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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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SDF membership drive in full swing at Singtam Yogen Thatal

SINGTAM, 23 JAN:

Sikkim Democratic Front is carrying out membership drives all over the State and in Singtam senior party workers were seen busy visiting every house registering new members.

Representative of District level committee East, Gupta Subba, Cheli Morcha convenor, Anita Tamang, Brand Ambassador Swachh Bharat, Prakash Subba and Uttam Pradhan were some who were seen going door-to-door.

In a meeting conducted today at ward number 05, more than 200 people were present. Councillor, Bhumi Subba said that the drive is going well and when the party's senior workers are present the event is even better and successful.

SPYF Gangtok Chalo rallies into capital protesting lack of facilities at Gyalshing Hospital

NITESH R PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 23 JAN:

Members of Sikkim Progressive Youth Forum, reached the capital this evening today, completing their "Gangtok Chalo" march of 110 KMs from Gyalshing in West Sikkim, a trek which took them four days to complete.

SPYF is demanding improved facilities at the District Hospital at Gyalshing and not satisfied with assurances and developments since their started their movement, decided to march to Gangtok and register their protest in the capital.

The protestors are insistent that the hospital does not meet the minimum criteria required for a district hospital as per Indian Public Health



Standards norms outlined under the National Health Mission by the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare which the State authorities are required to deliver.

Following their initial protests, Health Department had assured to meet

the required standards, and officials had recently detailed improvements in infrastructure and manpower deployment made since then.

SPYF, however, remains unconvinced and today demanded that facilities at the Gyalshing

District Hospital be upgraded to the level promised by the Health Minister and Health Secretary at their last meeting.

Prakash Parajuly, one of the protestors, stated that SPYF will continue the protest until all the demands are met.

Till the time of filing this report, the protestors were sitting in dharna at Titanic Park here, refusing to budge until their demands were met.

According to the police, the protestors were required to disperse upon completion of their rally at Titanic Park. The protestors were clearly in no mood to do so today even after concerned officials called on them, in all probability with more assurances.

Pritam Chettri, another protestor, stated that the recent press conference by the Health Secretary claiming improved services at the district hospital was untrue and a string of fabrications because the "facilities at Gyalshing hospital remain in shambles".

Specialist Dispatch Project delegates visit landfill site at Martam



GANGTOK, 23 JAN (IPR):

As part of the three-day Specialist Dispatch Project on Solid Waste Management and Sanitation programme, delegates visited the landfill site at Martam to get firsthand information on the functioning of the waste collection and segregation plant. The team was led by Gangtok Mayor, Shakti Singh Choudhary and officers of GMC.

The three-day workshop which began on 22 Jan has been organised by Gangtok Municipal Corporation (GMC) in collaboration with Japan Council of Local Author-

ities for International Relations (J. CLAIR), Singapore and All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIILSG), New Delhi.

Under the Specialist Dispatch Project, Japanese local government officials who have knowledge or technical skills in various fields are dispatched to local governments as specialists. These specialists will contribute to improving the quality of local administration, technical expertise, human resources and Knowledge transfer in the overseas local governments.

North officials begin prepping for Election 2019



MANGAN, 23 JAN (IPR):

A preparatory meeting for General Elections 2019 was conducted by the District Electoral Officer (DEO) with nodal officers appointed for various election-related duties. The District Collector, who is the ex-officio DEO, informed that officials from Election Commission of India will be reviewing election preparedness of the district in February, hence by the first week of February, appointment of manpower in various election tasks should be completed and trainings held.

The DEO informed that elections to the three Assembly constitu-

encies in the district - Lachen-Mangan, Kabi Lungchok and Dzongu - will be divided into eleven sectors and each sector will be manned by a sector magistrate and sector police officers.

The DEO informed that flying squads, video surveillance and static surveillance teams will be formed as per the directives of the ECI.

The requisition of vehicles was tasked to the Sr. RTO.

A communication plan and web-casting of polls was also discussed during the meeting.

Training for political parties and polling personnel will be done

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Tales of Transformation collects first- person accounts of CMMSS recipients



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 23 JAN:

Tales of Transformation, a compilation of articles by the recipients of Chief Minister's Merit Scholarship Scheme (CMMSS) was released by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling on 21 Jan, 2018 during the inauguration ceremony of NE Youth Festival, 2019 at Dentam, West Sikkim.

The book, published by Wandering Souls of Sikkim, comprises of 20 articles contributed by

CMMSS recipients narrating their tales of transformations after being selected under the scheme.

WSOS Co- Founder, Pranay Khatriwara, has compiled and edited the articles.

CMMSS is a scheme envisioned by the Chief Minister to provide an opportunity to meritorious local students to study at reputed boarding schools upon completing their primary schooling from govern-

ment schools and clearing a competitive exam.

"These articles are an expression of happiness and joys shared by the meritorious students and are a testimony of how a scheme conceived with a noble vision can transform dreams into reality. Wandering Souls of Sikkim is pleased to bring forth these stories. We have published twenty articles in this edition. It will be our endeavour to bring out more in the future," WSOS conveys.

WSOS has also expressed gratitude towards all students who contributed articles, Raju Basnet for writing the foreword and to all others who supported it during the publication of the book.

"We are highly grateful towards the Chief Minister for sharing his blessings as a message to the book and for releasing it, thereby adding to the legitimacy of our humble initiative," WSOS adds.

India, China affecting world economy much more today, need to relook at global financial systems: Merkel

BARUN JHA

DAVOS, JAN 23 (PTI): German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday said countries like India and China have begun affecting the world economy much more today and that needs to be taken into account for having a relook at the global trade and financial systems.

In a veiled attack at policies being adopted by countries like the US, she said, "There is a new approach in the world that says shouldn't we look after our own, and ensure that our own are looked after."

"I have great doubts about this approach. We should always remember

that others have their own interests," Merkel said. "Let's call a spade a spade."

Speaking at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting here, she said there are a number of disturbances around the world and the IMF has painted a rather gloomy picture of the global economy.

If we look at the international order today, the global architecture is still driven a lot by what was created by people who were in power after the Second World War and they had the insight and their decisions should not be cast aside, Merkel said.

She added that politicians have got a lot to face and banking industry has

also lost a lot of credibility after the financial crisis.

"The global financial system has got damaged quite a bit and we need to do a lot to fix the things," she said, while noting that international bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), IMF and the World Bank have very much contributed to making the world a better place.

"Countries like China and India are affecting the global economy much more today and the global organisations need to take that into account," she said, while highlighting the emergence of organisations like G20 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Ahead of LS polls, pol parties in Bengal try to capitalise on Netaji

KOLKATA, JAN 23 (PTI): Ahead of the crucial Lok Sabha polls, political parties in West Bengal seem to be engaged in a battle over the legacy of Subhas Chandra Bose, leaving no stone unturned to encash on Netaji's public image.

Starting from the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) to opposition BJP, Congress and CPI(M)-led Left Front, all the political outfits organised day-long programs to celebrate Netaji's 122nd birthday anniversary Wednesday.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee presided over the celebration at Darjeeling Chowrasta in the heart of the hill town.

She rued that the Centre had not declared the birthday of Netaji Subhas

Chandra Bose as a national holiday befitting his stature.

"It seems they (the Centre) do not consider him (Netaji) a national leader...Netaji had talked of togetherness and unity of all people of the country," Mamata said, adding a person who takes people from all sections along was the only "true leader".

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), for the last few years since the Centre's decision to declassify files on Netaji lying with the government in 2016, has claimed that it was the Narendra Modi government which had given due respect to the "unsung hero" of India's freedom struggle.

"The Congress has always tried to highlight the

achievements of Gandhi family as if no one else has any contribution towards the country's freedom struggle or development post independence.

"The Congress has always neglected the legacy of icons like Netaji and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. But it is the Modi government which has given due respect to Netaji," BJP state president Dilip Ghosh said.

Listing out various steps taken by the Modi government to honour the freedom fighter's invaluable contribution towards the country's freedom struggle, Ghosh said neither Congress nor the CPI(M) or TMC had done anything to honour Netaji.

ASDTF coordination meet held at Namchi



SUMMIT REPORT

RANGPO, 23 JAN:

All Sikkim Democratic Transport/Drivers Front (ASDTF) conducted a coordination meeting with the representatives of Drivers Associations of South District at Namchi today.

ASDTF, general secretary, Karma Tashi Bhutia from Bhusuk highlighted the main framework of the meeting and ASDTF, State In charge, GM Gurung of Rangpo informed the representatives about the government sanctions for the welfare of the drivers and transporters till date. He also assured to solve the new grievances put up by the drivers and transport-

ers of the state.

The meeting also finalized the meeting with drivers and transporters of South District in the coming month.

The meeting was hosted by South District Working Committee of Sikkim Democratic Front party where Senior Vice President of SDF, Girish Chandra Rai was present as the chief guest.

General secretary (Sports Front), Arjun Rai, South District Working Committee, president, Ganesh Rai, DWC vice president, Das Tamang, DWC general secretary, CL Gurung, DWC general secretary, Rajkumari Thapa also attended the meeting.

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Save Sikkimese Soul accuses Lok Sabha MP of lying

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 JAN:**

The organization Save Sikkimese Soul has accused Lok Sabha MP, PD Rai of lying about supporting the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019, in a press release issued today. The organization has alleged that the MP is trying to “conceal evidence of his wrongdoing” by stating that SDF party's support in the Parliament was to

the 124th Constitutional Amendment Bill and not the Citizenship (Amendment) bill 2019.

“PD Rai and SDF party should realise that their incompetence has already put the political future of Sikkim in danger and now trying to cover-up their mistake will complicate the issue,” the release states.

The State Government should refrain from subscribing to the hollow

assurance of the Central Government that it will allow individual states to decide on granting citizenship, the organization further adds.

The State must learn lesson from Nagaland and adopt a firm resolution explaining the distinct identity and constitutional status of Sikkim and withdraw its support to the controversial Citizenship Bill in the Parliament of India, the release states.

Susakurtot organic festival concludes

**WANGCHUK BHUTIA
DZONGU, 23 JAN:**

The three-day Susakurtot organic festival being organized at Gor, Lower Dzongu in North Sikkim concluded today. The valedictory function today had Deputy Speaker SLA cum MLA Dzongu, Sonam Gyatso Lepcha as chief guest in the presence of Additional Director KVK, panchayats, Zilla members and people from all walks of life.

The function also had traditional games, cultural programmes pre-

sented by the different cultural troupes.

Addressing the function, the chief guest stated that Dzongu will be one of the best places in the world in the next three years and further added that Sikkim has been one of the safest places to live owing to the leadership of Pawan Chamling. He also requested all the employees to work with full dedication and sincerity especially those who have recently received their appointment order under One Family



One Job scheme.

Lum/Gor/Sangtok GPU has always been loyal to the party and

will be made into a model GPU, he stated.

Earlier, president of the Organising Com-

mittee, Bhujong Lepcha highlighted the history and importance of Susakurtot organic festival.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao celebration continues in North



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 23 JAN:**

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao week is being celebrated under Mangan block of North Sikkim with door-to-

door campaign conducted by Aganwadi Workers at different places of Kabi block and Mangan Gram Panchayat office under the aegis of CDPO Mangan, LD

Bhutia. Felicitation of mothers and handing over of Birth Certificates and awareness on Sukkanaya Samridhi Yojana is also being conducted.

EVM and VVPAT awareness in Namchi

NAMCHI, 21 JAN (IPR): An awareness programme on Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) for the upcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha Elections was held at Central Park here today as part of SVEEP program.

A total of 67 mock votes were registered today.

Enthusiastic voters participated in the hands-on practice of the

EVM and VVPAT organised by the Office of the District Election Officer, South District.

Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) is an important flagship programme of the Election Commission of India designed to educate citizens, electors and voters about the electoral process in order to increase their awareness and participation in the electoral processes.

ITBP-sponsored excursion for North Students concludes

SUMMIT REPORT

PEGONG, 23 JAN:

The closing ceremony of the excursion tour programme of North Sikkim students sponsored by ITBP was held at 11th Bn, ITBP, Pegong, on Tuesday. The 11-day tour covered Delhi and NCR Territory from 10-22 Jan.

Students and teach-

ers along with 11th Bn ITBP staff returned yesterday with a smile on their faces and joy in their hearts, an official press release shares.

Students from Tasa Tengay Govt. Sec. School, Chungthang, and Govt. Sen. Sec. School, Lachen, were addressed by Commandant RK Tomar.

CBI books former Air India CMD on corruption charges

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 (PTI): The CBI has booked former Air India chairman-cum-managing director Arvind Jadhav for allegedly violating procedures while making various promotions and appointments, officials said Wednesday.

Along with Jadhav, the CBI has also named then executive director (personnel) L P Nakhwa (now retired) and former additional general managers (operations) Arvind Kathpalia, Amitabh Singh and Rohit Bhasin in its FIR registered under the Indian Penal Code section related to criminal conspiracy and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The Central Bureau of Investigation alleged that Jadhav had constituted a panel in 2010 to promote officers to the rank of general manager (operations) in violation of laid down procedure.

The three-member panel included then chief operating officer Gustav Baldauf, then executive director (operations) A S Soman and former executive director (Personnel) L P Nakhwa, it said.

Nakhwa, who was general manager (medical service), was given the rank of executive director (medical services) after the post was upgraded as a temporary measure till August 31, 2009.

It is alleged that Nakhwa was to be reverted to the post of general manager (medical services) from September 1, 2009, but she continued

in her position as executive director in clear violation of the Civil Aviation Ministry's directive dated March 6, 2009.

The CBI inquiry also found that Jadhav regularised Nakhwa in the post of executive director (medical services) with effect from April 1, 2010 without following the due procedure, the FIR said.

The Civil Aviation Ministry had annulled and reversed the irregular appointment of Nakhwa as executive director (medical services), the CBI alleged.

A human resources sub-committee of the Board of Air India in an order dated September 8, 2010 reverted Nakhwa to the post of general manager (medical services) with immediate effect.

“Therefore, the promotion panel so constituted by Arvind Jadhav... for selecting suitable candidates for promotions to the post of GM (operations) should have been re-constituted in the wake of reversion of Nakhwa from executive director (medical services) to the rank of general manager,” it said.

This was necessary as according to the promotion policy of Air India, members of promotion panel should be preferably two levels above the post for which the selection is to be made, which was not the case with Nakhwa who was of the same for which selection was to be made by the panel.

Cabinet decides to strengthen NE autonomous councils

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 (PTI): Aiming to woo the tribal population in the Northeast ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the NDA government on Wednesday decided to grant more power and funds to 10 autonomous councils in the region.

The Union Cabinet approved a “landmark” constitutional amendment to increase the powers of the autonomous councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of the Northeast.

The Finance Commission will be mandated to recommend devolution of financial resources to them, an official statement said.

The amendment also provides for transfer of additional 30 subjects including departments of Public Works, Forests, Public Health Engineering, Health and Family Welfare, Urban Development and Food and Civil Supply to Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council and Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council in Assam.

“The cabinet approves landmark amendment to Article 280 and Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The most important part of these amendments is that these will significantly improve the financial resources and powers of the autonomous districts councils in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura, fulfilling longstanding aspirations of the trib-

al population in these Northeastern states,” the statement read.

A bill in this regard is expected to be introduced in the upcoming session of Parliament, a home ministry official said.

“This will be a game changer, as it will substantially enhance the funds available to these local government institutions for undertaking development works in these tribal areas,” the official said.

The proposed amendments provide for elected village municipal councils, ensuring democracy at the grassroots level.

The village councils will be empowered to prepare plans for economic development and social justice including those related to agriculture, land improvement, implementation of land reforms, minor irrigation, water management, animal husbandry, rural electrification, small scale industries and social forestry.

At least one-third of the seats will be reserved for women in the village and municipal councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura and at least two of the nominated members in all autonomous councils in the North East Sixth Schedule areas resulting in empowerment of women.

There will be State Election Commissions for holding elections to the autonomous councils, village and munic-

ipal councils in the areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura.

There will be a provision for anti-defecation too.

Meghalaya has for the time being kept out of the purview of the provision for elected village and municipal councils and one-third reservations for women.

The amendments will fulfil the commitments made under tripartite Memorandum of Settlements signed by Government of India, governments of Assam and Meghalaya, United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), Dima Haram Daogah (DHD) and Achik National Volunteers' Council (ANVC).

The amendments propose to rename the existing autonomous councils as Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council (KAATC), Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council (DHATC), Garo Hills Autonomous Territorial Council (GHATC), Khasi Hills Autonomous Territorial Council (KHATC), Jaintia Hills Autonomous Territorial Council (JHATC) and Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous Territorial Council (TTAATC) as the present jurisdiction of these councils extend to more than one districts.

There will also be increase in seats in KAATC (from 30 to 50 seats), DHATC (30 to 40 seats), GHATC (30 to 42), KHATC (30 to 40) and JHATC (30 to 34).

North officials begin..

in the month of February for which a calendar is to be drawn. The Police Department has been tasked with security planning and deployment of police personnel during the elections. The DEO also informed that wide awareness on EVMs and VVPATs will be undertaken in the district for which a detailed plan will be drawn and executed by the concerned nodal officer.

The Election Department, North Sikkim, also conducted hands-on training on EVMs and VVPATs for all booth-level officers.

The BLOs were handed over IEC materials for National Voters Day to be celebrated at all polling stations on 25 January.

The DEO sought the active participation and involvement of all the nodal officers in the preparation for the General Elections. The DEO asked all the nodal officers to dedicate their time for election related duties apart from their normal duties for the proper planning and successful conduct of the General Election 2019.

BJP govt at the Centre saviour of illegal Bangladeshis : AASU

GUWAHATI, JAN 23 (PTI): Leading students

union of Assam AASU Wednesday termed the BJP-led central government as the “saviour of illegal Bangladeshis” and appealed to opposition parties to vote against the contentious Citizenship

(Amendment) Bill in Rajya Sabha.

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and its 30 allied organisations also vowed to stop the free movement of Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and BJP MLAs if they did not end the “conspiracy” to destroy

Assamese identity, culture and language, as protests against the Bill continued to rock the north eastern state.

Peasants organisation Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and its 70 allied indigenous groups brought out a torch light procession demanding scrapping of the Bill, while the North East Congress Co-ordination Committee (NECC) adopted a resolution demanding it.

“Except BJP, all other parties are opposing the Bill. We appeal to all of them to vote against it in Rajya Sabha. We are looking at them with great hope. This will prove who is with the North East and its people,” AASU chief adviser Samujjal Kumar Bhattacharya said addressing a public rally here.

The rally called ‘K'hilonjiyar Bajra Ninad’ (indigenous people's war cry) was attended by a large number of students, artistes, intellectuals, education-

ists, filmmakers and entrepreneurs.

Bhattacharya said the people of the North East will not accept Delhi imposing “anything and everything” on it to destroy its indigenous culture and identity and added that public and village meetings would be held in all corners of Assam from Thursday to intensify the protest

against the Bill.

“This way we will intensify our agitation and unite the entire state against the saviours of illegal Bangladeshis who are sitting at Dispur now.

“This Bill has to be scrapped. If it is imposed on us, if you (the Centre) try to finish our culture, language and identity, you cannot live in peace,” he said.

Hitting out at Sonowal for saying that it was wrong for students to protest publicly, Bhattacharya said the chief minister was also a student leader during the Assam Agitation.

“Was he wrong that time? If so, then he should first apologise to the people of Assam,” he said.

The NECC said even if the BJP passed the Bill in Rajya Sabha by resorting to undemocratic means, the Congress will scrap the law when it forms the government at the Centre.

AASU General Secretary Lurinjoyti Gogoi said a “continuous political conspiracy” was on to destroy the Assamese identity and the BJP was trying to polarise the society on communal lines.

“Under the undemocratic prime minister and chief minister, a fascist government is trying to forcefully impose the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill on us. People of Assam are committed to block it at any cost. We will never accept the conspiracy to get it passed in Rajya Sabha,” he said.

“If the CM and other BJP MLAs continue to engage in the plot to destroy the Assamese community, AASU and other 30 indigenous groups will stop their free movement in the state,” he added.

All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) president Pramod Boro asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi whether he had forgotten the North East and was it a mistake of its people

to vote for the saffron party.

“When the people of NE do not want it (legislation of the Citizenship Bill), why are you doing it? You are not a king, but a representative of the people.

“You (PM) said NRC would be completed. Then why did you not wait till its completion? It would have identified the illegal infiltrators. You cannot change everything as per your wish. This is not democracy. People will throw you out from power,” he added.

Speaking on the occasion, popular Assamese singer Zubeen Garg, who had demanded that Sonowal return the votes the BJP had got in the 2016 Assembly polls using the election song sung by him, pledged his support to the struggle against the Bill and demanded that it be cancelled.

KMSS adviser Akhil Gogoi met senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh and appealed to oppose the Bill in every platform across the country.

The opposition Congress organised ‘Sankalp Divas’ coinciding with the 122nd birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and took pledge to fight the “communal Bill”.

The National Highway-37 at Dhola-Sadiya was blocked by protesters demanding withdrawal of the Bill.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was passed by Lok Sabha on January 8 which seeks to provide Indian citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan after six years of residence in India even if they do not possess any document.

Massive protests broke out across Assam and other parts of North East after Modi announced in Silchar on January 4 that the controversial document would be passed as soon as possible in Parliament.

SATA team leaves for Kyorugi and Poomsae nationals in Hyderabad

SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 22 JAN:

A 28-member team of Sikkim Amateur Taekwondo Association [SATA] is representing Sikkim at the 35th National Sub-Junior Kyorugi and 9th National Sub-Junior Poomsae Taekwondo Championship, 2019 to be held at GMC Balayogi Indoor Stadium in Hyderabad from 27-30 Jan, 2019.

The State team left for the tournament today accompanied by Sanjay Subba, Saroj Gurung and Pempa Doma Tamang as team coaches and Chandra Mukhia as team manager.

The team underwent a two-week coaching camp at White Hall complex for the championship.

At a function held here at White Hall complex on Tuesday, SATA executive members conveyed their best wishes to



the team and encouraged them to give their best to win medals for the State. "Around 60% of the team is participating for

the first time in a national level championship. All are in a good form though and all set to give their best in the

championship. We are very hopeful for more medals for the State this time," SATA assistant chief coach, Rajen Sub-

ba, expressed.

SATA has thanked the Chief Minister for his support to the association.

Namchi Prison Board meets



NAMCHI, 23 JAN [IPR]: Namthang Rateypani MLA, Tilu Gurung, who is also Chairperson of the Board of District Prison, Namchi, chaired the annual coordination meeting of the Board of Visitors at Boomtar Jail here today. The meeting was also attended by DC (South) Prabhakar Verma, ACF Namchi, Tsheten Tashi Lepcha, DMS (Namchi District Hospital), Dr SN Adhikari, other officials of line departments, Panchayats, Prison staff and administrative members.

Ms. Gurung and the officials inspected the female and the male wards, kitchen and the newly upgraded wards of the prison.

During the course of inspection, the Chairperson briefly interacted with under-trial prisoners.

She also expressed satisfaction with the

cleanliness and urged the UTPs to inculcate healthy habits of reading, teaching, skill development and positive motivation. She also assured to provide books for them.

Superintendent of Prison, Arjun Kumar Tamang, highlighted the importance of this meeting, the primary focus of which is the benefit of Prison and the Under Trials at large.

He also requested the concerned department officials to work in co-ordination with regards to prison-related works. He also put forth demands like green houses, a periodical lineman, fulfilment of the shortage of manpower and construction of Sarva Dharma Mandir for the Under Trials.

Also today, the Chairperson and DC (South) inaugurated the Dining Hall and other new infrastructure at the District Prison.

Submissions invited for Dr Shova Kanti Thegim (Lepcha) Smriti Purashkar

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 JAN:

Dr Shova Kanti Thegim (Lepcha) Memorial Trust has invited submissions for the Dr Shova Kanti Thegim (Lepcha) Smriti Puraskar 2019. A meeting of the Trust convened on 20 Jan decided to initiate the process for this year's award, a press release informs.

The Trust has requested all intending participants to send in 4 copies of their books on or before 17 Feb, 2019 for necessary assessment and consideration for the award.

Novels, story collections, poetry, criticism and plays in Nepali Language written/authored by all levels of writers be-

longing to Sikkim State, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Jalpaiguri Districts (covering the areas such as Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Gorubathan, Siliguri, Dooars, etc.) of West Bengal State and published during the calendar year 2015, 2016 and 2017, will be eligible for consideration of the Award. Further, entries from participants of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri Districts shall be considered valid only if they are permanent residents of these area for a period not less than 10 years as on 31 Dec, 2018 for which they are requested to enclose his/her Correspondence Address and ID Proof while forwarding their entries/books

to the Trust.

The meeting also resolved that in order to give equal opportunity to all participants, only one book/entry from the writers/authors covered by the aforementioned eligibility period will be accepted by the Trust for consideration of the Award.

Those writers/authors' books which were forwarded to the Trust earlier for the consideration of the Award 2018 (covering the period 2015 & 2016) and are presently available with the Trust will automatically be considered for the assessment/evaluation, for which the writers/authors need not send in fresh entries, the release further adds.

Residential dance and music workshop at Namthang concludes

SUMMIT REPORT
NAMTHANG, 23 JAN:

Fifteen-day residential dance and music workshop successfully concluded at Tek Primary School, Namthang in South Sikkim on Tuesday. The workshop was organised by Chords and Swing in collaboration with Tek Youth Club and supported by National Integration Federation of Artists and Activists (NIFAA) Sikkim State.

The valedictory programme of the workshop was attended by Area MLA, Tilu Gurung as chief guest who was accompanied by Zilla Panchayat

Member, Yadunath Mishra as special guest.

The programme started after the welcome speech of camp In-charge, Sudeep Sharma while Camp Director, MB Subba presented the report of the camp. During the programme, music scholars performed a song and dance scholars also performed dances.

On behalf of organising committee, Sanjeeta Bhandari of Mamring and SB Rai of Ben were felicitated for their contribution towards social causes. Choreographer, Sushma Chettri of Namchi and Music Teacher,

Sachin Pradhan from Namchi taught the scholars during the workshop.

Apart from the workshop there were different sessions on life skills education, career counselling, etc. While addressing the programme, the chief guest congratulated the participants and thanked the organisers for conducting the programme.

On the day, participants were awarded with certificates. Also present were BDO Namthang, Mahendra Chettri, Panchayat President, Birendra Pradhan, Panchayats, parents of dance and music scholars and other dignitaries.

KUTSE SHEGU

The 49th day Kutse Shegu of Late Lakpa Tsering Ethenpa (88 yrs.) who left for his heavenly abode on 10th Dec 2018 falls on Sunday the 27th Jan 2019.

All relatives, family friends & well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at "Ethenpa Villa", Lower Tadong, Gangtok. We also express our gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement.

Mrs. Pasang Lhamu Ethenpa (Pasang Guruma) (wife)
Mr. Menla T. Ethenpa & Tshering Pem (son & daughter-in-law)
Dr. Sonam T. Ethenpa & Chumki (son & daughter-in-law)
Mrs. Diki Yangzum Ethenpa & Karma Chankapa (daughter & son-in-law)
Ms. Chopel S. Ethenpa (daughter)
Mrs. Sangay Pema Ethenpa & Pemba Lama (daughter & son-in-law)
& host of grand children & Great Grand Children
(M) 943-4031-333, 900-2136-777, 817-000-5544



KUTSE ZHIPCHU SHERGU

Our gratitude to all our Friends, Relatives and well wishers for their support and love during the time of our bereavement. Our beloved Late Mr Pem Deechen Denzongpa, Yapa Jantarey, to many of his Friends and Well Wishers and Managing Director of Yuksom Breweries passed away on 11th December 2018.

With humility we request all our Family, Friends and Well Wishers, to please join us in prayer for the Kutse Zhipchu Shergu at our residence at Tashi Ghang, Yangtsey on the 28th January 2019

The Yuksom Family,
Tashi Ghang,
Yangtsey, West Sikkim.



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
STATE PROJECT MONITORING UNIT, NATIONAL HYDROLOGY PROJECT
WATER RESOURCES & RIVER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

E-Procurement Notice

BID ID No: - NHP- 02/Online Tender-01 OF 2018-19

The Superintending Engineer(NHP),WR &R. D.D. invites items rate bids through e-procurement for **Supply and Installation of Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) and Development of Rating Curve for Identified G-D Sites In Sikkim Under National Hydrology project**. The details of the bids are available at www.sikkim-tenders.gov.in

R.O.No.: 616/IPR/PUB/Classi/18-19
Date: 22.01.19

Superintending Engineer (NHP)

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

WATER SECURITY & PUBLIC HEALTH

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Memo No....

Date:--

ADDENDUM

Refrence Notice Inviting Expression of Interest no. 01/WS & PHE/1806/SEW/18-19, dated: 08.01.2019 of the Department, Interested bidders may note the following addendum.

"Hard copies of the technical bids in original including cost of tender form and earnest money are mandatory to be submitted to office of the Chief Engineer, Water Security & PHE Department, Nirman Bhawan, Gangtok on or before 04.02.2019 (2 pm).

R.O. NO. 619/IPR/PUB/Classi./18-19
Date: 23.01.2019.

Chief Engineer
WS & PHED.

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

SOCIAL JUSTICE, EMPOWERMENT & WELFARE DEPARTMENT

GANGTOK

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Chief Engineer, Water Security & Public Health Engineering Department on behalf of Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare Department invites e-tender from eligible contractors enlisted with Sikkim Public Works Department for the work "Construction of Tribal Research Institute at Assam Lingzey in East Sikkim". For further details, kindly visit the website www.sikkimtenders.gov.in. Date of uploading of bidding documents in e-procurement portal will be from 24.01.2019(after 2 PM).

Sd/-
Chief Engineer

R.O. NO. 624/IPR/PUB/Classi./18-19
Date: 23.1.2019

Water Security & Public Health
Engineering Department

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

No. 674/IPR/18-19

Dated. 21.01.2019

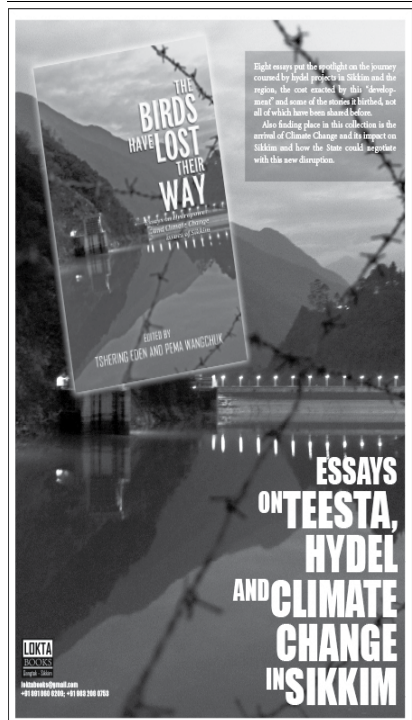
PUBLIC NOTICE

The State Level Celebration of Republic Day, 2019 will be held at Paljor Stadium on 26th January, 2019. Being a national function, the programme will be attended by Honourable Governor of Sikkim and Honourable Chief Minister of Sikkim along with Honourable other high ranking dignitaries.

Due to security reasons, carrying of water bottles are strictly forbidden at the venue and all Government employees, PSUs and members of public representatives are requested to carry with them respective identity card to gain access to the venue.

R.O.No.: 609/IPR/PUB/Classi/18-19
Date: 21/01/2019

IPR DEPARTMENT
Government of Sikkim



SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Back to School

Let's make this year genuinely about students, learning and schools

Government schools across the State will soon be opening their gates to welcome students back to a new academic session after a shortened winter break. Some schools begin a new year in upgraded avatars, or still catching up with it, and it will be interesting to see how the school in a Gangtok suburb which had reopened last year with a people-funded new facility after having remained shut for some years is faring. It is possible that some primary schools will not reopen this year because the low enrolment numbers just don't justify their continuation and the human resource can be much better deployed elsewhere.

The closure of anything is a difficult moment, especially when it is a place of learning and holds so many memories and significance for so many lives. But some closures are a practical necessity, and it makes sense for the HRDD to focus on the schools which still retain students and staff them with the best of faculty and facilities. In this regard, Sikkim's falling fertility rate and growing awareness among the youth could prove a boon for the coming generations. If Sikkim can manage its resources well, then the young can now be lavished with infrastructure, resources and access much in excess of what their numbers require or the previous generation received. It is simple. There might be fewer students coming into schools, and maybe some schools will even shut down, but the number of books, libraries, laboratories, and most importantly, teachers, will not go down and if anything, will only increase. What this means is that if Sikkim's planners can, well, plan, then this abundance of learning resources can be assigned in ways that every child in a government school gets focused and dedicated attention. This is an opportunity which is pregnant with immense possibilities if it is taken as an opportunity and not rued as a downturn.

Meanwhile, the winter break is over, and thankfully the new holiday schedule has kicked in to ensure that academic breaks are not so long that too much time is wasted every new session just repairing the academic connections for students. There is also a new transfer policy in place for the teachers and the promising EQUIP initiative is looking to expand its footprint. All of these make the start of a new academic year exciting and one hopes that the mood sustains and pushes learning to a level here, the politicking of an election cycle notwithstanding. And the excitement is palpable in more obvious terms as well, as for instance, in the preparatory rush expected at stores dealing in uniforms and books and in the number of laundry-fresh uniforms all over the state as students and teachers return to class.

In the coming weeks, Sikkim will also learn whether the Department responsible for education in the State has done any learning while the students and teachers were away. The good news is that education has received heartening attention over the winter holidays with a slew of teacher training workshops, hopefully some effective teacher transfers and most recently with the Chief Minister announcing that primary education will now receive primary attention.

And what is it that schools, whether primary, secondary or senior secondary, should deliver? If nothing else, then at least a generation that is better lettered, less parochial and more inquisitive. Look at it this way, Sikkim always had among the best per capita distribution of schools and the most enviable teacher-student ratios. It also now arguably has the highest per capita density of universities and children now have more options to explore by way of higher education. Without getting into the "quality" or reliability of the institutions of higher education, imagine a scenario where the schools here fostered a real thirst for knowledge that universities could help quench and expand. For far too long, schools have been about regimented teaching, and that has clearly not worked too well. How about the State started getting more liberal with the learning process? Open more minds, and they will not only take care of themselves, but also carry the state along. Now that there are fewer students in the classrooms and more options in the staff room, wider explorations are possible if the teachers were freed from clerical chores and inspired to work more with the students. With fewer schools to look after, the finances could also be invested more keenly on improving the learning environments at schools and making classrooms more student and learning friendly. One hopes that fewer teachers are borrowed out of classrooms to stand-in for tasks they are neither trained nor appointed for. One hopes that education-related problems will receive immediate attention and are not kept pending for the next winter holidays. One hopes that the process begins to make school interesting so that fewer students dropout. One hopes that there are fewer schools this year which are short-staffed and more teachers who motivate learning. Wishful thinking? We wish the same every February and still continue hoping...

It's cold! A physiologist explains how to keep your body feeling warm

JOHNERIC SMITH
theconversation.com

Whether waiting for a bus, playing outside or walking the dog – during the colder winter season, everyone is looking for ways to stay warm. Luckily, the process your body uses to break down foods serves as an internal heater.

But when the weather is cold, some defensive strategies are also necessary to prevent your body from losing its heat to the surrounding environment. As the temperature difference between your warm body and its frigid surroundings increases, heat is lost more quickly. It becomes more of a challenge to maintain a normal body temperature.

And two people with the same exact body temperature in the same exact environment may have very different perceptions. One may feel frozen while the other is completely comfortable.

But beyond the subjective experience of coldness, researchers do know that natural physiological responses to cold as well as behavioral adaptations – like bundling up! – can help keep your body around 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit and make sure you feel warm.

WHAT YOUR BODY DOES

Your blood courses through your body carrying nutrients, oxygen and other biological important substances. And this delivery system also brings heat produced in the muscles to the skin, where it's released.

When you enter a cold environment, your body redistributes blood to the torso, protecting and maintaining the warmth of the vital organs there. At the same time, your body constricts blood flow to the skin. Narrowing the roads to the skin means less heat can make the journey, and so less is lost to the environment. And minimizing how much blood goes to the skin – which is in closest proximity to the cold – means you can hold onto more of your internal heat longer.

Another defensive strategy the body uses to stay warm is cranking up muscle activity. This in turn increases your metabolism and creates more heat. Think of a brisk winter walk when the mercury has really plunged – your teeth may chatter and your arms and legs may shake uncontrollably in shivers. This seemingly nonproductive use of the

muscles is actually an effort to increase body temperature by breaking down more nutrients to stoke your internal furnace.

Differences in body size, body fatness and metabolic activity influence how different individuals experience cold. Smaller people with lower levels of body fat lose more heat to the environment than larger people with more body fat. A bigger individual may have increased muscle mass, which is a producer of heat, or elevated body fatness, which functions as an insulator to reduce heat loss. These



differences are not easy to change.

THINGS YOU CAN DO

In order to maintain a feeling of warmth, you can manipulate your clothing, your activity and your food. The most common thing people do to stay warm is wear a coat, hat and gloves. Obviously increasing clothing thickness or piling on the layers helps. Winter clothes serve not to warm you up, but more as a means to keep the heat you are producing from dispersing to the surrounding environment.

Contrary to popular belief, the head is not a greater source of heat loss than any other adequately covered body part. If you were to wear a warm hat and no coat, your torso would contribute the most to heat loss, thanks to how your body redistributes its blood in cold conditions. If you can keep your torso warm, you'll maintain blood flow to your limbs and can often keep the arms, legs, hands and feet warm.

Secondly, being physically active causes your muscles to contract, breaking down more nutri-

ents, which generates additional heat. This additional heat production can help maintain body temperature and the feeling of warmth. Maybe you've noticed this in your own life if you've run in place for a bit or done a quick set of jumping jacks when you're out in the cold.

Unfortunately, physical activity or layers of clothing can tip the balance past what you need to offset heat losses. In that case, you'll experience an increase in body temperature – and your body will start sweating in an effort to cool

down. This is a bad outcome, because the evaporation of sweat will lead to greater rates of heat loss.

Finally, eating increases the body's production of heat. The process of breaking down food is going to slightly increase body temperature. Sometimes campers will have a snack before bed in an effort to stay

warmer through the night. While the metabolic impact of a small snack may not be huge, the tipping point between heat balance and heat loss is pretty small.

You may also notice the urge to urinate – what physicians call cold diuresis. It's a side effect of constricting blood vessels and the resulting increase in blood pressure as the same amount of blood has a smaller space available to travel through your body.

And if you're the type who tends to feel cold and leave your coat on even inside, you might want to rethink the habit. Your skin will be flush with blood as your body tries to dissipate excess heat inside. Worst of all, you may start to sweat. Once you head back out the door, you might feel even colder initially than you would have as the cold air saps the heat from your skin and your sweat evaporates. To stay comfortable, your best bet is dressing appropriately, whether inside or outdoors this winter.

[the writer is Assistant Professor of Exercise Physiology, Mississippi State University]

Lessons from 'Spider-Man': How video games could change college science education

AARON W. HARRISON
theconversation.com

Like many people over the holidays, I spent some time – maybe too much – playing one of the most popular and best reviewed video games of 2018: "Spider-Man."

While I thought I'd be taking a break from chemistry research, I found myself web-swinging through virtual research missions all over New York City. I collected samples of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in Hell's Kitchen, studied vehicle emissions in Chinatown and determined the chemical composition of atmospheric particulate matter in Midtown.

"Spider-Man" has many of these eco-friendly research missions. But what I found most encouraging is that the game also includes tools that can potentially teach advanced concepts in chemistry and physics. These tools include adjusting the wavelength and amplitude of radio waves, rewiring circuits to meet target voltages, and what will be examined here, using absorption spectroscopy to identify unknown chemicals.

Believe it or not, the millions of people playing "Spider-Man" have been unwittingly introduced to principles of quantum mechanics. There is a lot of veiled science to this aspect of the video game. Perhaps more importantly – as a chemistry researcher and university lecturer – I believe the game represents an interesting opportunity to teach science in a fun and engaging way in higher education.

SPECTROSCOPY AND 'SPIDER-MAN'

To better understand the scientific technique that players simulate in "Spider-Man," it helps to have a short primer on what absorption spectroscopy is.

The interaction of light with matter is the most powerful means scientists have to understand what matter is made of. When matter does not interact with light, we are quite literally left in the dark. This problem is made obvious in the still unknown composition of dark matter that constitutes the vast ma-

jority of matter in the universe.

Using light to study ordinary matter like atoms and molecules is a broad field of science known as spectroscopy. It is an important part of university courses in chemistry and physics. There are currently many different types of spectroscopy. However, the underlying concepts are al-



most entirely the same as the original version that began in the 17th century when Isaac Newton first dispersed sunlight with a prism.

As famously illustrated on Pink Floyd's "Dark Side of the Moon" album cover, dispersing the white light of the sun with a prism reveals its continuous color spectrum extending from violet (higher energy, shorter wavelength) to red (lower energy, longer wavelength). However, if this is done carefully, you would find that this continuous spectrum is patterned with intermittent dark bands.

While the origin of these dark bands was not fully understood until the 20th century, scientists now know that they are due to absorption of specific wavelengths of light by atoms and molecules present in the sun. In fact, this kind of spectroscopy led to the discovery of helium in the solar spectrum before it was identified on Earth. This is why it derives its name from the Greek "helios" meaning sun.

So what causes this phenomenon? Atoms and molecules have a set of energy levels that depend on how their electrons are arranged. The absorption of light – which remember is energy – can cause the electrons

to rearrange into these different levels. The catch is that the energy – or wavelength – of light must exactly match the energy difference between two electron arrangements in an atom or molecule for absorption to occur. This set of energies is unique for each chemical and leads to a distinct absorption spectrum much like a finger-

print from which it can be identified.

In "Spider-Man," the player identifies unknown substances using simplified versions of these spectra. The goal is to match the pattern in the spectrum using the fragment inventory provided to give the absorption spectrum of the unknown substance. Unfortunately for chemists everywhere, determining the chemical structure of an unknown molecule is much more complicated.

Still, there is a significant amount of science conveyed in the video game version of what a spectroscopist would call assigning this spectrum. Only slight modifications and additional explanation could make these parts of the game an excellent way to teach these concepts to undergraduate science students.

But are video games ever used in higher education?

VIDEO GAMES IN HIGHER EDUCATION
Video games for teaching more elementary skills like arithmetic or spelling are common. Similarly, colleges and universities are increasingly infusing video games into their coursework.

In a recent publication in the journal Nature Chemistry, researchers presented a modified version of the

video game "Minecraft" called "PolyCraft World." In this game, the player learns polymer chemistry by crafting materials in the game. Preliminary results showed that students learned real chemistry through the game even though they weren't doing it for grades or getting regular classroom instruction.

In the popular game "Kerbal Space Program," the player builds their own space program by successfully launching rockets into orbit. The game was not originally intended for educational purposes but implements rigorous orbital mechanics in its physics calculations. It is so accurate that NASA joined the game's developers to create new missions, and it now has a teaching-ready standalone game that could be used directly in university physics courses.

A unique approach has been taken with the biochemistry-based game "FoldIt." This game serves as both an educational as well as a citizen science platform. In the game, players manipulate the structures of real proteins to search for the "best" or lowest energy structures. Results published in the journal Nature showed that the player's search methods can be successfully combined with computer-based algorithms to solve actual scientific problems.

The use of video games in higher education is a real possibility and could even have a promising future in higher education given the advantages of delivering educational content through a video game format. These advantages include things such as remote access, personalized student progress and immediate feedback. However, creating an engaging video game from scratch is challenging, costly and time-consuming. As indicated by the creators of "PolyCraft World," finding existing games to modify for educational purposes – like the research missions in "Spider-Man" – could be the best way forward.

[the writer is Teaching and Research Fellow, Chapman University]

Arunachal urges CEC to deploy 60 companies CAPF for LS, assembly polls

ITANAGAR, JAN 23 (PTI) Arunachal Pradesh has urged the Election Commission of India (ECI) to deploy 60 companies of Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) for the upcoming Lok Sabha and assembly elections in the state.

State Chief Secretary Satya Gopal requested the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India, Sunil Arora, during a video conference here on Tuesday, an official communique said here on Wednesday.

Each company has about 130 personnel.

The chief secretary informed the CEC that

sensitive constituencies have also been identified and measures would be taken accordingly.

Gopal stressed on strengthening surveillance along the Indo-Myanmar border and neighbouring Assam to check infiltration and unwanted activities when the CEC sought the weekly progress report on election preparedness.

“Foot march to far-flung polling stations, communication bottlenecks, and Assam-Myanmar border are specific and major challenges for free and fair elections in the state,” the chief secretary said. The CEC and

Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa also held a meeting through video conferencing with all chief secretaries, DGPs, and CEOs of eastern states and sought status reports on the ongoing election preparations.

“Transfer posting of officers and officials as per ECI directive in administrative and police departments was taken into account,” Gopal said and committed to post sufficient administrative officers within the first week of February, in the few districts facing severe shortage now.

“Transfer of very few left out senior admin-

istrative and police officers in home districts will be affected immediately,” he said.

Proposal to appoint IAS, IPS, IFS officers and nodal officers under various categories as election observers has also been sent to ECI, he said, adding, sufficient budget to conduct elections and maintain law and order has been prepared.

DGP SBK Singh, Principal Home Secretary Dr AC Verma, Chief Election Officer Kaling Tayeng, IGP Sunil Garg, DIG K Kaming, Tax & Excise link commissioner NT Glow were also present during the video conference.

Fresh tremor hits eastern Nepal

SHIRISH B PRADHAN KATHMANDU, JAN 23 (PTI): A 4.5-magnitude earthquake shook the Eastern Nepal’s Bhojpur and its adjoining Khotang districts late Tuesday, the country’s seismological department said.

The tremor was felt around 10.30 pm and its epicentre was in Bhojpur district, about 500 km east of Kathmandu, the National Seismological Department said on Wednesday.

Tremor was also felt in neighbouring Khotang district, it added.

This was not an after-shock of the great Gorkha earthquake of April 25, 2015, but a fresh one that occurs in the Himalayan region time to time, the department said.

This was the second quake that hit the Himalayan nation in less than 12 hours.

On Tuesday, a mild tremor of 3.3-magnitude was felt in and around Kathmandu metropolitan city at 11.26 am.

Its epicentre was in the national capital’s Thapathali area.

The department said that it was an aftershock of the Gorkha earthquake. Nepal was hit by a massive 7.8-magnitude earthquake in 2015 that left nearly, 9,000 people dead, 22,000 injured. Around 6,00,000 structures in Kathmandu and other nearby towns were either damaged or destroyed.

Hand-raised rhinos translocated to Manas National Park from Kaziranga

GUWAHATI, JAN 23 (PTI): A pair of hand-raised rhinos, a male and female, have been translocated from Kaziranga National Park to Manas National Park in Assam. The translocation was carried out by a joint team of Assam Forest department, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and Wildlife Trust of India, an official of the Manas National Park said on Wednesday.

The rhinos were sent from Kaziranga on Sunday and released in Manas on Tuesday, the official said.

These rhinos were rescued during the 2016 floods in Assam and brought to the Centre for Wildlife Research and Conservation (CWRC) in Kaziranga, where rescued animals are hand-raised, rehabilitated, and sent back to the wild.

Priyanka appointed AICC gen secy for UP East

NEW DELHI, JAN 23 (PTI): Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was on Wednesday appointed Congress general secretary for Uttar Pradesh East, seen as a masterstroke reflecting the party’s intent to go whole hog in the politically crucial state.

The appointment also marked Priyanka’s official entry into politics, and is expected to boost morale of the party workers in the state which sends 80 MPs to Lok Sabha.

There has been demands within the Congress for a prominent role for 47-year-old Priyanka, Rahul’s sister, to revive the Congress in Uttar Pradesh which was a Congress bastion till mid 1980s.

Priyanka, a mother of two and wife of Robert Vadra, has always confined her role in overseeing campaigning in Amethi and Raebareli, the constituencies of Rahul and mother Sonia Gandhi respectively.



After the SP and BSP kept the Congress out of their anti-BJP alliance for the Lok Sabha polls in the state, the party announced that it will contest all 80 seats in the state.

At present, Congress has only two Lok Sabha seats of Amethi and Raebareli from Uttar Pradesh.

The party had joined hands with the SP in the assembly elections in 2017, but that alliance lost to the BJP. Congress won only seven seats in the 403-member assembly. In 2014 Lok Sabha polls, BJP had won 71 seats while its ally Apna

Dal came out victorious in two seats. The NDA had vote share of around 42 per cent in 2014 polls.

The Congress also replaced Ashok Gehlot as AICC general secretary (organisation) with K C venugopal. Jyotiraditya Scindia was appointed AICC general secretary for UP West.

Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad was appointed AICC general secretary in charge of Haryana, the party said.

Congress said Priyanka will take over as AICC general secretary for UP East in the first week of February.

BSF, cops on alert to check Rohingya infiltration: Tripura DGP



AGARTALA, JAN 23 (PTI): The BSF and the state police have increased vigilance along India-Bangladesh border to check infiltration of Rohingya Muslims, Director General of Police (DGP) Akhil Kumar Shukla said Wednesday, two days after 30 refugees were apprehended at Churaibari in Assam.

The immigrants, including 12 children, were on their way to Guwahati from Agartala in a bus Monday, when the Assam Police held them at Churaibari in Assam’s Karimganj district, about 200 km from here.

They were sent to jail by a district court Tuesday.

Last week, 31 Rohingyas were holed up behind the barbed wire fencing along the Bangladesh boundary in Tripura, as the border guards of both sides debated

over their status.

“The Border Security Force (BSF) and the state police have been put on alert to ensure that no new Rohingya Muslims enter into our territory through the India-Bangladesh international border,” Shukla said.

Tripura shares 856-km-long border with Bangladesh.

CL Belwa, the deputy inspector general of BSF (Tripura Frontier), said Rohingyas make their way to India through different routes in the east and then move to other parts of the country for job and livelihood.

The refugees, who were apprehended at Churaibari on Tuesday, had actually entered India through Assam, he said.

“They had come to Tripura to work in brick kilns, but their livelihood issues were not solved

here so they were returning to Assam again,” Belwa told PTI.

The 31 Rohingya Muslims, who were holed up in no-man’s land since January 18, have been handed over to Tripura Police by the BSF after talks with Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) failed.

They underwent a medical check-up and were later produced before a court in West Tripura district which sent them to 14-day judicial custody Tuesday.

More than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims fled Myanmar’s Rakhine state to neighbouring Bangladesh since August 2017 after a military crackdown, triggering a massive refugee crisis.

In October 2017, the Ministry of Home Affairs had urged all states to take immediate steps to identify and monitor Rohingya immigrants.



ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM SINGTAM

Memo No:-.....

Date:-.....

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Assistant Engineer-Singtam, Roads & Bridges Department Government of Sikkim, invites sealed tenders under single bid system from the eligible contractors of Class IV Grade enlisted with Sikkim Public Works Department vide Notification No: 515/R&B/PWD/Secy, dated 12.06.2018 and notification No. 556/R&B/PWD/Secy. dated: 28.08.2018 for the construction of fair weather roads, through competitive bidding within the territorial jurisdiction of the Concerned Ward of the Gram Panchayat Unit of West Pendum Constituency where the work is to be executed.

The details of works and time schedule are as under:

SL No.	Name of Work	Cost of Work put to tender (in Rs)	Earnest Money @ 2.50% (in Rs)	Cost of Tender documents (in Rs)	Completion Time
1	Const. of road from Chawribotey Phakli Mamjei Jukepani to Pendum School in East Sikkim.				
	Km 1st	Rs. 4238496.00	Rs.1,05,970.00	Rs. 1500.00	09 months
	Km 2nd.	Rs. 4238496.00	Rs.1,05,970.00	Rs. 1500.00	09 months
	Km 3rd.	Rs. 4238496.00	Rs.1,05,970.00	Rs. 1,500.00	09 months

TIME SCHEDULE:-

1	Date of submission of application with Bank receipt & TDR for issue of Tender Documents .	4th February, 2019 (10.00am to 4.00pm) at resective Gram Prashashan Kendra where work is to be executed.
2	Last Date and Time for submission of Tender:	6th. February, 2019 (10.00am to 1.00pm) at resective Gram Prashashan Kendra where work is to be executed.
3	Date and Time for Opening of Tender:	6th. February, 2019 (1:30 PM) at resective Gram Prashashan Kendra where work is to be executed.

CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT:

- Tender is open only to the eligible Contractors/Firms of appropriate Class/Area.
- The intending tenders/contractors should apply in writing for issue of tender documents. The application would be invariably be signed by the contractor himself/herself. The tender documents will not be issued to any person other than the INTENDING TENDER. The application shall be submitted initially for each works listed above with all required documents.
- The application should enclosed attested copies of the a) Goods & Services Tax Clearance Certificate (b) Validated/Updated Contractor Enlistment Certificate along the application. It is mandatory to produce the original validated/Updated Enlistment Certificate during sale/Issue of the Tender Documents for verification. \
- The prescribed Non-Transferable Tender Documents (excluding the Tender Form) can be obtain during the period specified in (As abovefrom the office of the Assistant Engineer-Singtam, Roads & Bridges Department, Singtam on production of requisite Bank Receipt of the State Bank of Sikkim towards the cost of Tender Documents (Non-Refundable) under the Head “0059-80-800” cost of Tender Form (Roads & Bridges).
- Earnest money deposit @ 2.50% in the State Bank of Sikkimshall be in the form of Deposit Receipt of Schedule Bank which includes deposits in the form of Temporary Deposit Receipt (TDR) in favour of the Accounts Officer, Roads & Bridges Department, NirmanBhawan, Gangtok. Tender Form shall be issued only on production of toward deposit receipts of 2.50% earnest money.
- The Tender documents, including the Tender Form with quoted offer should be placed in a sealed cover with the name of the tenderers and the name of work superscripted on it, supporting documents listed at Sl. No: (a) &(b)above should be enclosed with the offer.
- Sealed Tenders may be deposited in the Tender Box in the office of the Assistant Engineer-Singtam, Roads & Bridges Department, Singtam, on the date and within the time indicated above.
- Tenders shall be opened by a Tender Opening Committee as prescribed by the Government in the presence of the tenderers on the date and time indicated above.
- The Tenderer shouldsign on every page of the tender documents as Acceptance of the General Direction and Conditions of the contract and other laid down norms. The rate quoted should be both in figures and words and should be inclusive of GST and all other Taxes and Levies. Over writing and corrections should be avoided and if made should be authenticated. Incomplete/Conditional tenders shall be rejected forthwith.
- In case of any discrepancy in rate(s) printed in the schedule of Rates and Quantities issued with the tender documents, rates as per approved Schedule of Rates will be taken as correct. For items outside the Schedule of Rates (SOR), the rates shall be as per the technically checked estimate/analysis. Decision of the PCE-cum-Secretary/Head of the Department will be final in the regard.
- The work value, scope and quantum of the work are subjected to change; the contractor shall execute the work as per the directives of the Department. No claim on this account is entertained whatsoever. If any claim is made, it shall be as per the agreement rates.
- The Department reserves the rights to hold payments to the contractor unless test certificates are not produced by the contractor when called upon to do so.
- Avoidable damages due to negligence of the contractor shall be at his/her own risk and cost.The Department shall not be liable for payment of such damages (if any), including accidents to labour at site.14 The offer shall remain valid for a period for 90 (Ninety) days. The work should commence within 15 (fifteen) days form the issue of Work Order.
- All the conditions as mentioned in the NIT shall be deemed to a part of the agreement to be entered with the contractor. Security deposit shall be collected by deductions from the running bills of the contractor @ 5.00% of the value of work done.
- The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- The recoveries of Royalties on Forest Produce shall be as per rates notified by the Government from time to time and applicable on the date of payment. In no case, claim of any contractor for deduction as per rates incorporated in Analysis of Rates or Schedule of Rates on the date of tender shall be acceptable.
- Subletting of contract work is against the norms and it comes to the notice, the original contract shall be cancelled and appropriate action shall be initiated as per the rules.
- The Department also reserves the right to increase, decrease, alter or modify the item of works as indicated in the NIT without assigning any reason thereof.
- In case the man power employed by the contractors are from outside the State or neighboring countries, it shall be the responsibility of the contractors to get them registered with the Labour Department, Government of Sikkim as per the relevant Labour Laws.
- Use of explosive shall be regulated as under:
(a) Transportation, Handling, storage and use of Explosives (if necessary) shall be in accordance with the provision of the India Explosive Act and General Guidelines, Circulars issued by the department and other competent authorities on the subject from time to time.
(b) The rules and regulations issued by the Sikkim Public Works Department or any other competent authority shall strictly be adhered to with regard to transportation, storage; handling and use of explosives shall be maintained by the contractor.
- The contractor shall also make arrangement to have photographs of the works taken at least at three stages of the construction period i.e. beginning, middle and completion stages.
- Damage of properties in and around the work site must be avoided at all cost. The contractor shall be held responsible for any acts of negligence and shall be made to make good the damages.
- It is accepted to the tenderer to have inspected the site before submitting his/her bid. There may be possible site difficulties for which the tenderer should have their own correct assessment before submitting the bid.
- The cost of Stock materials supplied from the Departmental store will be deducted from the contractor’s bills as per rules.
- The bidders shall produce a Certificate of Residence from the concerned Gram Panchayat Unit where the work is to be executed.

R.O. No.: 608/IPR/PUB/Classi/18-19 Date: 21/01/19

Sd/- ASSISTANT ENGINEER SINGTAM SUB DIVISION ROADS & BRIDGES DEPARTMENT

CWG gold medallist weightlifter Sanjita's provisional suspension revoked

PHILEM DIPAK SINGH
NEW DELHI, JAN 23 (PTI): The International Weightlifting Federation has revoked the provisional suspension on weightlifter K Sanjita Chanu for a failed dope test, a major reprieve for the two-time Commonwealth Games gold-medallist who has claimed innocence.

In a case that has dragged on for almost a year and has been marred by an "administrative" goof-up in Sanjita's sample number, the IWF informed that a final decision on the matter is expected in the coming days.

"On the basis of the information at its disposal, the IWF has decided that the provisional suspension of the athlete (Khumukcham Sanjita) shall be lifted as of today (22 January 2019)," IWF's legal counsel Eva Nyirfa said in an e-mail sent to the national federation and Sanjita.

"The IWF Hearing Panel will render its decision on the athlete's case in due course," it added.

The 25-year-old Sanjita, who had won a gold in the women's 53kg category at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, had tested positive for anabolic steroid testosterone. Her urine sample was taken prior to the World Championships in United States in November 2017, and she was put under provisional suspension from May 15 last year. A final decision of the IWF panel is yet to come but Sanjita said her assertion of innocence has been vindicated.

"I have got a mail from the international federation and our national federation has also called me up this morning informing about the lifting of the (provisional) suspension. I am relieved and happy. I am innocent and I have never taken any banned substance in my career. I am vindicated now," she told PTI from her native place in Manipur. "At the same time, I experienced mental trauma during these past 8-9 months (since May 15 last year) due to the mistake of the international federation. I hope nothing like this happen to any athlete in future. An athlete's reputation is very precious," she added. Sanjita said the Indian Weightlifting Federation had asked her to join the national camp immediately if she wants.

"The federation official told me today to write if I want to join national camp. I am doing that. I missed the Asian Games and World Championships in 2018. I want to compete in the World Championships this year and qualify for 2020 Olympics. For any athlete, Olympics is the ultimate," she said.

The international body informed about her doping offence only in May last year. That meant the Manipuri weightlifter participated in the Gold Coast CWG, where she finished top of the podium. She had also won gold in the 48kg in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

Pressure on Brazil, Argentina as Copa America draw looms

SAO PAULO, JAN 23 (AFP): They may boast seven World Cup victories between them and two of the game's biggest stars in Lionel Messi and Neymar, but Argentina and hosts Brazil will be under immense pressure when the Copa America begins in June.

First they have a nerve-wracking wait ahead of Thursday's draw in Rio de Janeiro to see who they will face in the group stages.

Argentina haven't lifted a major tournament trophy in 26 years and while it has only been a dozen years for hosts Brazil, the trauma of their 2014 World Cup humiliation on home soil is still fresh in their collective memory.

The 7-1 thrashing inflicted by Germany in the semi-finals left a wound that only trophies could heal.

The two South American giants can ill afford a false step in such a competitive tournament.

Brazil failed to even make it out of the group stages last time around, their only victory coming against Haiti, while a 1-0 defeat to Peru sent them



packing. They haven't gone beyond the quarter-finals since last lifting the trophy in 2007.

As for Argentina, they have lost four of the last five finals, three of those in penalty shoot-outs, meaning Barcelona great Messi has never won a major international honor with his country.

Messi's participation is far from certain, though, as he

hasn't played for his country since Argentina were dumped out of the World Cup at the last 16 stage in Russia by eventual winners France.

They have played six friendlies since then, but Messi has stayed in Barcelona each time, allegedly to rest.

"I'm convinced that if he's selected, he'll play. It depends on the coach," Argentinian

federation president Claudio Tapia told TyCSports TV channel. Messi has retired from international duties before, following Argentina's penalty shoot-out loss to Chile in the Centenary final in the United States in 2016, only to reverse his decision a few months later to help guide a struggling Argentina to Russia. Their World Cup campaign was a

farce amid rumors of internal disputes between the coach, Jorge Sampaoli, and the players. Sampaoli has gone to be replaced by interim boss Lionel Scaloni, but so far Messi, who hasn't claimed to be retired this time, has stayed away.

- 'WE HAVE TO WIN' -

The pressure will be greatest on Brazil coach Tite, though, after he signed a new contract despite the Selecao's quarter-final elimination by Belgium at the World Cup. He's launched something of a revolution in terms of personnel since Russia. "We have to win," he told Estadao newspaper in November.

But he's not planning on ditching an expansive style based around vibrant young players in favor of a more pragmatic approach to trying to win the trophy. "I'll take the risk of losing and being fired," rather than compromising on his playing principles, he said.

The two powerhouse sides will be top seeds in the draw -- Brazil are ranked third in the FIFA world list, with Argentina 11th -- so at least they should be faced with a favor-

able pool. But as Brazil found out last time in finishing below Peru and Ecuador in their pool, there are no weak teams in South America. Uruguay, the other top seeds, are the most successful team in the competition's history with 15 titles, one more than Argentina.

Boasting the likes of Edinson Cavani of Paris Saint Germain and Barcelona's Luis Suarez, they reached the World Cup quarter-finals last year, only to lose to France.

Those players have won this competition before having last won the Copa in 2011.

Reigning two-time champions Chile will be in the pot of second seeds but led by Manchester United winger Alexis Sanchez they retain the kind of fire-power needed to go all the way once again.

Copa America it may be but this edition will have a distinctly Asian feel to it.

With one eye on the next World Cup in Qatar, the Gulf kingdom has been invited to the tournament for the first time, alongside Japan, who were also invitees in 1999, when they failed to win a game.

Indian women eye on-field success against NZ after end of off-field drama

NAPIER, JAN 23 (PTI): The Indian women's cricket team will aim to put behind the off-field fuurores and bring the focus back on the game when it clashes with New Zealand in a three-match ODI series starting Thursday. The Indian women's team was at the centre of a huge controversy after its semi-final exit in the T20 World Cup in the West Indies owing to a bitter public spat between ODI captain Mithali Raj and the then coach Ramesh Powar.

Mithali had accused Powar, whose interim tenure ended last year, of bias after she was dropped from the lost semifinal against England. She also accused Committee of Administrators' member Daina Edulji of trying to finish her career when the former captain backed her omission. Following the fiasco, WV Raman replaced Powar and this will be his first assignment at the helm. Mithali also had a fallout with T20 skipper and star batter Harmanpreet Kaur but asserted on the eve of the series that she has moved on from all the drama and is focussed on the task at hand.

The side would be aiming to improve its fifth position in the ICC championship table through this series, which is part of the world body's women's championship and will determine qualifiers for the 2021 World Cup.

India lost the home leg of the ICC Women's Championship series 2-1 to New Zealand during the last cycle that ran from 2014-2016.

However, the team has enough firepower in stylish opener Smriti Mandhana, who has already scored 488 runs in the championship.

"These matches are very going to be very important for us. India are presently at number five on the points table, so it is very important from that perspective that we gain as many points from this ODI series," Mithali said. "Beating New Zealand in the World Cup and the World T20, it

definitely gives us a psychological advantage, but again, we are playing in different conditions, we are playing in their backyard, so it is important that the team acclimatize to the conditions," she added. New Zealand are presently in second position on the table with 12 points from nine matches while India are fifth with eight points and ahead of Pakistan only on net run rate. Defending champions Australia lead the table with 16 points from nine outings.

The losses at the ICC Women's World Cup 2017 and the Women's World T20 last year put paid to New Zealand's hopes of qualifying for the knockouts.

They now get a chance to outdo India in home conditions, which will also help their chances of qualifying directly for the 2021 Women's World Cup, which will be competed here. The hosts and four other top teams will direct entries to the premier event two years from now.

"You can't afford to take any game or series lightly and we will be doing everything in our power to put our best performances on the park at home against India," captain Amy Satterthwaite said.

The skipper said she realises the importance of the series and the capability of the opposition while looking forward to the advantage of playing in home conditions.

New Zealand are without wicketkeeper-batter Katey Martin, who is unavailable due to work commitments, but have match-winners in the likes of former captain Suzie Bates and Sophie Devine, who leads the championship run table with 592 with three hundreds.

Spin bowler Leigh Kasperek is another one to look out for with 19 wickets in the championship so far.

"We respect the quality that the Indian side have across the board and won't be taking them lightly," Satterthwaite said.

India crush NZ by 8 wickets in first ODI after sun-induced stoppage

NAPIER, JAN 23 (PTI): India produced cricket of the calibre that has become synonymous with Virat Kohli's men to crush New Zealand in the first ODI but a bizarre and unprecedented sun-induced interruption overshadowed the on-field action here Wednesday.

Entering the five-match rubber following maiden Test and ODI series triumphs in Australia, India signalled their intent with a clinical display, which saw them chase down a revised target of 156 by eights wickets in 34.5 overs.

The Duckworth-Lewis method came into the picture for an interruption which was not caused by rain for the first time.

On a near-perfect day, the only thing that didn't go their way was the toss. But India made light of that by bowling out the home team for a paltry 157 in 38 overs.

Wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav was the most successful bowler, returning figures of 4/39 in 10 overs, while seamer Mohammed Shami finished with an excellent 3/19 in six overs. There were also two wickets for leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal.

Captain Kane Williamson top-scored for the hosts with 64 off 81 balls. In response, Shikhar Dhawan began the innings with a flurry of boundaries, eventually finishing as the top-scorer with 75 off 103 balls.

The left-handed



opening batsman, battling indifferent form, studied his innings with six boundaries.

India were comfortably placed at 44 for one when, in a bizarre turn of events, players walked off the ground after dinner because the setting sun made it difficult for them to spot the ball at McLean park.

This led to an interruption that has never been seen in international cricket before.

Because of the nearly half-an-hour delay, the target was revised to 156 in 49 overs, which the visitors chased without much ado.

While Rohit Sharma may have lost his focus after the dinner break, Kohli and Dhawan didn't let the sun-induced stoppage distract their minds when play resumed. Kohli, though, got out five short of a fifty.

The Indian captain hit three boundaries in

his 59-ball knock before pacer Lockie Ferguson had him caught behind with a quick delivery that caught the batsman by surprise.

In the course of his 26th ODI fifty, Dhawan became the joint fourth fastest batsman to reach 5000 runs. Dhawan needed 118 innings to reach the mark.

This knock will bring some relief for Dhawan as he hasn't scored a half century in his last nine innings.

Earlier, opting to bat, the New Zealanders were off to an inauspicious start, losing both openers Martin Gupthill and Colin Munro within the first five overs with just 18 runs on the board.

By sending back Gupthill in his 56th match, the 28-year-old Shami became the fastest Indian to reach 100 wickets in ODIs. Coming into the series after a hugely successful 2018, Ross Taylor

looked good in his 41-ball 24, but he was brilliantly caught and bowled by Chahal, who lured the batsman to dance down the pitch a tad too early with his change of pace.

Till Taylor was there alongside Williamson, things looked good for New Zealand, as the duo played a few delightful shots, especially the skipper whose trademark backfoot punch through the covers stood out.

Tom Latham was dismissed in similar fashion, with leg-spinner Chahal being the bowler.

Henry Nicholls and Mitchell Santner came, swung their willows for a six and a couple of boundaries, and got out to Jadhav and Shami respectively as New Zealand stuttered at 133 for six in the 30th over.

By that time, Williamson too had had enough, and got out while trying to hoick Yadav over long-on.

Shah Faesal launches crowdfunding campaign for 'clean politics' in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, JAN 23 (PTI): Former IAS officer Shah Faesal Wednesday launched a crowdfunding campaign for "clean politics and corruption-free administration" in Jammu and Kashmir.

The 2010-batch topper of the UPSC civil services exam said it was a people's movement for change.

"Be a part of this journey for clean politics and corruption-free administration in J&K. Support Shah Faesal with your small donations," he tweeted.

Faesal, who resigned from government service earlier this month, gave a bank account number for contributions and said payments could also be made through e-wallet.

He had said the resignation was to protest "unabated killings in Kashmir, and lack of any sincere reach-out from the Union government; the marginalisation and invisibilisation of around 200 million Indian Muslims at the hands of Hindutva forces reducing them to second-class citizens; insidious attacks on the special identity of J&K and growing culture of intolerance and hate in mainland India in the name of hypernationalism".

While he has made it clear that he would like to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, Faesal has not joined any political party so far. Speculation is rife that he might float a new political outfit.

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Bolt hanging up boots on football dream

KINGSTON (JAMAICA), JAN 23 (AFP): Usain Bolt is giving up on his dream of forging a career as a professional footballer following his try-out last year with Australian side Central Coast Mariners.

In remarks reported by Jamaican media outlets on Tuesday, the eight-time Olympic sprint champion following his try-out last year with Australian side Central Coast Mariners.

The 32-year-old ath-

letics icon had told reporters last month he had not given up hope of becoming a footballer. However at an event in Kingston on Monday, Bolt said he now planned to concentrate on his business career.

"I don't want to say it wasn't dealt with properly, but I think we went about it, not the way we should and you learn your lesson, you live and you learn," he was quoted by Television Jamaica as

saying. "It was a good experience. I really enjoyed just being in a team and it was must different from track and field and it was fun while it lasted.

"The sports life is over, so I'm now moving into different businesses, I have a lot of things in the pipeline, so as I say, I'm just dabbling in everything and trying to be a business man now."

Bolt was speaking as he handed over a 1 million

cheque to help fund Jamaica's team at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in the United Arab Emirates in March.

The star of the Beijing, London and Rio de Janeiro Olympics meanwhile said he was concerned at failure of a new generation of Jamaican sprinters to emerge following his 2017 retirement. Bolt questioned whether young athletes in Jamaica handed lucra-

tive contracts were being given too much too soon.

"A lot of these athletes I think it's much easier now for them," he said.

"When we were coming up it was a struggle, we didn't get big contracts when we left high school. "I think a lot of the athletes aren't motivated any more. When they leave high school and they get a big contract they are happy with whatever.

Thai king signs decree approving first election since coup

BANGKOK, JAN 23 (AFP): Thailand's king has issued a royal decree endorsing the first general election since a 2014 coup, the palace said Wednesday, with the date of the long-delayed poll expected to be announced imminently.

The decree, published in the Royal Gazette, called for a general "election of members of parliament" and gives the kingdom's Election Commission five days to announce when it will hold the much-anticipated poll.

The election will be the first since the junta toppled the administration of Yingluck Shinawatra nearly five years ago, rewriting the constitution, muzzling dissent and appointing key military allies across the bureaucracy.

The junta had said polls would be held no later than the end of February, but the late signing by 66-year-old King Maha Vajiralongkorn may mean elec-



tions are put back for several weeks.

The decree means campaigning can officially start, although an array of new parties -- including some aligned to the military, others to the still powerful Shinawatra clan -- have already begun meetings and recruitment.

Analysts say the military is positioning itself for a return to govern-

ment through its proxy party with junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha angling for a role as civilian leader after the election.

The army-linked Phalang Pracharat party led by members of the junta's cabinet held a recruiting drive in the traditional rural base of Yingluck and her brother Thaksin, who was toppled by an earlier coup in 2006. Questions remain

about whether Pheu Thai, the Shinawatras' main party, still draws the loyalty of its vote banks in the poor, rural north and northeast without the star power of its brother-sister duo.

Both remain in self-exile to avoid convictions they say are politically motivated.

Thaksin has launched a weekly podcast sharing his views on Thai society

and economy, while Yingluck has embarked on several rounds of photo ops. Even if the junta rivals do well in elections, any new civilian government is expected to be hamstrung by the military-scripted constitution.

It allows for an upper house to be fully appointed by the junta rubber-stamp assembly, while embedding 20-year strategies governing everything from the economy to education policy. "You can call it hybrid democracy," said Somjai Phagaphasvivat, a political analyst and academic at Thammasat University.

The uncertainty over the election date prompted small demonstrations in Bangkok this month, but analysts do not expect an immediate return to the violent, paralysing street protests that defined Thailand's politics since the fall of Thaksin.

The election is expected to be held before the coronation of Thailand's king in early May.

Sharif's condition very serious, says his doctor



M ZULQERNAIN LAHORE, JAN 23 (PTI): Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's condition is "very serious" after heart complications and he should be shifted to hospital without any delay, his doctor said on Wednesday.

Sharif, 69, who is serving a seven-year imprisonment in a Lahore jail, was rushed to a hospital from Kot Lakhpat jail on Tuesday after he complained of heart related complications.

He was later discharged from hospital and taken back to jail following medical tests. Doctors of the Punjab Institute of Cardiology Lahore, where his medical tests were conducted, said Sharif's condition was "not very serious", but suggested "aggressive medication" and regular medical follow-ups to avoid cardiac complications.

However, Sharif's cardiologist Adnan Khan termed his condition as "very serious and said he should be shifted to hospital without any delay.

"Nawaz Sharif's treatment at jail is not possible because of his heart complications. He should be shifted to hospital forthwith so that he is

properly taken care of," Khan said.

"Even a special medical board that earlier examined Mr Sharif had suggested shifting him to hospital for treatment but the government did not heed to the suggestion," he said.

Sharif's stress thalium test -- a nuclear imaging test that shows how well blood flows into one's heart -- suggests "post stress LV pump/contraction 56 per cent which is almost normal", according to his medical reports.

The report says that the left ventricle, the main pumping chamber of the heart, is damaged on the lower left wall, it says.

Expressing concern about Sharif's health, his daughter Maryam tweeted: "My only source of information on what is happening to my father is the media only."

Sharif's brother Shahbaz Sharif asked the government to provide best healthcare facilities to the three-time prime minister.

A special medical board that examined Sharif in jail last week observed "he is not completely well" as more investigations (tests) are required before suggest-

ing treatment for him.

According to the report of the special medical board, "Patient Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, 69, examined by the special medical board is a known case of diabetes Mellitus and hypertension for the last 10 years. He is also known case of Ischemic heart disease since 2001."

Sharif underwent Coronary Angioplasty (PCI) twice in 2001 and 2017. He also had open heart surgery twice in 2011 and 2016 (no medical record/documents are available for these above said procedures at the time of examination), it says.

The board says after evaluating these test reports and availability of previous cardiac medical record further management plan will be proceeded.

Sharif was shifted to the Kot Lakhpat jail on December 25, a day after he was sentenced by the accountability court in Islamabad to seven years' imprisonment in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills case.

A disqualification of 10 years from holding any public office is part of the sentences awarded to the three times prime minister of the country.

After Ayyappa darshan, Kanakadurga forced to take refuge at One Stop centre after finding house locked

PERINTHALMANNA (KER), JAN 23 (PTI): Facing stiff opposition from relatives for offering prayers at the Sabarimala temple, Kanakadurga was forced to take shelter at a One Stop centre here after she found that her house was locked and her family members had shifted to another building, police said.

A police official said the 44-year-old also filed a petition in a court here under the Domestic Violence Act, stating she had the right to stay at her husband's home. Police sources said Kanakadurga went to her husband's house when she was discharged from the Kozhikode medical college, where she was treated after allegedly being assaulted by her mother-in-law for entering the temple.

When she reached there, she found the house locked, the sources said. Her husband and other relatives had shifted to a rented building, the police said, adding Kanakadurga then took refuge at the One Stop Centre here.

Kanakadurga, an employee of the Civil Supplies Department, had scripted history along with Bindu, a college lecturer and CPI(M) ML activist, on January 2 by offering prayers at the Ayyappa shrine, where traditionally women in the 10-50 age group were barred from entering.

The Supreme Court had in a historic verdict last year lifted the centuries old ban and allowed women of all age groups to offer prayers at the temple. The two were the first women of menstrual age to offer prayers at the Lord Ayyappa shrine after the SC verdict. Perinthalamanna Circle Inspector T S Binu said she was being provided round-the-clock security as directed by the apex court.

Pak court temporarily halts Mumbai attack case hearing

SAJJAD HUSSAIN ISLAMABAD, JAN 23 (PTI): A Pakistani has temporarily halted the hearing of the 2008 Mumbai attack case to let the prosecutor produce more witnesses.

Ten Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists had sailed into Mumbai from Karachi and carried out coordinated attacks, killing 166 people and injuring over 300 in November 2008.

The trial, underway in an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan against seven activists, has made little headway in more than 10 years as the Pakistani establishment has been claiming lack of enough evidence against them.

A divisional bench of Islamabad High Court, comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhter Kiyani, on Tuesday conducted hearing on a petition by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) seeking stay on anti-terrorism court proceedings.

The Express Tribune reported that the court initially granted one week stay in trial of the Mumbai attack case to let the prosecutor to summon some of the 19 witnesses for testimony.

During the hearing, FIA prosecutor Akram Qureshi appeared in the court.

Justice Kiyani remarked several wit-

nesses were not appearing due to fear and the whereabouts of some others were unknown.

The FIA prosecutor told the bench that many witnesses had been traced out. Justice Kiyani inquired if those witnesses will appear in the court to which Qureshi said some of the witnesses have been traced and they are ready to appear before court.

Justice Amir Farooq inquired about the next date of hearing in the trial court. The FIA prosecutor replied the case is set for hearing on Wednesday (January 23) in the anti-terrorism court (ATC), while requesting for a stay on

the hearing.

The court accepted the request and suspended proceedings of the ATC till the next week. The court directed the registrar to set the hearing of the case in the next week.

Seven LeT suspects -- Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, Abdul Wajid, Mazhar Iqbal, Hamad Amin Sadiq, Shahid Jamil Riaz, Jamil Ahmed and Younis Anjum -- are facing charges of abetment to murder, attempted murder, planning and executing the Mumbai attack since 2009.

Except Lakhvi, the other six are kept in the high-security Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi.

Putin and Erdogan to hold Syria talks

MOSCOW, JAN 23 (AFP): Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan will hold Syria talks in Moscow on Wednesday, with Turkey saying they will focus on Ankara's so-called "security zone" in northern Syria.

The two leaders are on opposite sides of the conflict: Russia provides critical support to the Syrian government, while Turkey has backed rebel groups fighting President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

Despite this, they have worked closely to find a political solution to the seven-year conflict.

Russia and Turkey have agreed to coordinate ground operations in Syria following US President Donald Trump's shock announcement on pulling 2,000 American troops out of Syria last month.

In a speech on Monday, Erdogan said he would discuss with Putin the creation of a Turkish-controlled "security zone" in northern Syria, suggested by Trump.

The US-allied Kurds, who control much of northern Syria, have re-



jected the idea, fearing a Turkish offensive against territory under their control.

Moscow, a long time supporter of Assad, is likely to oppose the plan, with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov last week saying Damascus must take control of the country's north.

Nearly eight years into Syria's deadly conflict, the US pullout has led to another key step in Assad's Russian-backed drive to reassert control over the country.

Kurdish forces who were left exposed by Trump's pledge to withdraw US troops have asked the Syrian regime for help to face a threat-

ened Turkish offensive.

The Kremlin hailed the entry by Syrian forces into the key northern city of Manbij for the first time in six years after Kurds opened the gates.

Moscow plans to organise a three-way summit with Turkey and Iran at the beginning of this year as part of the Astana peace process, launched by the three countries in 2017.

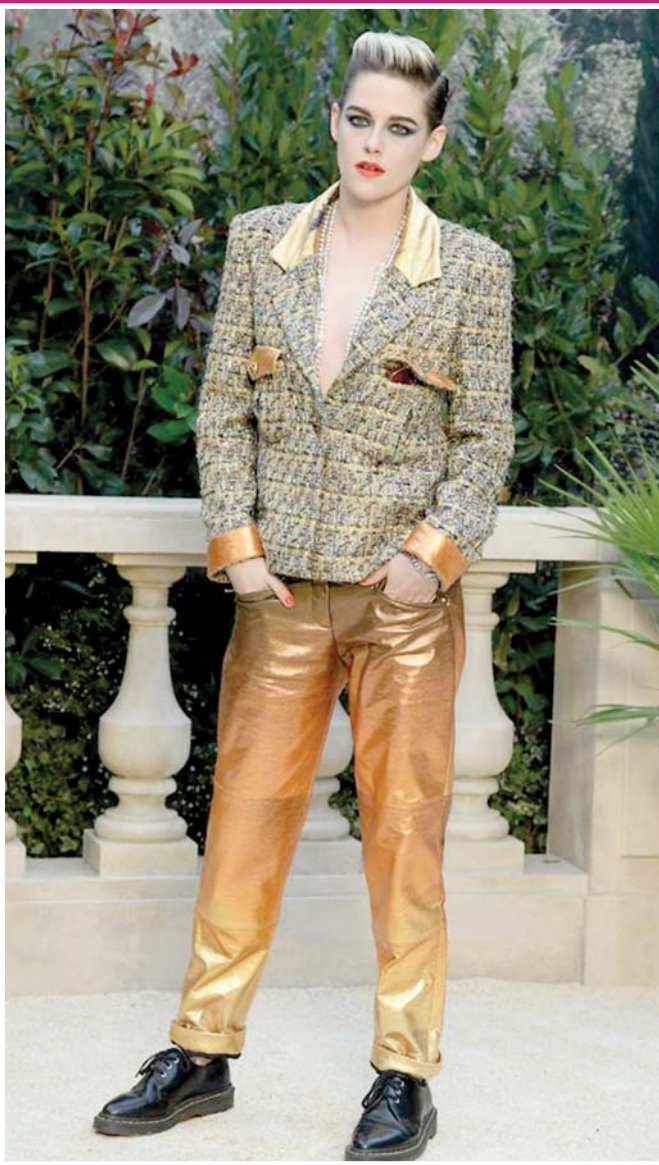
"So far, no date has been set but after negotiations with Erdogan, we will begin preparations for the trilateral summit," Putin's foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov told reporters last week.

The last meeting be-

tween Putin, Erdogan and Iran's Hassan Rouhani took place in Iran in September last year with the fate of the rebel-held Idlib province dominating the agenda.

Ties between Russia and Turkey plunged to their lowest level in years in November 2015 when Turkish forces shot down a Russian warplane over Syria.

But after a reconciliation deal in 2016, relations have recovered with remarkable speed with Putin and Erdogan cooperating closely over Syria, Turkey buying Russian-made air defence systems and Russia building Turkey's first nuclear power plant.



VIVID SUNSET: Actress Kristen Stewart is spotted wearing a yellow tweed blazer with ombre and metallic yellow-orange pants during the Chanel Haute Couture show at Paris Fashion Week.

Karan Johar apologises for Pandya-Rahul 'Koffee with Karan' episode

MUMBAI, JAN 23 (PTI): Breaking his silence on the controversy following comments by cricketers Hardik Pandya and K L Rahul on his chat show, filmmaker Karan Johar says he apologises for what happened and admits the conversation "may have crossed boundaries".

The filmmaker also said he feels very responsible for the remarks made on "Koffee with Karan" and has spent sleepless nights wondering how to "undo this damage".

Pandya and Rahul were widely slammed for their remarks labelled misogynistic and sexist and have been provisionally suspended by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), pending an inquiry.

"I'm not justifying the conversation that happened on the episode. I'm saying that perhaps things were said that may have crossed boundaries and I apologise because it was my platform where it happened," Johar told ET Now in an interview.

The filmmaker, who is in Davos for the World Economic Forum, said the boys have "paid the price" for what happened on the episode.

"I haven't spoken about it really... I feel very responsible because it was my show and

my platform. I invited them as guests and so the ramifications and repercussions of the show are my responsibility.

"I have had so many sleepless nights, just wondering about how I can undo this damage. Who is going to listen to me? It has now gone into a zone that is beyond my control," Johar told the channel in the interview posted on Twitter on Wednesday.

Calling himself a feminist who has been brought up by strong women, Johar said he asks the same questions to everyone.

"I don't defend myself when I say this, the questions I asked the two boys are the questions I ask everyone, including women. When Deepika (Padukone) and Alia (Bhatt) were on the show, I asked them those questions.

"I have no control over the answers that come my way. And post the show, I have a control room of about 16-17 girls. The show 'Koffee with Karan' is run entirely by women. I'm the only man there. None of them came up (with issues)." According to Johar, some of them thought Pandya was wild, "crazy or cracked" and some said he was funny too.

"No one came and told me that 'Karan, this is inappropriate'," he added.

'Roma' and 'The Favourite' lead 91st Academy Awards nominations with 10 each

Mexican filmmaker Alfonso Cuarón's semi-autobiographical black-and-white drama, "Roma", and Yorgos Lanthimos' dark comedy, "The Favourite", have topped the 91st Academy Awards nominations with 10 nods each.

"Roma", Cuarón's memoir of childhood set in 1970s Mexico City, scored nominations in best picture, best director (Cuarón), best actress (Yalitza Aparicio), best supporting actress (Marina De Tavira), best foreign language film, cinematography (Cuarón), original screenplay, sound mixing, sound editing and production design categories.

The film has also created history by becoming the first Netflix project to get nominated in the best picture category where it will compete with "Black Panther", "The Favourite", "Vice", "Green Book", "A Star Is Born", "BlackKkKlansman" and "Bohemian Rhapsody".

"Black Panther", the Marvel blockbuster, became the first superhero film to be nominated in the best picture category.

Cuarón, who has previously won the Best Director Oscar for his space-survival drama "Gravity", will be vying for his second Academy Award. He will go up against Spike Lee, ("BlackKkKlansman"), Pawel Pawlikowski, ("Cold War"), Yorgos Lanthimos, ("The Favourite") and Adam McKay, ("Vice").

Lanthimos' "The Favourite", which revolves around 18th century British monarch Queen Anne, has bagged nominations in best actress (Olivia Colman), best supporting actress (Emma Stone and Rachel Weisz), original screenplay, costume design, film editing, production design and cinematography categories, apart from best picture and best director nods.

For the Best Actress trophy, Colman is pitted against Glenn Close (The Wife), Lady Gaga ("A Star Is Born"), Melissa McCarthy ("Can You Ever Forgive Me?") and Aparicio for "Roma".

The two films are closely followed by Adam McKay's political satire "Vice" and Bradley Cooper's directorial debut "A Star Is Born" with eight nominations each.

Starring Christian Bale as former US Vice President Dick Cheney, "Vice" will be competing in the categories -- best director, best actor, best picture, best supporting actress (Amy Adams), best supporting actor (Sam Rockwell), original screenplay, film editing and makeup and hairstyling.

Bale, who previously won best supporting actor Oscar in 2011 for "The Fighter" has received his fourth Oscar

nomination. He faces a tough challenge from Cooper ("A Star Is Born"), Rami Malek ("Bohemian Rhapsody"), Viggo Mortensen ("Green Book") and William Dafoe ("At Eternity's Gate").

The eight nods, which "A Star Is Born" has received, also includes best adapted screenplay, original song, cinematography, best supporting actor (Sam Elliott) and sound mixing.

In the best supporting actress category, Adams is nominated alongside Marina De Tavira ("Roma"), Regina King ("If Beale Street Could Talk") and Stone and Weisz for "The Favourite".

Rockwell, who has been nominated in the best supporting actor category for

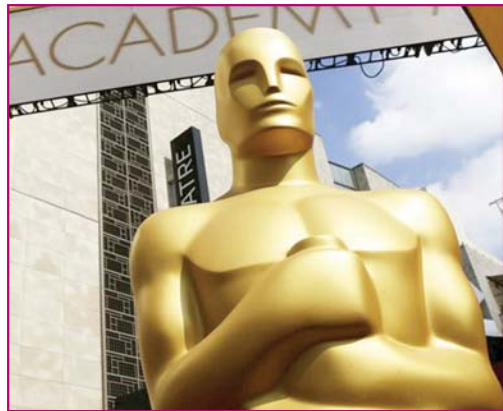
trophy.

India-set short film "Period. End of Sentence" produced by Guneet Monga's Sikhya Entertainment, has also received an Oscar nod in the Documentary Short Subject category.

For the Original Song Oscars, Gaga is the front-runner with "Shallow". "Black Panther's" "All the Stars" is also nominated in the category.

In the Original Score section, "Black Panther" is nominated alongside "BlackKkKlansman", "If Beale Street Could Talk", "Isle of Dogs" and "Mary Poppins Returns".

The Oscar nominations were announced on Tuesday by Kumail Nanjiani



the second consecutive year, will face off against Mahershala Ali ("Green Book"), Adam Driver ("BlackKkKlansman"), Elliott ("A Star Is Born") and Richard E Grant ("Can You Ever Forgive Me?").

Both Rockwell and Ali have previously won Oscars for their supporting act in "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" (2018) and "Moonlight" (2017) respectively.

Cuarón, who has led the award season with "Roma", will face a stiff challenge from Poland's "Cold War" in the Best Foreign Language Film category. Other films nominated in the section are "Shoplifters" (Japan), "Capernaum" (Lebanon) and "Never Look Away" (Germany).

The Best Animated Film category is once again dominated by Disney and Pixar with "The Incredibles 2" and "Ralph Breaks the Internet". Wes Anderson's "Isle of Dogs", Sony's Golden Globe-winner "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" and Japanese animation "Mirai" are also competing for the

And Tracee Ellis Ross.

The 91st Academy Awards will be held on February 25. No host has been decided for the ceremony yet, after Kevin Hart stepped down following a controversy over his old homophobic tweets.

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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ARIES: An Aries can only take so much "adulthood" before your alarm bells go off—and that's when you have to rebel! If you don't want to burn any bridges, forget about being the de facto grownup in the room today. Shock jock Uranus in Aries and your first house of self-expression gets into a dust-up with messenger Mercury in Capricorn and your maturity zone. If you're feeling suppressed, you could act out or be tempted to go off on your stupefied squad. Don't let it get to that point!

TAURUS: Caution: Mind games ahead! Today's tricky tango involves mental Mercury in your independent ninth house and unpredictable Uranus in your shadowy twelfth. Look out! Flattery could get a scheming person everywhere with you now. You're going to need to stay on the tippy-toes of your high tops if you don't want to fall for a smooth pitch.

GEMINI: Your allegiance may be tested today, Gemini, as radical Uranus in your community zone clashes with social Mercury in your possessive eighth house. Though YOU may want to remain impartial and just be "friends

with everybody," your refusal to take sides could damage some important relationships.

CANCER: Don't pay the price of being too nice today as ebullient Mercury in your partnership house clashes with chaotic Uranus in your ambition zone. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity could present itself. The trouble is, someone you care about might also be reaching for the same brass ring.

LEO: Goals, goals, goals! Nothing wrong with setting a lofty benchmark for yourself. But in your high-key zeal to do something extraordinary, did you create an unrealistic plan? If you're exhausted at the mere thought of getting started, consider it a sign. Then break your epic mission down into "micro-resolutions." What would the first phase look like? What smaller milestones could you tick off first to boost your confidence?

VIRGO: Duck, Virgo! Cupid wings in on a wonky flight path today, thanks to a complicated connection between electric Uranus in your erotic eighth house and your ruler, flirty Mercury, in your romantic fifth. Under these skies, it's easy to confuse a better-than-average

age hookup with "happily ever after."

LIBRA: Unfiltered Libra is on the loose—and things could get personal! Spontaneous Uranus is tearing through your relationship house, setting you free of constraining thoughts and limitations. But today, he'll clash with unfiltered Mercury in your ultra-sensitive fourth house. One wrong look or under-the-breath remark might be all it takes to throw your scales out of balance.

SCORPIO: First impressions are hard to undo, Scorpio, but admit it: You CAN be a little quick to write people off. Today, as spontaneous Uranus in your charitable sixth house nudges Mercury in your friendship zone, you may feel gracious enough to proffer a second chance. Observe people in action. You might see a different side of the "superficial retail addict" or the "amateur hour comedian" who just can't stop with the dad jokes.

SAGITTARIUS: It's great that you've learned the joy of a routine, Sagittarius, but in the process, have you forgotten the power of the pleasure principle? Renegade Uranus

in your glamorous fifth house wags a (nail-art-adorned) finger at Mercury in your sensible second house. Pull yourself out of a rut by infusing your daily rituals with more fun. Better yet, shake up those structures altogether!!

CAPRICORN: Can someone else be the adult today, please? Push aside your structured nature and let spontaneity be your guide. Free-range Capricorn can discover some fascinating new things! One catch: Don't shut down your devices without informing friends and family of your whereabouts. Cranky Uranus in Aries and your fourth house of family will be throwing shade at mobile Mercury today, which means your inner circle will not take kindly to you ignoring their texts.

AQUARIUS: When making plans, don't overcommit. Your moods will fluctuate wildly today as your co-ruler, communal Uranus, gets checked by frenetic Mercury. Even if you start off excited about an event, your energy and interest may flag. When you've gotta go, you've GOT TO GO, Aquarius, so don't force yourself to be polite and

linger on...not unless you want to risk snapping at someone you love dearly. If you've spent too much time alone lately, do something "solitary within a crowd," like going to the movies after work or relaxing at a yin yoga class with a sound bath.

PISCES: Count your cryptocurrency, Pisces—and don't be so quick to pull out the plastic. Your taste for life's treasures needs to be balanced against your 2019 budgetary restraints. Review your statements and map out your expenses and income for the quarter. (This can be an affirming process!) With detail-driven Mercury in your innovative eleventh house, you could download some powerful visions for making money without selling your soul. But over the next two days, erratic Uranus in your finance sector will throw the cosmic messenger a curveball. Retail therapy urges will be strong; and good luck "window shopping" if you let your type that tempting URL into your browser. Resist the first splurge by putting your focus on people over things.