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# Summit TIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## One more succumbs to Covid, Sikkim reports only two more cases

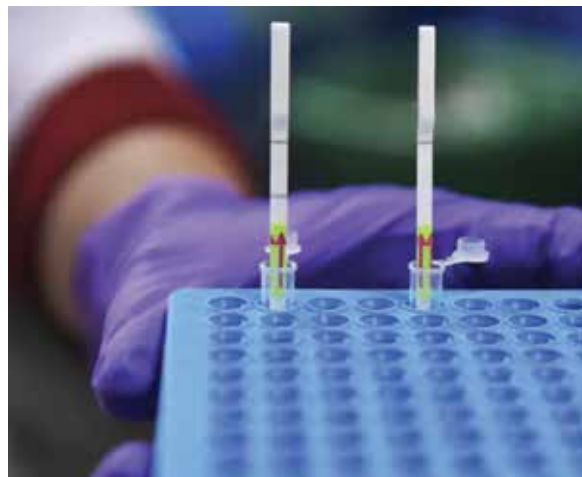
### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 31 JAN:

Sikkim recorded its 134th COVID death in the passing away of an 84-year-old male from Tokal-Bermiok, South District, who succumbed with Novel Coronavirus on Saturday. He passed away at around 11:40 AM at the STNM Hospital due to COVID pneumonia. The last death in Sikkim due to Covid was on 24 Jan.

In his daily health bulletin on Sunday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam Gyaltsen Bhutia informed that the patient was admitted to STNM Hospital after testing positive for COVID-19 a day earlier on 29 January.

He had symptoms of Covid pneumonia and the death of the octogenarian is being registered as a COVID death with comorbidities as he was also suffering from Sepsis and was in Septic shock.



Meanwhile, two new cases of novel coronavirus were reported in the past 24 hours taking the state's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the State to 6,090.

On the other hand, the number of recovered Covid patients in Sikkim reached 5,775 with nine more recoveries being reported from different isolation facilities on Saturday.

The number of active cases of novel coronavirus have further fallen to 86 in Sikkim.

The two new cases were picked up from the testing of 235 samples on Saturday, both from the RT-PCR testing of 200 samples. The 24 samples screened via TrueNat and 11 by rapid antigen testing, all returned negative.

While providing details of the new cases, Mr Bhutia informed that one person from Kumrek, Rangpo and another from the Swastik camp at Burtuk in East District were the two to test positive.

### SHRAVAN CHETTRI GANGTOK, 31 JAN:

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang laid the foundation stone of a Community Health Center in Soreng Chakung, West Sikkim as well as the Mangsari Mangarjong project today.

Thanking PK Pradhan (Ex-Chief Secretary) and his family for donating land for the project, the CM, announced that the CHC will be named "Birkha Bahadur Memorial Hospital" in memory of the land donor's grandfather.

Principal Health Secretary, P. Srinivasulu informed that the CHC will have three floors with total plinth area of 40,764 square feet. The estimated cost of the construction is Rs 8.40 Crore consisting of OPD



sections for general medicine, pediatrics, surgery, gynaecology, dental, physiotherapy, labour rooms, natal care units, recovery rooms, SNCU, Radiology Units for Digital X-Ray and CT Scan, and geriatric ward and

laboratories for hermatology, pathology, and microbiology. The centre will also have a Dialysis Unit, a Wellness Centre and a multi-purpose hall.

Both the Health Minister, MK Sharma and

Soreng Chakung legislator, Aditya Golay spoke at length expressing gratitude to PK Pradhan and the government for the development.

All Sikkim Mangar Association President, Santosh Alley mentioned

that Mangsari Mangarjong is a place of worship for the Mangar community of the constituency. Akhil Sikkim Mangar Association also presented a memento to the Chief Minister on behalf of the civil society of Soreng and the Sikkim government.

Tourism Department officials informed that the Mangarjong is to be built at a cost of Rs 25.98 Crore spread across an area of 1.82 acres. The structure will include an eco-friendly 150 metres walkway till Garthangey Bhir. Additionally beautification will also take place for Rai Khola nearby.

The program was organized under the joint auspices of the Department of Health and the Department of Tourism.

## Sikkim House in Mumbai soon: CM

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 31 JAN:

Chief Minister, PS Tamang today informed that a Sikkim House will soon be coming up in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

While addressing a function in West Sikkim today, the CM said that the Sikkim government had approached the Maharashtra government for construction of a Sikkim House in Kharghar, Mumbai, which has been accepted by the Maharashtra government.

The Sikkim House will be 4000 square meter in size, with the nearest airport being 6 km and Tata Memorial Hospital being 2 km away. The CM said that Sikkim House can be accessible for people travelling to Mumbai for medical purposes.

## Sukmit Lepcha is 1st Iron Woman of Sikkim, Lalit Rai the 1st Iron Man

### SAGAR CHHETRI GANGTOK, 31 JAN:

Lalit Rai of White Hall Gym, Gangtok, and Sukmit Lepcha of Namchi Indoor Gym have emerged the 1st Iron Man of Sikkim and 1st Iron Woman of Sikkim respectively after impressing at the 1st Junior & Senior [men & women] Bench Press & Deadlift Competition held here at Arithang community hall on Saturday.

Power House Gym of Pani House, Gangtok, lifted the team championship trophy.

Also on Saturday, Premit Lepcha of Barbel Gym, Gangtok, set the State record in deadlift by lifting 130 kgs in women's category.

The daylong championship, organized by Sikkim Powerlifting Association [SPA], saw the participation of 65 lifters representing gyms from different parts of the State in 23 weight categories. The champion-

ship had a four-member jury from West Bengal.

The championship had RDD Minister, Sonam Lama as chief guest accompanied by UD&HD Minister, Arun Upreti, who is also the SPA president, and Khadi Board chairperson, Chung-Chung Bhutia, among other dignitaries.

It is informed that the winners in different weight categories will now represent Sikkim at the upcoming national championships.

In his address, the RDD Minister appreciated the SPA initiative and called on them to continue their efforts towards engaging local youth in sports and constructive activities.

The UD&HD Minister, in turn, informed that SPA organized the championship to provide an opportunity and platform to local lifters to compete among their peers and a taste of intense competition.

## State Open Table Tennis Championship concludes



### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 31 JAN:

The 23rd edition of the State Open Table Tennis Championship 2021 concluded here at the indoor gymnasium hall, Paljor Stadium complex on Saturday. The three-day championship was organized by Sikkim Table Tennis Association [STTA], which was conducted by NIS coach, Zarina Rana.

STTA president, SB Subba and general secretary, Kuber Bhandari, who is also the president of Sikkim Olympic Association, gave away prizes to winners in different categories of the championship.

The Association

plans to organize district-wise championship to promote table tennis amongst youngsters, it is informed. The Association also plans to form table tennis clubs in different parts of the State to organise inter-club tournaments.

In the cadet singles [girls] category, Rajeshwari Basnett defeated Dawa Doma Sherpa, while Rigeal Vyas outplayed Vedhant Sharma in cadet boys' singles. In sub-junior boys, Richard Lepcha defeated Ayush Raphael and in sub-junior girls, Eunice Rai defeated Tanya Dong.

Richard Lepcha defeated Ashwin Gurung in

turn to pg02

## Journalist arrest: Media bodies condemn police action

### NEW DELHI, JAN 31 (PTI):

Media bodies on Sunday condemned the police action against two journalists who were picked up during the farmers' protests at Delhi's Singhu border for allegedly misbehaving with police personnel. They said such crackdowns impinge on the media's right to report freely and interferes with its right to freedom of expression.

Freelance journalist Mandeep Punia and Dharmender Singh (with Online News India) were detained by Delhi Police last evening for allegedly misbehaving with personnel on duty. While Singh was later released, the police arrested Punia on Sunday.

The Indian Women's Press Corps, Press Club of India and the Press Association demanded Punia's immediate release and said no journalist should be disturbed while carrying out their duties at any place. "Such crackdowns impinge on the

media's right to report freely and interferes with our right to freedom of expression, and freedom of the press as guaranteed by the Constitution of India," the bodies said in a joint statement.

They said Punia has been reporting on the present farmers' agitation right from the beginning and his arrest "is part of the government crackdown on journalists to prevent them from doing their job independently and freely." "Punia is a young freelance journalist who contributes to The Caravan and Junpith. The Delhi Police used brutal force while picking him up (on Saturday) and did not share his whereabouts to other media colleague entire night," the media bodies said.

They said the copy of the FIR against Punia was issued only this morning. Four IPC sections -- 186 (voluntarily obstructing public servant in discharge of his duties), 353

(assaulting or using criminal force on a public servant in execution of his duty), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to a public servant in the discharge of his duty) and 34 (acts done in furtherance to common intention) have been pressed against him, they said.

Police had earlier said they placed barricades at the border following the violence on Friday to ensure that no one could get through. However, some people including the journalist were trying to remove the barricades, the police had alleged, adding the scribe also misbehaved with the police personnel there.

On Friday, clashes broke out at Singhu border between farmers and a large group of men claiming to be local residents who hurled stones at each other. The Singhu border is one of the main protest sites against the new farm laws.

Delhi Police SHO (Alipur) was injured in the violence.

**World Cancer Day 4th February**

Organized by: **Mani Trust**  
Under - Health and Medical Awareness Programme

In Technical Collaboration with:  
Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

In Association with:  
Block Development Office, Kalimpong - II  
& Pedong Multipurpose Women Primary Co-operative Society Ltd.

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**Summit TIMES**

Date: 4th Feb 2021 | Venue & Time: Pedong Community Hall, Kalimpong - II at 11 am

I AM AND I WILL

Join us On 4th February



# GNLF takes dig at Bimal

SMRITA KHAWAS  
SILIGURI, 31 JAN:

A public meeting was organised by Gorkha National Liberation Front at Darjeeling Motor Stand today which was attended by leaders along with thousands of supporters.

Addressing the public in the meeting, GNLF president, Maan Ghising said, "Now it's time for the public of the Hills to be serious and analyse what is right and wrong because we can see many political parties in our Hills trying to confuse the public. I want to tell them that the public is well aware of facts so think before you speak because I will always be with the public."

He said that it is good that leaders who



had so far been living outside the state have returned home but they should not spread misinformation.

Darjeeling MLA, Niraj Zimba said, "We will support those who will support our demand and our community. Centre will have to realise that if one person betrayed them that does not mean all of

us are like that. And we will continue our political pressure to fulfill our demands. But as of now we believe that the Centre knows what is what and will do what is best for every one of us."

Mr Zimba further said that there is a wave of change in Bengal and the public is supporting Bhartiya Janta Party

along with the ministers.

The Chief Minister can only offer Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) or GTA 3 autonomous body within Bengal but what the centre offers will be under constitutional guarantee and might be Gorkhaland, Union Territory or even bigger than the Sixth Schedule, he stated.

"All we want to say is that we don't want economical solution, we want permanent political solution for our community. And about development, that is something that has to be done any how but more than development we want to solve the issue of our identity," he added.

## Gill blazes to National Rally Championship title

COIMBATORE, JAN 31 (PTI): Gaurav Gill was in blazing form at the wheels of his Mahindra XUV as he and navigator Musa Sherif showed immense skills and patience to win the Rally of Coimbatore here on Sunday and again emerge national champions.

By winning two legs on tarmac in Itanagar last month and performing strongly in Kethanur, 40km outside Coimbatore, where the rally stages were situated, Gill showed he was the king of gravel as well.

"I am extremely happy to win three rallies in a row and become national champion for the seventh time," said Gill. For JK Tyre, the return to the rallying scene with a bang after a long COVID-19-forced hiatus could not have been sweeter.

It was a brave decision on part of the FM-SCI's INRC and the competing teams to go ahead with the rally season despite fears over the virus.

From Saturday to Sunday afternoon, Gill had a lot of problems but through his experience and large heart he

conquered the elements and technical glitches in the car. From Stage 1 on Saturday till the end of Stage 6 on Sunday, Gill's rally machine was not in best shape. The car was in "limp mode" and he was not able to drive at the maximum speed he wanted on a demanding surface laden with gravel, hard pieces of stone and rock.

There were twists and turns, cars kicking up dust which made the two days of rallying action a joy to watch.

The champion rally driver from Delhi, who trains hard and is normally a picture of composure, adapted well.

"I knew I was not able to push beyond 100 or 105kmph in dirt. I had to drive technically and ensure I finished. I must thank Hardy Sir (Sanjay Sharma) of JK Tyre for being ever supportive. We have won the championship and this is pure joy," said Gill. "In 2020, when lockdown happened, I was simply training at home for nine months in the gym. To get back into the car, for which I thank Mahindras and JK Tyre for this booster.

## COVID-19: India reports 13,052 new cases

NEW DELHI, JAN 31 (PTI): With 13,052 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, India's COVID-19 tally has gone up to 1,07,46,183, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease has surged to 1,04,23,125, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday.

The national recovery rate has climbed to 96.99 per cent.

The death toll increased to 1,54,274 with 127 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,04,23,125. The COVID-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.44 per cent.

The total COVID-19

active cases remained below 2 lakh for the 12th consecutive day.

There are 1,68,784 active coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 1.57 per cent of the total case-load, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to the ICMR, 19,65,88,372 samples have been tested up to January 30 with 7,50,964 samples being tested on Saturday.

### State Open Table...

junior boys singles and Tanija Dong defeated Srijana Dong in junior girls category. Sashi Dong emerged as the champion defeating BM Subba in women's singles and in men's singles, Ayush Agarwal defeated Sylvanus Sherpa.

Bimal Gurung defeated Dhurva Rai in veterans men's [40 years and above], CS Subba beat Dhurva Rai in veterans [50 years and above] and UK Pradhan became the champion of veterans [60 years and above] after defeating Lomden Bhutia.

## DSA meets to prepare for State-level Sherpa Losar celebrations

SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 31 JAN:

The Denzong Sherpa Association convened the third round of its follow-up meeting with executive members of different Sherpa Kidugs of Sikkim here at Bhojoghari on Sunday to discuss preparations for the state-level Sherpa Losar celebrations, a press release informs.

The meeting confirmed that the celebration will be hosted at Gumpa Dara, Uttarey, West Sikkim, on 21 February. DSA has resolved to felicitate Sherpa language teachers for the extra effort they have put in for smooth functioning



of e-education system during the pandemic.

The meeting also decided to invite the Chief Minister to the celebration as the chief guest.

The celebration is being organised in collaboration with the Sikkim Sherpa Sangathan (Sherpa Kidug) of Maney-bong Dentam, an official release informs, while

adding that an organising committee chaired by DSA president, Pema Wangchuk Sherpa, and with Minister MN Sherpa as the chief patron was also formalized today with Secretaries PN Sherpa and MT Sherpa as patrons.

Today's meeting was chaired by Sangay Sherpa, Chief Patron DSA.

## Mid-day meals lifeline for millions, should be restarted: UN Food Agency



NEW DELHI, 31 JAN [PTI]: Noting that the mid-day meal scheme represents the lifeline for millions of school children in the country, the UN WFP India has said as the schools reopen, the scheme will also need to be reactivated with the provision of hot, cooked meals.

The UN's World Food Programme country director Bishow Parajuli said India offers a shining example through its existing food safety nets and the collaborative response it undertook to try and ensure that the coronavirus-triggered lockdowns did not disrupt the nutrition of the school children.

"The involvement of state agencies, civil society organisations and multilateral agencies to avert hunger ensured collaboration, including the creation of a standard operating procedure for procuring, preparing and serving mid-day meals," he told news agency Press Trust of India.

"The MDM scheme represents predictable support and the lifeline for millions of school children in the country and has a significant impact on the children's daily diet. As the schools reopen, this all-important scheme will also need to be reactivated with the provision of hot, cooked meals," Mr Parajuli said. Schools across the country were closed in March last year to curb the spread of COVID-19. They were partially reopened in some states from October 15.

Calling the mid-day meal scheme one of the three main food-based safety nets in India, reaching close to 10 crore school children with hot, cooked meals, Mr Parajuli said in response to the lockdown, schools had to be closed across

the country, but to ensure the continuity of the scheme, the Centre, states and Union territories issued guidelines to provide the MDM entitlement to children in kind or cash or both.

"Available information suggests that most states and Union territories acted upon this guidance quickly, albeit with variability in the coverage, continuity and quality of implementation at the district or sub-district level. This guidance was aimed to help the schools prepare for reopening with a focus on food safety, health and hygiene," he added.

A recent UN report presented evidence on the potential short and long-term negative effects of the disruption to school meal schemes during the COVID-19 pandemic globally.

It shows how vulnerable the children participating in these schemes are, how coping and mitigation measures are often only short-term solutions and how prioritising the reopening of schools is critical.

The report further highlighted how girls are at greater risk of not being in school or of being taken out of school early, which may lead to poor nutrition and health for themselves and their children.

However, well-designed school feeding programmes have been shown to enable students to catch up from early growth failure and other negative shocks. As such, once the schools reopen, the meal schemes can help address the deprivation that children have experienced during the closures and provide an incentive for the parents to send and keep their children, especially girls, in school, the report said.

## Chongrang to host SKM's constituency level foundation day celebrations for Yuksam-Tashiding

PRITAM LAMA

GIALSHING, 31 JAN:

The Yuksam-Tashiding unit of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha is busy in preparations for the 9th foundation day of the party which is being held at the constituency level this year on 04 Feb.

Deputy Speaker Sangay Lepcha, who is also the area MLA, accompanied by SKM's West district coordinator Nandu Gurung and CLC coordinator Keshav Kumar Khatiwada visited the venue for the celebration, Chongrang, near Tashiding and inspected the arrangements today.

The party's Yuk-



sam-Tashiding constituency level committee members and other party functionaries were also present.

The CLC has been tasked to make arrangements to ensure a grand celebration.

A grand joining program is also scheduled to be held on the day.

The celebrations, organisers inform, will be organised ensuring all prescribed COVID-19 protocols.

## We will soon issue guidelines for digital platforms, says Minister

NEW DELHI, 31 JAN: The Ministry will soon release guidelines on Over the Top (OTT) platforms as it is receiving a lot of complaints against some serials available here, said Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar on Sunday.

"We have received a lot of complaints against some serials available on OTT platforms. Films and serials released on OTT platforms and digital newspapers do not come under the purview of the Press Council Act, Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act or Censor Board. We will come

up with some guidelines on it soon," he said while addressing media.

The Minister also announced that full occupancy will be allowed in cinema halls from February 1 while following all COVID-related protocols.

Content on OTT platforms has recently fuelled controversy, leading to public outcry and booking of makers of these programmes.

Three FIRs were registered in Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow, Greater Noida and Shahjahanpur. Two FIRs were lodged in Madhya Pradesh while one FIR each was lodged in Karnataka and Bihar. Apart from

the FIRs, at least three other criminal complaints are pending in Maharashtra, Delhi and Chandigarh respectively regarding content aired on OTT.

FIRs were registered for the alleged inappropriate depiction of Uttar Pradesh Police personnel, deities and adverse portrayal of a character playing the role of prime minister in the show.

Earlier, the Bombay High Court had granted a transit pre-arrest bail to director Ali Abbas Zafar, producer Himanshu Mehra, writer Gaurav Solanki, and Purohit against whom a case was registered in Lucknow.

## Police Case against Wire's editor over tweet on farmer's death at tractor rally

NEW DELHI, 31 JAN [NDTV]: A police case has been filed against "The Wire" editor Siddharth Varadarajan over his tweet sharing a news report filed by the web portal regarding the death of a farmer during the tractor rally on Republic Day. The First Information Report accuses him of making imputations, assertions prejudicial to national-integration and statements conducing to public mischief.

The farmer who died in Delhi was from a village in Uttar Pradesh's Rampur and the case was filed on a complaint by a local resident.

The story was based on the comments from farmers' family who alleged that he had been shot. The family also said one of the doctors who conducted the postmortem on the body, had confided in them about this but said "the hands of the doctors are tied". The Delhi Police had said the farmer died after his tractor had overturned.

The doctors who conducted the postmortem later issued a signed statement denying they spoke to the family or anyone else about the postmortem.



The Uttar Pradesh police have said his postmortem shows he was not shot, as claimed by his family. "He succumbed to the injuries he received after his tractor turned turtle," Avinash Chandra, a senior police officer of Bareilly region was quoted as saying by news agency ANI.

The farmer had died during the protest near Delhi's ITO, where violence broke out. CCTV footage of his tractor overturning was widely circulated.

"What's the IPC provision for 'malicious prosecution'? Here is the UP Police indulging in it, filing an FIR against me for tweeting about what the grandfather of farmer who was killed in the tractor parade had said on the record!," Mr Varadarajan has tweeted.

Siddharth Varadarajan is the seventh journalist to be accused over the issue. Earlier, Rajdeep Sardesai, Mrinal Pande,

Paresh Nath, Anant Nath and Vinod K Jose were accused of sedition, criminal conspiracy and promoting enmity under the Indian Penal Code in a case filed in Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

Objecting to the police action, Editors' Guild chief Seema Mustafa had said: "The journalists have been specifically targeted for reporting the accounts pertaining to the death of one of the protestors on their personal social media handles as well as those of the publications they lead and represent. It must be noted that on the day of the protest and high action, several reports were emerging from eyewitnesses on the ground as well as from the police, and therefore it was only natural for journalists to report all the details as they emerged. This is in line with established norms of journalistic practice."

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**POLIO SUNDAY AT LOWER BARDING:** Polio drops were administered to children below five years of age at Lower Bardang here where the District Hospital, Singtam, had established a booth. ASHA members Doma Bhutia, Rabita Rai, Dhan Maya Darnal and Ranaji Darnal were present at the booth to attend to the children on Polio Sunday. [from YOGEN THATAL]

6 new COVID-19 cases push Mizoram's tally to 4,372

**AIZAWL, JAN 31 (PTI):** Six more persons, including two children and an 82-year-old man, have tested positive for COVID-19 in Mizoram, pushing the coronavirus caseload to 4,372, an official said on Sunday. Of the six new cases, five were reported from Aizawl district while one was reported from Kolasib district, he said.

The new cases were detected through Rapid Antigen Test, he said. The 82-year-old patient has developed symptoms of COVID-19 while the rest five are asymptomatic, the official said.

Mizoram now has 40 active COVID-19 cases, while 4,323 people have recovered from the disease, he said.

Nine people have died in the state due to COVID-19 so far. The state has tested 2,07,184 samples for COVID-19 so far, including 1,208 on Saturday. Meanwhile, state Immunisation Officer Dr Lalzawmi said 849 beneficiaries received COVID-19 vaccine on Saturday.

Of the 14,607 healthcare workers registered to receive COVID-19 vaccine, a total of 9,346 have been administered the first dose of Covishield vaccine in the ongoing vaccination drive till Saturday, Lalzawmi said.

"Prayed to God to forgive us": Indore official on dumping homeless out of city

**Indore, 31 Jan [PTI]:** Indore District Magistrate Manish Singh on Sunday said he has apologised to God for the local administration's action of dumping homeless people outside the city amid the cold weather, which led to a public outrage.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has also criticised the incident, terming it a "blot on humanity", while actor Sonu Sood, who came into spotlight for helping migrants return to their homes amid the COVID-19 lockdown last year, urged Indore residents to help the homeless people.

Facing flak over the incident which took place on Friday, District Magistrate Singh, while attending a religious event at a Ganesh temple in Khajrana area here on Sunday, said he apologised to God on behalf of the administration.

"Whosoever might have been at fault in this incident, but we are officers and we can't run away from our responsibility. Hence, we prayed to God to forgive us for our mistakes," Mr Singh told reporters.

On Friday, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan suspended an Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) official after videos of homeless people being driven out of the city and dropped near a village went viral on social media.

The civic body has also removed two temporary employees from the job.

The incident has taken place at a time when the administration of Indore, which has won the country's "cleanest city" tag four times in a row, is making all efforts to keep the city neat and tidy to win the "Sawchh Sarvekshan 2021".

In a Twitter post on Saturday, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said it was a "blot on humanity" and sought action against the officials who ordered such an action.

Mr Sood in a video message on Saturday appealed to residents of Indore to come forward and help the homeless people get a roof on their heads.

When contacted, Additional Municipal Commissioner Abhay Rajangaonkar told PTI on Sunday that, "We are conducting a detailed investigation into the incident. All facts will come to light after the inquiry."

Around 2.30 pm on Friday, some municipal workers brought eight to 10 people, who were homeless and looking weak, in a truck and dropped them near Shipra village outside the city, said Rajesh Joshi, who runs a tea stall in the village and recorded the incident on his mobile phone.

They were forcibly taking out these people, including two women, from the truck, Mr Joshi said.

"When I started recording it, some municipal workers said they were dropping these people here (in the village) following a government order, as they were dirtying the city," he claimed.

After villagers protested, the IMC staff took those people back to the city, he said.

In the video, these elderly people, including some who were unable to walk properly, were seen sitting dejected along a roadside. Their belongings tied in rags were also seen scattered around.

Mahila Kavya Manch holds January symposium

**AARON RAI GANGTOK, 31 JAN:**

The Sikkim unit of Mahila Kavya Manch held its poetry symposium for the month of January here at Golden Tips, MG Marg, on Saturday.

Veena Rai chaired the symposium and congratulated Bhakti Sharma, chairperson of the Sikkim branch of Mahila Kavya Manch, for the initiative and celebrated the arrival of women in fields which were kept beyond their engagement until recently.

She also commended the quality of poems shared at the symposium and urged the forum to continue providing women poets a platform of their own.

Poets who shared their works at the symposium were Manika Sharma, Rupa Tamang, Ratna Laxam, Subba, Radha Pandey, Deepa Rai.



### RUCHI DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC

Behind telephone Exchange Near Old STNM Hospital. Gangtok

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Shivalik arboretum opened for public in Uttarakhand

**DEHRADUN, JAN 31 (PTI):** An arboretum showcasing the floral diversity of the Shivalik hills was inaugurated on Sunday at Jeolikot in Nainital district. One of the unique features of the "Shivalik Arboretum" inaugurated by noted environmental activist Ajay Rawat is that the trees standing there introduce themselves to visitors.

Explaining the unique aspect, Chief Conservator of Forests Sanjiv Chaturvedi said the placards hanging on individual trees to describe their qualities refer to them in the first person in a story telling format.

For example, the placard hanging from a Koel-

reuteria paniculata tree at the arboretum reads: "My common name is Golden rain tree. I belong to Sapindacea family. I am native to Eastern Asia. My flowers are used in the treatment of conjunctivitis and epiphora. A yellow dye is obtained from my flowers. My flowers provide good nectar for bees. I am also grown as an ornamental tree."

"The idea behind the description of trees in a narrative format is to help them make a direct emotional connect with people who come to see them. It is also intended to awaken in them an urge to save trees and conserve the environment," Chaturvedi explains.

Spread over three acres, the botanical garden is one of the largest arboretums in the state that boasts of more than 200 salient tree and shrub species native to the Shivaliks which literally means the tresses of Shiva, he said.

The tree species include Kaphal (myrica esculenta), Toon (toonaciliata), Tejpat (cinamomum tamala), Banj oak (quercus leucotrichophora) and Buransh (rhododendron arboreum).

Some exotic tree species like Queensland Kauri Pine (agathis robusta), Atlas Cedar (cedrus Atlantica) and Monzuma Cypress also stand at the arboretum.

File No: GOS/C&I/TTE/2020-21/003Date: 01/02/2021

INVITATION FOR QUOTATIONS FOR SUPPLY OF GOODS UNDER NATIONAL SHOPPING PROCEDURES

To,

Dear Sir /Madam,  
Subject: Invitation for Quotation for Supply of Kirloskar 250 KVa DG Set.

1 You are invited to submit your most competitive quotation for the following goods:

Sl No	Brief Description of Goods	Specification*	Quantity	Delivery Period	Place of Delivery	Installation Requirement if any
1	Kirloskar DG Set (250 KVa)	Kirloskar 250 KVA DG. Phase Voltages & Currents, Frequency, Reverse power, Genset kVA, kW, kWh, KVAR, Power Factor, Canopy Temperature Lube oil Pressure, Engine Temperature, RPM, Run Hours, Number of starts, Fuel Level, Auto / Manual Stop, Battery charge condition, AMF feature, Modbus communication, Synchronization, Remote Monitoring, Battery charging failure, Over/Under speed, Over Current, Over/Under Voltage, Over kW, Phase Seq, Phase missing, Mains Under voltage, Earth Fault trip, Fuel usage Alarm, Low lube oil Pressure, High Engine Temperature, Low/High battery voltage, Low Fuel Level, Over Crank protection, Routine maintenance indicator, Genset Test Facility, Mains Frequency.	1 number	4-5 weeks	Temi Tea Estate, South Sikkim	To be installed in the Genset Room.

\*Note:

1 Bid Price

a) The contract shall be for the full quantity as described above. Corrections if any, shall be made by crossing out, initialing, dating and re writing.

b) All duties, taxes and other levies payable by the contractor under the contract shall be included in the total price.

c) The rates quoted by the bidder shall be fixed for the duration of the contract and shall not be subject to adjustment on any account.

d) The Prices should be quoted in Indian Rupees only.

2 Each Bidder shall submit only one quotation.

3 Validity of Quotation  
Quotations shall remain valid for a period not less than 15 days after the deadline date specified for submission.

4 Evaluation of Quotations  
The Purchaser will evaluate and compare the quotations determined to be substantially responsive i.e. which

a) Substantially responsive; and

b) Conform to the terms and conditions, and specification.  
The Quotations would be evaluated for all the item together/would be evaluated separately for each item. [Select one of the options].

5 Award of Contract: The Purchaser will award the contract to the bidder whose quotation has been determined to be substantially responsive and who has offered the lowest evaluated quotation price. Notwithstanding the above, the Purchaser reserves the right to accept or reject any quotations and to cancel the bidding process and reject all quotations at any time prior to the award of contract. The bidder whose bid is accepted will be notified of the award of contract by the Purchaser prior to expiration of the quotation validity period. The terms of the accepted offer shall be incorporated in the purchase order.

6 Payments shall be made promptly by the Purchaser but in no case later than Thirty (30) days after submission of the invoice or claim by the Supplier.

7 Normal commercial warranty/ guarantee shall be applicable to the supplied goods.

8 You are requested to provide your offer latest by 12:00.hours on 15/02/2021.

9 We look forward to receiving your quotations and thank you for your interest in this project.

(Purchaser)  
GENERAL MANAGER  
TEMI TEA ESTATE  
GOVT OF SIKKIM.

FORMAT OF QUOTATION

Sl No	Description of Goods	Specifications	Quantity	unit	Quoted Unit Rate in Rupees	Amount in Rupees and Words	
						In figures	In words
	Tax (specify)						
	Tax (specify)						
Gross Total Rs ..... Rupees.....							
#Applicable while the bids are being invited for more than one item and would be evaluated for all the items together.							

We agree to supply the above goods in accordance with the technical specifications for a total contract price of Rs. .... (amount in figures ) (Rs. ....amount in words) within the period specified in the Invitation for Quotations.

We also confirm that the normal commercial warrantee/guarantee of ..... months shall apply to the offered goods.

We clarify/confirm that we are eligible to trade in the goods as indicated in the quotation document as per law.

We understand that you are not bound to accept the lowest or any quotation you may receive.

Signature of Supplier, Official Seal.  
Contact Number:  
E mail:



## The Border Was Back in the News

*...and so was the disinterest in taking the Sikkimese into confidence*

So, the border with China was back in the news. And not just the one in Ladakh, but also the one Sikkim abuts with the bully of the region. No, not Doklam, that one has played out of the news cycles and no one bothered telling the Sikkimese what settlement was arrived there. The border flashpoint that was in the news a fortnight or so back was Nakula, not to be confused with Nathula although some channels did use photographs of Nathula in their stories. Nakula is further up north and not even locals get to roam there anymore. That being the case, the Sikkimese, especially the Lachenpa and Lachungpas will just have to take the army's assurance at face value and accept that regions which were once part of their usual forays for grazing or chasing livestock is still secure. There was reportedly a skirmish there and this time there are no whatsapp video forwards of soldiers jostling, but a confirmation that a "minor" incident did transpire there but has since been resolved. There was not quite the headline-grabbing excitement of a few years ago, but it was a talking point nevertheless. And as is the norm, this was in studios in Delhi and even though the real tension, even if shortlived, was on a border in Sikkim, no one bothered to explain things to people here or reassure them.

The return of Sikkim's borders to the headlines followed a leaking route similar to how other episodes issue had first made news – an obvious nudge towards the story from army/ defence "sources". In the present instance, news reports spoke of Chinese soldiers having come into Indian territory from Nakula and getting pushed back after some lusty exchange of blows. Since this was not an incursion of any consequence, we were spared satellite images of the area, although some Google map images were used. In this regard, one should realise that it is unlikely that TV channels, even the desh-bhakt types, have satellites keeping watch over our borders, so such info is obviously "shared" by defence or intelligence agencies. Such images could really be from anywhere in the mountains, and it is unlikely that these are ever independently verified by the media before their broadcasts claim it as facts. Earlier, during Doklam's "sensational" debut on national news in 2017-18, TV news anchors dubbed running commentaries on to a video of Indian and Chinese soldiers in a shoving match in the Doklam area. These were not captured by an embedded journalist but fell into their laps through WhatsApp groups but no mention was made of the source when the footage was aired. That smartphone video was not much different from other videos of similar jostling matches between Indian and Chinese soldiers in this sector. Journalists in these parts have been privy to such visuals for a while now and anyone who knows the borders here, should also know that such confrontations are common and have been routine for the past nearly four and a half decades. Thankfully, the Nakula episode was not of the scale of the Ladakh, or, if army spokespersons are to be believed, of the Doklam skirmish either.

Interestingly, when the Doklam news first broke, most nationalist, oops, national, journalists could not even be bothered by geography and for several weeks led viewers to believe that Doklam was part of India or danced around the suggestion that it was contested between India, China and Bhutan. That's old news now and interest in Nakula probably dropped because it is not near the Chicken-Neck corridor which is when the mainland takes note.

But there is not excusing the disinterest of central and army agencies to address the incident for the Sikkimese. Agreed, most Sikkimese won't know where Nakula actually is, but it is still Sikkimese territory. Territorial integrity cannot be Delhi's sole preserve because when it comes to emotional, and perhaps even cultural, connect, it is the Sikkimese, especially those in Lachen and Lachung, who have a stronger association with Nakula and whichever pasture sits at its base.

It is wrong for the actors in play to not realise that this entire drama is playing out in the Sikkim sector. And since it is here that the incident occurred, does Sikkim, to reiterate a point, not deserve some explanations and reassurances? If the drama is to play out from Sikkim's soil, the State needs to be provided more than a mute bystander's role.

### WRITE US:

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

## GameStop: Wall Street short sellers are not villains but Reddit traders should be totally free to attack them

ARTURO BRIS  
*theconversation.com*

In the battle between the army of renegade Reddit retail traders and Wall Street's hedge funds over unloved stocks like the Texan computer games retail chain GameStop, there has been a serious case of mistaken accusations on both sides. They are both being wrongly accused of manipulating the markets, but they are not.

Let me start with the hedge funds. The reason why they were targeted by the 5 million-plus traders who follow r/WallStreetBets (of which I am one, by the way) is because their strategy of short-selling stocks is seen as damaging.

Hedge funds and institutional traders sell a stock short when they have a negative view about a company. In essence, this involves borrowing the stock in the securities lending market and selling it, with the commitment to return the loaned stock later.

Such a strategy tends to be self-fulfilling: when the stock is sold, it puts downward pressure on the price (especially if many investors do the same). Then, when the time comes to return the borrowed stock, the hedge fund buys it back at a much lower price, thereby pocketing a hefty profit.

In the view of the angry retail traders who have driven up the price of GameStop and other stocks like Nokia in recent days, this is manipulation. Their attack, using cheap and easy trading apps like Robinhood, was based on the simple premise that if short sellers make prices go down, buyers make prices go up (assuming they have market power).

If buyers dominate, it creates what is known as a "short squeeze" as prices go up and the short sellers have to rush to buy fast in order to lose as little money as possible. In some cases, the rising prices will trigger "margin calls" by their lenders, which requires the short sellers to immediately cover their costs. This has inflicted billions of dollars of losses on hedge funds like Melvin Capital.

Meanwhile, the rush to buy stocks back pushes prices even higher, and some short sellers are pushed out of the market because the stock is too expensive for them to buy. In such cases, they are usually penalised by the exchange regulator for "failing to deliver" the stock back to the lenders that they borrowed it from.

### IN DEFENCE OF SHORT SELLERS

The debate about short sales and their impact on stock markets goes back to the beginning of the 20th century. It was highlighted during the 2008 financial crisis, and I was already among the few that advocated for short sales as a way to increase market efficiency, together with my colleagues professors William Goetzmann and Ning Zhu.

However, most saw the fall of Lehman Brothers, AIG and other financial institutions in 2008 as caused by short sellers artificially betting on their stocks plummeting. Many jurisdictions, from the US to Japan, implemented short sale restrictions and market halts.

In some European markets, it has actually been quite common for the market authorities to prohibit short sales for certain periods. Remember: regulators want stock prices to go up, not down. The extreme case is the Pakistani regulator, which in 2008 imposed a regulation that basically prohibit-

and then reopened trading a few hours later. The prices of the targeted stocks then shot up again, though it soon emerged that there were still heavy restrictions on how many shares traders could buy in GameStop and certain other companies.

Now the controversy is whether regulators should go after Robinhood on the basis that it has been facilitating stock manipulation. In my view, the retail traders are no more manipulators than the short sellers. Manipulation requires both false information and intent to profit. Neither side falls into this category.



ed selling (not short selling but any selling).

### IN DEFENCE OF RENEGADE TRADERS

As for the Reddit traders, Robinhood and certain other platforms suspended buying (but not selling) of targeted stocks like GameStop in the midst of the excitement. This earned them much vilification on social media, and one trader filed a lawsuit against Robinhood.

Shares in GameStop and other stocks quickly tumbled, but they rose again a few hours later when the platform signalled that the suspension would be temporary. Robinhood explained soon after that it had taken this "tough decision" to ensure that it could meet its capital obligations with US regulator the SEC.

It could presumably have breached these requirements if the prices of stocks had suddenly fallen because so many traders would have borrowed heavily to maximise what they could buy, and Robinhood would have had to pick up the tab if they couldn't pay.

The platform quickly raised an additional US\$1 billion from its backers to cover such eventualities,

Markets are to finance what democracy is to our political systems: we need to allow people to vote according with their preferences and information. In the case of GameStop, it is equally as acceptable that sophisticated investors use market mechanisms to benefit from pessimistic beliefs, and that uninformed, well organised investors push stock prices up in order to harm the Wall Street institutions.

It should be the role of market regulators to increase transparency of markets so that trading is not driven by misinformation. They should also educate potential investors about the risks involved in equity trading (in fact, the potential losses for Reddit members in the GameStop episode could yet end up being enormous).

Finally, it is a regulator's responsibility to facilitate market entry to all, whether they are sophisticated or uninformed, whether they are rich or poor, whether they are tall or short. Markets are an amazing invention of humankind, but they are risky.

[the writer is Professor of Finance, International Institute for Management Development (IMD)]

## 10 Parenting Strategies to Reduce Your Kids' Pandemic Stress

AMANDA SHEFFIELD MORRIS  
& JENNIFER HAYS-GRUDO  
*theconversation.com*

Parents are dealing with huge demands on their time and energy. Children may not be attending school or involved in regular activities. As the pandemic continues to wreak havoc on families, routines have collapsed, patience is wearing thin and self-care is a distant memory.

Decades of research have taught us that adversity during childhood has damaging effects on health and development. Many studies have shown that kids who have faced abuse, neglect and family conflict struggle forming friendships, have academic difficulties and face physical and mental health problems in adolescence and adulthood.

Fortunately, developmental scientists have identified ways to help children survive and thrive during times of adversity. The beneficial effects of protective and nurturing experiences are powerful antidotes to stress and adversity and prepare children to cope with hard times for years to come.

Families worried about possible long-term effects of pandemic-related disruption can learn from these proven strategies. Here are 10 ways parents can foster children's resilience during challenging times.

### 1. CONNECT WITH ONE ANOTHER

Make time to talk, listen and play without distractions. Be sure children know they are loved unconditionally. This can include taking breaks to check in during the day when learning and working at home, having a special bedtime routine that includes talking about the day, taking walks together, or playing favorite games. Making the effort to connect helps children know they're valued and creates a sense of security.

### 2. SUPPORT CHILDREN'S FRIENDSHIPS

Think about ways for children to play together outdoors, talk via tech-

nology or play a video game virtually with friends. Some families are creating safe zones or bubbles, where they allow children to pick a close friend or two whose family is practicing recommended coronavirus precautions that they can interact with more closely. Maintaining friendships gives children opportunities to learn from peers and reduces stress, providing support and acceptance.

### 3. FIND WAYS CHILDREN CAN HELP OTHERS

Talk about how others are also struggling. Encourage them to donate toys they've outgrown, save money for a special cause or help a neighbor with errands like shopping, bringing in mail, doing yardwork or dog-walking. When you do things for others in the community, include your children and talk about why you do it. This helps children learn about the needs of others and cultivates empathy.

### 4. HELP CHILDREN STAY INVOLVED IN CLUBS OR GROUPS

Some groups that work well during a pandemic include outdoor Scouting, Zoom clubs and other special-interest clubs such as outdoor sports, fishing, hiking or biking. Being part of a group helps children feel a sense of belonging and promotes identity development. It can also help build morals and values and even promote academic success.

### 5. STAY IN TOUCH WITH IMPORTANT ADULTS

Children benefit from relationships with other grown-ups, like grandparents and teachers. They can be another source of support and someone to talk to about problems or successes. They're particularly important when parents are unavailable due to work or other obligations. Help kids stay connected through Zoom, email, phone calls, FaceTime and special activities like outdoor events. Some social media groups have targeted programs to link children with others to play games or chat.

### 6. KEEP UP WITH HOBBIES

Boredom is a parent's worst en-

emy. Having an enjoyable hobby is rewarding for kids; it provides engaging leisure time and opportunities to master something. Such activities provide connections with others, can teach discipline and how to manage one's emotions and behavior, and promote self-esteem. Explore art, music, science projects, writing, chess and other hobbies that develop physical, artistic and intellectual skills while providing hours of enjoyment.

### 7. BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Make exercise a part of family routines. Take walks or ride bikes, play active video games like Wii, go to the park, stretch or do yoga together. Exercise has many of the same benefits as hobbies. It also helps children handle the physical effects of stress on the body and improves mood and mental health.

### 8. CREATE ROUTINES

Routines are a powerful nonverbal signal to children's brains that they are safe and that life is predictable. Keeping a routine can reduce the number of conflicts, and children know what to do and expect during different points of the day.

Create and display (together, ideally) daily or weekly calendars with words or pictures that remind children when learning, playing, resting, sleeping and eating activities occur. Invent little rituals that comfort as well as accomplish goals, especially at bedtime: read, tell stories, sing a special song, say a prayer or list loved ones. Such activities ensure better sleep than allowing children to drift off watching a video. Children may push back if they've gotten used to less structure during the day, but most will welcome knowing what to expect.

### 9. KEEP REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Children's involvement in schooling varies widely during the pandemic, with some hardly affected and others learning entirely at home. Virtual schooling requires parents to be more involved than before – monitoring assignments, checking in during

the day and seeking help when children are struggling.

While schoolwork is indeed important, not all learning takes place in class. Involve children in opportunities to learn during everyday tasks such as cooking (measuring, timing), gardening, shopping (figuring sales prices, adding), and games (cards, dominoes, board games) that build memory and thinking skills. Read with your child every day. Depending on the level of the book, you can read to your child or take turns reading pages.

### 10. MAINTAIN A HEALTHY AND SAFE HOME

In addition to maintaining COVID-19 precautions, make nutritious meals, declutter and organize toys, games, hobby supplies and learning materials. Find ways to involve children in preparing meals, organizing their work and play spaces, cleaning up after activities, and sharing in conversations about family rules. Chaos and clutter are the enemies of calm. Creating safe and orderly spaces helps children manage stress. Eating healthy foods together benefits physical and mental health.

### PARENTING IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

Many parents naturally do the things listed above. However, with increased stress and demands on time, these activities are difficult to maintain. Now is a good time to pick a few of these strategies and get back on track.

Every family is different, and what's appropriate differs by children's ages, whether infants and toddlers, school-age children or teens and young adults. But adjusted for age and circumstances, these tried-and-true techniques can help youngsters make it through tough times and come out the other side OK.

[Amanda Sheffield Morris is Professor of Human Development and Family Science, Oklahoma State University; Jennifer Hays-Grudo is Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Oklahoma State University]



# Nepal's Disappearance Commission starts issuing ID cards

**BINOD GHIMIRE**

**KATHMANDU, 31 JAN [KATHMANDUPOST]:** With just two weeks left in its tenure, the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons on Thursday started distributing identity cards to the kin of people who disappeared during the Maoist insurgency.

Representatives of the victims, however, aren't happy with the identity cards as they are not associated with any government facility or concession. They allege that the commission is distributing cards just to show the government that they have been working hard.

"What is the meaning of holding the cards when it is of no use to the victims? This is nothing but a sham to show that the commission is working hard," Suman Adhikari, founding chairperson of Conflict Victims' Common Platform, told the Post. "The government should announce some facilities for cardholders."

Families of 21 people who disappeared during the Maoist insurgency, received their identity cards in the presence of Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Gyawali in Bardiya on Thursday.

Though the parties—then-government and the CPN Maoist—to the Comprehensive Peace Accords signed in 2006, agreed to make public the whereabouts of the disappeared within 60



days, it took the commission over 14 years just to start issuing identity cards to the kin of the victims.

Ganga Dhar Adhikari, spokesperson for the commission on enforced disappearance, said it is up to the government to provide facilities and concessions to cardholders, and the commission can only make recommendations.

He said the commission has recommended the government to provide subsidies in health, transportation, and education to cardholders. Officials from the three tiers of government can provide subsidies and relief to the victims, he added.

"We will press local, provincial, and federal governments to announce packages for the victims if our term is extended," he said.

The distribution of identity cards was also one of the tasks assigned

to the two transitional justice bodies—enforced disappearance and the truth commissions—formed in February 2015. "This is a step towards recognising the victims," Ganga Dhar Adhikari, spokesperson for the commission, told the Post. "This will now open doors for reparations."

The commission aims to complete the distribution of identity cards within three months if its tenure is extended. Its present tenure is set to expire in February.

Meanwhile, Suman Adhikari from the Conflict Victims' Common Platform told the Post that the transitional justice commissions have completely failed to investigate complaints filed by victims of the decade-long conflict.

The truth commission received 63,718 complaints but has recorded statements of concerned parties only in 3,787 cases. Simi-

lary, 3,223 complaints were filed with the disappearance commission by family members saying their loved ones had disappeared during the decade-long conflict. Of these, the commission is investigating only 2,506 complaints saying that the rest don't fall under its jurisdiction.

In February 2015, the Supreme Court ordered the government to amend the transitional justice law to make it adhere to international principles of transitional justice. The court held convicts in cases related to rape, extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance, and torture cannot be granted amnesty. However, successive governments are yet to amend the law as directed by the court.

As the House of Representatives has been dissolved, the government will have to issue an ordinance to revise the law—to both extend

the tenure of the commissions and amend the laws governing them as per the directives issued by the Supreme Court in 2015.

The Ministry of Law and Justice says it is consulting leaders from the Nepali Congress and the Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhav Kumar Nepal-led Nepal Communist Party to decide the fate of the commissions and the transitional justice law.

"We have held discussions with the Nepali Congress leaders," Minister for Law and Justice Lila Nath Shrestha told the Post. "We will make a decision on the tenure of the commissions and the amendment of the transitional justice law after conducting proper discussions," he added. He said the government will take the necessary decisions by Thursday.

Conflict victims, however, aren't optimistic that the government will take steps towards amending the law to do away with the controversial amnesty provision.

Maina Karki, chairperson of the platform, said they have been requesting an appointment with Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. However, he hasn't given them time. "Though the prime minister is meeting former Maoist combatants, he is reluctant to meet the victims' representatives. It is clear that the government isn't serious about our concerns," she said.

## For fifth day in a row, no new COVID-19 case in Andamans

**PORT BLAIR, JAN 31 (PTI):** Picturesque Andaman and Nicobar Islands have not reported any coronavirus case for the last five days notwithstanding a steady inflow of tourists into the archipelago, health department officials said Sunday.

The Union Territory has not reported any new COVID-19 case since Tuesday, they said.

The virus caseload in the archipelago remained at 4,994, with only four active cases, a senior health official said.

No casualty due to the virus has been reported for over a month time as the death toll stays at 62.

One more person was cured of the disease in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries in the islands to 4,928, the official said.

The administration is ensuring a strict compliance of COVID protocols by the natives as well as the tourists visiting the place. The Andaman and Nicobar administration has conducted 2,21,875 sample tests for COVID-19 so far, and the positivity rate stands at 2.25 per cent, the health official said.

Inoculation drive is going on at a smooth pace in the islands.

So far a total of 2,844 beneficiaries including Defence healthcare workers have received COVID-19 vaccine in the union territory of which 1,518 are in South Andaman district, 1,000 in North Andaman district and 326 in Nicobar district, the official said.

The islands known for its dazzling beauty remained coronavirus-free till the first week of June last year. The first case in the union territory was detected on June 10, 2020. Andaman and Nicobar Islands reported its first COVID-19 death of a 49-year-old patient on July 27 last.

With the islands opening to the tourists and resumption of daily economic activities, the administration has been observing strict COVID protocols to contain spread of the virus.

Official sources said anybody arriving by flight or reaching by ship from Kolkata or Chennai is mandatorily required to show a negative coronavirus report before the authorities allow them to enter the islands.

A compulsory coronavirus test is conducted on everybody boarding a jetty even after inter-islands movement, officials said.

Besides, a fine of Rs 2000 is imposed on anybody found moving without face mask in Port Blair and other places in the UT, officials said.

The civil and police officials have also launched a vigorous awareness drive against COVID-19 as safety protocols against the deadly disease, they said.

The tourism industry which was hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic has started receiving a large number of visitors as all the major tourist attractions in the archipelago have been opened by the administration.

## Bhutan's Samdrupcholing residents worry they are losing mining opportunity

**KALZANG WANGCHU**

**SAMDRUPCHOLING, 31 JAN [KUENSEL]:** Communities in the four gewogs of Samdrupcholing drungkhag allege that the State Mining Corporation Ltd (SMCL) is backtracking on its pledge to let them operate the Tshophangma coal mine after it floated tender.

The SMCL's chief executive officer (CEO) highlighted the importance of public participation in working with SMCL for coal mining operations once the existing contract expires in February this year during the consultative meeting on January 13 last year.

Residents from the locality near the coal mine claimed that they started gathering fund by selling shares from December 7, 2020, after receiving their approval letter from the SMCL on November 26 last year and set up the office and a company, Pemi Dejung Kuenphen Private Limited in Samdrupcholing, Samdrupjongkhar.

Pemi Dejung Kuenphen Private Limited's chairman, Sonam Wangdi, said that the community formed a tshogpa and established the office after the SMCL committed to giving the coal mining works at Habrang and Tshophangma to the public.

He said the tshogpa floated the shares and collected the funds to procure the earth moving equipment (EME) and wheel loaders after approval from the SMCL, adding that committed to purchasing the shares.

"Due to the second nationwide lockdown the villagers could not buy the shares as they were not able to sell their cash crops. We managed to collect more than Nu 30M from about 3,900 shareholders so far," the chairman said. "The collection is still going on."

The chairman said after seeing Tshophangma coal mining's tender announcement in the media earlier this month people lost interest in purchasing the shares. "Some are concerned about not getting their money back. SMCL could have discussed before they announced the tender."

As per the SMCL's letter to Pemi Dejung Kuenphen Private Limited on November 26 last year, the SMCL directed the tshogpa to furnish the certified assurance for Nu 189M as the

first tranche of their financial resource. "Since the financial aid would be crucial to mobilising the EMEs, SMCL needs to be assured this amount available with the tshogpa."

"We have submitted an estimation report to SMCL that we would be able to collect Nu 189M from the shares. But it was not a commitment," Sonam Wangdi said.

"We also have concerns about the dividend as we have to declare it at the end of the year as we had sold the shares. SMCL should now have to tell us how and based on what we should declare the dividend as we collected the shares after their approval," the chairman said.

The shareholders said that SMCL's requirement of 30 EMEs is too much. "We are in a position to procure about 10 to 15 EMEs as we have more than Nu 30M at the moment."

They said that the balance amount could be topped up by the bank loans to procure the EMEs and letter of credit facility from the machinery companies. They are hoping to collect Nu 189M as the collection of shares is still on. A letter from SMCL to Pemi Dejung Kuenphen Private Limited on June 12 stated that the public would be allowed to participate in the coal mining operation at Habrang and Tshophangma once the present contract expires in February.

"But the community group should be a legal entity with their charter and by-laws, and the group should procure and own EMEs they would hire to the SMCL," the letter stated, adding that the community hiring strategy would be same as that of Khotakpa gypsum mining in Pemagatshel.

According to an official from the SMCL, SMCL set two conditions: the community should be a legal entity and procure and own EMEs. "But they fail to procure and own EMEs they would hire to SMCL, and about Nu 30M won't be enough to run the mines," an official said.

"The two conditions were set because coal mining operations would be directly awarded to the community. Pemi Dejung Kuenphen Private Limited could not hire the machinery as the project should benefit all the members and shareholders without fail," an official said.

File No: GOS/C&amp;I/TTE/2020-21/004

Date: 01/02/2021

INVITATION FOR QUOTATIONS FOR SUPPLY OF GOODS UNDER  
NATIONAL SHOPPING PROCEDURES

To,

Dear Sir /Madam,

**Subject: Invitation for Quotation for Supply of following items.**

1 You are invited to submit your most competitive quotation for the following goods:

Sl No	ITEM	QUANTITY	SPECIFICATIONS	Delivery Time	Place of Delivery
1	DSLR Camera	10	Nikon D7500 DSLR [with VR & GPS/20.9 MP/ 8 FPS Continuous Shooting/ ISO 100-51,200/4K UHD/ WiFi/ Bluetooth/ (VGA) tilting TFT touch-sensitive LCD]	4-5 weeks	Teri Tea Estate (Animation Hub)
2	External HardDrive	10	Toshiba Canvio Basics Portable Hard Drive 2TB/ USB 3.0 (backwards compatible with 2.0)		
3	Light Reflector	5	Hiffin 42 inch/5 in 1 Reflector		
4	Portable Dolly	2	Proaim Swift Camera Track Dolly System with 12ft. straight long aluminium track		
5	Headphone	10	Marshall Major III / Sennheiser HD4.30 Wired Studio Headset		
6	Optical Scanner	3	Epson Perfection V39 Flatbed Color Scanner [Perfection Series]		
7	CPU	15	Intel Core i5-9400 @ 2.90 GHz; Graphics Card 8/12GB; RAM 16 GB; 1 TB HDD; Win 10 Pro		

8	UPS	15	APC Back-UPS 600 [600VA/360W/230V]		
9	Interactive Pen Tablet	15	Wacom Intuos Photo Creative Pen & Touch Tablet [Tablet with pressure-sensitive, cordless, battery-free pen]		
10	Interactive Pen Display	10	Wacom Cintiq Pro 13" Creative Pen Display		
11	Spike Buster	25	Sharko Platinum Series - 353U2M [3 Power Socket/3 USB - USB Identify Automatically/2m Cable]		
12	Projector with Screen	2	Epson EB-X05 -- XGA Multimedia Projector		
13	Multimedia Desktop Speaker	5	F&D A110 -- 2.1 Computer Multimedia Speaker (Wired)		
14	Short Throw Projector	1	BenQ WXGA 80/90" Short Throw Projector		
15	Laserjet All-in-One Scanner/Printer	1	Canon Imageclass MF3010 -- Laserjet All-in-One Scanner/Printer		
16	Drawing Board	30	Custommade Wooden Drawing Board [Size B2 - 19.7x27.8 inches]		
17	2D Animation Light Box	8	Custommade Traditional Lightbox		
18	Alienware Aurora R7	2	Dell Alienware Aurora R7 [Intel Core i5/i7; Win 10 Pro/Home; RAM 8/16GB; 1TB/2TB HDD; Graphics Card(NVIDIA/AMD) 8/12GB]		
19	3D Printer	1	Pratham/MIK 3D Printer		
20	Laser Cut Machine	1	CO2 Laser Engraving & Cutting Machine		
21	Editing Suite	20	Adobe		
22	Green Screen Studio	1			
23	Sound Proofing	1			
24	Monitor	10	LG Full HD IPS LED 22" Monitor		
25	Keyboard Mouse Combo	15	Zebtronics Zeb-Transformer Premium Gaming Keyboard & Mouse Combo		

\*Note:

- Bid Price
  - The contract shall be for the full quantity as described above. Corrections if any, shall be made by crossing out, initialing, dating and re writing.
  - All duties, taxes and other levies payable by the contractor under the contract shall be included in the total price.
  - The rates quoted by the bidder shall be fixed for the duration of the contract and shall not be subject to adjustment on any account.
  - The Prices should be quoted in Indian Rupees only.
- Each Bidder shall submit.
  - Technical Bid
  - Financial Bid
- The bidder shall also submit its company's / firm's profile.
- Validity of Quotation. Quotations shall remain valid for a period not less than 15 days after the deadline date specified for submission.
- Evaluation of Quotations The Purchaser will evaluate and compare the quotations determined to be substantially responsive i.e. which
  - Substantially responsive; and
  - Conform to the terms and conditions, and specification. The Quotations would be evaluated for all the item together. [Select one of the options].
- Award of Contract: The Purchaser will award the contract to the bidder whose quotation has been determined to be substantially responsive and who has offered the lowest evaluated quotation price. Notwithstanding the above, the Purchaser reserves the right to accept or reject any quotations and to cancel the bidding process and reject all quotations at any time prior to the award of contract. The bidder whose bid is accepted will be notified of the award of contract by the Purchaser prior to expiration of the quotation validity period. The terms of the accepted offer shall be incorporated in the purchase order.
- Payments shall be made promptly by the Purchaser but in no case later than Thirty (30) days after submission of the invoice or claim by the Supplier.
- Normal commercial warranty/ guarantee shall be applicable to the supplied goods.
- You are requested to provide your offer latest by 12:00.hours on 15/02/2021.
- We look forward to receiving your quotations and thank you for your interest in this project.

(Purchaser)

**GENERAL MANAGER  
TERI TEA ESTATE  
GOVT OF SIKKIM.****FORMAT OF QUOTATION**

Sl No	Description of Goods	Specifications	Quantity	unit	Quoted Unit Rate in Rupees	Amount in Rupees and Words	
						In figures	In words
	Tax (specify)						
	Tax (specify)						
Gross Total Rs ..... Rupees.....							

#Applicable while the bids are being invited for more than one item and would be evaluated for all the items together.

We agree to supply the above goods in accordance with the technical specifications for a total contract price of Rs. .... (amount in figures ) (Rs. ....amount in words) within the period specified in the Invitation for Quotations.

We also confirm that the normal commercial warrantee/guarantee of ..... months shall apply to the offered goods.

We clarify/confirm that we are eligible to trade in the goods as indicated in the quotation document as per law.

We understand that you are not bound to accept the lowest or any quotation you may receive.

Signature of Supplier, Official Seal.  
Contact Number:  
E mail:



*I don't know how we are going to get Kohli out:*

**Moeen**

**CHENNAI, JAN 31 (PTI):** England all-rounder Moeen Ali doesn't know how they are going to tackle Virat Kohli in the upcoming Tests against India and feels the batting maestro will be extra motivated to fire after missing his team's incredible triumph in Australia.

Kohli, who had returned home after the opening Test debacle against Australia for the birth of his child, is back to captain the side in the four-match series against England, beginning here on February 5.

"How do we get him out? He's obviously an amazing player, world-class, he's very motivated to do well and I'm sure he'll be even more motivated after they did well in Australia and he had to leave for the birth of his child," Moeen told reporters during a video conference.

"I don't know how we're going to get him out because I don't think he has any sort of weakness but we have a good bowling attack, some pace in the line-up.

"He's a great guy and a good friend of mine -- we don't talk too much about cricket. We do a little bit but not too much."

Back in the fold after recovering from COVID-19, Moeen said he has still got "match-winning performances" in him and is ready to take on India.

Besides the Tests, India and England will play three ODIs and five T20s.

Moeen said playing Test cricket is his "biggest motivation" and he has "little targets", which he is wants to achieve in the upcoming series.

"Whether or not I get picked is another matter ... in terms of being ready to play, I think I'll be fine to play, I'll be ready. I've waited long enough," he said.

"I still feel I've got wickets and runs in me and match-winning performances within me. I have little targets I want to achieve first. I am not too far away from getting 200 wickets.

"I know people say they don't look at these things but it would be something I would look at. Then I would set another target after that."

The 33-year-old had tested positive for COVID-19 upon the England team's arrival in Sri Lanka and missed the two Tests there, which the visitors won for a series sweep. "I'm all right now. Once I tested positive, I just wanted to get it over and done with really. It has been tough but I'm a big believer in 'after hardship comes ease'. Hopefully there is ease after this," said Moeen, who had just five or six net sessions due to the time he had to spend in quarantine.

Moeen, who has 181 wickets and 2782 runs in Test cricket, had taken a break from the traditional format after missing out on a full contract in 2019. "I enjoyed the break and played a few leagues around the world ... but ultimately it was Test cricket that I missed.

# Manchester United's big blanks reflect lack of heat without crowds

**BARNEY RONAY**

**LONDON, 31 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]:** Another week of lockdown football. Another mannered, quietly deathly game between two of the Premier League's heavier hitters.

For all the talk of zaniness, of a season up for grabs, the lack of crowds has clearly taken something from these clashes between the Bigger Teams. Often you need a little noise and a little heat to take a chance or two when your opponent might just punish you in return.

So it was at the Emirates, where Arsenal and Manchester United produced a forgettable 0-0 draw. Of the two it is Arsenal who will be happier with the point and the performance on a night of cards held close and pulses reined in.

For Manchester United the obvious question is, well, why exactly? Why not try just a little harder to win this game, against an Arsenal team missing their best goalscorer, best defender and best creator?

This might sound facile in isolation. United had chances to score. The players ran and sweated. But there is a pattern here. In the last three months United have played out a 0-0 with Chelsea, a 0-0 with Liverpool, a 0-0 with Manchester City and now a 0-0 with Arsenal.

Six hours of wall-to-wall goalless football. Six defeats avoided. Six games that have



blurred into one sequence of deep midfield pivots and hard-running cover. There has of course been progress in that time. United are finally sitting in a league position that corresponds with the vast resources at their disposal.

But there is also a sense of lurking conservatism. This is a good, competent United team that lacks, for now, that lust for glory, the will to power that demands these occasions are seized more viciously by the throat. How much further can they push this?

It would be foolish, and indeed incorrect, to demand that the club's grand winning

history demands carefree adventure, cavalier attack and all the rest.

The idea with Ole Gunnar Solskjær was always that he would, as a gargoye of the Fergie years, bring back some sense of authentic Unitedness. And so he had. Just not the flying winger version, more the Carlos Queiroz-influenced model of counterattack and spoiling midfielders, those days when the energy, the shadow of Fergie-ism disguised the pragmatism of much of the football.

Plus, of course, that United team knew when to be ruthless. There were some fine

performances at the Emirates. Paul Pogba was influential while Scott McTominay remained on the pitch, but less so when he moved deeper into the midfield.

If United want to start winning these key away games much will revolve around how Solskjær deploys his most talented passing player. Here he went back to his safe place, starting Fred and McTominay as a central pivot, with Pogba as the third central midfielder, the man with deeper gears.

And Pogba produced some fine moments again. By half-time he had touched the ball 53 times, more than any other

player on the pitch. There were interceptions and clearances, and five accurate long passes, mainly those elegantly-lofted diagonals in transition from defence to attack.

But United congealed after half-time. With McTominay off the pitch (he was unwell) Pogba faded too. And Arsenal might easily have won this game. Alexandre Lacazette hit the bar. Willian had the clearest chance but produced the finish of a man who remembers vaguely that scoring goals is indeed a part of this game, but who still feels it might just not be for him.

What could Solskjær's

safe, steady United have done differently? The recent run has been built on a clear mix of prose and poetry, solidity plus inspiration, heavy carbs plus a sprinkling of flavour. If United can stay in a game they feel they can win it. But when Bruno Fernandes is quiet the movement from midfield and the flanks is often unimaginative. United always looked like a team trying to win this game 1-0. They had three shots on target all game. At times you wonder what exactly the attacking plan is.

Edinson Cavani will be criticised for one late miss, but he is, lest we forget, a bolt-on No 9 at the tail end of a gruelling career. Elsewhere Marcus Rashford has one goal in nine games, Anthony Martial one in 11, Mason Greenwood one in 13.

These are talented attackers on a simultaneous goal drought. Again there is a sense of some systemic problem. Meanwhile the first-choice full-backs have three goals in 281 career games between them, at a time when full-backs are often auxiliary attackers in the more powerful teams.

Solskjær deserves great credit for the progress made and for the solidity that defined that run to the top of the table. The question of how to win this kind of game, and how to bring the best from his creative players without losing that resilience is an obvious next step.

## Bianca Andreescu: 'Sometimes I would sit just in my bed and cry'

**TUMAINI CARAYOL**

**LONDON, 31 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]:** Bianca Andreescu was in the middle of describing her sad summer without tennis when the doorbell rang. In her hotel room in Melbourne, where she had been locked away in solitude since arriving for the Australian Open on one of the contaminated flights, there was one big reason for the intrusion. It was time for her daily Covid-19 test. What followed was an interlude reflective to these times: she excused herself, put down her phone and, with the call still running, fielded her 13th cotton bud in 13 days.

While many of her colleagues spent the early days of their detention venting anger on the internet, the Canadian remained under the radar. Her silence was in large part because her coach, Sylvain Bruneau, was one of the positive cases.

Away from the gaze of social media, the 20-year-old held fitness sessions with her team over Zoom and "played tennis without a tennis court or balls", shadow swinging into the night. For her enjoyment, she rediscovered the thrill of Call of Duty seven years after throwing her Xbox away because it consumed so much of her time. "My kill, death ratio on COD back then was way better than it is now," she says. "I don't even want to tell you what it is now."

The challenge of being confined to one room does not quite compare with the recent struggles Andreescu has endured. Sixteen months ago she finished one of the great breakthrough years in recent times. She entered the 2019 season ranked 152 and her simple goal was to reach the French Open main draw in May, just before she would turn 19. That March, she won the Indian Wells title but suffered a shoulder injury soon afterwards.

An attempted comeback at Roland Garros lasted one match before she had to withdraw but



when she returned properly she did so with an outlandish achievement: in her first two tournaments, she won the Rogers Cup on home soil in Toronto and then she beat Serena Williams in the US Open final.

When she thinks back to the joy and emotions of those days, Andreescu's memories are scattered. Her first recollection is, to her own amusement, not the triumph itself, but the three hours it took for her to provide a sample for her anti-doping test. The second is the wave of noise from the crowd in the final.

"At 5-5 [against Williams] I was like: 'Yo, I'm gonna do my best to win all these points so the crowd would shut up.' Because they were so loud. After I won, I was just thinking about that. Just laying on the court, thinking about the sacrifices I made, all the injuries and setbacks or challenges I went through to get to the spot. And it all just came down on me."

At that moment on 7 September 2019, it seemed as if the future of tennis had caught up with the present. It was exciting, particularly when she and Naomi Osaka produced an unforgettable first meeting a month later in China. Instead, Andreescu has not competed in 15 months. In the final tournament of the season, the Shenzhen WTA Finals, she injured her knee and was

forced to withdraw.

There is little doubt about her talent and competitive spirit, but she has amassed a long list of injuries in her short career and it is likely that her fitness will define her future. "I don't really like to spend much time talking about the specifics with injuries but it is part of being an athlete," she says.

"When things like [Shenzhen] happen, I have to sit down with my team and figure out why it happened. We thought it could be poor planning. I'm trying to prevent as much as possible and hopefully I won't have to be giving more interviews about [being] injured."

Attempts at rehabilitating her knee, and a subsequent foot injury, were further affected by the arrival of the virus and new lockdown rules in Canada. "Like anyone, I had my bad days," she says. "Sometimes I would just sit on my bed and cry because I couldn't do anything."

When the tour returned last August for the US swing, Andreescu was forced to watch the final rounds at home. Through the frustration of relinquishing her title without a defence, Andreescu leant on her established processes.

Her US Open triumph had been preceded by years of her visualising herself grasping the winner's cheque. This time,

her goals were more modest. "During this quarantine, I pictured myself on the court, playing tennis, having the same feelings, feeling the shots. All of that.

"There's studies that show imagery works just as well, if you do it correctly, as you being on the court. That's huge."

Andreescu speaks frequently about meditation but her explanation of how she came to ignore her early biases is endearing. "I wasn't into all of that, I don't know how to say, 'hippy' stuff. My mum would always put these books beside my bed. At first I wouldn't read them, but then I saw how well my mum was doing at life.

"Even at that early age, I saw how happy she was all the time and I would just see her in the back yard sitting with herself, meditating. I put one and one together: 'Oh, maybe it's this book that really helped her and she isn't lying to me.'"

There are silver linings to be found in stepping away from this gruelling tour. While she was injured, Andreescu directed some of her energies into making music on SoundCloud. She was one of the few non-black players to support the movement for Black Lives Matter and she commemorated the 50th anniversary of the WTA by writing an open letter to Billie Jean King.

## British Cycling defends gathering 90 riders for secretive simulated Olympics

**WILLIAM**

**FOTHERINGHAM**

**LONDON, 31 JAN**

**[THEGUARDIAN]:** After an Olympic cycle marred by questions around medicine management and allegations of sexism and bullying, British Cycling was again on the defensive over the decision to gather 90 riders plus about 35 coaching staff and race officials in Manchester for three days of simulated Olympic competition.

The governing body insisted it had followed government guidelines for elite athletes during the national lockdown that began on January 5 to combat the Covid-19 pandemic and this was in effect training business as usual as part of the team's Olympic buildup and as such there had been no need to go public on the event.

One source close to the Olympic track team told the Observer that riders had been "told not to divulge details". On Friday evening, after news of the event emerged on social media, at least two riders deleted images of the velodrome from Instagram accounts. It is not unusual for British Cycling to ask riders to observe social media silence in order to preserve competitive advantage. The gathering of the nation's leading riders coincided with the dates of the national championships, whose cancellation was announced in December. British Cycling said the racing was simulated rather than official.

It is understood the programme resembled that of a typical cycling world cup, with the intention being that the riders and coaches could replicate the timings they would work to at the Tokyo Olympics in order

to simulate nutrition and recovery protocols. Local officials were invited to supervise the events and all were tested for Covid-19 before entering the velodrome. So, too, were all riders who travelled to Manchester, while riders based in the city and staff were tested according to the usual GB cycling team protocols.

Stephen Park, British Cycling's performance director, said: "As part of our preparations for the forthcoming Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, and as a development opportunity for our pathway riders, we are holding race simulation activity during our training sessions in our regular training venue, the National Cycling Centre, which has been in use since reopening in May last year.

"Under the current government guidance, elite training and competition can continue and stringent Covid protocols are being followed at all times, as they always are in our training sessions.

"We acknowledge that as an elite sports team, we are in an extremely privileged position to be able to continue with our operations, and the race simulation activity forms part of our strategy to ensure we are on track to achieve our ambitions in Tokyo and Paris [host of next year's world track cycling championships]." The 90 riders consisted of Great Britain cycling team members including Paralympic athletes, with the addition of riders from the development pathways, which go down to junior level, to ensure competition for the elite athletes. Thirty-eight cyclists travelled from outside Manchester and were accommodated on one floor of a local hotel.



# Russia detains over 2,700 at protests against jailing of Kremlin critic Navalny

**POLINA NIKOLSKAYA & POLINA IVANOVA MOSCOW (REUTERS)**

- Police detained more than 2,700 people and broke up rallies in Moscow and across Russia on Sunday as supporters of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny braved the bitter cold and a massive show of police force to demand he be set free.

The nationwide rallies are the second straight weekend of protests that are part of a high-risk opposition campaign to try to pressure the Kremlin into freeing President Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponent.

The opposition politician was arrested on Jan. 17 after returning to Moscow from Germany where he had been recovering from a nerve agent poisoning in Russia last summer. He accuses Putin of ordering his murder, which the Kremlin denies.

Navalny's dramatic return to Moscow despite the obvious threat of arrest and the protests that his jailing has sparked pose a major challenge for Putin who has dominated the Russian political landscape for over two decades.

In a highly unusual move, police imposed a security lockdown in the heart of the capital on Sunday, sealing off



streets to pedestrians near the Kremlin, closing metro stations and deploying hundreds of riot police as snow fell.

Yulia, a 40-year-old protester in Moscow, said she had joined the rallies despite having a panic attack the night before because of worrying about repercussions for taking part.

"I understand that I live in a totally lawless state. In a police state, with no independent courts. In a country ruled by corruption. I would like to live differently," she said.

Police have said the protests were illegal as they had not been authorised and would be

broken up. Authorities have said demonstrators could spread COVID-19.

At one point a column of protesters marched towards the prison in northern Moscow where Navalny is being held, chanting "Let him go!"

Police put turnout at the Moscow protest at around 2,000 people. Reuters reporters estimated crowds of several thousand that were smaller than last weekend when police estimated 4,000 people and the opposition put the figure at 50,000, an assertion the authorities dismissed as nowhere near the truth. Police detained at least 2,737 people na-

tionwide, including 681 in Moscow, according to OVD-Info, a protest monitoring group. The figures were expected to rise.

Yulia Navalnaya, the Kremlin critic's wife, was among those detained.

"If we stay quiet, then they could come for any of us tomorrow," she wrote on Instagram before joining the protests.

The protest is a test of Navalny's support after many of his prominent allies were targeted in a crackdown this week. Several, including his brother Oleg, are under house arrest.

In the far eastern city of Vladivostok, video footage showed pro-

testers chanting "Putin is a thief" as they linked hands and marched in temperatures of around -13 Celsius (8.6 Fahrenheit). Police detained more than 100 people in the city, OVD-Info said.

In Tomsk, the Siberian city that Navalny visited before suddenly collapsing on a domestic flight last August, demonstrators gathered in front of a concert hall and chanted "Let him go!"

Navalny, 44, is accused of parole violations which he says are trumped up. A court is due to meet next week to consider handing him a jail term of up to three and a half years.

The West has told Moscow to let Navalny go and his allies have appealed to U.S. President Joe Biden to impose sanctions on 35 people who they say are Putin's close allies.

Seeking to galvanise supporters at home, Navalny put out an online video this month that has been viewed over 100 million times, accusing Putin of being the ultimate owner of a sumptuous Black Sea palace. The Kremlin leader has denied this.

On the eve of the protests, Arkady Rotenberg, a businessman and Putin's former judo sparring partner, said he owns the property.

## China's manufacturing, services sectors weaken in January

**BEIJING, JAN 31 (AP):** An official indicator of China's manufacturing activity weakened for a second consecutive month in January, following outbreaks of domestic COVID-19 cases that affected the operations of some industries.

The purchasing managers' index, or PMI, for China's manufacturing sector fell to 51.3 in January, down 0.6 percentage points from December, according to data from

the National Bureau of Statistics on Sunday.

Readings above 50 indicate expansion of the manufacturing industry, while a reading below it reflects a contraction.

China has seen new virus clusters across the country, particularly in the north, and restrictions have been tightened to curb the spread.

NBS senior statistician Zhao Qinghe said that locally transmitted coronavirus cases had

affected the operations of certain industries, and that January is typically an off-season for factories due to the Lunar New Year holidays.

Separately, the indicators for China's service industry also dipped in January amid the local outbreaks.

The PMI for China's non-manufacturing sector came in at 52.4 in January, down from 55.7 in December, according to NBS.

## Fugitive Tigray leader reportedly speaks out after months

**NAIROBI, JAN 31 (AP):** The fugitive leader of Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region has reportedly made his first public comments in three months, urging the international community to investigate alleged genocide and other abuses by forces including those from neighbouring Eritrea.

It was not immediately possible to verify the audio comments by Debretsion Gebremichael posted late Saturday by Tigray-allied media outlet Dimtsi Weyane.

He has been on the run since shortly after fighting broke out in early November between Ethiopian and allied forces and those of the Tigray region who had dominated the country's government for nearly three decades.

But the comments seemed to note the recent killings of other fugitive Tigray leaders. Many have paid and many are continuing to pay the ultimate sacri-

fice, Debretsion said.

He urged Tigray residents to continue the struggle and vowed to do the same against those who are working with all their might to destroy our existence and identity.

The comments also alleged widespread murder, rape, torture and intentional starvation. They are carrying away what they can and burning what remains, he said.

A spokeswoman for Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed did not comment.

Abiy sidelined the Tigray leaders after taking power in early 2018 and introducing political reforms that led to him being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

But his government and the now-fugitive Tigray one came to regard each other as illegitimate, especially after Ethiopia delayed its national election last year to mid-2021, citing the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Tigray conflict continues largely in shadow. Some communications links are severed, residents are scared to give details by phone and almost all journalists are blocked.

Thousands of people have died.

Ethiopia's government on Friday privately told Biden administration staffers that Tigray has returned to normalcy" and more than 1 million people had been reached with aid, but new witness accounts describe terrified residents hiding in bullet-marked homes and a vast rural area where effects of the fighting and food shortages are yet unknown.

Last week the Biden administration has pressed Eritrea to immediately withdraw its soldiers from Tigray, citing credible accounts of looting, sexual assault and other abuses.

The Eritreans have been fighting alongside Ethiopian troops against the Tigray forces.

## Pak govt to join review proceedings of Supreme Court's acquittals in Pearl murder case

**SAJJAD HUSSAIN**

**ISLAMABAD, JAN 31 (PTI):** Amid mounting pressure from the US and the UN, the Pakistan government has said it would formally join the review proceedings initiated by the Sindh administration against the Supreme Court's acquittal of British-born al-Qaeda terrorist Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and his three aides in the brutal murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl.

Pearl, the 38-year-old South Asia bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal, was abducted and beheaded while he was in Pakistan investigating a story in 2002 on the links between the country's powerful spy agency ISI and al-Qaeda.

The Supreme Court on Thursday ordered the release of main accused Sheikh and his aides - Fahad Naseem, Sheikh Adil and Salman Saqib - by dismissing appeals against their acquittal by the Sindh High Court. The judgement was denounced by Pearl's family as "a complete travesty of justice".

The Sindh government on Friday filed a review petition in the apex court against the acquittal of Sheikh and his three accomplices.

A spokesman of the Attorney General of Pakistan on Saturday announced that the federal government will file an appropriate application before the apex court to be allowed to join as a party in the proceedings and further seek review and recall of the court's January 28 judgement.

The federal government will file an application for the constitution of a larger bench to hear the review petitions. In cooperation with the provincial government, the federal government will continue to take all legal steps to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice in accordance with the law, the spokesman said.

The announcement came after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke to Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi over phone and discussed the accountability of convicted terror-

ists responsible for the brutal murder of Pearl. Blinken also expressed "deep concern" over the apex court's judgement.

The Pakistan Foreign Office in a statement said Qureshi underscored that it was important and in the mutual interest that justice is served through legal means.

According to some media reports, the Supreme Court would hear the review petition on February 1. However, no formal announcement has been made as yet.

Expressing concern over the acquittal of those involved in the brutal murder of Pearl, a senior UN official representing Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that it is important that there is accountability for such crimes.

"What is important that there be accountability for those crimes committed, said Stephane Dujarric said on Friday.

The US also has been mounting pressure on Pakistan, demanding justice for Pearl. Last month, the US said it is ready to take custody of Sheikh, asserting that Washington will not allow him to evade justice.

Acting Attorney General Monty Wilkinson said the US was deeply concerned by the ruling affirming the acquittal of individuals convicted by a Pakistani trial court.

"The release of those involved would be an affront to Daniel Pearl's family, to other terrorism victims around the world, and to the cause of justice, Wilkinson said.

In a tweet, Congressman Brad Sherman said: The killers of Daniel Pearl go free. And Dr. Afridi, who helped the US get Osama Bin Laden, rots in jail. "We are deeply disappointed that Pakistan's Supreme Court has acquitted and ordered the release of Ahmad Saeed Omar Sheikh, despite overwhelming evidence of Sheikh's involvement in the kidnapping of Daniel Pearl, which led directly to his murder," said Steven Butler, Committee to Protect Journalist's Asia programme coordinator.

In April 2020, a two-judge Sindh High

Court bench commuted the death sentence of 46-year-old Sheikh to seven years imprisonment. The court also acquitted his three aides who were serving life terms in the case -- almost two decades after they were found guilty and jailed. The Sindh government and the family of Pearl filed petitions in the apex court, challenging the high court verdict.

The Sindh government invoked the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance 1960 to keep the four men under detention.

Their continuous detention was challenged in the Sindh High Court (SHC), which on December 24 directed security agencies not to keep Sheikh and other accused under "any sort of detention" and declared all notifications of the Sindh government related to their detention "null and void".

The order elicited an immediate response from the US, which on December 25 expressed its deep concerns over the SHC order.

The US State Department said it will continue to monitor any developments in the case and will continue to support the Pearl family "through this extremely difficult process", while honouring the legacy of the "courageous journalist".

Sheikh in a handwritten letter to the SHC in 2019 admitted his limited involvement in the killing of Pearl. The letter was presented to the Supreme Court nearly two weeks ago and Sheikh's lawyer on Wednesday confirmed the letter. The accused, however, didn't explain the nature of his role which he said was just minor.

Pearl's murder took place three years after Sheikh, along with Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar and Mush-taq Ahmed Zargar, was released by India in 1999 and given safe passage to Afghanistan in exchange for the nearly 150 passengers of hijacked Indian Airlines Flight 814.

He was serving a prison term in India for kidnappings of Western tourists in the country.

## Israeli police use water cannon to disperse anti-PM crowd

**JERUSALEM, JAN 31 (AP):** Israeli police sprayed a crowd of protesters with a water cannon Saturday night as they tried to disperse demonstrators calling for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's resignation over corruption charges.

Temperatures were about 10 degrees Celsius (50 Fahrenheit) on a raw winter evening when the crowd was sprayed. The protesters have been gathering every week near Netanyahu's official residence in Jerusalem for over seven months, but the use of water cannons is rare.

In a statement, police said hundreds of protesters took part in the demonstration. They accused some protesters of

unruly behavior, including throwing objects and trying to break through a police barricade. It said one officer was lightly hurt, and several protesters were arrested.

The protesters say Netanyahu cannot serve as prime minister when he is on trial for charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate cases.

They also accuse him of mismanaging the coronavirus crisis, with unemployment in double digits after a series of nationwide lockdowns. The country is in the midst of its third lockdown, despite one of the world's most successful vaccination campaigns. Israel is preparing to hold new elections March 23.

## Mir hat trick gives Huesca 2nd win in La Liga

**BARCELONA, JAN 30 (AP):** Forward Rafa Mir scored a hat trick to lead last-placed Huesca to a much-needed 3-1 victory at Valladolid in the Spanish league.

Mir, who is at Huesca on loan from Wolverhampton, ended a four-game scoreless slump for the modest team from northeast Spain when he headed in a cross from Pablo Maffeo in the 37th minute on Friday.

Mir doubled his tally in the 50th when he used nice control to pull in a lobbed ball from Maffeo. He held off two defenders before poking the ball past goalkeeper Jordi Masip.

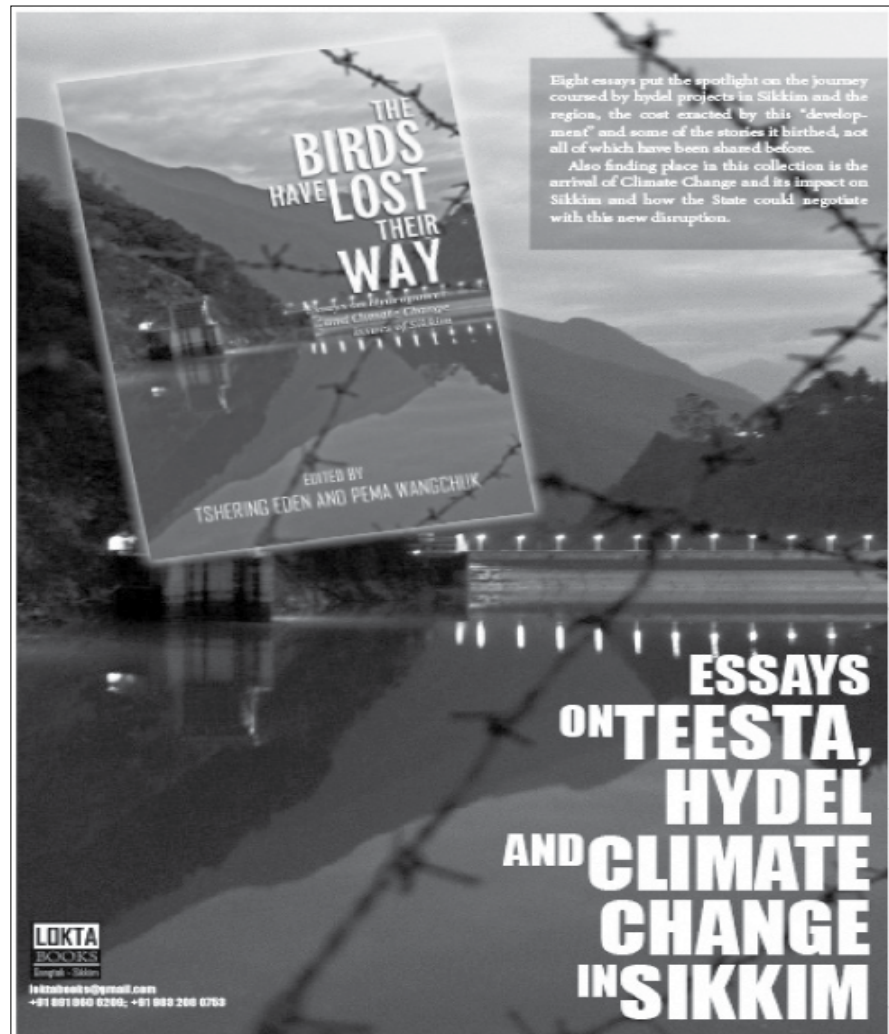
Mir helped to create his third goal in the 57th when he headed on a long ball to Dani Escriche, charged forward, and fired the return pass

from Escriche just inside the post. Mir leads his team with six goals in the league. He also had a hat trick in December to beat fourth-tier team Marchamalo 3-2 in the Copa del Rey. "I am super happy, but for the victory, not for the three goals," Mir said.

"We needed this win. "This is what I am paid to do, to score. And at the end, the important thing is the team. We have been having a hard time of it and this win should boost our confidence."

Huesca remained bottom of the table after just its second win in 21 rounds.

Toni Villa scored Valladolid's consolation goal in stoppage time. Valladolid was left in 16th place, two points above the relegation zone.







**FASHION FANATIC!** Jaden Smith, the young actor and singer looks stylish as he hits the shops in Milan, Italy.

## Girish Karnad memoir in English to be out in May



Girish Karnad's memoir, which was to be translated from Kannada into English by the actor-playwright himself but could only finish a part of it before his death in 2019, will now be out in May after final touches by award-winning translator Srinath Perur.

"This Life at Play: A Memoir by Girish Karnad" will be released on the director's 83rd birth anniversary on May 19 by Fourth Estate, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

Karnad, considered one of modern India's greatest cultural figures, first published his memoir in Kannada in 2011.

Covering the first half of his remarkable life, from growing up in Dharwad and engaging with local theatre, to his education in Mumbai and as a Rhodes Scholar in Oxford,

his career as a publisher, his successes and travails in the film industry, and his personal and writerly life, Karnad's inimitable voice shines through it all.

The no-holds-barred account provides a glimpse into the life-shaping experiences of this towering figure on India's cultural scene, and a unique window into the India in which he lived and worked.

HarperCollins India Publisher (Literary) Udayan Mitra terms "This Life at Play" an extraordinary account of an extraordinary life - the life of a pioneer and luminary of the literary and cultural world who shaped many of our contemporary perspectives on theatre, film, literature and society, and whose impact will be felt for decades to come.

## NBC sets premiere date for 'New Amsterdam' season 3

**LOS ANGELES, JAN 31 (PTI):** Medical drama "New Amsterdam" is slated to air on NBC on March 2, the network has announced.

According to Deadline, the series will return to its original time slot at 10 pm after having moved to a 9 pm time slot vacated by "This Is Us" at the end of March to finish its second season.

Fronted by "The Blacklist" star Ryan Eggold, production on the third season was delayed because of COVID-19 pandemic and the series additionally had to build new sets.

The official logline of the new season reads: "When Dr Max Goodwin (Eggold) took over New Amsterdam, he asked a simple, revolutionary question: 'How can I help?' In Season 3, Max and his team face the daunting task of sustaining that optimism while dealing with a pandemic that exposed the gaping inequities in our health care. Max is no longer content to fix a broken system. He's determined to tear it down and build something better."

"New Amsterdam" is inspired by Dr

Eric Manheimer's memoir "Twelve Patients: Life and Death at Bellevue Hospital" and his 15 years as medical director

and Anupam Kher.

David Schulner and Peter Horton serve as executive producers along with



at the hospital.

The medical drama, which has a three-season pickup, has been a strong ratings performer for NBC.

It also stars Janet Montgomery, Freema Agyeman, Jocko Sims, Tyler Labine

Michael Slovis, David Foster, Aaron Ginsburg and Shaun Cassidy.

"New Amsterdam" is produced by Universal Television, a division of Universal Studio Group, Pico Creek Productions and Mount Moriah.

## Halle Berry talks teaching her 7-year-old son to rethink harmful gender stereotypes

Halle Berry is fighting sexism by teaching her son Maceo Martinez, 7, to break gender stereotypes.

On Jan. 30, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association hosted a panel titled "Women Breaking Barriers: An Industry Shift" as part of the Sundance Film Festival, which, due to the coronavirus pandemic, is taking place virtually this year. The event, which was hosted by HFPA members Elisabeth Sereda and Silvia Bizio, featured Berry as well as Andra Day, Robin Wright, Sia and Zendaya in a conversation about how women, and in particular women of color, are fighting for equality in Hollywood in the wake of major social movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter.

During the conversa-

tion, Wright pointed out that eventually, she wants women to no longer have to "fight for a position to be heard," and that will only come with education. As Wright explained, "[Men] have to shift their perspective. And that they have to shift their psyche. It's what they've only known. What a great opportunity for the new generation, the children of today, to be able to educate them when they're 3, 4, 5 years old. To teach them something new. Not the way we grew up."

Berry, who is making her directorial debut with the MMA drama Bruised, which last year screened as a work-in-progress at the Toronto Film Festival and sold to Netflix, spoke about how she's teaching her son with ex-husband actor Oliver Martinez to respect the power of women.

## Dhanush-starrer 'Karnan' to release theatrically in April

South star Dhanush on Sunday announced that his upcoming Tamil film "Karnan" will have a worldwide theatrical release in April. Directed by Mari Selvaraj, of "Pariyerum Perumal" fame, the film is reportedly billed as an action-drama.

The 37-year-old "Asuran" star took to Twitter and shared the announcement note, along with a teaser of the film. Dhanush thanked the producer of the film, Kallippuli S Thanu, for opting for a theatrical release despite other available options to screen the movie.

"Karnan" releases April 2021 in theatres. A much

needed encouraging news at the right time. Thank you Thanu sir for thinking of the theatre owners, distributors, exhibitors and everybody who's livelihood is dependant on films and theatres, even though you had other options. "A big thank you on behalf of my fans as this means a lot to them. Love you all. Spread Love," the actor tweeted.

Dhanush is currently awaiting the release of director Karthik Subbaraj's action-thriller "Jagame Thanthiram". He will also be seen in filmmaker Aanand L Rai's "Atlangi Re", co-starring Akshay Kumar and Sara Ali Khan.

## Machine Gun Kelly proves chivalry isn't dead as he carries Megan Fox into crowded studio

It's nothing less than true romance between Machine Gun Kelly and girlfriend Megan Fox.

The "Bloody Valentine" singer and Fox looked extra cozy heading to NBC Studios for a taping of Saturday Night Live in New York City, during which Kelly picked up the smiling Jennifer's Body star and carried her down the street.

The artist, whose real name is Colson Baker, sparked engagement rumors with the New Girl alum this week when Fox—who is in the midst of a divorce from her ex-husband and father of her three children Brian Austin Green—was spotted rocking a sparkling diamond ring.

However, Fox shut down the speculation on her Jan. 29 Instagram Story when she showed off a different ring with the words "f-k you" on it, along with a side-eye emoji.

While Kelly and Fox may not be walking down the aisle any time soon, it appears that the two could not be more in love. Last August, Fox shared a photo of her and Kelly to Instagram along with the caption, "Achingly Beautiful Boy... My heart is yours."

Last July, the couple, who met while filming the movie Midnight in the Switch Grass, discussed their relationship on Lala Kent and Randall Emmett's podcast Give Them Lala...With Randall podcast.

## Sidharth Shukla clocks 1 mn followers on Twitter

Actor Sidharth Shukla on Sunday amassed one million followers on Twitter and thanked his fans for their constant support.

Shukla, who won the last season of the reality show "Bigg Boss", said joining the microblogging site to connect with fans was one of the best decisions he has made.

"Woohoo congratulations everyone we are 1M strong. Thank you for supporting me and choosing to follow me. Joining Twitter was one of my best decisions as I connected to you all.

"Feels good to see that the first few who followed are still around. Thank you. Love and luck to all," the 40-year-

old actor tweeted. Shukla made his screen debut with 2008 TV show "Babul Ka Aangan Chootay Na" and gained acclaim for the successful soap opera "Balika Vadhu", on which he played the role of Shiv, an upright IAS officer, between 2012 and 2015.

The actor made his Bollywood debut with Karan Johar's production "Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania" in 2014 and made a transition to reality shows, including "India's Got Talent", "Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi 7" and "Bigg Boss" season 13.

Shukla will be next seen in the third season of ALTBalaji and ZEE5 romantic-drama "Broken But Beautiful".

**HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?**

email us: [news@summittimes.com](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

Aries:

It's true that there are certain things in our lives that are predetermined—a part of the soul contract we signed prior to boarding the spaceship which brought us to the earthly realm. However, to think that you are being rewarded fairly for your efforts? Are you convinced there's a growing imbalance between what you are giving and what you are receiving from the given organisation? Here's the thing, honey: nobody is going to make that change for you unless you do it for yourself. So, show up for what you believe in and show up for it now. Ask for the raise. Demand for your paycheck. Command the respect you truly deserve. Remember, the power to change the script around has always been yours.

Tip: It's time to change your relationship with money.

Gemini:

After a period of lull, things are beginning to pick up pace around here. It's an action-packed weekend in the Gemini HQ, and you're actively pursuing the projects you have put on hold. Remember, everything starts with you. When you hit the accelerator button, the Universe will too. Some of you are being reminded that the behind-the-scenes games will only take you so far. So network like a pro and learn to (tastefully) toot your own horn. Learning to be your own PR rep will change the game for you permanently.

Tip: Things are beginning to pick up pace.

Cancer:

Food for thought, Cancer: Is love enough or do we need truth, honesty and integrity in order to sustain a relationship? You already know the answer to this one. So stop beating around the bush when you need to be direct. Stop walking on eggshells when you can tell it like it is. When you bring your most authentic self to the table, the dynamics you share will evolve with you.

Tip: It's time to bring truth, honesty and integrity to the table.

Leo:

Here's the thing, Leo: you already know. You already know what's good for you and what's not. So, why are you walking on eggshells when you can simply tell it like it is? The cards want you to remember that nothing will free you like the truth. Self-care,

the Aphrodite way, is also going to be a big theme for you this weekend. PS: Nothing reads zen-tastic quite like a bubble bath, a glass of vino (or kombucha, if you prefer!) and your favourite self-help bible. Tip: Honey, it's time to tell it like it is!

Virgo:

Here's the thing, Virgo: the Universe is not obliged to work in accordance with your timeline. In fact, nobody is. Don't take this as a bad omen or some sort of punishment, though. The Universe is flawless in every way and has a master plan in place for you. So, follow the path of least resistance as you allow life to take you where you need to go. In due course of time, you will realise that the worst thing that happened to you is the best thing that could happen for you.

Tip: You are where you need to be. Stop pushing against the flow.

Libra:

Spending time with the little ones in your tribe is going to be a big theme around here. It's amazing all the things you can learn from them without even trying! Things to do today: make art. Make macramé. Make a mess, and laugh to your heart's content. The process of letting go of your inhibitions will prove to be therapeutic on so many levels. PS: If you're having a hard time getting through to one of your children, consider adding an element of 'play' to your equation.

Tip: Make a mess.

Scorpio:

Everything's coming up roses for you, Scorpio, especially on the home and family front. Domestic bliss is indicated for coupled Plutonians. Trust that this cosmic collaboration is helping you deepen your bond. Remembering that you both want the same things from a relationship will help you tide over the so-called troubles. Those who are involved in the family business will also find that this is an opportune time. Sow the seeds you're being called to, and know that you will enjoy a magnificent harvest a few years down the line.

Tip: Everything's coming up roses, Scorpio.

Sagittarius:

Shortcuts will only take you so far—a Universal truth you're well aware of. This year, you want to dedicate yourself to the hustle, work harder than you ever have, and go after the big dreams you've put on hold for some time now. You've got that big goals energy about you, which is making you simply irresistible! Remember, this journey you've undertaken is yours and yours alone. So let go of the need to discuss with others or compare it with the trajectory of those around.

Tip: You've got that big goals energy about you.

Capricorn:

We couldn't do everything on our own even if we wanted to. The good thing is, we don't have to. Capricorn, you are blessed with at least a handful of

people who love you, care for you, and want to support you in the best way they can. So, allow yourself to reach for help and know they've got your back. As you do, keep in mind that nobody is perfect. Letting go of your unrealistic expectations will help you work with the team, rather than against it.

Tip: Allow yourself to receive the help and support you need at this moment.

Aquarius:

If the cosmic cues are anything to go by, you may find yourself in a Vicky Cristina Barcelona situation. However, you may not always be a fan of the free-love game, especially when there are feelings involved. Word for the wise: Stop playing it cool and tell the other person exactly how you feel about the given connection. PS: There's nothing wrong with monogamy or the desire to play by the rules.

Tip: You need to be honest about what you desire from this connectio

Pisces:

You can't keep showing up as the background dancer when all you ever wanted was to channel your inner Lady Gaga. Playing it small has never been your style. Neither has settling for anything less than what you deserve. So, relinquish the cloak of invisibility you have been hiding under and go after your dreams with single-minded focus. Unless you put yourself out there, nobody can help you, Pisces.

Tip: Pursue your dreams with single-minded focus.