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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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**GST Inspector
missing from
Rangpo**



**SUMMIT REPORT
RANGPO, 12 FEB:**

GST Inspector, Ranjan Kumar, Rangpo, has been missing for the last five days, family members informs. According to the family members, he had gone to Rangpo Market for some work five days back and has not returned since. They have filed a missing person's report with the Rangpo Police Station, it is informed.

**Bhaichung insists
that 40-seat
formula has
been rejected
by Centre**

**REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 12 FEB:**

Hamro Sikkim Party (HSP) working president, Bhaichung Bhutia, countering SDF claims that the proposal to expand the 40-seat Legislative Assembly to accommodate seats for Limboos and Tamangs was still under consideration with the Centre, today insisted that the proposal has been rejected.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Bhutia said that after HSP disclosed the letter from MHA which conveyed the failure of the 40-seat formula, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling immediately rushed to Delhi.

"What was the need for the Chief Minister to suddenly go to Delhi? He has gone to Delhi to request the Centre to keep alive the 40-seat formula which has been dismissed by the Centre," Mr Bhutia claims.

Aggrieved Alembic workers arrive at Labour Deptt with complaints against company

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 12 FEB:**

Aggrieved casual workers of the Alembic Pharmaceuticals unit at Mamring-Samardung in South Sikkim have been on a dharna in front of Labour Department head-office here at Sokeythang since Monday evening in support of their 8-point charter of demands submitted to the Labour Department Secretary this afternoon.

They marched from Singtam to Gangtok on Monday and reached Shram Bhawan late in the evening and have been demonstrating here since.

The aggrieved workers have announced plans to continue their dharna until all their demands are addressed

unconditionally by the concerned authority.

The demands include one that the company take all the terminated employees back to work, salary be increased to Rs 20,000 per month, immediate withdrawal of arrest warrants against them and no mistreatment to any worker in any company in Sikkim.

They are also demanding that the labour contract system be abolished from Sikkim, ESIC be implemented, accident insurance and others welfare measures be extended to workers of all companies based here, assurance on minimum safety measures for all workers and a medical check-ups for workers twice a month, increase HRA to Rs 2000 from Rs 600 and that the

company undertake not to not initiate any witch-hunt against workers.

In the afternoon, Labour Secretary LP Chettri interacted with aggrieved workers on their different issues and demands. During the interaction, workers asked the department to intervene in the matter to deliver justice to them.

The Secretary assured aggrieved workers that Alembic Pharmaceutical officials will be summoned and a meeting arranged between representatives of the company, workers and the department on Wednesday morning.

It is informed that a casual worker was terminated from service on 01 Feb and when other workers enquired about

turn to pg03



HRDD felicitates Jorethang School Band

JORETHANG, 12 FEB (IPR): The Human Resource Development Department felicitated the band display team of Jorethang Government Senior Secondary School at the school today.

Health Minister AK Ghata, who also happens to be the area MLA, was present as the chief guest accompanied by Additional Chief Secretary, HRDD, GP Upadhyaya, State Project Director, Samagra Shikshya, Bhim Thatal along with officials of HRDD and School staff.

The Minister along with the officials presented a letter of appreciation to the band team.

He also congratulated them for their outstanding achievement in securing the first position at the National Level Band Competition which was held at New Delhi on 21 Dec, 2018.

The team had also interacted with the Prime Minister at his official residence in New Delhi and also performed at the National Police Academy in the presence of the Union Defense Minister where they received a trophy as a mark of appreciation.



OFOJ appointments made "in exigency," RTI query finds

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 12 FEB:**

The more than 12,000 appointment letters handed over as part of the popular "One Family, One Job" scheme of the State Government were made "in exigency" and no policy decision was taken prior or Cabinet approval secured, an RTI application has found.

In response to an RTI application filed by Tshering Wangchuk Lepcha seeking details about the OFOJ scheme, the Department of Personnel has replied saying, "...there is no any law for providing employment on temporary capacity, but appointment in temporary basis are made in exigencies".

The DoP reply does not detail what exigencies had arrived neces-

sitating the 12,000 appointments.

The RTI applicant had sought details about the policy decision of the state government along with relevant documents, note-sheets and Cabinet approval.

In response, DoP in its reply on 24 Jan, said that the Department had not moved any such file nor mooted any such policy and couldn't furnish the Cabinet memo on the matter.

Mr Lepcha is now questioning how DoP still went ahead and issued appointment letters in the absence of any clear policy decision of the government and chalked it up as a play at vote back politics in favour of the ruling party.

CONTACT SummitTIMES

Ph: 03592-208698

news@summittimes.com

NABARD projects Rs 596 cr credit potential in priority sector in 2019-20 for Sikkim

GANGTOK, 12 FEB (IPR): Chief Secretary AK Srivasatav released the 'State Focus Paper: 2019-20' prepared by NABARD on the occasion of 'State Credit Seminar' held on 11 Feb at Tashiling Secretariat here.

The document estimates a potential of Rs 596.08 crore for credit flow to priority sectors in the state for the year 2019-20.

Credit potential of Rs

25.47 crore has been estimated for financing under dairy sector by banks to give a boost to dairy activities in the state.

The document also estimates a potential of Rs 305.88 crore towards agriculture loans covering farm credit, agri infrastructure and agri ancillary activities.

Additional Chief Secretary VB Pathak and Additional Chief Secretary Dr Jayakumar, General

Manager, Reserve Bank of India, RV Sangvai, also attended the seminar and shared their views.

Representatives from government departments, banks, research institutions and NGOs were present on the occasion.

The Chief Secretary appreciated the efforts made by NABARD for support rural infrastructure creation and thanked the organization

for its farmer friendly programmes.

He also requested bankers to make concerted efforts to translate the exploitable potential into bankable projects.

He emphasized on sustainability of production and adequate marketing of organic produce and also advised stakeholders to identify innovative approaches towards various developmental initiatives in

the State.

General Manager/ Officer in Charge, R Tshering, NABARD, Sikkim Regional Office, in her inaugural address, presented the interventions by NABARD for promotion of Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure.

She mentioned that a corpus fund of Rs 2,000 Crore has been set up in NABARD by GoI for the up gradation of Rural Haats to Gramin Agri

Markets.

She added that NABARD has also played an important role in development of infrastructure by extending finance to State Govt under RIDF for constructions of rural roads, bridges, rural markets, irrigation projects, drinking water supply projects, etc.

The RBI General Manager, in turn emphasized the role of entrepreneurs in the economy and the

necessity to groom them by providing credit plus services.

LDM Gopal Lama, while appreciating the document prepared by NABARD, stated that it was a base document for preparation of Annual Credit Plan for the State. He also highlighted the achievements against the ACP targets under priority sector.

**CONTACT
SUMMIT
TIMES
REPORTERS
SINGTAM
8170070813
MANGAN/
DIKCHU
9832612485/
9434011213
GANGTOK
8116388176
9832424750
8016270440
NAMCHI
9832048410**

SKM reiterates bandh call for 28 Feb if demands remain ignored



**SUMMIT REPORT
SORENG, 12 FEB:**

Sikkim Krantikaari Morcha (SKM) is keeping busy opening party offices, and today the SKM party president, PS Tamang [Golay], inaugurated seven block level party offices at Soreng Chakung constituency, an SKM press release informs.

In his addresses at these events, Mr Tamang stressed “the fierce urgency of now” which requires the participation of every member of the society.

He urged the youth to come forward to safeguard old laws and railed against what he sees as the incompetency of the SDF Government in every aspect.

The current regime has mastered the prac-

tice of neo feudalism, he contended, while adding, “Now it’s time to wake up and I urge everyone to vote not on basis of caste or creed but to secure the future of our Sikkimese society. We fought the 2014 election with vigour even though time was against us and still managed to secure 10 seats in the state assembly. In this 2019 election we have time and the resources and we will win it because we have the blessing of our deities and the people. We believe in politics which prevails on truth and facts. The thugs behind the scam of One Family One Job will surely face the wrath of the innocent people for they have been lied to while numerous backdoor entries with much higher pay-

grade recently surfaced in the social media. The practice of such illegal appointment is not new for the current government, the youth need to wake up the entire party machinery will stand for your lot.”

“The failure of current government has been exposed by the activities going in the state. Padhyatra of SPYF, pen down strike of NHM employees, strike by adhoc teachers and what not. We, as the biggest opposition party, have placed an ultimatum with the government with 35 demands. Failure to fulfill the demands will result in a 24 hour Sikkim bandh on 28 of Feb and massive protest after that.”

Today’s programme included 45 families joining the SKM.



Khamdong drivers meet ASDTDF exec members

**SUMMIT REPORT
RANGPO, 12 FEB:**

Drivers of Khamdong organised a meeting with executive members of All Sikkim Democratic Transport/ Drivers Front at Khamdong in East Sikkim today.

Drivers of the area placed their demands

with the executive members who were led by the State In charge, GM Gurung.

The Front assured have their demands fulfilled within a few days.

The meeting was coordinated by Zilla Upadakhya (East), Sharmila Chettri, and Panchayats of Khamdong area.

18 SDF families join SKM



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 12 FEB:**

Today, 18 families from the DPH Ward of Gangtok constituency and Shyari constituency joined SKM, leaving the SDF, at a function chaired by the SKM acting presi-

dent, Shyari MLA Kunga Nima Lepcha, secretary general Arun Upreti and party executives at Party HQ, an SKM press release informs.

They were received with Khadas and made primary members of the party.

BJP readies poll strategy for Sikkim

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 12 FEB:**

A state level sammelan of booth-level presidents of Bharatiya Janata Party’s Sikkim unit was held at the Singtam party office on Tuesday. The sammelan was attended by presidents of different booths from across the State.

A BJP press release informs that the Sikkim-BJP president, DB Chauhan, mentioned that the BJP state unit would actively participate in the upcoming elections and shared the strategy of the party.

He claimed that the north eastern states have witnessed unprecedented development under the Modi government and added that regional parties have diluted Article 371F by repeatedly using it in the

wrong manner and stressed that only a national party government can safeguard Article 371F.

He added that the SDF government has been leveling false allegations against the Modi government out of fear that if BJP forms the government in Sikkim, then all corrupt, anti-people and anti-poor elements would go to jail.

He claimed that the Modi government has given funds to the tune of Rs 2 lakh crores in four years to the State and when divided equally among the 4,23,325 voters, every voter gets a share of Rs 40 lakh. On the same, he alleged that instead of giving development of Rs 40 lakh to each person, the SDF government has provided just Rs 300 costing blankets and pressure cookers purchased for Rs 500.



House to house re-verification of electoral rolls

GANGTOK, 12 FEB (IPR): Chief Electoral Officer, Sikkim, has directed for a 10-day extensive House to House re-verification program to ensure enrollment of all eligible electors and incorporate any correction/ modification in the final electoral roll.

The final electoral roll was published on 31 Jan, 2019 and is available with Electoral Registration Officer, Assistant Electoral Registration Officer, and Booth Level Officers. Electors can check their names and can apply in case if their names are missing or any corrections are required. Voters can check their names through our web-sites www.nvsp.in and www.ceosikkim.nic.in.

For this purpose, the District Election Officer,

East, has issued a letter to the Head of the Department concerned to release the BLOs for a period of ten days.

The BLOs have been directed to identify and fill up the forms for all the un-enrolled eligible electors. Registered voters can also apply for corrections, shifting of voter list during this period. Political parties have been informed to depute the BLAs being appointed in the respective Polling Stations to assist the BLOs.

The Electoral Registration Officer (EROs) has been informed to achieve 100% completion of the task and to ensure that no voter is left behind. They have been directed to submit the daily progress report of the BLOs.

NAMCHI SMART CITY LIMITED

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Tender No. 13/NSCL/WORKS/2019

Date: 02.02.2019

CORRIGENDUM

This is to inform that the advertisement published under caption “INVITATION FOR BIDS” by CEO, Namchi Smart City Limited (NSCL), Namchi, South Sikkim invites percentage rate tender among the eligible bidders for the works published in SummitTimes Vol 04.No.32 dt. 03.02.2019. & Vol 04 no. 41 dt. 12.02.2019 under tender no. 13/NSCL/WORKS/2019 dt. 02.02.2019 under Serial No. 4 has been corrected as below:-

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Bid security 2.5% of the bid value (in Rupees)	Bid Value (in Rupees)	Cost of tender/ bid form (in Rs.)	Completion Period.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Improvement of Storm water drainage system at Devithan Jhora, Debrung (Job-C) (breakup mentioned below)	3,94,124.00	1,57,64,936.00	30,000.00	12 Months.
	Part –I (Job-C)	2,10,000.00	84,00,000.00	10,000.00	12 months.
	Part-II (Job-C)	1,84,124.00	73,64,936.00	10,000.00	12 months.

Tender Schedule

(i)	Sale of Bidding documents	:	14.02.2019 up to 1600 Hrs.
(ii)	Last date & Time for seeking clarification regarding bids	:	15.02.2019 up to 1600 Hrs.
(iii)	Venue of the Submission of the bids	:	Office of the CEO Namchi Smart City Limited, UDHD Office, Bhanjyang Road, Namchi-737126 South-Sikkim. Tel No:- 03592-264088
(iv)	Last date for submission of completed bids	:	16.02.2019 up to 1330 Hrs.
(v)	Date of opening of bids	:	16.02.2019 up to 1400 Hrs.

Eligibility Criteria: This Invitation for bids is eligible to the contractors enlisted with the Sikkim Public Works Department and eligibility criteria as per the Govt. Order (R&B, GoS) 373/S&B/Secy dated: 01/05/2017 except the mode of Tender.

Note: The tender forms to the intending bidders will be issued on the dates specified above, after production of the Demand Draft in favour of Chief Executive Officer, Namchi Smart City Limited, or payment through National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT)/ Over the counter payment (OTC) as cost of tender forms duly deposited in any nationalized / Commercialized Scheduled bank. The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) / Bid Security value shall also be deposited in favour of Chief Executive Officer, NSCL in the form of Demand Draft (DD)/ Cashier’s Cheque (CC) / Banker’s Cheque (BC) drawn in any Nationalised/ Commercialized Scheduled Bank.

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer,
Namchi Smart City Limited (NSCL)
Namchi, South Sikkim

Training on pest & disease management for Mangsari farmers



**SUMMIT REPORT
MANGASARI, 12 FEB:**

Mevedir, a service-provider agency, organized a ward-level training today at Mangsari ward, West Sikkim, about the methods of preparing herbal spray which is effective in controlling ants and other pests.

The training was held in the presence of Ward Panchayat Sunita Chettri along with Mevedir Master Trainers Sub-

ash Chandra Sharma, Renuka Chettri and Sangita Sharma.

Ms Chettri highlighted the ICS documentation processes like Internal Inspections, maintaining the Farmer Dairies, checking compliances of farmers to organic standards, use of various inputs and whether farmers understand and practice the concepts of organic farming.

More than 30 farmers participated in the training.

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IndiGo cancels 30 more flights due to pilot shortage

MUMBAI, FEB 12 (PTI): Shortage of pilots continued to hamper budget carrier IndiGo's operations with the airline cancelling as many as 30 flights Tuesday from across stations and passengers allegedly being forced to buy last minute high fares for its flights, a source said.

On Monday also, the Gurugram-headquartered airline had pulled out 32 flights from its network.

On the other hand, there was no indication of any probe by the aviation regulator into the cancellation of such large number of flights by the airline since last Saturday.

IndiGo has cancelled 30 flights for Tuesday due to the on-going pilots issue. Most of the flights have been cancelled from Kolkata, Hyderabad and Chennai, the source said.

While eight flights are not being operated from Kolkata, another five flights are cancelled from Hyderabad and four each from Bangalore and Chennai, among others, he added.

The source also alleged that IndiGo was forcing passengers to either buy last minute fares or offering them alternate flights with one-stop connectivity with a long transit time.

Response to the queries sent to IndiGo and Directorate General of Civil Aviation on this issue was awaited.

In a statement on Sunday, the airline had blamed on weather for disruption in operations across its network.

"As part of recovering our schedule, positioning of the crew and aircraft had to be readjusted. As a result, a number of flights were cancelled, it had said without giving any specific number of flights were cancelled.

Aggrieved Alembic workers arrive at Labour Deptt with complaints against company

Contd from pg01

the reasons, they were told that this had resulted from a scuffle and assured they were told that their demands were being looked into and that they should resume work. The workers returned to work the next day only to be served a shocker on 07 Feb when the company terminated the services of 15 casual workers without giving any reasons.

Speaking to media persons, Binita Rai, one of the protesting workers, said, "After not getting justice and support from any side, we were compelled to take this stand to march from Singtam to Gangtok and now dharna in front of Labour Department head-office to get the justice."

She added that the next phase of their protest depends on the decision of tomorrow's meeting.

"We have received information that the com-

Governor attends Lower Mamring Pratibha Kala Kendra Society foundation day celebrations



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 12 FEB:**

Governor Ganga Prasad attended the 6th Foundation Day celebration of Lower Mamring Pratibha Kala Kendra Society at Mamring, South Sikkim today.

Minister for Roads & Bridges and Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department, Garjaman Gurung and area MLA, Namthang-Rateypani, Tilu Gurung were present on the occasion among a host of other invitees and local gentry.

The function featured a colourful cultural

performance by artists and students of the Kala Kendra and felicitation of several personalities from various walks of life for their contributions to society at large.

Students of the Kala Kendra completing their courses were also awarded certificates and citations.

Addressing the function, the Governor mentioned the strengths of Sikkim such as peace, natural and cultural diversity, immensely talented youth and students, hospitable people and organic status among others and urged the youth

to capitalise on these strengths to take the state to a higher pedestal of growth and prosperity.

He also underlined the success of Sikkim in the fields of tourism and organic farming and stressed for an integrated approach to link these two unique achievements to ensure greater dividends for the State.

Appreciating the efforts of the Kala Kendra in nurturing young talents in the field of music and performing arts, the Governor also urged the society to come forward and support such initiatives.

Bill on ponzi schemes introduced in Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI, FEB 12 (PTI): A bill seeking to protect gullible investors from ponzi schemes was introduced in Lok Sabha Tuesday by Finance Minister Piyush Goyal.

The House will take up the Banning of Unreg-

ulated Deposit Schemes Bill for discussion and passage on Wednesday.

Members from the treasury benches and the opposition suggested to Speaker Sumitra Mahajan that the Question Hour may be suspended

Wednesday, the last day of the Budget Session, to take up the bill so that it can be sent to Rajya Sabha for passage after the Lok Sabha approves it.

Goyal said the bill will plug the loopholes which

allow ponzi schemes to target small investors.

The bill seeks to put in place a mechanism by which such depositors can be compensated. It has incorporated recommendations of the Standing Committee on

Finance.

The bill will effectively tackle the menace of illicit deposit-taking activities, and prevent such schemes from duping the poor and gullible people of their hard earned savings, Law Minister Ravi

Shankar Prasad had said last week after the Cabinet had approved it.

The bill was initially introduced in Parliament on July 18, 2018 and was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

Citizenship Bill: Mamata supports Bhupen Hazarika's son

Kolkata, Feb 12 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday came out in support of Assamese singer-composer Bhupen Hazarika's son on the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill and said the Narendra Modi government should "understand and respect" the sentiments of the people of the north-east.

Her comments came in the backdrop of Hazarika's son Tez saying his father's name and words were being invoked and celebrated publicly (by the Centre) even as plans

were afoot to pass the "painfully unpopular" Citizenship (Amendment) Bill.

In a Facebook post on Monday, Tez had described the proposed legislation as "undermining" the "documented position" of Hazarika, who was awarded the Bharat Ratna -- the country's highest civilian award -- posthumously by the Modi government last month.

"We (Trinamool Congress) have opposed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill and demanded that it should be with-

drawn.

"Why do citizens of this country need to prove their citizenship again? Those who have come to this country after partition from Pakistan and Bangladesh are very much citizens of this country. They want to insult the people of this country in the name of citizenship," Banerjee told reporters here.

The bill provides for according Indian citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis from

Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan after six years of residence in the country, instead of 12 years currently, even if they do not possess any document.

"We have great respect for Bhupen Hazarika. Now, when his family has taken a stand regarding the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, we appreciate their sentiments. The Modi government should understand and respect the sentiments of the people of the north-east," the TMC

chief said.

Banerjee, a strident critic of Prime Minister Modi, accused the Centre of trying to insult the people of the country in the name of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill.

She was speaking to reporters at the airport before leaving for Delhi to participate in the mega rally of non-BJP leaders convened by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on February 13 against the Modi government.

The bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on January

8 and has been on the Rajya Sabha schedule. The ongoing budget session of Parliament concludes on Wednesday.

Replying to a query, Banerjee said, "I am going to Delhi as (AAP supremo) Arvind Kejriwal had invited me for the dharna."

Apart from attending a programme of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) in the national capital, the chief minister said she would also meet leaders of other political parties.

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KVK and ATMA organize Kisan Gosthi at Toyang

**SUMMIT REPORT
RANGPO, 12 FEB:**

KVK and ATMA organized a Kisan Gosthi at Toyang today.

The Program was funded by ATMA West Sikkim.

KVK officials, Block

Technology Manager and farmers from the area attended the program.

BTM Safal Pandey coordinated the program and explained the functions of ATMA and the significance of Kisan Gosthis.



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NO VOTER TO BE LEFT BEHIND



SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Working Towards a Civil Society

*Start grooming them young
through collaborations, discussions
and disagreements*

Social Capital is counted in one's relationship with others in a community in which citizens have a tendency to engage in civic affairs, band together in voluntary groups, come together for collective action. This Social Capital, once it has matured into an instinctive collectif of concerned citizens becomes what we know as a Civil Society.

All are aware that in the present times of multiple sources of information, it becomes difficult to sift the rumour from the news and it is expected of a Civil Society to become the conduit that filters this barrage of information and also mould public opinion. This is definitely a tall ask and the responsibility is tremendous. What makes the task even more daunting is that one is never sure whether a society has fully awakened or whether it is still in the process of finding itself. A Civil Society after all grows from the same faculties that make the masses. This challenge apart, it is still a state worth aspiring to. Now, let us see where Sikkim stands. Community participation is the first investment into building a healthy reserve of Social Capital. Sikkim has seen active community participation, but it is unfortunate that this participation has not cut across caste and community divides. The Sikkimese society has yet to find its collective voice. The high point was achieved by the hydel protests mounted against Rathong Chu in the nineties and the more recent one by ACT. The nadir was scrapped in the communal posturing of communally inclined organisations. The middle ground, that much preferred Buddhist way, however, has hardly seen any activity. The only other examples of community involvement have been stands taken by isolated groups for sectional causes. That said, it is also from the experience of such organisations that a Civil Society could have been carved. The problem with the organisations which speak in the name of civil society is that they have always stopped after raising issues. They have never stepped out of their comfort zones and sought out collaborations and wider discussions to help arrive at solutions. They have always done their homework and worked out their arguments, but unless they involve a larger cross-section of the society in their debates they will continue to be seen as parochial or communal. The moment such statements are tempered with voices representative of other communities; the moment they can sit across the table and speak to each other, we know that a Civil Society has germinated.

But why has Sikkim denied itself a Civil Society? If recent history is to be believed, then the people did unite for change in the seventies and won it. It is from such upheavals that a Civil Society usually shakes out. It was perhaps because the seventies was a bubble and a Civil Society requires much sounder foundations. They don't happen by accident, they have to be nurtured and groomed until they become instinctive. Sikkim should extend such support if it wants a Civil Society without having to go through the strain of suffering radical voices before better sense prevails. This can be achieved by inculcating a sense of community participation among the students. The first step would be to make them comfortable in a group. Just the classroom will not do. Something more focussed like book clubs, art groups, even a more effective Scouts & Guides and NCC culture. Once their comfort level increases, they should be inducted into more serious issues like those relating to children and environment. Issues that are more immediate for them. Of late we have seen massive student involvement in AIDS awareness through Red Ribbon Clubs, but this initiative without the first step remains but cosmetic. If we pace the grooming well, a Civil Society will be at hand within a generation. Or, we could continue with our trial and error method and continue with a society that speaks only in its kitchens.

WRITE US:

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

Mail us at: news@summittimes.com



Melting Himalayan glaciers: a big drop in a bucket that's already full

ANTHONY DOSSETO
theconversation.com

A new report has warned that even if global warming is held at 1.5 degrees, we will still lose a third of the glaciers in the Hindu Kush-Himalaya (HKH) region. What does that mean for rivers that flow down these mountains, and the people who depend on them?

The HKH region is home to the tallest mountains on Earth, and also to the source of rivers that sustain close to 2 billion people. These rivers supply agriculture with water and with sediments that fertilise soils in valleys and the floodplain.

Some of these rivers are hugely culturally significant. The Ganges (or Ganga), for instance, which flows for more than 2,525km from the western Himalayas into the Bay of Bengal, is personified in Hinduism as the goddess Gaṅgā.

WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS... LITERALLY

Before we get to the effect of melting glaciers on Himalayan rivers, we need to understand where they get their water.

For much of Himalayas, rain falls mostly during the monsoon active between June and September. The monsoon brings heavy rain and often causes devastating floods, such as in northern India in 2013, which forced the evacuation of more than 110,000 people.

But the summer monsoon is not the only culprit for devastating floods. Landslides can dam the river, and when this dam bursts it can cause dramatic,

unpredictable flooding. Some of those events have been linked to folk stories of floods in many cultures around the world. In the Himalayas, a study tracking the 1,000-year history of large floods showed that heavy rainfall and landslide-dam burst are the main causes.

When they melt, glaciers can also create natural dams, which can then burst and send floods down the valley. In this way, the newly forecast melting poses an acute threat.

The potential problem is worsened still further by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's prediction that the frequency of extreme rainfall events will also increase.

COME HELL OR HIGH WATER

What will happen to Himalayan rivers when the taps are turned to high in this way? To answer this, we need to look into the past.

For tens of thousands of years, rivers have polished rocks and laid down sediments in the lower valleys of the mountain range. These sediments and rocks tell us the story of how the river behaves when the tap opens or closes.

Some experts propose that intense rain tends to trigger landslides, choking the river with sediments which are then dumped in the valleys. Others suggest that the supply of sediments to the river generally doesn't change much even in extreme rainfall events, and that the main effect of the extra flow is that the river erodes further into its bed.

The most recent work supports the latter theo-

ry. It found that 25,000-35,000 years ago, when the monsoon was much weaker than today, sediments were filling up Himalayan valleys. But more recently (3,000-6,000 years ago), rock surfaces were exposed during a period of strong monsoon, illustrating how the river carved into its bed in response to higher rainfall.

So what does the past tell us about the future of Himalayan rivers? More frequent extreme rainfall events mean more floods, of course. But a stronger monsoon also means rivers will cut deeper into their beds, instead of fertilising Himalayan valleys and the Indo-Gangetic plain with sediments.

What about glaciers melting? For as long as there are glaciers, this will increase the amount of meltwater in the rivers each spring (until 2060, according the report, after which there won't be any meltwater to talk about). So this too will contribute to rivers carving into their beds instead of distributing sediments. It will also increase the risk of flooding from outburst of glacial lake dams.

So what is at stake? The melting glaciers? No. Given thousands or millions of years, it seems likely that they will one day return. But on a more meaningful human timescale, what is really at stake is us – our own survival. Global warming is reducing our resources, and making life more perilous along the way. The rivers of the Himalayas are just one more example.

[the writer is Associate Professor, University of Wollongong]

Should we judge people for their past moral failings?

ANDREW KHOURY
theconversation.com

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam is facing a controversy after a photograph surfaced from his medical school yearbook showing one person in blackface and another wearing a Ku Klux Klan hood. The media alleged the governor was the one in blackface.

Northam, initially apologized, but later said that he did not believe that the photo was of him and called it "disgusting, offensive, racist."

The controversy came just months after Supreme Court justice Brett Kavanaugh, faced allegations of sexual assault going back to his high school years.

As a philosopher, I believe these cases raise two ethical questions. One is the question of moral responsibility for an action at the time it occurred. The second is moral responsibility in the present time for actions of the past.

Most philosophers seem to think that the two cannot be separated. In other words, moral responsibility for an action, once committed, is set in stone.

I argue that there are reasons to think that moral responsibility can actually change over time – but only under certain conditions.

LOCKE ON PERSONAL IDENTITY
Philosophers implicitly agree that moral responsibility can't change over time because they think it is a matter of one's "personal identity." The 17th-century British philosopher

John Locke was the first to explicitly raise this question. He asked: What makes an individual at one time the very same person as an individual at another time? Is this because both share the same soul, or the same body, or is it something else?

Not only is this, as philosopher Carsten Korfmacher notes, "literally a question of life and death," but Locke also thought that personal identity was the key to moral responsibility over time.

"Personal identity is the basis for all the right and justice of reward and punishment," he wrote.

Locke believed that individuals deserve blame for a crime committed in the past simply because they are the same person that committed the past crime. From this perspective, a person would still be responsible for

any of the alleged actions of a younger self.

PROBLEMS WITH LOCKE'S VIEW

Locke argued that being the same person over time was not a matter of having the same soul or having the same body. It was instead a matter of having the same consciousness over time, which he analyzed in terms of memory.

Thus, in Locke's view, individuals are responsible for a past wrong act so long as they can remember committing it.

While there is clearly something appealing about the idea that memory ties us to the past, it is hard to believe that a person should get off the hook just by forgetting a criminal act. Indeed, some research suggests that violent crime actually induces memory loss.

But, I believe, the problems with

Locke's view run deeper than this. The chief one is that it doesn't take into consideration other changes in one's psychological makeup. For example, many of us are inclined to think that the remorseful don't deserve as much blame for their past wrongs as those who express no regret. But in Locke's view, the remorseful would still deserve just as much blame for their past crimes because they remain identical with their former selves.

Responsibility and change

Some philosophers are beginning to question the assumption that responsibility for actions in the past is just a question of personal identity. Philosopher David Shoemaker, for example, argues that responsibility doesn't require identity.

In a recent paper in the Journal of the American Philosophical Association, my co-author Benjamin Matheson and I argue that the fact that one has committed a wrong action in the past isn't enough to guarantee responsibility in the present. Instead, that responsibility depends on whether the person has changed in morally important ways.

Philosophers generally agree that people deserve blame for an action only if the action was performed with a certain state of mind: say, an intention to knowingly commit a crime.

My co-author and I argue that deserving blame in the present for an action in the past depends on

turn to pg05



NSCN(IM) elects new chairman, vice-chairman

KOHIMA, FEB 12 (PTI): The Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) has unanimously elected Qhehezu Tuccu as the new chairman of the outfit.

It also elected Tongmeth Wangnao as the vice-chairman of the organisation.

The chairman's post was lying vacant for over two years after the death of the founder-chairman of the NSCN(IM), Isak Chishi Swu on June 28, 2016 while the post of vice chairman fell vacant



following the demise of Kholi Konyak on December 12, 2018.

Both Tuccu and Wangnao were elected for a tenure of six years, a release issued by the NSCN(IM) said.

NSCN (IM) general secretary, Th. Muivah, on Monday declared the two names at Camp Hebron, the faction's headquar-

ters, the release said.

The NSCN(IM) is in ceasefire with the Centre since 1997 and negotiations are on to resolve the seven-decade-old Naga political problem.

A framework agreement was also signed between the Centre and the NSCN (IM) in August 2015.

Liverpool's improvement is clear to see, says Wijnaldum

LONDON, FEB 11 (AFP): Liverpool's transformation this season into Premier League title contenders reflects how much they have improved, says midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum.

The 28-year-old Dutch international, who scored a superb goal in Saturday's 3-0 victory over Bournemouth despite suffering from a stomach upset, admitted two successive draws had been a setback as the club chases a first league title since 1990.

But he added that garnering 65 points at this stage of the season exceeded their expectations when the campaign got underway.

"We had two draws in a row and that didn't feel that good," said Wijnaldum.

"But if we had been told that at the beginning (of the season) you will have this kind of points (65) everyone would have taken it.

"It could be better



but we must appreciate where we stand.

"You can see the improvement. You could see at the beginning of the season we improved. We just have to keep it going." Liverpool manag-

er Jurgen Klopp is taking the squad to the Spanish resort of Marbella for a warm-weather training break this week.

He can afford to do that as Liverpool are not involved in next week-

end's FA Cup, meaning they return to action in the Champions League at home to Bayern Munich on February 19.

Wijnaldum, who cost Liverpool a reported ?22 million (28 million) when

he signed from Newcastle in 2016, is optimistic they can cope with competing on two fronts.

"We have to see how it is going to work. I think we can play both," he said. "You never know but

a lot of times it goes well. Last season the Champions League went well and we dropped a lot of points in the league.

"But I don't think it was because of the Champions League.



Japan's Osaka in shock split with tennis coach Bajin

TOKYO, FEB 12 (AFP): World number one Naomi Osaka has split from her coach Sascha Bajin just weeks after winning the Australian Open to complete back-to-back grand slam victories, the Japanese player said Monday.

"Hey everyone, I will no longer be working together with Sascha. I thank him for his work and wish him all the best in the future," the 21-year-old tweeted in a shock announcement.

Bajin, a former hitting partner to Serena Williams, responded: "Thank you Naomi. I wish you nothing but the best as well. What a ride that was. Thank you for letting me be part of this."

Osaka, who became the first Asian to hold the top ranking after beating Czech Petra Kvitova in the Melbourne final, had worked with the German for just over a year. No reason was given for the decision to part ways.

The Japanese player captured her first slam by stunning Williams at last year's US Open in a final remembered as much for the American's astonishing rant at the chair umpire following a coaching violation.

Based in the United States, Osaka linked up with Bajin in late 2017 and enjoyed a breakthrough year, climbing

from 72 in the world to the top of the women's rankings.

During that period she won the prestigious Indian Wells tournament before scooping her first major in New York, while Bajin was named WTA coach of the year.

Osaka, who grew up in the US and speaks little Japanese, melted hearts when she fought back tears after her emotional US Open win over her idol Williams as booing echoed around the stadium.

She won more fans with a nail-biting 7-6, 5-7, 6-4 win over Kvitova in the Australian Open final, after which Osaka sobbed tears of joy as the jeers were replaced by cheers.

Former greats Billie Jean King, Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert have all heaped praise on the new darling of women's tennis.

"Winning back-to-back grand slam tournaments is a rare and special achievement, and I'm thrilled these results have propelled Naomi to the top of the women's game," said Chris Evert, the first ever WTA world number one.

"Her exciting brand of tennis, coupled with the dignity she displays on and off court, is a winning combination that tennis fans really embrace.

India, China leading global greening effort: NASA study

WASHINGTON, FEB 12 (PTI): India and China are leading the global greening effort, which is quite contrary to the general perception worldwide, a latest NASA study said Monday, observing that the world is a greener place than it was 20 years ago.

The NASA study based on data received and analysed from its satellite said that India and China are leading in greening on land. "China and India account for one-third of the greening but contain only 9 per cent of the planet's land area covered in vegetation," said lead author Chi Chen of Boston University.

"That is a surprising finding, considering the general notion of land degradation in populous countries from over exploitation," he said.

The study published on February 11, in the journal Nature Sustainability said that recent satellite data (2000-2017) reveal a greening pattern that is strikingly prominent in China and India and overlaps with croplands world-wide.

China alone accounts for 25 per cent of the global net increase in leaf area with only 6.6 per cent of global vegetated area.

The greening in Chi-

na is from forests (42 per cent) and croplands (32 per cent), but in India it is mostly from croplands (82 per cent) with minor contribution from forests (4.4 per cent), the NASA study said.

China is engineering ambitious programmes to conserve and expand forests with the goal of mitigating land degradation, air pollution and climate change.

Food production in China and India has increased by over 35 per cent since 2000 mostly owing to an increase in harvested area through multiple cropping facilitated by fertiliser use and

surface- and/or ground-water irrigation.

When the greening of the Earth was first observed, we thought it was due to a warmer, wetter climate and fertilization from the added carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, said Rama Nemani, a research scientist at NASA's Ames Research Center and a co-author of the study.

This study was made possible thanks to a two-decade-long data record from the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) instruments on NASA's Terra and Aqua satellites. Now with the MODIS data, we

see that humans are also contributing, she said.

Observing that once people realise there is a problem, they tend to fix it, Nemani said in the 1970s and 80s in India and China, the situation around vegetation loss was not good.

In the 1990s, people realized it, and today things have improved. Humans are incredibly resilient. That's what we see in the satellite data, she said.

According to the paper, how the greening trend may change in the future depends on numerous factors.

For example, increased food production

in India is facilitated by groundwater irrigation. If the groundwater is depleted, this trend may change, it said.

The researchers also pointed out that the gain in greenness around the world does not necessarily offset the loss of natural vegetation in tropical regions such as Brazil and Indonesia. There are consequences for sustainability and biodiversity in those ecosystems beyond the simple greenness of the landscape, the research study said.

Blockades continue as Gujjar quota stir enters 5th day

JAIPUR, FEB 12 (PTI): The Gujjar community agitation for five per cent reservation in jobs and education entered its fifth day on Tuesday, with protesters blocking Chaksu town, about 40 km from here on National Highway 52, police said.

The blockades on the Agra-Jaipur-Bikaner National Highway-11 in Dausa district, state highway in Nainwa of Bundi district, Malarna road in Sawai Madhopur and the Karauli-Hindaun road at Budla village in Karauli district continued from the previous day.

"Apart from the routes that were blocked till yesterday, agitators have laid a blockade in Chaksu town of Jaipur district. No untoward incident has been reported so far. Law and order situation is under control," Director General of Police (Law and Order) M L Lathar said.

The North Western Railway informed through a bulletin that three trains were cancelled and two diverted on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Gujjar leaders have refused to back-off from the tracks and roads.

"We have not received any communication from the state government so far. Dharna will continue," Vijay Bainsla, son of Gujjar leader Kirori Singh Bainsla, said.

Gujjar agitation leader Kirori Bainsla and his supporters began their indefinite sit-in on railway tracks in Malarna Dunga of Sawai Madhopur on Friday evening.

Bainsla has stuck to the demand of five per cent reservation for the Gujjar, Raika-Rebari, Gadia Luhar, Banjara and the Gadaria communities, and has refused to move from the tracks until the same is met through an official announcement.

A state government delegation, including Tourism Minister Vishendra Singh and IAS officer Neeraj K Pawan, had held talks with the protestors on Saturday but failed to come to an agreement.

SC gives courtroom detention to ex-CBI interim chief Rao, legal advisor for contempt

NEW DELHI, FEB 12 (PTI): The Supreme Court Tuesday awarded day-long courtroom detention to former acting CBI director M Nageswara Rao and another official for "brazen" contempt of its orders, and strongly rebuked them when they tried to leave before the rising of the court.

It had directed them to remain seated till the rising of the court and imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh each for transferring out an officer who was probing the Bihar shelter homes sexual assault cases.

Sparing contemnors Rao and CBI's legal advisor S Bhasuram the jail term, the apex court held them guilty for "wilfully disobeying" its orders by transferring CBI Joint Director A K Sharma, as additional director general of CRPF on January 18.

"In our considered view, it is a case where contempt has been committed by both the then acting CBI Director, M N Rao, and the director prosecution (of the agency)" said a bench headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi.

Pensive looking Rao and Bhasuram, who on Monday had already tendered unconditional and unqualified apologies for their roles in the transfer of Sharma, were in for a



shock as the bench expressed its mind on their culpability at the outset.

Holding them guilty of contempt of court, the bench, also comprising justices L N Rao and Sanjiv Khanna, said, "We could not have done anything else."

It said: "We have heard Rao and Bhasuram for commission of contempt of court and we impose one lakh fine and sentence them till the rising of the court.

"Go to one corner of the court and sit down till the rising of this court."

Both remained in the CJJ's courtroom till 4 pm, the normal working hours of the judicial side of the apex court. They also remained seated during the lunch session.

The bench did not allow Attorney General K K Venugopal's request that the two officers be allowed to leave even at

3.40 pm -- 20 minutes ahead of time.

The top court responded furiously to Venugopal's seeking the permission.

"What's this? Do you want us to sentence him till the rising of the court tomorrow? Go and sit where you were," the CJJ said.

Before passing the order in the pre-lunch session, the bench told Rao and Bhasuram they have been held guilty of contempt of court and it was not accepting their unconditional and unqualified apologies.

At the outset, the Attorney General, appearing for CBI and its officer, referred to the noting on the file related to the transfer of Sharma and said that it was a case of "error of judgement" on Rao's part as he had acted on the "incorrect legal advice".

"It is not wilful. Facts

are little muddled... Rao has put himself to the mercy of this court," Venugopal said and sought leniency from the bench.

"Let us see the sequence of events. From the note of the Acting (CBI) Director, this much is obvious that he knew that there was an order of the Supreme Court (against the transfer of the CBI officer). He also seeks the opinion of the legal advisor," the bench said.

Later, Rao approved the relieving order of the CBI officer without "satisfying" himself whether the sanction of the court has been secured or not and "if this is not the contempt then what is contempt," the bench said, adding "the axe falls on the Supreme Court orders".

"He is the Acting Director of the CBI... Would the heavens have fallen if the relieving orders were

passed after taking the Supreme Court into confidence," the furious CJJ remarked.

The CJJ told the Attorney General "Let us be very clear that I don't think any of us have as judges had the opportunity to invoke the jurisdiction of the contempt."

"We are and I can say I have not invoked the contempt powers and punished anyone. Speaking for myself I can say I have not invoked contempt power in the last 20 years. However, the dignity and majesty of the court has to be maintained," the CJJ said.

"But this is brazen," the CJJ said, adding that he was of the "firm view" that "the majesty of judiciary" has to be maintained.

At this moment, the Attorney General said "To err is human, to forgive is divine."

The bench said that the officers have committed the contempt and asked, "Why should a contemnor be defended at government expenses?"

Dealing with Rao's approval to the transfer Sharma, the bench made clear at the outset that Rao can be held guilty of contempt as he did not bother to check while signing the relieving order of Sharma.

Not only that Rao did not even seek "post facto"

approval of the apex court to the decision for two weeks," it said.

It also gave option to Rao and Bhasuram to say something as the sentence for them could be 30 days in jail. "Do you have to say something" the bench asked them.

Venugopal repeatedly requested the court to look into other options as per the law and sought leniency for them.

Rejecting the defence of the two officers, the bench said though they have tendered an unconditional and unqualified apology, "we don't agree with the contentions raised by them".

The bench said that Rao was aware of the apex court direction that the CBI officer probing the shelter home sexual assault cases cannot be transferred without its consent.

However, his "attitude is 'I have done what I thought was required,'" the bench said.

"This is a blatant contempt of court. If this is not contempt of court then what is," asked the bench.

The court had on February 7 come down heavily on the CBI for transferring Sharma out of the agency in violation of the court's order.

It had also taken note of the violation of two earlier orders and issued contempt notice to Rao.

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China, Russia pose challenge to US space capabilities: Pentagon

LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, FEB 12 (PTI): China and Russia have developed robust and capable space services and the two countries pose a challenge and threat to the space capabilities of the US, the Pentagon has said.

Chinese and Russian military doctrines indicate they view space as important to modern warfare and counterspace capabilities as a means to reduce US and allied military effectiveness, the Pentagon said in a report released by

the Defense Intelligence Agency. The report “Challenges to Security in Space” examines the space and counterspace programmes that could challenge the US or partner interests in the space domain.

Noting that both countries have developed robust and capable space services, including space-based intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, the report said China and Russia were making improvements to existing systems includ-

ing space launch vehicles and satellite navigation constellations.

“These capabilities provide their militaries with the ability to command and control their forces worldwide with enhanced situational awareness, enabling them to monitor, track and target US and allied forces,” it said.

Running into more than 40 pages, the report mentions India a few times and describes China and Russia as a major challenger to the US, Iran and North Korea as other

space challenges.

The Pentagon lists India as one of the nine countries and one international organisation which can independently launch spacecraft: China, India, Iran, Israel, Japan, Russia, North Korea, South Korea, the United States, and the European Space Agency (from French Guiana).

While the European Union, Russia and the US’ satellite navigation constellations offer global coverage, Japan and India operate regional systems, it said.

China operates both a regional and worldwide satellite navigation system.

In its report, the Pentagon said Chinese and Russian space surveillance networks were capable of searching, tracking and characterising satellites in all orbits.

This capability supports both space operations and counterspace systems, it said.

“Both states are developing jamming and cyberspace capabilities, directed energy weapons, on-orbit capabilities

and ground-based anti-satellite missiles that can achieve a range of reversible to non-reversible effects,” said the report.

The report is intended to support a deeper public understanding of key space and counterspace issues and inform open dialogue and partner engagement on these challenges.

“Beijing and Moscow will continue to see space as integral to winning modern wars. They are developing systems that pose a threat to freedom of action in space.

Both will continue their efforts to enhance their space and counterspace capabilities, and better integrate them into their respective militaries,” the report said.

The report notes that some actors will seek counterspace capabilities that target the perceived United States and allied reliance on space, including the ability to use secure satellite communications, precision strike capabilities, and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance or ISR assets.

Globally, the space industry will continue to expand as technological and cost barriers fall and international partnerships for joint production grow. State, non-state and commercial actors increasingly will have access to information from space.

“The number of satellites and debris on orbit will grow concurrently, making tracking satellites, discriminating threats from non-threats, and predicting and preventing collisions a greater challenge,” it said.

Afghan mujahideen fighter turned president dies

KABUL, FEB 12 (AFP): An Afghan mujahideen commander who fought the Soviets and rose to become the country’s first president after the Red Army retreated has died aged 93, his family said Tuesday.

Sibghatullah Mojadeddi, who commanded a mujahideen faction during the decade-long insurgency against the Soviet occupiers, passed away late Monday in a Kabul hospital after a long illness.

Prominent Afghans, including former president Hamid Karzai, have begun visiting the Mojadeddi family home to pay their respects.

Afghanistan’s de facto prime minister Abdullah Abdullah extended his condolences to the respected Mojadeddi clan.

“He has played a vital role in all national issues and his legacy will remain part of Afghani-



stan’s history,” he posted on Twitter.

Presidential candidate and former national security adviser Mohammad Haneef Atmar said Mojadeddi’s passing

“leaves a huge vacuum in Afghan politics and public life”.

Mojadeddi’s death comes three days before the 30th anniversary of the Soviet withdrawal

from Afghanistan.

The Red Army crossed the Amu Darya river into Soviet Uzbekistan on February 15, 1989 having suffered 15,000 losses.

After the withdrawal, Afghanistan’s communist regime collapse in 1992 and Mojadeddi, who led the Afghan National Liberation Front, was chosen as interim president.

Muslim US lawmaker apologises for remarks which triggered anti-Semitism row

Washington, Feb 12 (PTI): Illhan Abdullahi Omar, one of the first two Muslim women in the US Congress, has “unequivocally” apologised for her remarks which sparked an anti-Semitism row and drew condemnation including from President Donald Trump who termed it a “terrible statement”.

Omar, a Democrat who was elected to the House of Representatives in November, in a tweet on Sunday questioned the financial relationship between the powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and members of the Congress.

While reacting to a Republican critic, Omar, 37, said “It’s all about the Benjamins baby,” referring to American USD 100 bills featuring the likeness of Benjamin Franklin.

“Anti-Semitism is real, and I am grateful for Jewish allies and colleagues

who are educating me on the painful history of anti-Semitic tropes,” Omar, the first Somalian American lawmaker, said Monday.

“My intention is never to offend my constituents or Jewish Americans as a whole. We have to always be willing to step back and think through criticism, just as I expect people to hear me when others attack me for my identity. This is why I unequivocally apologise,” she said, after top Democratic leaders sought an apology from her on her tweets.

On Monday, Trump told reporters abroad Air Force One that the apology was not enough.

“I think she should be ashamed of herself. I think it was a terrible statement and I don’t think her apology was adequate,” he said.

Asked what she should say, Trump replied, “she knows what to say”.

Democratic leaders led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi described her tweets as highly offensive.

“We are and will always be strong supporters of Israel in Congress because we understand that our support is based

on shared values and strategic interests. Legitimate criticism of Israel’s policies is protected by the values of free speech and democratic debate that the United States and Israel share,” they said.

“But Congresswoman Omar’s use of anti-Semitic tropes and prejudicial accusations about Israel’s supporters is deeply offensive. We condemn these remarks and we call upon Congresswoman Omar to immediately apologise for these hurtful comments,” Democratic leaders said.

Congressman Dean Phillips had an impassioned, face to face conversation with Omar during which he expressed offense to her recent anti-Semitic tropes and extended an invitation for future discussions aimed at fostering a better understanding between Jewish and Muslim members of Congress.

“I strongly condemn anti-Semitism in all its forms, including comments made by my colleague that - purposefully or not - have propagated dangerous and destructive stereotypes of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

“As elected leaders, it is our collective responsibility to set standards of respect and elevate understanding between the communities we represent,” he said.

Omar and her Democratic colleague from Minnesota were the first two Muslim women elected to the House of Representatives during the last November mid-term polls.

“As Americans and Jews, we expect our politicians to condemn bigotry, not to fuel it. Words matter. At a time when anti-Semitism is on the rise in the US and abroad, Rep Omar is promoting the ugly, anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that Jews have an outsized influence over politics,” said Jonathan A Greenblatt, CEO and national director of the Anti-Defamation League.

Omar was elected to the House of Representatives from Minnesota on a Democratic party ticket last November.

Under-resourced UN peacekeepers undermine their credibility: India

UNITED NATIONS, FEB 12 (PTI): India, which is among the largest troop contributors to the UN peacekeeping, has called for adequate resources for the peacekeepers, asserting that “under-resourced” Blue Helmets cannot accomplish their mandated tasks.

Speaking at a General Debate on Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34), India’s Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin said on Monday the views of troop/police contributing countries on implementing the mandates should be reflected in relevant reports of the Secretary-General.

“Peacekeepers must be given adequate resources to accomplish the tasks set for them. Desiring peacekeepers to do more and more with less and less is not a rec-

ipe for success,” he said.

“Under-resourced peacekeepers, unable to accomplish their mandated tasks, undermine the credibility of the UN peacekeeping,” he said.

As the Special Committee opened its 2019 substantive session, member states highlighted the need to work more closely to ensure continued progress in making United Nations missions more safe, accountable, secure and effective, amid sweeping reforms occurring against a backdrop of increased security threats targeting the Blue Helmets.

The three-week session will focus on some of the pressing issues facing the more than 100,000 military, police and civilian personnel from 125 countries currently serving in 14 operations.

India said that to ensure peacekeeping oper-

ations function at an optimal level, initiatives for structural reforms, measures to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers were all welcome steps.

“However, we need to ensure that there is no schism between doctrine and practice,” Akbaruddin said.

While voicing appreciation for the Secretary-General’s close attention to improving safety and security of UN peacekeeping personnel, Akbaruddin stressed that there should be dedicated counter-IED resources for missions facing threats from Improvised Explosive Devices.

He said there should also be concerted efforts to upgrade the security infrastructure of camps.

Outlining several areas that can be improved to help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping, Akba-

ruddin said the issue of the large number of mandate components in peacekeeping missions has been raised by India on many occasions.

“Now that the practice of prioritising mandates has begun, there is a need to look at ways to address the availability of adequate resources to fulfil the prioritised mandate components,” Akbaruddin said.

He said the time has come to do away with all caveats.

“We need to develop a culture of no national caveats in the service of the United Nations,” he said.

Akbaruddin also voiced concern over the non-payment/delayed payment of arrears to the troops contributing countries, stressing that the practice of delaying payments cannot continue unaddressed.

Akbaruddin also called

for resolving the issue of pending arrears of closed peacekeeping missions.

“Non-payment of peacekeeping dues for years, and sometimes decades after closure of peacekeeping missions, is not only bad accounting practice, but also tends to be interpreted as reflecting bad faith,” he said.

Reiterating India’s commitment to the UN’s Zero Tolerance Policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), he said India was the first contributor to the Secretary General’s Trust Fund set up in Support of Victims of SEA.

Having deployed the first ever all-women Formed Police Unit (FPU) in Liberia, India welcomed the recently launched UN Gender Parity Strategy, with Akbaruddin noting that the country is committed to increasing the number of

women peacekeepers.

India hopes to deploy a Female Engagement Team (FET) in the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and a mixed Formed Police Unit (FPU) in the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

He said it was important to ensure transparency in selecting contingents.

Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support Atul Khare said peacekeeping was the United Nation’s most financially significant activity, with more than 90 per cent of peacekeeping personnel serving in the field.

He noted that not only are United Nations peacekeepers the second-largest deployed force in the world, but also cost just half of one per cent of world military expenditures.

Republicans, Democrats reach agreement to avert another govt shutdown over wall funding

WASHINGTON, FEB 12 (PTI): Democrats and Republicans have struck a deal in principle to fund the US government and avert another crippling government shutdown while denying President Donald Trump much of the USD 5.7 billion he demanded to build a controversial wall along the US-Mexico border.

The announcement

by lawmakers on Monday night came days ahead of a possible government shutdown from Friday in the absence of such an agreement.

Senate and House negotiators from both parties, who held a closed-door meeting in Washington, did not comment on the details of the deal, saying the staff is still working on last-minute logistics.

Sharp differences between Democrats and President Trump over border security and building a wall along the US-Mexico border resulted in a record partial government shutdown for more than 30 days. Building a wall along the US-Mexico border is a campaign promise of the 72-year-old Republican President.

“We’ve had a good evening. We’ve reached

an agreement in principle between us on the Homeland Security and the other six bills,” Senator Richard Shelby told reporters on Monday night.

As a result, the House and the Senate are likely to pass a new resolution before the February 15 deadline.

According to reports, the bill would provide USD 1.375 billion for wall

construction, far less than USD 5.7 billion congressional funding Trump has demanded to build the wall.

According to Trump, illegal immigrants pose a national security risk to the US and can only be stopped by the construction of a border wall.

If accepted, the deal would end a standoff in which Trump has threatened to cut budgets from

swaths of government this Friday.

The tentative agreement, according to the Hill newspaper, also specifically prohibits the use of a concrete wall. But, senior Congressional aides separately noted that it will fund new barriers for approximately 88kms along the US-Mexico border in the Rio Grande Valley sector.

CONTACT

SummitTIMES at 9832556698,
9832369520
news@summittimes.com



FRINGE FAN! Model Karlie Kloss heads to Diane Von Furstenburg's party during New York Fashion Week.

Anand Patwardhan's documentary on Babri goes from 'U' to 'A' after 28 years

MUMBAI, FEB 12 (PTI): Renowned filmmaker Anand Patwardhan has said his National Award-winning documentary "Ram Ke Naam", based on the Babri Masjid demolition, has been age restricted on YouTube.

The director said the video sharing website is "catering to Hindutva goons who want to kill all secular content."

The 1992 documentary explores the campaign waged by the Hindu-nationalist Vishva Hindu Parishad to build a Ram temple at the site of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, as well as the communal violence that it triggered.

The film had received a 'U' certificate from the Central Bureau of Film Certification and was shown at prime time on Doordarshan after the High Court ordered its telecast in 1996.

Patwardhan said he is baffled how the film has now been termed for "adults" only, 28 years after its release.

In a Facebook post, the director wrote Sunday, "YouTube is at it again, catering to Hindutva goons who want to kill all secular content. Latest is they have put an 'age restriction' on my film 'Ram Ke Naam' which has a 'U' certificate from CBFC."

The filmmaker said the video sharing website has previously done this to "Jai Bhim Comrade", which also had a 'U' certificate, questioning if "YouTube is even worse than our CBFC?"

Patwardhan said the website is "Hindutva embedded" and called the move "disgusting".

"Now if you are a child over 14 and under 18 you are allowed to do hazardous labour but you are not allowed

to see 'Ram Ke Naam'! The temporary good news is that if you are over 18 you can watch it on my (anandverite) youtube channel. That is, till they think up a new ruse to restrict it further," he wrote.

Patwardhan had written to YouTube regarding the move, to which the video-sharing website replied that "Ram Ke Naam" was flagged for review, upon which, they "determined that it may not be suitable for all viewers and it has been placed behind an age restriction."

"After further review, we've determined that while your video does not violate our Community Guidelines, it may not be appropriate for a general audience. We have therefore age-restricted your video," Patwardhan shared YouTube's response below his post.

ARIES: No need to rush it, Aries. As the moon in your security-seeking second house forms a helpful trine to potent Pluto, look within and make sure you've got a stable framework for your dreams. If you want to go for the gold, you have to play by the rules. Don't let restlessness get the best of you. You may have to take a few steps backward in order to get yourself on track and playing by the books.

TAURUS: Don't abandon self-care simply because it's a busy Monday. With a metamorphic trine between the Taurus moon and potent Pluto, you may finally feel motivated to make a healthy transformation. Walking three blocks out of your way to grab donuts on the way to work doesn't exactly fulfill the fitness quota for the day—but a 30-minute trek (on sidewalk or trail) and a sushi lunch or nourishing salad will be revitalizing.

GEMINI: Obsessing again, Gemini? Old anxieties may come back to haunt you under today's deep-diving moon-Pluto trine. Instead of letting those demons endlessly torment you,

shift in a proactive direction. If you fixate on the negative, you'll miss the opportunities that are all around you. Set a limit for cathartic venting time so you don't drown in the drama.

CANCER: IToday's powerful connection between the moon and alchemical Pluto infuses all your collaborations with magic. The only catch? That also means that you'll have to take a step back and listen to your intuition before you leap. You have a vision, Cancer, and an exciting one at that. The thing is, you don't want to steamroll your collaborators with your plans. Ask for feedback and drink it in.

LEO: "Martyr" is NOT the role for zodiac royalty to play! Hit the brakes if you find yourself cast as the selfless helper and redirect that energy toward your own realm. Under today's alchemical moon-Pluto trine, you don't have to make apologies for taking care of number one. These draining situations have a way of working themselves out on their own. Plus, people will actually respect you more when you set clear boundaries.

Shraddha Kapoor to reunite with Tiger Shroff for 'Baaghi 3'

MUMBAI, FEB 12 (PTI): Shraddha Kapoor is coming back to the "Baaghi" franchise.

The actor has been cast as the female lead opposite Tiger Shroff in the series' third film.

The film marks the actor's return who starred in the first installment "Baaghi" in 2016.

Shraddha said she is looking forward to the film.

"I'm super excited to be back with the 'Baaghi' family. I had such a memorable time being a part of 'Baaghi' and this is my third film with Sajid sir, second with Tiger and first with Ahmed sir. The script is amazing and I'm excited to be a part of this movie," she said in a statement.

Choreographer-filmmaker Ahmed Khan, who helmed "Baaghi 2", will return to the director's chair for the threequel.

The sequel to the 2018 film, which starred Disha Patani opposite Tiger, is co-produced by Fox Star Studios and Sajid Nadiadwala, under the banner Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment.

"The entire team of 'Baaghi' is very



happy to have Shraddha Kapoor back. Tiger and Shraddha's pair was extremely loved in 'Baaghi' and I am sure that fans of the franchise will be as excited as we are to have them together," Sajid said.

Shraddha also stars in Nitesh Ti-

wari's directorial "Chhichhore", also produced by Sajid. The shooting is underway. She is currently filming "Street Dancer", also featuring Varun Dhawan.

"Baaghi 3" is scheduled to release on March 6, 2020.

'Aquaman' sequel officially in the works

LOS ANGELES, FEB 12 (PTI): Warner Bros studios has tapped "Aquaman" co-writer David Leslie Johnson-McGoldrick to begin penning a new installment for the franchise.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, director James Wan wants to return as producer along with Peter Safran.

It is currently unclear whether Wan would come back to direct.

The news came almost two months after the film, headlined by Jason Momoa, released.

The movie turned out to earn USD 1.12 billion globally. It is Warner Bros' first DC movie to pass the USD 1 billion mark since 2012's "The Dark Knight Rises".

Johnson-McGoldrick co-wrote "Aquaman" with Will Beall ("Gangster Squad"), with Geoff Johns receiving a story by credit along with Beall and Wan.

The studio is also developing horror spin-off from the "Aquaman" series, titled "The Trench".



'Coming to America' sequel to release on August 7, 2020

LOS ANGELES, FEB 12 (PTI): Eddie Murphy's "Coming to America" long awaited sequel has landed a summer 2020 release date.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Paramount announced Monday that the film will hit theatres on August 7 next year.

Craig Brewer is directing the follow-up to the 1988 comedy for Paramount.

The currently untitled movie will see Murphy reprise his role of Prince Akeem.

"Black-ish" creator Kenya Barris wrote the most recent draft of the sequel.

The plot would see Akeem learning about a long-lost son and returning to America to meet his unlikely heir to the throne of Zamunda.

Murphy is producing alongside Kevin Misher, while Barris is executive producing.

Brewer and Murphy are also working on the Netflix film "Dolemite Is My Name".

REQUIRED FOR CANADA

**Nurses,
Caregivers,
Chef-Waiters-Butchers-Bakers,
Driver,
Farm Workers - Meat Packers
IT PROFESSIONAL**



Walk for Interview & Resume Submission



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sevenseasconsultancy5@gmail.com

Contact No. +9170764 21789 / +9183487 14807

to run out of fuel!

SAGITTARIUS: Get organized, Archer! Until you have an efficient system figured out, you'll only be spinning your wheels (and maybe getting stuck in a rut—eek!). If you're already operating at max capacity, take stock of your tasks: What can you outsource? Which projects need your attention today, and what can you put off until tomorrow? Take a critical look at your calendar for the rest of the week. Instead of juggling everything at once, dedicate blocks of your schedule to specific action items!

CAPRICORN: Today's transformational moon-Pluto trine could bring rapid developments—or much-needed closure—around a romantic situation. Maybe you've been waiting for bae to be honest with you, for better or for worse! Here's hoping you get nothing but the best news, Capricorn, but whatever the case, you're going to feel a thousand times better once you know the truth. From there, you can get into action, be it leaning in for that first kiss, shopping for rings or booking an

emergency couples' therapy session!

AQUARIUS: Are you at wit's end, Aquarius? Today's revelatory trine between the moon and perceptive Pluto shines a light on the ways in which you've been holding yourself back. Don't be afraid to try new things, especially if they might help you climb out of any ruts you've fallen into. It can be scary to break out of trenchant routines, even for an imaginative Aquarius. But you won't be alone this time: An influential female friend or mentor will support your exploration of new frontiers!

PISCES: Is trouble brewing with an old friend, coworker or relative close in age? Under today's transformational trine between the moon and volcanic Pluto, conflict may erupt like hot lava. It's likely that this issue has been suppressed for a while and is finally rising to the surface. Here's the most important question: Is the bond important enough to save? This crisis might actually be an opportunity to set healthier boundaries, especially if you two are on different pages.