



SALMAN LOSES COOL, SNATCHES FAN'S PHONE AT GOA AIRPORT
pg 08

HOW CONTAGIOUS IS THE WUHAN CORONAVIRUS AND CAN YOU SPREAD IT BEFORE SYMPTOMS START?

04

I DON'T LIKE WHEN PEOPLE SAY 'WOH ZAMAANA ACHHA THA': PANDIT JASRAJ

pg 08



SummitTIMES

Vol 05 | Issue 25 | Gangtok | Wednesday | 29 January 2020

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

Bangladeshis discover Sikkim

Foreign tourist figures double in 2019

REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 28 JAN: What could have ended a lacklustre tourist season, appears to have been salvaged by Bangladeshi tourists who not only made up the majority of

foreign visitors to Sikkim in 2019 but also doubled the number of foreign visitors to the state.

60,542 Bangladeshis visited Sikkim in 2019 making up nearly half of the 1.33 lakh foreign tourists Sikkim hosted last year.

In 2018, the total number of foreign tourists was 65,020.

This comes after the Centre lifted restric-

tions on Bangladeshis visiting Sikkim and some other Indian states on 21 Nov, 2018.

"Since Bangladeshi tourists have been allowed to visit Sikkim, they have overtaken tourists from Nepal. Since 2014, Nepal had been the leader among foreign visitors," said Deputy Director for Tourism department, Mikme Tasho.

Sikkim received

56,781 Nepalese tourists in 2019. The previous year, 2018, at 55,946 Nepalese tourists were the leaders among the 71,172 foreign tourists who visited Sikkim.

Mr Tasho also said that the tourist volume last year was good but did not meet expectations.

When it comes to domestic tourists, figures were only available from Jan-Sept 2019 and in

these nine months Sikkim received 11,964,68 domestic tourists. In 2018, Sikkim received around 14 lakh domestic tourists.

The data is compiled from the checkposts on quarterly basis and figures for the last three months of 2019 will probably come in February, said Tourism department joint secretary Bandana Chettri.

Meeting discusses State's Corona Virus preparedness



GANGTOK, 28 JAN (IPR): A meeting was convened by the State Chief Secretary, SC Gupta to discuss the State's preparedness with regard to the Corona Virus today.

The meeting was attended by Director General of Police, A Shankar Rao, Principal Secretary, Health Department, K Sreenivasulu, and heads of concerned departments namely RDD, Transport Department, UDHD, Commerce & Industries, Tourism & Civil Aviation, Animal Husbandry, Information & Public Relations, representatives of Travel Agents Association of Sikkim, Sikkim Hotels and Restaurant Association, Drivers' Association and other stakeholders.

Chief Secretary, SC Gupta, in his address said that the meeting was convened to seek preventive measures and caution against any suspected case of Corona Virus, and to assess the preparedness for prevention of any outbreak. He urged the heads of departments and all stakeholders to be alert and work in close coordination.

DG cum Principal Director, Health, Dr PT Bhutia briefed about the current status of Corona Virus and countries affected by it, and also apprised about the precautionary measures already in place under the supervision of the State Health Department, especially in the

border areas of Rangpo and Singtam, and parts of West Sikkim.

He also laid down the Do's and Don'ts for everyone to take into serious consideration for effective prevention. Dr Bhutia reiterated that there was no need to panic as the Virus has not entered India.

However, he maintained that any symptom of Corona Virus, such as running nose, severe cold and cough should immediately be reported to the nearest health facility.

All the heads of departments along with the DGP informed about their responsibilities in spreading awareness and disseminating information in their respective sectors.

TNA's Ayushi wins Gold Medal at UN's Global Action Summit

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 28 JAN:

Ayushi Dahal, a class X student at Tashi Namgyal Academy, represented the country at the United Nations Global Action Summit for Sustainable Development Goals at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 23 to 25 Jan.

The daughter of Mamta Awasthy and Kiran Dahal, Ayushi was not only the youngest participant among those from 39 countries, but also impressed with the quality of her presentation at the Summit and was recognized as United Nations Global Goals-India Ambassador and conferred the gold medal.

DEAR READERS,
IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE GETTING YOUR COPY OF THE SUMMIT TIMES IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD, PLEASE MESSAGE OR WHATSAPP US YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS AT 9832556698 AND WE WILL ENSURE THAT THE NEWSPAPER REACHES YOU.

Kalimpong District Court pronounces its first death sentence

SUMMIT REPORT

KALIMPONG, 28 JAN:

Kalimpong District and Sessions Court has pronounced its first death sentence to one Surjei Bhujel [34] for killing his sister-in-law and two nephews.

This is the first death sentence for Kalimpong after becoming a district on 14 February 2017.

Kalimpong District and Sessions Court on Tuesday pronounced the death sentence to Bhujel, resident of Jaldhaka Basme Gaon under Kalimpong district, who was accused of killing

his sister-in-law in order to get his deceased brother's job. After his brother died, his sister-in-law, Junita Bhujel, had got the deceased's job at a Cinchona plantation on compassionate grounds.

On the night of 03 Feb 2018, Bhujel had slit Junita's throat and his two nephews Akhrit Bhujel (8) and Atith Bhujel (6). He had also threatened his parents not to speak of the murders. On the following day, Junita's sister, Nima Doma Sherpa had filed a police complaint.

Bhujel had been

booked under section 302 of Indian Penal Code, said Public Prosecutor, Prem Pradhan who also informed that there were 18 witnesses.

This is the first time that capital punishment has been pronounced, he said.

In the 85-page order, Sessions Judge Parthasarthi Mukhopadhyay said that men do not kill three animals in one go even in a slaughter house.

The order has been sent to Calcutta High Court for approval, it is learnt.

Sikkim at Dr T Ao North East Football Championship

Sikkim loses finals, wins best goalkeeper and midfielder awards

SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 28 JAN:

Sikkim's dream to lift the champion's trophy of the prestigious Dr T Ao North East Football Championship crashed once again when it went down to Mizoram by a lone goal in the contesting final match of the tournament played at IG Stadium in Kohima, Nagaland on Tuesday evening.

Sikkim was playing the finals of this prestigious tournament for the third time but it has to again console itself with the runners-up trophy in the 9th edition of the tournament.

The first half of the match ended in a goalless draw. Both teams missed some good opportunities



to take an early lead in the second half.

In the meanwhile, David Lalrinmuana scored the only and winning goal for Mizoram in the 75th minute. Sikkim players responded with a tough fight but could not score any goal in the match.

Sikkim received the

runners-up trophy and cash prize of Rs 6 lakh.

Sikkim's goalkeeper, Urgen Pintso Sherpa was adjudged Best Goalkeeper of the tournament and Sikkim's midfielder, Kilp Namgyal Barfungpa received the Best Midfielder trophy.

Sikkim team manag-

er, Arjun Rai expressed that the state team played very hard in the entire match but could not score any goal despite of its wonderful performance. He also thanked local spectators for supporting the team throughout the match.

EC notice to Thakur over controversial remark

NEW DELHI, JAN 28 (PTI):

The Election Commission (EC) issued a show-cause notice to Union minister Anurag Thakur on Tuesday for his "desh ke gaddaron ko" slogan at a poll meeting here, saying prima facie the remarks had the "potential of disturbing communal harmony" and the BJP MP had violated the election code and electoral law.

Thakur has been asked to respond to the notice before 12 noon on January 30 (Thursday), "failing which the commission shall take a decision without any reference to you".

In the show-cause notice, the EC referred to section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, dealing with attempts to promote enmity or hatred between different classes of citizens on the grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language.

The notice also said the EC received a report from the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) on Tuesday, which said Thakur chanted "desh ke gaddaron ko" and the crowd responded, saying "goli maro sa*** ko" (shoot down the traitors) several times, while addressing a public meeting in Delhi's Rithala Assembly constituency on Monday.

It said the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader also made "certain other objectionable statements" at the meeting.

turn to pg 02

Restrict political parties from fielding candidates with criminal antecedents, says a plea in SC

NEW DELHI, JAN 28 (PTI):

A PIL in the Supreme Court has sought directions for restricting political parties from fielding candidates against whom charges have been framed in serious offences, saying that allowing criminals to contest and become legislators is extremely serious for democracy.

It has sought directions for every political party to put up complete details of the contesting candidates on the home page of its website, and publish criminal antecedents in three most watched news channels between 9 am to 9 pm and three most circulated newspapers two days before the day of polling.

The petition, filed by

BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay through lawyer Ashwani Kumar Dubey, said that a person against whom charges have been framed cannot become a doctor or an engineer but can become a legislator.

It has sought insertion of an additional condition that "political party shall not set up candidate with criminal antecedents" in Paragraph 6A "Conditions for recognition as a State Party", Paragraph 6B "Conditions for recognition as a National Party" and Paragraph 6C "Conditions for continued recognition as a National or State Party" of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.

It has also sought

directions to introduce a definition that "candidate with criminal antecedents means a person against whom charges have been framed at least one year before the date of scrutiny of nominations for an offence with maximum punishment of five years or more" in paragraph 2 of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.

Besides, it said, the Election Commission should introduce a definition in paragraph 2 of the Order that a candidate with criminal antecedents means a person against whom charges have been framed at least one year before

turn to pg 02

Amazon, Flipkart need to establish system for collecting plastic waste: CPCB to NGT

NEW DELHI, JAN 28 (PTI): E-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart need to fulfil their extended producer responsibility under the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 and need to establish a system for collecting back the plastic waste generated due to the packaging of their products, the Central Pollution Control Board told the NGT on Tuesday.

The apex pollution monitoring body told the National Green Tribunal that as per provisions 9(2) of the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, "Primary responsibility for collection of used multi-layered plastic sachet or pouches or packaging is of Producers, Importers and Brand Owners who introduce the products in the market."

"Amazon Retail India Private Limited and Flipkart Private limited are involved in packaging and selling of other companies' products and thus introducing plastic packaging in the market. They need to fulfil their extended pro-

ducer responsibility under PWM Rules and should obtain registration as brand owner after submitting proper documents," CPCB said.

The submission came in response to a plea filed by a 16-year-old boy who has approached the tribunal to stop e-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart from excessive plastic use in their packaging.

Aditya Dubey, through his legal guardian, has pleaded the NGT to direct Amazon and Flipkart to stop excessive use of plastic in packaging the goods delivered by the firms.

"The e-commerce companies are covered under the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016. But due to a lack of monitoring and implementation, the respondents continue to use excessive amounts of plastic in wrapping and packaging their sold items," said the plea, filed through advocate Divya Prakash Pande.

Dubey's plea had contended that the companies deliver items in cardboard boxes, which

are too large when compared to the size of the items being delivered.

"To ensure that the sold items do not move around in the outsized boxes, they wrap the items in multiple layers of plastic sheets and plastic bubble wraps and thereafter fill the large empty spaces in the boxes with additional sheets of single-use plastic," it had said.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel had posted the matter for hearing on January 3, 2020.

The plea has also said that though the home-delivery service of e-commerce companies have been very useful for consumers, they have given rise to serious environmental challenges due to excessive use of plastics in packaging.

Once goods are delivered, the plastic waste is thrown away in garbage and it ends up at landfill sites, leading to a burden on the earth and damaging the environment, it said.

"Single-use plastic has emerged as one of

the biggest environmental challenges for our planet. It is cheap, useful, ubiquitous and very deadly. The fact that it's non-biodegradable and is recycled in very small percentages means that our planet is with passage of time is becoming a big dumping ground for single use plastic. Single-use plastic breaks down into smaller fragments known as microplastics and then contaminates soil and water," the petition had said.

Dubey said the two companies have not made any arrangements for either taking back the plastic material or ensuring that it is recycled.

"Plastic packaging constitutes 43 per cent of the total plastic waste generated in India and it is imperative that a direction be issued to the respondents that they should stop using plastic packaging materials and shift to environment friendly packaging option, the plea had said.

ITBP wins 1st ice hockey championship of Ladakh

NEW DELHI, JAN 28 (PTI): Border guarding force ITBP on Tuesday won the first-ever ice hockey tournament organised in the newly-created union territory of Ladakh, officials said. The ITBP defeated the Army's Ladakh Scouts regimental centre team to lift the 'fire and fury' cup.

The match was held in Leh at an altitude of 11,000 feet where the temperature hovered around minus 20 degrees, officials said.

The match was decided with a penalty shoot out after the two teams

drew at 4-4, they said.

Thirteen teams participated in the championship that began on January 22.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), that is primarily tasked to guard the 3,488 km Line of Actual Control with China, is the national ice hockey champion.

Ladakh was declared a UT along with Jammu-Kashmir on October 31 last year after the Union government ended the special status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir provided under Article 370.

ISL final to be played on March 14



MUMBAI, JAN 28 (PTI): The title clash of the ongoing Indian Super League (ISL) will be played on March 14, Football Sports Development Ltd (FSDL), the franchise-based event's organiser, announced on Tuesday.

The first set of semi-finals will be played on February 29 and March 1 while the return leg is scheduled for March 7 and 8, a media release stated.

However, the venue for the summit clash is yet to be decided.

The season will see the league stage winner on completion of the 90th match on February 25.

ATK FC (27 pts), FC Goa (27 pts) and Bengaluru FC (25 pts) occupy the top three spots in the league table. The winner of the league will get a direct entry into the AFC Champions League 2021 group stage.

Maha: No operators for Jayakwadi bird sanctuary boats

AURANGABAD, JAN 28 (PTI): Nine boats bought by the forest department to patrol the Jayakwadi Bird Sanctuary in Maharashtra's Aurangabad district are lying idle because no operator has been recruited, an official said on Tuesday.

Jayakwadi Bird Sanctuary comprises the Nathasagar Lake and surrounding wet lands and is home to a huge variety of flora and fauna.

"These boats were procured to patrol a 339 square kilometre area. However, no driver post has been sanctioned. The

forest department says they hire private operators when the need arises," honorary wildlife warden Dilip Yardi told PTI.

"If the department can't appoint full-time drivers, then staff should be trained for it so that patrolling can happen. There are more than 200 birds here, many of which are protected species," he added.

When contacted, Regional Forest Officer Raosaheb Kale confirmed the absence of drivers for the boats but said local ones are hired whenever required.

West district sends 54 students on exposure tour

RUDRA KAUSHIK

GYALSHING, 28 JAN:

West District Administration sent two groups of 54 meritorious students from Government schools across the district to Odisha and Gujarat for a student exposure and learning program titled "Explore and Learn."

The student exposure program commenced on 25 Jan, 2020 and will conclude on the 05 Feb, 2020.

With this a total of 150 students from West Sikkim have been set on exposure and learning tour under the Explore and Learn initiative of the West District Administration. The entire initiative of the District Administration is being funded by REC Foundation through its CSR initiative.

The students will also be visiting reputed institutes like National Institute of Design, Indian Institute of Manage-



ment Ahmedabad, and Space Application Centre Ahmedabad.

"The idea of the student exposure program is to encourage them to move beyond their comfort zones and to be competitive in the world outside. Since all the students are academically meritorious, we believe that some spark of learning would enhance their capabilities to push themselves forward. Also the thrust of the State Government, the Chief Minister and the Educa-

National Integration Camp at Majhitar concludes



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 28 JAN:

The valedictory function of the five-day National Integration Camp of the Bharat Scouts & Guides at Himalayan Home, Majhitar, East Sikkim was held today.

The function was at-

tended by more than 300 Scouts & Guides from 14 different states and two neighbouring countries of Nepal and Bangladesh, a press release informs.

In the morning, the Sadbhavna rally under the theme of 'Ek Bharat

Shresth Bharat' started from Majhitar to Rangpo wherein SDPO Rangpo, Dilip Tamang flagged off the rally.

The valedictory function was also attended by Education Minister, KN Lepcha as the chief guest

followed by Chief National Commissioner of BS & Guide (Retd), Dr KK Khandelwal and Additional Chief Secretary, GP Upadhyaya as guests of honour.

Mementoes and prizes were distributed to the participants.

NHPC provides garbage truck to Singtam Nagar Panchayat



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 28 JAN:

NHPC-Teesta-V Power Station, Balutar, East Sikkim provided one Tipper Truck to Singtam Nagar Panchayat under Swachh Bharat Yojana as part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) & Sustainable Development (SD) FY 2019-20 for proper Solid Waste Management, a press release informs.

General Manager (I/c), Sahadev Khatua, Teesta-V Power Station & CEO of Teesta-VI HE Project, formally handed over the key to MEO, Singtam Nagar Pancha-

yat, Prakesh Kharel in the presence of Minister of Sikkim for Health care & Family welfare, Mani Kumar Sharma and SDM-Rangpo, Prem Kamal Rai in a function held today at office of Nagar Panchayat, Singtam.

Speaking on the occasion, Health Minister, Dr Mani Kumar Sharma lauded the efforts of NHPC for overall development of the region. He appealed to local residents to use the tipper truck to keep Singtam clean.

General Manager (I/c), Sahadev Khatua, Teesta-V Power Station

said that the garbage menace can be solved with public participation and expressed confidence that people of Singtam will use the truck to maintain the town neat & clean.

He thanked Sikkim government for its cooperation which will help early completion of Teesta-VI HE Project. President of Singtam Nagar Panchayat, Sawan Kumar Pradhan, Councilors, employees of Singtam Nagar Panchayat & employees of Teesta-V Power Station, SHO-Singtam, SB Gurung and local people attended the event.

Abhijit Banerjee conferred D Litt by alma mater

KOLKATA, JAN 28 (PTI):

Nobel laureate Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee was on Tuesday conferred the honorary D Litt by his alma mater Calcutta University at its annual convocation here.

The acclaimed economist, who was bestowed the D Litt (honoris causa) by CU Vice-chancellor Sonali Chakraborty Banerjee, said in his address "It is a moment of pride...to be bestowed the honour by this great university. I am happy to have been honoured by the 162-year old institution located in my own city".

Banerjee had pursued his graduation with economics honours from the then Presidency College, now university, and secured first class first rank in Calcutta University in 1981.

The VC said, "Prof Banerjee comes in a long lineage of Bengali and Indian intellectuals who have placed the ethical problem of poverty and inequality at the centre of their vision. We hope that our present and future students will carry this legacy forward to create a more equal society".

Speaking at the programme, Banerjee dwelt on his economics theory 'randomised control trials' (RCT) which involves carrying out randomized field experiments to study the effectiveness of policies and programmes at improving human well-being.

The objective of RCT is to see how it impacts economics and lives of the people, he said, adding the theory was put on trial in field projects in Rajasthan and Bihar in past.

Eminent astrophysicist JV Narlikar was conferred Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Memorial Medal. Scientists Samir K Brahmachari, Arup Kumar Raychaudhuri and Partha Pratim Majumder were bestowed the Sir Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray Medal.

visit us at
www.summit-times.com

Restrict political...

the date of scrutiny of nominations for an offence with a maximum punishment of five years or more.

"If the proposed direction is given, there would be no need even for an enquiry by the ECI because candidates are required by Section 33A of the Representation of the People Act read with Rule 4A of the Conduct of Election Rules and Form 26 to file along with their nomination papers an affidavit containing detailed information relating to the framing of charges against them for offences punishable with imprisonment of more than 2 years," the plea said.

The PIL said a person against whom charges have been framed in serious offences, cannot become a Doctor, Engineer, Primary Teacher, Professor, Army Officer, Police Officer, Judicial Officer, District Magistrate, District Judge, Metropolitan Magistrate and Judge of the High Court and Supreme Court.

"But, he can contest election, become MLA, MP and even Minister, which is arbitrary, irrational and offends Article 14 of the Constitution. This is a matter of serious concern to both- democracy and rule of law, because many Legislators are prima facie involved in serious criminal cases," it added.

The petition said that all advertisements for the candidature of an individual to the election shall compulsorily and prominently carry details of age and educational qualification, criminal cases against him in which charges have been framed with description of every offence in bold letters and combined value of fixed and movable assets of the candidate and his family members/blood relatives.

"Every candidate shall publish the above details at least thrice in leading News Channels between 9am-9pm pm and thrice in widely circulated Newspapers within seven days of his nomination. The political party shall publish the aforesaid information on the Home Page of its Website within 24 Hours of the nomination and keep it till polling date," the plea said.

The PIL said that if the above guidelines are not adhered, the Returning Officer shall reject the nomination of the candidate.

"The above conditions shall be incorporated in Election Symbol Order, Model Code of Conduct and Instructions of the ECI for effective compliance. Any violation of the above directions would invite apposite action by the ECI against concerned political party.

"The Court may be pleased to direct the ECI to publish the above details constituency wise on its website and thrice through leading news channels between 9 am-9 pm and thrice in widely circulated newspapers within seven days of nomination. Budget may be charged from consolidated fund of India," the plea said.

EC notice...

The Delhi CEO Office on Tuesday said it had submitted a report to the EC on the "provocative" language used by Thakur while canvassing for BJP candidates contesting the February 8 Delhi Assembly polls.

At the Rithala rally, the MP from Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh had egged on the crowd to raise an incendiary slogan -- "shoot the traitors" -- after lashing out at anti-CAA protesters.

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at GANGTOK:

For circulation details Contact: (Sandeep) 9734152451 & for Advertisement booking at 9933427505 or at office no 03592 208698. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

SILIGURI:

Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, 1st floor. Opp. Ganga Hotel. Hill Cart Road. Siliguri - 03. Ph. 9832318644/ 9800682989/ 9153035100 or mail at mani_siliguri@yahoo.co.in.

KOLKATA OFFICE:

Irshad Ali/ Imteeyaz. Synapse, 6, Madan Street, Mezzine - 2, 2nd floor. Kolkata - 700072. Ph. 033-22124348/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. 9830547774/ 983108397. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/ irshad_ali123@rediffmail.com

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

FLAT FOR RENT/LEASE

Fully furnished 3BHK flat available for rent/ lease at Church Road near DPH. Roadside and five minutes walking distance from MG Marg.
For more details: 9083826462 /9832556698

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College. Flat Land no cutting required. Price 27 Lakhs (negotiable).
Contact: 9800201335

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

Videos of Delhi schools shared by Shah false: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, JAN 28 (PTI): Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday asserted that the videos of alleged deficiencies in the city's government schools shared by Home Minister Amit Shah are false and that these actions show the BJP leader's "hatred" towards the people of the national capital.

Kejriwal said out of 1,024 government schools in Delhi, BJP found only eight schools with some shortcomings and even those drawbacks turned out to be false.

The Chief Minister had last week invited Union Home Minister Amit Shah to visit the city's government schools with him and witness their "transformation" by his government.

Eight BJP MPs visited the schools and on Tuesday shared videos of their findings.

"I am very happy that Amit Shah ji sent all his MPs and workers of his party to all schools to investigate the deficiencies in our schools. Amit Shah hates the people of Delhi. His hatred towards the children, parents and teachers of Delhi is visible," he said.

Kejriwal appealed to Shah "with folded hands" to not insult and hate the 16 lakh children of Delhi together with their 32 lakh parents and 65 thousand teachers who he said have worked hard to change the education system of Delhi.

"The people of Delhi will not tolerate the insult at all. Recently Amit Shah ji had said that if BJP forms a government here, then he will make Delhi also like Uttar Pradesh. The people of Delhi should decide whether the education system of Delhi is good for them or school system of Uttar Pradesh," he told reporters. Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, who also addressed reporters with Kejriwal on Tuesday, claimed that all the videos released by Shah were based on falsehoods.

Showing the video of the gate of the same school that BJP MP Gautam Gambhir had visited, Sisodia read out a public notice pasted on the gate.

"The video clearly shows that the school had been shifted to another building from October 2019," he said.

"I have the demolition orders of this school and the public notice has also been placed at the gate of the school. When Gautam Gambhir went to make a video of this school, he must have seen this truth. But he chose not to read it. He must have been distracted by the jalebis from Jalebi Chowk next door in Kalyanpuri," Sisodia said, taking a dig at Gambhir who had last year posted a picture of him eating jalebis in Indore when there was a key meeting on pollution in Delhi.

Sisodia said BJP MP Sahib Singh Verma tweeted a video of a school in Matiala where the old building is on one side and on the other side are the new buildings.

Eastern Command chief calls on Governor



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 28 JAN:

General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command, Lieutenant General Anil Chauhan, accompanied by GOC, Trishakti Corps, Lieutenant General Nav

K Khanduri and GOC, 17 Mountain Division, Major General RC Tiwari, called on Governor Gangadhar Prasad at Raj Bhawan on Tuesday evening.

The Army Commander briefed the Governor about the present secu-

city situation at Sikkim's borders and said that the situation was peaceful.

The Governor appreciated the Army's efforts at Nathula in rescuing thousands of tourists and providing them basic administrative faci-

ties during emergency, a press communiqué from Raj Bhawan informs.

The Governor also conveyed best wishes to the GOC-in-C, Eastern Command, for his tenure at the Kolkata-based Army formation.

Tripura sounds coronavirus alert

AGARTALA, JAN 28 (PTI): The Tripura government on Tuesday sounded a coronavirus alert in the whole state especially along the Indo-Bangla international border, an official said.

Health Secretary Dr Debashish Bose said, "We have received an advisory from the Union Ministry of Health regarding the standard procedure being prescribed to all states for combating the coronavirus. So, the alert was sounded today itself".

Tripura shares an 856-km long international border with Bangladesh.

"Many people enter our country through Agartala-Akhaura integrated check post (ICP). We have taken adequate measures to screen those people, if they were carrying the deadly coronavirus. We are also in the process of setting up of such mechanism in all the check posts along the border", Bose said.

There are eight no-

tified Land Custom Stations (LCS) in Tripura and about 1,500 people enter the state every day from Bangladesh.

He said, with the availability of enough manpower the screening procedure could be adopted at Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport and railway stations of the state.

Director of Family Welfare and Preventive Medicine Dr Radha Debbarma said that a medical team was already sent to Akhaura ICP, where they are checking Bangladeshis entering into the country to ascertain if they are carrying the virus.

Debbarma said the authorities of the Agartala Government Medical College (AGMC) were instructed to keep an isolation ward ready for admission of the patients carrying the suspected virus.

He said the state government has also launched an awareness programme about the coronavirus.

Unity in diversity is the mainstay of India: Mamata



KOLKATA, JAN 28 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said that unity in diversity is the mainstay of the country and will continue to be so.

Banerjee, who was speaking at the inauguration of the 44th Kolkata Book Fair here, said that the worth of books is infinite in the modern age of internet.

She said "Won't we accept if books are written in Hindi or Urdu? This fair reflects the spirit of a united India

and is a pride of Bengal. "This festival of books is for all. Unity in diversity is the mainstay of the Indian society. The Quran, Bible, Tripitaka and the Bhagvad Gita will continue to be read in the country," she said.

Starting today, the fair will continue till February 9. Russia is the theme country of this year's book fair.

A total of 20 countries, including hosts India and neighbouring Bangladesh are participating in the fair.

Ram temple trust likely within a week, cabinet nod soon



NEW DELHI, JAN 28 (PTI): The Home Ministry is likely to announce within a week the constitution of a trust for construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya along with the offer of land for a mosque in Uttar Pradesh's temple town as mandated by the Supreme Court verdict on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue, officials said on Tuesday.

The ministry has prepared the framework for the trust for the construction of the Ram temple and identified the land to be offered to the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Waqf Board. The entire proposal will be put before the Union Cabinet for its approval.

The announcement of the trust's constitution as well as the offer of a 5-acre plot for the mosque will be made soon after the Union Cabinet's approval, probably within a week, an official privy to the development said.

The UP Sunni Waqf Board will be offered three plots of land so that it can choose a suitable one, the official said.

In its verdict on November 9, the Supreme Court had paved the way for the construction of a Ram temple by a trust at the disputed site at Ayodhya, and directed the

Centre to allot an alternative 5-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a new mosque at a "prominent" place in the holy town in Uttar Pradesh.

The apex court had said the trust should be formed within three months for the construction of the temple at the site where many Hindus believe Lord Ram was born.

As per the Supreme Court judgment in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid matter, the central government has been directed to formulate a scheme with necessary provisions for the setting up of the trust with a board of trustees or any other appropriate body, the functioning of the trust, the powers of the trustees, transfer of land to the trust and all necessary, incidental and supplemental matters.

All these matters will be put before the Union Cabinet so that a final decision can be taken, another official said.

All matters concerning Ayodhya and related court judgements are being handled by a dedicated desk set up in the Union Home Ministry.

The desk is handled by three officers, headed by Additional Secretary Gynesh Kumar, the official said.



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
SOCIAL JUSTICE & WELFARE DEPARTMENT
LUMSEY, 5TH MILE TADONG, EAST SIKKIM
GANGTOK. SIKKIM

"Department of Social Justice & Welfare, WCD (ICDS), Government of Sikkim is procuring medicine kits for use in anganwadi centres. Interested parties/manufactures/ suppliers may log on to sikkimsocialwelfare.gov.in for details.

Sd/-
Additional Director, ICDS

R.O. No. 337/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20

Date: 27.01.2020

Corona Virus awareness along Sikkim's borders

GANGTOK, 28 JAN (IPR): In view of the outbreak of Corona Virus in China, as a precautionary measure, special Gram Sabhas have been scheduled at the following GPUs which have international border Check Post to create awareness about this disease.

West District

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----|----|
| 1. 20-Maneybong | GPU | on |
| 29.01.2020 | | |
| 2. 21-Sopakah | GPU | on |

29.01.2020.

East District

- 16-Lingtam Phadamchen on 03.02.2020.

The ADCs (Dev), BDOs, field functionaries and PRI members are making all efforts to ensure that maximum people participate in these special Gram Sabhas which are being conducted in coordination with the District administration and Health Department, in particular.

Proposed bank strike: Guj HC issues notice to RBI

AHMEDABAD, JAN 28

(PTI): The Gujarat High Court on Tuesday issued notice to Reserve Bank of India on a PIL filed by eight trade federations in the state seeking the court's direction to the central bank to not allow unions to go on strike.

Bank unions may go on a two-day nationwide strike on January 31 and February 1, followed by a three-day strike from March 11-13, and indefinite strike from April 1, mainly over their demand for wage revision.

The division bench of Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice AJ Shastri issued notice to the RBI, returnable on January 30. The federations

have prayed to the court to direct the RBI to not allow banks to go on strike and also take strict action against employees for frequently going on strikes for their own financial benefits.

The PIL said such strikes by bank unions are illegal and are meant only for their own financial benefits at the cost of the public who have to suffer harassment and financial loss.

The bank employees associations are going on strike over issues like salary, leaves, and other benefits, which can be achieved as per the provisions of law and not by declaring strikes, the PIL claimed.

SC allows govt to bring African cheetah to India

NEW DELHI, JAN 28 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed the government to introduce the African cheetah to a suitable habitat in India on an experimental basis to see whether it can adapt to Indian conditions.

Stating that the rare Indian cheetah is almost extinct in the country, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had sought the court's permission to relocate the African cheetah from Namibia.

The court set up a three-member committee, comprising former director of Wildlife of India Ranjit Singh, DG of Wildlife of India Dhananjay Mohan, and DIG, Wildlife, Ministry of Environment and Forests to guide the NTCA in taking a decision on the matter.

A bench comprising Chief Justice S A Bobde and justices B R Gavai and Surya Kant said the apex court will monitor the project and the committee will submit its report before it every four months.

The court also said the decision for relocation of the African cheetah will be taken after a proper survey and the action of introduction of the animal will be left to NTCA's discretion.

It said NCTA will be guided by the committee of experts who will carry out a survey for the "carefully chosen location on viability of doing it on a larger scale."

"In case of any difficulty, location would be changed to more habitable one," the apex court said.

It was submitted before the apex court that the African cheetah will be introduced on an experimental basis in the best suitable habitat to see whether it can adapt to Indian conditions.

The bench in its order noted that the apex court in 2013 had turned down the plea for relocation of African cheetah at Kunho National Park in Madhya Pradesh.

"We find that in 2013, this court struck down an order by MoEF on the ground that it had not conducted any detailed study for introducing foreign species

The PIL claimed the strike would cause a loss of Rs 12,700 crore per day.

The PIL has been filed by Gujarat Traders Federation, Rajkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Central Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahmedabad Auto Parts Association among others.

The strike call has been given by United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), an umbrella body of the nine unions, including All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC), All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA) and National Organisation of Bank Workers (NOBW).

of cheetah to India, this application presumably remedied the defect," the bench said.


Advocate A D N Rao, who is assisting the court as amicus curiae, explained the reasons for resistance of the African cheetah in the Indian condition.

However the bench, after hearing the former Wildlife of India director, said since it was a pilot project, there should not be any opposition.

Singh told the bench that African cheetah would be brought to the country on an experiment basis.

In 2018, the NTCA informed the Supreme Court that the International Union for Conservation of Nature has given approval for translocation of cheetahs in India from Namibia in Africa.


NTCA said IUCN, which provides inputs to governments and institutions on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development, has stated it would co-operate with India in translocation of cheetahs.



WANDERING SOULS OF SIKKIM
www.wanderingsofsofsikkim.com

CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED FOR THE UPGRADATION OF LIBRARY AT RATEY PANI SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL.

CONTACT 7384639193 TO CONTRIBUTE & HELP US IN LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR BETTER FUTURE



A Beautiful Sikkim?

And in the question lies the problem

Sikkim and its towns have been doing rather well in Swachh rankings and the ODF stats, but drive out of habitations and one realizes that it could be doing much better. Admittedly, the State is much cleaner than most other places in the country, but it also has much fewer people to litter so it cannot be compared fairly with places which have much more waste to collect and dispose. So yes, Sikkim should really be doing much better; setting-the-bar-for-others kind of better.

One can get a sense of why that final mile evades the State from the fact that so many of its towns are reported to be drawing up “action plans” for beautification. These cosmetic jobs are clearly required because urbanization is leaving an ugly mark which needs to be touched-up and camouflaged. There is also a nagging doubt that these will be half-cock measures since most of these initiatives are state-sponsored and not community-driven. Look at the list of initiators (of beautification) and we come across the usual suspects - the district administration and the UD&HD/ municipal bodies. Notice anything amiss here. Where are the people? And in the answer to that question we find the reason why no proposal for public good ever takes off to the stratosphere as it should in the State. The people, one would venture to suggest, simply don't care. Look at what is happening to the jhoras of Gangtok again; littering and spitting at MG Marg might have substantially reduced but the bylanes are worryingly filthy; the highways are pockmarked with disposal (mostly unauthorized) sites and even when the bins are not full, there is almost always a scatter of litter around it. The list can go longer, but the moral remains the same: in a society where the people don't care to get involved, nothing gets done. These clearly bear out that while the government have provided the means (to keep things clean) through infrastructure and regulations, the people have not internalized swachhata.

While this might not be surprising, it is still confounding. No one can accuse the Sikkimese of being filthy. Walk into any home and it will invariably be spic and span. Walk out and a different experience awaits. The roads remain littered with rubbish and the jhoras perennially clogged. The problems lies in the fact that for most people here (as elsewhere, one would guess), the world ends at their doorstep. They will sweep their homes of the last speck of dust, but contribute each morning to the piles of rubbish gathering outside the gate. Public representations for improving public convenience remains unheard of. Public engagement for cleanliness remains awaited and in this scenario, the government is always playing catch-up, reaching facilities after disposal has become a problem or offering systems and alternatives when funding is made available. Ideally, the policy-makers should be building on systems worked out by the people and supporting their initiatives.

Would an uninvolved and disinterested people care for a beautiful Sikkim? Unlikely. Would they help in beautifying Sikkim and its towns? You must be joking. The beautification proposal being promoted by government officials should have instead come from the civil society in the form of an active NGO or public association. We are yet to hear of either anywhere in the State. And so, the administration will have another go at improving the environs we live in. They might even succeed for some time, but we won't even notice because we rarely open our windows to look at the world outside.

WRITE US:

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



How contagious is the Wuhan coronavirus and can you spread it before symptoms start?

C RAINA MACINTYRE
theconversation.com

Cases of the Wuhan coronavirus have increased dramatically over the past week, prompting concerns about how contagious the virus is and how it spreads.

According to the World Health Organisation, 16-21% of people with the virus in China became severely ill and 2-3% of those infected have died.

A key factor that influences transmission is whether the virus can spread in the absence of symptoms – either during the incubation period (the days before people become visibly ill) or in people who never get sick.

On Sunday, Chinese officials said transmission had occurred during the incubation period.

So what does the evidence tell us so far?

CAN YOU TRANSMIT IT BEFORE YOU GET SYMPTOMS?

Influenza is the classic example of a virus that can spread when people have no symptoms at all.

In contrast, people with SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) only spread the virus when they had symptoms.

No published scientific data are available to support China's claim transmission of the Wuhan coronavirus occurred during the incubation period.

However, one study published in the Lancet medical journal showed children may be shedding (or transmitting) the virus while asymptomatic. The researchers found one child in an infected family had no symptoms but a chest CT scan revealed he had pneumonia and his test for the virus came back positive.

This is different to transmission in the incubation period, as the child never got ill, but it suggests it's possible for children and young people to be infectious without having any symptoms.

This is a concern because if someone gets sick, you want to be able to identify them and track their contacts. If someone transmits the virus but never gets sick, they may not be on the radar at all.

It also makes airport screening less useful be-

cause people who are infectious but don't have symptoms would not be detected.

HOW INFECTIOUS IS IT?

The Wuhan coronavirus epidemic began when people exposed to an unknown source at a seafood market in Wuhan began falling ill in early December.

Cases remained below 50 to 60 in total until around January 20, when numbers surged. There have now been more than 4,500 cases – mostly in China – and 106 deaths.

Researchers and public health officials determine how contagious a virus is by calculating a reproduction number, or R0. The R0 is the average number of other people that one infected person will infect, in a completely non-immune population.

Different experts have estimated the R0 of the Wuhan coronavirus is anywhere from 1.4 to over five, however the World Health Organisation believes the R0 is between 1.4 and 2.5.

If the R0 was higher than 2-3, we should have seen more cases globally by mid January, given Wuhan is a travel and trade hub of 11 million people.

HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED?

Of the person-to-person modes of transmission, we fear respiratory transmission the most, because infections spread most rapidly this way.

Two kinds of respiratory transmission are through large droplets, which is thought to be short-range, and airborne transmission on much smaller particles over longer distances. Airborne transmission is the most difficult to control.

SARS was considered to be transmitted by contact and over short distances by droplets but can also be transmitted through smaller aerosols over long distances. In Hong Kong, infection was transmitted from one floor of a building to the next.

Initially, most cases of the Wuhan coronavirus were assumed to be from an animal source, localised to the seafood market in Wuhan.

We now know it can spread from person to person in some cases. The Chinese government announced it can be spread by touching and contact. We don't know how much transmission is person to person, but we have some clues.

Coronaviruses are respiratory viruses, so they can be found in the nose, throat and lungs.

The amount of Wuhan coronavirus appears to be higher in the lungs than in the nose or throat. If the virus in the lungs is expelled, it could possibly be spread via fine, airborne particles, which are inhaled into the lungs of the recipient.

HOW DID THE VIRUS SPREAD SO RAPIDLY?

The continuing surge of cases in China since January 18 – despite the lockdowns, extended holidays, travel bans and banning of the wildlife trade – could be explained by several factors, or a combination of:

- increased travel for New Year, resulting in the spread of cases around China and globally. Travel is a major factor in the spread of infections
- asymptomatic transmissions through children and young people. Such transmissions would not be detected by contact tracing because health authorities can only identify contacts of people who are visibly ill
- increased detection, testing and reporting of cases. There has been increased capacity for this by doctors and nurses coming in from all over China to help with the response in Wuhan
- substantial person-to-person transmission
- continued environmental or animal exposure to a source of infection.

However, with an incubation period as short as one to two days, if the Wuhan coronavirus was highly contagious, we would expect to already have seen widespread transmission or outbreaks in other countries.

Rather, the increase in transmission is likely due to a combination of the factors above, to different degrees. The situation is changing daily, and we need to analyse the transmission data as it becomes available.

[the writer is Professor of Global Biosecurity, NHMRC Principal Research Fellow, Head, Biosecurity Program, UNSW]

How we found a special maths equation hidden in rat whiskers

ROBYN GRANT
theconversation.com

Rats have up to 70 whiskers on their faces, varying hugely in size and shape. Almost every mammal possesses whiskers, but these rodents are what we call “whisker specialists”, meaning they have super-sensitive, moveable hairs that they use to explore and sense their surroundings.

Rat whiskers can vary hugely. In our recent research, my colleagues and I analysed 523 whiskers from 15 rats and found that each whisker had a different length and shape. We wanted to investigate more about the shape of these hairs as a first step in understanding what rats feel through their whiskers.

We found that rat whiskers can be accurately described by a simple mathematical equation known as the Euler spiral. It's an example of how special spiral patterns are found throughout the natural world. And spotting them can help us not only understand nature better, but also improve our own engineering.

The Euler spiral – also called the Cornu spiral, Spiros or Clothoid – is a shape whose curvature changes linearly with its length. It looks quite like an s-shape, where the tips of the

“s” carry on curving in to spirals that get rapidly tighter. As a result, aspects of the curve can fit a wide variety of shapes including those that are straight or s-shaped, those that increase in curvature and those that decrease in curvature.

This is why the Euler spiral can be used to describe all types of rat whisker, even though they come in many different shapes. Some are s-shaped, some get more curly towards the tip and some get less curly towards the tip.

EULER SPIRAL OF RAT WHISKERS

Most natural structures don't display all of these three shapes. But there are many spirals in nature that get more curved along their length. Many sea shells, sheep and antelope horns, sea horse and lizard tails and even the cochlear in our own ears have all been shown to have a linear radius of curvature along their length, making them into a shape called a logarithmic spiral.

Although it is named after Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler, the Euler spiral was actually first described by his countryman James Bernoulli in 1694 who was trying to solve a mathematical problem related to elasticity. But Bernoulli didn't plot or draw the spiral, didn't put any numbers in to his equation, nor

provide any workings to show why it was true.

Euler discovered Bernoulli's equation and started to characterise aspects of the curve that it describes in 1744. In 1818, the French physicist Augustin Fresnel independently derived aspects of the Euler spiral as he was describing the shape of light diffracting through a slit. And American civil engineer Arthur Talbot discovered it again in 1890 when designing railway tracks that would produce a smoother journey.

In particular, because the Euler curve has a transition from flat to curved, it has been used for designing the parts of railway tracks or roads that make this transition. It has even been used for finding the best route a racing car should take through a corner. The Euler spiral also has applications in working out how to project maps onto globes, and improving the operation of microwaves.

RAT ESSENTIALS

But how can it help us to study the rat? Describing the shapes and patterns of natural structures using simple mathematical equation can help us to understand their function.

Whiskers are actually made up of dead hair cells but they sit within a specialised sensitive follicle. The

follicle is what extracts information about the force and direction of the whisker as it touches objects, and transfers that information to the brain. This information is what the rat uses to perceive objects and judge their shape, size and texture.

The size and natural shape of each whisker will strongly influence the way it deforms and the tactile signals that reach the follicle. This means that being able to describe the whisker's shape with a mathematical equation will help us understand the signals that the follicle receives. We can also tell from the equation that rat whiskers probably grow from the base by the same amount each day (although this might also be affected by the seasons and how much food the rat has eaten).

Nature is full of mathematical patterns. Given how rat whiskers follow the Euler spiral, and that spirals are so common in nature, we think there's a good chance the whiskers of other mammals probably follow similar rules and may also be described by Euler spirals. In this way, maths can give us a special insight into how biological structures and systems work.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer in Comparative Physiology & Behaviour, Manchester Metropolitan University]

Bangladesh allows education for Rohingya refugee children



DHAKA, JAN 28 (AFP): Rohingya children living in Bangladesh refugee camps will be allowed to receive a formal education after a change of heart by Dhaka in a move welcomed by right activists.

Nearly one million Rohingya, including more than half a million children, live in the squalid and crowded camps near the southeastern border with Myanmar, where

many had fled from in 2017 after a brutal military crackdown.

The children were previously barred from studying the curriculums used in Bangladesh and Myanmar, and instead received primary education in temporary learning centres set up by the UN children's agency UNICEF. "We don't want a lost generation of Rohingya. We want them to have education. They will

follow Myanmar curriculum," Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen told AFP on Tuesday.

The decision came after a meeting of a national taskforce set up by the government. Local media reported that a pilot programme involving more than 10,000 students would be launched soon, with UNICEF and Dhaka jointly designing the curriculum.

The refugee children

will be schooled in Myanmar history and culture up to age 14, and will also receive skills training so they can take up jobs back in Myanmar when they return home, the foreign ministry said.

"I can't express my joy with words ... generations of Rohingya hardly had any education in their homeland in Myanmar as they were discriminated there and were robbed of their

citizenship," Rohingya youth leader and human rights activist Rafique bin Habib said.

"The decision will minimise the chances for a Rohingya kid to get radicalised (in the camps)," he added. UN representative in Bangladesh Mia Seppo told AFP the move would "make it easier for them to go back home to Myanmar when the time is right for returns".

Some Rohingya children have used fake Bangladeshi identity cards and hidden their ethnic identities to enrol in local schools. Authorities last year expelled scores of them from schools in a drive condemned by rights groups.

Tens of thousands of other Rohingya Muslim children were also educated in madrassas set up by Islamic groups in the camps.

The decision came almost a week after UN's highest court ordered Myanmar to do everything in its power to prevent the genocide of Rohingya Muslims.

Mamata wields paintbrush to protest against CAA, NRC



KOLKATA, JAN 28 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, along with other artists, took up the brush on Tuesday and created paintings to express dissent against the amended Citizenship Act and proposed NRC exercise.

The CM, on the occasion, urged people to carry out peaceful protests against the citizenship law and iterated that she would never allow its implementation in the

state. The programme, themed around anti-CAA agitation, was organized near the Mahatma Gandhi statue on Mayo Road, where Banerjee, who is also the TMC supremo, voiced her protests through her paintings.

According to a TMC leader, the paintings will be exhibited in various galleries of the country.

"These paintings will be a part of our awareness campaign against CAA and NRC," he said. The issue of

CAA has emerged as major political flashpoint in West Bengal with the TMC opposing the contentious legislation tooth and nail, and the BJP pressing for its implementation.

Banerjee, a staunch critic of the BJP, has been at the forefront of anti-CAA protests.

The TMC supremo has so far led 11 protest marches and seven rallies in various parts of the state against the CAA and the NRC.

Ready for talks with PM, but first withdraw CAA : Mamata

KOLKATA, JAN 28 (PTI): West Bengal Chief minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday said she is ready for talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue of Citizenship Amendment Act but the Centre has to first withdraw the contentious law.

Banerjee, a staunch critic of the BJP, said protesting against the decisions of the Centre does not make opposition parties anti-national and iterated that she will not implement CAA, NRC or NPR in the state.

"It is good if he (prime minister) is really interested in opening a dialogue on the CAA. They (BJP) must call all the political parties. They did not call an all-party meeting before taking a decision on Kashmir and CAA. Before taking the decision, they should have consulted all the parties.

"If the Centre is ready for talks, then it should first repeal CAA. If they repeal it only then can we talk with an open mind. The prime minis-

ter needs to restore confidence of the countrymen. He needs to assure us that CAA will be repealed, and both NPR and NRC will be dropped," she said while talking to reporters at a protest programme against CAA through paintings.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the union government is yet to convene all party meeting on CAA and PM Modi had clearly said last month that his government has not discussed any proposals regarding pan India NRC, she said.

The TMC supremo also slammed the saffron party for making references to Pakistan, which she said, is a ploy to divert public attention from issues like economic slowdown and growing unemployment.

"Why do they glorify Pakistan every time? I am proud of my country. Is this a BJP ploy to glorify Pakistan? I don't know whether BJP has become brand ambassadors of Pakistan as they always talk of it and less of Hindustan," Banerjee

said hitting out at the BJP. The West Bengal Assembly on Monday passed a resolution demanding immediate repeal of the CAA and dropping plans for a pan-India NRC and NPR, with Banerjee calling the new citizenship law "against the Constitution and humanity".

Reacting to Banerjee's statement, West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh wondered what she and TMC were doing when the bill was placed in Parliament for discussion.

"What was she (Banerjee) and her party doing when the bill was placed in Parliament for discussion? Why did they not place their views then?" Ghosh said.

West Bengal became the fourth state after Left-ruled Kerala, and Punjab and Rajasthan, where the Congress is in power, to have passed a resolution against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

The state assembly had on September 6, 2019, passed a resolution against the NRC.

Centre ready to hold peace talks with ULFA(I): Himanta

GUWAHATI, JAN 28 (PTI): A day after the Bodo Peace Accord was signed, senior Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday extended an olive branch to the anti-talk ULFA (Independent) faction, appealing to its leader Paresh Barua to come to the negotiating table for the sake of "permanent peace in the Northeast".

Sarma, also the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) convenor, told reporters here that Union Home Minister Amit Shah had clearly said on Monday that if the ULFA(I) faction is ready for negotiations, then "the Centre is more than willing to hold talks with them."

"This is the first time that this government is making a public appeal to the ULFA(I) for dialogue. If they are willing for negotiations, the Centre will reciprocate with equal strength and willingness for ushering in permanent peace in Assam and the Northeast," he said.

The state education minister, referring to the Bodo pact, said that a "historic Accord" was signed on Monday with all the factions of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB), once one of the most dreaded insurgent outfits in the region.

"In this context, I would like to request Barua and his anti-talk faction to consider engaging in a productive dialogue. The Centre and the state government want peace in the region," he said.

Most of the militant outfits in the northeastern states, barring some in Assam and Manipur, are holding talks but "if we want peace in the region, it should be inclusive by involving all the factions and the outfits," he said.

"Some militant activities have been reported only in Assam and Manipur. So, we are requesting them (insurgents) to join the mainstream and hold discussions with the Centre for durable peace," Sarma said.

He also appealed to all the people of the state to urge ULFA(I) to come forward for dialogue.

"The pro-talk faction of ULFA, led by Arabinda Rajkhowa, is already engaging in dialogue with the Centre and this will continue but for permanent peace to prevail, it is necessary that all outfits and their factions come to the negotiating table," Sarma said. The offer for peace talks comes a few days after ULFA (I) claimed responsibility for four serial blasts in Upper Assam districts on the Republic Day.

He said that though the two earlier Bodo accords were signed, they did not bring peace in the Bodoland Territorial Administrative Districts (BTAD) as the NDFB was not involved in the previous talks. "But this time, all the four factions participated in the negotiations and a historic Accord was signed which will usher in permanent peace and progress in BTAD," Sarma said.

The first Bodo accord was signed with the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) in 1993, leading to the creation of a Bodoland Autonomous Council with limited political powers.

In 2003, the second Bodo accord was signed with the militant outfit Bodo Liberation Tigers, leading to the formation of Bodo Territorial Council with the four districts, terming them together as BTAD.

Referring to the fate of the cases against NDFB cadres, the minister said, "Law will take its own course".

BSF to be armed with anti-drone system at IB soon



ANIL BHATT

JAMMU, JAN 28 (PTI): BSF troops guarding the 200-km-long International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir will soon be armed with anti-drone system, officials said on Tuesday, a day after a Pakistani drone was downed in Arnia sector.

"We are working on it," a senior officer told PTI. On Monday night, alert BSF troops shot down a Pakistani cameraless drone along the IB in Arnia sector of Jammu district, officials had said just after the interception.

Another set of officials said on Tuesday that anti-drone systems will soon be put in place along the IB in Jammu-Samba-Kathua belt to foil any attempt by Pakistan to effect a drone intrusion in future.

"The process of induction is on," one of the

officials said, adding that initially five to six systems will be deployed in the area of operation on the Jammu frontier.

The force is also training troops to handle these systems, the official said.

In October last year, the BSF had issued an Expression of Interest (EoI) for acquiring the 'Anti Drone System'. The EoI was issued after several instances of UAVs dropping arms in Punjab from across the border were reported.

As per the specifications, the force has sought a ground-based anti-drone system in stand-alone platform. The instrument will run on rechargeable batteries, the BSF has stated as the system has to be deployed in tough-to-access border areas that includes dense forests, desert, rivers and others.

The system, the BSF specification said, should be capable to detect a lone suspicious flying object or group of UAVs (swarm attack) from a distance and should be capable to detect a target within 10 seconds.

It (system) should be capable to do a real-time scan, detection, track and neutralisation of flying objects like multi-copters, fixed wing UAVs and radio-controlled UAVs in 360-degree environment, the October draft specifications said.

The force also desires that the prospective technology should have the "capability" to track multiple UAVs in a specified range and it should be able to neutralise the flying objects by jamming its radio and GPS (global positioning system) links simultaneously and also trigger signals to force land the drone.

Civic body row: Cal HC asks state election commission to clarify stance on BJP plea

KOLKATA, JAN 28 (PTI): The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday directed the West Bengal State Election Commission to state its position on a plea by the BJP, which claimed that the list of reserved wards in Howrah Municipal Corporation was finalised without taking into account the party's objections.

Refusing to pass any interim injunction on the list, the high court directed the commission to file its affidavit within two weeks and asked the BJP to submit a subsequent

reply the week after.

It said that the matter would be taken up for hearing again once these proceedings were over.

Claiming that the commission had announced the names of wards reserved for SC/ST and women in the 66-seat Howrah Municipal Corporation (HMC) without considering its objection, the BJP had moved the court of Justice Rajsekhar Mantha.

Smarajit Roy Chowdhury, the saffron party's lawyer, prayed that the notification declaring

the list of reserved wards in HMC be set aside and objection given by it be heard. Opposing the prayer, State Election Commission counsel Nayan Bihani submitted that it had given due consideration to the objection placed by the BJP and rejected the contention after weighing the pros and cons.

Elections are due since 2018 in HMC, currently being run by administrators. It is likely to go to polls along with several other municipal bodies in the state later this year.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us: news@summittimes.com



SummitTIMES

It's easy to relax... When you can trust the News.

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at

GANGTOK: For circulation details Contact: +91-9768997569, +91-9647102492 & for Advertisement booking at +91-9933427505 or at office no 03592 208498. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com
SILIGURI: Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads, B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, Ist. 983108397. E-mail: contact.syrapse@gmail.com / irshad_alil23@rediffmail.com
Phone: 03592-208498, +91-9832556698, +91-9832080753
www.summittimes.com
news@summittimes.com
summittimes14@gmail.com
advertise@summittimes.com
Address: Santa Bhawan Complex, Church Road Near Diesel Power House (DPH) Gangtok, East Sikkim, 737101

VIDEO NEWS SECTION



We miss
Dhoni, no one
sits on his
seat in team
bus: Chahal

HAMILTON (NEW ZEALAND), JAN 28 (PTI): No one sits on the seat that Mahendra Singh Dhoni made his own in the team bus, revealed India leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, saying that the talismanic former skipper is missed by the side.

In a video shot inside the team bus while it was on its way to Hamilton for the third T20 International against New Zealand, Chahal is seen talking to several members of the squad including Jasprit Bumrah, Rishabh Pant and KL Rahul.

Towards the end of the video, he moved to the rear of the bus and pointed to an empty seat which, he said, was the former captain's preferred spot before he went on a sabbatical last year.

"Yeh woh seat hai jahan ek legend baithate the. Mahi bhai. Abhi bhi yaha koi nahi baithata. Hum unhe bohut miss karte hai (This is the seat that used to be occupied a legend. MS Dhoni. No one sits here now. We miss him a lot)," Chahal said in the video posted on 'bccivt'.

The-38-year-old Dhoni has not played a competitive game since the World Cup semifinal loss to New Zealand on July 9. Earlier this month, Dhoni was dropped from the BCCI's list of centrally contracted players, raising fresh doubts on his future.

However, on the same day Dhoni returned to training, batting fluently in the Jharkhand team nets.

Head coach Ravi Shastri has hinted that the celebrated wicket-keeper-batsman might retire from ODIs soon but will be in contention for a T20 World Cup berth provided he does well for Chennai Super Kings in the IPL.

The Indian team lead the five-match T20 series against New Zealand 2-0.

Virat Kohli's men will take on the hosts in the third T20 here on Wednesday.

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

Federer saves seven match points in ‘miracle’ escape

MELBOURNE, JAN 28 (AFP): Swiss great Roger Federer said that “I believe in miracles” after he saved seven match points in a five-set nail-biter against 100th-ranked Tennys Sandgren to labour into the Australian Open semi-finals on Tuesday.

The six-time champion, struggling physically, saved three match points at 4-5 in the fourth set and four more in the tie-breaker to win 6-3, 2-6, 2-6, 7-6 (10/8), 6-3 and set up a clash against either title-holder Novak Djokovic or Milos Raonic.

Federer received a rare warning for an audible obscenity before going off-court for treatment on a groin injury in the third set, but still looked hampered as he forced a fifth set against the big-serving American.

“I believe in miracles,” Federer said, revealing that he thought his groin strain had ended his chances. “There could be rain, there could be



all kinds of stuff. “(I thought) just let him finish me off in style, and he didn’t do that. I’m incredibly lucky tonight, today -- I don’t even know what time it is.” Sandgren, achingly close to becoming

the lowest-ranked player to beat Federer at the Australian Open, can count himself unlucky especially after a ball girl accidentally collided with him during the pivotal tie-breaker, which he lost.

Federer has made heavy weather of reaching his 46th Major semi-final. He was two points from defeat by John Millman in a fifth-set tie-breaker in round three, and dropped a set against

67th-ranked Marton Fucsovics in round four.

- ‘QUIET LITTLE LIFE’ -

In the women’s draw Australia’s world number one Ashleigh Barty dismissed two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova in impressive style to reach the semis for the first time. The unflappable Barty beat the Czech 7-6 (8/6), 6-2 and will be favourite in her semi-final against America’s Sofia Kenin -- sending hopes soaring of a first home winner in 42 years.

The French Open champion, who once quit tennis to play cricket and has been steadily rising since her return, is the tournament’s poster girl with her image plastered all over Melbourne.

But she said: “I’d prefer to just be sitting at home just living my quiet little life.” Kenin, whose career is also on the up, made her first Grand Slam semi-final and with it will rise to at least 12 in the rankings -- making her

the second-highest American behind Serena Williams.

The feisty 21-year-old was a 6-4, 6-4 winner over Ons Jabeur, halting the Tunisian’s historic run which made her the first Arab woman to reach a Major quarter-final. “She’s a really tough player, I knew she’s going to come out playing strong,” Kenin said.

“She’s had really good matches, good wins. It wasn’t an easy battle -- all respect to her.” Jabeur has ignited interest back home with her run to the last eight, even receiving a good-luck phone call from her president.

“I think I proved that I can be in the quarter-finals in a Grand Slam, even if I have a lot of things to improve physically and mentally,” said the 25-year-old, who will now move inside the top 50.

“I proved to myself that I could do a lot of great things. I’m happy that I played this way.

Bengaluru FC sign Spanish winger Nili Perdomo

BENGALURU, JAN 28 (PTI): Bengaluru FC have signed Spanish winger Nili Perdomo for the remainder of the season, the ISL club announced on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old winger who is expected to arrive shortly replaces striker Manuel Onwu who has joined Odisha FC on loan till the end of the season.

Perdomo becomes Blues’ second signing of the January transfer window after striker Deshorn Brown.

Bengaluru FC head coach Carles Cuadrat believes Nili will help the team going into the business end of the season with the race to the top-spot heating up.

“He is a young player with a lot of potential who has come to try to help us to achieve the objectives at a crucial moment of the season. We both share same roots as he also has been playing in La Masia, and even playing with the Bar a first team for some games,” he said.

The winger who is comfortable playing on either flank was excited ahead of joining the Blues in what will be his first stint outside Europe.

“Well, I am very happy to be able to go to the best club in India, and



above all to thank the coach and the club for trusting me and giving me this opportunity.

“I am looking forward to starting and giving joy to the fans, I have seen many matches of our team, and I believe we have what it takes to be champions,” said Nili after completing formalities.

Having come through the youth set up at UD Las Palmas, Nili represented the Canary Islands’ side’s reserve team since 2013, before making his La Liga debut in the 2015-16 season.

The following season he was signed by FC Barcelona for whom

he appeared during the pre-season tour and a Copa Del Rey game while playing regularly with the reserve side.

The winger joined Segunda Division side Albacete during the first half of the 2017-18 season before travelling abroad for the first time in his career to play for Greek side Platanias FC where he has been playing for the past two seasons.

Having replaced Onwu in the squad, Nili signs as the seventh foreigner and becomes the fourth Spaniard in the team joining Dimas Delgado, Juanan Gonzalez, and Albert Serran.

Gokulam Kerala FC embarrass Kenkre FC 10-1 in IWL

BENGALURU, JAN 28 (PTI): Gokulam Kerala FC embarrassed Kenkre FC 10-1 in their Hero Indian Women’s League football fixture here on Tuesday.

Gokulam’s Nepali striker Sabitra Bhandari was the star of the show with five goals. Karishma Shirvoikar notched up a hat-trick, while Manisha netted two more to complete the rout.

Kenkre couldn’t get any foothold in the game as their Kerala counterparts completely blew them away and raced to a 7-1 lead going into half time.

Gokulam opened the scoring in the 7th minute when a Sabitra Bhandari effort was initially saved by Kenkre keeper Monika Devi, but the rebound fell to Karishma, who made no mistake.

Bhandari continued to be the fulcrum



of Gokulam’s attack, running circles around the Kenkre defence as they failed to find an answer. She linked up beautifully with Karishma throughout the game, forging a formidable partnership and scoring an astounding eight goals between them.

Just like she had created Karishma’s opener, the young forward returned the favour by setting her up minutes later,

in the 17th minute.

The goal of the game was scored by Manisha in the 30th minute, when her left-footed curler left everyone astounded.

Bhandari completed her hat-trick in first-half stoppage time and added a further two in the second half. The Nepal international narrowly missed out on a double hat-trick, but beautifully set up Karishma for her to wrap up her three-goal haul.

Espanyol to ban 12 supporters after racist abuse of Athletic’s Iñaki Williams

SID LOWE

MADRID, 28 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: The Spanish first division club Espanyol will ban 12 supporters after they were identified as having subjected Iñaki Williams to racist abuse during a match against Athletic Bilbao on Saturday. The club have also passed their report on to local police in case there is a legal case to answer, with the football authorities proposing tougher measures against abuse in stadiums.

Williams was heading towards the bench having been substituted with 20 minutes remaining, leaving the pitch behind the goal Athletic were attacking, when he heard noises from the stand. At one point, he paused and could be seen to mutter “sons of bitches”. As he reached the bench, he told teammates that he had heard monkey chants. Footage caught by a camera positioned on the touchline and shown on television that evening clearly picked up the chants as Williams passed the corner flag.

The game was not stopped or abandoned, and nor was there any tannoy announcement. The referee, who had been unaware of the chants, was informed of them at full-time by the Athletic captain, Iker Munian, and neither the delegate from the league nor the federation heard them. Because of the existing protocol, which requires the referee or delegates to witness the abuse directly, the abuse was not included in the referees’ official report but the league and the federation investigated, as did Espanyol. The league’s report said the chanting had lasted 10 seconds. There was widespread condemnation with Williams receiving a message of support from across the



game and the prime minister, Pedro Sánchez. La Liga initially proposed a partial closure of the stand as a punishment. Espanyol announced on Monday night that they had investigated the incident and, “after an exhaustive analysis of video images”, had identified 12 supporters in sectors 107 and 108. Nine of them are season-ticket holders, while three others were described as “occasional purchasers of tickets”. The report will be passed on to the club’s disciplinary committee with the intention that none of those fans return to Espanyol games. The nine season-ticket holders

will have their membership revoked and none of them will be allowed to buy tickets. “We did what we had to do; we made all necessary effort, in collaboration with the league,” said Espanyol’s vice-president, Carlos García Pont. “Football has values to defend. We have to try to ensure that people with these attitudes do not enter the ground.”

The Athletic president, Aitor Elizegi, said: “Espanyol have been as concerned about this as we have. These people, who are a minority, have to know that they have no hiding place. Those who cannot embrace the values of sport are not wanted.”

India footballer Jhingan working on his first book

NEW DELHI, JAN 28 (PTI): Indian footballer Sandesh Jhingan is set to turn author and is working on his first book while recuperating from an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) injury.

It’s been over three months that Jhingan has been out of action owing to the injury.

“I am working on writing my first book. It’s been in mind for quite some time. This time I have promised myself that I need to finish it off this year. It will be a collection of short stories,” he said.

“I have finished a couple of them and some more remain. I have also been writing poems for long, but they won’t be a part of this book.”

Jhingan had suffered the ACL tear during a friendly match between Kerala Blasters and NorthEast United FC in October last year. ACL is a key ligament that



connects the thighbone (femur) to shinbone. It helps stabilize the knee joint.

The 26-year-old said the surgery for the injury has gone well and asked about his return to action, Jhingan said, “It’s better to come back stronger than sooner.”

“The surgery under Dr. Anant Joshi went off well. I was operated on November 7, 2019, and the rehab kicked off thereafter.

“To achieve milestones, you need to be patient. So far I am happy with the progress and need to work more on getting back my strength.”

Though it’s always tough to recover from a serious injury, he believed a footballer is one of the most toughest mentally.

“I have had a serious injury before as a 17-year-old when I broke my ankle, and was

out of action for around a year. I strongly believe that the mental strength of a footballer is never tested to limits for his prowess on and off the field,” Jhingan said.

“I have been to hospitals and have seen people fighting for their lives. To me, that’s mental toughness. I feel I am extremely lucky where I am going through a phase where everything is being taken care of. I have a job with a club. I am lucky.

Modi govt destroyed India's image, deterred investors: Rahul

JAIPUR, JAN 28 (PTI): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of destroying India's image as a country of peace and harmony and urged the youth not to let their voice be suppressed.

Addressing a youth rally here, the former Congress president blamed the BJP-led government at the Centre of creating an image for the country that deterred investors. He claimed that one crore people lost their jobs in the past year while the Modi government had promised the creation of two crore new ones.

Gandhi said the growth rate of 9 per cent reached during the UPA term has now declined to 5 per cent -- and claimed it is only 2.5 per cent if measured in the same manner in which it was during the UPA period.

He said Narendra Modi has not studied economics, claiming that the prime minister could not understand the Goods and Services Tax



(GST). Gandhi also criticised the PM on demonetisation, when high-value currency notes were withdrawn.

He urged the youth not to let their voice be suppressed and ask questions on employment and on the country's future. Gandhi said wherever Modi goes he talks of CAA, NRC and NPR but not on real issues like unemployment.

But the Congress leader made no direct comment on the Citizen-

ship Amendment Act, the National Register of Citizens and the National Population Register -- or on the recent protests, many of them involving young people, on these issues. The Jaipur public meeting was billed 'Yuva Aakrosh Rally', focusing on youth anger over unemployment and the state of the economy.

"Narendra Modi has destroyed India's image and reputation in the world. Today, India is known as the rape cap-

ital but Narendra Modi does not talk about this," he said at the rally at Jaipur's Ramniwas Garden.

He said when the youth raise questions over unemployment and ask Modi why he "destroyed" India's image, you are answered with bullets and are suppressed.

He said India's biggest asset and strength are the youth, who are capable of competing with China but the government is wasting this

asset. Rahul Gandhi suggested that the US, Europe and other regions are looking at India as a manufacturing hub as a balance to China.

India's youth have the potential. They can compete with China. The companies which are there in China want to invest in India. But they say that earlier peace prevailed in India but today there is violence, he said.

They say that the government of India is spreading violence and how can an investment be made in an environment where there is no surety for tomorrow, he said. He said the world saw India in the past as a country where there was harmony.

People used to say look at Pakistan where there is an environment of violence. Pakistan is a divided nation but India takes everyone along -- and this image of India has been tarnished by Modi, he said. Gandhi charged Modi of extending benefits to a handful of industrialists, ignoring farmers and the youth.

Hong Kong halts trains from mainland China as virus spreads

BEIJING, JAN 28 (AP): Hong Kong's leader has announced that all rail links to mainland China will be cut starting Friday as fears grow about the spread of a new virus. Chief Executive Carrie Lam said Tuesday that both the high-speed rail station and the regular train station would be closed.

China's death toll from a new viral disease that is causing mounting global concern rose by 25 to at least 106 on Tuesday as the United States and other governments prepared to fly their citizens out of the locked-down city at center of the outbreak.

The total includes the first death in Beijing, the Chinese capital, and 24 more fatalities in Hubei province, where the first illnesses from the newly identified coronavirus occurred in December.

Asian stock markets tumbled for a second day, dragged down by worries about the virus's global economic impact.

The U.S. Consulate in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where authorities cut off most access Jan. 22 in an effort to contain the disease, was preparing to fly its diplomats and some other Americans out of the city on Wednesday.

Japan and South Korea said they would send planes to Wuhan this week to evacuate their citizens. France, Mongolia and other governments also planned evacuations.

China's increasingly drastic containment efforts began with the suspension of plane, train

and bus links to Wuhan, a city of 11 million people.

That lockdown has expanded to 17 cities with more than 50 million people in the most far-reaching disease-control measures ever imposed.

China extended the Lunar New Year holiday by three days to Sunday to reduce the risk of infection by keeping offices and factories nationwide closed and the public at home.

Authorities in Shanghai, a global business center and home to 25 million people, extended the holiday in that city by an additional week to Feb. 9.

U.S. health officials expanded their recommendation for people to avoid non-essential travel to any part of China, rather than just Wuhan and other areas most affected by the outbreak.

Mongolia closed its vast border with China and North Korea said it was strengthening quarantine measures. Hong Kong and Malaysia are barring visitors from Hubei. Chinese travel agencies were ordered to cancel group tours nationwide. There were 1,771 new cases confirmed in China on Monday, raising the national total to 4,515, according to the National Health Commission. It said 976 people were in serious condition.

The government has sent 6,000 extra medical workers to Wuhan from across China, including 1,800 who were due to arrive Tuesday, a commission official, Jiao Yuhui, said at a news con-

ference. A baby boy was delivered by surgery in Wuhan after his 27-year-old mother was hospitalized as a highly suspected virus case, state TV reported. The mother, who has a fever and cough, was 37 weeks pregnant, or two weeks less than a standard full term.

Doctors wore protective masks and clothing for the delivery Friday at Union Hospital.

It was unlikely for her to be able to give natural birth, said the hospital's deputy director of obstetrics, Zhao Yin.

After the baby was born, the mother would suffer less pressure in her lungs and she could get better treatment. Also Tuesday, the Education Ministry canceled English proficiency and other tests for students to apply to foreign universities. The ministry said the new semester for public schools and universities following Lunar New Year was postponed until further notice.

The Hong Kong government announced some government offices would remain closed until at least Monday and non-essential public employees were allowed to work from home.

Chinese financial markets were closed for the holiday, but stock indexes in Tokyo, Seoul and Sydney all declined.

Beijing's official response has vastly improved since the 2002-03 SARS outbreak, which also originated in China, but fears of a global contagion are not put to bed, said Vishnu Varathan at Mizuho Bank in Singapore.

China urges citizens to delay foreign travel over virus fears

BEIJING, JAN 28 (AFP): China on Tuesday urged its citizens to postpone trips abroad as the country expands a massive effort to contain a viral outbreak that has killed more than 100 people nationwide.

The recommendation to delay non-essential travel was issued "in order to protect the health and safety of Chinese and foreign people", the National Immigration Administration said in a statement.

"Reducing people's cross-border movement helps to prevent and control outbreaks," the agency added.

Authorities had al-

ready suspended domestic and overseas Chinese group tours as part of nationwide efforts to combat the coronavirus outbreak, which has infected more than 4,500 people across the country.

Chinese nationals took almost 150 million trips abroad in 2018, the official Xinhua news agency reported in May.

A drastic reduction of trips abroad from China could deal a severe blow to the international tourism industry.

The number of tourists from the country has increased nearly tenfold since 2003, according to a report by research firm Capital Economics.

Washington Post places reporter on leave after Bryant tweet

WASHINGTON, JAN 28 (AP): The Washington Post has placed a political reporter on administrative leave after she tweeted a link to a story about rape allegations against NBA superstar Kobe Bryant, who was killed Sunday.

Dozens of journalists at the newspaper criticized the decision.

Reporter Felicia Sonmez's tweet Sunday, amid widespread public mourning over Bryant's death in a helicopter crash, drew considerable backlash on social media.

The Post reported that Sonmez received threats of death and rape and had to move to a hotel after her home address was published online. The Post said Sonmez deleted the original tweet at the request of a managing editor.

She also received an email from executive editor Marty Baron saying: A real lack of judgment to tweet this. Please stop. You're hurting this institution by doing this. Sonmez shared the email with an Associated Press reporter. The Post said Sonmez had been placed on paid leave while newsroom managers look into the episode. A spokeswoman for the newspaper did not respond to questions about Baron's

role. Sonmez said Monday night that she remains suspended and doesn't know how long it will last. She said she's been working closely with the Washington Post Newspaper Guild and there may be a meeting with management soon.

Members of the Guild protested Sonmez's suspension. They also noted that Sonmez had received an onslaught of violent messages and has gotten insufficient guidance from the Post on how to protect herself.

We understand the hours after Bryant's death Sunday were a fraught time to share reporting about past accusations of sexual assault, Guild members wrote. The loss of such a beloved figure, and of so many other lives, is a tragedy. But we believe it is our responsibility as a news organization to tell the public the whole truth as we know it about figures and institutions both popular and unpopular, at moments timely and untimely.

Sonmez's controversial tweet linked to a 2016 Daily Beast story titled Kobe Bryant's Disturbing Rape Case: The DNA Evidence, the Accuser's Story, and the Half-Confession.

Netanyahu withdraws immunity from prosecution request

BY HARINDER MISHRA JERUSALEM, JAN 28 (PTI): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday announced that he was withdrawing his request for parliamentary immunity in the three graft cases against him to stop the "dirty game" over the issue, paving the way for legal proceedings against him to go forward.

The Israeli leader made his decision public through a Facebook Post from Washington, where he is on a visit to meet US President Donald Trump before the latter announces his plan for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, was indicted on counts of fraud, breach of trust and bribery in November in three separate cases. He has denied any wrongdoing.

During this fateful time for the people of Israel, while I am in the US on a historic mission to shape Israel's permanent borders and ensure our security for future generations, another Knesset episode is expected to begin in the immunity circus, Netanyahu wrote.

Since I was not given due process, because all the rules of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) were trampled on, and since the results of the procedure were pre-dictated without proper discussion, I decided not to allow this dirty game to continue, the 70-year-old leader stressed.

The indictment is now expected to be filed with the Jerusalem District Court by the end of the week, less than five weeks before the unprecedented third round of parliamentary elections within a year slated for March 2.

The date for Tues-

day's Knesset discussion was set before Netanyahu announced that he would travel to Washington for the unveiling of Trump's long awaited peace plan. The timing of the announcement of the peace plan has been criticised by many analysts in Israel as an attempt to rescue Netanyahu from the immunity proceedings.

The Israeli Prime Minister's main political rival, Benny Gantz of the Blue and White party, who also met Trump in Washington on Monday said that Netanyahu cannot run the country while standing trial in the three three cases against him.

Netanyahu is going to trial. We must move forward. Israel's citizens have a clear choice: A Prime Minister who will work for them or a Prime Minister working for himself," Gantz, a former Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Forces, said in a statement.

"No one can run a state and at the same time manage three serious criminal cases for bribery, fraud and breach of trust, he emphasised.

Netanyahu, who rejects all the charges, may have withdrawn his request to avoid the embarrassment of a certain defeat at the floor of the Knesset with almost 65 out of 120 parliament members reportedly likely to vote against it, according to reports.

His move to seek for immunity was also seen as contrary to his pleadings that he was innocent and nothing would come out of these cases.

Despite that he announced in January that he would ask the Knesset for parliamentary immunity, as he faced a legal deadline to do so following Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit's

decision to charge him.

Mandelblit couldn't officially indict Netanyahu so long as his immunity request was pending and the Knesset hadn't voted on it.

The Attorney General announced in November that he would indict Netanyahu in all the three corruption investigations against him. The Prime Minister is charged with fraud and breach of trust in all three cases, as well as bribery in one of them.

He has all through denied wrongdoing and has accused police and state prosecutors of participating in an attempted coup against him, orchestrated by the Left and a hostile media.

The first case, dubbed Case 1000, involves accusations that Netanyahu received gifts and benefits from billionaire benefactors including Israeli-born Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan in exchange for favours.

In Case 2000, involving accusations that Netanyahu agreed with Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper publisher Arnon Mozes to weaken a rival daily in return for more favourable coverage from Yedioth, the Premier is charged with fraud and breach of trust, while Mozes has been charged with bribery.

In the so called Case 4000, widely seen as the most serious, Netanyahu is accused of having advanced regulatory decisions that benefited Shaul Elovitch, the controlling shareholder in the Bezeq telecom giant, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, in exchange for positive coverage from the Elovitch-owned Walla news site.

Mandelblit has charged both Netanyahu and Elovitch with bribery in the case.

Japan to send evacuation plane to Wuhan: minister

TOKYO, JAN 28 (AFP): Japan will send a plane to the Chinese city of Wuhan later Tuesday to begin evacuating citizens from the centre of a deadly virus outbreak, the country's foreign minister said.

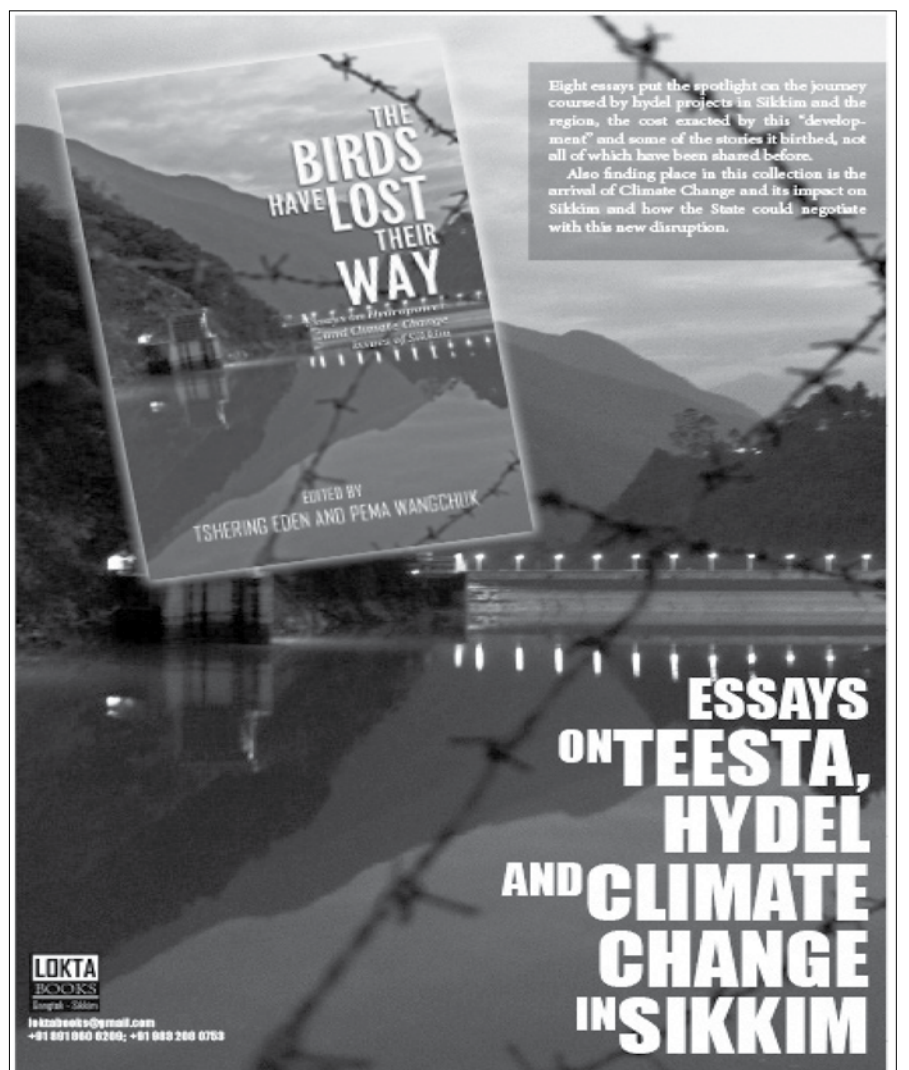
"We have finalised arrangements, and the Chinese side has communicated to us that it is now ready to accept one chartered flight. Arrangements have been made to secure transportation to the airport," Toshimitsu Motegi told reporters.

"We will dispatch the first flight for Wuhan airport this evening, and we will also bring with it aid supplies such as masks and protective suits for Chinese people as well as for Japanese nationals," he said. He added that around 200 people were likely to be on board, out of 650 Japanese nationals in the area who had expressed an interest in being repatriated.

"We will continue to coordinate efforts with the Chinese government and other relevant agencies, including securing

transportation on the ground, so that all Japanese nationals wishing to return home will be able to return home as soon as possible," he added.

The flight is expected to arrive in Japan early on Wednesday, with health officials on board monitoring the condition of passengers but no apparent plans so far to quarantine those arriving from Wuhan. "We will send around four people per plane -- a medical doctor, a quarantine officer, a nurse and so on.



visit us at: www.summittimes.com



IN CHARACTER! The actresses, Lucy Hale poses with a copy of Katy Keene while out in New York City.

Why Ayushmann Khurrana Signed On To Play Gay Lead In Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan

Ayushmann Khurrana, who has quite a reputation for playing challenging roles, recently talked about playing a gay character in his upcoming film Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan and revealed how people from the film industry reacted to it. Ayushmann stated that a lot of people from film fraternity “asked him to re-think” playing a gay man but he went for it because he wanted to change the stereotype. “Doing ‘Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan’ was one of the most important decisions of my life. A lot of people from the industry asked me to re-think this because no leading hero has ever portrayed a gay man on screen. But I knew, this stereotype needed to be shattered and the time to change it, is now. I somehow knew I had to do it and take the plunge,” he was quoted as saying by news agency IANS.

Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan features Jitendra Sharma as Ayushmann Khurrana’s gay partner. On Monday, the makers of the film released its first track, which showed Kartik Singh (Ayushmann) and Aman Tripathi (Jitendra) kissing at a wedding. The track perfectly captures the reaction of Aman Tripathi’s parents Shankar Tripathi (Gajraj Rao) and Sunaina Tripathi (Neena Gupta) who, like others, find it hard to accept gay couples in their society because of the taboos linked with the LGBTQ community.

Talking about the same, Ayushmann said that apart from raising awareness about taboos linked with LGBTQ commu-

nity, he wanted to make ‘Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan’ a full family entertainer: “I have a free pass to do all things different and quirky and I wanted to raise nationwide awareness on the taboos linked with the LGBTQ community at large. I was sure that we have to make ‘Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan’ as a full family entertainer that brings a smile to people’s faces, to spread the message of the film to as many people as possible across the country and I’m thrilled with how the movie has shaped up.”

Ayushmann Khurrana’s unconventional choice of films and his quirky yet realistic roles have managed to win hearts of his fans so far. From playing a man dealing with premature balding in Bala to portraying the role of a sperm donor in Vicky Donor, Ayushmann has constantly pushed the bar higher by taking up challenging roles. It wouldn’t be wrong to say that Ayushmann’s fans loved his performance in Dream Girl, in which his character picked a ‘dial a friend’ job and spoke to people as a woman. Also, his performance as a guy dealing with his mother’s pregnancy in Badhaai Ho, in which he worked with Neena Gupta and Gajraj Rao, was unmissable.

Ayushmann gives his family the credit for supporting him throughout his career: “They have constantly been a massive support system for me and they have always enabled me in taking the biggest life decisions. When I decided to pursue a career in showbiz, they stood by me like a rock”

I don’t like when people say ‘woh zamaana achha tha’: Pandit Jasraj

BY KOMAL PANCHAMATIA

MUMBAI, JAN 28 (PTI): Quite like music, legendary Classical music vocalist Pandit Jasraj is in sync with time.

The Padma Vibhushan recipient, who turned 90 on Tuesday, is not the one to look back on the years gone-by and even uses the Internet to impart his extensive knowledge on music to the young generation.

“I teach through Skype. I suggest everyone to do it. I am walking with time and that’s what one should do. I don’t like when people say ‘Woh zamaana achha tha’ (Those were the good times).”

“I believe the current phase is good. One should not compare it with the past -- good or bad. One has to walk with time and only then you will like the current time,” Pandit Jasraj told PTI in an interview.

As someone who has spent his life dedicated to Indian music, Pandit Jasraj said it is not a matter of pride for him and he constantly feels the need to improve. “I am critical of myself. I never think I have done something great. I don’t think too much about myself or my achievements. Whatever I have received is as per God’s will. I am grateful to God for that.”

Birthdays are not a grand affair, the musician said, adding that the responsibility of the celebration this year is on his grandchildren.

Recalling his first ever concert, Pandit Jasraj said, he performed in front of Ne-

pal King Tribhuwan Bir Bikram Shah in 1952. “The king told his men to announce that he has awarded me 5,000 gold coins. I was shocked, I couldn’t believe it. I was sweating and I almost fainted, I was maybe 22-year-old then,” he said.

Indian Classical music is unaffected by trends but has always found patronage whether with the monarchy or now with people. “Classical music has never

cinema music. My all-time favourite is Lata Mangeskar, there is no one like her. I often talk to her. I watch movies, I catch up on films on OTT platforms. Whatever my granddaughter plays it, I see it,” he added.

True to his philosophy of walking on the beats of time, Pandit Jasraj doesn’t believe in the notion that Classical music doesn’t find an audience in the younger



seen a downfall. Earlier it was under the patronage of kings. After they went away, people took care of us.”

The musician said he still does ‘riyaz’ (practice) every day but due to age, it is no longer possible to sit for hours at a stretch.

He often spends his leisure time playing cards, talking to people and listening to all kind of music. “I listen to western music, African music and also

generations. “It is just a perception. In western music, you may groove listening to it but in Indian classical music, you become calm, you listen to it peacefully. In every other form of music, your body, mind and everything moves but Indian classical music calms you down,” he said.

There are already three documentaries on the musician’s life and Pandit Jasraj said wouldn’t mind if someone wanted to make a biopic on him.

Salman loses cool, snatches fan’s phone at Goa airport



PANAJI, JAN 28 (PTI): Irked by the behaviour of a fan who tried to click a selfie with him at the Goa airport, Bollywood actor Salman Khan on Tuesday snatched his mobile phone.

The video of the incident has gone viral on social media.

In the clip, a man can be seen approaching Khan and trying to click a selfie when the actor was walking out of the airport. Annoyed, Khan

can be seen snatching the mobile phone from the man, who was later identified as a ground staff working for an airlines.

“No formal complaint is lodged but when the video went viral, we inquired about the incident and confirmed it,” said a senior official of the airport.

When contacted, Airport Police Inspector Sagar Ekoskar said no formal complaint was lodged.

Two new ‘Transformers’ movies in the works at Paramount

LOS ANGELES, JAN 28 (PTI): Paramount Pictures is developing two new films in the “Transformers” franchise after the success of spin-off “Bumblebee”. The franchise is based on the 1980s toy range with the slogan “more than meets the eye”.

According to Variety, James Vanderbilt will write

the script for one project, while Joby Harold is on board to work on the other film.

No directors are attached, though both the movies will feature new cast.

“Bumblebee” was the last “Transformers” film to hit the theatres. The movie, directed by Travis Knight, earned USD 465 million worldwide.

CBS developing ‘Equalizer’ reboot with Queen Latifah

LOS ANGELES, JAN 28 (PTI): The “Equalizer” reboot, featuring actor Queen Latifah, is in the works at CBS network.

According to Deadline, CBS has officially ordered the project to pilot.

The show is said to be a reimagining of the popular series in which Queen Latifah played an enigmatic figure who uses her skills to help those with nowhere else to turn.

The original “Equalizer” ran four seasons between 1985 and 1989. Andrew Marlowe and Terri Miller are attached as writers, executive producers, and showrunners on the new series.

Queen Latifah will also executive produce.

Universal Television is producing the project in association with CBS Television Studios.

David Schwimmer doesn't think 'Friends' reunion is possible

LONDON, JAN 28 (PTI): “Friends” alum David Schwimmer says a reunion of the popular sitcom is not possible as every member of the lead cast is headed in different career directions. The actor, who played fan favourite Ross Geller on the NBC series, said he doesn’t want to go along with a supposed return for the sake of money.

“I just don’t think it’s possible, given everyone’s different career trajectories. I think everyone feels the same: why mess with what felt like the right way to end the series? “I don’t want to do anything for the money. It would have to make sense creatively and nothing I’ve heard so far presented to us makes sense,” Schwimmer told The Guardian when asked about a potential “Friends” reunion.

Recently, show’s co-creator Marta Kauffman said the team would never do a “scripted” reunion.

“If it was the right thing, if it were the six of them together reflecting, talking about their experiences, and the episodes, then I’m totally behind it... Nothing scripted. We will not do anything scripted,” Kauffman said. Reports of HBO Max’s “Friends” reunion started doing the rounds last November.

“Friends”, also starring Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, and Matthew Perry, premiered in September 1994.

ARIES:

The tendency to overthink often increases every time you find yourself smitten by someone. But how many of these scenarios that you are building in your head have their roots in reality? Which of these are simply a figment of your imagination? Stay woke, Aries. This will give you perspective on your own drama.

Tip: Be aware of your tendency to overthink. **TAURUS:** Today, you’re being asked to observe the ways in which you are demonstrating love towards yourself. Is your practice unconditional, or have you set the standards so high that you are unable to reach the so-called target? The cards are reminding you that you are a work-in-progress, Taurus. So give yourself some loving even when you feel like you are failing. Tip: Be gentle in the manner you communicate with yourself.

GEMINI: Everything we experience in this lifetime is a choice, including the so-called obstacles. So is our soul trying to

mess with us or is there some sort of divine plan at play? Think of each of these challenges as learning lessons that are helping your soul grow and evolve to the next level. The key to transcendence: approaching Tip: You have the tools required to transcend your challenges.

CANCER: What if we said you are your biggest obstacle? Move beyond the duality within. Stop creating complex scenarios in your head. The simple practice of grounding your energy will give you perspective on the things you are struggling with. As far as your relationship with others is concerned, take a step back from conflicting situations. Tip: Move beyond the duality within.

LEO: The early stages of a ‘situationship’ are simultaneously exciting and panic-inducing. There’s so much you don’t know about the person. So what parts of you should you reveal to them and what aspects should you keep a secret? Oh, Leo! Aren’t you exhausted by the constant chatter in your own head. There’s only one way to

make space for intimacy: to be exactly who you are minus the filters you sometimes wear when you step out into the world. Tip: Be exactly who you are.

VIRGO: At any point of time, you have two options: to do the right thing or opt for the easy way out. Which way are you going to head, Virgo? Know that you are being guided by Spirit in every moment. Some of you may feel like communication gaps are getting the better of your relationship. Tip: Let go of your fear of confrontation and have the talk.

LIBRA: How do you feel about whirlwind romances, Libra? Doesn’t matter. You won’t have the time to gather your thoughts today given how soon things are about to escalate. Let ‘go with the flow’ become your mantra. Spirit has a plan for you, one that unfolding magically right now and in this moment.

Tip: Did somebody say whirlwind romance? **SCORPIO:** The secret to a harmonious relationship: listening more than you talk

as you practice kindness, compassion and empathy. You are perfecting the recipe yet again, Scorpio, which in turn is helping your love soar to new heights. You may feel like you are developing an almost telepathic connection. One glance across the room and you know exactly what they’re thinking.

Tip: Practice kindness, compassion and empathy.

SAGITTARIUS: Wise words by Douglas Adams to provide you with the inspiration you need to keep moving forward with courage and confidence: “I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I needed to be.” Throw that road map out of the window - with that a sense of attachment to your past plans. The magic is in the now, Sagittarius. Be present to signs and synchronicities. A brand new adventure is about to begin.

Tip: Wild one, take a leap of faith.

CAPRICORN: Not all goodbyes have to be this painful, Capricorn. If you are

destined to, you will meet again. For now, embrace the beauty of endings. Endings that are now making space for a brand new chapter in your life. Remember, you are not the same person you used to be. Approach everything with a beginner’s mind rather than operating from old paradigms. For some of you, this may be a time of physical transitions. Trust that you are being guided to a better place.

Tip: Find the beauty in endings.

AQUARIUS: Golden words by Albert Einstein: “You cannot solve a problem with the same thinking that created it.” How would you apply this wisdom to your life, Aquarius? What are the things that need to be approached with a beginner’s mind? Spirit is offering you the chance to unlearn all your negative patterns and replace them with growth and learning. Trust that a change in your mindset will help you find novel solutions and move forward with dignity and grace.

Tip: Learn, unlearn, relearn.