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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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SKM delivered as Opposition, now try us in government: Golay



**SAGAR CHHETRI
RANIPOL, 02 APR:**
Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party president, PS Tamang [Golay], today asserted that although SKM failed to form the government in 2014, it has worked as an effective Opposition party for the past five years and proven its credentials as an effective representative of the people. SKM has raised the demands of the people of Sikkim

continuously with the State government, in the State Assembly and with the Centre, he added, while calling on the people to now vote SKM to the responsibility of running the government. He was addressing supporters from different constituencies of East District at Ranipool Truck Stand as part of the party's election campaign. The meeting was attended by senior lead-

ers and workers of the party and SKM candidates from different constituencies of East Sikkim. In his short address, Mr Tamang accused the SDF government of not working in the interest of the people of Sikkim throughout its 25 years in government. On the same, he alleged that after having failed to work for the people or deliver development, SDF party and

its president are now trying to buy the people's mandate and seeking one more chance. He also accused SDF government for "looting" the State for the past 25 years and suppressing the people's voice. Given that SKM won eight of its 10 Assembly seats from East Sikkim where the campaign stop was held today and that seven of the MLAs had defected to SDF [five of

whom are contesting as SDF candidates this time], Mr Tamang also addressed this issue and called on the people to decide for themselves whether they wanted to vote for those who disrespected their mandate or teach them a lesson.

Training his barbs on the SDF, he alleged that the SDF Government has severely compromised the identity of the Sikkimese people and that if it returned to power, it would erase whatever was still left of Sikkim's unique status and identity.

"SKM is not asking for 10 years; we seek just five years and in these five years we will take account of all public funds misappropriated by the SDF government," Mr Tamang said.

On the occasion, he thanked the party leaders and workers for working selflessly to strengthen the party since inception. "SKM will definitely form the government this time and this credit goes to all those leaders and workers of the party

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SDF CAMPAIGN REACHES RORATHANG

Infighting a bigger challenge for SDF than winning, says Chamling



**ARPAN PRADHAN
RORATHANG (RHENOCK),
02 APR:**

Chief Minister and Sikkim Democratic Front president, Pawan Chamling today said that rebellion within the party is becoming more of a challenge than winning the upcoming election.

On the fifth day of his election campaign, Mr Chamling addressed a public meeting at Rorathang in East Sikkim today. The programme was organized for three constituencies under East District, Chujachen, Rhenock and Gnathang-Machong.

The programme had the presence of SDF candidates, Hemendra Adhikari, KB Rai and DT Lepcha and Lok Sabha candidate, DB Katuwal with a large number of party supporters from the three constituencies. The programme was also addressed by the MP candidate, DB Katuwal.

In his address, Mr Chamling said that if full tribal status is not possible then the State Government will seek Territorial Tribal status for the left out communities.

He also announced that Pakyong and Soreng will

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Pakyong to be upgraded to a District.
- Dalapchand PHSC will be upgraded to PHC.
- Lingtam Secondary School will be upgraded to Senior Secondary level.
- Chujachen will have East District's biggest tourism project. The Government has already bought a 56-acre land for the purpose.
- Highest priority to ensure qualitative drinking water to every household through efficient management.
- All employment opportunities from upcoming 'Gaushala' in Rhenock will be confined to the local youth of Rhenock and surrounding constituencies.
- Only local youth from the three constituencies (90%) will get employment opportunities in the private sector industries established in the three constituencies such as liquor factory, pharmaceuticals units etc.
- Complete eradication of labour contractor system as per public demand.
- 70% of the demands submitted during the Chief Minister's 32-day tour have been sanctioned. I assured that all remaining demands will be met within 100 days of forming the Government.
- Demands for irrigation canals will be taken up on priority.
- SDF Government will give priority to construction and upgradation of religious places of worship.
- All the demands submitted by retired Government employees of the State will be met within 100 days of forming the new Government.
- Government will continue to pursue the demand for exemption of Central Income Tax exemption to the Old Settlers. Also local licence rates for business community will be brought at par with businessmen from Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali communities.
- Token tax amount for vehicles will be reduced.

Cong releases poll manifesto with focus on jobs, farmers, 'Nyay' scheme

NEW DELHI, APR 2 (PTI): With a tagline "Congress Will Deliver", Rahul Gandhi Tuesday released his party's manifesto for Lok Sabha polls, making jobs creation, addressing farm distress, bringing a single moderate rate of GST and giving Rs 72,000 per annum to poor families as key focus if the party comes to power.

In the 55-page document, the Congress also promised to come out with separate budget for farmers, fill up 22 lakh government vacancies, allocate 6 per cent of GDP to education, assured 50 more days of guaranteed jobs from current 100 under the MNREGA, boosting healthcare infrastructure and enhance safety of women.

"When we started a year ago, I made it clear

turn to pg02

LT seats to be first gift for Sikkim after BJP form govt at Centre: Nabin

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 APR:**

Bharatiya Janata Party's Sikkim election in-charge, Nitin Nabin, today announced that seat reservation for Limboos and Tamangs of Sikkim in the State Legislative Assembly will be the first gift to the people of Sikkim from BJP upon forming the government at the Centre.

He further assured that BJP wants to work for the people of Sikkim by taking development to every corner of the State.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Nabin stated that BJP was committed to the complete safeguarding of the Article 371F but some sections have been trying to mislead the people on this issue.

He added that BJP wants to play an important role for the people of Sikkim and for devel-



opment of the State and informed that BJP will be releasing its 'Sankalp Patra' for Sikkim on 05 April.

Speaking on the election campaign in the State, Mr Nabin shared that BJP was contesting 12 assembly seats and one Lok Sabha seat in the State. Party candidates have been going door-to-door with the programmes of BJP and have been receiving encouraging support from the people. He expressed

hope that the lotus will bloom in the State this time.

Also today, a BJP delegation led by Mr Nabin submitted a four-point memorandum to the Election Commission.

He informed that the memorandum has voiced concerns that voting stretches till late into the night in Sikkim and that this delay raises possibilities of malpractices and bogus voting and appealed to the Com-

mission to finish polling within the scheduled time to ensure free and fair election.

The memorandum has also requested necessary arrangements to ensure participation of senior citizens and differently-abled voters, strong police patrolling after close of campaigning and deployment of adequate paramilitary forces at the sensitive and very sensitive polling stations.

South youth convenor attacked by SKM workers, alleges SDF

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 APR:**

Sikkim Democratic Front has alleged that a group of around 50 Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) youth cadre wrongfully restrained and attacked Youth Convenor of SDF, Bikash Rai, of Namchi Singithang on 01 Apr.

In a press release issued today, SDF spokesperson and Lok Sabha MP, PD Rai has said that Bikash Rai and his two brothers were threatened,

attacked and their vehicles damaged with iron rods and metal pipes. The victims were attacked with knives and one of the accused persons, Basu Rai, is the brother of Ganesh Rai, SKM candidate from Namchi-Singithang constituency, Mr Rai claims. An FIR has been lodged against the SKM supporters involved in this attack in Namchi police station, he adds.

The party has further alleged that a private bolero vehi-

cle of Zilla Panchayat, Yadunath Mishra was also vandalized by SKM workers at Perbing on 31 March while SDF youth, Upen Rai was stabbed by SKM youth, Joel Rai at Pabong under Poklok Kamrang constituency on 27 March. The victim is in critical condition, it is added.

Accusing SKM of propagating violence, PD Rai has said that such violence has become a daily occurrence.

"We strongly condemn the acts of vandalism that took

place last night and hope that better sense would prevail in the minds of SKM leadership. At SDF, we are committed to maintaining peace, harmony and upholding democratic ideals and rule of law, and as such, we expect every other party to do the same in the best interest of the people of Sikkim," Mr Rai has said.

The SDF MP has also raised doubts about the possibility of goons from outside the State being hired by SKM.

THE HIMALAYAN CLEANUP, 2020

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Cong releases...

that nothing in this can be a lie, because we live in a time where we hear a large number of lies every day," Gandhi said, after releasing the manifesto in the presence of former prime minister Manmohan Singh, UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and senior party leader P Chidambaram.

The document, titled 'Hum Nibhayenge', touched upon a range of key issues including national security, situation in Jammu and Kashmir and in the North Eastern region, foreign policy, defence, state of the rural economy, current tax regime and environmental challenges among others.

Referring to Jammu and Kashmir, Congress promised to review the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) as well as deployment of the armed forces, asserting that nothing will be done or allowed to change the constitutional position relating to the border state.

"Congress promises the people of J&K talks without pre-conditions. We will appoint the interlocutors drawn from civil society to facilitate such talks," according to the manifesto.

In another key promises, the party said it will abolish the provision of sedition in the IPC, scrap the "opaque electoral bonds" introduced by the NDA government, replace the Niti Ayog with a modern Planning Commission and enact an anti-hate crime law to deal with incidents of lynchings.

The party also pledged to make defamation a civil offence, change law that allows detention without trial and proposed to set up a national judicial commission to appoint judges. The party said, in place of the electoral bond, a National Election Fund will be set up to financially help recognised political parties.

On GST tax, the Congress said it will radically simplify the GST regime with a single moderate rate of tax, zero rating of exports, and exemption for essential goods and services, adding panchayats and municipalities will be given a share of the revenues.

For farmers, Congress promised to put them on the path from "Karz Maafi" (loan waiver), to "Karz Mukti" (freedom from loans).

This will be done through remunerative prices, lower input costs, and assured access to institutional credit, the party said adding it will present a separate "Kisan Budget" every year, if voted to power.

Speaking on the occasion at the Congress headquarters here, Gandhi said Congress will allocate 6 per cent of GDP to education, will strengthen government hospitals and give high-quality healthcare access to poor, if voted to power.

SKM delivered...

for working selflessly and making great sacrifices and contributions to the party," he said.

Mr Tamang also alleged today that the business community was not secured in the SDF government in whose hands they have been facing harassment and injustice.

Mr Tamang also accused the SDF of indulging in communal politics and called on the people to support SKM.

Earlier, SKM Lok Sabha candidate, Indra Hang Subba, mentioned that Sikkim received democracy at the cost of the country and that the SDF has failed to protect the people or resolve 40-year-old pending political issues of the State in the Parliament.

He assured to provide justice to the people and take up all pending demands of the State effectively in the Parliament and fulfill all hopes and aspirations of the people of Sikkim.

Mr Subba mentioned that if three MLAs of SKM party worked so effectively in the interest of the people of Sikkim, then 32 in the Assembly could do much more for the people of Sikkim.

He also stressed the need for tribal status for the eleven left-out communities and assured to get this demand met.

Speaking on the delay of a campus for Sikkim Central University and NIT, he stated that students of both institutions have been facing problems because of this. He commented that the Centre gave these premier institutes to the State as it was sincere towards the people of Sikkim, but petty politics of the SDF have compromised these initiatives.

Mr Subba also lashed out against the SDF government for failing to provide proper infrastructure for sports, culture and other requirements of the youth of Sikkim for the past 25 years.

The meeting was also addressed by senior leaders of the party.

Infighting a bigger...

be declared as Districts within 100 days of government formation.

Mr Chamling further said that people have to vote for the party and not an individual or candidate. He urged old and new members of the party to work together in securing victory in the upcoming elections and sweeping all 32 constituencies.

The party cannot provide candidature to all but has always treated all party members equally, he stated and urged those who did not get party tickets to work hard to make SDF stronger.

The SDF president assured that the problem of inadequate drinking water in the Rorathang area and other parts of the constituency will be taken up on priority and other demands of the locality will also be fulfilled.

Slamming the opposition, Mr Chamling alleged that SKM is secretly working for BJP and their candidates are spreading false information amongst the public. They are misleading the business community regarding tax exemption, he said and urged all to stay away from such leaders.

Mr Chamling also assured to end the labour contract system in the State.

During his address, the SDF president expressed his sadness over the death of young social worker, Naresh Chettri.

Earlier, he was welcomed by first time voters of the area.

Tilak Basnet convinced that electoral wind favours SKM

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 APR:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha candidate for Melli [South Sikkim], Tilak Basnet, expressed confidence that SKM will win sweep the elections in South District with a huge majority this time. SKM, it may be recalled, is yet to open its account in South and West districts.

Mr Basnet, however, believes that the electoral wind has shifted in SKM's direction this time and went on to assure that SKM would work on all promises made in the manifesto and fulfill all hopes and aspirations of the people.

The 44-year-old SKM candidate has been going door-to-door with his campaign message in the area. He is a post graduate and had worked in Australia for some years before returning to enter politics.

Speaking to media persons during his door-to-door campaign at Kamarey ward today, Mr Basnet commented that disparity in the Sikkimese convinced him to



join politics.

"I also noticed vast difference between Gangtok and rural parts of the State. This situation convinced me to enter politics and do something for the society. I have no dreams for myself and am motivated solely by the dream to work for the people," he said.

Speaking about his election campaign, Mr Basnet expressed happiness on the people's response to his candidature and explained it also to the lack of any substantial development in the constituency under the SDF government.

"Development creates opportunities for

the people and inversely, when there is no opportunity there is no development. During the election campaign, I found that there are no opportunities for the people of the area to develop," he said.

He alleged that SDF government has even failed to provide the basic needs of the people of Melli.

Mr Basnet further alleged stated that even the claim of the SDF government on women's empowerment were false. He added that without providing economic rights, other rights would become useless. He stated that only the SKM party can provide justice

and independence to the women of Sikkim.

"SKM also has programmes to address the issue of acute shortage of drinking water, irregular power supply and education and other sectors in the area but my approach will also be more futuristic to empower youths and to create more opportunities for them in this knowledge age," Mr Basnet said.

When pressed, he shared his plan to use the latest technology to tap water from Rangeet to create water bodies in the higher areas of the constituency and provide water for drinking and irrigation.

MUSS donates essentials to Lee Aal Old Age Home



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 APR:

Manav Uthan Sewa Samiti (MUSS) Sikkim commemorating 50 years of promotion of Manav Dharma and birth anniversary of Matasri Raj Rajeshwari, mother of Satpalji Maharaj contributed essential commodities to Lee Aal Destitute Home, Rakdong Tintek in East Sikkim on Sunday.

A team comprising of Incharge North East Zone, Akhilesh Baijee, Incharge Gangtok Branch, Gyan Baijee, Incharge Ravangla, Pushpawati Baijee, State president, Bhim Prakash Rai, general sec-

retary, Bhupendra Giri and members visited the Home and handed over essential commodities to Home Incharge.

Later in the afternoon, the members observed Yuva Chetna Jagaran Diwas here at Sambhala Ashram, Tibet Road. The programme saw handsome participation of youth members of MUSS from all the four districts of Sikkim.

Incharge North East Zone, Akhilesh Baijee, Incharge Gangtok Branch, Gyan Baijee, Incharge Ravangla, Pushpawati Baijee, State president, Bhim Prakash Rai addressed the spiritual programme.

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GO Parliamentary Constituency meets Nodal officers in North

MANGAN, 02 APR (IPR): General Observer-1 (GO), Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency, Ama-ya Abhyankar, IAS in the presence of General Observer (GO), North, Dr Pratibha Singh and Superintendent of Police, North, Kunzang Dorjee Shangderpa held a meeting today with Nodal Officers of North District, Assistant Expenditure Observers (AEOs), Accounting Team (AT), Video Viewing Team (VVT), Video Surveillance Team (VST), Flying Squad Team (FST), Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) and the officials of Control Room here at the conference hall of District Administrative Center (DAC), North.

GO-1, Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency,

Mr Abhyankar directed to all extended election teams to closely monitor unusual or doubtful activities especially while the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is enforced. He also exhorted them to coordinate with their counterparts and facilitate for the smooth conduct of Election. Further, he instructed to the FST, VST to remain more vigilant during 48 hours prior to poll day and urged officials to discharge their duties effectively to ensure successful, free and fair election.

Talking on critical Polling Stations he urged to the field functionaries those who are engaged in their respective stations should remain more vigilant against

Expenditure Observer visits Bikmat Polling Station

NAMCHI, 02 APR (IPR): Expenditure Observer, Inder Solanki visited polling station at Bikmat Secondary School under Namthang Rateypani Assembly Constituency today. The Observer on his visit enquired about the various amenities available in the polling station. He was accompa-

nied by Sector Magistrate and various other election Officials.

It may be mentioned here that Inder Solanki is in charge of four Assembly Constituencies namely Namthang-Rateypani, Temi-Namphing, Rangang-Yangang and Tumin-Lingi of the South district.

Physical randomization of EVMs and VVPATs for Lok Sabha elections begins in West



GYALSHING, 02 APR [IPR]: The second Physical Randomization of EVMs and VVPATs along with the commissioning of the machines for the Assembly segments of Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency was done at the Control Room set up at the Girls Senior Secondary School, Kyongsa, today in the presence of Karma R Bonpo, DC-cum-RO West; Faisal Aftab, General Observer West;

Naveen Arora, State Police Observer; Tenzing L. Lepcha, SP West; Karma L. Lepcha, ADC West; Tushar G. Nikhare, SDM (HQ); Gilbert Lepcha, SDM (Gyalshing) and other officials. The process was completed for four assembly segments of Yoksam Tashiding, Yangthang, Maneybong Dentam and Gyalshing Barnyak in the presence of representatives from political parties.

any unusual events related to the election. Booth Level Officers (BLOs) should ensure the proper distribution of voter's slips for inclusive vote cast, he added.

General Observer, Dr Singh sought coordination from the nodal officers with regard to carrying out complete election process in a transparent and responsive manner. She appreciated the work done by SST till the date and suggested them to continue in same spirit until the last day of election.

She also informed about establishment of Voters Facilities Center and availability of volunteers for Person with Disabilities (PwD) around Polling Station for inclusive vote cast.

In order to conduct

peace and fair election, she appealed to all extended teams and Nodal Officers of the district to work in close coordination.

In the morning GO-1, Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency, Mr Abhyankar also visited the Electronic Voter Machine (EVM) Commissioning hall along with GO, North, Dr Singh wherein commissioning of EVM for Parliamentary Constituency took place under the guidance of DEO/RO, Raj Yadav.

Mr Abhyankar along with Dr Singh visited District Control Room and took stock of election preparedness, thereafter, he inspected the Strong Room meanwhile and he expressed his satisfaction over election preparedness of the district.

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Required for Summit Times

Two field reporters for Gangtok (East) and one for West District. Should be fluent in english. Have basic knowledge in journalism. Walk in interview:

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03592-208698**

ANTHYESTHI KRIYA

The Anthyesthi Kriya of Late. Akal Bahadur Pradhan who left for heavenly abode on 24th March, 2019 falls on 5th April 2019.

All relatives, family, friends and well-wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at Rhenock, Pradhan Gaon, East Sikkim. We would also like express our gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement.

Tika Maya Pradhan (Wife), Khem Narayan Pradhan - 9593777633, Khush Narayan Pradhan - 9593267782, Pushpa Kr. Pradhan - 9593267782, Ganga Ram Pradhan, Arun Pradhan, Udai Pradhan(Sons) Sarita Pradhan, Karuna Pradhan (Daughters) Rekmit Pradhan, Durga Pradhan (Daughter-in-laws)

PLOT FOR SALE:

Vacant plot measuring 0.38 Acres for sale at Amdo Golai, Deorali. Contact: 09717191985/097474651223

KUTSHE SHEGU

Our sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to all our dear friends and well wishers who have been so supportive and forthcoming during our time of bereavement, the sad demise of our beloved daughter Late **Kes-sang Tongden Lepcha** who left for her heavenly abode on 19/02/2019. Once again in all humility we request your benign presence in offering prayer for the departed soul, the 49th day of Kutshe Shegu which falls on **07/04/2019** (Sunday) at our residence at Tongden Lee, Dikchu Bazar, East Sikkim.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who stood by us in our hard time and regret our inability to thank them individually.

Wangchuk Bhutia (Husband) & all family members.



ANTHYESTHI KRIYA

The Anthyesthi Kriya of our beloved mother, Late **SITA MAYA TRIKHATRI** (80 yrs) who left for her heavenly abode on the 23rd of March, 2019 falls on **4th April 2019**.

All relatives, family, friends and well-wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at Hotel Chowtaro, Deorali Bazaar, Gangtok, East Sikkim.

We also express our gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement.

**Daughters: Champa Bardewa-9434203706, Manju Trikhtri -7407181907
Sons: Pratap Trikhatri -9064836436; Lalit Trikhatri (Son)-9775956554
Daughters-in-Law: Man Maya Trikhatri -9775405439; Ashu Trikhatri -9647686222; Mamta Trikhatri -9609115039**

ANTHYESTHI KRIYA

The Anthyesthi Kriya of our beloved Mother Late. Sita Maya Trikhatri (80 yrs) who left for heavenly abode on 11th March, 2019 falls on 4th April 2019.

All relatives, family, friends and well-wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at Hotel Chowtaro, Deorali Bazaar, Gangtok, East Sikkim. We also express our gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement.

**Champa Bardewa (Daughter)-9434203706
Manju Trikhtri (Daughter)-7407181907
Laxmi Sunam (Daughter)- 8250303207
Pratap Trikhatri (Son)-9735981155
Lalit Trikhatri (Son)-9775956554
Man Maya Trikhatri (Daughter-in-law)-9775405439
Ashu Trikhatri (Daughter-in-law)-9647686222
Mamta Trikhatri (Daughter-in-law)-9609115039
Shyam Sunam (Son-in-law)-8768716297
Bijay Sewa (Son-in-law)**

Postal Ballot Drop Box for South polling officials

NAMCHI, 02 APR [IPR]: Returning Officer (South), Ragul K., informed today that a Postal Ballot Drop Box Facilitation Centre for the General Election 2019 will be established at the Community Hall and the auditorium hall of Namchi Girls Senior Secondary School from 04 to 08 April as per the guidelines of Election Commission of India. He also requested the contesting candidates or their election agents to oversee the facilities being extended to them on the afore-mentioned dates.

Police Observer tours West Sikkim

GYALSHING, 02 APR (IPR): The Police Observer of Sikkim, Naveen Arora, toured various parts of West Sikkim on 01 Apr, 2019 where he visited the Polling Stations, Police Check Posts and inspected them thoroughly to see if the basic facilities were available at the Polling stations.

He further interacted with the Sector Magistrates, Flying Squad Teams, Static Surveillance Teams and SSB Jawans in regards to the security measures being performed by them during the elections along the way to Yuksam via Khecheopalri.

He also visited the Model Polling Stations of Pelling and Yuksam. Further, the Police Observer for Sikkim interacted with the Monks of Pemayangtse who are the voters of Sanga.

On 02 Apr, 2019 the Police Observer also toured Hiley via Dentam, Soreng and Sombaria where he visited 5 normal and 6 critical polling in five constituencies. At Dentam SDM office the Police Observer briefed the Officers deputed on election duties on their respective functions and roles. He also interacted with some of the local voters on topics related to the forth coming elections.

The PO was accompanied by the Liaison Officer, Sonam Wangdi Bhutia.

Pogba wants to stay at Man Utd, says Solskjaer

MANCHESTER, APR 2 (AFP): Ole Gunnar Solksjaer says he has been assured by star midfielder Paul Pogba that the Frenchman does not want to leave Manchester United despite mounting speculation over a switch to Real Madrid.

United midfielder Pogba last week described Madrid, managed by France great Zinedine Zidane, as a "dream club for every player" while on international duty.

Fuel was then poured on the fire ahead of Madrid's game at the weekend when the Real boss admitted that Pogba would be welcome at the Bernabeu if and when he decides to call time on his United career. Zidane is expected to have a big transfer budget this summer to shake things up. Real crashed out of the Champions League to Ajax at the last-16 stage and trail Barcelona by 12 points in La Liga.



EPSSS felicitates Sneha and her coach for boxing gold

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 APR:**

Sneha Tamang and her boxing coach Pritam Silal were felicitated today East Point Senior

Secondary School for the gold medal bagged by Sneha in the D-3/34 KG weight category at the 1st Zone National Boxing competition held recently at Golaghat, Assam.

Handloom expo gets underway at DHH



GANGTOK, 02 APR [IPR]: The 15-day National Level Special Handloom Expo 2018-19 organised by Sikkim Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd got underway here at the DHH premises at Zero Point today.

The expo is being organized in collaboration with Directorate of Handicraft and Handloom under NER Textile Promotion Schemes sponsored by the office of the Development Commissioner (Handloom), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.

The exhibition-cum-sale of Hand-

loom items saw a large contingent from Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Ladakh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and local weavers/ SHG's/ Cooperative Societies from different corners of the State.

The expo is an annual feature of SHHDC calendar and is proving to be a boon for weavers. It also provides a readymade marketing platform for the local weavers, SHGs and PUCs.

The expo, which will conclude on 11 April, was inaugurated by Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava.

Strong Room opened for East district



GANGTOK, 02 APR (IPR): The strong room for East district was opened today at Biraspati Parsai Senior Secondary School, Ranipool.

This was followed by commissioning of EVMs and VVPATs for Sikkim Parliamentary Constituency in the presence of contesting candidates and their representatives.

A team of qualified BEL engineers were also present to supervise and assist the commissioning process.

Returning Officer/District Election Officer, Kapil Meena, briefed everyone present about

the commissioning process and gave a detailed overview of the process which will continue for the next couple of days.

He said that the EVMs and VVPATs belonging to the 13 Assembly constituencies including Sangha will be commissioned on 04 and 05 April.

The complete process of commissioning of EVMs and VVPATs was videographed and all security measures like 24X7 security, CCTV coverage, fire extinguisher, frisking of all people entering the commissioning hall etc. has been made as per the ECI guidelines, the DEO informed.

FLAT AVAILABLE FOR RENT

Fully furnished, 3 Bedroom flat available for rent at Church Road, Near Diesel Power House. Conveniently located by the roadside and a 5-minute walk from M.G. Marg. Suitable for Corporate Office and Guest House.

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Training and orientation of East BLOs concludes



GANGTOK, 02 APR (IPR): The District Election Officer (East), Kapil Meena, informs that training and orientation of BLOs for various works to be done on and before the polling day concluded today.

The two-day training focused on distribution of voter slips, voter guides, setting up of voter assistance booth and efficient use of Booth

Awareness Groups for assistance to persons with disabilities.

Mr Meena further informed that the final briefing of the polling team will be done on 04 and 05 Apr, 2019 at Manan Kendra Auditorium Hall where a Facilitation Centre will also be set up where the polling personnel can cast their votes after the training session.

Awareness on ill effects of substance abuse at Sikkim University

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 APR:

Sikkim Against Addiction Towards Healthy India (SAATHI), a project under the Chief Minister's Youth Empowerment and Self-reliant mission, organized an awareness program on "ill effects of substance abuse" in association with NSS, Sikkim University on 02 Apr, 2019. The program had the participation of 81 students, a press release informs.

The program started with welcome by Dr Nidhi Saxena and was delighted to collaborate with SAATHI and to create awareness on ill effects of substance abuse. After that, President, Mr Tempo Bhutia introduced and oriented about SAATHI to the participants and explained in brief how SAATHI works and has reached from 100 schools to conduct awareness program in colleges and universities now.

Next, Justice, AP Subba (Retd.), High Court of Sikkim boldly highlighted that, "Substance abuse is a global phenomenon, where India also falls under the golden circle." He mentioned that our country has become a large consumer of substance with 10.7 mil-



lion Indians abusing substances, equivalent to the population of Sweden.

He also explained that abusing substance is a complex problem, which cannot be seen from a single perspective, but from various approaches be it, psychological, physical, legal etc. He ended with a saying that the menace of substance abuse is rising and death penalty is not the solution.

"If you want the law to protect you, you should also protect the law," he added.

Registrar, Sikkim University, TK Kaul, introduced the audience by appreciating the NSS Cell of Sikkim University and SAATHI Sikkim for conducting an awareness program with regarding to substance abuse.

Vice Chancellor Sikkim University, Prof Avinash Khare started his speech by appreciating the effort of organizing

the program on substance abuse. He also highlighted about psychoactive substances and how it is widely prevalent amongst the youth.

Dr Bibhushan Dahal from the Psychiatric Department, STNM Hospital, started his session on the theme "I am not what happened to me: I am what I choose to become" and explained the medical aspects of substance abuse.

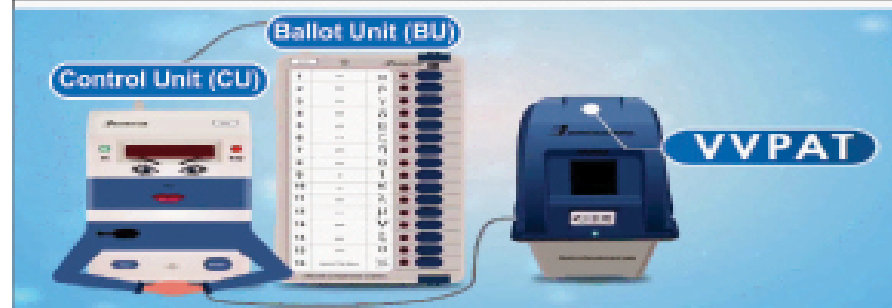
Teacher Coordinator of Modern Sr. Sec. School, Bishal Darnal shared substance abuse cases at schools; and how students have reformed and are actively working as SAATHI peer educators. Chomu Lachungpa from Sikkim Police spoke about legal aspects of substance abuse where in she explained about SADA, COTPA and JJ act.

The program ended with vote of thanks from NSS team of Sikkim University.

FAQ

1

EVM with VVPAT Unit



Q12. Is it possible to vote more than once by pressing the button again and again?

Ans. No. As soon as a particular button on the Balloting Unit is pressed the vote is recorded for that particular candidate and the machine gets locked. Even if one presses that button further or any other button, no further vote will be recorded. This way the EVMs ensure the principle of "one man, one vote". The next vote is enabled only when the Presiding Officer/Polling Officer in-charge of the Control Unit releases the Ballot by pressing the Ballot Button. This is a distinct advantage over the ballot paper system.

Q13. How can a voter be sure that the EVM is working and his vote has been recorded?

CALL 1950 FOR ANY ELECTION RELATED QUERIES

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

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.nic.in

MISSING



Ref. Paikyong PS Case FIR No. 02/2019, dated: 28.01.2019, u/s 363 IPC, 1860 one 17 yrs old girl child is missing since 22.01.2019 from Looxing, Machong, East Sikkim.

The details of Missing girl are as follows:

Name: Divya Sharma
Age: 17 yrs
d/o: Chandra Prasad Sharma
Height: 4' 5" (approx)
Complexion: Fair
Wearing apparel: Blue colour jeans paint & shirt and black & pink colour Nike shoe

All are requested to share any information about the missing child in the below given Contact No.

03592-257834, 73843-49283, 97330-23817

Informant will be suitably rewarded

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Nothing Down the Drain

Everything actually, except the surface run-off

The Nor'westers are still not upon us. The persistent evening downpours of the past few days courtesy the Western Disturbances which arrive as calling cards of the impending pre-monsoon have however given some thoughts to ponder over. These showers serve as reminders of infrastructure which needs to be reinforced and reclaimed from the decades of neglect seeded by their clearly inept design. One downpour and traffic comes to a halt, vehicles squeezed into narrower patches of tarmac because of the inundation which runs on the roads instead of the drains.

Soon, the weather forecasts will start predicting showers and even more thunderstorms. Gangtok's response to the weather patterns will also be predictably routine – slips, slides and slush. The SDF campaign meeting at Kabi scheduled for Wednesday, for instance, has been postponed due to a landslide on North Sikkim Highway

No surprises there. But what is surprising though, is the fact that the inept drainage system remains consistently failed despite the hordes of engineers that the capital is home to.

How is it that Sikkim's roadside drains refuse to, well, drain?

The price that poorly engineered storm water drains can exact was deeply felt by Gangtok in 1997 when several lives were lost and a building toppled when the rain water ran on the road and then into buildings instead of getting carried away by the drains. Two decades since, and the situation has only worsened. New trouble-spots have cropped up and it is not just the drains to blame, also causing this madness every time it rains is the insensitivity with which people construct [buildings], store their building material and how many in Gangtok still dispose their garbage. It's the uncivility of the Gangtok way of life that is causing as much harm as the corruption which delivered Gangtok a drainage system too ineffectual for its topography, road alignments and habitation spread. There is invariably as much household and hotel waste flowing down the highway with every downpour as there is mud and rocks that the rain carved out of the hill. These are not unrelated constituents of a 'land-slide'. A pile of garbage in an out-of-sight spot in a too cramped for a garbage truck to reach spot is as effective in triggering a slide as recklessly disposed building excavation mud in an out-of-sight spot. Both are imposed on the slopes and both slip with a heavy shower and scratch out a larger landslip as they roll down and gather strength. The drains, already dodgy in their effectiveness, are denied even a face-saving carriage because they are already clogged with everything that should not be in them. While this is reasonably harmless in the drier winter months, it adds to everyone's woes when the nights receive rainfall. The downpour washes these piles of garbage off their heaps and spreads them across the road, pours them into nearby homes and squeezes them into drains and clogs them.

The capital still has some weeks at hand to do at least a bandaid repair of its drains. And now will also be the time to have the engineers survey the roads during rains, identify the more serious failures in the drainage system, and if these can't be fixed, then at least keep them on a watch list for disaster mitigation interventions. Does it not worry anyone that the Pani House stretch pours down slush every monsoon, mostly blocking the highway, but also occasionally jumping the lane into buildings across the road? Why is it that this has still not been "trained"? There is also the scouring of the road surface every monsoon. This is not caused by water and vehicles, but is a damage wrought by construction litter and debris from exposed, and thereby potentially threatening, slopes.

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

Remembering minorities amid eastern Europe's nation-state centenary celebrations

ALEXANDRA LIEBICH
theconversation.com

Over the past year, states across central and eastern Europe have been celebrating the 100th anniversary of the creation or re-creation of their countries.

Some will continue to do so through 2019 and 2020 as they mark 100 years since maps were redrawn and nation-state status was granted to groups that were formerly part of vast, diverse empires.

Amid the festivities and fanfare, let's not forget to include minority views and voices in the dialogue. A centenary is an important moment for these states, no doubt. It is also important for citizens — including minority citizens, many of whom remember the events of 1918 to 1920 from a different perspective. What they tend to remember of those years are grievances, losses of status, forced migration and changed homelands.

DIFFERENT MEMORIES

During my field work in the region, speaking with minority and majority groups, I learned that minority members tend to have different interpretations and contrasting memories of the events of 1918-20, many of them painful. So they were not likely to participate in the centenary celebrations. More often, they were celebrating occasions of national and cultural significance to their particular group.

There are about 400 minority communities in Europe today, comprising more than 100 million people. "Minority" refers to groups that are distinct in ethnicity, culture and language from the group that is numerically dominant in the state. They are also in a politically non-dominant position within the state.

Some of these groups became minorities through displacement and forced migration amid the upheaval of war. Some became minorities through the arbitrary redrawing of lines on maps, meaning they suddenly found themselves living in another country as "accidental diasporas". In other words, minorities can arise when people move across borders, or when borders are redrawn around people.

The First World War brought about the collapse of large multi-ethnic empires and the formation of several nation-states in their wake.

Recognition of these new states was based upon the famous, or perhaps infamous, idea of self-determination, promoted at the Paris Peace Conference and in post-war treaties. Recognition was also based on the principle of nationality, which advocated and justified the notion of states created of and for particular nations. The logic was: one ethno-cultural group per country, one nation per state. In reality, none of these states was entire-

ly homogenous.

STATELY CELEBRATIONS

For Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, the events of 1918-20 signify the recognition of statehood. The years 2018-2020, therefore, mark the centenary of this stately occasion. The governments of these countries have put a lot of time and resources into the celebrations.

There are countless special events and programming such as "100 Years" walking tours, speeches, concerts, flag and fireworks displays, museum exhibitions, patriotic parades, youth marches, military tributes and bonfires.



The national colours of each state are visible in public squares and streets, and at night they light up historic buildings and landmarks. National anthems are played, and national poetry and literature recited, as each nation-statehood is observed.

The Pope visited the three Baltic states in September 2018 in a gesture seen to acknowledge their struggle for independence. There have even been Twitter hashtags, 100 Year playlists on Spotify and restaurants serving centennial meal specials. It's the spectacle of a national holiday but amped up several times.

WHAT ABOUT THE MINORITIES?

The fanfare is exciting for the dominant groups in these states. But what about the groups that are not dominant — the minorities? Where do they fit in all of this? Are they celebrating?

In Romania, members of the Hungarian minority view the 100th anniversary of Romania's "Great Unification" as more of a division – as a historical tragedy rather than triumph. The 1.2 million Hungarians in Romania today are there mainly because lines on the map were redrawn.

In 1920, Hungary was carved up by the Treaty of Trianon, and some Hungarians suddenly found themselves living in the new state of Romania. The Hungarian minority now constitutes 6.5 per cent

of the population of Romania, concentrated in the northwest in the region of Transylvania.

This community tends to celebrate Hungary's annual National Day over Romanian national days, and to partake in Hungarian Cultural Days.

An anniversary that may resonate for Romania's Hungarians in 2020 is the proposed and very political Trianon Memorial Year. Trianon resulted in Hungary losing two-thirds of its territory and population. Today, many Hungarians still view the Trianon "dismemberment" as a violation of Hungary's sovereignty and national integrity.

It remains one of the most traumatic events in Hungary's collective memories, and a recurring issue in Hungary's domestic politics and regional relations.

In Lithuania, members of the Polish minority associate the years 1918-20 more with the re-emergence of the Polish state than the restoration of the Lithuanian state. Poland experienced three territorial partitions, in 1772, 1793 and 1795, and effectively disappeared from the map until 1918.

Similar to Hungarians and Romanians, Poles and Lithuanians have had a long and contested relationship over borders, history and identity. The Polish minority constitutes 6.6 per cent of the population in Lithuania, concentrated in the southeast in the Vilnius region.

This community strongly celebrates the annual Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad Day with a ceremonial march through the streets of Vilnius. Though the parade is a sea of red-and-white Polish flags, the red, yellow and green of the Lithuanian flag can be seen as well. There are celebrations on May 3, the day when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth proclaimed a Constitution in 1791, and also Polish Culture Days in Vilnius.

The Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic states haven't had much of a presence at the centenary celebrations. These groups have different memories of the years following the First World War. Russia withdrew from the war in 1917 and then civil war broke out between the Bolsheviks and the White Guard.

Amid these grand celebrations in places like Bucharest, Riga, Tallinn, Vilnius and Warsaw, let's look for whether and how minorities are celebrating. Their voices and perspectives are an important part of the story. Just as the armistice is commemorated differently in western Europe and eastern Europe, the years 1918-1920 mean different things to different national groups across the continent.

[the writer is PhD Candidate & Teaching Fellow, Queen's University, Ontario]

Debate continues about the media's role in driving Rwanda's genocide

AMANDA GRZYB
theconversation.com

Twenty-five years ago, the Rwandan government launched a meticulously planned genocide against its Tutsi minority. It killed approximately 800 000 people in 100 days.

We can't reflect on the history of the 1994 genocide without considering the critical role the media played in both inciting and prolonging the violence.

In the summer of 1993 the government, ruled by the pro-Hutu National Revolutionary Movement for Development, engaged in a peace process with the mostly-Tutsi rebel army, the Rwandan Patriotic Front. They negotiated an end to the civil war and the repatriation of Tutsi exiles. At the same time, however, the Movement was also preparing for genocide.

The youth wing of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development established the Interahamwe. This paramilitary group would eventually lead attacks on Tutsi civilians. Hardliners from the party also launched Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM - French for "Thousand Hills Free Radio and Television"). It was a radio station that disseminated hate propaganda and prepared its listeners for the coming violence. The broadcaster provided a popular platform for ideas already circulating in Kangura, an extremist magazine founded in 1990.

In its early broadcasts, the station used Radio Rwanda's transmission equipment. The new broadcaster developed lively, informal and accessible programming that targeted ordinary citizens. Unlike Radio Rwanda,

it played popular music from neighbouring Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). This was particularly appealing to younger listeners.

In the weeks prior to the April 1994 genocide the station ramped up its anti-Tutsi, pro-Hutu propaganda. Broadcasters used increasingly dehumanising language to speak about the Tutsi minority. This mobilised ordinary Hutu citizens against the Tutsi. Historian Alison Des Forges wrote that, once the genocide was underway, government leaders used the station to promote violence. It also gave specific directions for carrying out the killings.

A quarter of a century on, media scholars, historians and journalists are still debating the precise role of RTLM in the genocide. Did radio broadcasts directly incite violence? Or did they simply amplify the fear and genocidal ideology that was already circulating throughout the Hutu population?

MEDIA EFFECTS

Most early scholarship about the genocide views RTLM as a lethal influence. In 2001, researcher, war correspondent and diplomat Samantha Power suggested that, "killers often carried a machete in one hand and a transistor radio in the other."

The refusal of international actors like the US and the UN Security Council to use radio jamming technology to stop RTLM's broadcasts is another flash-point for discussion. It reflects the general failure of the international community to intervene and stop the genocide.

More recent studies question the primacy of radio broadcasts in directly motivating the killers' actions.

These scholars see radio as an extension of years of state propaganda which was disseminated through schools, churches, and other government institutions.

In a detailed empirical study published in 2007, social scientist Scott Straus found that only 15% of perpetrators cited radio broadcasts as a key influence in their decision to kill Tutsi. Face-to-face intimidation and communication between peers appeared to have a stronger influence. Radio broadcasts were a secondary factor.

ENDURING DEBATE

The enduring debate about the role of media was central to a case before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The tribunal was tasked with prosecuting high level perpetrators and the masterminds of the genocide. The defendants in what was known as the Media Case included RTLM co-founder Ferdinand Nahimana, its executive Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza and Kangura founder and editor, Hassan Ngeze.

In 2003, all three were convicted of genocide, incitement to commit genocide, and persecution using radio broadcasts and newspaper articles as a crime against humanity. The conviction for committing genocide was overturned on appeal, but much of the original ruling was retained.

The Media Case was precedent-setting. It held media executives accountable for inciting genocide, regardless of other factors that may have influenced the perpetrators. Legal scholars suggest that the judgement will have a significant impact on future cases of incitement to genocide.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

We may never definitively settle

the "media effects" debate – that is, did radio and other media directly incite violence, or were they a secondary driver?

But the establishment of RTLM in 1993 was undoubtedly a clear warning sign to the world. In a 2000 report, the Organisation of African Unity suggested that silencing RTLM during the genocide would have had limited impact. The international community should have moved to address the hate propaganda before the killing started. It should have recognised the broadcasts as an essential part of the preparation for the genocide.

One mechanism for countering RTLM's hate propaganda could have come from the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda, which was deployed by the Security Council in 1993 to oversee the peace process. However, due to typical delays, the Mission's radio broadcast equipment was never shipped to Rwanda. The absence of an effective communication tool left the UN without the means to produce counter broadcasts. It could also not provide airtime for the voices of moderate Hutu leaders.

LESSONS REMAIN

Although many years have passed, the Rwandan genocide still has much to teach us about the centrality of media in cases of state violence. An analysis of media opens up important discussions about genocide prevention, the regulation of hate speech, and the appropriate forms of international intervention.

[the writer is Associate Professor and Faculty Scholar of Media and Information Studies, Western University]

China to destroy three lakh 'incorrect' world maps

KJM VARMA

BEIJING, APR 2 (PTI): Customs officials in China have ordered the destruction of three lakh more maps for not mentioning Arunachal Pradesh and Taiwan as part of its territory and decided to file a lawsuit against four persons for trying to export them to the Netherlands, according to a media report.

Last month, officials in China have destroyed 30,000 world maps printed in the country for incorrectly showing the borders with India and depicting Taiwan as a separate country.

China claims the north-eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of South Tibet. China routinely objects to Indian leaders visiting Arunachal Pradesh to highlight its stand.

India says the State of Arunachal Pradesh is its integral and inalienable part and Indian leaders visit Arunachal Pradesh from time to time, as they



visit other parts of the country. The two countries have so far held 21 rounds of talks to resolve the border dispute covering 3,488-km-long Line of Actual Control.

China also claims the estranged island of Taiwan as its part. The Global Times reported

on Tuesday that customs officers in South China's Guangdong Province will destroy more than three lakh world maps with boundary mistakes and file a lawsuit against four suspects for intending to export the maps to the Netherlands. The customs bureau at the

port of Wenjindu in China's Guangdong Province recovered 264,983 incorrect world maps in English for export to the Netherlands on January 17, an employee surnamed Wang from the customs' press office told the Global Times. The maps were printed by a company

in Dongguan in China's Guangdong province.

In total the company had printed 306,057 problematic maps, which will all be destroyed.

"Those maps jeopardised China's territorial integrity and will be destroyed soon," Wang said.

Mizoram CEO urges civil societies to reconsider poll boycott call

AIZAWL, APR 2 (PTI): Mizoram Chief Electoral Officer Ashish Kundra Tuesday appealed to a conglomerate of civil societies and student bodies to reconsider its decision to boycott the April 11 Lok Sabha elections in the state and observe indefinite bandh from April 8. The NGO Coordination Committee (NGOCC) Monday said it would boycott polls to the lone Mizoram Parliamentary seat if special polling booths are established in the state for Bru refugees staying in neighbouring Tripura.

The Election Commission is setting up 15 exclusive polling booths in the Mizoram-Tripura border Kanmun village for 12,081 Bru refugees, who are voters of Mizoram and now

housed in six camps in Tripura. The step had been taken in the November 2018 state assembly polls too.

Kundra urged the civil societies not to deprive the people of their democratic rights and to ensure that people of Mizoram has representation in Parliament.

"At a meeting held before the assembly election last year, it was decided that Bru voters living in the relief camps would exercise their franchise inside Mizoram, and it was arranged. Officials of the EC, the NGOCC and the state election department had attended the meeting," the CEO said.

He told reporters that as far as he knows, there is no agreement that the Bru refugees will cast

their votes in those polling stations of Mizoram where they were enrolled as voters.

The NGOCC had earlier threatened to launch agitation if temporary polling stations were set up for the Brus.

The organisation was of the opinion that those living outside Mizoram should not be allowed to vote in the state.

Thousands of Bru community people had been lodged in the six relief camps in North Tripura district since late 1997 after they fled from Mizoram in the wake of a communal tension.

The Centre and the governments of Tripura and Mizoram had taken steps to repatriate the Bru refugees but those efforts did not yield much.

Training of Micro Observers held in Namchi



NAMCHI, 02 APR (IPR): A daylong training of Micro Observers (MO) for the upcoming General Elections 2019 was conducted at the Conference Hall of South DAC, Namchi today. In attendance, during the training were Master Trainers, Former SDM, Jorethang, Bimal C Rai and SDM (Ravangla) cum Sector Magistrate, Jigme W Bhutia along with General Observer, Shrish Chandra Verma, General Observer for Parliamentary Constituency (South/West), Pankaj Agarwal (IAS) and SDM (HQ), Hemant Rai.

Master Trainer, Jigme W Bhutia in his PPT presentation spoke about the responsibilities of Micro Observers in the smooth conduct of polls. He stated that the tasks of MO revolve around reporting deviations in the polling process from the assigned polling station to the General Observer. He also added that the MO needs to observe the overall election process of the polling booth assigned to him and there-

fore for performing his duties well, he needs to understand the roles and responsibilities of official machinery of polling booth, Jigme Bhutia added. He also made them aware that if there is a possibility of any serious problem that arises during the poll day, information should immediately be conveyed by phone to the General Observer.

The resource persons for the day also asserted that the MO's have to observe all complaints made to him by the polling agents, election agents and electors during the poll and understand the seriousness and nature of the complaints. Likewise, he also informed the MO's about senior citizens, infirm and differently-abled voters. Additionally, he also briefed the MO's regarding the management outside and inside the polling stations and the duties of the polling team. He stated that those MOs who have been deployed in critical and sensitive polling centers, should have all the information of the allotted

booths accordingly.

During the course of the training the micro observers were apprised about EVMS, ballot unit, presiding officer and polling officers of the polling team, voter's slip, ballot account, mock poll and other process. Master Trainer, BC Rai provided the trainees with demonstration of EVMS and VVPAT followed by a hands-on session.

The General Observer in his address advised the Micro Observers to be vigilant and said that any serious deviation needs to be reported to him promptly. Directions regarding the presence of MOs in their respective polling booths throughout the polling day and observing all the processes of the elections as per the guidelines of ECI meticulously were also asserted by the General Observer. He also notified the MOs to be conversant with the laws and rules related to election conduct on the poll day and to ensure successful completion of polls.

Autism awareness must be created among people: Mamata



KOLKATA, APR 2 (PTI): Urging people to create awareness on autism, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said Tuesday that West Bengal will soon have a world-class autism township near Kolkata, where people suffering from the disorder will receive training, treatment and boarding facilities.

The centre, a first of its kind in India, is expected to have housing facilities for 350 residents and daycare centre for over 200 children, adolescents and adults, according to a state government official.

"Today is #WorldAu-

tism Awareness Day. We must create more awareness about autism among the people. You will be happy to know that a world-class autism township is coming up near #Kolkata, where autistic children and adults will receive training, treatment and boarding facilities," the CM tweeted. World Autism Awareness Day is observed every year on April 2 to generate awareness on the developmental disorder.

The theme for this year is Assistive Technologies, Active Participation.

EC issues notice to railways over BJP slogan on tea cups, PM Modi's picture in tickets

NEW DELHI, APR 2 (PTI): The Election Commission Tuesday called the railways approach towards enforcing the model code of conduct "lackadaisical" after allegations that poll norms were violated with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's picture on tickets and the slogan "Main Bhi Chowkidar" on tea cups.

The poll panel has issued a notice to the railways, asking it to submit a report by Thursday on the slogan on tea cups, so that it can take a call on whether it was a poll code violation.

The issue came to the fore after a passenger on the Kathgodam Shatabdi tweeted a picture of tea cups with the slogan, the

post went viral.

The railways said its has withdrawn the cup and penalised the contractor.

On the ticket issue, the EC has reprimanded the national transporter for not taking the code of conduct seriously.

"It has come to the notice of the commission that tea cups were provided to the passengers in the train of the Indian Railway by the NGO, namely "Sankalp", which contained the political slogan of the Bharatiya Janata Party and such matter is closely related to violation of the Model Code of Conduct," according to the notice.

BJP, Cong locked in tight battle in Arunachal assembly seat

ITANAGAR, APR 2 (PTI): A neck-and-neck electoral battle is on the cards in the assembly constituency of Pakke-Kesang, the newly created district in Arunachal Pradesh, where candidates of both the ruling BJP and the Congress claim to enjoy equal popularity.

BJP contestant B R Waghe and Congress nominee Atum Welly will vie for the seat, which was earlier a part of the East Kameng district.

Simultaneous Lok Sabha and assembly polls are going to be held in the state on April 11.

The Pakke-Kesang constituency was in the news after the 2014 assembly polls, as former deputy chief minister Kameng Dolo, who won as a Congress nominee, had to give up the seat following a Gauhati High Court order that declared his election null and void.

Atum Welly, who had contested the election as a BJP nominee, filed a petition against Dolo in the high court claiming that a fraudulent move threw him out of the race as the Election Commission accepted a forged letter declaring withdrawal of his nomination.

He alleged that his signature was forged in the withdrawal letter by Dolo.

In the by-election that followed on December 21, 2017, BJP candidate Waghe bagged the seat, defeating his lone rival Dolo of the Congress by a margin of 475 votes.

In 2019, the contest would be a tough one as both the candidates are equally popular among the 7,000 odd voters in the constituency, according to poll observers.



Welly, who quit the BJP to join the Congress last year, stressed on the possibility of rigging during the April 11 polls, while sitting MLA Waghe alleged that the Congress candidate has been resorting to 'cash for vote' tactics.

"The Congress candidate is alluring voters by paying them huge sum of money," Waghe alleged. Welly denied the charge, saying, "He (Waghe) is from the ruling party and everything is possible in the state for the BJP, not the Congress."

Jimmy Chiram, the superintendent of police of Pakke-Kesang district, contended that the administration has taken adequate measures to thwart any untoward incident.

"We have deployed two companies of central armed police forces and one company of Indian Reserve Battalion, along with civil police, to ensure violence-free polling in 26 booths, five of which are critical," Chiram added.

Deputy Commissioner T Messar said all arrangements have been made, including uploading of postal ballots on the Election Commission (EC) website.

"The nakas (check point) have been set up and patrolling intensified

in all the vulnerable areas of the district. While videography will be in place to record the polling process in the critical booths, the EC has also appointed flying squad and static surveillance teams to check the flow of cash during elections," the DC maintained.

This time, Waghe has chosen infrastructure development as his main poll plank, while Welly is attaching priority to issues of unemployment and road connectivity.

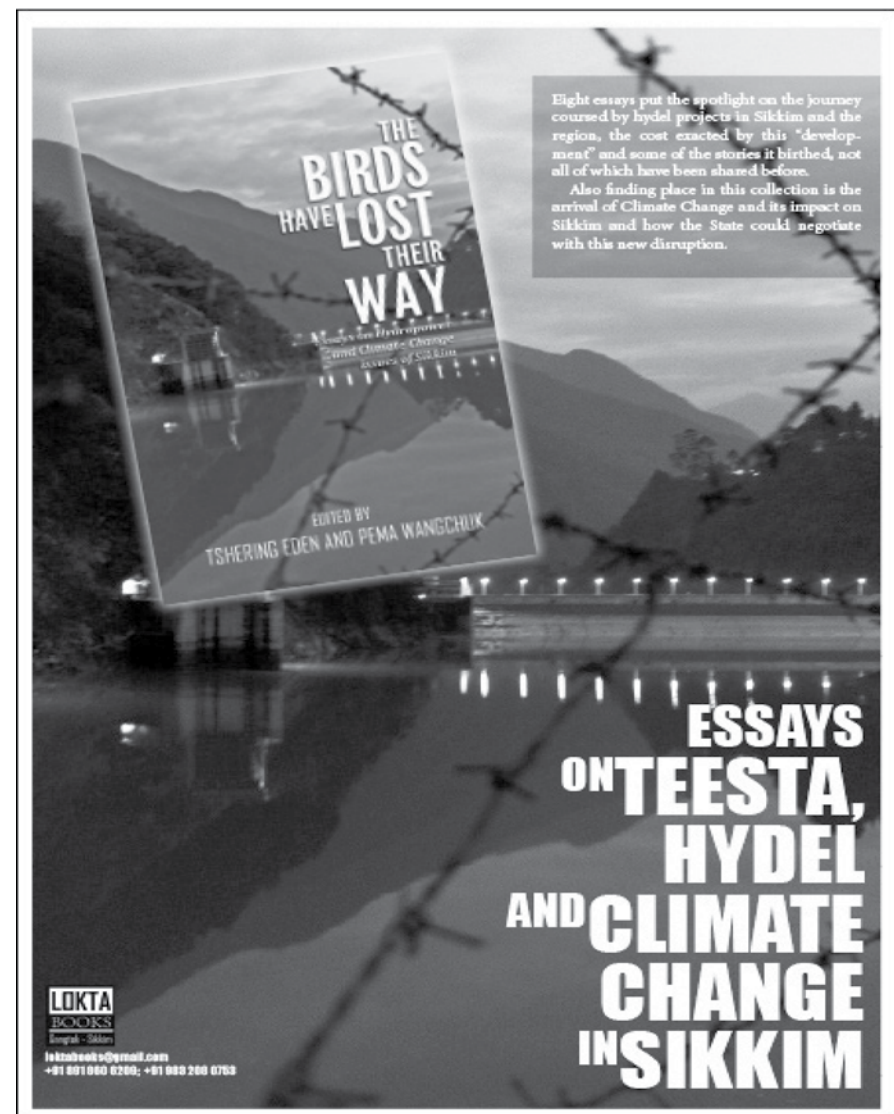
"My main priority will be to establish a state-of-the-art district secretariat and declare the Pakke-Paga festival a state festival. I also plan to commission a hydro project at Palin and ensure sustainable economic development for the unemployed youths," Waghe said.

"During my stint as the representative of the seat, I was able to give Pakke-Kesang the status of a 'district' and bring mobile connectivity to the region," he claimed.

Welly insisted that he would improve facilities in the health and education sectors, if voted to power.

According to poll analysts, Waghe has an edge over his rival as Dolo, along with his supporters, has recently quit the Congress to join the saffron party.

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Sarri fights to win over mutinous Chelsea fans

LONDON, APR 2 (AFP): Maurizio Sarri faces another angry vote of no confidence from frustrated Chelsea fans if the under-fire Italian fails to spark his spluttering side in Wednesday's clash against Brighton.

Sarri was subjected to vitriolic abuse from Chelsea supporters at Cardiff on Sunday in response to a painful performance that was just six minutes away from serving as the nadir of a miserable first season for the Blues boss.

Trailing 1-0 in the second half after being out-fought by the Premier League relegation candidates, Chelsea were on the rack and chants of "you don't know what you're doing" and "we want Sarri out" echoed out from the away end.

Chelsea's under-performing stars eventually raised themselves for just long enough to give Sarri a modicum of breathing space with two late goals to steal a sorely-needed 2-1 win.

That may have kept alive their hopes of a top four finish, but it did little to quell the feeling that Sarri is on borrowed time at Stamford Bridge.

Since an impressive 2-0 win over Tottenham raised hopes that Sarri could avoid the sack, his troubled team have reverted to lacklustre type.

Reflecting the pattern of a hugely frustrating season, Chelsea are once again churning out turgid performances that feature large spells where they dominate possession without showing any cutting edge.

In the league games since they beat Tottenham, Sarri's side needed an inspired display from goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga to narrowly beat lowly Fulham, while it took a last-minute equaliser from Eden Hazard to rescue a home draw against Wolves.

A woeful 2-0 loss at Everton was following by an even more limp effort at Cardiff, which looked certain to end in an embarrassing defeat before Cesar Azpilicueta's clearly offside equaliser triggered their late fightback.

A repeat of that woeful display against struggling Brighton is certain to bring more opprobrium for Sarri, who has already suffered several nights on the boos at the Bridge this season.

I didn't really know about the hat-trick, says Curran

MOHALI, APR 2 (PTI): The youngest to notch up an IPL hat-trick, England and Kings XI Punjab all-rounder Sam Curran said he had "absolutely no idea" that he had taken one during the game against Delhi Capitals here.

The left-arm medium pacer's hat-trick, which was the first of this edition of the IPL, helped Kings XI Punjab script an exciting 14-run win over Delhi Capitals on Monday night.

The 20-year-old from Northampton, KXIP's costliest buy this year with a price tag of Rs 7.20 crore, surpassed Rohit Sharma in becoming the youngest to take an IPL hat-trick. Sharma had achieved the feat as a 22-year-old for Deccan Chargers against Mumbai Indians in 2009.

Curran was adjudged the player of the match for snapping four for 11 as Delhi Capitals collapsed from 144/3 to 152 all-out while chasing a target of 167.

"I didn't really know



(about the hat-trick)," said Curran.

"When we won the game, one of the players came up to me and said 'you've got a hat-trick'. I had absolutely no idea I had taken one," he elaborated.

Son of former Zimbabwe all-rounder the late

Kevin Curran and younger brother of another England international player Tom Curran, cricket is indeed a family affair for young sensation.

On Tuesday, he was drafted into the match when the in-form Chris Gayle was ruled out due to a back injury.

Curran filled in the slot quite well, making a quick-fire 10-ball 20 in the opening position. He struck three fours and a six in his short but exciting stay at the crease.

Curran's hat-trick started in the 18th over when he got rid of Harshal Patel off the last

ball of the over.

He then dismissed Kagiso Rabada and Sandeep Lamichhane off successive deliveries at the start of the 20th over.

"My main focus was obviously that last ball when Rabada came and I knew his strengths and where I could bowl, so I

was always aiming for his stumps and his toes," Curran said.

The visitors needed just 23 runs from 21 balls with seven wickets in hand, but Curran turned the match on its head.

"Ash (R Ashwin) told me what to do. Ryan Harris was standing at

the third man region. Against the local batters, I had to ask our players, 'Where does he hit?'. Shami got two amazing overs in the end which helped," he said.

Curran said he needs to work hard on his batting.

"I have worked a lot on my batting over the last few months. I like to work hard on my batting, bowling and fielding. I have opened in school cricket, but think this was the first time in professional cricket. Hopefully, we keep winning games," he said.

Considered a prodigal talent, Curran has played nine Tests for England, averaging a decent 32 with the bat and with 15 wickets in his kitty.

He made his first-class debut at 17 for Surrey, making him the second youngest in history after Tony Lock.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) declared him as one of the eight players to watch out for in its 2018 annual awards.

I am speechless, we panicked: DC captain Shreyas Iyer

MOHALI, APR 2 (PTI): Left speechless after Delhi Capitals' collapse, skipper Shreyas Iyer said his team simply "panicked" and "miscalculated" the target in its 14-run loss to Kings XI Punjab in an IPL fixture here. Delhi were going strong at 144 for 3 in the 17th over, chasing 167 but Sam Curran's hat-trick saw the visitors being bowled out for 152 in 19.2 overs. "I am really speechless. It is a crucial match and losing such matches is not going to benefit us," Iyer said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"Really disappointing. With the way we were going, we came to run-a-ball and to lose from there. We didn't play smart cricket and Punjab outplayed us in all the departments. "We miscalculated the target. I think It was just a panic in between. They got two wickets in succession, (Chris) Morris and (Rishabh) Pant and there we lost the match. Our batsmen did not taking initiative to win the game," the skipper said.

In their earlier match, Delhi Capitals had won the game in a Super over despite looking good at one stage to overhaul the target against Kolkata Knight Riders.

Iyer said his team needs to learn from their mistakes. "I couldn't figure it out what happened today. It happened in the previous match as well, we were going really good and suddenly ball-to-ball.... these are key factors we have to work on," he said.

"Our batting has been really dominant right from the start but we need to learn



from this small things." Iyer was also critical of their bowling. "Also we didn't bowl that great to be honest, we got a bad start but we controlled in between and that is something we need to take forward," the Delhi skipper said.

"Looking at the quality we have, I think we shouldn't be losing such matches."

Asked about Sandeep Lamichhane, who took two for 27, Iyer said: "Sandeep is a confident lad, he has been playing all over the world, he has been bowling invariably really well. So I am really confident as a captain to pass on the ball to him at any time.

"The way he varies the pace and he spins the ball even when the wicket is really flat. I have great confidence on him and definitely he will do well in the tournament."

Iyer said Delhi will have enough time to work on their shortcoming since it happened early in the tournament. "In a way, it

is good that it happened at the start of the tournament, there will lot of learning out of this and we will look to comeback strong," he said. "I feel these things happen in the game, it is uncontrollable. We just have to apply ourself in between and just be smart, everyone has got a good mindset.

"It is not that we are weak. We have played lot of cricket and have good experience also. We just have to smart and be calculative in taking risks."

A delighted KXIP skipper Ravichandran Ashwin said that they were waiting for Rishabh Pant to make a mistake and cash in from thereon. "Not many times, you defend. When Rishabh hit the six, we just needed to hang in there. Credit to Shami and Curran. We were probably 25 runs short. We backed ourselves to defend with three spinners," he said.

Ban players who fudge age: Gopichand



AMIT KUMAR DAS

NEW DELHI, APR 2 (PTI): India's chief national coach Pullela Gopichand believes the Badminton Association of India (BAI) should ban players who indulge in age-fudging as "examples" need to be made of wrongdoers for any tangible change.

"I think you need to have firm decisions and strong examples to ensure that age fudging which is a big menace should stop, so there should be a ban on the players," Gopichand told PTI.

Age-fudging has been a big problem in Indian sports with some associations such as the Indian cricket board (BCCI) and Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) handing out bans on players found guilty.

Former India coach Vimal Kumar, who guided Saina Nehwal to the world No.1 position and the All England Championship final in 2015, however, feels banning the players will be unfair.

"Banning a player for 2-3 years is not right because suspending them will kill a talent," he said.

"If a player is found over-aged in U-15, U-17 or U-19 and you find ample evidence that they have done the manipulation, then the punishment could be that you make it clear that you can't play in any age category tournaments and only play in seniors."

In 2016, some badminton players had come under the scanner with the Sports Integrity Unit of the Central Bureau of Investigation submitting a report to the BAI saying

that four junior players had altered their age records.

In December last year, a group of 37 parents of budding shuttlers moved the Karnataka High Court, asking for a directive to BAI to implement a policy for detecting and eliminating age fraud from the sport.

The BAI, on its part, deactivated the IDs of players who were found carrying two different birth certificates and asked them to undergo medical examination and submit the reports.

"We have scrutinised the current list of players and those who were found to have two certificates have been issued fresh IDs after considering the higher age document," BAI Secretary General Ajay Singhania said.

"Also, we have directed the players, who have not registered their birth certificate within a year of birth, to get tested in a govt hospital and submit documents. They can't participate in any tournament till they furnish the documents."

Singhania said the issue of age-fudging and the quantum of punishment will come up during the selection committee meeting after the General Elections. BAI President Himanta Biswa Sarma is an active politician and will be busy with commitments for his party, the ruling BJP.

"We will be taking up this issue and decide the punishment during the selection meeting for junior and senior. It is likely to be held after election," he said.

India's first professional Kho-Kho league launched

NEW DELHI, APR 2 (PTI): The Kho-Kho Federation of India (KKFI) on Tuesday launched an ambitious franchise-based league for the sport named Ultimate Kho-Kho. The KKFI and Dabur India Limited's vice-chairman Amit Burman -- in his personal capacity -- will conduct the 21-day IPL-style league, which will see eight franchise teams playing a total of 60 matches in a double round-robin format.

There will be an initial draft of players where athletes from across the world, including England, South Korea, Iran, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, will be part of the eight franchise.

The teams will also have the opportunity to include U-18 players in their squads with the aim of developing a pool of young players. "Indigenous sports are the manifestation of the local genius and ethos. Surely, this league will go a long way in enhancing the popularity of this very Indian sport and open new vista for



the players and the fans," said sports minister Rajyavardhan Rathore, who joined the event via video chat.

KKFI and Burman have together appointed Tenzing Niyogi (former sports advisory leader at Ernst and Young) as the CEO of the league. Indian Olympic Association Secretary General and former

KKFI president Rajeev Mehta is the chairman of the league. "I had this idea of making a Kho-Kho league back in 2017 when I was president of the KKFI. I wanted to build a system for our indigenous sport. Our aim is to restore the glory this sport has seen in our country," Mehta, who is currently KKFI chairman, said. "Olympic Council of Asia

(OCA) has given recognition to Kho-Kho and it is set to become a competitive sport in 2022 Asian Games. We are bidding for 2032 Olympics and if we win the bid, the host country can add two-three sports in the roster. We will include Kho-Kho and Kabaddi in the Olympic roster if we win the 2032 Olympics bid," he added. KKFI president Sudhanshu Mittal said, "This is an ambitious initiative and I believe this league will change the Kho-Kho landscape in the country. It is going to be a game changer." Kho-Kho is played in around 20 countries in the world, mostly in Asia. A Kho-Kho match consists of four innings of nine minutes each and will be played on specially developed mats in state-of-the-art indoor stadiums.

Tough New Zealand gun laws easily pass first hurdle

WELLINGTON, APRIL 2 (AFP): New legislation to tighten New Zealand gun laws in the wake of the Christchurch mosque shootings drew overwhelming support when it was introduced to parliament on Tuesday.

Lawmakers voted 119-1 in favour of the bill, which bans military-style semi-automatic (MSSA) rifles like those used in the March 15 rampage by a white supremacist which claimed 50 lives.

Police Minister Stuart Nash said the attack by accused gunman Brenton Tarrant showed current firearms restrictions were inadequate.

"Far too many people in this country have access to these dangerous firearms for no legitimate purpose, but at significant risk to the public," he said.

The sole holdout against the legislation was David Seymour, a conservative whose ACT Party has a single seat in parliament.

Seymour criticised the speed with which his colleagues were handling the legislation, fast-tracking a process that usually



takes months so that the law will take effect by the end of next week.

"It is important that we maintain our tradition of sober, robust law-making at all times, but especially now," he said in a statement.

"The best way to show defiance in the face of terrorism is to refuse to erode our democratic institutions," Seymour had intended to try to stall the legislation in parliament but missed his chance when he ar-

rived in the chamber late after spending too long explaining his plan to media.

Nash was unapologetic about the hurried timetable for outlawing MSSAs, which will see the ban put to the vote twice more before it would formally become law.

"We don't ever want to see an attack like this in our country again," he said. "We are compelled to act quickly." Further curbs -- potentially including a gun register,

tighter vetting and stricter gun storage rules -- are set to be passed by the end of the year.

New Zealand has about 1.5 million privately owned firearms, or 0.3 per person, including an estimated 13,500 MSSAs. The government has also said it will review laws dealing with hate speech.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, widely praised for her compassionate and decisive leadership following the Islamophobic attack, has

also called for action by social media giants after the alleged gunman live streamed the atrocity online.

She has also ordered a judicial inquiry into whether intelligence services could have prevented the attack.

Nash said the largest criminal investigation in New Zealand's history was now probing the country's worst mass shooting.

"Dozens of specialist police investigators, supported by Australian federal and state police, are following up concerns about a number of high-risk individuals," he told parliament.

"As we meet today, a number of people are before the courts for trying to promote hateful publications and videos of death; for unlawfully possessing weapons; for making threats against our citizens, and, for murder." Tarrant was apprehended soon after his killing spree and the 28-year-old Australian is due to appear in Christchurch High Court on Friday via video link from an Auckland prison.

Air is so dirty in northern Thailand, leader flies to see it



BANGKOK, APR 2 (AP): The air hanging over Thailand's far north has become so polluted, the prime minister went Tuesday to see in person what's been called a severe health crisis.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha arrived by helicopter at an army base in Chiang Mai, a city that's a popular tourist destination where seasonal haze has been unusually bad and prolonged this year.

Usually the pollution has been blamed on the burning of forests in neighboring Myanmar. Adding to the problem this year are wildfires caused by a drier-than-usual dry season as well as Thai farmers

and hunters clearing land. Prayuth handed out firefighting supplies like hoes and told local military personnel and firefighters that he traveled to Chiang Mai because he wanted to show his support. He'll later meet with local officials to discuss budgets and other issues related to combatting the smog.

Standard measurements of Chiang Mai's air quality have soared way in the danger zone and remained there for many weeks.

Once such measurement, PM2.5, refers to airborne fine particulates 2.5 microns or less in diameter that are small enough to be sucked deep into the lungs and

enter the bloodstream. High PM2.5 levels indicate pollution that is severe enough to cause respiratory problems and that over time may raise risks of cardiovascular disease and cancers.

Thailand's official safety limit is 50 micrograms of PM2.5 per cubic meter of air, higher than that suggested by the United Nations.

In recent weeks in the north, the levels have regularly been reaching four to six times the Thai safety limit, and in one case peaked at 700 mcg.

Local news reports have described efforts to get face masks to Chiang Mai residents that are capable of filtering out PM2.5 matter.

Pakistan says Indian fire killed 3 of its soldiers

BY SAJJAD HUSSAIN ISLAMABAD, APR 2 (PTI): The Pakistan Army said on Tuesday that it lost three soldiers due to "unprovoked" Indian firing across the Line of Control.

Military spokesman Major Gen Asif Ghafoor said in a statement that Indian troops resorted to "unprovoked" firing in Rakhchakri area of Rawalakot Sector along the LOC.

Three soldiers were killed, he said.

Ghafoor said that the Pakistan Army responded effectively.

Meanwhile, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir "Prime Minister" Raja Farooq Haider on Monday said his government has prepared a plan for evacuation of civilian population from the highly vulnerable areas along the Line of Control (LoC) in case of emergency, according to a report in Dawn.

Tensions between India and Pakistan flared up after the Pulwama terror attack claimed by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed.

Amid mounting outrage, the Indian Air Force carried out a counter-terror operation, hitting what it said was a JeM training camp in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan on February 26. The next day, Pakistan Air Force retaliated and downed a MiG-21 in an aerial combat and captured an Indian pilot, who was handed over to India later.

Indian satellite destruction created 400 pieces of debris, endangering ISS: NASA



WASHINGTON, APR 2 (AFP): The head of NASA Tuesday branded India's destruction of one of its satellites a "terrible thing" that had created 400 pieces of orbital debris and led to new dangers for astronauts aboard the International Space Station.

Jim Bridenstine was addressing employees of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration five days after India shot down a low-orbiting satellite in a missile test to prove it was among the world's advanced space powers.

Not all of the pieces were big enough to track, Bridenstine explained. "What we are tracking right now, objects big enough to track -- we're

talking about 10 centimeters (six inches) or bigger -- about 60 pieces have been tracked."

The Indian satellite was destroyed at a relatively low altitude of 180 miles (300 kilometers), well below the ISS and most satellites in orbit.

But 24 of the pieces "are going above the apogee of the International Space Station," said Bridenstine.

"That is a terrible, terrible thing to create an event that sends debris at an apogee that goes above the International Space Station," he continued, adding: "That kind of activity is not compatible with the future of human spaceflight."

"It's unacceptable and NASA needs to be very clear about what

its impact to us is."

The US military tracks objects in space to predict the collision risk for the ISS and for satellites.

They are currently tracking 23,000 objects larger than 10 centimeters.

That includes about 10,000 pieces of space debris, of which nearly 3,000 were created by a single event: a Chinese anti-satellite test in 2007 at 530 miles from the surface.

As a result of the Indian test, the risk of collision with the ISS has increased by 44 percent over 10 days, Bridenstine said.

But the risk will dissipate over time as much of the debris will burn up as it enters the atmosphere.

China to destroy three lakh 'incorrect' world maps

BY K J M VARMA BEIJING, APR 2 (PTI): Customs officials in China have ordered the destruction of three lakh more maps for not mentioning Arunachal Pradesh and Taiwan as part of its territory and decided to file a lawsuit against four persons for trying to export them to the Netherlands, according to a media report.

Last month, officials in China have destroyed 30,000 world maps printed in the country for incorrectly showing the borders with India and depicting Taiwan as

a separate country.

China claims the north-eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of South Tibet. China routinely objects to Indian leaders visiting Arunachal Pradesh to highlight its stand.

India says the State of Arunachal Pradesh is its integral and inalienable part and Indian leaders visit Arunachal Pradesh from time to time, as they visit other parts of the country.

The two countries have so far held 21 rounds of talks to resolve

the border dispute covering 3,488-km-long Line of Actual Control.

China also claims the estranged island of Taiwan as its part.

The Global Times reported on Tuesday that customs officers in South China's Guangdong Province will destroy more than three lakh world maps with boundary mistakes and file a lawsuit against four suspects for intending to export the maps to the Netherlands.

The customs bureau at the port of Wenjinu in China's Guangdong Prov-

ince recovered 264,983 incorrect world maps in English for export to the Netherlands on January 17, an employee sur-named Wang from the customs' press office told the Global Times.

The maps were printed by a company in Dongguan in China's Guangdong province.

In total the company had printed 306,057 problematic maps, which will all be destroyed.

"Those maps jeopardised China's territorial integrity and will be destroyed soon," Wang said.

MI, CSK to face off in riveting contest

SS RAMASWAMY MUMBAI, APR 2 (PTI): With skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni in red-hot form, Chennai Super Kings will start favourites against the slightly off-colour Mumbai Indians when the IPL's two most successful teams have their first showdown of the season here Wednesday.

The Super Kings, three-time winners of the T20 League like the hosts, have been on a roll with three wins on the trot that have boosted them to the top of the table. Mumbai Indians, on the other hand, had a familiar stuttering start with a victory sand-

wich between two defeats. Recent history in head-to-head clashes is in MI's favour, as the Rohit Sharma-led home team has beaten their rivals in four out of the last five contests.

Overall too Mumbai holds a 14-12 advantage over CSK, including once in the defunct Champions T20 League.

However, CSK seem to hold the edge this time around, especially with Dhoni rolling back the years with a typically robust 75 off 46 balls that lifted his team from 27 for three to 175 for five against Rajasthan Royals at home in their last match. And with

Dwayne Bravo holding off Rajasthan's charge at the end with the ball, CSK maintained their 100 per cent record.

The Super Kings have the edge in batting depth and in spin bowling variety, while Mumbai have the better pace attack on a pitch that is bound to offer bounce and carry.

Mumbai are over-dependent on openers Rohit and South African Quinton de Kock. The rest need to step up.

The hosts will have the option of fielding new recruit, West Indian fast bowler Alzarri Joseph, or all rounder Ben Cutting in place of the off-boil Lasith Malinga.



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BARRYMORE BRIGHT! The actress, Drew Barrymore is seen in a vibrant red jumpsuit and rainbow bag in NYC.

Mick Jagger to undergo heart surgery

LOS ANGELES, APR 2 (PTI): Veteran rocker Mick Jagger is set to undergo heart surgery.

According to the Rolling Stone magazine, the 75-year-old musician will have the surgery to replace a valve in his heart.

As a result of the treatment and recovery period, the Rolling Stones postponed the North American leg of their 'No Filter' tour, which was supposed to run from April 20 to July 29. The legendary English rock band were due to play 17 shows in the US and Canada.

"Mick Jagger has been advised by doctors that he cannot go on tour at this time as he needs medical treatment. The doctors have advised Mick that he is expected

to make a complete recovery so that he can get back on stage as soon as possible," the band's representative had said in a statement issued on Saturday.

Jagger had also took to Twitter to apologise to his fans.

"I really hate letting you down like this. I'm devastated for having to postpone the tour but I will be working very hard to be back on stage as soon as I can," he had tweeted.

Drudge Report first reported the news saying that the procedure will take place on Friday in New York. The publication added that Jagger is expected to make a full recovery and return to touring this summer.

Tamil filmmaker J Mahendran dies at 79



CHENNAI, APR 2 (PTI): Veteran filmmaker J Mahendra, known for infusing realism in Tamil cinema and for giving superstar Rajinikanth his career breakthrough with "Mullum Malarum", died here on Tuesday at the age of 79.

The filmmaker passed away after a brief illness at his residence, a source close to the family said.

He was in the hospital for about a week for kidney related ailments and was discharged on Monday.

His last rites will be held on later in the day at his suburban residence.

He is survived by son John who is also a film director.

Mahendran was introduced to the world of cinema as a critic while working as a sub-editor in a Tamil magazine during his student days.

He started his journey in the movies as a screenplay writer and made his directorial debut with 1978 film "Mullum Malarum", featuring Rajinikanth in the lead.

Later, Mahendran and Rajinikanth worked on films like "Kaali" and "Johnny".

The director's popularity peaked with his movies

"Uthiri Pookkal" (1979) and "Nenjathai Killathay" (1980).

In the past few years, Mahendran had switched to acting. He played pivotal parts in "Kamaraj" (2004), "Petta" opposite Rajinikanth and Vijay's "Theri". He was last seen in Tamil film "Boomerang", which released on March 8.

Mahendran was also the founding member of Blue Ocean Film and Television Academy here.

Speaking to PTI, the filmmaker's long time associate and producer G Dhananjayan said Mahendra redefined the Tamil cinema at a time when it was dominated by the trend of delivering lengthy dialogues.

"He brought the touch of realism into Tamil cinema and it made people connect more to his movies. Mahendran is the forefather of realistic Tamil cinema," Dhananjayan added.

Filmmaker AR Murugadoss took to Twitter to pay homage to the director.

"It is deeply saddening to hear the demise of one of the pioneer filmmaker #Mahendran sir. You and your films live forever in our hearts sir. Rest in peace," he wrote.

You're not obligated to make social commentary through your art: Farah Khan

MUMBAI, APR 2 (PTI): Filmmaker-choreographer Farah Khan says when celebrities are attached to social causes it makes a huge impact in creating awareness but one is not obligated to make a commentary using their art. The "Om Shanti Om" director said since every individual is different, even their art will have different things to say. "There is no obligation and there should never be an obligation on art. It should come from within you. Whether they want to speak about something, or highlight a cause," Farah told PTI.

"Not everyone is vocal, fiery and feisty. If you feel like doing it, you come out and do it," she added. The director, however, said films as a medium have often tackled societal stigmas on screen and now with the boom in OTT platform, there are more opportunities. "To a great extent Bollywood films do their bit. A film like 'Taare Zameen Par', for example, helped create awareness. Now we have a series of platforms too so we should do it." She was speaking on the sidelines of 75th anniversary celebration of Jai Vakeel Foundation on World Autism Day.

Farah said it's extremely important to create awareness regarding intellectual disability in the country where it's considered a huge stigma. "The awareness regarding autistic children's need is missing in our country. According to last year's data, almost two-three percent of our population is mentally challenged, which means two and a half crores. Do we see them in cinema halls, parks, malls?"

"Because the stigma is tremendous. The awareness that they need to be included in what we call a 'normal' society is needed. May be next time I'll do a dance workshop for these kids because they love arts, painting and dancing," she added.



Election Symbol

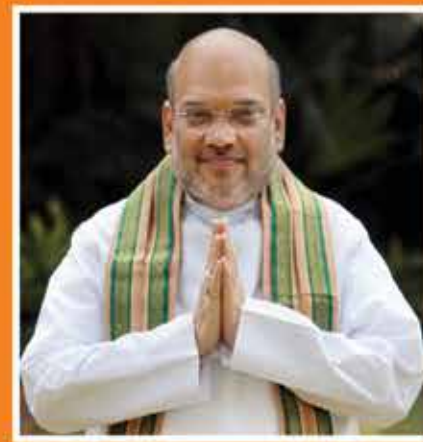
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