



**VIDYA BALAN TO PLAY FOREST OFFICER IN HER NEXT FILM**  
pg 08

**SIKKIM HAS A VERY YOUNG POPULATION – INFORM THEM BETTER SO THAT THEY CARE**

04

**'BRAHMASTRA' PART ONE TO RELEASE ON DEC 4**

pg 08



# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Pages 8 | ₹ 5

## CM ATTENDS SONAM LHOCHAR CELEBRATION AT KATENG Tamang Bhawan and BAC inaugurated at Namthang

**NAMCHI, 02 FEB [IPR]:** Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] attended the state level Sonam Lhochar celebrations at Kateng public ground here at Namthang today.

Present amongst others were his spouse Shradha Golay, Building & Housing Minister Sanjit Kharel, who is also the area MLA, Cabinet Ministers, Political Secretary to the CM Jacob Khaling, Chairpersons, Advisors, MLAs, Secretary RDD CS Rao, Panchayats and public at large.

At the outset, the CM along with the dignitaries inaugurated the newly constructed Block Administrative Centre at Namthang.

This centre is equipped with a canteen, gym provisions, offices and many other amenities.

Thereafter, the CM unveiled the Tamang Community Bhawan at Kateng.

The Bhawan has been funded by Social Justice and Welfare Department and executed by the Ru-



ral Development Department.

The Bhawan has been constructed with the aim to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of the Tamang community and comprises a hall, washrooms, lounge, store, office, library, museum, dormitory and more facilities.

Addressing the gathering, the CM extended warm wishes on the state level Sonam Lhochar celebration which is being observed in a grand

manner at Namthang and also congratulated the people of the locality on the inauguration of a new Block Administrative Centre office which will assist the masses in completion of various office works.

He also underlined how the maiden Tamang Community Bhawan can aid in maintaining the cultural artifacts of the community and urged the locals to use this Bhawan judiciously.

On the release of the

book, 'The Tamang Community in Sikkim- a historical study,' by Anjana Tamang, the CM highlighted that such books should be translated in vernacular languages and students encouraged to read such books so that they acquire knowledge about local history.

The CM also highlighted how festivals of different communities are being celebrated on a grand scale in Sikkim and urged the organizing committee to include

each and everyone in the celebrations so that the secular fabric of the State is upheld.

He added that everyone should come together and contribute towards transforming and substantially building the State in a positive way.

The CM also informed that the State Government was making adjustments to rules that government employees have to follow like those concerning transfer policy, removal of the word junior and many more keeping in mind the betterment and enhancement of state government employees.

He also assured that demands placed by the area MLA will be looked into and fulfilled at the earliest.

As to the proposal to make Namthang a sub-division, the CM informed that this point will be put into the next budget session.

Turn Page 3

## Agri Minister continues Kerala study tour with visits to dairy farms



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 02 FEB [IPR]:** Agriculture Minister Lok Nath Sharma made a daylong extensive visit to various farms of Fisheries, Dairy Farming and Industrial Plants in Kerala today.

Minister Sharma, along with the CEO Sikkim Organic Mission Dr S Anbalagan, visited the Fresh Water Fish Seed Farm and Ornamental Fish Hatchery at Neyaar Dam in Thiruvananthapuram.

With the view to improve fish production in Sikkim, they studied the practices and technical aspects of artificial breeding, hatching and rearing, water saving practices, feeding and other components which can be adopted to further strengthen fisheries in the State.

The Minister also called on the Chairperson, Thiruvananthapuram Regional Cooperative Milk Producers Union Ltd (TRCMPU), Kallada Ramesh and discussed prospects of dairy development through collaborative support and exchanged inputs and ideas to improve production of milk and dairy products.

Thereafter, Minister Sharma visited the Dairy Industrial Unit of Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation, popularly known as "MILMA" at Thiruvananthapuram.

The Chairperson and the Managing Director of MILMA informed the Sikkim delegation about the functioning of the milk industry in Kerala that aims at socio-economic development of the dairy farmer through procuring, processing and marketing of milk.

Later, the Minister visited the Milco Dairy plant at Attingal, Trivandrum, which is a co-operative of dairy farmers.

The Minister interacted with the Board of Directors and staff. The high value of Milco produce through value addition was noted to encourage educated youth in Sikkim.

The Minister also visited Jaya Krishna (JK), a private dairy farm in Kollam, Chirakkarthazham.

He said that the purpose of the visit was for the welfare of the farmers in Sikkim with the implementations of impressive activities in practice.



Sikkim Krantikari Morcha  
on the auspicious occasion of

# THE 8<sup>TH</sup> SKM FOUNDATION DAY

would like to invite  
the people of Sikkim to join us

at Rangpo Playground,  
on the 4th of February,  
Time: 10 am onwards

*Hon'ble Chief Minister  
Shri PS Tamang (Golay)  
has consented to grace the  
occasion as the **Chief Guest**. He  
shall also address the People on  
the new initiatives launched  
by the SKM Government.*

- Organizing Committee





# Sikkim U-17 boys are runners-up at National School Games football



**SAGAR CHETTRI**  
**GANGTOK, 02 FEB:** Sikkim emerged runners-up in U-17 Boys Football in the 65th National School Games after a busy Sunday of match-

es at Agartala, Tripura. In the contesting final match played under floodlights at Umakanta Stadium, Agartala, this evening, Sikkim went down to

Tripura by a solitary goal.

In the semi-final match played at TSS Ghat Playground, Agartala, earlier this morning itself, Sikkim



defeated West Bengal by a lone goal in extra-time.

Full time of the match ended in a goalless draw and in extra-time, Ongda Sherpa scored the win-

ning goal for Sikkim and took the team to the finals.

Ongda Lepcha was also the Highest Scorer of the tournament, scoring 10 goals.

## Winter Sports Coaching concludes in Soreng

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 02 FEB:** Winter Sports Coaching Camp concluded at Soreng playground in West Sikkim on Sunday.

The coaching camp, which had begun on 17 January, was organized by Department of Sports & Youth Affairs.

A total of 148 children received coaching in football, karate, athletics and badminton.

The closing cere-

mony was attended by Soreng SDM, Himmat Rai, as chief guest accompanied by president of Soreng Badminton Association, Amber Gurung, president Cricket Association of West Sikkim, Subash Tamang, AEO [Education], Soreng, Kailash Gurung, Panchayat Member Soreng, Ashok Pradhan and parents and guardians of participants.



## Coronavirus: First death outside China recorded as total fatalities pass 300

**JUSTIN MCCURRY**  
**BEIJING, 02 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]:** The Philippines has reported the first death from the coronavirus outside China, adding to fears about the spread of the virus as more countries imposed travel restrictions.

The outbreak of the respiratory illness has killed 304 people in China since it was first detected in the central city of Wuhan late last year. Across China, there were 2,590 new confirmed infections on Saturday, bringing the total to 14,380, China's National Health Commission said on Sunday. A study published on Saturday by scientists from the University of Hong Kong found that the virus may have infected as many as 75,815 people in Wuhan.

The virus, which has been declared a global public health emergency, has caused at least 100 infections in more than 20 countries, with Britain, Russia and Sweden confirming their first infections over the weekend. Japan has recorded 20 cases, including those involving human-to-human transmission, while the US on Sunday reported its eighth case.

Japan on Saturday confirmed an additional three cases among evacuees from Wuhan, including one, a man in his 40s, who initially tested negative, the health ministry said.

The fatality in the Philippines is a 44-year-old Chinese man from Wuhan who died in a hospital in Manila. He appears to have been infected before his arrival

in the Philippines.

"This is the first reported death outside China," Rabindra Abeyasinghe, the World Health Organisation representative to the Philippines, said. "However, we need to take into mind that this is not a locally acquired case. This patient came from the epicentre of this outbreak."

The Philippine department of health said the man was admitted to hospital on 25 January with a fever, cough and sore throat. He developed severe pneumonia, but in the past few days, "the patient was stable and showed signs of improvement", it said. However, his condition then deteriorated and he died within 24 hours.

The man was with a Chinese woman who also tested positive for the virus, health secretary Francisco Duque said. She was the Philippines' first case of the virus and is recovering in a hospital isolation ward.

The news of the man's death was released shortly after the Philippines announced it would immediately halt the arrivals of any foreign travellers from China, joining several other countries that have imposed similar bans in an attempt to contain the virus.

On Sunday, Indonesia also said it will temporarily stop flights to and from mainland China from Wednesday and bar visitors who have been in China for 14 days from entering or transiting.

Stricter border controls, along with the suspension of flights

and business operations have sparked fears of a slowdown in China, the world's second-biggest economy.

The US, Australia, Singapore and Israel have banned foreign nationals from visiting if they have been in China over the previous 14 days, and advised their own citizens not to travel there. Mongolia, Russia, and Nepal closed their land borders, while Papua New Guinea has banned anyone arriving from ports or airports across Asia. Other countries have imposed restrictions on people who have visited Hubei province in the past 14 days.

Vietnam declared a public health emergency over the coronavirus epidemic on Saturday and said it would halt all flights to and from China. The government said it would also stop issuing visas for foreign visitors who had been in China in the past two weeks.

On Sunday, New Zealand said it would bar entry to all foreign nationals arriving from mainland China. The ministry of foreign affairs and trade also raised its travel advice to New Zealanders for all of mainland China to "Do not travel", the highest level.

Confirmation of the first death outside China comes after thousands of Hong Kong medical workers voted to go on strike, calling for the government to close the border with mainland China. The financial hub had 13 confirmed cases of the disease as of Saturday, with 112 patients isolated.

More than 3,000 public hospital staff, including doctors and nurses, agreed to a week of phased strike action starting on Monday if the government failed to meet their demands. Staff representatives will meet officials from the city's hospital authority on Sunday for talks.

In China, cities began to implement more extreme restrictions on residents. In Huanggang – the second most affected city after Wuhan – authorities barred residents from leaving their homes. Families in the city, also in Hubei province, were to choose one person from their household to leave and buy food and other necessities. The city of Wenzhou in neighbouring Zhejiang province announced similar measures.

In Huanggang, six officials were fired over "poor performance" in handling the outbreak, the official Xinhua news agency reported. It cited the mayor as saying the city's ability to treat patients remained inadequate and that there was a severe shortage of medical supplies such as protective suits and medical masks.

China's military said it would send 1,400 medical personnel to Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak. The personnel will staff one of two new hospitals built in the past two weeks, scheduled to open on Monday.

China is facing increasing global isolation as dozens of airlines suspended flights. Some countries are still trying to evacuate hundreds of

their citizens. Australia on Sunday backed down on plans to charge its evacuees \$1,000 to be taken to quarantine on Christmas Island, and a plane carrying 100 German citizens and 24 foreign nationals – mainly Chinese – landed in Frankfurt on Saturday afternoon after being delayed by Russia's refusal to let it land and refuel.

The Russian military will start evacuating Russian citizens on Monday, domestic media reports said.

In China itself, cities and villages are becoming ghost towns, with about 50 million people in Hubei province alone under lockdown and many more living under self-imposed quarantine.

In Hubei, roads have been sealed off and public transport shut down, and the province extended its Lunar New Year holiday break to 13 February. However, people are leaving Hubei on foot over a bridge spanning the Yangtze river.

**CONTACT**  
**SUMMIT TIMES**  
**REPORTERS**  
**SINGTAM**  
**8170070813**  
**MANGAN/ DIKCHU**  
**9832612485/**  
**9434011213**  
**GANGTOK**  
**8116388176**  
**9832424750**  
**8016270440**

## SKM gear up for mega Foundation Day celebration



**ARPAN PRADHAN**

**GANGTOK, 02 FEB:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha is all set to celebrate its eighth foundation day in grand fashion here at Rangpo Football Ground on 04 February.

The celebration carries special significance given that this is the first foundation day the party will be celebrating since forming the government last year.

The party, informs its Press & Publicity secretary, Ranjana Pradhan, plans to make this a mega event to recognize the selfless contributions and support extended by party supporters which led to SKM winning the assembly elections.

"The 8th foundation day will celebrate everyone's contribution and will be a day to re-

member and recognize the sacrifices and selfless contribution made by many which helped the party for the government," Ms Pradhan said.

Meanwhile, preparations are underway at Rangpo to prepare the venue for the event.

The party is expecting around 25,000 party supporters to show up for the celebration, she added.

## India reports second case of novel coronavirus

**NEW DELHI, FEB 2 (PTI):**

India on Sunday reported a second case of novel coronavirus with a person from Kerala with a travel history to China testing positive, officials

said.

"The patient has tested positive for novel coronavirus and is in isolation in a hospital," the health ministry said.

The patient is stable

and is being closely monitored, it said.

India's first novel coronavirus case in India was also reported from Kerala with a student testing positive.

## Deliberate, calculated design to frustrate mandate of law by Nirbhaya convicts: SG to Delhi HC

New Delhi, Feb 2 (PTI): Solicitor General Tushar Mehta on Sunday told the Delhi High Court that there is a deliberate, calculated and well thought of design by the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case convicts to "frustrate mandate of law" by getting their execution delayed.

Mehta told Justice Suresh Kait that convict Pawan Gupta's move of not filing a curative or a mercy petition is a deliberate, calculated inaction.

The four Nirbhaya case convicts are playing with judicial machinery and trying patience of the nation, Mehta said.

"There is deliberate, calculated and well thought of design to frustrate mandate of law," Solicitor General Mehta told the high court.

The high court is hearing the Centre's plea challenging stay on the execution of the four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case.

Advocate A P Singh appeared for convicts Akshay Singh (31), Vinay Sharma (26) and Pawan Gupta (25) opposing the Centre's plea to set aside stay on execution of death sentence.

Senior advocate Rebecca John, representing the fourth convict Mukesh Kumar (32), raised preliminary objection on the Centre's plea saying it was not maintainable.

She contended that the Centre was never a party in the case proceedings before the trial court and while the government was accusing

the convict of delay, it has woken up just two days ago.

"It was the victim's parents who moved the trial court for issuance of death warrants against the convicts. At no point the central government or the state government approached the trial court to immediately issue death warrants," John contended.

The proceedings are currently underway.

John told the high court that the Centre has moved a plea in the Supreme Court seeking clarification whether co-convicts can be executed separately and this petition is pending before the apex court.

A 23-year-old paramedic student, referred to as Nirbhaya, was raped and

brutally assaulted on the intervening night of December 16-17, 2012 inside a moving bus in south Delhi by six persons, before being thrown out on the road.

She died on December 29, 2012 in Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Hospital.

One of the six accused in the case, Ram Singh, allegedly committed suicide in the Tihar Jail.

A juvenile, who was among the accused, was convicted by a juvenile justice board and was released from a reformatory home after serving a three-year term.

The top court, in its 2017 verdict, had upheld the capital punishment awarded to the convicts by the Delhi High Court and the trial court.

~ **SummitTIMES** ~  
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### LAND FOR SALE

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

### LAND FOR SALE

An area measuring 1 acre at Sadam South Sikkim near Loretto Convent School at Gupti road. Price negotiable any one interested can contact: 78640-04501,62970-03235, 98320-48410



# Governor visits Raigaon

## SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 02 FEB:**

Governor Ganga Prasad today visited Raigaon under Namcheybong Gram Panchayat Unit (GPU) in East district and attended a function held at a local residence and visited the farm of Saroj Rai.

The Governor was accompanied by Gangtok MLA YT Lepcha, Pakyong Sub-Division Magistrate, Hemant Rai and officials from various line departments under Pakyong Sub-Division, east district.

On his arrival, he was accorded a warm welcome by panchayat members and local public, a press communiqué from Raj Bhawan informs.

The Governor also visited organic stalls put up by local public and Self Help Group to display organic agro-produce.



Addressing the gathering, the Governor said, "Sikkim being only Organic State in India holds lots of potential as the State has made a mark throughout the globe. There is need to propagate and promote organic farming as sustainable agricultural practice and to transform entire North East as organic hub. Everyone individuals have to work in convergent approach to ensure doubling farmers' income and resolving issues of the farming community at large."

The Governor spoke on various central government schemes including Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY) pension

scheme and mentioned that special attention is being paid to North Eastern State by the central government.

He also urged the public to remain consistent in their efforts to promote entrepreneurship and model farming in the area.

The Governor also announced that discretionary grants from Raj Bhawan will be provided to Namcheybong GPU, Sunakhari SHG and Ranikhoila FPO.

He also distributed small tokens of gifts to locals during function from Raj Bhawan.

Later, the Governor held an interactive session with officials of Pakyong Sub-Division.

During the interactive session, senior officials from the concerned department briefed the Governor about the schemes (central and state sponsored) and initiatives provided to the farmers by the state government.

Earlier, the Gram Panchayats of the Namcheybong GPU presented their GPU's progress report and put forth local issues and public grievances to the Governor.

## Palestinians cut ties with Israel and US after rejecting Trump peace plan

**CAIRO, 02 FEB [AP]:** The Palestinian Authority has cut all ties with the US and Israel, including those relating to security, after rejecting a Middle East peace plan presented by Donald Trump, the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, said on Saturday.

Abbas was in Cairo to address the Arab League, which backed the Palestinians.

The blueprint, endorsed by the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, calls for the creation of a demilitarised Palestinian state that would exclude Jewish settlements built in occupied territory and remain under near-total Israeli security control.

"We've informed the Israeli side ... that there will be no relations at all with them and the United States including security ties," Abbas told the one-day emergency meeting in Cairo, which was called to discuss Trump's plan.

Israeli officials had no immediate comment.

Israel and Palestinian Authority security forces have long cooperated in policing areas of the occupied West Bank that are under Palestinian control. The Palestinian Authority also has intelligence cooperation agreements with the CIA, which continued even after the Palestinians began boycotting Trump's peace efforts in 2017.

Abbas said he had refused to discuss the plan by with Trump by phone, or to receive even a copy of it to study it.

"Trump asked that I speak to him by phone but I said 'no', and that he wants to send me a letter ... but I refused it," he said.

Abbas said he did not want Trump to be able to say he had been consulted. He reiterated his "complete" rejection of the Trump plan, presented on Tuesday.

"I will not have it recorded in my history that I sold Jerusalem," he said.

The blueprint also proposes US recognition of Israeli settlements on occupied West Bank land and of Jerusalem as Israel's indivisible capital.

The Arab League foreign ministers meeting in Cairo said the plan did not meet the minimum aspirations of Palestinians, and the League would not cooperate with the US in implementing it.

The ministers affirmed Palestinian rights to create a state based on land captured and occupied by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war, with East Jerusalem as capital, the final communique said.

Foreign ministers from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, three close US allies, as well as Iraq, Lebanon and others, said there could be no peace without recognising Palestinian rights to establish a state within the pre-1967 territories.

After Trump unveiled his plan some Arab powers appeared, despite historic support for the Palestinians, to prioritise close ties with the US and a shared hostility towards Iran over traditional Arab alliances.

Oman, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates attended the White House gathering where Trump announced his plan alongside Netanyahu.

On Tuesday, Netanyahu said he would ask his cabinet this week to approve the application of Israeli law to Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

## Pompeo condemns China's Xinjiang crackdown during Central Asia tour

**NUR-SULTAN (KAZAKHSTAN), FEB 2 (AFP):** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called on countries to offer asylum to ethnic minorities fleeing China's troubled Xinjiang region during a visit Sunday to oil-rich Kazakhstan -- a country that borders the region.

"We ask simply for them to provide safe refuge and asylum for those seeking to flee China," Pompeo said at a press appearance with Kazakh foreign minister Mukhtar Tleuberdi.

"Protect human dignity, just do what is right," Pompeo said.

Pompeo was meeting top officials in ex-Soviet Kazakhstan as he rounds off a five-nation tour in two countries where Russia and China enjoy privileged interests.

His visit to the Kazakh capital Nur-Sultan also saw him meet with Kazakhs who say their family members are detained in Xinjiang, where over a million ethnic Uighurs, Kazakhs and other minorities are believed to have been incarcerated as part of an unprecedented security crackdown in the region.

Kazakhstan has allowed several ethnic Kazakhs of Chinese citizenship who fled the region to stay in the country, but has not given any of them asylum -- a reluctance local activists attribute to Chinese pressure.

Pompeo also commended Kazakhstan's "quick action" over the novel coronavirus that has killed more than 300 people and infected more than 14,000 in mainland China and beyond, forcing governments around the world to take drastic measures.

Kazakhstan has presently hospitalised over 40 people that returned to the country from China with flu-like symptoms, but has yet to confirm any cases of the disease.

On Sunday evening Pompeo will fly to Uzbekistan, a country of 33 million that is emerging from nearly three decades of isolation.

Pompeo also visited two other ex-Soviet countries -- Belarus and Ukraine -- as part of a trip that began with a stop in Britain.

Ahead of the visit, Pompeo stressed that the Central Asian countries on his itinerary "want to be sovereign and independent", and Washington had "an important opportunity to help them achieve that".

But he also acknowledged "a lot of activity (in the region) -- Chinese activity, Russian activity".

Washington has often struggled to keep a foothold in Central Asian states that were part of the Soviet Union up to its collapse in 1991.

At the height of hostilities in Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks, NATO and the United States maintained important logistics centres in the region, but these have now closed.

Russia has retained military bases and heads security and trade blocs that have helped to entrench its position there.

But Central Asia also increasingly looks east to China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road global trade plan as a panacea to treat battered economies.



Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have both seen leadership transitions since John Kerry toured the region in 2015 -- the last US secretary of state to visit.

In Kazakhstan, Pompeo was to meet President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as well as his predecessor Nursultan Nazarbayev, who last year shocked Kazakhs by retiring from the presidency after nearly three decades in office.

In Uzbekistan, he was to hold talks with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who has embarked on ambitious reforms, welcoming tourism and investment in the once-isolated republic while keeping the authoritarian system intact.

Mirziyoyev's long-ruling hardline predecessor, Islam Karimov turned his back on the United States in 2005 after a row over the Uzbek government's bloody crackdown on protests.

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**SIKKIM STATE ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION**

**P. O. Tadong, Sikkim -737102**

**Tel: (03592)281081, 281088, 280081, Fax. (03592) 281044**

**Email: [sikkim.serc@gmail.com](mailto:sikkim.serc@gmail.com)**

**No: 318/SSERC/2017-18/10**

**Date: 30.01.2020**

**NOTICE FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

Power Department, Government of Sikkim, a deemed licensee engaged in distribution and retail sale of electricity in the State of Sikkim has filed its Annual Revenue Requirement (ARR) and Tariff Petition for the Financial Year 2020-21 before the Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SSERC). The ARR and Tariff Petition have been registered by the SSERC as Case No. MYT/2020-21/P-01/PDS dated 05.12.2019. The copies of the ARR/Tariff Petition can be viewed and downloaded from the Commission's website ([www.sserc.in/Tariff Petitions](http://www.sserc.in/Tariff%20Petitions)) and also from the official website of the Power Department ([power.sikkim.gov.in](http://power.sikkim.gov.in)).

Power Department has already issued a 'Public Notice' on the ARR/Tariff Petition soliciting objections and suggestions from the consumers and stake holders on the proposed ARR and Tariff proposal. As per the said 'Public Notice', any person who intends to file objections or suggestions on the ARR/Tariff Petition of the Power Department may do so by filing statement of objections or comments before the Secretary, Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission. Objections or comments shall be submitted in 5 (five) copies by registered post or in person, which should reach the Secretary, Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission, Old SITCO Complex, Deorali, Gangtok-737102 on or before 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

The objections or comments shall be submitted with copies of the relevant documents and evidences in support thereof alongwith Affidavit as per Form SSERC-3 of Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission (Conduct of Business) Regulations, 2012. Form SSERC-3 can be downloaded from the Commission's website ([www.sserc.in/Regulations & Rules/Conduct of Business](http://www.sserc.in/Regulations%20&%20Rules/Conduct%20of%20Business)).

The SSERC therefore proposes to hold a Public Hearing on the ARR/Tariff Petition filed by the Power Department on the date, time and venue mentioned below:

Date	Time	Venue for Public Hearing	Category of Consumers.
19 <sup>th</sup> February 2020	10.30 AM to 2.30 PM	Small Meeting Hall, Chintan Bhavan, Gangtok, East Sikkim	All categories of Consumers

Interested parties/persons who intend to be heard in person may appear before the Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission for the purpose and would be heard as per the above schedule.


**Sd/-**  
**Director (T&T)**  
**Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission**




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## Focus Will Not be Wasted on the Youth

*Sikkim has a very young population – inform them better so that they care*

Over fifty per cent of Sikkim's population is in the most productive age-group of 10 to 35 years. Despite more than half of Sikkim made up of the young, there does not appear to be much youthful exuberance in the State. Disenchantment, pessimism and opportunism are behavioural traits that one normally associates with those who have been around for slightly more time than the under-35 that we are speaking of here.

Agreed, 10 to 35 is a very wide spectrum for an age-group, but we take it here because this is the span during which people are learning or have begun putting their learning to use. After this, they start stagnating if the younger years have not instilled them with a passion to get excited. Take a look around, at the community level, there is very little that this age-group is doing to get noticed and make a difference. Even the rebellious streak that is so marked in these years is sorely missing. This age-group needs to get stimulated. They have to start getting involved in the workings of the State that they will inherit soon. It would not be a bad idea to force them to get involved. The elder generation is too out of sync with the needs and aspirations of the young and the connection has to be restored. What the present generation in control prioritizes is lost on the young. Sample this – 67.42% of the current population of Sikkim is what can be called the post-Merger/ Annexation generation, having been born or settled in Sikkim after 1975. While this data cannot be interpreted to mean that this segment does not care as much for the political issues of 1975 vintage as the political noise would have one believe, what is does bear out is that a huge majority of Sikkim might not know what is being discussed. Accept it, no one – no leader and surely no academics thus far – have made any genuine efforts to explain the history or socio-political developments of Sikkim to its young. What they peddle in is a colored to suit their position narrative of Sikkim's issues, and that is cannot end too well. But the young, it needs to also be recognised, are showing an interest to 'know'. It would serve Sikkim well to inform them better and let them do their own interpretations and work out their own solutions.

It also makes political sense to get a grip on the priorities that the young hold dear. The under-40 year old age-group constitutes more than 35% of the electorate. Since they constitute a substantial vote-bank, it is important that they start understanding and caring for Sikkim. It is equally important that they start getting understood first. This is an age-group, which, as much as it is interested in history and Sikkim past – both remote and recent – also wants a future. This is also an age-group that has received better education and seen more of the world and can hence be trusted to intelligently weigh options, sift the rhetoric from real commitments and hopefully grow away from caste and community divides. They can also influence their elders and infect them with their hopes and aspirations. Whichever party touches a chord with them is assured to well. And Sikkim has already seen the reasonable success of this approach in how the Opposition did better than most past elections in Sikkim in 2014 and then built on it to snuggle into office in 2019.

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# Coronavirus in Wuhan: Residents Shout 'Stay Strong' From Windows

YVONNE SU  
THECONVERSATION.COM

In Wuhan, China, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak, residents have been shouting "Wuhan jiāyóu" meaning, "Wuhan, stay strong" out of their windows, from apartment building to apartment building, to send words of encouragement to fellow citizens, doctors and medical staff at the front lines of the battle.

When facing a crisis, humans historically seek solidarity. Community solidarity is often seen as a great way for the community to feel alive and charged with energy after facing hard times.

This solidarity was seen after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005, after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013 and after the Fort McMurray wildfires in Alberta in 2016.

More recently, there are tales of neighbours shovelling each other out of their homes after the historic snowstorm in St. John's, N.L. Near Manila, strangers offered up their homes to evacuees of the Taal volcano eruption.

But how do you show community solidarity in the face of a crisis when speaking with your neighbours — and coming together — could literally kill you?

#### BOOST MORALE

As the 11 million citizens in Wuhan entered the sixth day under lockdown because of the coronavirus, people have been forced to stay indoors to limit their contact with others. As fears grew, some felt the need to boost morale and create a sense of community solidarity.

Soon, social media posts circulated asking residents in Wuhan to go to their windows and shout out "jiāyóu" starting at 8 p.m. local time. The posts were widely shared, leading to the phenomenon that took place.

Jiāyóu (加油) directly translates to "add oil" in a way that might mean "add gasoline to your car" so you can continue to push hard and do what you need to do. In a general sense, the sentiment is "stay strong" or "keep going." Jiāyóu is a common phrase used to encourage someone if they are facing a challenge.

As the city of Wuhan faces the life and death challenge of the coronavirus, jiāyóu works as a phrase that resonates with residents of a city struggling to survive.

"Wuhan jiāyóu" (武汉加油!) is now the motto of Wuhan to keep spirits high in the face of this spreading pandemic.



In addition to raising morale and giving a strong sign of life to a city that has been rendered a ghost town, the jiāyóu chants have also served another purpose: for the global media audience, it has helped to humanize the citizens of Wuhan.

#### APOCALYPTIC FEAR

Even with the exceptional stories like the reporting of "Wuhan jiayou" by the BBC and the Guardian, western media has been shown to inevitably contribute to reducing the people at the core of these stories into numbers and statistics.

So far, it seems, with a few exceptions, western mainstream media has focused on medical and scientific stories. The images and videos shared of Wuhan are of a ravaged and scary ghost town. Some include videos of overflowing hospitals and medical staff in heavy protective gear. Others have spread stories of apocalyptic fear. Many social media posters have engaged in fear mongering. With all this, it can seem that few have treated the citizens of Wuhan as anything but potential carriers of the virus.

While these videos and images depict the reality of a city dealing with a pandemic, the face masks and crowded hospitals allow viewers to overlook the silent majority — the tens of millions of people in self-isolation at home.

The jiāyóu chant and the videos that captured it have since gone viral. It is a way for citizens to reclaim their narrative. It helps to draw attention to the millions of diligent and law-abiding citizens who are doing their job in fighting this pandemic and encouraging others to keep going in this fight against an invisible virus.

I believe the humanization of the Wuhan citizens helped to send a wake up call to the world about the plight of those not infected but isolated in their homes. Many westerners have largely focused on

whether the virus will spread in their countries. Few may have stopped to think of those in lock down in Wuhan and other cities in China.

Some took to social media to ask why the world is not praying for Wuhan or China. Why are there no Facebook profile filters to show solidarity with those struggling against the virus?

Most recently, in Wuhan, Premier Li Keqiang's visited a Wuhan supermarket where the coronavirus allegedly originated. In an act of solidarity, he chanted "jiāyóu Wuhan" with a crowd of shoppers to encourage them to continue fighting the coronavirus.

While the premier was likely genuine, there is also a small warning in this government official's act. There is a risk that acts of solidarity like "Wuhan jiāyóu" could be co-opted by government bodies to shift attention or responsibility away from authorities.

This type of co-option was observed in the exaggerated use of "resilience" and "survival" narratives after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines to paint a picture of a rapidly recovering community doing well by being resourceful and helping each other.

These narratives of community resilience pushed forth by official government messages can act to shift responsibility away from the state and international humanitarian organizations that have formal responsibilities in disaster risk reduction and recovery.

Thus, Premier Li Keqiang was able to use the peoples' chant, "Wuhan jiāyóu" to rally support in the grocery store. But he did not create a space for questions about accountability and government action. This is often the double-edged sword of community solidarity: it is powerful, but it can also be misused by the powerful.

*[the writer is PhD, International Development and Political Science, University of Guelph]*

# Rohingya genocide case: why it will be hard for Myanmar to comply with ICJ's orders

PON SOUVANNASENG  
THECONVERSATION.COM

Myanmar was ordered to "take all measures within its power" to prevent any further acts of violence against the Rohingya in late January by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The court is considering a case brought by the Gambia accusing Myanmar of violating the 1948 Convention on Genocide against the Rohingya, a minority ethnic group.

The court has not yet determined whether violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2016-17 constitutes genocidal intent by Myanmar's authorities, nor who should be prosecuted. But under the court's "provisional measures", Myanmar is expected to submit to regular reporting to the court within four months, and then every six months.

A few days before the ICJ's ruling, Myanmar's Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE), a domestic investigative task force, concluded its final report on the violence. It found that crimes against humanity were committed in Rakhine, and there was evidence of sexual violence, but it did not find evidence of genocidal intent by state security forces.

The ICOE recommended a domestic judicial process for prosecuting evidence and perpetrators in an effort to build and affirm the country's judicial institutions. The commission's findings were endorsed by the Myanmar presidential office and largely repeated by Aung San Suu Kyi, the country's state counsellor and minister of foreign affairs, in an article in the Financial Times.

The statements by the ICOE and the ICJ reveal major differences over issues of jurisdiction, what establishes genocidal intent, sources of evidence, and different expectations of timeframes for reform. In rejecting the ICOE process, the ICJ's orders – though driven by imminent concern and noble intentions – could both threaten to exacerbate tensions between Myanmar and the international community, and within the country, which is in a fraught election year.

#### DIVIDED POWER

As a political scientist who studies development and environmental issues in Myanmar, I know that the pace of change happens slowly in a place stunted by decades of international sanctions and repressive autarky. The ICJ's approach is blind to the context of Myanmar, a fragile and weak state where power is fragmented, government divided and internal conflicts run rife across the country's seven regions and states under its federal system. Ethnic armed groups, army-backed militias and border guard forces run into the thousands.

My ongoing research on water, infrastructure and the environment in Myanmar has been filled with humbling moments as I have come to understand how, on the ground, every major issue of the day in Myanmar is viewed through the prism of 60 years of armed conflict and an unfinished peace process.

Critiques of the ICOE recommendations turn on a mistrust for Myanmar institutions and the looming power of the Tatmadaw, the state armed forces. After ruling the country for more than four decades, the military continues to hold a grip over key government ministries and a quarter of the parliament.

Yet, by the same logic, those wary of a Myanmar-run judicial process should also be concerned about the demands placed on Myanmar by the ICJ and its political and institutional capacity to deliver on them. The ICJ provisional measures are tantamount to wholesale civil, political, bureaucratic, legal and military reforms at the drop of a hat, wielding a stick of shame rather than a ladder of support in a time of need.

#### POLARISING RIFTS

International press coverage has simplistically portrayed the ICJ's imposition of provisional measures as a "win" for international human rights and a "setback" for Myanmar. Numerous articles have focused on Suu Kyi's tarnished international reputation, painting her as complicit in alleged genocide.

This has alienated Myanmar, a country emerging from decades of isolation, from crucial international engagement, particularly with major Western democratic countries. These rifts present difficulties both for supporting pro-democracy initiatives in the country and assisting Rohingya communities with medical and humanitarian support.

The rifts have also driven Myanmar to develop closer ties with China, which has vital and strategic business interests in all of the country's major conflict regions where vulnerable minorities reside. This includes the Rakhine region, where China plans to build a major sea port. China's president, Xi Jinping, visited Myanmar on January 18 to sign more than 22 bilateral contracts with Myanmar.

#### PAST AND PRESENT CONFLATED

The way which international law operates, based on precedents surrounding previous cases, has led to problems in its application in the Myanmar case. The term genocide was coined in 1942 by international jurist Raphael Lemkin, a Holocaust survivor who led a movement to push the UN to prosecute Nazi perpetrators as criminals, giving rise to the Genocide Convention.

The legacies of Lemkin's framework for prosecution, forged through the horrors of the Holocaust and the 1915 Armenian genocide, continue to influence the way contemporary cases are viewed and discussed. Echoes of the "never again" narrative reverberate throughout the Gambia's case against Myanmar at the ICJ.

Suu Kyi is not comparable to Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic or Nazi Germany's Adolf Hitler, who were both at the helm of coordinated machines of mass killing and wielded overwhelming control of civilian and military power. Myanmar's civilian leaders do not have a well-developed and professionalised state capable of reigning in the military's illicit moneymaking activities such as mining and the region's largest methamphetamine operations.

Myanmar's civilian leaders are being held liable at the ICJ for alleged crimes committed by the Tatmadaw and have the Augean task of turning around more than a century of colonially inherited complex communal legacies in a mere matter of months. This is why Suu Kyi has publicly balked at: "Unreasonable demands that Myanmar's criminal justice system complete investigations in a third of the time routinely granted to international processes."

#### BRIDGING THE GAP

I cut my teeth as a young undergraduate researcher studying genocide on the ground in the former Yugoslavia. I visited Srebrenica in 2002 and spent four years studying the difficulties of transitional peacebuilding. European states and NATO were willing to provide military presence to stabilise the post-conflict situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and later spent several years trying to forge a shared government out of a UN protectorate. No such magnitude of political will, resources, or framework are remotely forthcoming from major Western countries to build the state and shore up peace in Myanmar.

Instead, the growing diplomatic isolation of Myanmar's civilian government as it deals with the international consequences of the Tatmadaw's actions has handed the military strategic and electoral leverage over civilian leaders.

Ultimately, the purpose of the ICJ process in Myanmar is to secure a "safe and dignified return" for displaced people. The prosecution of perpetrators, if the case advances that far, will require the cooperation and compliance of Myanmar's officials. Failing to substantively engage with the very real concerns and points of disagreement between the ICJ and Myanmar has the potential to further destabilise the country's already delicate political security and rights situation.

*[the writer is Research Associate, Centre for Crisis Studies & Mitigation, University of Manchester]*



# ‘I’ll destroy your family’: Anti-CAA activists tell of false arrest and torture in custody

## Hannah Ellis-Petersen in Delhi and Shaikh Azizur Rahman in Lucknow

**THEGUARDIAN**  
At 73 years old, Mohamad Shoaib had grown used to harassment from police. As one of India’s highest-profile activists, he had made a name fighting for Muslims falsely accused of being terrorists by the police, earning him powerful enemies.

But in late December, as he was brought into the police station in Lucknow, in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, in the middle of the night, he felt something had shifted. “Police officers abused me badly while I was in their custody and they threatened me in many ways,” he said. “One [senior officer] said to me at the police station: ‘I will fuck your mother. I am going to throw all your family members in jail where they will rot for life. I will destroy your family.’”

As India erupted in protest over a controversial new citizenship bill late last year, Shoaib was among dozens of leading social and legal activists who began to be systematically and illegally targeted, rounded up and detained by police, with several tortured and most kept in prison on fabricated charges, without ever being presented

to a magistrate, as the law requires.

While the BJP government is notoriously intolerant of critics, the systematic crackdown on some of the most recognisable civil society activists has been unprecedented in both scale and fervour. It has also been concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, where the BJP government led by chief minister Yogi Adityanath, known for his anti-Muslim and staunchly Hindu nationalist rhetoric, vowed “revenge” on those who had taken to the streets to protest at the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Police have been accused of firing on protesters, rounding up hundreds of innocent Muslims in the state and torturing men, women and children in custody.

In seven cases recounted to the Observer, activists alleged they had been detained on entirely falsified charges by police. For Shoaib, his detention was particularly farcical. He stands accused of leading a protest that turned violent in Lucknow on 19 December, despite the fact it occurred while he was under police house arrest, having been detained the night before.

“Police kept my house under watch and restrained me from going out. How could I possibly be present at the protest site, away from my home that afternoon?” he said. “Yet, the police charged me with attempted murder, arson and rioting. For years many police officers have viewed me as their enemy and now they are portraying me as a conspirator and violent rioter, without any basis.”

After police failed to produce any evidence before a judge, Shoaib was bailed last month, following weeks behind bars. But the charges have not been dropped. “Activists are facing an increased level of pressure or crackdown,” he said of the past three months. “The government is trying to silence all types of dissent and shrink the space for activism. It is trying to break the backbone of activism in the state.” Sadaf Jafar, another prominent activist in Uttar Pradesh and spokesperson for the Congress political party, wept as she recounted the torture she says she endured when arrested on 19 December.

She says she was arrested while protesting peacefully at the Lucknow rally against the new citizenship law, and was among those later facing 20 charges, including inciting violence and attempted murder. She was detained until early January, when a judge granted her bail due to lack of evidence. While in the police station, Jafar said, officers subjected her to relentless racist and Islamophobic slurs. “They started slapping and beating me, calling me ‘Pakistani’ and other language I could never repeat.

“One of the female officers, who was filled with this anger, shouted: ‘I am going to beat you so hard I draw blood,’” said Jafar. “She pulled my hair and clawed my face and hands. And then another senior male officer told me he had seen me ‘talking big’ at the protest and that he would teach me a lesson; that he would charge me with attempted murder and make sure I ‘rotted in prison’. He pulled me down by my hair, kicked me in my stomach and knees... I have spent my life fighting for people’s rights but I never imagined the police would act in this way.”

It is not just Muslim activists who report torture. Deepak Kabir, 46, a prominent Hindu poet and activist, said he had been arrested and badly beaten after he went into a police station to look for fellow activists. “They are going after activists because we are willing to fight,” he said. “It’s a very thought out process to target well-known faces because if they crush us, then everyone else is immediately intimidated.” SR Darapuri, 76, a former senior police officer turned activist, who has long irritated authorities in Uttar Pradesh with his outspoken comments about extrajudicial killings by police, alleged the police had gone to “extreme lengths” to arrest and then charge him with rioting, attempted murder and criminal conspiracy related to Lucknow protests that turned violent. “For 46 hours they kept me without food,” he said. “I am a retired senior police officer from the rank as high as inspector general and I was forced to endure such torture.” Darapuri described how, after his arrest at home on 20 December, police brought him before a magistrate, as is legally required before he could be sent to jail. But the magistrate refused to grant permission, citing lack of evidence, and criticised the officers for Darapuri’s “wrongful arrest”. But that did not stop them. “After taking me back to Hazratganj police station, the police officer recorded a report in which he stated that I had been taken to a magistrate but he was not available,” he said. “This was not the truth. The magistrate refused to remand me in custody because he believed I was innocent.”

The same day, Darapuri was taken to jail where he was kept until 5 December, when he was bailed. At the hearing the Uttar Pradesh police failed to produce any evidence against him, claiming video footage of his alleged offences was “too hazy or grainy and none of the people there could be identified.”

The Uttar Pradesh police and government have denied any wrongful and illegal arrests and torture in custody. Uttar Pradesh BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi said: “Bail doesn’t mean that Sadaf and Darapuri have been given a clean chit. They will have to face trial in court. The statements made by them after release are objectionable, baseless and provocative.”

Yet the arrests of activists have continued. Last Wednesday, hours before he was due to address an anti-CAA rally in Mumbai, activist Dr Kafel Khan was arrested by Uttar Pradesh Police Special Task Force for allegedly delivering a “provocative” speech in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, at a rally on 12 December. On Friday, police filed new complaints against Shoaib, Kabir and several other activists after they staged a peaceful candlelit vigil against the act.

Sandeep Pandey, another prominent Lucknow-based activist involved in the anti-CAA protests described the escalation in attacks on critics. “My emails and phones have been kept under surveillance by the government,” he said. “We have been jailed before for activism-related activities but we used to get bail and come out of jail. Police didn’t misbehave with us. Now, in recent months, police have changed their attitude towards us and we are being badly abused by them... The rights activists are facing the worst crackdown in Uttar Pradesh; in no other state in India is the situation as bad,” he said. “This is out and out a fascist regime.”

The passing of the citizenship amendment act in December has led to India’s greatest unrest for more than four decades. The law says all Hindu, Christian, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh migrants who arrived from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan before 2014 can claim citizenship. But the same does not apply to Muslim migrants. Many believe the act brazenly discriminates against Muslims and could tear apart the secular foundations of India. There are also fears that associated plans for a national register of citizens will require only Muslims to produce evidence of their nationality, and could lead to detentions and deportation. Over the past month, millions have taken to the streets every week in the first backlash against Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist BJP government, and the response has increasingly been one of force, with public gatherings banned and peaceful student protesters met with violence and openly communal and anti-Muslim rhetoric used in the BJP campaign for the Delhi state elections which will be held next weekend.

engaged in a face-off with the TMC government over a host of issues, since assuming charge as the Governor of West Bengal.

The relation between the ruling party and the governor hit a new low after Speaker Biman Banerjee adjourned the House for two days in December last year as bills slated to be placed in the Assembly were to receive his nod.

The claim was, however, refuted by the Raj Bhavan, which, in a statement, had termed the situation “factually untenable.”

### Yadav, Anjali bag titles in Kolkata marathon

**KOLKATA, FEB 2 (PTI):** Lucknow’s Awadh Narayan Yadav and home favourite Anjali Saraogi clinched the top honours in the men’s and women’s categories respectively in Kolkata Full Marathon here on Sunday.

Awadh clocked a timing of two hours, 30 minutes and 30 seconds, while Meghalaya duo of Tlinding Wahlang (2:30:51) and Batsrang A Sangma (2:31:43) finished second and third respectively.

For Anjali, it was a



memorable hat-trick of titles on her home course as she led all the way to cross the finish line with a timing of 3:24.02.

Anjali’s city-mate

Sunmul Rahman took home the second place with a timing of 3:44.12, while Meghalaya’s Snora Lyngkhoi finished third with a time of 3:46:48.

### India sends aid to cyclone-hit Madagascar

**NEW DELHI, FEB 2 (PTI):** India has sent relief supplies to cyclone-hit Madagascar using its naval ship INS Airavat, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday.

In a tweet, Jaishankar said India was an early responder to the natural disaster that hit the island nation.

“INS Airavat delivers relief supplies to

cyclone-hit #Madagascar. #SAGAR Policy at work - India as an early responder,” he said in a tweet.

Madagascar has been hit by a cyclone and there has been heavy flooding and landslides since last month, causing loss of lives and displacement of a number of people.

According to reports, more than 92,000 people have been affected.

### Bengal minister meets governor

**KOLKATA, FEB 2 (PTI):** Amidst the ongoing tussle between the West Bengal government and Raj Bhawan, state Parliamentary Affairs minister Partha Chatterjee on Sunday met Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and held an hour-long meeting with him.

Chatterjee came to the Raj Bhawan around 3 pm.

“Yes, I had gone to meet the governor and apprised him of several issues and spoke to him on various matters. But I won’t discuss it with the media. I also informed him about the state Budget session,”

Chatterjee told reporters.

According to sources, Chatterjee had gone to the Raj Bhawan to discuss the upcoming budget session of the state Assembly which is likely to begin from February 7.

“They discussed the governor’s speech which, according to rules, is read out by the governor himself. There has been a lot of tension between the Raj Bhawan and the state government. So it would be better if it is discussed beforehand,” a senior TMC leader said.

Dhankhar has been

## Using chemicals to ripen fruits amounts to poisoning somebody, send culprits to jail: Delhi HC

**NEW DELHI, JAN 30 (PTI):** Use of pesticides and chemicals to ripen fruits amounts to poisoning the consumer, the Delhi High Court has observed and said invoking penal provisions against the culprits would have a deterrent effect.

“Using chemicals like calcium carbide to ripen mangoes is like poisoning somebody. Why should the Indian Penal Code be not invoked against them?”

“Send such persons to jail, even if for 2 days and it would have a deterrent effect,” a bench of Justices G S Sistani and A J Bhambhani said while

hearing a PIL initiated by the court to monitor use of pesticides on fruits and vegetables.

The bench asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) whether calcium carbide was still being used to ripen fruits, like mangoes, and sought the presence of its Chief Executive Officer to assist it on the next date of hearing.

The court also asked the Ministry of Agriculture as to whether any kit was available for consumers to themselves test for calcium carbide in their homes.

The ministry said no

such kit was available as the presence of calcium carbide can only be tested in laboratories with the help of proper equipment and additional chemicals.

The Delhi government, represented by its additional standing counsel Naushad Ahmed Khan, told the court that it has been picking up samples from the various markets in the national capital for testing purposes and also carrying out awareness drives.

It also told the court that some of the samples were tested and no chemicals were found and results regarding

other samples were awaited.

Apart from the PIL initiated by the court on its own, it is also hearing two other pleas by private individuals seeking directions to the authorities to curb the use of pesticides and other chemicals on food products, especially the agricultural produce, coming into the national capital.

According to a report filed by amicus curiae Rajul Jain earlier, due to excessive usage of pesticides in fruits and vegetable, “various countries have banned the import of Indian vegetables and fruits and many more were under scrutiny”.

The high court had initiated the issue on its own after a NGO had found that vegetables and fruits sold in the Delhi markets contained poisons capable of causing cancer and harming the nervous system and liver.

The court has in the past suggested several measures to curb adulteration of eatables, especially fruits and vegetables, like large-scale testing and sending back contaminated food products to manufacturers or farmers.

## Schengen visa application fee hiked to Euro 80

**ASHWINI SHRIVASTAVA NEW DELHI, FEB 2 (PTI):** A trip to much of Europe has gone costlier from Sunday with increase in Schengen visa fees to Euro 80 from the current Euro 60, officials said.

A Schengen visa is needed to visit 26 European countries, including Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Switzerland and Spain.

“The visa fee increases from Euro 60 to Euro 80. This increase is the first one since 2006,” an European

Union (EU) official told PTI.

The increase in the visa fee comes as an updated Schengen Visa Code takes effect from February 2 this year.

It brings the fee in line with the level where it would be today if it had been aligned to the general EU-wide inflation rate since 2006, they said.

“The increased visa fee will provide member states with additional financial resources to

process visa applications quickly and more efficiently. By international standards, the visa fee remains low,” the official said.

For regular travellers, the fee increase is offset by the new rules on long-validity visas.

These travellers may actually save money under the new provisions, since they have to apply for visas less often, they said.

Visa fee is still waived for children below six-years-old (as it was the case in the previous rules).

“The visa fee for minors between the age group of 6 and 12 years remains half of the general fee, and thus increases by Euro 5 (to Euro 40),” the official said. In addition, it is now possible for member states to waive the visa fee for minors between the age group of 6 and 18 years under the new visa regime.

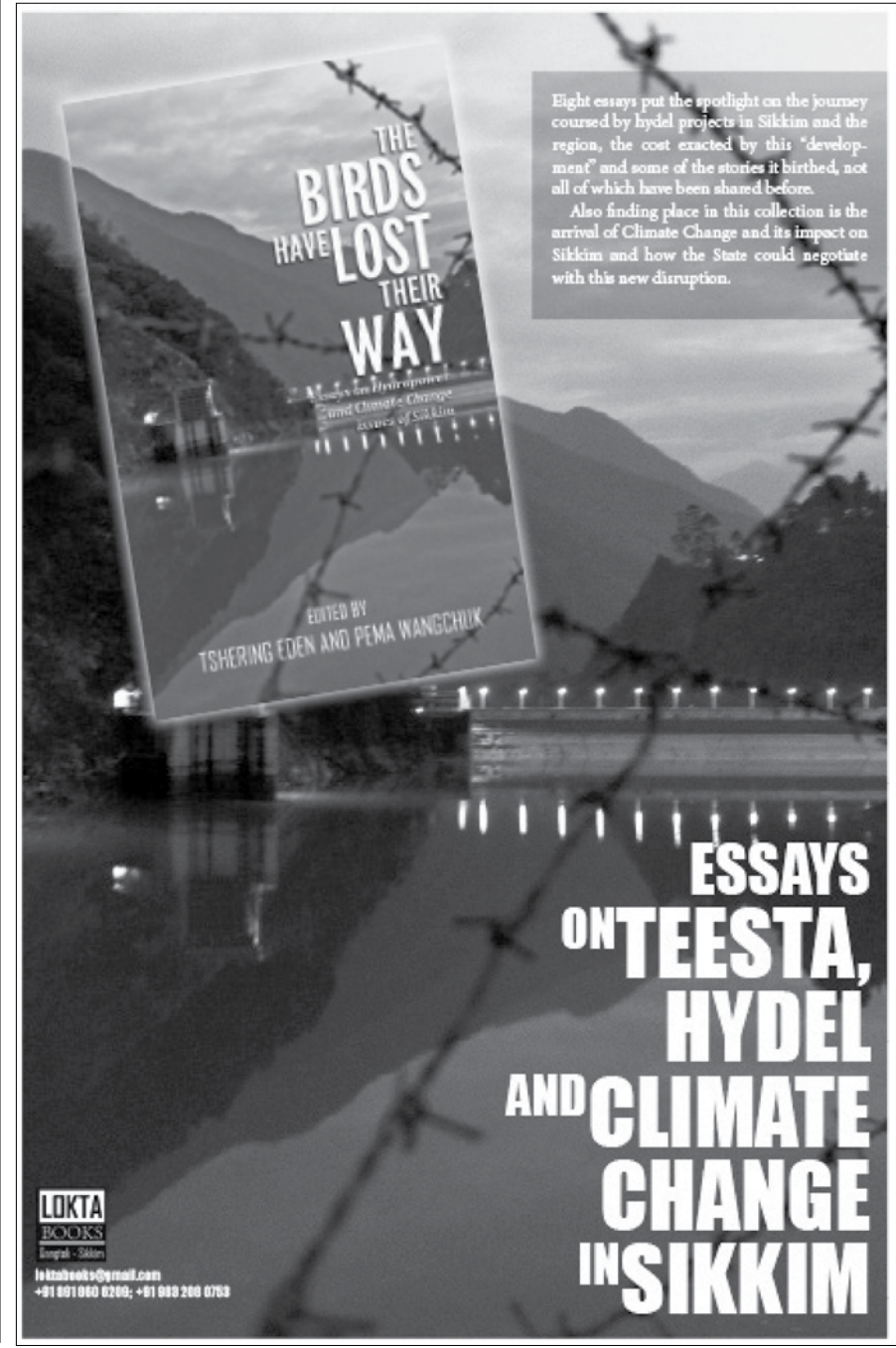
According to the latest exchange rates, a Euro is equivalent to Rs 79.37.

People can now apply for the Schengen visa six

months before the intended date of travel to Europe instead of three months timeline.

The minimum time period will now be nine months for seafarers, they said.

In addition to this, frequent travellers with a positive visa history are to be granted multiple-entry visa with a gradually increasing validity period from one year to a maximum of five years, which will save applicants time and money, the official said.





# Bruno Fernandes’ debut for United ends in frustration against Wolves

**JAMIE JACKSON**  
**MANCHESTER, 02 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]:** Bruno Fernandes’s debut began brightly then dulled as Manchester United and Wolves failed to take advantage of Chelsea’s draw earlier in the day. It means each remain six points behind the west Londoners in the race for a Champions League berth before the winter break.

Judging by the uninspiring fare on show a freshening-up is required, a point Ole Gunnar Solskjær made repeatedly afterwards. “I don’t think it’s confidence,” he said. “We have just come off a 6-0 [win] versus Tranmere, we beat Man City [in midweek]. Wolves had 10 days’ rest to prepare, we’ve had two games on a muddy pitch and at City. Sometimes you get games that look a bit flat.”

Solskjær’s decision to field Fernandes from the start could be read as bold and pragmatic: Nemanja Matić’s suspension left the manager even lighter, as he joined Paul Pogba and Scott McTominay on the injury list. The club’s new signing had to wait some three minutes for



a first touch, a clearance from United’s area. Wolves pressed via a João Moutinho free-kick, an Adama Traoré cross and a wild Romain Saïss shot that was hooked over.

Fernandes was positioned as a 10 in Solskjær’s 4-2-3-1 and once United settled the impression was of a clever player who was involved with deft touches and bursts of movement. If this United side lack a feisty edge the way Fernandes walloped Moutinho with a tackle that left him requiring treatment showed how. The pass moments later that put Anthony Martial in behind illustrated the No 18’s silkier side. “You can see he’s a top player,” the United manager told Sky Sports. “First half he

was getting the ball into feet, Bruno wants players moving in front of him and we didn’t move enough so we moved him further back to give him more of the ball. He’s going to be a top addition.”

Wolves, though, have noticed how shaky United are under the aerial ball. Twice Moutinho hit in corners from the right and twice the home side struggled, Harry Maguire, Victor Lindelöf and Aaron Wan-Bissaka all floundering. The next time Wolves attacked United’s defending became near-comedic. Diogo Jota was allowed to amble around deep in David De Gea’s area, Wan-Bissaka looking on as if he was seated in the Stretford End. The right-back and his team were

lucky Jota spooned his cross but this was another warning.

The closest United had gone by the half-hour was a Maguire shot from 30 yards that missed badly to Rui Patrício’s left. When Traoré was teed up before De Gea the wide man had to hit the target, but his effort lacked composure and United’s No 1 watched the ball sail past his left post.

As the interval approached Fernandes had a golden chance to pen a headline start to his United career. Luke Shaw rolled the ball to the 25-year-old Portuguese just outside the box. He connected cleanly but could fire only into Rui Patrício’s hands.

The half ended with Traoré outmuscling Maguire, who had to be assisted by Fred.

Solskjær sent United out for the second half in a rejigged form. Fernandes now sat alongside Fred, Juan Mata became the 10, Andreas Pereira went to the left and Daniel James the right. The game still lacked rhythm, though. Pereira’s tendency to misplace and mistime passes sold Wan-Bissaka and Maguire short and Fernandes had to race back to defend when he too ceded possession.

A planned walk-out on 68 minutes in protest at the Glazers’ ownership of United did not materialise. Ed Woodward was not present at Old Trafford five days after his house was attacked.

Fernandes’s next act was to pull down Raúl Jiménez and be booked. Better was the new boy’s curving free-kick that Rui Patrício needed two attempts to clutch a little later. So, too, to a Mata shot that nearly crept inside the left post. De Gea saved from Jiménez, then Maguire threw himself at a Matt Doherty effort as Wolves pressed and Diogo Dalot went close with a late header.

# Indian shooting team is best in world: Anjum Moudgil

**NEW DELHI, FEB 2 (PTI):** World Championships silver medallist Anjum Moudgil is expecting a good performance from the Indian shooting team, which she calls the best in the world, at Tokyo Olympics.

When asked about the expectations from the team in Tokyo, the 26-year-old sounded optimistic.

“Our shooting team is the best in the world. I am really happy that I am part of this team. This team is really good at the world level. My teammates are breaking records and winning medals,” said Moudgil.

“I am sure the results in the upcoming tournaments will be really good. I am expecting a good performance by the entire shooting contingent at the Olympics.”

India has seen a host of young shooters make their mark on the world stage since the last Olympics in 2016. Moudgil expressed that she is happy to see how the youngsters have capitalised on the availability of facilities and good coaches in India.

“With the availability of equipment and good coaches, it’s really good to see how the youngsters are taking up shoot-



ing and they are doing really well.

“The senior Indian team is really young, which is a good thing. This is the best Indian shooting team I have ever seen,” said Moudgil.

She said the Khelo India University Games will be a great platform for the upcoming athletes.

After successfully organising the Khelo India Youth Games, the Indian government has decided to conduct a competition for the university-level athletes in Bhubaneswar from February 22 to March 1.

“It’s really good that the Indian government is conducting a Khelo India tournament for another age category. I am really happy with the way the Khelo India Games are organized in India. It’s a

really big tournament. I am looking forward to the University Games, I think it’ll be a very good platform for all upcoming athletes,” said the 26-year-old.

The government has put in a lot of effort to improve the sporting culture in India. Moudgil expressed that she is very happy to see the work put in by the government and the Sports Authority of India.

“The government is putting in a lot of effort to improve sports in India with tournaments like Khelo India and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme. It’s really helpful for us as we have been able to cover our expenses for our training abroad and in India. The Indian government and the Sports Authority of India are doing a lot of work,” said Moudgil.

## Indian women lose to Australia in T20 tri-series

**CANBERRA, FEB 2 (PTI):** Indian women suffered a four-wicket loss against the mighty Australia after a disappointing batting performance in their second match of the T20 tri-series here on Sunday.

India struggled to 103 for nine in 20 overs after being asked to bat. The visiting team’s bowlers did well to stretch the game till the penultimate over but there were not enough runs on the board.

Elysse Perry was the undisputed star of the game, picking up three wickets in one before making 49 off 47 balls in Australia’s chase.

India had beaten England in the tournament opener while Australia had lost to England in a Super Over finish on Saturday, leaving all three teams with a win each.

“Our lower order definitely needs to bat a lot better, especially when the top-order doesn’t get runs. However, really appreciate the performance of the bowlers,” said India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur at the post-match presentation. India next play against England at the Junction Oval in Melbourne on February 7.

Barring opener Smriti Mandhana (35) and Harmanpreet (28), Indian batters showed complete lack of application on a pitch offering extra bounce.

India lost their last six wickets for 21 runs with pacer Perry (4/13 in 4 overs) picking three of them in 14th over over, removing Harmanpreet, Taniya Bhatia and Deepti Sharma.

Sixteen-year-old Sha-

fali Verma, touted as the next big thing in women’s cricket, lasted only three balls while Jemimah Rodrigues crawled to 1 off 11 balls, leaving their team at 16 for two in three overs.

The experienced Mandhana and Harmanpreet stitched a 40-run stand before the latter’s dismissal triggered a collapse.

The spin-heavy Indian bowling attack did all they could with left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad taking two wickets for 18 runs in four overs. Offie Deepti Sharma, who opened the bowling, too kept things tight taking one wicket for 18 runs in four overs.

The tri-series is an important preparatory event ahead of the T20 World Cup beginning in Australia on February 21.

## Rare T20 series whitewash for India after 7-run win in 5th T20 against New Zealand

**CHETAN NARULA**  
**MOUNT MAUNGANUI, FEB 2 (PTI):** India choked New Zealand yet again to turn it around for a seven-run win in the fifth T20 International, giving them a rare 5-0 series whitewash in the shortest format here on Sunday.

The Indian pacers, led by ever-reliable Jasprit Bumrah, shared seven wickets among them for 25 runs in match-changing 7.2 overs to restrict the Kiwis to 156 for nine while defending 163 for three.

Bumrah conceded just 12 runs in his four overs and got rid of three batsmen, bowling block-hole deliveries during death overs.

India’s total was built around stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma’ 60-run knock after they elected to bat.

Tim Seifert (50) and Ross Taylor (53) kept the Black Caps in hunt for a

consolation win but the hosts again fell near the finish line.

This is only third time that India have whitewashed opponents in away T20 series and first time in a five-match rubber. India had blanked the West Indies 3-0 in 2019 and beat Australia 3-0 in 2016.

New Zealand got off to a poor start and were quickly reduced to 17 for three in the fourth over. Bumrah had Martin Guptill (2) lbw, and Sundar bowled Colin Munro (15). Tom Bruce’s run-out didn’t help the situation either.

Taylor and Seifert came together at that juncture, putting on 99 runs for the fourth wicket, raising vision of an improbable win.

Seifert reached his half-century off 29 balls, including five fours and three sixes, while Taylor got to his half-century in 42 balls. He hit five fours

and two sixes.

They took 34 runs off Shivam Dube in the 10th over, after which KL Rahul, who led in absence of injured Rohit Sharma, had to take corrective measures. He brought back his front-line pacers and they both etched out wickets.

Navdeep Saini (2-23) dismissed Seifert and then Bumrah bowled Daryl Mitchell (2) with a searing yorker.

New Zealand’s chase was all but over when Mitchell Santner (6) holed out of Shardul Thakur (2-38) and Manish Pandey held a fine running catch at long on.

Ish Sodhi smacked 16 off 10 balls to provide some fireworks at the end but it was not enough.

Earlier, Rohit, batting at number three, was retired hurt after injuring his left calf whilst hitting a six and walked off the field in discomfort. He faced 41 balls and hit three fours as well as three sixes.

## Chelsea’s Antonio Rüdiger scores twice to earn draw with Leicester

**PAUL DOYLE**  
**LEICESTER, 01 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]:** After Frank Lampard was left peeved by Chelsea’s failure to sign a striker in January, his centre-back Antonio Rüdiger did his best to soothe the manager’s concerns by scoring with two fine headers. But those goals were not enough to close the gap on Leicester, who earned a share of the points thanks to goals by Harvey Barnes and Ben Chilwell. The result leaves Brendan Rodgers’ side relatively comfortable in third place, eight points above fourth-placed Chelsea, who can feel the breath of the chasing pack on their backs.

Last season Chelsea finished 20 points above Leicester, but Rodgers’ team have improved since then and the Londoners have not. Lampard is spooked by the strengthening of other clubs, suggesting the purchases made by Manchester United and Sheffield United make Chelsea underdogs in the fight for the last Champions League qualification spot. “We must be super-underdogs then, given where we were at the start of the season,” quipped Rodgers.

Lampard’s angst cannot have been eased by the profligacy of players



other than Rüdiger, especially in a first half in which Chelsea’s lack of sharpness in front of goal prevented them from taking a lead they would have deserved. Several times teasing crosses were delivered into the home box – usually by Callum Hudson-Odoi or the excellent Reece James – but no attacker showed enough instinct and poise to get on the end of them.

Tammy Abraham was full of enthusiasm but was certainly not clinical after being declared fit enough to play despite the ankle knock he suffered in the draw with Arsenal two weeks ago. One wonders what Olivier Giroud made of it all. The Frenchman, denied a January move away, was not even in Chelsea’s squad here.

Kepa Arrizabalaga was dropped to the bench, as Lampard decided that the out-of-form goalkeeper needed

a reminder than his No 1 spot is not guaranteed. “We have to be competitive,” said Lampard, who instead gave Willy Caballero his first Premier League start since May.

The 38-year-old must have fancied his chances of keeping a clean sheet here as Leicester made an uncharacteristically sluggish start. Their attempt to show that they were not deflated by their midweek Carabao Cup defeat at Aston Villa suffered a setback even before kick-off when Wilfred Ndidi felt pain in his knee and was replaced in the starting line-up by Hamza Choudhury.

For the first 25 minutes Chelsea practically had the run of the place. César Azpilicueta made regular bursts down the left, virtually unhindered by Ayoze Pérez. But when the left-back supplied an inviting centre in the fifth minute, Hudson-Odoi gave an indication of what

was to come from Chelsea’s forwards in the first half by swishing at fresh air from the edge of the area.

Chelsea continued to create danger but their final touch was regularly awry. Leicester woke up in the 25th minute, jolted into action by sloppy play from Chelsea. Azpilicueta played a careless pass that Pérez chested into the path of Jamie Vardy. It was Caballero’s time to shine, the keeper rushing off his line to block the shot from Vardy, who went for power rather than precision.

Leicester came close to taking the lead just before the break, when Choudhury leapt above N’Golo Kanté only to head wide.

Within 57 seconds of the restart Rüdiger did what Choudhury had tried to, taking advantage of hesitancy in the Leicester backline to head in a corner at the back post. If he hoped

his attacking team-mates had taken note of his emphatic finish, Rüdiger would soon be dismayed to realise that his goal inspired Leicester. The hosts struck back with two goals in 10 minutes.

Barnes scored the first after being released down the left by Youri Tielemans. The winger also enjoyed assistance from Andreas Christensen, who inadvertently deflected his shot over the wrong-footed Caballero and into the net.

Caballero was caught in the wrong place again in the 64th minute after deciding to chase an overhit cross by Chilwell. The goalkeeper did an about-turn when he realised Ricard Pereira would beat him to the ball but did not get back in position in time to stop Chilwell from swatting a low cross from Tieleman into the net.

Chelsea did not look like equalising until Rüdiger soared above Chilwell to meet a free-kick from the left by Mason Mount and power the ball in from 15 yards.

Jonny Evans had a chance to emulate his centre-back counterpart but nodded wide from six yards after being left free at a corner. Then Barnes was presented with an even better opportunity by Vardy but sidefooted wide from 10 yards.

ners-up in the Indian Super League.

Club president Akshay Tandon said, “I wish to thank Sergio and his team on behalf of everyone involved at the club for the work they’ve put in over the past few seasons.

Our objectives when Sergio came in was to instill a style of football and build a platform on which we would move forward as a club and we managed to achieve that consistently.

**MARGAO, FEB 2 (PTI):** Indian Super League (ISL) franchise FC Goa have parted ways with head coach Sergio Lobera and his assistants, Jesus Tato and Manuel Sayabera. The club thanked Lobera and his coaching team for their service over the last two and a half seasons and wished them well for the future.

FC Goa won the Super Cup last year under his guidance and finished run-

## FC Goa part ways with Sergio Lobera





# China intensifies efforts to combat coronavirus as death toll rises to 305

KJM VARMA

**BEIJING/WUHAN, FEB 2 (PTI):** China on Sunday resorted to more drastic measures like isolating coronavirus patients to designated areas and restricting the movement of residents in regions hit by the rapid spreading virus that has killed 305 people and infected over 14,000 others.

The Philippines on Sunday reported the first death outside China from the deadly virus that has spread to 25 countries, including India, taking the total toll to 305.

The victim, a 44-year-old Chinese man, was the companion of a 38-year-old Chinese woman who arrived in the Philippines on January 21 from Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus outbreak.

So far over 140 coronavirus cases have been reported from abroad, including India where a second case of virus was reported from Kerala on Sunday.

India airlifted 647 Indians and seven Maldivians on Saturday and Sunday from Wuhan. The evacuated Indians would be monitored for any signs of infection for two weeks by a qualified team of doctors and staff members.

India also temporarily suspended e-visa facility for Chinese travellers and foreigners residing in China in view of the rapid spread of the virus.

Two Indians who were not allowed to get into the special flight in Wuhan on Friday after they reported high fever told PTI that their temperatures have now come down to normal level and wished to travel back home.



A total of 10 Indians were not allowed to board the AI flight by Chinese immigration officials after they were found to have high fever.

Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Misri told PTI that about 100 Indians are still believed to be residing in Hubei province.

By the end of Saturday, a total of 304 people had died of the disease in the country, China's National Health Commission said.

The state-run CGTN reported that there were 14,411 confirmed cases of virus. However, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post said that the virus has infected 14,562 people.

The commission said 19,544 people were suspected of being infected with the virus of which the condition of the 2,110 patients remained severe.

Chinese health experts have been saying that the casualties will increase sharply for the next two weeks before they start declining.

This is so because millions of travellers especially those from Wuhan and Hubei province

who travelled to China and abroad during the New Year holidays are returning home.

A top Chinese official said that about five million residents of Wuhan have travelled out of the virus-hit city before it was locked down on January 23.

China is bringing back by charter flights hundreds of its citizens who had travelled abroad during holidays. They are directly being flown to Wuhan.

The commission also highlighted that number of virus affected patients are recovering, saying that 328 people have been discharged.

Since the virus is transmitted human-to-human, over 1.63 lakh close contacts had been traced of which 1.37 lakh are still under medical observation, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

China has intensified measures to contain the virus by isolating the patients. Wuhan health authorities announced that people suspected of infection will be isolated in designated areas effectively immediately.

Wenzhou city in Zhe-

jiang Province regulated that only one family member is allowed to step out of the house every other day for grocery shopping from Saturday to February 8, amid efforts to contain the epidemic, state-run Global Times reported.

The National Health Commission also directed that bodies of coronavirus victims should be cremated close by and immediately. Burials or transfer of the bodies are not allowed, the Commission said.

China also reported an outbreak of the deadly H5N1 bird flu in Hunan province, which lies on the southern border of Hubei province.

"The outbreak occurred in a farm in the Shuangqing district of Shaoyang city. The farm has 7,850 chickens, and 4,500 of the chickens have died from the contagion. Local authorities have culled 17,828 poultry after the outbreak,"

a statement by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on Saturday.

No human cases of the Hunan H5N1 virus have been reported, the Post reported.

The bird flu is highly deadly to humans who contract it, with a mortality rate of more than 50 per cent in cases over the last 15 years.

China also geared up to open the makeshift 1,000 bed hospital built in Wuhan in record nine days. Another 2,300 bed hospital is getting ready in few days.

President Xi Jinping has ordered 1,400 medical staff from the armed forces to treat patients in the newly-built Huoshenshan Hospital in Wuhan starting from Monday.

Huoshenshan Hospital, with a capacity of 1,000 beds, is a makeshift hospital dedicated to treating patients infected with the coronavirus, Xinhua reported.

The medics include 950 people from hospitals affiliated to the People's Liberation Army Joint Logistic Support Force and 450 from medical universities of the army, navy and air force of the PLA.

Meanwhile, a joint expert group of 15 people has also been set up to guide the hospital's epidemic prevention and control on the spot.

While India, the US, Sri Lanka and many countries evacuated their nationals from Wuhan, Pakistan has declined pleas by its stranded citizens in Wuhan to airlift them.

Pakistan's Ambassador to China Naghmana Hashmi on Sunday said that Pakistani students should not be evacuated from Wuhan as medical facilities back home do not meet the standards required to treat a patient diagnosed with coronavirus.

## Iraqi protesters dig in heels despite new PM-designate

**BAGHDAD, FEB 2 (AFP):** Furious anti-government youth dug in their heels in Iraq's capital and south on Sunday, rejecting the previous evening's nomination of Mohammad Allawi as premier after months of demonstrations and political paralysis.

Allawi was named prime minister-designate after a hard-won consensus among Iraq's rival parties, who had struggled to agree on a candidate since outgoing premier Adel Abdel Mahdi resigned under growing street pressure two months ago.

Mass rallies have rocked Baghdad and the mainly-Shiite south since October, with protesters demanding snap elections and an independent prime minister as well as accountability for corruption and recent bloodshed.

Young demonstrators have expressed contempt for the ruling elite and on Sunday, they slammed Allawi -- a former lawmaker and minister -- as part and parcel of the system they want to overhaul.

"Mohammad Allawi is rejected, by order of the people!" read a new sign hung in the holy city of Najaf on Sunday.

Young men with their faces wrapped in checkered scarves had spent the night torching car tyres in anger at Allawi's nomination and smouldering remains still blocked the main roads on Sunday, an AFP reporter there said.

In Diwaniyah, further south, protesters marched into government buildings to demand they close for the day while students began sit-ins at schools and universities.

Protesters in Hilal blocked off all roads leading into the city and chanted, "Allawi is not the people's choice!"

In Baghdad, hundreds of students flooded the streets around the main protest camp of Tahrir Square, carrying Allawi's photograph with an "X" over his face.

"We are here to reject the new prime minister because he has a well-known history within the political class," said 22-year-old university student Tiba.

Allawi, 65, served as a parliamentarian immediately after the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled ex-dictator Saddam Hussein, then was twice appointed communications minister under former prime minister Nuri al-Maliki.

But he resigned both times, accusing Maliki of turning a blind eye to graft in a country considered among the top 20 most corrupt in the world by Transparency International.

His appointment came after days of crisis talks prompted by President Barham Saleh, who said he would select his own candidate if the political blocs of Iraq's parliament did not nominate someone by Saturday.

Allawi had been among the top contenders for the post, but the stalemate continued into the late afternoon, Iraqi government sources told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The talks were very secretive and it remains unclear what finally unlocked a deal, but on Saturday evening, Allawi announced his own nomination in a video posted to Twitter.

There was no official statement from Saleh, but Abdel Mahdi congratulated his successor and the pair pledged to meet soon to ensure a smooth transition.

In his first formal address, Allawi vowed to form a representative government, hold

early parliamentary elections and ensure justice for protest-related violence.

More than 480 people have died and nearly 30,000 have been wounded since the rallies began on October 1, but few have been held accountable for the bloodshed.

Allawi has one month to form his government, but ensuring its independence may prove a challenge, said Sajad Jiyad of the Iraq-based think tank the Bayan Center.

"If we've learned anything from the previous PM, it's that this is the most difficult part: pushing back against the political blocs' demands," Jiyad told AFP.

In Iraq, cabinets are typically formed after complex horsetrading whereby parties demand lucrative and influential ministerial posts based on their share of parliament.

If Allawi fails to resist ministerial candidates proposed by parties, "it will back up what protesters are saying" about his allegiance to the factions, Jiyad added.

Among the most powerful of Iraq's political players is populist cleric Moqtada Sadr, who welcomed Allawi's nomination on Saturday as a "good step".

Sadr backed the protests in October and his die-hard followers are widely recognised as the most organised and well-equipped among anti-government demonstrators.

But on Sunday, Sadr ordered members of his movement to organise with security forces to reopen roads and schools, contrary to what other protesters across Iraq were doing.

"The revolution must go back to being restrained and peaceful," Sadr wrote on Twitter.

## Fears of new virus trigger anti-China sentiment worldwide

**SEOUL, FEB 2 (AP):** A scary new virus from China has spread around the world. So has rising anti-Chinese sentiment, calls for a full travel ban on Chinese visitors and indignities for Chinese and other Asians.

Restaurants in South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Vietnam have refused to accept Chinese customers. Indonesians marched near a hotel and called on Chinese guests there to leave. French and Australian newspapers face criticism for racist headlines.

Chinese and other Asians in Europe, the United States, Asia and the Pacific complain of racism.

Two dozen countries outside of China have reported cases of the new coronavirus, which has killed more than 300 people and sickened thousands of others in China. Many countries have sent planes to the Chinese city of Wuhan to evacuate their nationals.

The anti-China sentiments come as a powerful Beijing bolsters its global influence, and China's rise has caused trade, political and diplomatic disputes with many countries.

But with rising fear of the mysterious disease has come a more acute anti-Chinese and, in some cases, anti-Asian backlash.

Here's a look from AP

journalists from around the world.

South Korean websites have been flooded with comments calling on the government to block or expel Chinese and racist remarks about Chinese eating habits and hygiene. A popular Seoul seafood restaurant frequented by Chinese tourists posted a sign saying No entry for Chinese before taking it down Wednesday after an online backlash.

About 600,000 South Koreans have signed an online petition filed with the presidential Blue House calling for a temporary ban on Chinese visitors. Some conservative opposition lawmakers publicly back these steps, and about 30 people rallied near the Blue House on Wednesday demanding the government immediately ban Chinese tourists.

Unconditional xenophobia against the Chinese is intensifying in South Korea, the mass-circulation JoongAng Ilbo newspaper said in an editorial Thursday. Infectious diseases are a matter of science, not an issue that can be resolved through an emotional outpouring.

After news broke that someone attending Arizona State University has the virus, Ari Deng, who is Chinese Ameri-

can, said she sat down at a study table on the Tempe, Arizona, campus near five other students.

Deng, who was the only Asian, said the other students began whispering. They got really tense and they quickly gathered their stuff and just left at the same time.

In a recent business class a non-Asian student "said 'Not to be racist, but there's a lot of international students that live in my apartment complex. I try my best to keep my distance but I think it's a good precaution for all of us to wash our hands,'" Deng said.

It stings but I don't let it take up room in my mind or weigh on my conscience," she said.

Meanwhile, the University of California, Berkeley's health services center removed an Instagram post Thursday that said fears about interacting with those who might be from Asia and guilt about these feelings were a normal reaction to the coronavirus outbreak.

No matter how much time we spend in this country, at times we are almost immediately viewed as a foreigner, Gregg Orton, the national director of the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, said. It's a pretty frustrating reality for many of us.

The virus has deepened anti-Chinese sentiment in Hong Kong, where months of street protests against Beijing's influence have roiled the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

Last week, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam suspended ferry and high-speed train services to the mainland and reduced flights between Hong Kong and Chinese cities.

Tenno Ramen, a Japanese noodle restaurant in Hong Kong, is refusing to serve mainland customers.

We want to live longer. We want to safeguard local customers. Please excuse us, the restaurant said on Facebook.

A French teacher started a Twitter conversation recently under #JeNeSuis-PasUnVirus (I am not a virus) that has drawn numerous accounts of discrimination, from children taunted in the schoolyard to subway passengers moving away from people who appear Asian.

France has a significant and growing Asian community, and Chinese visitors are a pillar of the French tourism industry, but old prejudices run deep. A regional newspaper in northern France carried a front-page

headline warning of a Yellow Alert, and later apologized amid national criticism.

It's a virus that comes from a region in China. It could have come from North Africa, Europe or anywhere, said Soc Lam, a legal adviser to Chinese community groups in Paris.

People should not consider that just because we are Asian, we are more likely to spread the virus.

A Danish paper, Jyllands-Posten, published a cartoon that replaced the yellow stars of the Chinese flag with representations of the virus. The Chinese Embassy in Copenhagen called the cartoon an insult to China and demanded the newspaper apologize.

The German Der Spiegel magazine ran a headline that said made in China along with a photo of an individual in protective gear.

On Friday, a cafe near Rome's Trevi Fountain, a popular tourist site, posted a notice in its window saying all people coming from China are not allowed access in this place, according to the Italian news agency ANSA. When AP journalists went there to check on it, the post was no longer in the window.

## Tajikistan holds journalist on extremism charges

**DUSHANBE, 02 FEB [AP]:** Tajikistan has said it is holding an independent journalist and government critic on extremism charges, fuelling concerns that the government of the ex-Soviet republic is cracking down on dissent before two sets of elections.

The state prosecutor said Daler Sharipov had been detained for publishing "over 200 articles and commentaries containing extremist content" between 2013 and 2019 in a press release late on Saturday.

The document said he had also published 100 copies of a text affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood, a movement that was banned in Tajikistan in 2006.

Officials said in January that more than 100 people had been arrested over ties to the movement, which briefly led a

government in Egypt before being overthrown in 2013 and banned.

The arrests come as Tajikistan prepares to hold parliamentary elections in March and presidential elections in November.

The parliamentary vote will be the first of its kind since a moderate faith-based party called the Islamic Renaissance party of Tajikistan was banned as extremist in 2015.

Sharipov became a popular figure on state television before focusing on writing for independent outlets, where he sometimes commented on the difficulties Muslims faced in observing their faith in Tajikistan.

More than 90% of the population adheres to Islam but the government is secular and wary of the religion's popularity.

Sharipov was beaten

up in 2012 shortly after trying to set up a civic organisation devoted to fighting against regional divisions. The assailants were never caught.

One article that he wrote last year for Rushnoitj - a website that receives funding from western donors - was titled "Mohammed was For Peace and Against Terrorism".

The prosecutor's statement did not say which articles had been identified as extremist.

The US state department last year cited the Central Asian country for "systematic, ongoing, [and] egregious violations of religious freedom".

The other countries listed as "countries of particular concern" were Myanmar, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkmenistan.

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**SWEET COUPLE:** Alex Rodriguez and Jennifer Lopez share some PDA while shooting their Super Bowl commercial shoot for Hard Rock Hotel in Miami.

## Pamela Anderson-Jon Peters part ways less than 2 weeks after wedding



### Shabana Azmi returns home, expresses gratitude to well-wishers



**MUMBAI, FEB 1 (PTI):** Noted actor Shabana Azmi, who was injured in an accident last month, on Saturday said that she is back home now and thanked her fans for praying for her speedy recovery.

The 69-year-old actor suffered head injuries when her car met with an accident on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway on January 18. Her husband, veteran lyricist Javed Akhtar, was also there in the vehicle but escaped unhurt.

The actor and her driver Kamlesh Kamath were taken to the MGM hospital in Navi Mumbai and later shifted to the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in suburban Andheri the same day. "Thank you all for your prayers and wishes for my recovery. I'm back home now," Azmi wrote on Twitter alongside a post-recovery photo of herself.

"Thank you #Tina Ambani and Kokilaben Ambani hospital for the sterling care provided by the doctors team and the nursing staff. Im indebted and grateful," she added. Azmi's driver has been booked for rash driving and negligence.

**LOS ANGELES, FEB 2 (PTI):** Actor Pamela Anderson has split from her husband of less than two weeks, Jon Peters. Anderson, 52, and Peters, 74, got married in Malibu on January 20 in a private ceremony but never filed for a marriage certificate.

"I have been moved by the warm reception to Jon and my union. We would be very grateful for your support as we take some time apart to re-evaluate what we want from life and from one another.

"Life is a journey and love is a process. With that universal truth in mind, we have mutually decided to put off the formalization of our marriage certificate and put our faith in the process. Thank you for respecting our privacy," Anderson said in a statement to The Hollywood Reporter.

The "Baywatch" star had shared her first post-wedding photo with Peters eight days ago on Instagram. The two first dated when she was 19 after meeting at the Playboy Mansion.

Anderson was previously married to rocker Tommy Lee, Kid Rock, and Rick Solomon. She was recently linked to French soccer icon Adil Rami.

## Netflix cancels 'Soundtrack' after one season

**LOS ANGELES, FEB 1 (PTI):** Netflix has pulled the plug on musical drama "Soundtrack" after just one season.

The Joshua Safran-created musical show had premiered in December 2018 to poor reviews.

The series takes a look at the love stories connecting a diverse, disparate group of people in contemporary Los Angeles through the music that lives inside their hearts and minds.

Fox had originally picked up "Soundtrack" in 2018 with a pilot-episode order. After the network passed it on, the show found home at Netflix.

The streamer had ordered a 10-episode first season in July 2018 and it premiered on December 18, 2018.

"Soundtrack" featured Jenna Dewan, Callie Hernandez, Madeline Stowe, Jahmil French, Campbell Scott, Marianne Jean-Baptiste, Megan Ferguson and Evan Whitten.

**DEAR READERS,**  
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## 'Brahmastra' part one to release on Dec 4



**MUMBAI, FEB 2 (PTI):** The first installment of Ayan Mukerji's much-anticipated "Brahmastra" trilogy finally has a release date and it is December 4, 2020.

The long in the making project will feature Mukerji's frequent collaborator Ranbir Kapoor besides Alia Bhatt, Amitabh Bachchan, Nagarjuna and Mouni Roy.

The announcement was made by the cast in a funny video that was shared by Alia on Instagram.

In the clip, recorded by

Alia, Ranbir is seen grueing Ayan about the delays in the film and incessantly asking the director about the film's final release date.

Bachchan is also present in the video but he only reacts when Ayan says that he has a release date for "Brahmastra" part one and that is December 4, 2020.

"Sooooooo.. this just happened! Brahmastra 04.12.2020.. promise," Alia captioned the video.

The megastar also shared the news on Twitter, saying,

"Brahmastra.. coming to cinemas on 4/12/20 and Ayan is not allowed to change it now!"

The film, produced by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Fox Star Studios, will release in five languages -- Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada.

The movie was earlier set to come out in December 2019 but Ayan had postponed it to summer 2020, saying he needed more time in order to get the film's VFX right.

## Cecily Strong in talks for Apple's 'Schmigadoon'

**LOS ANGELES, FEB 1 (PTI):** "Saturday Night Live!" star Cecily Strong is in final negotiations to star in a musical comedy from Apple.

Titled "Schmigadoon", the show has received an eight-episode order from the studio, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

The comedy series has been penned by Cinco Paul and Ken Daurio of "Despicable Me" fame and will be executive produced by Lorne Michaels. The story follows a couple on a backpacking trip designed to reinvigorate their relationship when they discover the magical town of Schmigadoon, in which everyone acts as if they're in a studio musical from the 1940s. They then discover that they can't leave until they find "true love".

Daurio and Paul will also serve as executive producer on the project, which hails from Universal Television.



## Vidya Balan to play forest officer in her next film

**MUMBAI, FEB 2 (PTI):** Actor Vidya Balan will play a forest officer in her forthcoming film that will explore man-wildlife conflict.

There have been reports that the film revolves around the controversial killing of a tigress named Avni.

"She will be playing the role of a forest officer," a source close to the film told PTI.

Tigress Avni was shot dead by a sharp shooter in November 2018, allegedly on the instructions of the forest department officials as the tigress had allegedly killed 13 people in Maharashtra.

The source said the movie is not based around Avni's case, but focuses on "man-animal conflict".

The yet-untitled project will be produced by Vikram Malhotra of Abundantia Entertainment.

Vidya will next be seen in biopic on mathematician Shakuntala Devi. The film is scheduled to release on May 8.



**Aries:**  
Yet again the cards are reminding you to sever toxic ties. If you're the only one invested in this relationship, you know you've got a problem, Aries. It's not selfish to exit a relationship that's making you feel disrespected and dishonoured. Be sure to take the high road instead of succumbing to the blame game though. You are an empowered being making empowered life choices. A Rumi quote to help you survive the trials and tribulations of the emotional realm:

**Taurus:**  
When you are on the right path, the Universe tends to wink and nod from time to time to let you know you're winning the game of life. Be cognizant of the signs and synchronicities on your path, Taurus. The song on the radio that describes your state of mind accurately or a conversation you overheard at the bar are no coincidences. They're all nudging

you towards your truth; your true purpose in the earthly realm.

**Gemini:**  
Love and freedom. Freedom and love. They're both two sides of the same coin, Gemini. What's making your relationship thrive: the balance between 'me time' and 'we time'. Continue to give each other space. Trust that this will make your bond a lot stronger. Single twins in the market for love, expect a twist in the tale.

**Cancer:**  
2020 has just begun, Cancer, and you're already thinking about giving up! So you had a minor setback. Things didn't turn out the way you wanted to. Oh, and let's not get started on the people around you! But that doesn't mean there aren't things that are looking up or working out right now and in this moment.

**Leo:**  
The world has a way of mirroring our beliefs back to us. By holding on to the

belief that good things don't happen to you, you are blocking the Universe from giving you all that you deserve and more. This self-limiting pattern could be the reason your anxiety is triggered. So think about how you can break free from this shackle..

**Virgo:**  
Virgo, you're the one everybody turns to for sage advice (a reality check). The responsible member of the crew who drives them home after a particularly debauched night. But that doesn't there's only one side to you. Labels are just labels, Virgo. Free yourself from the idea of who you are supposed to be and allow yourself to embrace all aspects of your personality. What the cards are encouraging you to do today:

**Libra:**  
Everything you are looking for is right here and in this moment. There is no rush to get anywhere. You are enjoying the process of getting to know the other organically rather than rushing to the finish line. If they are 'the one', things will

work out despite the odds. If they're not, you'll still have made memories you will cherish for a lifetime.

**Scorpio:**  
It doesn't matter how many times you have had your heart broken. Everything transpired for a reason. This you believe with your whole heart. You're grateful for where you are now: a place of joy and love. For a lot of you, this marks a new beginning.

**Sagittarius:**  
Today, you're taking a no BS approach to love, life, and everything in between. Yes, that means having to sever certain connections or say goodbye to toxic ties, and that's okay. Your space is sacred, Sagittarius. Do what you need to in order to protect yourself. Not everybody is used to being served the truth tea though.

**Capricorn:**  
Capricorn, you're an alchemist. A master manifestor in your own right. Rules of game to help you reclaim your reins: 1) Tell the Universe exactly what you want;

2) Be specific. Visualise the details; 3) Trust in your power; 4) Take the required action and; 5) Express gratitude for what you have and what is yet to come.

**Aquarius:**  
You know what's underrated? A tall cup of cocoa, an old pair of linen pants, and a book that reminds you of the power of being in the now. Aquarius, this is your cosmic cue to shun worldly responsibilities and retreat into your inner sanctum. Be sure to put your phone on flight mode as you. Meditation and mindfulness will also take centre-stage today.

**Pisces:**  
Sometimes you just need to take a moment to review your life, be grateful for the highs as well as the lows, and acknowledge each other's role in the process of evolution. You didn't think you could make it, yet you did! Trust that your connection will only grow deeper. Single Pisceans could be reflecting on their past patterns.