

Summit TIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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SAHASHI AAMALA THRILLS ON 3RD DAY OF WINTER THEATRE FESTIVAL

GANGTOK, 26 FEB: On the third day of the ongoing Sikkim Winter Theatre Festival being organised by the Sikkim Theatre Training Centre in Gangtok, a play based on Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage & her Children", "Sahashi Aamala" [design/direction-Noushad Mohamed Kunju], was staged today at Manan Kendra. The festival, on 25 Feb, featured a Bipin Kumar direction, "Aur Ab Nahi". The play is an adaptation of William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet".

NORTH TAKES STOCK OF EDUCATION IN GOVT SCHOOLS

E-learning modules and libraries soon to boost learning

MANGAN, 26 FEB (IPR): An interactive meeting with the Principals and Headmasters of various schools of North District and Officials of HRDD was convened by the District Collector North, Karma R Bonpo, today.

The meeting was held to ensure effective coordination among the various stakeholders to improve the quality of education in the district and ensure effective learning outcomes among the school students.

A brainstorming session was also held to improve the quality of learning in English, Maths and Science in the Government schools of the District.

The Meeting was also attended by the Joint Director, HRDD and the team of officials from the HRDD Department.

Among the reason why the students fare poorly in Maths and Science stream was the lack of interest and motivation on the part of the students. Due to the phobia generated for the subjects the students were not motivated to learn. It was suggested that the subjects should be taught in an interesting manner to generate interest.

The District Collector informed that the State Government plans to launch e-learning modules such as the one from BYJU'S in select schools on a pilot basis. The work for procurement of the same has already started, he added.

He stated that in the first phase, four senior secondary schools of the district will be connected by Wimax technology to provide internet

connection. The internet connectivity will help students access the online repository of information and knowledge.

It was suggested that for improving the learning outcomes in English language, the primary sections of the schools should be the centre of focus.

Teacher training on effective teaching must be made compulsory to all teachers and the nursery system should be further institutionalized and strengthened. An effective coordination between ICDS schemes and HRDD should be ensured so that the pre-schools children are given the right inputs before they enter Class I.

The District Collector assured all help in setting-up libraries in all primary and junior high schools and directed the

Head Masters to ensure effective use of such facilities.

He stated that schools should also focus on the extra co-curricular activities of the students and stated the District will hold various events like Essay, Debate and Painting Competition contests.

He also informed that a District level science fair will be held in coordination with the HRDD Department. In order to motivate the teacher, the District will institute three awards for best teachers from the primary, junior and secondary level.

The Joint Director HRDD reviewed the position of teaching and non teaching staff and status of text books in all the schools.

A Powerpoint presentation on the Report of the National Achieve-

turn to pg02

Bhaichung Bhutia quits Trinamool Congress

KOLKATA, FEB 26 (PTI): Former India football captain Bhaichung Bhutia today announced his decision to quit the Trinamool Congress.

The footballer, who contested elections twice as a Trinamool Congress candidate and lost both

times, took to social media to announce his decision.

"As of today I have officially resigned from the membership and all the official and political posts of All India Trinamool Congress party. I am no longer a member or associated with any

political party in India," Bhutia said in a tweet.

Bhutia had unsuccessfully contested the 2014 Lok Sabha elections from Darjeeling and the 2016 West Bengal Assembly elections from Siliguri.

The TMC declined to

comment on Bhutia resigning from the party.

However, sources told PTI that Bhutia had informed the TMC about his decision one month ago as he was no longer interested in being associated with any political party.

Sikkim politicians welcome Bhaichung's decision

NIRMAL MANGAR

GANGTOK, 26 FEB:

Political parties of Sikkim have welcomed the decision of footballer Bhaichung Bhutia to quit the All India Trinamool Congress. (details on pg01)

Soon after Bhaichung's announcement, a tweet was posted by Union Minister of State for Home, Kiran Rijiju stating that the resignation "was expected".

He tweeted, "Bhaichung resignation was expected. He holds a high regards for Mamta Banerjee but is difficult to cope with the



situation. He wants to do more for Sikkim and Football."

The spokesperson of Sikkim Democratic Front, KT Gyalsten, said it is the Bhaichung's personal decision and that the party has nothing to say.

"It would be the people who will decide eventually as they reign supreme in democracy," said Mr Gyalsten when asked how the politics of Sikkim would be affected if Bhaichung joins state politics now.

Similarly, Bikash Basnet, the Secretary for Press and Publicity of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha said, "We don't have to say anything on Bhaichung quitting TMC as in democracy everyone enjoys the liberty to join or quit political parties. However, Sikkim needs a young

turn to pg02

Linemen Dajus & Bhais are South Sikkim's Employees of the Month

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 FEB:

In an effort to recognize the efforts of the unknown faces in the community who often fly unrecognized under the radar, yet deliver huge and positive impact every day, the executive committee members of South District Administration have selected linemen of Energy & Power Department [South] as 'Employees of the Month' for the month of March, a press release from the South District Collector's office informs.

"We would like to show our appreciation to our lineman Daju and Bhais for their relentless and selfless service. We would like to thank them for taking control of such challenging conditions to the extent of risking their lives. To raise awareness of the power-



ful yet unfelt presence of these ordinary men doing extraordinary feats, we choose them as the Employees of the Month.

The next time you see your mobile fully charged,

geyser on and somewhere you hear Arnob Goswami screaming-The Nation wants to know, be assured your next door lineman daju is in your service," the release adds.

The South District Administration has extended gratitude to the linemen fraternity of Energy & Power Department for doing their job with dedication.

Weather wet blanket on test flight to Pakyong Airport

SUMMIT REPORT

PAKYONG, 26 FEB:

Unfavourable weather conditions led to the test flight planned for the Pakyong Airport to be cancelled today. Airport Director, Airport Authority of India, Pakyong, R Manjunatha, informs that the test flight has been postponed to the near future when suitable weather conditions prevail.

Can non-payment of compensation be grounds to cancel land acquisition?

NEW DELHI, FEB 26 (PTI): A five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court will hear on March 6 a contentious issue that had cropped up after a three-judge bench had raised concern over "judicial discipline" and propriety arising due to conflicting views of different benches of the apex court in matters relating to land acquisition.

The issue had come to fore on February 21 when a three-judge bench had virtually stayed the operation of a verdict delivered on February 8 by another three-judge bench of the top court, which had held that compensation not availed within a stipulated

five year period would not be a ground for cancellation of land acquisition.

On February 21, the three-judge bench had observed that perhaps there had been a tinkering with judicial discipline in arriving at a conclusion as the issue should have been referred to a larger bench in case of difference of opinion, as a 2014 verdict passed by another three-judge bench had held that non-payment of compensation would be a ground to cancel the land acquisition.

The very next day when another matter on the land acquisition issue came up for hearing before a two-judge

bench, it had referred the case to the Chief Justice of India (CJI) for constituting an "appropriate bench" to deal with the "piquant" situation that had arisen after the February 21 order.

Now, a five-judge constitution bench has been set up by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dipak Misra to deal with the issue.

Besides the CJI, Justices A K Sikri, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and Ashok Bhushan are part of the bench, which would hear the matter on March 6.

A three-judge bench headed by Justice Madan B Lokur had on February 21 referred

to the February 8 judgement and observed that if "judicial discipline" and propriety were not maintained, the institution will "go forever".

"Taking all this into consideration, we are of the opinion that it would be appropriate if in the interim and pending a final decision on making a reference (if at all) to a larger bench, the High Courts be requested not to deal with any cases relating to the interpretation of or concerning Section 24 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013," the bench had said and posted the matter for

hearing on March 7.

In its February 8 judgement, the apex court with a 2:1 majority view, had held the 2014 verdict of another three-judge bench in Pune Municipal Corporation case was passed without due regard to the law (as per incuriam), saying that the land acquired could not be quashed due to a delay on part of land owners in accepting compensation within five years due to litigation or other reasons.

The court had held that once the compensation amount for land acquired by a government agency has been unconditionally tendered but the land owner refused to ac-

cept it, this would amount to payment and discharge of obligation on part of the agency and it would not be open to the person, who has refused compensation, to raise the point that since the amount has not been deposited in court or paid to him, the acquisition has lapsed.

The 2014 verdict was rendered unanimously by a three-judge bench which had held that "the deposit of compensation amount in the government treasury is of no avail and cannot be held to be equivalent to compensation paid to the landowners/persons interested".

SRP to celebrate its 2nd Foundation Day in Singtam

YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 26 FEB:

Sikkim Republican Party (SRP) is all set to celebrate its second Foundation Day here on 27 Feb. More than 3m000 SRP supporters are expected to be in attendance for the celebration, informs SRP president, KB Rai. The celebration is scheduled to be hosted in the space in front of the Singtam Police Station.

E-learning modules and libraries soon to boost learning

Contd from pg01

ment Survey 2017 GOI for Class VI and Class VIII was made and the general Academic Performance of students in the District was discussed.

It was informed that the Girls Senior Secondary School at Mangan will be open soon. He also informed that residential Hostel to facilitate students from far flung areas of the district was started in Singhik Secondary School with the support of Teesta Urja Limited and others like Passingdong Lum and Pentong have been made operational by the State Government.

During the meeting a brief introduction of Rupantar (Zero investment) initiative was also provided.

The School Safety guidelines regarding disaster management was also discussed and it was directed that all school heads should come up with a disaster management plans of their schools.

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Two houses allotted to one family, not even one completed, SKM alleges

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 FEB:

A Sikkim Krantikari Morcha team led by its constituency-level general secretary, BB Gurung, and accompanied by other members of Chujachen constituency toured Upper Biring in

East Sikkim today.

The team inspected the under construction house of a couple of the area, Amber Rai and Dil Maya Rai, under the CM-RHM scheme, informs an SKM press release.

The release informs that despite their house

being damaged by the earthquake of 18 Sept 2011, the family did not get any house under the REDRH scheme. However, as the 2014 election approached, a house under CMRHM was allotted to Amber Rai [husband] but the house has not been

constructed till date.

Another house under CMRHM was again allotted to the family, now in the name of the wife, Dil Maya Rai, ahead of the 2017 Panchayat election, the release contends. The construction of the second allotment was start-

ed but has been left unattended with only three posts in place.

SKM has demanded that the concerned department immediately complete the construction of Ms Rai's house so that her family can have one house to live in.



BJP dissolves South district working committee

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 FEB:

A meeting of the Sikkim unit of Bharatiya Janta Party was held under the chairmanship of the State president, DB Chauhan, at the party zonal office in Singtam today. The meeting discussed and

decided to strengthen the organizational structure of Bharatiya Janta Yuwa Morcha and increase the pace of its outreach programme, informs a BJP press release.

The release adds that the meeting dissolved the working committee of South district and

relieved general secretaries LR Gurung, Bhim Kumari Sharma and AL Rai from their responsibilities.

The meeting has also decided to celebrate the 38th Foundation Day of BJP on 06 Apr this year in a grand manner and invite peo-

ple through a door-to-door campaign.

The members also extended gratitude to the representatives from political parties, social organizations and civil society for their participation in the recent dharna held on 24 and 25 Feb in Gangtok.

Sikkim politicians welcome Bhaichung's decision...

Contd from pg01

politician like Bhaichung but he should be precise in selecting the political party which he wants to join in Sikkim."

The President of Sikkim Rajya Manch Party, RN Chamling said he welcomed the decision.

"We are hopeful he will give good leadership in Sikkim by joining any of the political parties," he said.

Likewise, the state President of BJP DB Chauhan hinted that BJP would be keen to have Bhaichung.

"We cannot confirm but we are hopeful that Bhaichung Bhutia can join state BJP," said Mr Chauhan.

Sridevi getting ready for dinner with husband when she suffered cardiac arrest: report



DUBAI/MUMBAI, FEB 26 (PTI): As anxious crowds milled around her Mumbai home and stars visited the family to pay their condolences, a Dubai paper today reported that Bollywood superstar Sridevi was getting ready for dinner with husband Boney Kapoor when she suffered a cardiac arrest. Uncertainty over when the body would arrive and the many questions surrounding her sudden death in Dubai late Saturday intensified as the day progressed.

Boney and Sridevi, 54, were in Dubai to attend nephew Mohit Marwah's wedding.

While most of the extended family as well as Boney and younger daughter Khushi had returned, Sridevi decided to stay back. The elder daughter, Jahnvi, was in Mumbai to complete a shooting schedule.

Some details of what may have happened were pieced together by the Khaleej Times newspaper, which quoted sources as saying that the matter was under police investigation.

According to the newspaper, an Indian Consulate official and a family member were called inside the morgue today afternoon.

On Saturday, Boney, who produced "Mr India", which gave Sridevi one of her most remembered roles, flew back to Dubai to surprise his wife with a dinner, the paper reported.

He reached the Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel around 5.30pm (Dubai time) and woke her up and they chatted for about 15 minutes, the report said.

Sridevi then went to the bathroom to get ready. When she didn't come out for 15 min-

utes, Boney knocked on the door. He did not get any response and forced open the door, to find her lying motionless in the bathtub that was full of water.

"He tried to revive her and when he could not, he called a friend of his. After that, he informed the police at 9 pm," Khaleej Times quoted a source as saying.

The police and paramedics rushed to the site, but she was pronounced dead. Her body was taken to the General Department of Forensic Medicine for an autopsy.

The body of the late actor, who embodied superstardom in the 1980s and 1990s in what was a hugely male dominated industry, is expected to reach Mumbai late today after authorities in Dubai conclude all the formalities.

Back home, fans, family and friends were still trying to come to grips with what had happened.

While crowds hung around Boney and Sridevi's empty Lokhandwala home, many celebrities visited Boney's brother, Anil Kapoor's residence, to offer their condolences.

The couple's daughters, Khushi and Jahnvi, are at Anil Kapoor's home, waiting for some news.

Amongst those who visited Anil Kapoor's bungalow were Farah Khan, Farhan Akhtar, Tabu, Saroj Khan, Ritesh Sidhwani and Honey Irani.

Sridevi's stepson Arjun Kapoor as well as Rekha, Rani Mukerji, Karan Johar, Manish Malhotra, Shilpa Shetty, Nikhil Dwivedi, Anupam Kher and Ishaan Khatter, co-star of Sridevi's daughter Jahnvi's debut film "Dhadak", also called on the Kapoors last night.



Free health camp held at Phodong School

WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 26 FEB:

SProject Limited organised a free health camp at Phodong Senior Secondary School in North Sikkim on 24 Feb. 280 people from in and

around Phodong attended the camp.

The programme was inaugurated by Sub Divisional Magistrate, Kabi, TD Denzongpa, in the presence of Principal of Phodong SSS, Panchayats of Rongong-Tumlong GPU,

staff of Phodong Primary Health Sub Centre, Phodong Police and students.

A paramedical team from Central Referral Hospital, Gangtok, attended to the walk-ins and distributed free medicines for various ailments.

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CS row: Del govt mulling live streaming of meets, Employees demands apology, action against CM, Dy

NEW DELHI, FEB 26 (PTI): The row over the alleged attack on Delhi chief secretary by AAP MLAs today intensified with government employees demanding action "as per law" against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia in the case, even as the AAP dispensation mulled live streaming of all meetings of its ministers.

Digging their heels in, the officers, including those from IAS and DAN-ICS, said they will continue to communicate with ministers only in writing until Kejriwal and Sisodia give a public apology over the alleged incident at the chief minister's residence on the intervening night of February 19 and 20.

In a resolution, the Joint Forum of Delhi Government Employees also rejected mediation by Delhi minister Rajender Pal Gautam, the peacemaker appointed by the AAP government, who said the attitude of officers "is not correct" and "they should show a positive response to government efforts to end the current crisis". Meanwhile, the AAP, which has alleged that its minister Imran Hussain and Delhi Dialogue Commission's Vice Chairman Ashish Khetan were assaulted, sent a delegation to Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik to demand "justice" for its leaders and action in the cases.

The delegation, which included AAP leader Ashutosh and party MP Sanjay Singh, told reporters that they gave Patnaik "video evidence" of the "assaults" that took place on February 20 at the Delhi Secretariat.

Ashutosh claimed that police were prompt in taking action against AAP MLAs Prakash Jarwal and Amanatullah Khan -- for allegedly assaulting chief secretary Anshu Prakash - though there was no evidence against them.

"The AAP MLAs were arrested though he (Prakash) produced no evidence. What about the life threatening attacks on Delhi minister Imran Hussain and DDA vice-chairman Ashish Khetan, who enjoys the rank of cabinet minister," Ashutosh asked. Amid the standoff with the bureaucracy, the Delhi government today said it is now mulling live streaming of all meetings of its ministers.

A senior government official said that as per the plan, live feed of meetings with audio output will be available on a web site, and if the proposal is passed, funds will be allocated for it in the upcoming budget.

Pranaal Khatri of Kutch travels the country with no money in his pockets

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 26 FEB:

Everyone loves travelling, but only few travel without thinking about the financial crunch it serves on our budget. Among these rare people is 18-year-old Pranaal Khatri from Kutch district of Gujarat who is currently travelling the country without any money in his pockets.

"Since my school days, I wanted to do something different and adventurous in my life and random thoughts came into my mind those days. So I took a break after completing my class XII last year and decided to travel India without money," he shared.

Pranaal reached Gangtok on 23 Feb from Ranchi. He shares his idea and experiences of his travel so far.

After convincing his parents to travel without money, he started his journey on 25 Nov last year from Rajasthan.



He has already travelled to Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Ranchi with just a tent, sleeping bag and some essential things in his backpack.

"It took me four months to convince my parents for this travelling. I am constantly in

touch with them over the phone and they are happy with my initiative," he said.

He mentioned that travelling includes transportation, food and accommodation expenses.

"I do hitchhiking for transportation and take food whoever offers me and sleep outside and hostels by doing volun-

tary works," he said. He stated that inspired by his ideas, many have offered him food and hostels and to stay in their vehicles.

"I have faced good and bad times during my travel but I have been enjoying and learning from every moment," he said.

He shared that Sikkim was not on his list for this

time but another traveller gave him lift till Sikkim from Ranchi impressed with his idea of travelling without money.

"There is a difference between a traveler and a tourist. I am a traveler and I prefer to meet more people to know about their stories and experiences than to visit tourist interest places," he said.

Pranaal is leaving for Nepal tomorrow morning. "I will come again back to Sikkim from Nepal and then will cover other North-Eastern States," he shared.

He has targeted to travel the country within a span of two years. "I want to inspire youths to do whatever they love. I also want to spread the message of humanity and love and to show that people are really helpful," he shared.

He plans to write about his travel experiences in the future to inspire the youths.

New Press Accreditation Committee formed

GANGTOK, 26 FEB [IPR]:

A new State Press Accreditation Committee [SPAC] for Sikkim for 2018-19 and 2019-20 was constituted during a meeting of the officers of the Information & Public Relations Department, chaired by Special Secretary/ Director, Sherap Shenga, here at Soochna Bhawan today.

The SPAC is constituted by the Government of Sikkim to have uniform and standard procedure for issue of Accreditation/Press Cards to Journalists through the IPR Department.

The Accreditation issued by the Department enables news media representatives to access information in the government and also to news materials, written or pictorial released by the IPR Department and/or other agencies of the Government of Sikkim.

It was decided in the meet that the new Com-

mittee will have Principal Secretary [IPR Department] as Chairperson, Special Secretary cum Director [IPR Department] as Member Secretary and District Information Officer, East [IPR Department], Bhim Rawat [Editor, Swatantra Manch & former President, Press Club of Sikkim], Bishal Gurung [Bureau Chief, Hindustan Samachar, News Agency], Shekhar Khawas [Correspondent, Himalaya Darpan Daily] and Sushma Chettri [Editor, Janayug Weekly & General Secretary, Sikkim Mahila Patrakar Sangh] as Members.

The names of the new members were recommended by the Press Club of Sikkim and thereafter approved by the IPR Department. The SPAC once constituted shall function for a period of two years from the date of its first meeting and will continue to function till it is reconstituted.



WSOS conducts inter-college scholastic competition

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 26 FEB:

Online magazine and youth forum, Wandering Souls of Sikkim [WSOS], organised an inter-college scholastic competition on 25 Feb at SDF Bhawan in Gangtok.

Quiz, elocution and motivational sessions for the students were a part of the daylong event which had the participation of 12 colleges from across the State, a press release informs.

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences of Sikkim Ma-

nipal University were adjudged winners of the overall competition followed by Sikkim Government College, Tadong securing the second position.

Participants from Sikkim Government Science College bagged both the top positions in the elocution competition which was judged by Assistant Professor [SU], Binod Bhattarai, and Research Scholar & Wildlife Conservationist, Sunita Khatiwara.

The programme also had the presence of former SLA Speaker,

KT Gyalsten, Zilla Up-Adhyaksha, East, Sharmila Chettri, representatives of SDF Student Front, Tashi Gyatso Bhutia, Milan Chettri and Ves Raj Sharma, SUSA president, Lalit Pokhrel.

The WSOS members have extended gratitude to their patrons and sponsors for their continuous support and have assured to continue working ahead with the objective of providing a meaningful forum of engagement and performance to the young minds of Sikkim.

HRD Ministry to seek suggestions for NCERT curriculum to reduce burden on students

NEW DELHI, FEB 26 (PTI): The HRD Ministry has decided to seek suggestions from various stakeholders on which portions of the NCERT curriculum can be done away with to reduce the burden on students as the current syllabus was

only making them examination driven, minister Prakash Javadekar said today.

The reduction of syllabus to up to half will be done in the next two to three years and the curriculum will be revamped to include phys-

ical education, value education and life skills education, the Union Human Resource Development Minister said here.

"We have asked NCERT to evaluate the present curriculum and decide what can be done away with and what can

be retained.

"The Ministry will put out this week on its website the request for suggestions from teachers, parents, educational experts, students and all concerned stakeholders in the field of education

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DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM SOOCHANA BHAWAN CORRIGENDUM

Tender Notice bearing R.O. No. 589/IPR/PUB/Classi/17-18 date 23/02/2018 of Information and Public Relations Department published in Summit Times and Samay Dainik on 24/02/2018 and in Sikkim Herald on 23/02/2018 may be read as **17th March 2018 instead of 10th December 2018 or 10th March 2018.**

In Sl. No. 2, size of the Sikkim Today may be read as **7.9 x 10.63** inches, which was published in centimetres in Summit Times and Samay Dainik on 25/02/2018.

Sd/-
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR [PUBLICATION] INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

R.O. No: 595/IPR/PUB/Classi/17-18 Date: 26/02/2018



SummitTIMES
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SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

A Day for Sikkim Subjects

28 Feb to deliberate on issues of identity and belonging

There is still a day to go, and so we return to another idea that we have been plugging for a while - Sikkim should consider observing 28 February as Sikkim Subjects' Day to mark the significance that this date bears for Sikkim Subjects and the moment it could celebrate. To recap, it was on 29 February 2008 that the then Union Finance Minister had introduced an amendment to the Income Tax Act which allowed for Income Tax exemption for all "Sikkimese" from all incomes earned in the State. 2008 was a Leap Year, and since it will be too long a wait to mark occasion only once every four years, the suggestion that the Day be celebrated on the 28th of February every year. And this celebration not because Sikkimese were exempted from paying Income Tax, but more importantly because this was the first time that "Sikkimese" were officially defined by the Union Government in an official document and Sikkim Subjects formally recognized as a unique population group of Sikkim.

The wording of the exemption was as special. The exemption was extended to all "Sikkimese", an identity explained in a footnote as those with their names are included in the Sikkim Subjects Register and their descendants. It was a historic development and one without any recent precedence in the country because special treatment was announced for "a people" collectively, and not divided by community, caste, or religious denominations or economic privation. For Sikkim, the Centre had reiterated the individuality of "Sikkim Subjects". Interestingly, neither the 8 May Tripartite Agreement of 1973, nor even Article 371F, makes any specific mention of "Sikkim Subjects". Delhi has never really acknowledged the people of Sikkim as a uniform group unbothered with ethnicities or castes and even leaders here have acquired the rhetoric which speaks of the people of Sikkim as belonging to the three ethnic communities of Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali (and now also the plainsfolk). Sikkim might claim the three communities to be united, but the segregation is obvious in how the references are made. Of course, even this Bhutia-Lepcha-Nepali coinage came into currency primarily with the Tripartite Agreement of 1973 and continued to remain in circulation since then. These were always the underlying demarcations on which the Sikkimese were slotted. Of late, as mentioned earlier, the Byapari have been added in the mix as Old Settlers, but the point remains that the State is too small for such divisions and it is ironic that this message had to be driven home with an amendment of the same Bill which in 1994 had cleaved Sikkim into perhaps its deepest ever communal divisions. It then took 14 years since that tumultuous confusion for Income Tax exemption to finally be extended to the Sikkimese as one people.

As far as the I-T exemption is concerned, it was citizenship [Sikkimese Citizenship] which earned exemption, nothing else. The exemption can be looked at as a reward for everyone who decided to take on the risks of becoming subjects to a King because they loved the land or were so completely invested in it that they did not consider any other option. Of course, like in the case with every privilege, there are sections which have been left out. For instance, Sikkim's old settlers from the business community would have met the criteria for becoming Sikkim Subjects when it was first promulgated in 1961, but who decided not to become Sikkimese at that time. In that sense, those who arrived in Sikkim after the Old Settlers, but decided to become Sikkimese enjoy more privileges and exemptions than families of older antiquity in the State. In a way, the extension of special treatment also makes one wonder whether questions of identity and belonging are purely emotional or do material benefits and sops drive the passion? But then again, irrespective of the motivation, the claims and arguments cannot be ignored.

So, when the suggestion is floated that 28 February be celebrated as Sikkim Subjects' Day, it is more for people to discuss and deliberate issues of identity, belonging and history, not celebrate parochial and insular takes on what being Sikkimese means, which, unfortunately, seems to be the jingoism which dominates the public domain.

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

FUSCHIA SIROIS
theconversation.com

How many times have you been told that something great will happen as long as you believe it is possible? From pop psychology books to self-improvement seminars and blogs, there's a lot of hype surrounding the advantages of positive thinking. And there's certainly some evidence behind it - a large body of work suggests that being optimistic reaps a number of positive rewards, including better health and wellbeing.

But what about the people who tend to see the glass as half empty rather than half full? Is being pessimistic always such a bad thing? Actually, the latest research suggests that some forms of pessimism may have benefits.

Pessimism isn't just about negative thinking. Personality science has revealed it also includes a focus on outcomes - that is what you expect will happen in the future. While optimists expect positive outcomes will happen more often than not, pessimists expect negative outcomes are more likely.

There is a particular type of pessimist, the "defensive pessimist", who takes this negative thinking to a whole new level and actually harnesses it as a means for reaching their goals. Research has shown that this way of thinking can not only help them succeed, but also bring some rather unexpected rewards. However, the other main form of pessimism, which involves simply blaming oneself for negative outcomes, has less positive effects.

PERFORMANCE AND CONFIDENCE
But how does defensive pessimism actually work and what benefits can you expect to get out of it? Researchers suggest that defensive pessimism is a strategy that people who are anxious use to help them manage their

The surprising benefits of being a pessimist



Seeing the glass as half empty may inspire some people to fill it up.

anxiety, which might otherwise make them want to run in the opposite direction of their goal rather than pursue it.

The crucial factor is setting low expectations for the outcome of a particular plan or situation - like expecting that you won't get hired after a job interview - and then envisioning the details of everything that might possibly go wrong to make these worst-case scenarios a reality. This gives the defensive pessimist a plan of action to ensure that any imagined mishaps won't actually happen - such as practising for the interview and getting there early.

The benefits of defensive pessimism also extends to actual performance. One study shows that this has everything to do with negative mood. When prompted to be in a good mood, defensive pessimists performed poorly on a series of word puzzles. However, when they were put in bad mood, by being instructed to imagine how a scenario might have negative outcomes, they performed significantly better. This suggests that they harness their negative mood to motivate themselves to perform better.

Pessimism can also be more beneficial than optimism in situations where you are waiting for news about an outcome and there is no opportunity to influence the

outcome (such as waiting for the results of a job interview). When the outcome is not as good as optimists had hoped for, they take a bigger hit to their wellbeing and experience greater disappointment and negative mood than do your garden-variety pessimists.

Strangely, this type of pessimism can even help boost confidence. In one study that followed students throughout their university years, those who were defensive pessimists experienced significantly higher levels of self-esteem compared to other anxious students. In fact, their self-esteem rose to almost the levels of the optimists over the four years of the study. This may be due to increases in the defensive pessimists' confidence to anticipate and successfully avoid the negative outcomes they imagined.

HEALTH

The defensive pessimist's strategy of being prepared to prevent negative outcomes can also have some very real health benefits. Although these individuals will worry more about getting ill during an outbreak of an infectious disease compared to optimists, they are also more likely to take preventive action. For example, they might frequently wash their hands and seek medical care promptly when they experience any unusual

symptoms.

When pessimists become chronically ill, their negative view of the future may be more realistic and encourage the sort of behaviours that healthcare professionals recommend for managing their illness. I conducted a study with two groups of people - those with either inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) or arthritis - and asked them to rate their future health on a simple scale ranging from poor to excellent. Because both arthritis and IBD are long-term health conditions that often worsen

over time you wouldn't expect people to think their health would improve that much in the future.

However, those who were optimists still rated their health as improving in the future, whereas the pessimists saw their health as getting worse in the future. Taking this view may lead pessimists to engage in the types of coping strategies necessary to manage symptoms such as pain. Having said that, this benefit may be best realised when there is at least some optimism that such strategies will actually work.

The key difference that separates defensive pessimists from other individuals who think negatively - such as those who are simply anxious or depressed - is the way they cope. Whereas people tend to use avoidance to cope with anticipated problems when they are feeling anxious or depressed, defensive pessimists use their negative expectations to motivate them to take active steps to feel prepared and be more in control over outcomes.

So being a pessimist isn't necessarily bad - though you may irritate others. Ultimately, it's what you do with that pessimism that matters.

[the writer is Reader in Health Psychology, University of Sheffield]

Grime artists cannot be ignored- and it will mean a seismic shift in public discourse

ADAM DE PAOR-EVANS
theconversation.com

At the Brit Awards grime artist Stormzy won both best British male and best British album. But it was his acutely insurgent performance at the close of the live BBC broadcast that really got people talking.

Amid the usual glitz, glamour and perfect lifestyles portrayed at such events, Stormzy delivered a powerful and passionate verse that built up to a direct challenge to Theresa May:

Yo Teresa May, where's the money for Grenfell?

What, you thought we just forgot about Grenfell?

You criminals and you've got the cheek to call us savages

You should do some jail time, you should pay some damages

This is not the first time Stormzy has exploited a media platform to state his position on the Grenfell disaster, which claimed the lives of 71 people in June 2017. At Glastonbury festival last summer he criticised the May government's response to the tragedy, while he also featured on the Grenfell charity single.

Grime music provides a means for the younger black generation to deliver first-hand experiences and express their anger toward the disparity of social and political structures. The MCs of grime have developed a strong vocal position and style of their own over the past 15 years.

Since the early noughties, the genre has matured into the UK's principal expression of rap culture, but its cultural roots are firmly anchored in the urban sounds of British hip hop pioneers prolific at the turn of the 1990s. Artists such as London Posse, Katch 22, and MC Mell'O' embraced their own accents and vernacular, and developed the first true sounds of UK hip hop coupled with a strong socio-political agenda. These artists drew

upon African and African-Caribbean heritage and the context of living in Britain, sonically inspired by reggae sound systems and the power of American hip hop. Tracks including London Posse's Live Like the Other Half Do, Katch 22's Final Judgement, and Subtraction by MC Mell'O' carried messages of awareness about one's cultural history and identity, and the blatant racism and police harassment regularly suffered by black British people.

Another day of racist police brutality

And this reality is changed my personality

This voice of revolutionary UK hip hop may have remained too underground and marginal to permeate mainstream media and have much impact on broader society, but it has had a lasting influence on the grime MCs of today.

MCS CONTROL THEIR OWN MESSAGE

Grime is immediate - and it is its closeness to its audience that supports the dissemination of the new voices of working-class black culture. An artist's output can be delivered, captured and presented within minutes to an almost limitless audience - and established artists such as Skepta, Wiley and Fekky draw literally millions of YouTube views and Soundcloud hits.

By embracing the speed and impact of social media, music production and everyday sonic technologies, grime MCs take a lead from Afrofuturist thought to frame their position within the so-

cio-political context of present-day Britain.

The big grime artists are paving the way for more MCs to convey their own message, often anchored in the veracity of working-class life. The fluid delivery of Octavian, and emerging "UK drill" stars such as K-Trap and Zone 2, extend much of the vexations expressed by their predecessors, and are also gaining huge hits online.

It is here these new voices have subverted the tradition of media representation. Grime extends past the metropolis - and MCs in the north such as Afghan Dan epitomise the working-class nature of this genre. During a Noisy YouTube special on Blackpool's grime scene, and on the question of broader talent in the city, Afghan Dan replies: "That's survival. That's what you see there. You know, families are devastated by drugs and drink. That's what happens." With more than 5m views, the video shows the messages of the marginal can no longer be ignored by mainstream.

Through its success as a music and its modes of delivery, the narratives carried by grime artists are bringing the issues directly to a much broader audience. In turn, this is contributing to a seismic shift in public discourse, illustrated by the positive reaction to Stormzy's Grenfell comments.

This is no longer about how grime artists might be heard by the British media - we're past that point. Now it is about how artists, society and the media ensure that the arrival of these new voices is maintained and developed to make real social and political change.

[the writer is Principal Lecturer in Cultural Theory / Research Lead, School of Art, Design and Fashion, Faculty of Culture and the Creative Industries, University of Central Lancashire]



PA

CBSE warns schools against withholding Board admit cards

NEW DELHI, FEB 26 (PTI): The CBSE has warned schools against withholding of admit cards of class 10 and 12 students on any pretext, including poor performance in pre-board examinations.

The warning comes following several complaints received by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) about withholding of admit cards by certain schools and in some cases charging of fee for their release.

"Several instances of not issuing admit cards by various CBSE affiliated schools on grounds of perfor-

mance of students in pre-board tests (conducted by schools internally) have come to the notice of the board. It has also been noted that some schools are charging fees for release of the admit card," CBSE controller of examination KK Chaudhary said in an advisory to schools.

Mentioning the Rule 15 of Examination Bye-Laws, the CBSE said, "In no case the heads of affiliated schools shall detain eligible candidates from appearing at the examination. The practice has been viewed very seriously by the board and is violative of the bye-laws".

The advisory also stated that the board issues admit cards to only those students which have been sponsored by the schools in their final list of candidates submitted to it.

"Therefore, their eligibility for the exams has already been confirmed by the school and hence their admit cards cannot be withheld. The schools also cannot charge any fee for issuing admit cards," it said.

The CBSE board exams for Class 10 and 12 students are set to begin from March 5.

HRD Ministry to seek suggestions for NCERT curriculum...

Contd from pg03

on reducing the syllabus," Javadekar told reporters.

The minister said that after two months he will review the suggestions and take definite measures to reduce the syllabus.

The decision by the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry to reduce the syllabus has been taken after consultations during in six workshops held across the country in which teachers, education experts, NGOs working in the sector and representatives from various state governments participated.

"Today syllabus is so cramped that students read, mug up and appear for examinations. We are only producing examination driven students. Plenty of information is not education and students should not be just data banks and dictionaries.

"We have decided that we must not pack our syllabus with more and more things and see what can be stashed. It is the need of the hour to inculcate value education, life skills, experiential learning and physical fitness in our daily life," he said.

The idea to reduce the burden is to make students learn the basic principles of various subjects, teach them how to interpret and analyse for overall personality development, Javadekar said.

IITKGP research scholar develops battery using sewage water

KOLKATA, FEB 26 (PTI): A research scholar of IIT Kharagpur has developed a disposable and flexible battery powered by bacteria from sewage water, the institute said in a statement.

For the environment-friendly battery cell to start energy production, sewage water containing bacteria needs to be injected into it.

"Normally microbial fuel cells (MFCs) can take as long as couple of days to start power production as the bacteria needs to get adjusted to the environment.

"But for this device, the power production starts within 10 seconds, that is, almost immediately," the statement said quoting Ramya Veerubhotla, the PhD student in the Department of Biotechnology.

Currently, the power from the device is in the range of few microwatts. Stacking multiple devices can further boost the power and drive several practical applications.

Unlike other batteries which are heavy, this device developed by Veerubhotla, is made on a paper platform, it said.

The battery is made using air cathode and the anode can be prepared from any simple carbon-based materials.

Veerubhotla presented her research paper from IITKGP's Team Electrodes at KPIT Sparkle 2018, the annual National Design and Development Innovation Contest recently.

The project won the first prize and a cash award of Rs 10 lakh, the statement said.

"It may be difficult to

power household devices with this device, but it can power certain electronic components," she said in the statement.

Veerubhotla s PhD supervisor, Professor Debabrata Das of the Biotechnology Department is confident that this invention will have tremendous use when applied in bio-electric toilets.

"One of the best advantages of the device is that it is 100 per cent biodegradable and environment-friendly, which is not the case with chemical batteries," Das said.

Faculty members from departments of Mechanical engineering, Materials Science and Electronics and Electrical Communication Engineering of IITKGP are working together to harness this bio-energy.



Paschim Bengal Sikkim MYM starts Naari Chetna Mission

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 26 FEB:

A 35-day-long Naari Chetna Mission organised by the Paschim Bengal Sikkim Prantiya Marwadi Yuva Manch commenced today from Rishra in South Bengal.

Hosted by the MYM Rishra team, the first day of the programme included inauguration of renovated Wani Mandir School, distribution of school stationeries and Naari Chetna rally, a press release informs.

One hundred and fifty school students participated in the Naari Chetna rally which was followed by self-defence session for women and girl students of the area organised under the guidance of trainers from Kolkata.

Panchayati Raj JS chairs review meeting of West Dist's transformational initiative

GEYZING, 26 FEB (IPR): A review meeting regarding Niti Aayog's initiative of Transforming Aspirational districts was chaired by KS Sethi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, today at the District Administrative Centre here at Tikjuk.

The District Collector, Kapil Mena, gave a brief presentation on the district's plan for transforming West Sikkim.

The plan will run from 2018 to 2022 and covers five sectors - Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Allied Areas, Basic Infrastructure, Skill Development & Financial inclusion.

The district has come up with various indicators prevalent in these sectors at present and what the district wants to achieve by 2022 through various technological, administrative, financial and infrastructural interventions.

The DC briefed the audience about various cross-convergent ideas and schemes that the district has planned for overall development. He urged



the HODs to take ownership and invest personal involvement so that the initiative fructifies.

Mr Sethi advised that the review process be held on quarterly basis and urged the HODs present to pool their efforts and not work in silos.

He suggested NERLP and ITI to come up with trainings in areas like hotel management, house-keeping, driving, cooking etc so that local youth can get absorbed in the thriving hotel & tourism industry in Sikkim.

He advised the DC to confer with the State Medicine Board so that high value medicinal crops and herbs can be planted in suitable places in Sikkim. This will be a good value addition to Sikkim's ecosystem as well as bring opportunities for farmers here.

He also asked the DC to prepare the various issues Ministry-wise so that the Ministry of Panchayati Raj can coordinate with parent Ministries at Government of India level which will quicken the pace of activ-

ities at District level and help district achieve the targets well within set target time.

The meeting was attended by Director Panchayat Raj, Gangtok, ADC (Dev) Geyzing, DPO Zilla Panchayat, DRCHO Geyzing District Hospital, JD HRDD, JD Agri, DIO IPR, BDO Geyzing, BDO Dentam, DPM NERLP, AD Nutrition, CDPO Geyzing, JTI Principal and various other officials.

SDM Geyzing welcomed the audience and also proposed the vote of thanks.

Siliguri rallies against increasing pollution

SMRITA KHAWAS SILIGURI, 26 FEB:

The Left Front Youth Organisation took out a rally today at Airview More here to protest the increasing pollution in the city.

It may be mentioned here that a recent study reported Siliguri as the second most polluted city in India.

Hundreds of youth participated in the demonstrations carrying placards followed by a signature campaign on the streets.

District secretary, LFYO, Udayan Das Gupta, said, "We organised the rally to protest against increasing pollution in the city and to spread awareness among the citizens here. We have also organised a signature campaign which will be forwarded to the administration after



Holi. The citizens are suffering because of pollution. We have to

wear masks when we step out of our homes to avoid health hazards. We want the adminis-

tration to check the pollution control status of every vehicle that runs on the road."

Stage set for voting in Meghalaya, Nagaland

SHILLONG/KOHIMA, FEB 26 (PTI): The stage is set for tomorrow's crucial Assembly elections in the two north-eastern states of Meghalaya and Nagaland.

Polling will be held between 7 am and 4 pm, except in some polling stations of the interior districts of Nagaland, where the process is scheduled to conclude at 3 pm.

The two states have a 60-member House each, but voting will be held for 59 constituencies in both.

In Meghalaya, the election has been countermanded in Williamnagar in the wake of the killing of NCP candidate Jonathone N Sangma in an IED blast in East Garo Hills district on February 18.

In Nagaland, NDPP chief Neiphiu Rio has been declared elected unopposed from the Northern Angami-II constituency.

The results of the polls in the two states, along with that of Tripura, will be declared on March 3.

A high-decibel campaign for the polls in the two states came to an end last evening.



Buoyed by the formation of governments in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, the BJP is making a determined bid to expand its footprint in the north-east.

For the Congress, the poll outcome in Meghalaya is particularly significant as it has been ruling the state for the last 10 years.

But this time, the BJP is leaving no stone unturned to throw the Congress out of power and add Meghalaya into its kitty.

Political observers are keenly watching the BJP's push in the north-east, a Congress stronghold, where the saffron party has traditionally been a marginal player.

In Meghalaya, the Congress and the BJP are pitted against each other. While the former has fielded 59 candidates, the latter has put up nominees in 47 constituencies.

Though they are contesting the polls separately, in Meghalaya, the National People's Party (NPP)

of Conrad Sangma, son of former Lok Sabha speaker P A Sangma, is the BJP's partner in the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA).

In Nagaland, BJP's hope hinges on its alliance partner NDPP (the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party) of Neiphiu Rio, which is contesting from 40 seats. The saffron party has fielded candidates from the remaining 20 seats.

The Congress, which has given three chief ministers to Nagaland since the state's inception in 1963, is contesting from only 18 seats, two less than the BJP, an emerging entity in the north-east.

There are 370 candidates in the fray in Meghalaya. A total of 18.4 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in 3,083 polling stations in the state.

Meghalaya's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) F R Kharkongor said for the first time, 67 all-women polling stations and 61 model polling stations were set up in the state.

He added that 32 women can-

didates were in the fray, the highest ever in the state.

In Nagaland, a total of 11,91,513 voters -- 6,01,707 (50.50 per cent) men and 5,89,806 (49.50 per cent) women -- will exercise their franchise tomorrow. There are also 5,925 service voters.

Voting will be conducted in 2,156 polling stations as 40 polling stations fall under the Northern Angami-II seat, from where Rio has been declared elected unopposed.

Over 15,000 government employees will be on poll duty and there will be 177 all-women polling stations across 25 constituencies in the state.

The election process in Nagaland had started on a difficult note.

Following a no-election diktat from the Core Committee of Nagaland Tribal Hohos and Civil Organisations (CCNTHCO), advocating "solution (to the Naga political issue) before election", the political parties had initially kept away from the poll process.

Though the process of nomina-

tion-filing had started on January 31, the first batch of 22 contestants filed their candidature only on the penultimate day on February 5. There was a heavy rush of nominees filing their papers on the last day.

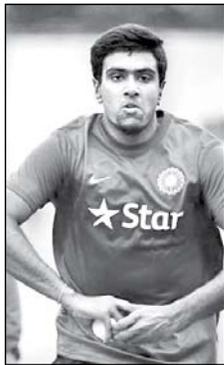
After the scrutiny and withdrawal, a total of 227 nominees are left in the field in Nagaland.

As many as 281 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), beside the state police force, are deployed throughout Nagaland to ensure a peaceful election.

Nagaland's CEO Abhijit Sinha said all the polling stations would be manned by the CAPF personnel, while the state police would also be assisting them.

Of the 2,156 polling stations in Nagaland, 1,100 were declared critical, 530 vulnerable and 526 normal, he added.

The Meghalaya CEO told PTI that six of the 10 additional companies of CAPF were deployed in the troubled East and South Garo Hills districts.



Ashwin to lead Kings XI Punjab in IPL

NEW DELHI, FEB 26 (PTI): Senior off-spinner Ravi Chandran Ashwin was today named captain of the IPL side Kings XI Punjab, which also has Yuvraj Singh and Chris Gayle in their ranks.

Ashwin has two IPL titles during his eight-year stint with Chennai Super Kings and has also played for Pune Supergiants.

I feel honoured to be trusted with the responsibility of leading such a talented bunch of cricketers. I am confident of bringing out the best out of team mates. This is indeed a proud moment for me, said Ashwin, who is currently out-of-favour in India's ODI and T20 scheme of things.

The off-spinner said captaincy pressure won't affect his performance.

There is no additional pressure on me as such. I first led my state side in first class cricket when I was 21. I have done it in the past and I am sure that I will enjoy the challenge, he said.

Ashwin played his last T20 for India seven months back in July, 2017 against the West Indies and last ODI against the same opponents last June.

Russia expects doping ban to be lifted in 'next few days'

MOSCOW, FEB 25 (AFP): Russia said on Sunday it expected to have the doping ban lifted in the "next few days," saying restoring the rights of its athletes could become a major result of the Olympic Games.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) voted unanimously to keep Russia's ban for mass doping, meaning Russian athletes will not be able to march behind their flag at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics closing ceremony later Sunday.

But IOC said the suspension would be lifted -- an IOC source said in "a few days or a few weeks" -- if no further positive drug tests come out of the Games, where two Russians tested positive for doping.

"We hope and count on the recovery of the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) membership in the IOC within the next few days," the committee said in a statement.

"Our absolute priority is the status of our country and the interests of our athletes," the statement said.

Restoring the rights of the ROC and the rights of "all the Russian athletes will be the major outcome" of the Games, the statement added.

The vote to maintain the ban for the time being followed a recommendation from the IOC's executive board, which met Saturday and early Sunday to thrash out Russia's fate.

PSG coach 'optimistic' injured Neymar will recover to face Real

PARIS, FEB 25 (AFP): Paris Saint-Germain coach Unai Emery remains optimistic that superstar Neymar will be fit to face Real Madrid in their do-or-die Champions League clash despite suffering an ankle injury in Sunday's 3-0 victory over Marseille.

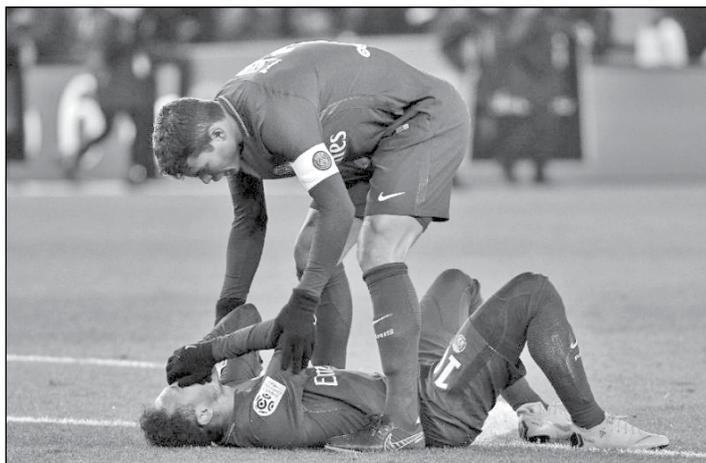
Neymar, the world's most expensive footballer, was stretchered off 10 minutes from time at the Parc des Princes as PSG opened up a 14-point lead in Ligue 1.

The 26-year-old was on his own when he innocuously rolled his ankle and flopped to the ground in pain.

"The first examination in the locker room revealed that it was a twist to the ankle. Now we will do a medical examination to find out what this twist is," said Emery, whose team face Real at home on March 6 in the Champions League last 16 where they need to overturn a 3-1 deficit.

"We will wait for the examination, we will be optimistic. If I had to say today (whether or not he will face Real) I would rather say yes to being optimistic."

PSG skipper Thiago Silva told Canal: "Neymar already



had a swollen ankle. I am not a doctor, but I don't think he'll be available on Wednesday (when PSG face Marseille again in the French Cup). He has to rest."

It was an otherwise easy night for the big-spending Parisians as teenager Kylian Mbappe became the youngest scorer in the French 'Classique'.

Uruguayan goal-machine Edinson Cavani was also on the scoresheet while Neymar had a hand in PSG's other

goal.

With Monaco drawing 3-3 at Toulouse on Saturday and Lyon held 1-1 at home to local rivals Saint-Etienne earlier on Sunday, it meant none of PSG's three nearest challengers managed to win.

Monaco remain second with Marseille third, two points behind, and Lyon a further five adrift.

This result was never in doubt and Emery even had the luxury of bringing off Mbappe, 19, after an hour to

give Argentine international Angel Di Maria a half-hour run out.

PSG were off to a flying start through Mbappe but Marseille were in part the architects of their own downfall.

France midfielder Adrien Rabiot tried to thread a through ball on 10 minutes to Mbappe, cutting in from the right.

Former Aston Villa full-back Jordan Amavi was in place to intercept the ball but he slipped and succeed-

ed only helping it onto teenage star Mbappe, who jinked inside onto his left foot and dragged a low shot inside Yann Pele's near post.

As expected, the hosts were dictating the tempo and dominating the ball, but Neymar was off target with a header from a Dani Alves cross.

The second came before the half hour mark, though, and again it owed much to poor Marseille defending.

Layvin Kurzawa slipped Rabiot into the inside left channel in the visitors' box and he picked out Brazilian Neymar with a cut-back.

The forward's poked finish was heading off target until his compatriot and Marseille centre-back Rolando thrust out a boot and inadvertently directed the ball into the goal.

The match was as good as over and PSG had barely needed to break sweat. Ten minutes before half time and the men in blue were already breaking out the showboating tricks and flicks, with Rabiot's backheel setting up Neymar to curl a long-range strike just past the post.

Marseille barely had a

sniff and when midfielder Andre Anguissa got up to meet a header in the box, it looped up harmlessly and landed in goalkeeper Alphonse Areola's arms.

It took just 10 more minutes after the break for PSG to extend their advantage as Neymar was allowed time and space to reach the byline on the left.

His cross picked out Cavani, whose first touch with his left was sublime to turn marker Rolando, while his right-footed finish was unstoppable.

Marseille were barely putting up a fight, but substitute Clinton N'jie managed to get himself booked for needlessly lashing out at Marquinhos and then clashing with Dani Alves, who also saw yellow.

After Neymar was stretchered off, the pacy N'jie almost gave Marseille hope but having rounded Areola, his goal-bound effort was cleared off the line by sliding PSG captain Thiago Silva.

Areola also made smart saves to deny Florian Thauvin and Luiz Gustavo, but Marseille's spirited finish had come too late.



GANGTOK, 26 FEB: Team Yawachey of Raktong defeated Team Pastanga 45/28 at the ongoing Late Chengey Lepcha Memorial Bamboo Archery Inter-Village Tournament held today at Phachey ground in Navek, East Sikkim. The tournament which had commenced on 21 Feb is being organised by Navek Shotak Archery Team. The date for the finals of the tournament has not been announced yet. The winner will be awarded with cash prize of Rs 32,000 with cash prize of Rs 30,000 for runners up team. Pakyong will be competing against Changay in the next match of the tournament scheduled to be held on 27 Feb. [REBYNA RANA]

BSNL selects Nokia to launch 4G service in 10 circles

BARCELONA (SPAIN), FEB 26 (PTI): State owned telecom firm BSNL today signed a pact with Finnish telecom gear maker Nokia to roll out 4G services in 10 telecom circles covering western and southern regions in India.

"We are really proud to have technology partner like Nokia with whom we are working in South and West Zone of the country, rolling out the latest single RAN Technology, and further moving towards 5G..." BSNL CMD Anupam Shrivastava said in a statement.

Nokia will deploy the technology in 10 telecom circles in India - Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Telangana - serving large cities, businesses, technology and tourist hubs and nearly

38 million BSNL subscribers.

The network technology that will be deployed by Nokia will help BSNL to save operational costs while supporting 2G, 3G and 4G subscribers in a single radio unit, the statement said.

As per Nokia MBIT Index 2018, released last week, 4G contributed to 82 per cent of data traffic in 2017 and the monthly 4G data usage per user was nearly 11 GB per user per month in India.

"We are pleased to continue our longstanding relationship with BSNL on this important project in India. The deployment of our technologies will enable BSNL to launch exciting new voice and data services, satisfying growing demand in India," Sanjay Malik, head of India Market at Nokia, said.



MANCHESTER CITY THRASH ARSENAL TO WIN LEAGUE CUP FINAL

LONDON, 26 FEB: Pep Guardiola claimed his maiden English silverware as his side thrashed Arsenal 3-0 in the League Cup final with Sergio Agüero, Vincent Kompany and David Silva all on target in a disappointingly one-sided showpiece on Sunday.

The first meeting between the sides in a domestic final was no classic but Span-

iard Guardiola will not care after his side's class eventually shone through at a freezing Wembley Stadium.

City, who will also win the Premier League title barring a monumental collapse, did not even have to hit top gear to lift the trophy for the third time in five years.

Agüero's 18th-minute goal gave City a halftime

lead and Arsenal withered after the break as Kompany prodded in from close range after 58 minutes before Silva thumped home a left-footer seven minutes later.

Arsenal's fans left in droves in the final 20 minutes while City's fans decorated the stadium with sky blue.

After a trophy-less first season in charge of City, Guardi-

ola's career major trophy haul as a manager stands at 19, having won 11 with Barcelona and seven at Bayern Munich.

"It's important. We're so happy, and a big congratulations to all of Manchester City, and our fans. This trophy is for Manchester City and not for me," Guardiola, whose side's bid for an unprecedented quadruple was

wrecked by a shock FA Cup defeat by third-tier Wigan Athletic on Monday, said.

"The first half we were not good, there were a lot of mistakes, in the second half we played with a lot more courage and personality, we were outstanding"

Arsenal have now lost a record six League Cup finals and it remains the only

silverware manager Arsene Wenger has not won.

"We self-inflicted our punishment," he said. "We had an unbelievable chance at 0-0 and then gave them a goal."

Despite the 27 points separating the sides in the Premier League, Arsenal arrived at Wembley having won their last three domestic finals, all in the FA Cup.

Four dead in UK building blast; Police rules out terror angle

LONDON, FEB 26 (PTI): A powerful explosion ripped through a three-storey building killed at least four people and injured four others in Leicester, police said today but ruled out a terror link to the "earthquake-like" blast in the English city, home to a large number of people of Indian-origin.

Police declared a "major incident" after the explosion occurred last evening on a stretch of road containing commercial and residential properties in Hinckley Road area of Leicester, some 140 km away from London. The city has a large Gujarati-origin population.

Four people were killed in the explosion and subsequent fire that destroyed the building which consisted of a Polish supermarket on the ground level and a two-storey flat above it, police said.

"At this stage, there are four confirmed fatalities and four people remain in hospital, one with serious injuries," Leicestershire police said in a statement.

Police Superintendent Shane O'Neill warned that the toll may rise further as the emergency services are still conducting a search and rescue operation and it is unclear if more people were trapped in the rubble.

Matt Cane, group manager at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, said the bodies of the four people were found during the search of the building.

British police said there was no indication at this stage that the explosion was linked to terrorism.

"The cause of the explosion will be the subject of a joint investigation by the police and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service," police said in a statement.

"We would ask that the media and public do not speculate about the circumstances surrounding the incident, but at this stage there is no indication this is terrorist related," it said.

The emergency services said they were called to reports of a blast shortly after 7 pm (local time) and six fire engines were sent to the scene, the BBC reported.

A fire service spokeswoman said the property was a two-floor building with a loft conversion that had suffered a "pancake collapse".

After shooting, students make emotional return to school

WASHINGTON, FEB 26 (AFP): Students and teachers returned to a Florida school for the first time since 17 people were killed there, consoling each other even as they called for swift action to address gun violence.

"Imagine (being) in a plane crash and then having to get on the same plane every day and fly somewhere else -- it's never going to be the same," David Hogg, a survivor of the February 14 shooting at a Parkland, Florida high school, told ABC television's "This Week."

The school held a voluntary "orientation" Sunday, with teachers and staff due back starting Monday and classes resuming on Wednesday -- a prospect described as "daunting" and "scary," but which is also a step for survivors to move forward after the attack.

One teacher who had already been back told NPR radio that the shock of returning to a classroom left exactly as it had been during the attack -- notebooks still on desks, the calendar still set to February 14 -- made her so physically ill she had to leave.

But Cameron Kasky, a student who survived the attack, tweeted a picture of people on campus, saying: "It is GOOD



TO BE HOME."

"I have all my friends here with me and it just makes me feel like I'm not alone in this situation," student Michelle Dittmeier, who attended the orientation, told ABC.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School also received

support from alumni, with previous graduating classes making banners to decorate the school, the WSVN news reported.

Amid ardent demands by students like Hogg for action, President Donald Trump said he is open to raising the

minimum age for gun purchases and to banning so-called bump stocks, which can effectively convert semi-automatic weapons into automatic firearms.

Speaking at the Governors Ball ahead of meetings with the top officials from all 50

states on Monday, Trump said that school safety is a top priority: "I think we'll make that first on our list."

A new CNN poll, conducted a week after the Florida shooting, shows surging public support for stricter gun laws -- surpassing levels

seen even after other horrific shootings of recent years -- and for a ban on powerful semi-automatic weapons like the AR-15 used in Parkland.

Overall, 70 percent of those surveyed said they supported stricter gun laws, up from 52 percent in October, and 57 percent favored a ban on semi-automatic arms, an increase from 49 percent.

Florida Governor Rick Scott has laid out a plan to station a police officer at every public school in the state, raise the legal age for gun purchases from 18 to 21 and pass a "red flag" law for authorities to more easily remove guns from the mentally ill or people with violent histories.

The age change and "red flag" law are staunchly opposed by the influential National Rifle Association, of which Scott is a member.

Scott, who holds the NRA's highest rating of A+, noted on "Fox News Sunday" that "there will be some that disagree. But... I want my state to be safe." Trump had Scott stand up to applause on Sunday, telling him: "You're doing a great job."

Florida was also the scene of a June 2016 shooting at an Orlando nightclub that left 49 people dead.

Bangladesh court extends bail for Zia until March 13

DHAKA, FEB 26 (PTI): A court in Bangladesh today extended the bail of imprisoned ex-prime minister and main opposition BNP chief Khaleda Zia until March 13 in a graft case, a day after the High Court deferred the judgement on a separate bail plea in a corruption case, media reports said.

The 72-year-old three-time former prime minister was jailed for five years on February 8 in connection with the embezzlement of 21 million taka (about USD 250,000) in foreign donations meant for the Zia Orphanage Trust, named after her late husband Ziaur Rahman, a military ruler-turned-politician.

The Dhaka Special Judge's Court-5 set March 13 as the date for the next hearing of arguments in the Zia Charitable Trust graft case and extended the bail of Zia, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chief, until then, bdnews24 reported.

"The court has set March 13



and March 14 for the next two days of arguments. Zia's bail has been extended until March 13," her lawyer Nuruzzaman Tapan was quoted as saying in the report.

Yesterday, the High Court deferred the judgement on her bail petition, saying it would decide

after receiving necessary papers from the lower court which sentenced her to five years in jail this month.

The Zia Charitable Trust graft case, filed in August 2011, accuses four persons including Zia of abusing power to raise funds for the trust from un-

known sources.

The three others are: Harris Chowdhury, political secretary of then prime minister Zia between 2001 and 2006; Ziaul Islam Munna, Assistant Private Secretary (APS) to Harris; and Monirul Islam Khan, APS of former Dhaka city mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

The corruption case is one of dozens pending against Zia, who has been a rival to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for decades.

The charges against Zia had led to her boycotting polls in 2014, which triggered widespread protests at the time.

Currently, 34 cases are pending against Zia in various courts across the country, including the Zia Orphanage Trust and Zia Charitable Trust graft cases, the report said.

The BNP has claimed that the cases are politically-motivated to keep its party chief out of the national elections, set for December.

Rare snowfall blankets Rome, closing schools

ROME, FEB 26 (AP): Romans have awoken to a rare snowfall, after an Arctic storm passing over much of Europe dumped enough snow to force schools to close and public transport to reduce services.

Rome's Mediterranean climate and proximity to the sea usually result in mild winters, such that restaurants often keep outdoor seating open even through



the coldest months of the year. As a result, the Monday morning snow-

fall, though not huge in quantity, brought excited young Romans out for a rare snowball fight or walk in the slush.

Mayor Virginia Raggi signed an ordinance Sunday evening closing public schools as a precaution, and many private ones followed suit.

Elsewhere in much of northern and central Italy, the storm also closed schools and disrupted transport.

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2nd Prize Rs.1,000/- 6982 3rd Prize Rs.500/- 4973

4th Prize Rs.300/- 6086 5th Prize Rs. 200/- 4102

6th Prize Rs.100/-

1001 1072 1093 1101 1108 1122 1151 1155 1172 1173
1176 1183 1190 1196 1218 1243 1263 1304 1357 1393
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1st Prize Rs.10,000/- 1710 2nd Prize Rs. 2,000/- 5878

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5th Prize Rs. 200/-

1048 1068 1180 1215 1351 1435 1477 1644 1671 1732
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6th Prize Rs.100/-

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4311 4315 4337 4378 4381 4419 4445 4482 4704 4733
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5203 5223 5233 5330 5335 5342 5402 5409 5415 5434
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C'EST CHIC! Sofia Vergara, 45, showcased her enviably toned legs in a black pencil skirt as she arrived at the premiere of Hotel Gagarin TCL Chinese 6 Theaters in Hollywood & Highland.

J Law reveals 'actual nightmare' of shooting Red Sparrow, hits back over "THAT racy Versace dress" criticism!

Jennifer Lawrence has admitted she was 'terrified' about stripping naked to play a Russian seductress in the espionage thriller Red Sparrow. The Oscar winner, 27, confessed she spent a sleepless night worrying about the 'nightmare' scene - but felt 'empowered' after finally doing it.

Her comments come after she lashed out at critics who slammed her for wearing a skimpy Versace dress in the freezing cold, insisting it was 'her choice' what she decided to wear. Jennifer touched on her nude scene in the spy film during an interview with the Today show in Australia on Monday.

The role struck a particular chord with her as she had avoided nudity since private photographs of her were hacked in 2014 and published online.



'It was really scary to say yes to the movie because I knew the only way to tell the story is if I agreed to really do the scenes and go full Monty,' she confessed.

'It took a while to say, "Yes". And the night before I didn't sleep at all and I was obviously really nervous because it is the actual night-

mare of standing in front of a classroom naked. 'But then after I finished the scene I felt empowered.'

Jennifer stars as Dominka Egorova, a Russian prima ballerina who is coerced into becoming a covert intelligence agent by her uncle in the film.

Trained in the arts of seduction and sexual manipulation, Egorova is sent on a mission to extract secrets from an American CIA agent [Joel Edgerton].

The Silver Linings Playbook admitted the torture scenes were gruelling to shoot, as she had ice-cold water poured on her naked body.

'I was terrified. I don't think I have ever been so scared of doing a movie before in my life. It was a lot of firsts for me,' Lawrence admitted.

feels unbearable. But when you step back and look at the bigger picture, you'll see that ultimately this delay is in your best interests.

GEMINI: Beware lawyers, bankers, and stockbrokers today, Gemini. One of them is likely to try and mislead you with some inaccurate information. While it might be in his or her best interests for you to take this information at face value, it certainly isn't in yours! Do your own research and get all the facts before making the financial investments recommended to you.

CANCER: A family member or other loved one may not be telling you the truth. In this person's defense, he or

she likely thinks they're protecting you by shielding you from the truth. This is a time for you to trust your instincts, Cancer. If you're told something that simply doesn't ring true, check the information yourself rather than accept it at face value.

LEO: You have an active mind and an even more active imagination, Leo. Today you risk short-circuiting your brain as you struggle to keep up with all the ideas and information swirling inside your head. Take a few minutes to do a mental inventory. Write down everything you're thinking right now so you can free some space in your brain for other issues. A long walk or jog would help

SRIDEVI DIED DUE TO "ACCIDENTAL DROWNING", SAY FORENSIC TESTS IN DUBAI: REPORTS

Actor Sridevi died of "accidental drowning", a forensic report has said, Dubai newspapers reported on Monday evening. Sridevi, 54, died suddenly in Dubai on Saturday night of a cardiac arrest, leaving Bollywood in deep shock and millions of fans heartbroken. She collapsed in her hotel room in Dubai, where she had gone with husband Boney Kapoor and daughter Khushi for a family wedding.

An autopsy was conducted earlier today and the police have handed the report over to the family and the Indian consulate, news agency ANI reported.

The Khaleej Times quoted family sources to report that Boney Kapoor, waiting to take Sridevi out to dinner, found her motionless in the bathtub of her room at the Jumeirah Emirates Towers. Boney Kapoor, a filmmaker, had returned to Mumbai with their daughter but had flown back to Dubai reportedly to surprise his wife.

A medical team failed to revive her. The family said Sridevi did not have any history of heart ailments.

The family waited all of Sunday but Sridevi's body was not handed over to them as UAE authorities carried out an autopsy. In a statement last evening, the family said the actor's body will arrive in Mumbai today.

Sridevi had gone along with husband Boney Kapoor and daughter Khushi for a family wedding.

According to reports, industrialist Anil Ambani has offered to fly Sridevi's body back in a private jet.

The Indian film fraternity has been shaken by the unexpected tragedy. Hundreds have gathered outside Sridevi's Mumbai home, hoping for a final glimpse.

Several planned events were cancelled. Actress Shabana Azmi posted a



tweet announcing that she and husband Javed Akhtar were calling off the grand Holi party they host every year. Several film shoots have also been cancelled.

A stream of stars, former co-stars and others were seen at the house of Anil Kapoor, the younger brother of Boney Kapoor.

Southern superstars Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan have headed to Mumbai to pay their respects to Sridevi.

Since the news of her death, Sridevi's last videos at the wedding of her nephew Mohit Marwah have been widely shared and snapshots of her life and films have been all over the media.

Sridevi began working at the age of four and, in a career spanning five decades, act-

ed in 300 films. The gorgeous actor, often described as India's one and only female superstar and the queen of the 1990s, was best known for her roles in "Sadma", "Lamhe", "Mr India", "Chandni" and "Himmatwala". A versatile actor known for her impeccable comic timing, she reigned over not just Bollywood, but also the Tamil, Telugu and Kannada film industry.

After a 15-year break following her marriage to Boney Kapoor, a much leaner Sridevi made a smashing comeback with the 2012 film "English Vinglish". She followed it up with the thriller "Mom".

Sridevi died before she could see her older daughter Jhanvi's debut in films this year.

Watch out Kris Jenner, there's a new momager in town!

Mother-of-six Madonna is said to be working hard to make sure her children follow in her star footsteps, according to a Sunday story from The Sun.

'Madonna adores every single one of her children and wants to use her influence to build them incredible careers,' a source close to the 58-year-old pop star explained.

The Lucky Star songstress is hoping to prime her four oldest children Lourdes Leon [21], Rocco Ritchie [17], David Banda and Mercy James's [both 12] for success in each of their passions.

Madge moved the family to Lisbon, Portugal last summer so that her son David Banda could study at the Benfica youth academy and play football.

Eldest daughter Lourdes 'wants to train as a professional dancer,' according to the insider.

'She will start to focus on dance properly as she graduates from her musical theater course at university in Amer-



ica soon.'

Son Rocco, who she shares with English film director Guy Ritchie, is said to be 'a keen painter' whose

'dream is to showcase his work at an exhibition.'

'Madonna is already lining up the best contacts for him in London's art scene,'

the source added.

It appears that adopted daughter Mercy is the only one with the music bug, however, with the insider saying the Malawi native 'idolizes Kanye [West]' and 'is already writing raps and performing them.'

The source didn't report any plans for the star's two youngest Esther and Stella, who are only five.

Madonna is also getting ready for a new album, reportedly planning to 'release new music towards the end of this year.'

'She has been in the studio for months. She wants to release new music towards the end of this year,' the Sun's insider said.

Madonna's last release, Rebel Heart, came out in 2015 and was a critical and commercial success. The multi-hyphenate is also said to be working on a film adaptation of Andrew Sean Greer's The Impossible Lives of Greta Wells, having secured the rights to the novel back in 2013.

ARIES: Misinformation is likely to spread like wildfire today, causing a lot of unnecessary upset either among your neighbors at home or your colleagues at work. Don't accept at face value any gossip or rumor you hear, Aries. Check the accuracy of the information yourself. If it does turn out to be false, as is likely, you'll feel sorry if you've had any part in perpetuating it.

TAURUS: You're finally setting in motion some long-standing goals of yours, Taurus. Good for you! But even though everything is in place and you're ready to go, it's possible that you'll receive notice today of some delay in your plans. The frustration

possibly even rewarded. Be sure to get some rest tonight. You're emotionally and physically drained.

SCORPIO: Your career may be sidetracked by petty gossip, rumor, and office politics. It's likely that someone is pushing forward his or her agenda without any thought or concern for its impact on others. Do what you can to put a stop to such shenanigans, Scorpio. There are times when it's appropriate to be the whistleblower, and this is one of them.

SAGITTARIUS: Some bad news about your financial situation may not really be as bad as it first appears. Even so, it throws you for a loop. Double-check the

information before spiraling into a panic, Sagittarius. It may be that a computer made an error or a bank clerk messed up. You may have to unravel some paperwork, but it will be a relief to have it resolved.

CAPRICORN: In an unpleasant situation, your inclination is to protect your loved ones from the truth. This would be a mistake, Capricorn. Even though you're acting out of love, your family members deserve to know the truth even if it hurts. You can't shield them from the realities of the outside world. Most people, even the young, prefer to know the facts.

AQUARIUS: You may be feeling tired and a bit wrong

out today, Aquarius. Although you're a workaholic by nature, even you are forced to admit that this is a day to stay in bed. Give yourself these few hours to regroup and recoup your energy. You'll need to be operating at peak form for all the work that's likely to hit your desk next week.

PISCES: There could be a missing person very much on your mind these days. Is it possible that the relationship is over and you're the last one to know? Don't let your insecurities get the better of you, Pisces. It's likely that your friend merely needs some time alone to sort out some big life issues. He or she will seek out your warmth and friendship again soon.