "some good performances" at back-to-back Artistic Gymnastics World Cups in Baku and Doha, beginning Thursday.

Dipa had claimed a bronze at the vault event of the Artistic Gymnas-tics World Cup in Cott-bus, Germany in No-vember 2018, to make a strong bid for her Olym-pic qualification.

It was Dipa's first appearance after recov-ering from a knee strain, which had spoilt her chances at the Jakarta Asian Games, where she missed the vault final and also had to pull out of the team event.

However, she recov-ered in time to secure a third-spot finish at Cott-bus, keeping alive her chances of Olympic qual-ification. Although Dipa skipped the World Cup in Melbourne (February 21-24), she is now eye-ing good outings at the two World Cups - Baku (March 14-17) and Doha (March 20-23).

"This time the Olym-



pic qualifications is through several routes including the World Cups. I want to explore all possible routes to in-crease my chances for the 2020 Olympic qual-ifications and my con-fidence has risen after winning a medal at the World Cup in Germany last year," Dipa had said.

"I hope to produce some good performanc-es and progress towards the Olympics," added the gymnast from Agartala, who had vaulted her way to a fourth place finish at

the Rio Olympics.

The two upcoming tournaments are part of an eight-event qualify-ing system for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, under which the gymnasts will make the cut based on the their top three scores.

However, the run-up to the two events was shrouded in uncertainty for Dipa with the Sport Authority Of India (SAI) not clearing the trips even though the Gymnas-tic Federation of India (GFI) had sent her entry to FIG in time. On March

5, SAI cleared her and coach Bisweswar Nandi's trip for the two World Cups and they left for Azerbaijan last Tuesday.

Nandi had made it clear that nothing less than a gold will do for his ward. "To qualify for the Olympics, she will have to win gold in the next 3-4 events of the World Cup she participates in," Nandi had said.

While Dipa will be the only Indian hope at Baku World Cup, the country will also see representa-tives in the men's catego-

ry at Qatar. SAI conduct-ed a selection trial for the men gymnasts on Mon-day here and Karnata-ka's Ujwal Naidu pipped seasoned Ashish Kumar in floor event to grab a berth, while Yogeshwar Singh of SSCB emerged on top in vault to qualify for the Doha event.

Interestingly, GFI had sent the entries of Ash-ish Kumar and Yogesh-war Singh in the men's artistic event in Doha after they showed in-terest to participate in the tournament.

## Ferrari unveil anniversary logo after tobacco ad probe

**MELBOURNE, MARCH 13 (AFP):** Ferrari unveiled a 90th anniversary logo for Formula One's sea-son-opening Australian Grand Prix on Wednes-day after ditching brand-ing by a tobacco giant's subsidiary over a poten-tial breach of cigarette advertising laws.

The Italian team had earlier agreed to remove all references to Mis-sion Winnow, a research subsidiary of tobac-co firm Philip Morris, from their SF90 cars and team uniforms over concerns they could breach Australian laws on tobacco advertising.

The new logo hon-ours the establishment of Scuderia Ferrari in 1929 by Enzo Ferrari and his associates, the team said. Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc will drive for Ferrari this year.

"The name of this

year's car, the SF90, is already a celebration of this anniversary and, on top of that (we have) decided to honour this achievement in an even more evident manner in Melbourne," Ferrari said in a statement.

"Over the Australian Grand Prix weekend, the SF90 livery, the drivers' race suits and some of the team's track equip-ment will bear the logo celebrating 90 years of the Scuderia." Philip Morris last October made a public return to Formula One through its scientific research sub-sidiary Mission Winnow and branded Ferrari cars with the logo.

They were featured on its livery during the Japan Grand Prix, sparking an investi-gation by Australia's communications regu-lator over whether TV

broadcasts of the race breached its ban on to-bacco advertising.

The state government of Victoria, whose capital is Melbourne, was like-wise probing the contro-versial branding.

Philip Morris last week agreed to drop the branding for Australia, but said it continued to believe it "complies with relevant laws related to our activities around the world".

A Scuderia Ferrari spokesman previously told AFP the team ex-pected to return to using the Mission Winnow logo at the Bahrain Grand Prix, the second race of the season, in late March.

Formula One's gov-erning body, the FIA, is opposed to any advertis-ing or sponsoring of cig-arettes or tobacco, as are a number of countries staging races.

## Defeated Djokovic will regroup at the double



**INDIAN WELLS (UNITED STATES), MARCH 13 (AFP):** World number one Novak Djokovic was trying hard to take his shock loss at the ATP Indian Wells Masters in stride on Tuesday, but it wasn't easy. "To be honest, I don't enjoy losing," Djokovic said after falling 6-4, 6-4 to 39th-ranked German Philipp Kohlschreiber in the third round.

Kohlschreiber notched his first ever victory over a number one-ranked player, ending Djokovic's bid for a sixth Indian Wells crown.

"Especially in a tour-nament like this, a tour-nament where I have had plenty of success in

the past ..." Djokovic said. "But it just happens, one of those days." Djokovic, playing his first tourna-ment since lifting his re-cord seventh Australian Open title in January, knew he'd have to work his way back into top form.

He admitted he was nervous in the early go-ing of his 7-6 (7/5), 6-2, win over US qualifier Bjorn Fratangelo in his second-round opener.

Nevertheless, he thought he was poised for a deeper run, some-thing he'll now try to achieve in doubles along-side Italian playing part-ner Fabio Fognini.

Shortly after falling to Kohlschreiber, Djokovic

was headed out for dou-bles, teaming with Fognini for a 7-6 (8/6), 2-6, 10/6 victory over Jean-Julien Rojer and Horia Tecau to reach the semi-finals.

"You just have to deal with it, move on, turn the next page," Djokovic said. "Miami is the next tournament singles-wise for me. "I'm going to try to go all the way here in doubles. I'm really excited about that."

But he'll also be put-ting in some solid singles practice. "Things to work on, without a doubt," Djokovic said. "I'm not at my highest level, but slowly building, and hopefully I'll be able to peak in Miami.

## How Guneet Monga raised money for films: posting online to selling her house

Mumbai, Mar 13 (PTI): The Oscar win for Guneet Monga is nothing but a validation of her years of hard work gone into backing films she be-lieved in by raising mon-ey through social media to selling her only house.

Though she received the Academy Award for her documentary short "Period. End of sentence", Guneet has also been as-sociated with critical-ly-acclaimed films like "The Lunchbox", "Ma-saan" and "Haraamkhor".

"For every film, we have raised money in-dividually. Our process is almost like 'kar guzarne

wala' (passionate). We raised money on Face-book and made 'Ped-dlers' and 'Haraamkhor' under Rs 1.5 crore be-cause one could not get money by raising in tra-ditional manner here.

"One raised mon-ey from France for 'The Lunchbox' and ended up raising some equity here. For 'Monsoon Shootout', I sold my house, the only house I had. It's a bit crazy story," Guneet said.

The producer was speaking at the ongo-ing FICCI Frames 2019 on 'Unapologetically Indian: The new breed of Swadeshi storyteller

of the industry'. Guneet said each project comes with its own challenge and she has learnt a lot over the years. "It's been more than 20 projects in all these years and all of them have been uniquely raised money for, through private investors, studios and crowdfunding.

"You do whatever is needed to tell that story and you see how you can do in the least amount and still sus-tain. Sometimes, it has been very difficult to sustain but those have been my learnings and I have learnt my business through that."

# Ayodhya dispute: Litigants appear before SC-appointed mediation panel

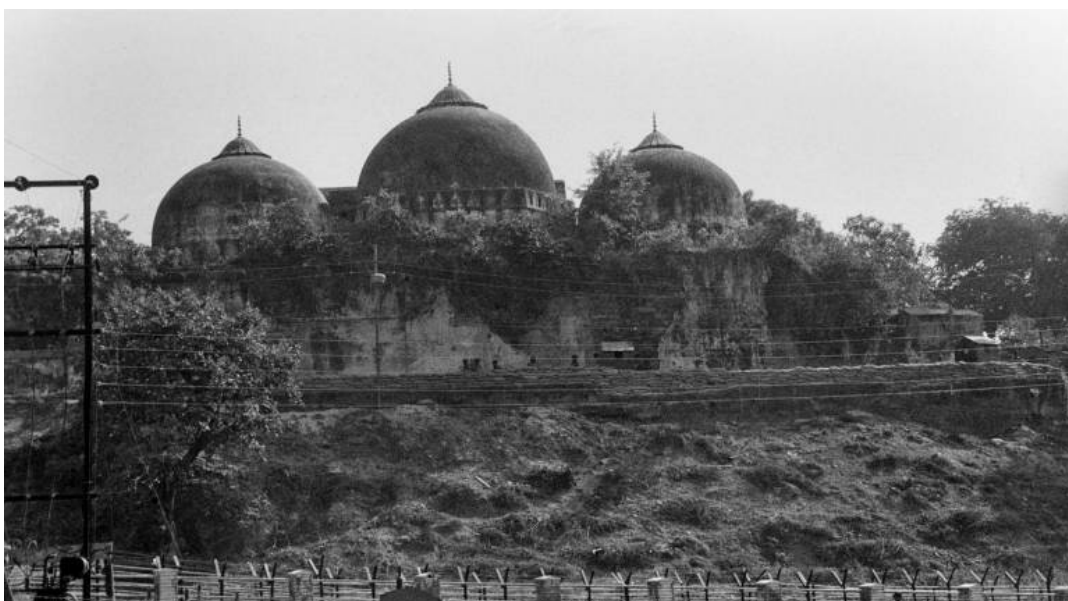
**FAIZABAD (UP), MAR 13 (PTI):** Twenty-five litigants in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land case Wednesday appeared before a Supreme Court-appointed panel as it began an attempt to resolve the dispute through mediation, officials said.

The litigants and their counsels altogether over 50 people met the three-member mediation panel on the Avadh University premises here.

The Supreme Court has given the panel, led by former apex court judge F M I Kaliful-la, eight weeks to explore the possibility of an amicable set-tlement over the disputed site in Ayodhya.

The panel members, who also include spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and senior advocate Sriram Panchu arrived in Faizabad Tuesday and are expected to spend three days here. Uttar Pradesh Advocate General Raghvendra Singh and Additional Advocate General Madan Mohan Pandey also attended the meeting. Swami Avimukteshwaranand of the Ram Janmabhoomi Punruddhar Samiti, said the meeting began at 10 am with over 50 participants.

The discussions were being held in a harmonious manner,



he told PTI. Nirmohi Akhara's Mahant Dinendra Das, Triloki Nath Pandey who is represent-ing Ram Lala Virajman, Mahant Dharam Das appearing for Ram Abhiram Das and Mahant Suresh Das of the Digambar Akhara were among the participants.

Swami Chakrapani and Kamlesh Tiwari appeared at the meeting for the Hindu Ma-hasabha. Litigants Iqbal Ansa-ri, Mohammad Umar and Haji Mahboob attended the meet-ing, where Maulana Ashhad Rashidi represented Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind.

Waseem Rizvi, who heads

the UP Shia Waqf Board, and representatives from the Sunni Waqf Board also participated.

The Faizabad adminis-tration had issued notices to the 25 litigants on behalf of the panel. Authorities said only the participants were being al-lowed to enter the area where the meeting was taking place.

Strict security arrangements have been made on the univer-sity premises, Faizabad District Magistrate Anuj Kumar Jha said. The panel in a letter had direct-ed the Faizabad administration to ensure foolproof security in and around the venue, and also

necessary personal security for the litigants and their law-yers, the authorities said. The Supreme Court is hearing 14 appeals against the 2010 Al-lahabad High Court judgment, delivered in four civil suits, that the 2.77-acre site in Ayodhya be partitioned equally among the three parties -- the Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lala.

In 1992, a right-wing mob demolished the Babri Masjid, which many Hindus believe was built on the spot which marks the birthplace of Lord Rama. While appointing the

## UNSC set to decide on designating JeM chief Masood Azhar as 'global terrorist'; all eyes on China

**YOSHITA SINGH**

**UNITED NATIONS, MAR 13 (PTI):** The fate of the proposal to designate Pa-kistan-based Jaish-e-Mo-hammed's chief Masood Azhar as a "global terror-ist" by the UN Security Council will be known on Wednesday and all eyes are on China, after it blocked the move thrice since 2009. The proposal to designate Azhar under the 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council was moved by France, the UK and the US on Feb-ruary 27, days after the Pulwama terror attack carried out by a suicide bomber belonging to the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) that led to a flare-up in tensions between India and Pakistan.

The Al Qaeda San-c-tions Committee mem-b-ers have 10 working days to raise any objections to the proposal moved by France, the UK and the US. The no-objection period dead-line ends 3 pm local time (New York) Wednesday (12:30am IST Thursday).

The Committee makes its decisions by consensus among its members. China, a veto-wielding permanent member of the Security Council, and an "all-weather ally" of Pakistan, has blocked India's proposal from being adopted by the Sanctions Commit-tee in 2009 and 2016. In 2017, Beijing also blocked a move by the US, the UK and France to designate Azhar as a global terrorist by the UN.

According to the list-ing rules of the Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee, if no objection is received by the end of the no-objec-tion period, the decision will be deemed adopted, meaning that Azhar will become a UN-designated global terrorist. A UNSC designation will subject Azhar to an assets freeze, travel ban and an arms embargo. An assets freeze

under the Sanctions Com-m-tee requires that all states freeze without delay the funds and other fi-nancial assets or econom-ic resources of designated individuals and entities.

The travel ban en-tails preventing the en-try into or transit by all states through their ter-ritories by designated individuals. Under the arms embargo, all states are required to prevent the direct or indirect sup-ply, sale and transfer from their territories or by their nationals outside their territories, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, of arms and related materi-el of all types, spare parts, and technical advice, as-sistance, or training relat-ed to military activities, to designated individuals and entities.

Hectic diplomatic and political parleys have pre-ceded the closely-watched March 13 deadline as New Delhi reached out to member countries of the 15-member UNSC. In the wake of the terror attack in Pulwama, India launched a major diplomatic offensive against Islamabad, holding briefings for envoys of 25 countries, including from the five permanent UNSC members -- the US, China, Russia, the UK and France -- to highlight Pakistan's role in using terrorism as an in-strument of state policy. India also handed over to Pakistan a dossier on "specific details" of involvement of the JeM in the Pulwama terror attack.

Days before the March 13 deadline on Azhar's possible listing, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale met Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Wash-ington. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi said in a statement that Pompeo expressed his "under-standing" of India's con-cerns on cross-border terrorism.



# Environment damage behind 1 in 4 global deaths, disease: UN

**NAIROBI, MAR 13 (AFP):** A quarter of all premature deaths and diseases worldwide are due to man-made pollution and environmental damage, the United Nations said Wednesday in a landmark report on the planet’s parlous state.

Deadly smog-inducing emissions, chemicals polluting drinking water, and the accelerating destruction of ecosystems crucial to the livelihoods of billions of people are driving a worldwide epidemic that hampers the global economy, it warned.

The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) -- a report six years in the making compiled by 250 scientists from 70 nations -- depicts a growing chasm between rich and poor countries as rampant overconsumption, pollution and food waste in the developed world leads to hunger, poverty and disease elsewhere.

As greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise amid a preponderance of droughts, floods and superstorms made worse by climbing sea levels, there is a growing political consensus that climate change poses a future risk to billions.

World leaders in 2015 came up with the Paris climate deal, which saw each nation promise action to cut emissions in a bid to limit global temperature rises to 1.5C (2.7 Fahrenheit). But the health



impacts of pollution, deforestation and the mechanised food-chain are less well understood.

Nor is there any international agreement for the environment close to covering what the Paris accord does for climate.

The GEO compiles a litany of pollution-related health emergencies. It said that poor environmental conditions “cause approximately 25 per cent of global disease and mortality” -- around 9 million

deaths in 2015 alone.

Lacking access to clean drinking supplies, 1.4 million people die each year from preventable diseases such as diarrhoea and parasites linked to pathogen-riddled water and poor sanitation.

Chemicals pumped into the seas cause “potentially multi-generational” adverse health effects, and land degradation through mega-farming and deforestation occurs in areas of Earth home to 3.2

billion people.

The report says air pollution causes 6-7 million early deaths annually. And the way Earth is set, unchecked use of antibiotics in food production will see drug-resistant superbugs become one of the largest causes of premature death by mid-century. “Urgent action at an unprecedented scale is necessary to arrest and reverse this situation,” said a note to policymakers accompanying the report.

“If you have a healthy planet it supports not only global GDP but it also supports the lives of the very poorest because they depend on clean air and clean water,” Joyeeta Gupta, GEO co-chair, told AFP.

“If you turn that around, an unhealthy system has massive damage on human lives.”

The report called for a root-and-branch detoxifying of human behaviour while insisting that the situation is not unassailable.

Food waste for instance, which accounts for 9 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, could be slashed. The world currently throws away a third of all food produced. That figure is fuelled by 56 percent in richer nations going to waste.

“Everyone is saying that by 2050 we have to feed 10 billion people, but that doesn’t mean we have to double production,” Gupta said. “If we reduce our waste and perhaps have less meat you could immediately reduce that problem.” At the same time, she acknowledged, “that would require changes in the way we live.”

The report also called for a rapid drawdown in greenhouse gas emissions and pesticide use to improve air and water quality. “Human behaviour is due to environment. It’s the way we eat. It’s the way we get around, it’s the energy we use

and it’s how we build our homes,” GEO co-chair Paul Ekins said.

The report estimates that global infrastructure will increase by two thirds by 2050.

“The way it is built will determine what kind of world we have,” Ekins said. The GEO draws on hundreds of data sources to calculate the environmental impact on over 100 diseases.

Its unveiling at the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi is likely to add to the debate over who bears the greatest responsibility for the damage already borne by Earth. Sources close to the negotiations told AFP some developed nations, led by the United States, had threatened not to “welcome” the GEO report -- a procedural but nonetheless significant hurdle if nations are to agree on the necessary cuts in waste, overconsumption and pollution.

Gupta said that nations, however big or small, would all have to adapt to the environmental reality facing every human on the planet.

“If you look at land, it’s fixed,” she said. “If the population is going to go up we have to redistribute, one way or the other. “If you look at freshwater, it’s more or less fixed. You have to end up sharing. This is a discourse that many developed countries don’t like.”

## Cardinal George Pell sentenced to six years in prison in Australia for child sex abuse



**NATASHA CHAKU MELBOURNE, MAR 13 (PTI):**

Cardinal George Pell, the most senior Vatican official to be convicted of sex abuse to date, has been sentenced to six years in prison by an Australian court for the “calculus” assault of two choirboys in the late 1990s.

A former senior adviser to Pope Francis, Pell, 77, was found guilty by a jury in December last year.

The County Court Chief Judge Peter Kidd, while delivering the sentence, described Pell’s abuse of two choirboys in the sacristy at St Patrick’s Cathedral in Melbourne as “a brazen and forcible sexual attack on the victims”.

“There was a clear relationship of trust with the victims and you breached that trust and abused your position to facilitate this offending,” the chief judge said.

“The brazenness of your conduct is indicative of your sense of authority and power in relation to the victims,” he said.

The chief judge said Pell’s abuse had had a “significant and long-lasting impact” on the wellbeing of one of his victims, whom he

referred to as J.

The chief judge said he did not have the benefit of a victim impact statement from his other victim, referred to as R, who died of a heroin overdose in 2014 and never reported the abuse.

“However on the basis of J’s account at trial I am able to say your offending must have had an immediate and significant impact on R,” Kidd said.

“Whilst it is not possible for me to quantify the harm caused, or articulate precisely how it impacted on R in the long run, I have no doubt that it did in some way.”

Pell will serve a minimum of three years and eight months in jail before he will be eligible for parole. “I will impose a shorter non-parole period than I otherwise would have been inclined to impose in recognition in particular of your age, so as to increase the prospect of you living out the last part of your life in the community,” the chief judge said.

Outside the court, survivors of Catholic sex abuse who had attended the hearing were divided on the sentence. Some

felt it was too light, while others were happy to see justice being done. “I would have been happy with one month, one week,” one said.

In a statement after the sentencing, the surviving victim said it was hard for him “to take comfort in this outcome.”

“There is no rest for me,” he said through his lawyer, Vivian Waller. “I’m doing my best to hold myself and my family together.”

Until last month Pell held the role of Vatican treasurer, considered by many to be the third most senior position within the Roman Catholic church.

Pell’s legal team has previously announced it will appeal his conviction on three grounds, including that the jury’s verdict on all five charges was unreasonable, based on the evidence submitted. The Court of Appeal is due to hear submissions in early June.

Reporting of the trial and verdict was suppressed by the court to avoid prejudicing a second trial, which crown prosecutors abandoned in February after the judge ruled some prosecution evidence couldn’t be submitted.

## UK set for another major Brexit vote to rule out no-deal exit

**ADITI KHANNA**

**LONDON, MAR 13 (PTI):** A day after British Prime Minister Theresa May’s Brexit divorce bill was rejected in a bruising 149-vote defeat, MPs will return to the House of Commons on Wednesday to vote on whether to prevent the UK’s exit from the EU by March 29 without any deal in place.

The latest motion to try and avert a chaotic no-deal Brexit, which would see Britain crash out of the 28-member economic bloc without any transition phase, follows a rejection of May’s withdrawal agreement 391 to 242 despite a final push by her to try and convince hard-Brexiteers that the concessions she had won to the controversial Irish backstop clause would not see the UK tied to the EU rules indefinitely.

Speaking moments after yet another Parliament defeat over Brexit on Tuesday night, May said that MPs would have to decide whether they want to delay Brexit, hold another referendum, or whether they “want to leave with a deal but not this deal”.

She made her own opposition to a no-deal Brexit very clear, warning of potential damage to the Union that leaving without a deal could do. The motion to be voted on Wednesday reads: “This House declines to approve leaving the European Union without a withdrawal agreement and a framework on the future relationship on 29 March.”

In an unusual move aimed at curbing further dissent between the various warring cliques within her own Conservative Party, May announced that her party MPs will be given a free vote on the motion and not be whipped to vote in any specific way by the government. It reflects the deep divisions that linger within her party over the issue. While some hard-Brexiteers such as former Cabinet

minister Boris Johnson are in favour of a no-deal exit, there is unlikely to be a majority for it in Parliament. The Opposition Labour Party has been demanding no-deal be taken off the table for months now.

If no-deal is rejected, MPs will then vote on Thursday on delaying Brexit by extending Article 50 the legal mechanism that takes the UK out of the EU. This would have to be ratified by the EU and the length of extension will become the next focus on both sides.

However, how the EU will react to an extension request remains unclear at this stage, given that it is preparing for its own EU elections towards the end of May. The EU side has expressed dismay at the agreement being rejected by Britain for a second time since the last vote in January and said it would need “a credible justification” before agreeing to any extension.

Unless agreed otherwise, Britain leaving the EU by March 29 remains the default Brexit option by law. With that in mind, the UK government on Wednesday also unveiled plans for trade across borders under such a scenario. As a temporary measure, most imports into the UK would not attract a tariff in the event of a no-deal Brexit, the UK’s Department for International Trade (DIT) announced.

Under a temporary scheme, 87 per cent of imports by value would be eligible for zero-tariff access up from 80 per cent at present. Tariffs would be maintained to protect some industries, including agriculture.

The government also announced it will not introduce any new checks or controls, or require customs declarations for any goods, moving from across the border from Ireland to Northern Ireland if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

## Sri Lankan government divided on UN rights body representation

**COLOMBO, MAR 13 (PTI):** The Sri Lankan Government appeared to be at loggerheads over the country’s representation at the 40th session of the UN Human Rights Commission where a resolution to address the human rights concerns in the island nation will be taken up next week.

Colombo is once again under international pressure to implement fully the measures identified by the UNHRC in 2015 to address human rights concerns after the United Kingdom and Germany on Tuesday tabled a resolution at the UN body in Geneva. The UN rights office calls for international investigations into alleged war crimes and encourages member states to prosecute Sri Lankans suspected of war crimes in accordance with universal jurisdiction principles.

The resolution which Sri Lanka is expected to co-sponsor was also endorsed by Canada, Germany, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. There is a clear division within the government over its representation and the approach as was evident in Parliament on Wednesday.

The leader of the House of Parliament and senior minister Laksh-

man Kiriella probed if President Maithripala Sirisena was sending his own delegation to attend the UNHRC sessions. An announcement from Sirisena said that he was sending his own men as part of the government delegation.

Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who are from different political parties, are at loggerheads over governance. In October last year, Sirisena sacked Wickremesinghe in a move declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The prime minister was later restored after the apex court intervened.

The government has come under fire from the main opposition for agreeing to co-sponsor the resolution. The government’s defence has been that this strategy will prevent international war crimes allegations being continuously levelled against Sri Lankans through strengthened ownership of the implementation process.

Kiriella asked Mahinda Samarasinghe, a Sirisena loyalist who had been named as a member of the team to Geneva, if Sirisena was sending his own men.

Samarasinghe replied that even though

he had pulled out from it, three others representing Sirisena will be attending.

The aim is to show the consensus within the government, Samarasinghe said.

However Sirisena’s public statement made last month on the Geneva resolution said that the president wanted the UNHRC to grant Sri Lanka a reprieve to mind Sri Lanka’s own business without any interference.

Notwithstanding Sirisena’s public statement on rights accountability sought by the UNHRC, the foreign ministry which is under Wickremesinghe’s control reiterated the government’s commitment to implement the UNHRC resolution.

The main Tamil party legislator Tamil National Alliance (TNA) MA Sumanthiran questioned Sirisena’s intentions in sending his own men who are in effect opposition representatives.

The resolution presented in the UNHRC session calls for accountability to alleged human rights violations committed by both government troops and the LTTE during the last phase of the conflict in 2009.







**DOG DAYS!** The Mamma Mia! actress Amanda Seyfried takes her pup Finn out for a walk in Manhattan.

## Gwyneth Paltrow hasn't quit acting

Los Angeles, Mar 13 (PTI): Gwyneth Paltrow says she has not bid adieu to acting.

The actor, who was last seen in "Avengers: Infinity War" in a cameo, said she is currently focused on her lifestyle brand, Goop.

"I've never said that I am quitting acting. What I say is Goop is my full-time passion, and being the founder and CEO of Goop is what I do all day every day, and occasionally when something is the right thing and it works out around my children and my Goop life, I'm able to participate.

"I think I'm just not focused on full-time acting right now," Paltrow said in an appearance on "Today" show.

The actor's comments come months after her admission that she does not miss acting.

She will next be seen reprising her role of Pepper Potts in the upcoming "Avengers: Endgame", which will mark her seventh and last appearance in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

Last month, Paltrow said she believes it is time for her to say goodbye to her character.



## Koffee With Karan 6: Expect exciting revelations from unseen footage

This evening's episode of celebrity talk show Koffee With Karan will be particularly exciting for its fans. For the episode will not host any particular guest but will instead air previously unseen footage from the sixth season.

Due to time constraints and other reasons, some of the footage was edited out from the episodes. But, as you will discover for yourself, those clips are as entertaining and intriguing as the episodes that went on air.

New tidbits and reveals will also come to light. We list some of them here.



Sara Ali Khan, who made her foray in Bollywood with Kedarnath last year, also made her debut on the Koffee couch with none other than her father Saif Ali Khan. What we did not get to see was the two talking about the last time they hung out with Amrita Singh, Sara's mother and Saif's ex-wife. Saif would reveal it was when he and Amrita went to the US to drop Sara to graduation school. He will add, "We had dinner in New York."

Sara will recall, "They set me up in college together, I remember and it was actually quite a sight because you were seeing Amrita Singh and for those of you who know her, it's a funny sight! Like

making my bed and Saif Ali Khan putting the bulb. And it was really very nice, I really cherish that!"

The next segment will present clips



from the episode involving Varun Dhawan and Katrina Kaif. Varun will complain that Katrina has not invited him over for a party ever. While Katrina will deny that, though she will also add that her place is very small right now for a full-fledged party, but she likes it anyway.

After Varun and Katrina, the episode will move on to the episode that hosted Priyanka Chopra and Kareena Kapoor. Kareena will recall how she was assailed by naysayers when she had announced her decision to marry Saif. "He has two children! He has, you know, been divorced! Are you sure, you wanna do

this? Your career will be over," the people warned her.

But she was unfazed. She said, "And I was like, you know, is it such a big crime to be in love? To get married? Let's do it, let's see what happens but this is what it is!"

Priyanka will be all praise for Kareena. She will say, "Even how she carried herself during her pregnancy was so unheard of. I think of how fabulous she was. I mean, I remember seeing those pictures and I was like, 'Damn, see now that's what I am also gonna do!'"

Another segment of the episode will concern itself with Badshah and Diljit Dosanjh. Karan

will push Diljit to reveal whether he owns a private jet as has long been rumoured. Diljit will deny, but will also talk



about how the tittle-tattle began. He will reveal that he was approached for a Punjabi film, which was pitched when he was in Mumbai for the shoot of another production. Due to this, he had to travel back and forth, as the shooting location was in Rajasthan. The remote location did not have an airport and this raised difficulties.

## Will definitely do a lady cop film to complete universe: Rohit Shetty

Filmmaker Rohit Shetty on Tuesday said he has definite plans to make a female cop film to complete his "Singham" universe, which chronicles stories of police personnel. Shetty's follow-up to his hit "Singham" was 2018's Ranveer Singh-starrer "Simmba", which was part of a multi-film universe that the director has in mind.

The next film in this universe is Akshay Kumar-fronted "Sooryavanshi". Asked if he plans to make a female cop film, Shetty told reporters, "Soon we will be making it. We have a story in mind. We will definitely do it. We need to take a year or so, but we plan to do that to complete the universe."

The director was speaking at a special session at the FICCI Frames



2019. Shetty, who has delivered consecutive blockbusters and is known for making larger-than-life massy films, said he got the idea to start a universe while watching Hollywood superhero projects like "Avengers".

"Whatever happens in Hollywood, happens here 10 years down the line. That's always been the theory. When I was

watching the 'Avengers' series, I got an idea that 'why don't we create a universe?'

"Obviously, we don't have the kind of budget to make so many superhero films year after year. Then I thought to make a cop universe from 'Simmba' onwards," he said. The filmmaker said as the concept of creating a universe was novel for the Indian audience, he was initially nervous about the plunge.

"I was a bit scared before the release because this was happening for the first time in our country. I knew that youngsters and kids will (understand), because they have 'Avengers', but our mature audience hasn't seen that. I had doubts merging two worlds but it worked big time," Shetty said.

## 'Sesame Street' to release on January 15, 2021

Los Angeles, Mar 13 (PTI): Anne Hathaway-starrer "Sesame Street" is set to hit the screens on January 15, 2021.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Warner Bros also announced Tuesday that Tim Story's "Tom and Jerry" movie will release on April 16, 2021. Studio insiders say "Sesame Street" will begin shooting in June.

"Portlandia" co-creator Jonathan Krisel is attached to direct, with 21 Laps' Shawn Levy producing alongside Michael Aguilar and Entertainment 360. The movie, which is said to be a musical, is expected to include appearances from "Sesame Street" residents Big Bird, Oscar the Grouch and Cookie Monster. Chris Galletta of "Kings of Summer" wrote the most recent draft of the screenplay.

Story's "Tom and Jerry" film is a live-action hybrid based on the classic animated series created by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera that was first introduced in 1940. Both the films are yet to have an official title.

**ARIES:** No matter how "magical" something looks or feels, keep a healthy dose of cynicism in place today, Aries. With the Sun and rosy-eyed Jupiter lowering your defenses, you could fall under the spell of a snake-oil salesman. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is. And if people rush you to sign on any dotted lines or invest a down payment, find a reason to slip away—and feel no pressure to come back.

**TAURUS:** It may be too late to reverse past "mista"Keeping a secret won't be easy under today's candid Sun-Jupiter square, but do your best to keep confidential information in the vault. Even if you're sharing out of concern, your blurts could come back to haunt you. Be careful who you bring into your confidence, and instead of getting wrapped up in other people's dramas, broaden your horizons with some cultural activities.

**GEMINI:** YOU know that you've got what it takes to lead a mission, but are other people aware of your skills? Don't let your magic live on as a "secret pow-

er," Gemini. Under today's galvanizing Sun-Jupiter mashup, seek out opportunities to advance your professional status. It's not rude to ask people, "So what do you do for a living?" (Okay, maybe make it the third or fourth question instead of your lead.)

**CANCER:** Come on out of that cave, Cancer—no matter how brisk the winter air might be. With the Sun getting a nudge from nomadic Jupiter, you need to breathe some unfiltered oxygen and enjoy the feeling of moving your body. An hour at an ice rink or a snowboarding lesson could be good fun. Can't deal with the temps? Organize an active hangout for your friends.

**LEO:** FSave the taupe and "greige" for another day, Leo. From your sartorial choices to your political opinions, a dynamic duet of the Sun and Jupiter urges you to make a bold statement. People have always considered you a role model for living out loud, even if lately you've been keeping your stronger points of view under wraps in order to keep the peace.

**VIRGO:** You hate to disappoint a friend in

need—or to miss a happening after-work event. But some days, you just have to resist the pressure to come out and play. You may be feeling depleted, and if you don't get some "me time," like, now, you could totally crash (not to mention make yourself susceptible for those nasty winter bugs going around).

**LIBRA:** No need to lower the blinds if you want a little shade. Thanks to today's agitating Sun-Jupiter square, you'll be throwing some of it yourself. Under this magnifying transit, people's annoying "quirks" will really get under your skin. Breathe, Libra, breathe. Let this be your signal to deploy some immediate self-care. Book the 90-minute massage or spend the whole day at the spa.

**SCORPIO:** All the glitters may not be gold—but that won't stop you from pulling out your wallet. With a decadent Sun-Jupiter mashup overhead, you'd be wise to carry a set amount of cash and leave your debit cards locked up at home. If you're trying to save up, don't meet friends for "window shopping." The odds of you heading home

empty-handed are basically zero.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Familiarity can breed contempt today, as your ruler, Jupiter, in Sagittarius catches some shade from the moody Pisces Sun. Yesterday, it was all love with your soul squad and favorite relatives. Today, even their most endearing traits will grate on your nerves. At moments like this, your best course of action is to just take some space. Better than to lash out at them for an innocent "mistake" or, worse, for simply being in your space!

**CAPRICORN:** Peel off that power suit and kick off those pinchy stilettos. Your heart—and the rest of you—wants to hunker down in your home sweet home. Can you swing a remote workday or head home early? Grab that sheepskin throw and make yourself a pillow fort as your "office." No can do? Do everything in your power to make your cubicle feel cozier. Maybe it's time to invest in a French press for brewing up loose-leaf tea or a pair of noise-canceling headphones for playing meditative music...and drowning out your coworker's ultra-annoying voice.

**AQUARIUS:** Shake up your routines under

today's galvanizing Sun-Jupiter square. Wandering off the beaten path can bring some incredible discoveries—as long as you don't make plans overly complex! Pick a district that you'd like to explore, then park and wander around. If there's a wait for a dinner table, put your name on the list, then pop into some of the shops. Apply this philosophy to your work today. Invite a new colleague to join you for a coffee run or try doing your work in a totally different order, being sure to build in ample breaks.

**PISCES:** Keep a major goal in your crosshairs—and don't get distracted—as the Sun and Jupiter compose a dynamic duet in the most ambitious parts of your chart. But that doesn't mean walking a straight and narrow line today. Figure out ways to combine your social needs with your career aspirations. If splurging on event tickets means mingling with the people YOU think of as influencers, consider it an investment in your future. And if you need to take a couple hours to develop one of your bigger ideas, reschedule a lunch date for dinner and hunker down to get those plans on paper!