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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## CM recommends 4 new awards to celebrate excellence in journalism

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 NOV:

Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay], speaking as the chief guest at the National Press Day event here at Mannag Bhawan, suggested that four new awards be instituted by the State Government to recognize excellence in journalism in Sikkim.

He proposed that a Chief Minister's Award for Best Rural Reporting, CM's Award for Best Climate Change Reporting, CM's Award for Best Women's Issue Reporting and CM's Award for Best Human Rights Reporting.

Speaking at the event, he said that such recognition would be an apt recognition of the work of local journalists on issues of regional and global significance.

"The scale of the award is not as important as the gesture of recognition," he said.

He also stressed that his government, and he personally as well, were fully committed to the idea of a free press and urged journalists to use



this free environment to deliver the best journalism to Sikkim.

He invited criticism and highlighted that a free press was an asset not just for the people but also for the government because it helped keep governance accountable and effective.

He stressed that the SKM Government would above tokenism to ensure that journal-

ists worked and reported in a free environment, and echoing his National Press Day message released yesterday, assured that no pressure will be exerted on media to toe any line.

While assuring to address all issues facing the media, he assured that he was not expecting any quid pro quo out of this and was confident that media would itself en-

sure that truth and objectivity will be prioritized in reporting.

His government, he added, welcomed criticism because it was keen to improve and deliver.

The CM assured that all concerns of the Press Club of Sikkim, including provision of health insurance cover for the media fraternity and pension will be deliberated upon by the State Government

and provided by and by.

Reiterating that a free press was the cornerstone of democracy, the CM said the State Government is fully committed to upholding freedom of press and expression and will discourage any external interference or regulation on the press.

The CM, who attended the event as chief guest, was accompanied by his cabinet col-

leagues, MLAs, Advisors and senior government officials.

IPR Minister Lok Nath Sharma, in his address, applauded the role of press in the State and urged every member of the press fraternity to continue their duties to be more responsive, proactive and accountable with the highest standards of professionalism. He expressed grat-

itude towards the CM for making it possible to handover the Press Bhawan to the Press Club of Sikkim within two months of the announcement.

He also proposed that digital displays be installed at administrative centres to inform the lay people about government schemes and public orientated programmes. He also advised de-

partmental officials to be more proactive in research and rural reporting in close proximity of the people and the government.

He also underlined on high degree of faith and belief of the people on the news report of established media houses and advised that constructive journalism be continued in the State. He also

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### Uttarakhand CM launches virtual classes project

DEHRADUN, NOV 16 (PTI):

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on Saturday launched a project that will connect 500 secondary schools to virtual classrooms and said schools in the state facing a shortage of teachers will benefit from the new technology.

Virtual classes are attended through video conferences where students can meet the teacher on a real-time basis and ask questions.

An estimated 1.90 lakh students of 500 government-run secondary schools in the state will benefit from the project, an official release here said.

Using the platform to interact with students of the schools at the launch, Rawat said, "No technology can replace teachers in an education system but schools with a shortage of teachers will definitely benefit from the new technology."

Initially, 150 schools have been connected with the project, which works on a two-way seamless interactivity, and the remaining 350 will be linked with it over the next 15 days, according to the release.

### SE's Bijoy Gurung conferred YN Bhandari Memorial Award for Excellence in Journalism



GANGTOK, 16 NOV (IPR): Associate Editor, Sikkim Express, Bijoy Gurung, was today conferred the YN Bhandari Memorial Award for Excellence in Journalism while Senior Journalist Bhanu Raj Thapa was awarded the Grameen Patrakarita Purashkar.

Chief Minister PS Ta-

mang [Golay] handed over the awards during the National Press Day function organized by Information & Public Relations Department here at Mannan Bhawan today.

The YN Bhandari Memorial Award is presented annually by the State Government while the Grameen Patrakarita

Purashkar has been instituted by the Press Club of Sikkim. The award has been instituted in the memory of the Late YN Bhandari, a respected journalist who passed away a few years ago and was originally instituted by his family.

On the occasion of National Press Day, the An-

nual Grant of Rs 5 lakhs was also handed over to the Press Club of Sikkim by the State Government.

Likewise, Positive Journalism Grants of Rs 50,000 each were presented to five journalists - Shekhar Khawas [Himalayan Darpan], Jeewan Katuwal [Hamro Awaaz], Pratima Rai [Freelance Journalist, West Sikkim], Thakur Subedi [Hamro Prajashakti] and Madhu Sharma [Yug Awaaz].

The chief guest also handed over the documents and keys of the much awaited Press Club Bhawan to the PCS president, Joseph Lepcha, today. The newly set up Press Club Bhawan is located at the Tourism Department Complex near MP Golai at 5th Mile, Tadong.

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### Sikkim students hold special prayer meet for Machong murder victim



#### SUMMIT TIMES

GANGTOK, 16 NOV:

Sikkim Students Association, Delhi, convened a special prayer meet in the lawns of New Sikkim House, New Delhi, in the memory of the Machong murder victim, a press release informs.

It was very heartening to see a large number of students turning up for the meet despite

their busy schedule, the organizers convey in a press release.

Assistant Professor, Jamia Milia Islamia University, Sunil Pradhan, who is currently pursuing his PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University and is the advisor to the Association, was also present for the prayer meet.

President of the association, Rinchen Dolkar,

along with Snigdha Basnet, Kalden Dorjee, and Albart Gurung presented their views and urged students to be more engaged in raising issues pertaining to the safety and security of people in Sikkim.

This event was conducted to register that students studying in Delhi were equally disturbed by the Machong incident.

## Ayyappa temple opens, 10 women sent back by police

SABARIMALA, NOV 16 (PTI): Amid tight security, thousands of devotees offered prayers at the Lord Ayyappa temple when it opened for the annual Mandala-Makaravilakku puja on Saturday, though police said 10 women were sent back from Pamba base as they were in the "barred" age group.

The temple has reopened just days after a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court referred to a larger bench the matter related to entry of women into the hill temple and other issues related to various faiths.

The state and temple precincts had witnessed protests by right wing outfits and BJP workers last year after the LDF government had decided to implement the Supreme courts verdict of September 28, 2018 allowing women of all age groups to offer prayers at the shrine. Though the apex court did not

stay its earlier order allowing entry of women in the Lord Ayyappa temple, the LDF government in Kerala this time said the shrine is not a ground for activism and made it clear that it would not encourage women who want to visit the temple for publicity.

Police on Saturday evening said at least 10 women, who were part of a 30-member group from Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, were sent back from Pamba, five km from the shrine, as they were found to be in the age group of 10-50 years. Females in this age group have traditionally been barred from praying at the temple.

"We checked their identity cards and found that they were in the barred age group and informed them about the current situation in Sabarimala. They did not proceed further," a police official said. Early this year, two

women in the barred age group-- Bindhu and Kanakadurga--had trekked the holy hills and offered prayers at the shrine, scripting history on January 2.

However, Devaswom Minister Kadakampally Surendran has said those who want to visit the temple can procure a court order to enter the temple.

At five pm on Saturday, Kandararu Mahesh Mohanararu opened the sanctum sanctorum of the temple, located in a reserve forest of the Western Ghats in Pathanamthitta district of the state, and performed the pooja.

The devotees from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and other neighbouring states, who were allowed to trek the hill from 2 pm, climbed the sacred 18 steps to the temple with the "irumudikettu" (sacred bag containing the offerings to the Lord) after the priests performed the

"padipooja". While A K Sudheer Namboodiri took charge as Sabarimala melshanti (chief priest), M.S. Parameswaran Namboodiri who was to take charge as priest of the Malikappuram Devi Temple could not do so following a death in his family.

He is likely to take charge by November 23, according to officials. The Devaswom board, which manages the temples in the state, has made elaborate arrangements to provide maximum amenities to the devotees.

The unprecedented floods during August last year had played havoc with the pilgrimage season with most of the facilities for the devotees being destroyed.

Resting places for the devotees at Nilackal, Pamba and Sannidhanam have already been set up along with medical, water and toilet facilities.

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## NRC in Assam targeting religious minorities: US commission on religious freedom

BY LALIT K JHA

**WASHINGTON, Nov 16 (PTI):** A federal US commission on international religious freedom has alleged that National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam is a tool to “target religious minorities and to render Muslims stateless”.

Observing that the final NRC list, which validates bona fide Indian citizens of Assam, has excluded 19 lakh residents, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (US-CIRF) on Friday said that a number of domestic and international organisations have expressed concern that the NRC is a “targeted mechanism to disenfranchise Assam’s Bengali Muslim community, implicitly establishing a religious requirement for citizenship and potentially rendering large numbers of Muslims stateless.”

The National Register of Citizens (NRC) is a register containing names of all genuine Indian citizens. The process to update the register in Assam began following a Supreme Court order in 2013, with the state’s nearly 33 million people having to prove that they were Indian nationals prior to March 24, 1971.

The updated final NRC was released on August 31, with over 1.9 million applicants failing to make it to the list.

The USCIRF in Issue Brief: India released on Friday said the NRC “as a tool to target religious minorities and, in particular, to render Indian Muslims stateless has become one more example of the downward trend in religious freedom conditions within India.”

Prepared by policy analyst Harrison Akins, the USCIRF alleged that following the August

2019 release of the NRC, the BJP government has taken steps that “reflect an anti-Muslim bias.”

The BJP has indicated its intent to create a religious test for Indian citizenship that would favour Hindus and selected religious minorities but exclude Muslims, the US-CIRF said.

Assam has seen a huge influx from other places, particularly Bangladesh, since the early 20th century. It did not stop even after Independence, with a large number of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, both Hindus and Muslims, settling there.

Updating of NRC is a statutory, transparent, legal process mandated by the Supreme Court of India. This is not an executive-driven process, the Ministry of External Affairs has said in response to questions on the NRC.

“The process is being monitored by the Supreme Court directly and the government is acting in accordance with the directives issued by the court. The apex court of the land has itself set the deadlines for all steps that have been taken so far,” it said in a detailed statement in September.

The statement also said that the NRC is a fair process based on scientific methods.

“It is a non-discriminatory process, which leaves no room for bias and injustice. As can be seen from the application form for data entry in NRC, there was no column in the application asking for religion of the applicant,” the statement said, adding that anyone excluded from the list has a right to file an appeal within 120 days of receiving a notification exclusion, to the designated Tribunal.

## Khandu for discussion on party-less panchayat election



**NAMSAI (ARUNACHAL PRADESH), Nov 16 (PTI):** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday urged the media fraternity to organise an event to discuss if panchayat polls in the state could be fought on non-party basis, saying that would enhance the possibility of election of “genuine leaders”.

Addressing journalists on the occasion of the National Press Day here, he also called upon them to play the role of a watchdog to root out corruption, the agenda of the state government.

“If elections are held on party line, many genuine candidates may not get tickets as parties have their own dynamics. But if it is fought not on party-basis, people could elect a genuine leader who can lead the society,” Khandu said.

The chief minister said an event could be organised by media houses where all stakeholders would discuss the issue.

Khandu said, “Corruption is going on in the

state. We have reports that benefits of government schemes do not reach the actual beneficiaries. A large part of development funds under central schemes are misused. In such a situation, the media can play a crucial role to unearth the anomalies which will reduce corruption.”

He also urged journalists to partner with the state government to achieve its developmental goals.

Responding to a memorandum submitted by various organisations of media people, he said he would approach the Information and Broadcasting ministry to name the film and television institute in Itanagar after the name of veteran journalist Taro Chatung who passed away on October 26.

The media bodies also requested the government to frame an advertisement policy for electronic media besides enhancing the government advertisement rates.



## ATMA holds BFAC meet for Gyalshing block

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 16 Nov:**

Agricultural Technology Management Agency [ATMA], Gyalshing Block, organised BFAC Meet 2019-20 at KVK Conference Hall Gyaba.

The programme, chaired by BFAC chairperson, Gyalshing Block, AK Khatiwada, State Awardee from Gyalshing Block,

Subject Matter Specialist Agriculture Agronomy, Jay Prasad Dulal, SMS Soil Scientist, Basant Tamang, SMS Horticulture, Sangey Palmu Bhutia from KVK West, Gyalshing Block Technology Manager, Safal Panday, ATM, Pavitra Subba, Computer Programmer, Tashi C Bhutia, along with 25 farmers attended the program.

BTM Safal Panday provided

details regarding ATMA Activities conducted in the Block based on the Block Action Plan 2019-20.

The subject matter specialist from KVK West highlighted about Rabi Crop, cultivation Package and Practices Reclamation of Acidic Soil, Productivity and Management of Pest, Soil Fertility and diseases in various crops.

## Air quality ‘very poor’ in Punjab, Haryana

**CHANDIGARH, Nov 16 (PTI):**

The pollution level continued to remain a cause of concern in Haryana and Punjab on Saturday, with several districts reporting air quality indices in the ‘very poor’ and ‘poor’ categories.

Gurgaon and Faridabad in Haryana were the worst-affected cities, reporting air quality index (AQI) at 372 and 369 respectively, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

The air quality in Manesar and Rohtak was 338 each, while it was 326 and 311 in Jind and Bahadurgarh respectively. Hisar and Panipat reported their respective AQIs at 287 and 292, the CPCB said.

Punjab reported air quality in the ‘poor’ and ‘moderate’ categories.

The respective AQIs in Amritsar, Bathinda, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Patiala stood at 251, 103,

158, 158 and 117, as per the data. Chandigarh witnessed air quality index at 144.

An AQI between 0-50 is considered ‘good’, 51-100 ‘satisfactory’, 101-200 ‘moderate’, 201-300 ‘poor’, 301-400 ‘very poor’, and 401-500 ‘severe’. Above 500 is ‘severe-plus’ or ‘emergency’ category.

The number of incidents of farm fire, considered a major reason for the pollution in the state and neighbouring areas, including Delhi, have dropped significantly in Punjab and Haryana over the past few days, officials said. On Friday, a total of 91 stubble burning incidents took place, an official of the Ludhiana-based Punjab Remote Sensing Centre said.

In all, the total stubble burning incidents between September 23 and November 15 in Punjab were 48,780, as

compared to 46,545 in corresponding period last year.

Haryana has reported a total of over 6,000 incidents of farm fires in this season so far.

On Friday, the Punjab government had said it disbursed over Rs 19 crore to 29,343 non-basmati paddy cultivating small and marginal farmers from across the state, who have not burned the paddy residue.

Punjab government had decided to give Rs 2,500 per acre as compensation to those small and marginal farmers who have refrained from burning paddy straw.

In Punjab, more than 1,500 FIRs have been registered against erring farmers for defying the ban and a fine of Rs 3.01 crore imposed on more than 11,000 farmers for stubble burning, while 71 harvesting machines had been impounded.

## BJP holds protests seeking Rahul’s apology

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16 (PTI):**

The BJP on Saturday held country-wide protests against the Congress, demanding an apology from its leader Rahul Gandhi in the wake of the Supreme Court’s clean chit to the Modi government on the Rafale deal.

The BJP said, in a statement, that its workers held protests in district headquarters across the country, with its national general secretary Arun Singh leading the stir in Bhubaneswar, Maharashtra party chief Chandrakant Patil in Mumbai and Bihar unit president Sanjay Jaiswal in Patna, among other places.

It also organised demonstrations in Lucknow, Chandigarh, Shimla, Jaipur, Varanasi and Thiruvananthapuram, the statement said.

The BJP has also referred to the Supreme Court’s decision to let off Gandhi in a contempt case for attributing false remarks to it after he tendered an apology. The party demanded that he also offer an apology to the country.

## Govt should have paid as much attention to pollution as it did to Article 370: Sibal

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16 (PTI):**

Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal on Saturday hit out at the government over the pollution crisis in Delhi, saying the Centre should have paid as much attention to poor air quality as it did in dealing with Article 370.

The national capital witnessed a dip in pollution levels on Saturday morning even as the air quality in the city remained in the “severe” category. “Nature is punishing us for our own misdemeanours. We have ourselves jeopardised our fundamental right to breathe. Forget odd prescriptions. Let’s be even in our solutions,” Sibal said in a tweet, in an apparent swipe at the Delhi government’s odd-even road rationing scheme.

“Was the politics behind Article 370 more important than our right to breathe clean air? Our Government should have paid as much attention to air pollution as it did in dealing with Article 370!”

## SE’s Bijoy...

Congratulating all the awardees, the CM also congratulated the Press Club of Sikkim for having its long-pending demand for proper infrastructure fulfilled.

Mr Gurung, the CM commented in his address, was deserving of the recognition and shared how he has known him to a hard worker, having seen him cover events at the time that he was the Sports & Youth Affairs Minister.

## CM recommends...

urged media fraternity to come forward with their advice and suggestions to be a part of reengineering process of the state.

The programme was also addressed by Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling, and PCS President, Joseph Lepcha and included a talk on the theme, “Reporting Interpretation - A Journey.” Shristhi Pradhan, a Mass Communication student of Sikkim University, also delivered a short speech on Journalism.

Students of Tapashree Dance Academy, Arithang, also performed at the function.

[with additional inputs from IPR Deptt, GoS]

## Ayyappa temple...

Over 10,000 police personnel would be posted in phases in and around the Lord Ayyappa temple for security purposes during the pilgrimage season.

The temple, which is located deep inside the Periyar Tiger Reserve, is opened for worship only during the days of Mandalapooja, Makaravilakku and Vishu festivals.

It is also opened during the first five days of every Malayalam month.

During this pilgrimage season, the temple will be open till December 27 for the Mandalapooja after which it will be closed for three days.

The shrine will reopen on December 30 for the Makaravilakku festival after which it will close on January 20.

A five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Thursday said a larger bench will re-examine various religious issues, including the entry of women into the hill temple and mosques and the practice of female genital mutilation in the Dawoodi Bohra community.

By a 3:2 verdict, it decided to keep pending the pleas seeking a review of its decision regarding the entry of women into the shrine, and said restrictions on women in religious places was not restricted to Sabarimala alone and was prevalent in other religions as well.

The temple, dedicated to Lord Ayyappa, is situated on a hilltop about 4,000 ft above sea level.

Meanwhile, Renaissance Protection committee, an LDF initiative, lashed out at the Left government, saying it had gone “soft” on its stand on women entry issue and this will only help “weaken” the cause.

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## CHANGE OF NAME

I Dhan Kumari Chettri w/o Lt. Harka Bdr. Chettri resident of Lower Kitam P.O. Kitam, South Sikkim solemnly declare that previously my name has been recorded/known as Bina Chettri in my locality. I, vide this affidavit number 028377, I have change my name from Bina Chettri to Dhan Kumari Chettri for all purpose

Oath taken before SDM Namchi, South Sikkim on 12th November 2019.

## ~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

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**For details contact: 9083826462**

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Fully furnished 3BHK flat available for rent/lease at Church Road near DPH. Roadside and five minutes walking distance from MG Marg.

**For more details: 9083826462 /9832556698**

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General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College.

Flat Land no cutting required. Price 30 Lakhs (negotiable).

**Contact: 9800201335**

### LAND FOR SALE

A land measuring an area for 50x32 1/2 at Roadside just below housing colony is for sale. It is just a one minute walking distance from Namchi bazaar taxi stand. Interested party may contact 9593373387 and 9434406761



was also showing good growth, he said, “the PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) scheme constitutes 26 per cent of the company’s portfolio. We are concentrating more and more on that segment.”

Besides the affordable housing segment, he said there was demand for office space, logistics go-downs. “commercial space portfolio constitutes about 7 per cent (for LIC Housing Finance)” he said.

Mohanty said the company was witnessing strong demand, to own a house, from people between the age group of 25 and 35 years.

“The age of Home buyers has gone down. Earlier, before retirement one plans to have a house. Before that (retirement) he fulfils educational needs of children, daughter’s marriage. But now home incentives are there, gov-

**CHENNAI, Nov 16 (PTI):** LIC Housing Finance Ltd has set a target of disbursing Rs 55,000 crore worth loans during the current financial year, a top official said on Saturday.

LIC Housing Finance Ltd., Managing Director and CEO Siddhartha Mohanty said the company disbursed Rs 48,000 crore worth loans during the last financial year.

“We propose to achieve a target of Rs 55,000 crore disbursement. Last year it was Rs 48,000 crore..,” he told reporters at the sidelines of the 22nd edition of two-day Mega Property Fair ‘Ungal Ilam’.

To a query, he said the company till date has managed to disburse Rs 26,000 crore worth loans.

On the company’s financials, he said they were looking at bringing the Gross NPA below the level it stood last year.

“Currently, it is at 2.38 per cent. We are very much careful and paying attention to the recovery of loans.

Compared to last year we want it to be less. Last year, the (Gross NPA) level was at 1.54 per cent,” he said.

Noting that the real estate sector was witnessing gradual improvement while affordable housing segment



## Second SMU Pride Awards 2019 held

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 NOV:**

Sikkim Manipal University held its second SMU Pride Awards function on 15 Nov recognizing its employees who have made outstanding contributions to the University and have exhibited excellence, a press release informs.

A total of 90 employees were recognized on the day with trophies and certificates under 11 award categories.

While delivering the welcome address, MS Sridhar, Head, Human Resources, SMU, said, "SMU Pride Awards is designed and initiated to reward the efforts and loyalty of the University employees across all units with the primary focus of the programme being fostering high performance, appreciative culture and engaged work force towards bringing in Excellence across all areas of the operations of the University to be a leader in this space. These awards represent the organization's appreciation to imbibe 'Appreciative Culture' in the University."

Mr Sridhar explained that the programme was



dovetailed to promote "Employer Branding" initiatives to become the "Employer of Choice". Based on these principles, the University worked on the 5 EVPs (Employee Value Proposition Pillar) comprising of Communication, Process improvement, Technology Adoption, Appreciative Culture and Employee Engagement.

Vice Chancellor, Lt Gen (Dr) MD Ven-

katesh, SMU in his address, said that such initiatives fostered a culture of appreciation within the organization.

Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Dr CT Singh, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT) and CEO, AIC-SMUTBI, was awarded with the prestigious TMA Pai Award for 2019.

Dr Singh single-handedly worked towards

the setting up of the Atal Incubation Centre-SMUTBI (AIC-SMUTBI) at SMIT from Ground Zero which is a business incubator setup under the Atal Innovation Mission and supported by NITI Aayog at Sikkim Manipal University.

The Outstanding Excellence Awards were won by SMIMS IT Department's Nihar Ranjan Sahoo, and Senior Executive, Human Resources Depart-

ment, SMIMS, Narayan Mohapatra, for "outstanding commitment, perseverance and excellence in their respective areas of responsibility within the organization."

Renowned Sand Artist from Chennai, Mr Gajendran performed at the event by presenting the journey of the Sikkim Manipal University and also its Founder, Dr TMA Pai and Dr Ramdas Pai through his unique art.

## Blood donation camp at Zyudus Healthcare



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 NOV:**

Zyudus Healthcare at Bagheykhola, East Sikkim, organised a blood donation camp at the company complex today. Teams from Sing-

tam District Hospital Blood Bank and STNM Blood Bank supported the drive during which 59 units of blood were collected and deposited at the STNM Hospital blood bank.

## Rhenock College marches against Machong murder



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 NOV:**

In an unanimous display of solidarity against the murder of a 19-year-old in Machong, East Sikkim, and to register collective condemnation of crime against women, Government College Rhenock carried out a peaceful

rally on 14 Nov, 2019. The rally was organised by the Gender Sensitization and Sexual Harassment at Work Place Cell of the College, it is informed. The rally was held under the guidance of Assistant Professor and Head, Gender Sensitization Unit, Unish Subba.

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## MHRD recognises KIIT as 'Institution of Eminence'

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 NOV:**

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, GoI, has recognised Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology [KIIT], Bhubaneswar, as an Institution of Eminence, a press release informs.

With this recognition, KIIT joins the select league of 10 public and 10 private universities

which will be developed as world-class institutions under the IoE scheme of the Govt of India.

KIIT's international university ranking like the QS and Time Higher Education helped achieve this "historic milestone," a KIIT press release states.

KIIT was founded in the year 1992 as a vocational training centre by Prof Achyuta Samanta

and grew to a centre of higher learning in 1997.

Today KIIT boasts of 30,000 students from across the nation and 50 foreign countries.

Expressing satisfaction over the IoE recognition, Prof Samanta thanked and expressed gratitude towards the Prime Minister for his vision to promote education and his blessings to KIIT.

## Word of Life, IEC Sakyong and Wok XI proceed in Sikkim United Cup

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 NOV:**

Three matches were played on the third day of the ongoing Sikkim United Cup 2019 here at Paljor Stadium on Saturday.

In the first match, Word of Life [Gangtok] outplayed Baptist Church [Kopibari] 3-1. Nikhil Chettri of Baptist Church was adjudged Man of the Match.

Next, IEC Sakyong thrashed HFC Gangtok 7-1. Anup Subba of HFC was adjudged Man of the



Match. In the last match of the day, Church of God went down to Wok XI by a solitary goal 0-1. Amos Rasaily of Wok XI was adjudged Man of the Match.

On Sunday, the first

match will be played between Mazzaroth and United Turuk, South Sikkim at 1.00pm which will be followed by HPC Darjeeling taking on Sribadam Christian at 2:30pm.

## SMIMS team attends international UNESCO Bioethics conference

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 16 NOV:**

UNESCO Chair in Bioethics Asia Pacific Division's International Conference on Bioethics in Health Sciences, 'BIOETHICON 2019,' was organized at SRM Medical College Hospital & Research Centre, Kattankulathur, Chennai in collaboration with the Government of India, Indian National Commission for Cooperation with the UNESCO on 8-10 Nov, 2019.

The aim of the conference was to offer a unique platform for the exchange of Bioethics Education Information and Knowledge. About 3,000 delegates attended the conference.

Six MSc final year students, Tanisha Dutta, Kanan Raj, Satakshi Pant, Satabdi Bhattach-



erjee, Sahin Ahmed and Nova Deka, and two faculty members, Dr Tanaya Ghosh and Dr PK Mitra, of the Department of Medical Biotechnology, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences (SMIMS), attended the conference.

In their presentations, students shared their experience on knowledge of bioethics of undergraduate/postgraduate students of Biotechnology of few

colleges of West Bengal on various topics of Biotechnology like In Vitro Fertilization, Bioinformatics, Gene Editing, Medical genetics, Cloning, Organ transplantation and stressed on the need of bioethics teaching among the students under study.

Dr Tanaya Ghosh chaired two scientific sessions of the conference. Dr PK Mitra delivered plenary lecture on Animal Ethics.

## We now have dream combination of fast bowlers: Kohli

**INDORE, NOV 16 (PTI):** Indian captain Virat Kohli on Saturday termed his fast bowling arsenal as a "dream combination" that can torment any opposition on any kind of surface.

Riding on one of the most hostile fast bowling performances in recent times, India thrashed Bangladesh by an innings and 130 runs inside three days in the first Test.

The pace trio of Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Shami shared 14 Bangladeshi wickets among them while the two spinners -- R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja -- took five.

Asked about India's current fast bowling resources, Kohli reminded that the team is without Jasprit Bumrah, who is undergoing treatment for an injury.

"These guys (fast bowlers) are on top of their game, when they bowl, it looks like any pitch is a good pitch. Jasprit is not a part of the attack and when he comes back, it will be a one heck of an attack to counter (by opposition teams)," Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

"They can take wickets in every spell. The slip fielders are ready as they know the ball can come any over. This is a dream combination for any captain. Having strong bowlers is the most important thing

in any team," he added. Talking about the match, he said, "Don't know what to say, it's another clinical performance. It was very professional with the bat, playing five batters with one guy taking responsibility is what we want with overseas tours coming up. Hats off to the boys."

India's performance at home is now comparable with the Australians of the early 2000s but Kohli said the team was not playing for records.

"The numbers and records are there for everyone to see, that'll remain in the books, we haven't focused on it. We're looking at keeping the standards up, motivating the next lot of players. In that process, we're pushing up the standard of Indian cricket. We don't care about numbers at all as a team," the skipper said.

Asked about Mayank Agarwal's superlative performance, Kohli said, "The mindset is simple, when you see a young guy coming in to bat in Tests I know how much time it took me to get those big hundreds, so I know the importance of getting big runs."

"It's important as a senior batter to let them know to keep going. I want them to not make the mistakes I made as a youngsters to make them world class cricketers."

The Indian team will play its first ever Day/Night Test in the second

and final match against Bangladesh in Kolkata, and Kohli said the players are excited about it.

"The pink-ball Test is going to be exciting, will be a challenge for the batters. With the older ball, it doesn't swing that much so the bowlers will have a challenge. We're just happy to be among the first to play pink-ball cricket for India." Man of the Match Agarwal said it was a dream come true for him to play for India and produce this kind of performance.

"It's dream come true to play for India, grateful for the start I've got. Hope I can continue. I do practice my six-hitting but not during the Tests, but I do try and hit a few in domestic cricket," said Agarwal who made 243 in India's only innings.

"It's great to have somebody who motivates you. When I got my first 150, Kohli was at the non-striker's end and he said 'nothing short of 200 for you next.'" About the Day/Night Test in Kolkata, he said, "We've had three pink-ball sessions under lights, Rahul Dravid arranged those in Bangalore. Looking forward to the game now. It's going to be a landmark game for us." Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque said the toss impacted the outcome of the match.

"It has been difficult. We won (the toss) and decided to bat, it was a difficult decision."

## CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED FOR AMBA SCHOOL LIBRARY UPGRADATION

Wandering Souls of Sikkim is excited to announce our plan to upgrade the school library of Govt. Secondary School, Amba, East Sikkim. This will be fourth such upgradation of school libraries by WSOS.

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We request all to kindly contribute books either old or new or cash for the upgradation of school library at Amba.

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PRESENTS

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## Activate Democracy

### *Time has come for a more participatory democracy*

Sikkim has been enjoying representative democracy for more than forty years now and it is time that this structure was strengthened further with a more participatory version of it. It is time not only because democracy has matured in the eight Assembly elections the people have participated in as a democracy thus far, but also because these are now very divisive times of quick paranoia and disturbing parochialism. There are too many conflicting ideas being thrown around, too much reckless opportunism which can be addressed only if the people deepened their involvement in democracy. This requires for the engagement to continue even after they have cast their votes.

But what is participatory democracy all about?

Essentially, it involves noticing, informing, discussing and listening.

These are actually prerequisites of a democracy, but the people tend to end their participation with the ballot, rather the EVM nowadays. While elected representatives are fine to deliver governance, when tricky issues need to be resolved, the people have to increase their involvement, participate more, demand it even. It is however not easy for the people to set up such engagements on their own. This is where the role of the elected representatives becomes more important. They have to initiate the process of participatory democracy. It serves their purpose also because then they can truly understand the aspirations of the people and act accordingly. By doing so they not only serve the people well, but also secure their own political futures by helping reinforce consensus. This task is not easy though. The public does not and will not speak in one voice, but with many voices, making different demands, even impossible ones. Within any area there are many communities and with every issue, there are many lines of conflict. What the mediator has to look for is the other common factor – the lines of cooperation and begin the process from there. The development of participatory democracy, if successful, would extend the range of voices beyond those normally heard.

The importance of discussion in a participatory democracy is to establish awareness of different positions, to test them against other, much wider concerns and to see whether, through discussion, new positions can be reached which can reconcile differences, or at least explore how far they can be reconciled. It is the responsibility of elected representatives to aid that process and in the end, if required, balance, mediate and judge the differing views.

The process, however, has to be consistent because no matter how pressing the issue, the people cannot be expected to sustain a continuing involvement. They should be called in for a limited period for a particular commitment and made to hear the issues in depth, given an opportunity to question and challenge and then asked to give their views. Ideally, this process is safest in the hands of a civil society, but we have none in Sikkim. The process of mediation and initiation will have to be started by the elected representatives at their respective levels. One hopes that they stand up to the calling.

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# Hong Kong: Police legitimacy draining away amid spiral of rage and retaliation

CAROL ANNE GOODWIN JONES  
*theconversation.com*

The situation in Hong Kong has become decidedly more serious and more intense in the past week. The sporadic violence associated with small groups of protesters and police has escalated into full-scale battles. There have been two deaths, more arrests, more teargas, more people injured, some critically. Lines have well and truly been drawn and crossed by both sides.

The government claims it is in control of the situation but, among the public, there is a widespread belief that the police are being allowed to act out of control.

It was the death of a young student, Alex Chow, during a police clearance operation in early November, and the police shooting, at point blank range, of an unarmed protester a few days later, which prompted this turn to violence.

The exact circumstances of Chow's death are still surrounded in mystery and rumour. The shooting on November 11, however, was caught clearly on camera, evidence of the unnecessary and disproportionate use of lethal force. The police had previously used live fire against demonstrators, but on those occasions, there was sufficient doubt about the level of threat posed by the protesters to deflect claims of unjustified police force. This time, however, the incident was so clearly caught on camera that the attempts by police spokespeople to justify it lacked all credibility.

Together with the force's unwillingness to acknowledge any wrongdoing, this has simply contributed to the growing feeling that the police are now acting with impunity. Even in the face of clear evidence, no one has yet been held to account. Meanwhile, state media in Beijing began to describe the situation as "chaos", a word reminiscent of China's justification for its deadly crackdown against protesters in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

The police's resolute rejection of allegations that they have abused their power is fuelling the public's belief that the government is simply not prepared to listen to them. This is what some protesters have argued since the start, when the government failed to respond to the 2 million people who marched peaceably through Hong Kong in June.

The failure to persuade the government of the need for political reform and an independent police inquiry by peaceful means is the rationale of those who have turned to violence. But this has not,

as some claim, resulted in "mindless acts of violence". The protesters have targeted specific places and property associated with mainland China. Until this week, violence against the person was not part of their repertoire.

It was the police, not the protesters, who first opened fire and who have continued to engage in confrontational acts designed to provoke a reaction, including calling the protesters "cockroaches" and banging their shields as they move forwards in formation. This strategy has simply produced a spiral of action-and-reaction, descending into acts of revenge and retaliation on both sides.

### TEAR GAS TALES

But it is the police who have the weaponry. It is their tear gas, pepper spray, water cannons, rubber bullets and firearms which have posed the greater threat to life and limb. And it's not only the groups of violent protesters who are affected. Verifiable footage, witness statements by lawyers, first aiders and Amnesty all testify to the police strong-arming of by-standers, spraying tear gas directly into the face of anyone who gets in their way.

The gas has also been sprayed in such volume that it has seeped into buses, the underground, and shops, afflicting one reporter with chloracne, a known effect of direct exposure to the dioxins used in tear gas. Face masks – commonly used to stifle the spread of germs during the flu season – are now being worn by some families inside their own homes because tear gas has been fired into their buildings.

Live television and Twitter streams footage of the police abusing citizens into their living rooms. Children, fathers, mothers and grandparents now have their own stories of daily, small-scale but deeply serious violations by the police. They have watched live video of the police spraying tear gas and pepper spray in enclosed spaces, directly into a person's face at close quarters, and at very young children running along the street. They have heard police officers swearing at those they deem protesters, threatening them with batons and firearms, and – on occasion – talking between themselves in Mandarin, the language of the mainland, rather than the Cantonese spoken in Hong Kong.

Whether it be from the top deck of their bus, on the streets or in their living rooms, Hong Kongers have witnessed water cannon laced with blue dye and chemicals spraying water indiscriminately along the streets, and even into the entrance of a well-known mosque. It's precisely because police

malpractice is so flagrant and unchecked that ordinary people in football stadiums, sports centres and shopping malls can now be heard booing the Chinese National Anthem, cursing the police, and filing out of their downtown city offices to show their support for the protesters.

When a police spokesman spoke on November 12 of the breakdown of the rule of law, it was not, therefore, on the protesters that the public first placed the blame.

### LOSING LEGITIMACY

Since the 1997 handover, Hong Kong has been badly governed by a succession of weak leaders, but it retains its common law system, under which no one, including the police, is above the law. In common with police forces around the world, the Hong Kong Police receive special training in public order policing which should equip them to handle riot situations appropriately. Internal police guidelines also regulate the use of force in public order policing. It's the existence of these regulations and legal restraints which, though imperfect, have until now led Hong Kongers to accept the police force as the only institution which can legitimately employ coercive means against the citizen.

But the visible lack of restraint exercised by the police in recent days has undermined this legitimacy. The fact that being captured on film has had no restraining effect whatsoever has convinced many members of the public that the police must have been given some assurance of immunity.

Carrie Lam, Hong Kong's chief executive, has repeatedly stated her support for the police and refused outright to criticise their misconduct. An independent panel of experts said in mid-November that the existing mechanisms of police accountability were incapable of conducting a proper investigation, but so far the government has not responded to its recommendations.

It is this idea that the state actively sanctions police violence that has cemented the belief that the Hong Kong government stands against the people. Only the state can alter that. The restoration of law and order demanded by Beijing can only be achieved by reining in the police, not by further state violence. That is likely to transform the 2 million peaceful protesters of June into millions more protesters, coming to the aid of those on the frontline, fighting for their way of life. Strong-arm policing is not so much a sign of authoritarianism, as it is a symptom of a failed state.

*[the writer is Reader, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham]*

## The psychology of riots – and why it's never just mindless violence

MATTHEW RADBURN & CLIFFORD STOTT  
*theconversation.com*

It seemingly can happen anywhere – and at any time. From London to Hong Kong, apparently peaceful cities can sometimes erupt suddenly into widespread, and often sustained, unrest. But what role does psychology play in this? And can it explain how, why and when crowds turn to violence?

The recent film *Joker* tells the bleak story of how a mentally ill loner, Arthur Fleck, becomes the infamous comic book villain – and inspires a riotous popular movement. In the film, the stage seems well set for a riot. Gotham City is depicted as "... a powder keg of lawlessness, inequality, corruption, cuts and all-round despair".

But is the crowd protesting this – or acting as a mindless mob? As commentator Aditya Vats has pointed out, the film appears to reflect the views of the 17th-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who argued that society has a drive towards chaos and destruction. In the film, Fleck is portrayed as the individual who unleashes these apparently innate tendencies when he brutally kills first three wealthy young bankers – and then a TV talk show host live on air. Subsequently, thousands of rioters in clown masks are shown rioting, looting and killing, seemingly inspired by his actions.

This is a simple, and popular, representation of real-world crowd violence. But does it accurately reflect the true psychology underpinning "riotous" behaviour?

There are three "classical" theoretical explanations of the crowd that endure in the popular imagination. The first, "mad mob theory", suggests that individuals lose their sense of self, reason and rationality in a crowd and so do things they otherwise might not as an individual.

The second is that collective violence is the product of a convergence of "bad" – or criminal – individuals enacting their violent personal predispositions together in the same space.

The third is a combination of the first two and is captured in the narrative of *Joker*: "The bad leading the mad". To quote from a book on the 2011 English riots *Mad Mobs and Englishmen*: that "evil and unscrupulous people – often outsiders or enemies – take advantage of the gullibility of the crowd in order to use them as a tool for destruction".

### WHAT REALLY HAPPENS

While these explanations are often well rehearsed in the media, however, they do not account for what actually happens during a "riot". This lack of explanatory power has meant that contemporary social psychology has long rejected these classical explanations as inadequate and even potentially dangerous – not least because they fail to take account of the factors that actually drive such confrontations. In fact, when people riot, their collective behaviour is never mindless. It may often be criminal, but it is structured and coherent with meaning and conscious intent. To address the causes of such violence, we need to understand this.

Contrary to expectations, there are actually important boundaries and limits during riots relating to 1) what goes on (and what doesn't) and 2) what (and who) becomes influential. Research and modern crowd theory suggest that these behavioural limits of crowd action relate in important ways to the limits of social identification.

Consider Steve Reicher's analysis of the 1980 St Paul's "riot", in Bristol, England. Reicher demonstrated that the crowd's actions were governed by the individuals' shared sense of social identity as members of the St Paul's community. This identity was partly defined by a united opposition to police "aggressors" who symbolically were seen to be attacking the community by raiding the Black and White cafe, an important local hub.

Reicher also showed how this collective identity placed important constraints on what happened during the "riot" – and where. First, there were clear limits on who and what consti-

tuted a legitimate target, with only those viewed as being in opposition to the St Paul's identity – largely, the police – being attacked. Second, there were defined geographical limits – the police were only attacked while they were within the boundaries of St Paul's and were left alone once they had left.

### BEHAVIOURAL 'CONTAGION'

The St Paul's study demonstrates that people in riots act according to their assumed social identities and do not behave mindlessly, as if subject to an irrational "group mind". For example, crowd members described throwing stones at police officers as normative and widespread – "a few bricks went in and then people closed the road and everybody started doing it". Attacks against other targets, however, were isolated and widely denounced – "a bus ... got one window smashed ... Everyone went 'Ugh', 'idiots'".

But why do individual acts of violence spread and "infect" others, inciting them also to riot?

Classical crowd theories, like the narrative of the *Joker*, suggest that mere exposure to the behaviour of others leads observers to act in the same way. According to this line of thinking, behaviour is spread via a process of "contagion", transmitted automatically from one person to another. This would mean the mere act of watching the *Joker* kill live on TV could explain why others turned to violence on the streets of Gotham.

But this notion of behavioural contagion cannot explain the clear patterns and boundaries of precisely what behaviour "spreads" and what doesn't. Why, for example, did the riots that swept England in August 2011 – and which followed the shooting by police of Mark Duggan – spread from London to some cities, but not others?

The answer to this is related to how people construct group boundaries (we are more influenced by fellow in-group members than out-group members) and the extent to which actions are in line with pre-

vailing group norms. As rioting swept across England in August 2011, research suggests that it was those who identified as anti-police that mobilised onto the streets and were subsequently empowered through their localised interactions with the authorities and each other. The targets of their subsequent collective rioting were not random, but focused predominantly on the police, symbols of wealth and large retail outlets owned by big corporations.

Seen in this light, the *Joker*'s actions didn't merely invoke a Hobbesian dystopia but instead are better understood as unwittingly galvanising a simmering anti-wealth movement brought about by structural inequality and injustice. And based on research on riots in multiple disciplines such as social psychology, history and criminology, the spread of the subsequent unrest would have been far from random.

In a real world Gotham, only those who identified as "anti-wealth" would have been subject to the crowd's influence during the riots, and only those actions consonant with this identity (for example, attacking and looting symbols of wealth) would have been "acceptable" to the *Joker*'s foot soldiers. As the riots developed, the apparent disempowerment of the authorities in one location, would have led those who identified as "anti-wealth" in other parts of the city to mobilise onto the streets and take on their erstwhile "common enemy".

Of course, *Joker* isn't real life but its narrative of contagion and random violence is common as an "explanation" of real life. But behind the scenes, with closer rereading of riots, social psychology can help bust the myth of the irrational mob and begin to explain how the fictional city – as well as countless real ones – can and do transform from tranquillity into widespread and enduring crowd violence.

*[Matthew Radburn is Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Keele University; Clifford Stott is Professor of Social Psychology, Keele University]*



# Arunachal convenes cabinet meet on Monday to discuss CAB



**NAMSAI (ARUNACHAL PRADESH), Nov 16 (PTI):** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday said the state government has convened a cabinet meeting on November 18 to discuss the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, which is likely to be tabled in the Winter Session of Parliament.

Khandu, participating in the National Press Day celebrations here, said

the special cabinet meeting will deliberate on the recommendations of the Consultative Committee on CAB set up by the state government.

"The committee had convened a number of meetings with political parties, students' bodies and community-based organisations to seek their opinion on CAB, and prepare a comprehensive report on the issue.

"The report has been finalised, which will be discussed in the cabinet meeting, and the stand of the government will be communicated to the Centre," he said. Khandu said the Arunachal Pradesh government will never work against the interests of the indigenous people of the state, and ensure that their rights are protected.

"The central government has made its stand

clear on the bill that it will not affect the tribal states," he said.

Various students' bodies led by All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) have opposed the CAB, saying it would affect the tribal population of the state. Lawmakers of the state, during a meeting on November 11, had suggested that the government should approach the Centre for converting

two regulations -- The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR), 1873 and the Chin Hills Regulation 1896 -- into acts before enacting the contentious bill. The BJP-led NDA government is set to push for the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in Parliament's Winter Session starting from Monday.

It has listed the bill in its items of business for the session, official sources said.

The bill had lapsed following the dissolution of the last Lok Sabha.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said on October 1 that Parliament will pass the CAB, which seeks to grant citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan after seven years of stay in the country, even if they do not possess proper documents.

The indigenous people of the north eastern states fear that entry of these people will endanger their identity and livelihood.

## World Bank submits plan on logistics for Kolkata: Mitra



**KOLKATA, Nov 16 (PTI):** West Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra on Saturday said the World Bank has prepared and submitted a conceptual master plan for development of logistics infrastructure within the city metropolitan area.

He said that the proposed master plan would entail a project cost of around USD 300 million to be funded by the World Bank.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of CII Logistics Colloquium here, Mitra said, "World Bank has submitted a master plan to the state on logistics infrastructure in and around Kol-

kata metropolitan area." A meeting will take place soon, he said, adding that the World Bank has also "expressed its interest for a review of industrial parks, logistics hubs and SEZs encompassing West Bengal with the aim of improving logistics competitiveness, employment generation and ease of doing business".

The infrastructure spending has been increased five times after the Mamata Banerjee-led government came to power in the state in 2011.

"From Rs 1,758 crore in 2011, the (state) government's spending on infrastructure has been increased to Rs 9,553

crore in 2018," he said. Mitra said the increased spending on infrastructure had helped the state to register "a SGDP growth of 12.58 per cent in 2018-19 against the national growth of around 5.5 per cent".

The minister said the private sector is expected to generate employment for around 1.26 lakh people by investing in logistics infrastructure in the state.

Mitra also said that the government had already given 2,600 acres of land at Raghunathpur in Purulia for the Amritsar-Kolkata industrial corridor which would generate huge employment opportunities.

## WBPCB action plan to tackle air pollution



**KOLKATA, Nov 16 (PTI):** The West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) has put in place an action plan to tackle the air pollution in the city, an official said.

The Air Quality Index in several automated air monitoring stations in the city had hovered between 200 and 350 (PM 2.5) in the first week of November, which was categorised as 'moderate' and 'poor' but then improved substantially as Cyclone Bulbul lashed the city and washed away the particulate matters in air for next few days.

A WBPCB statement said on Friday, although the levels of PM 2.5 during summer and monsoon remain within the prescribed standards, it exceeds during the winter months due to various factors and an air quality action plan has been put in place to address the situation.

An Air Quality Index from 0-100 (PM 2.5) is considered satisfactory and within prescribed limits.

The WBPCB statement attributed road dust as "having contributed substantially to

air pollution" in recent times and said the WBPCB has provided Rs 6 crore to Kolkata Municipal Corporation for procurement of 10 water sprinkling vehicles. Ten 'mechanical sweeping vehicles' which will sweep dust from road in a mechanised manner will also be procured by KMC for containing dust, the statement said.

Three water sprinkling vehicles, apart from the 10 to be procured later, are already being put in service by the WBPCB in the eastern parts of the city from Friday, a WBPCB official said.

All these water sprinkling vehicles and mechanical sweeping vehicles, when together put in service, will cover the airport to Garia stretch via EM Bypass, Garia to Tollygunje Phari, Tollygunje to Rashbehari via Mominpur, Thakurpukur to Taratala via Behala, Esplanade to Shyam-bazar, Dunlop to Chirra More, the official said.

The water sprinklers will help in a great way to contain particulate matters gathering in air and bring down air pollution to a great extent, he added.

## Anil Ambani resigns as director of Reliance Communications

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16 (PTI):** Anil Ambani has resigned as director of Reliance Communications, the debt-ridden company said in a filing on Saturday. According to the filing, Ambani along with Chhaya Virani, Ryna Karani, Manjari Kacker, Suresh Rangachar have resigned as directors of RCom.

"Your good office may also note that Shri Manikantan V., has also tendered his resignation as a director and Chief

Financial Officer of the Company earlier. The aforementioned resignations shall be put up to the committee of creditors of the Company for their consideration," the filing added.

RCom, which is currently going through insolvency process, has posted a consolidated loss of Rs 30,142 crore for July-September 2019 due to provisioning for liabilities after the Supreme Court ruling on statutory dues.

## Arunachal CM welcomes Centre's initiative to solve Naga problem Rptg after correcting word in sixth para

**NAMSAI (ARUNACHAL PRADESH), Nov 16 (PTI):** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday welcomed the Centre's initiative to solve the decades-old Naga problem and categorically stated that there will be no compromise on the territorial integrity of the state.

The Arunachal Pradesh government will make clear its stand on the Naga peace process to the Centre when called for discussion, he said.

Welcoming the Centres initiative, Khandu said New Delhi is serious to solve the issue once for all.

"We will soon call an all-party meeting to discuss the issue besides taking the view of other stakeholders. We will submit our decision to the Centre before a framework agreement is signed," the chief minister said while addressing the National Press Day celebration here.

"We are clear in our stand and we want that

Naga peace process should not affect the state at any cost," he said.

The central government has already rejected insurgent outfit NSCN-IM's demand for unification of Naga inhabited areas in Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

All the three north-eastern states have vehemently opposed it.

The union home ministry had said in a statement that before any settlement is arrived at with Naga groups, all stakeholders, including the states of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh will be duly consulted and their concerns will be taken into consideration.

The NSCN-IM had demanded 'Nagalim' or Greater Nagaland in which all Naga-inhabited areas in the Northeast would be under one administrative umbrella.

The map of 'Nagalim', released by the NSCN-IM a few years ago, spreads over 1,03,473 sq km beyond the 16,527 sq km area of Nagaland. It in-

cludes Anjaw, Changlang, Lohit, Longding, Namsai and Tirap districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The NSCN-IM and its rival factions have claimed that these areas, primarily Changlang, Longding and Tirap districts, are dominated by Nagas.

Successive governments in Arunachal Pradesh have time and again made it clear that they would not compromise on the state's territorial integrity.

A framework agreement was signed on August 3, 2015 by NSCN-IM leader Thuingaleng Mui-vah and Centres interlocutor R N Ravi in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The framework agreement came after over 80 rounds of negotiations spanning 18 years, with the first breakthrough in 1997 when the ceasefire agreement was sealed after decades of insurgency in Nagaland which started soon after Independence in 1947.

## Bhutanese foreign minister to visit India from Sunday

**New Delhi, Nov 16 (PTI):** Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo Tandi Dorji will be on a week-long visit to India from Sunday, during which he will hold bilateral discussions with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and review the "entire gamut" of relations between the two countries, an official statement said.

"The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan Lyonpo Tandi Dorji will be paying a visit to India from 17-23 November 2019," the Ministry of External Affairs said on Saturday.

"During the visit, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan will hold bilateral discussions with his counterpart External Affairs Minister S. Jaishan-



kar and review the entire gamut of India-Bhutan relations," it added.

Dorji will also pay a visit to Bodh Gaya and Rajgir in Bihar on November 19-20, and Kolkata on November 21-22.

"India and Bhutan share a unique and time-tested bilateral relationship, characterized by mutual trust, goodwill and understanding," the MEA said.

"During the visit, the two sides will hold discussions on various aspects of bilateral relations, including economic cooperation, development partnership and hydro-power cooperation," it said. "Lyonpo Tandi Dorji's visit is in keeping with the tradition of regular visits and exchange of views at the highest level between the two countries.

## Fake news bigger menace than paid news: Javadekar

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16 (PTI):** Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said on Saturday that fake news was a bigger menace than paid news and urged the media fraternity to introspect about ways to deal with it.

Speaking at an event organised by the Press Council of India to observe National Press Day and confer National Awards for Excellence in Journalism, the union minister for information and broadcasting also touched upon the issue of "lynching" and how only "one kind of lynching" was being talked about.

"A fake news was circulated about child-lifters and it claimed 20 lives. When there is discussion about lynching, only one lynching is talk-



ed about but these 20 people also died due to lynching. That is not talked about," he said.

Talking about how fake news goes viral on social media, he said even if a tweet is deleted, it stays somehow.

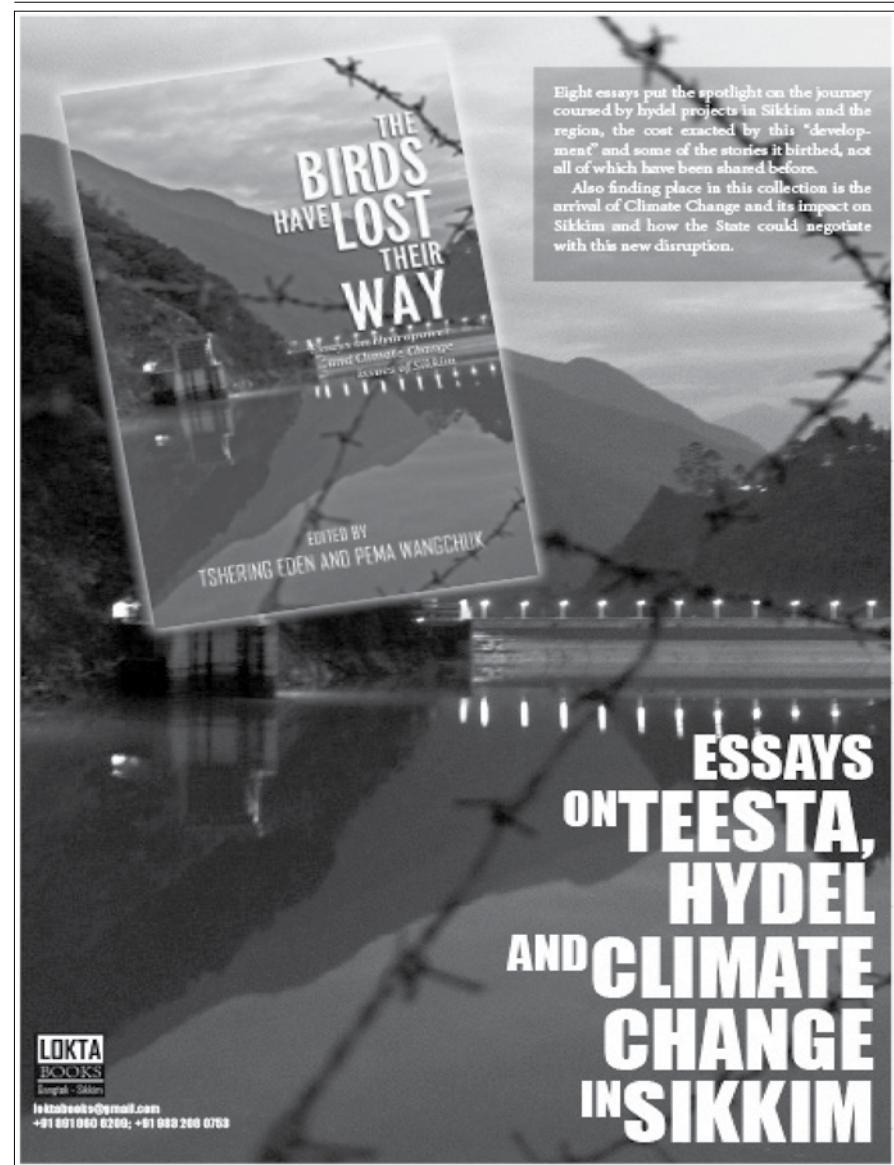
"Press freedom has to be responsible freedom. We need responsible freedom. Mediapersons need to introspect. Fake news has more TRPs," he said, adding fake news was a bigger menace than paid news.

"There should be

discussion about how to deal with the menace of fake news. You can give suggestions to the government," he told the gathering.

Javadekar also spoke about how press freedom was curbed during the British rule and the Emergency in 1975.

He said as a student activist of the RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, he had fought for press freedom during the Emergency and had even gone to jail.





## Bajwa, Mairaj to headline National Shotgun Shooting Championship

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16 (PTI):** Fresh from securing Olympic quotas, Asian Championship medalists Angad Bajwa and Mairaj Ahmad Khan will headline the 63rd National Shotgun Shooting Championship, beginning here on Sunday.

Besides Bajwa and Mairaj, who clinched Olympic quotas last week by winning the gold and silver medals respectively in the men's skeet event at the Asian Championship in Doha, several top shooters including Kynan Chenai, Shreyasi Singh and Manavjit Singh Sandhu are expected take part in the fortnight long competition.

The women's trap qualification will kick off the competition at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range.

The women's trap has seen 71 entries across the senior and junior categories. Qualification matches are scheduled for a 9 AM start. The women's trap finals are scheduled for 2pm on Monday, while the junior women's final is at 3pm.

## HI names 33 probables for senior women's national coaching camp

**NEW DELHI, Nov 16 (PTI):** Hockey India on Saturday named 33 probables for the senior women's national coaching camp, beginning November 18 at the Sports Authority of India centre in Bengaluru to prepare for the New Zealand tour.

After securing a berth in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, the Indian team will focus on maintaining its rhythm and consistency under the watchful head coach Sjoerd Marijne.

The Rani Rampal-led side qualified for the Olympics by defeating world number 13 USA 6-5 on aggregate across the two matches of FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers earlier this month.

The team is scheduled to tour New Zealand in January-February next year.

"The National Camp gives us the opportunity to keep working on the fitness as this would be an important period where we will have the time for it. The upcoming year will be a busy one for us, and that's why this period is important," said Marijne.

"Besides this, we will evaluate our performances at the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers Odisha and what can we learn from those two matches," he added.

List of Campers:  
Goalkeepers: Savita, Rajani Etimarpu, Bichu Devi Khariyam  
Defenders: Deep Grace Ekka, Reena Khokhar, Suman Devi Thoudam, Sunita Lakra, Salima Tete, Manpreet Kaur, Gurjit Kaur, Rashmita Minz, Mahima Choudhary, Nisha.

# F1 trailblazer Silvia Bellot: 'If I can do it, it proves other women can'

**GILES RICHARDS**  
*theGuardian*

Silvia Bellot smiles easily, her grin often breaking into the warm, generous laughter of a woman wholly at ease with herself. There is nothing in her manner that suggests she takes anything but pleasure in her role as the youngest and only female steward in Formula One and her forthcoming, history-making challenge. Next season the 34-year-old will take up one of the sport's most senior positions as the race director of the Formula 2 and Formula 3 championships.

Motor racing is still overwhelmingly dominated by men on and off the track and Bellot is more than aware of the importance of her achievements. "I feel I have an extra responsibility because I am a role model for young women," she says. "In the FIA Women in Motorsport Commission we believe the best way is to show we have the women already in the sport. If I can do it, it proves someone else can do it. I know it could impact on other women's lives."

She has stewarded in F1 since 2011 and the slight shoulders of this young woman have borne this often onerous task, which largely attracts only opprobrium, with a steadfast joy and determination fuelled by professionalism and passion.

Bellot will be the youngest FIA race director and a pioneer in being the first woman to assume the role that directly controls the drivers, safety and regulations from the moment a race meeting begins to the final chequered flag.

Since she was a child Bellot has had no fear of crashing the boys' club. Growing up in Barcelona with motor racing in the family she soon followed her father, Joseph, to the track where he was stewarding in Spain. She had always enjoyed motor racing but unexpectedly the technical management of the sport some-



how struck a chord.

"I saw how the stewards worked and how one driver lost the championship because he breached the rules," she explains. "The fact that they look at it carefully and do the right thing I really liked. That they investigated and I felt that they helped the sport, because someone who did something wrong didn't deserve to win the championship."

This perhaps unlikely interest proved all-consuming. Bellot became the youngest female marshall at 16, beginning the course on the day of her birthday. Two years later, at the minimum age of 18, she took the stewarding course and promptly became the youngest female steward, exhibiting a singular dedication in so doing.

"My friends would go out at weekends to clubs," she recalls. "But between the lessons when we had a break I used to do my homework so I could have the weekend free so I could go to races. I really, really loved it. I wasn't at clubs, I felt the track

was much more interesting."

Race stewarding, the process of assessing whether drivers have broken the rules and, if they have, merit punishment, is an essential part of the sport but one unlikely to appeal to a teenager. Bellot considers carefully what it was that drew her in. Where most find the speed and the danger compelling, it was a sense of bringing order and justice that gripped the Spaniard.

"I like the competition, the technical side, but more the feeling of bringing fairness through the decision," she says. "We are not the police; we don't try to search for breaches of regulations. We are there when there is a problem to decide what is right and wrong for the sport."

Motor sport could not have a more convincing spokesperson in disabusing fans convinced the stewards are always pursuing an agenda against their favourite drivers.

At 25 Bellot was appointed to the stewards panel for her first F1 grand

prix, in Turkey, and has continued in the unpaid role on the rotating pool of F1 stewards ever since. She says her experience as a woman rising through the ranks has been largely positive but echoes the oft-repeated belief that women are required to prove themselves more than men.

The real brickbats in motor racing, however, tend to be at the stewards' decisions and the controversy they generate rather than their personality or gender, and Bellot has plenty of experience in making hard calls.

The Austrian GP this year was a case in point. A late-race clash between Max Verstappen and Charles Leclerc meant the result hung in the balance for more than three hours while Bellot and her three fellow stewards investigated before declaring it a racing incident. The time it had taken and the decision itself infuriated many.

Bellot believes she and her colleagues are often unfairly criticised. She points out they must investigate

incidents in the order they happen, noting that sometimes it means the most important are left to last, that drivers and team principals must complete media duties before they are summoned. When they are, the process must be scrupulously fair.

Stewards now have access to a huge volume of information: the television feed, all the F1 feeds, including in-car, all the CCTV from race control, the maps, the GPS, the timing information, all live radio and telemetry from the cars. Examining it takes time and once the drivers and principals have been summoned they are entitled to give their opinion on each piece of evidence.

In a highly technical sport where margins are tiny but can make a huge difference, the determination is to make the right decision rather than rush a wrong one.

"We always give the right to everybody to give their opinion. Sometimes we move on swiftly; it depends on the complexity of the incident we are investigating," says Bellot.

The contrast often made with how relatively quickly VAR decisions are made does not stand up. With so much to assess, it is the just decision-making, which attracted Bellot to take the part in the first place, that remains paramount.

"It is similar in a way to being in court," she says. "They have the right to explain what happened so you want to make the process as fair as possible. We want to have the right decision for the benefit of the sport."

Next season a new role, of an even higher profile, awaits Bellot, who once more laughs brightly as she considers how far her childhood passion has taken her.

"I never dreamed of this," she says. "But I guess when you get involved you want more and more, and now I am happy to be race director. I never thought it could be a real career. I thought it was a hobby I was just happy to do."

## Fiery pacers engineer another innings win for India

**KUSHAN SARKAR**

**INDORE, Nov 16 (PTI):** India annihilated Bangladesh inside three days for a resounding innings and 130 run-victory in the first Test, riding on one of the most hostile fast bowling performances in recent times.

The quick victory was on predicted lines.

Having bowled Bangladesh out for 150 in the first innings, India bundled them out for 213 in the second essay after declaring their first innings on their overnight score of 493 for six.

The victory also gave India 60 points, and they strengthened their position in the World Test Championship table with 300 points in their kitty.

The thrashing also completed a hat-trick of innings wins for them, having beaten South Africa in the second and third Test in the previous series. The gulf was huge between the two teams and it could only get worse for Bangladesh from here onwards as the Indian pace attack, in the upcoming Day/Night Test with pink ball, is expected to cause more damage to their batsmen's psyche.

It was a game where Mohammed Shami (match haul of 7 wickets), Umesh Yadav (4 wickets overall) and Ishant Sharma (3 wickets) scared the hell out of an opposition that showed little stomach for a fight, save senior player Mushfiqur Rahim (64, 150 balls, 7x4), who delayed



the inevitable. Ravichandran Ashwin (match haul of 5 wickets) complemented the pacers, chipping in with wickets at regular intervals.

Bangladesh may have lost a lot of Test matches but the one in Indore has left them with scars that will remain for a long time. An international team looked frightened in the face of relentless hostility.

There were no angry gestures or over-the-top celebrations but scorching pace, mesmerising swing and the red cherry rearing at the throat from good length.

It created a spectacle and Bangladesh didn't have the wherewithal to handle it.

The best part about this Indian attack is that its intensity is same even in the third session as it is

early in the morning. Mehidy Hasan Miraj (38 off 55 balls), despite sharing a 59-run stand with Rahim, being bounced out by Umesh, was a case in point. It was a 'heavy ball' in cricketing parlance that grew big on Miraj, hitting him on his chest and then tickling the stumps. It was pure intimidation as the batsman looked in physical pain as he left.

Ditto for Imrul Kayes, who got a perfect outswinger (inswinger for a left hander) from Umesh in the first session. The ball tailed in and uprooted the leg-stump. Kayes had given up on the fight from the start as he looked nervous while facing each and every delivery.

Shadman Islam may have been a heavy scorer in domestic cricket but he has never faced a

bowler of Ishant's calibre in his short Test career.

So when young Shadman got one from Ishant to nip back from length, he couldn't react in time to bring his bat down, as the ball clipped the top of middle stump.

Bangladesh's best bet, Mominul Haque (7) was jittery from the start and survived a DRS call while trying to leave a delivery pitched on the off-stump.

However, when Shami angled one into the opposition skipper, he was adjudged plumb in front even though Virat Kohli had to take a reprieve, which turned out to be successful.

Shami's guile again came to the fore when he hurried Mohammed Mithun with a bouncer and his mistimed pull was easily taken at

mid-wicket by Mayank Agarwal. For the team's oldest player (in terms of age) Mahmudullah Riyad, the issue was technical as well as temperamental.

A fluent player in white ball format, not for once during the two innings did he look comfortable be it against the pacers or spinners.

In the post-lunch session, Shami just bowled one fuller on the off-stump channel. The ball held its line and all the veteran did was to offer a training session slip catch to Rohit Sharma.

Amid the ruins, Rahim, after getting reprieve in the first session, showed his will to fight that was missing in younger colleague Liton Das (35 off 39 balls), who showed T20 skills when something else was required.

## Finland seal historic Euro 2020 place with victory over Liechtenstein

**HELSINKI, 16 MAY [AP]:** Teemu Pukki scored twice as Finland beat Liechtenstein 3-0 in Helsinki to book a place at Euro 2020 and reach the finals of a tournament for the first time in the country's history.

Jasse Tuominen scored after 21 minutes before Pukki converted a penalty early in the second half and wrapped up the win with their third goal 15 minutes from time. The victory secured Finland second spot in Group J with 18 points. Finland, a nation of around 5.5 million people, was the only major Nordic country to have failed to reach a World Cup or European Championship.

Breaking that duck at the 5G-aerena led to home fans pouring on to the pitch at the final whistle and giving each other high-fives and congratulating the players as fireworks exploded. Finland's prime minister, Antti Rinne, tweeted: "Oh Finland is, oh Finland is, oh Finland is finally in the championship."

The group winners, Italy, enjoyed a 3-0 win over Bosnia and Herzegovina through goals from Francesco Acerbi, Lorenzo Insigne and

Andrea Belotti which maintained their 100% record. Sweden also qualified with goals from Marcus Berg and Robin Quaison giving them a 2-0 win in Romania, although the win was marred by racist abuse suffered by striker Alexander Isak when he replaced Berg in the 78th minute. The game was stopped briefly by the referee and an announcement was made over the public address system.

Norway must hope for a play-off spot despite a 4-0 win over the Faroe Islands in Group F. Tore Reginiussen and Iver Fossum scored in the opening eight minutes before Alexander Soerloth added another two goals midway through the second half to secure the win. The group leaders, Spain, beat Malta 7-0 in Cadiz, where the former Arsenal midfielder Santi Cazorla scored his first international goal for four years.

In Copenhagen Denmark beat Gibraltar 6-0 and will qualify if they avoid defeat by the Republic of Ireland in Dublin on Monday. Switzerland beat Georgia 1-0 in the other Group D match and will make it with a win in Gibraltar.

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# Bolivia's growing crisis turns deadly as 5 killed in clash

**SACABA (BOLIVIA), Nov 16 (AP):** Bolivia's political crisis turned deadly after security forces opened fire on supporters of Evo Morales in a central town, killing at least five people, injuring dozens and threatening the interim government's efforts to restore stability following the resignation of the former president in an election dispute.

Most of the dead and injured Friday in Sacaba near the city of Cochabamba suffered bullet wounds, Guadberto Lara, director of the town's Mexico Hospital, told The Associated Press. He called it the worst violence he's seen in his 30-year career.

Angry demonstrators and relatives of the victims gathered at the site of the shootings, chanting: Civil war, now! Morales, who was granted asylum in Mexico after his resignation Sunday, said on Twitter that a massacre had occurred and he described Bolivia's government led by interim President Jeanine ez as a dictatorship.

Now they are killing our brothers in Sacaba, Cochabamba, he said in another tweet.

Protesters said police fired when demonstrators, including many coca leaf growers who backed Bolivia's first indigenous president, tried to cross a military checkpoint. Emeterio Colque S nchez, a 23-year-old university student, said he saw the dead bodies of several protesters and about two-dozen people rushed to hospitals,



many covered in blood.

Earlier in the day, ez said Morales would face possible legal charges for election fraud if he returns home from Mexico City, even as the ousted leader contended he is still president since the country's legislature has not yet approved his resignation.

Bolivia's interim leader also said Morales would not be allowed to participate in new presidential elections meant to heal the Andean nation's political standoff.

Morales stepped down on Sunday following nationwide protests over suspected vote-rigging in an Oct. 20 election in which he claimed to have won a fourth term in office. An Organization of American States audit of the vote found

widespread irregularities. Morales has denied there was fraud.

Families of the victims held a candlelight vigil late Friday in Sacaba. A tearful woman put her hand on a wooden casket surrounded by flowers and asked: Is this what you call democracy? Killing us like nothing? Another woman cried and prayed in Quechua over the coffin of Omar Calle, which was draped in the Bolivian national flag and the multicolor Wiphala flag that represents indigenous peoples.

Bolivia's Ombudsman's Office said it regretted the deaths during the joint police-military operation and called on the interim government to investigate if the security forces had acted within the constitution

and international protocols on human rights. We express our alarm and concern over the result of an attempt to stop a demonstration by coca leaf growers from entering the city of Cochabamba, it said.

Presidency Minister Jerjes Justiniano told reporters in La Paz that five people had been killed and an estimated 22 were injured. Lara, the hospital director, said that 75 people were injured. Justiniano called for a dialogue with all parties involved in the conflict. "What we've been able to determine through preliminary information is that they used military weapons, he said.

On Thursday, Morales told The AP in Mexico that while he had submitted his resignation,

in South America, have been staging disruptive protests since his ouster, setting up blockades that forced closure of schools and caused shortages of gasoline in the capital.

In the capital, riot police fired tear gas at rock-throwing demonstrators. Elderly people and children were caught in the violence and tried to seek shelter in businesses that had been shut behind metal sheets to protect against looters. Long lines formed outside some gas stations in La Paz after blockades in the nearby city of El Alto, a major distribution point for fuel.

There's no gas, said Efra n Mendoza, a taxi driver from El Alto, who was forced to buy gasoline on the black market at twice the regular price.

Products are scarce. There's no meat, no chicken, people are making long lines. It's all because of the blockades, he said. There's division in Bolivia. It's exasperating.

Anez, the highest-ranking opposition official in the Senate, proclaimed herself president, saying every person in the line of succession ahead of her all of them Morales backers had resigned. The Constitutional Court issued a statement backing her claim that she didn't need to be confirmed by Congress, a body controlled by Morales' Movement Toward Socialism party.

Much of the opposition to Morales sprang from his refusal to accept a referendum that would have forbidden him from running for a new term.

## Gunmen fire on buses carrying Muslim Sri Lankan voters



Gunmen fired at buses carrying minority Muslim voters on Saturday as Sri Lankans elected a new president, with the powerful Rajapaksa clan eyeing a comeback seven months after Islamist extremists carried out deadly bombings on the island. Minority Tamils and Muslims are seen as crucial in the close election, and the attack in the northwest of the island -- in which no one was injured -- was likely aimed at deterring people from voting.

The assailants set fire to tyres on the road and set up makeshift roadblocks before shooting at and pelting with stones two vehicles in the convoy of more than 100 buses, police said. After casting ballots there were given an armed escort back home.

In the Tamil-dominated northern peninsula of Jaffna, meanwhile, police said they arrested 10 men they suspected of "trying to create trouble", while also complaining that the army had illegally set up roadblocks that could stop people getting to polling stations.

Such tactics are nothing new in Sri Lanka, which emerged from a horrific civil war only a decade ago. At the 2015 election, there was a series of explosions in the north. Supporters from rival parties meanwhile clashed in a tea plantation area 90 kilometres (55 miles) east of the capital Colombo, with two people taken to hospital with knife wounds, the election commission said.

- Terminator vs Padman - Some 85,000 police were on duty for the election with a record 35 candidates running for president, an office with considerable power similar to the French political system, with close to 16 million eligible voters. Results could come as early as midday (0630 GMT) on Sunday if there is a clear winner.

Nationwide preliminary figures for voter turnout appeared to be similar to 2015 when it was 81.5 percent. Voting ended at 5:00 pm (1130 GMT). One of the two frontrunners is grey-

haired retired army lieutenant colonel Gotabaya Rajapaksa, 70, younger brother to the charismatic but controversial Mahinda Rajapaksa, president from 2005-15.

Dubbed the "Terminator" by his own family, "Gota" is promising an infrastructure blitz and better security in the wake of the Islamist attacks in April that killed 269 people.

"Gotabaya will protect our country," construction worker Wantha Samarajeew, 51, said as he cast his ballot in Colombo.

His main rival is Sajith Premadasa, 52, from the governing liberal United National Party (UNP), son of assassinated ex-president Ranasinghe Premadasa. He is also pushing development and security as well as free sanitary pads for poor women, earning him the nickname "Padman" after a famous Bollywood movie.

The Rajapaksas are adored by Sri Lanka's Sinhalese majority for defeating Tamil Tiger separatists and ending a 37-year civil war in 2009.

They are detested and feared by many Tamils, who make up 15 percent of the population. The conflict ended with some 40,000 Tamil civilians allegedly killed by the army.

During Mahinda Rajapaksa's presidency, Gotabaya was defence secretary and effectively ran the security forces, even allegedly overseeing "death squads" that bumped off political rivals, journalists and others. He denies the allegations.

What also concerns Western countries, as well as India, is that strategically located Sri Lanka moved closer to China under Mahinda Rajapaksa, even allowing two Chinese submarines to dock in Colombo in 2014.

Under its Belt and Road Initiative spanning Asia and beyond, China loaned and granted Sri Lanka billions of dollars for infrastructure projects, many of which turned into white elephants and mired in corruption allegations.

## Diplomat says he overheard Trump call about 'investigations'

**WASHINGTON, Nov 16 (AP):** A State Department official told impeachment investigators Friday that he overheard President Donald Trump talking with a US ambassador about investigations in Ukraine, according to people familiar with the testimony.

David Holmes, the political counsel at the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, said Trump was talking so loudly that Ambassador Gordon Sondland had to hold the phone from his ear. Holmes said that allowed others at a restaurant in Kyiv to overhear the call that's now part of the impeachment inquiry, according to one of the people, who were unauthorized to publicly discuss the testimony and were granted anonymity.

The conversation at the Kyiv restaurant came the day after Trump's July 25 phone call with newly elected Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in which the U.S. president pressed his counterpart to investigate Democrats and 2020 rival Joe Biden. A whistleblower's complaint about that call sparked the impeachment inquiry.

Sondland opened the July 26 conversation by telling Trump that the Zelenskyy loves your ass. Trump responded, So, he's gonna do the investigation? He's gonna do it, Sondland replied.

The Associated Press has viewed key excerpts of Holmes' 10-page state-

ment and a person familiar with the document confirmed its authenticity. The remarks were first obtained by CNN. Holmes, a career foreign service officer, told investigators he did not seek the opportunity to testify. Like others in the inquiry, he was issued a subpoena to appear. He spent nearly seven hours with lawmakers.

Rep Ted Lieu, D-Calif, said Holmes is a key witness to the impeachment investigation because he heard directly from Trump. That counters Republican complaints that the inquiry is based on hearsay from other officials testifying.

He has firsthand knowledge of the conversation between Ambassador Sondland and the president of the United States, Lieu said. He overheard the conversation.

After the call with Trump, which Sondland placed from his mobile phone at the outdoor table over lunch with Holmes and two other people, he remarked the president was in a bad mood. Holmes asked the ambassador if it's true that Trump doesn't give a shit about Ukraine. Sondland told him the president did not give a shit about Ukraine. The president only cares about big stuff, Sondland said.

When the foreign service officer noted the importance of Ukraine, at war with Russia, Sondland clarified that

he meant stuff that benefits the president, like the Biden investigation. Trump's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, was pushing the Ukrainians to investigate former Vice President Biden.

Holmes' job often required him to be the official note-taker at meetings. He said while he did not take notes from the lunch with Sondland, he has a clear recollection and believes other colleagues at the table do as well.

The Associated Press has already identified one of the other people who heard the call as Suriya Jayanti, a foreign service officer based in Kyiv. Like other officials who have testified in the inquiry, he expressed alarm at the shifting situation in Ukraine with Giuliani's influence.

Holmes, who testified after Friday's public hearing with ousted U.S. Ukraine Ambassador Marie Yonkovitch, told investigators he had never seen anything like the campaign that led to her May recall.

The situation in Kyiv changed dramatically in spring, he said. Key policies, including resistance to Russian aggression, became overshadowed by a political agenda being promoted by Rudy Giuliani and others with a direct channel to the White House.

Ahead of one meeting, Sondland said: Damn it Rudy. Every time

Rudy gets involved he goes and f---s everything up. Holmes said he heard John Bolton, the National Security Adviser, tell others about his frustration with Giuliani's influence with the president. Bolton told William Taylor, the top diplomat in Ukraine, to send a first-person cable to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about the situation. Holmes first came to investigators' attention after Taylor, the acting head of the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, testified Wednesday that a staff member overheard the conversation. The person was later identified as Holmes.

Holmes, who joined the Foreign Service in 2002, has served in Afghanistan, Colombia, India, Kosovo and Russia as well as on the National Security Council staff in Washington.

He won an award for constructive dissent from the American Foreign Service Association in 2014 for complaining about problems that an alternate diplomatic channel had caused in South Asia and recommending organizational changes to the State Department's bureaucratic structure for the region.

Holmes made his concerns known through the State Department's so-called Dissent Channel, which provides diplomats with a confidential way of registering serious concerns.

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**ANIMATED ALICIA!** Singer, Alicia Keys arrived at the 20th Latin Grammy Awards, held at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

## Bill Murray joins Peter Farrelly's comedy series at Quibi

**LOS ANGELES, NOV 16 (PTI):** Veteran actor-comedian Bill Murray has boarded "Green Book" director Peter Farrelly's comedy series for upcoming streaming platform Quibi.

The series titled "The Now" features Dave Franco in lead. According to Variety, Murray is playing a recurring role in the series and has already wrapped up shooting for his part.

The short-form show also stars O'Shea Jackson Jr, Daryl Hannah, Jimmy Tatro, Alyssa Milano, Rob Yang and Lex Scott Davis. Peter will co-direct the series with brother Bobby Farrelly. He is also writing the series along with Steve Leff and Pete Jones. The series follows Ed Poole (Franco), a man considering suicide who achieves clarity when a secret from his past destroys his future. He soon realises that the only thing that will make his life worth living is to forget the past, leave the future and live in the present.

Quibi, co-founded by Hollywood heavyweight Jeffrey Katzenberg and former HP CEO Meg Whitman, is set to launch next year. The streaming service has already lined-up an impressive slate of projects in collaboration with celebs like Jennifer Lopez, Idris Elba, Chrissy Teigen, Lena Waithe, Don Cheadle, Tyra Banks and Lorne Michaels.

## Kingsley Ben-Adir to play Barack Obama in James Comey mini-series

**LOS ANGELES, NOV 16 (PTI):** "Peaky Blinders" actor Kingsley Ben-Adir has been roped in to play Barack Obama in CBS Studios' upcoming mini-series based on James Comey's book "A Higher Loyalty".

Jeff Daniels was previously confirmed for the role of Comey, the former FBI director, with Brendan Gleeson set to play President Donald Trump, reported Deadline.

The show also features Michael Kelly (acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe), Jennifer Ehle (Patrice Comey), Peter Coyote (Robert Mueller), Steven Pasquale (Peter Strzok) and Oona Chaplin (Lisa Page).

Billy Ray has adapted the book and will be directing the as-yet-untitled series.

The production is set to begin in November.

Comey was dismissed from his FBI position in May, 2017, after President Trump took objection to his handling of the investigation into Hilary Clinton's emails.

The mini-series will be produced by Secret Hideout, The Story Factory and Home Run Productions in association with CBS Television Studios.



## Lata Mangeshkar doing good: family spokesperson

**MUMBAI, NOV 16 (PTI):** Lata Mangeshkar, who has been admitted to the Intensive Care Unit of a hospital here, is "doing good", a spokesperson of the legendary singer's family said Saturday.

Mangeshkar, 90, was admitted to the Breach Candy Hospital after she complained of difficulty in breathing in the early hours of Monday.

In a statement, her PR team said, "Lata didi is do-

ing good today." In her over seven-decade long career, Mangeshkar has sung more than 30,000 songs across languages. She is considered one of the greatest playback singers in Indian cinema. She received the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour, in 2001.

Mangeshkar's last full Hindi album was for the late filmmaker Yash Chopra-directed 2004 film "Veer-Zaara".

## Was hyper-sexualised early in my career: Scarlett Johansson

**LOS ANGELES, NOV 15 (PTI):** Hollywood star Scarlett Johansson is already being considered as one of the major contenders for best actress Oscar for her performance in "Marriage Story", but she says it was tough for her to get out of being an "ingenue" and play performance-oriented parts. During The Hollywood Reporter's Actress Roundtable, Johansson, 34, said she was "hyper-sexualised" initially in her career due to the narrative "crafted for me by probably a bunch of dudes in the industry".

"I feel when I was working in my early 20s and even in my late teens/early 20s, I felt that I sort of got, somehow, typecast. I was very hyper-sexualised. Which, I guess, at the time seemed OK to everyone. It was another time. Even though it wasn't a part of my own narrative, it was kind of crafted for me by probably a bunch of dudes in the industry.

"And I guess that worked then, but it was really difficult for me to try to figure out how to get out of being an

ingenue or the other woman, because it was never anything that I had intended," she said. The actor believes the opportunities for women of every age to play different character has broadened.

Johansson revealed that she even thought of quitting the film industry and pursue something that would be more fulfilling for her.

"There seemed like there was nowhere to go." But things took a turn for the actor when she got an opportunity to star on Broadway in Arthur Miller's "A View From the Bridge" in 2009. "It totally reset my whole way of thinking about how I could work and the different kind of opportunities that could be available to me.

"It's amazing how theatre is limitless. Even though it was terrifying, it was liberating because I actually felt that every night I had the opportunity to change the narrative," Johansson said. In "Marriage Story", Johansson stars alongside Adam Driver and Laura Dern.

single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." Do not let yourself fall into this trap. Remember, we are still in retrograde season. Make sure what you have said and what others have understood is exactly the same. When it comes to professional matters, it's best to put everything on paper. Tip: Keep your communication clear and direct.

**LIBRA:** In a world that glorifies the busy, understand the importance of rest and rejuvenation. Libra, you've dealt with some major changes in the past few days. Your body deserves some downtime to process it all. Word for the wise: schedule that spa appointment or aromatherapy session pronto! Some of you may be recovering from a betrayal of sorts. Not everybody deserves to know your secrets.

Tip: Take time off from your schedule.

**SCORPIO:** Nothing will go back to being the same. Such is the cycle of life. Understand and embrace this, Scorpio. You have the strength and flexibility required to adapt to the given changes. Trust that everything is

## It was awkward position to be in: Joaquin Phoenix on not addressing 'Joker' violence

**LOS ANGELES, NOV 16 (PTI):** Actor Joaquin Phoenix says he took a conscious decision to not address the controversy around the violent themes of his recent feature "Joker" as he feared that it might actually lead to extreme incidents. The film had received unanimous praise for Phoenix's acting as Joker, a villain in the Batman comic mythology but detractors believe his portrayal hits too close to home in a country where gun violence is real issue.

In an interview with Los Angeles Times, Phoenix said he felt blindsided by the criticism coming towards film's way. "It was an awkward position to be in. Because I thought, 'Well, I can't address this because this is the thing that is potentially part of the problem that's precisely what you shouldn't do'.

"So it suddenly seemed like I was being evasive and trying to avoid this topic because it made me uncomfortable. But really I was thinking, This is the very thing that would excite this kind of personality" Phoenix said.

Families of victims who were killed in the

2012 mass shooting at a movie theatre in Aurora, Colorado, during the screening Batman film "The Dark Knight Rises", had written a letter to Warner Bros, the studio behind Joker, calling for donations to gun-victim charities because the film "presents the character



as a protagonist with a sympathetic origin story". Warner Bros had defended the film, saying the aim of storytelling is to "provoke difficult conversations around complex issues."

In September, Phoenix had walked out of an interview with the UK's The Telegraph when questioned about the violence in the film. He later told a publication that audience is capable of understanding the difference between right and wrong.

## Revisit original sufi poets to resist majoritarian politics' idea of spirituality: K Satchidanandan

**MUMBAI, NOV 15 (PTI):** Poet K Satchidanandan on Thursday said it's important for people to revisit the poetry of Tukaram and Meera Bai to understand spirituality in its true form, especially in the times of majoritarian politics where religion is used as a tool to attain power. Satchidanandan said he had written a poem about Kabir in the '90s, before the demolition of Babri Masjid, when people knew "something like this was going to happen."

"It is about Kabir addressing contemporary Indians and telling them how wrong their idea of religion is. He is speaking about a deeper kind

of spirituality, which could exist even without the formal religion. It led me to a deep study of 'bhakti' and sufi poets like Tukaram, Meera Bai, Akka Mahadevi... "I believe the one way to resist the extremely wrong idea of religion that is being spread today is to go back to these poets and learn from them what it means to be truly spiritual," Satchidanandan said.

He was speaking at the Tata Literature Live! The Mumbai LitFest, where he was honoured with Poet Laureate award. Satchidanandan, considered to be the pioneer of modern poetry in Malayalam, said spirituality can never be

the basis of hatred.

"All these poets stood for love across religions, love which transcended caste, gender and all kinds of nuisance. That's where I find true spirituality, or counter spirituality to the kind of majoritarian politics you find today which doesn't have spirituality but uses religion to attain power," he added.

Satchidanandan has represented the country at several literary meetings overseas and has headed several national literary institutions. He is the recipient of numerous national and international awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2012.

## Robert Downey Jr. Returning to MCU For Iron Man in Disney+ Series

The upcoming What If...? Disney+ series is bringing all of the top talent from the Marvel Cinematic Universe back into the mix in animated form. A photo shown at San Diego Comic-Con displayed the impressive and massive roster of actors lending their voices to the series but now a few more are being added. Thor: Ragnarok's Grandmaster actor Jeff Goldblum recently revealed that he is reprising his role, along with Korg actor Taika Waititi and Iron Man actor Robert Downey Jr. It's a surprising reveal, considering Downey's MCU tenure could have ended with Avengers: Endgame when his character died saving the world. "I played the part again a couple of days ago. I went to the Disney studios and I recorded the Grandmaster's voice for an episode of a show that's gonna be on Disney+ that's called What If...?" Goldblum said in a BuzzFeed video. "It's an animated version of all the characters we know and love from Marvel and this episode included the Grandmaster and Iron Man, so Robert Downey will do a voice for that, and Korg. Taika Waititi had already recorded his voice for that, so yeah, for a couple hours I enjoyed doing that.

It was already known that Goldblum and Waititi were reprising their Marvel roles for the What If...? series but Downey

Jr. reprising the voice of Tony Stark is brand new. So far, Downey has played Tony Stark in Iron Man, The Incredible Hulk, Iron Man 2, The Avengers, Iron Man 3, Avengers: Age of Ultron, Captain America: Civil War, Spider-Man: Homecoming, Avengers: Infinity War, and Avengers: Endgame.



As for Thor: Love and Thunder, Goldblum and the Marvel crew are determining whether or not he is going to return to the MCU in live-action form right now. "We're talking about it, in fact, I hope so," Goldblum said. "I love Taika Waititi, he's a great director and a friend of mine."

What If...? is expected to premiere during Summer 2021, and Thor: Love and Thunder will hit theaters on November 5, 2021. Other upcoming Marvel Studios projects include Black Widow on May 1, 2020, The Falcon and The Winter Soldier in Fall 2020, The Eternals on November 6, 2020, Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings on February 12, 2021, WandaVision in Spring 2021, Loki in Spring 2021, Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness on May 7, 2021, Spider-Man 3 on July 16, 2021, Hawkeye in Fall 2021, and Black Panther 2 on May 6, 2022. Marvel Studios Disney+ series without release dates include Ms. Marvel, Moon Knight, and She-Hulk.

**ARIES:** You've lost a battle, not the war. Aries, you are in this for the long run, and victory will require more than just your physical strength. So detach yourself from the material plane of existence and turn inwards to find that reserve of resilience. Remember, the weather doesn't have to be gloomy if you don't want it to.

Tip: Find that reserve of resilience.

**TAURUS:** What do you do when faced with injustice? Do you stoop down to their level of do you let the gods of karma intervene on your behalf? Taurus, the less you do, the more you will gain. Continue to live conscientiously and get ready to watch poetic justice unfold. Taureans who have been working themselves to the bone, consider taking some time off to recalibrate.

Tip: Watch poetic justice unfold.

**GEMINI:** Physical exhaustion is one thing; mental, quite another. If you feel like the stress is getting to you, give in to your need for solitude. Sometimes, you just need to put your phone on flight mode and get eight hours of uninterrupted sleep. To turn things

around, the cards are also encouraging you to spend time with in the company of children. Tip: Spend time in the company of those who make you forget your troubles.

**CANCER:** To quote the most commonly used self-help affirmation: change is the only constant. What you've displayed this week is courage at its best. Give yourself a pat on the back, Cancer. At the same time, let go of the need to be okay or make things okay immediately. You need time to process the learnings and adjust to a new way of life. Be patient with yourself.

Tip: You are coping with the changes. Be patient with yourself.

**LEO:** When you focus all your energy on doing what you love, you become a magnet for joy and abundance. As a result, wealth flows freely into your life. Keep this in mind when you are faced with choices today. Opt for the path that ignites your passion and brings you joy. Just because you are taking a risk does not mean things will manifest immediately.

Tip: Pour your energy into what brings you joy.

**VIRGO:** Wise words by GB Shaw, "The