



**XBOX GAME PASS ADDS PERFECT
GAME TO PLAY WITH FRIENDS**
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**ADAM LEVINE APOLOGIZES FOR
LACKLUSTER PERFORMANCE,
SAYS IT 'WASN'T OUR BEST'**

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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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'Prince of Football' to be crowned on 04 March State-level trials held for final selection

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 29 FEB:**

State-level selection trial under 'Prince of Football' initiative to shortlist players in U-13 and U-15 state football teams was held here at Paljor Stadium on Saturday.

Under the initiative, an 18-member squad of selected players in U-13 and U-15 state team will be taken for an exposure tour to Delhi by Bhairav Bhutia Football School. The trial was attended by footballers from all four districts selected during the recently held winter football coaching camp in each district.

'Prince of Football' is a collaboration between Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Government of Sikkim and Bhairav Bhutia Football



School [BBFS] to spot talented footballers from different corners of the State in U-13 and U-15 categories. The best footballer, 'Prince of Football', each in U-13 and U-15 category will get scholarship and exposure from BBFS.

It has to be mentioned here that under this joint collaboration, Sports & Youth Affairs Department had organised winter football coaching

camp in all four districts and shortlisted talented players for the state-level selection camp. The state-level team U-13 and U-15 teams will now be taken by BBFS for exposure trip to Delhi and after the exposure tour the best footballer of U-13 and U-15 category will be provided scholarship and exposure trip to clubs in Europe by BBFS.

Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Joint

Director, Doniv Rai mentioned that around 20 players from each district in each category have been shortlisted in this state level trial. He informed that spotters in the selection trial will submit their selection list to the evaluation committee and the final list of selected players in each category will be announced on 04 March.

He mentioned that the state U-13 and U-15

team will be taken for Delhi tour between 23 to 26 March. "This is a very good opportunity for talented footballers to reach higher levels in football," Mr Rai said.

The state-level selection trial witnessed the participation of young talented footballers from different corners of the state and many of them were accompanied by their enthusiastic parents.

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Sikkim gets a taste of world cinema

Filmmaker Rahul Rawail talks Art Production



GANGTOK, 29 FEB (IPR):

The second day of Global Cinema Festival 2020 witnessed an array of world cinema being showcased along with technical workshops on various aspects of film production and digital marketing.

Both feature and non-feature films from India, France, Spain and Azerbaijan, as well as a short film titled 'Buwa' from Sikkim were screened today at Manan Kendra. The Indian films included films

from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Bengal, Gujarat, Jharkhand and the host State Sikkim.

The technical sessions had noted film maker Rahul Rawail take a session on Art Production/VFX, while noted sound engineer/director, Pravash Pradhan provided insights on various aspects of sound in the audio-visual media. The session on Production Management was conducted by Director, SRFTII, Ashok Vishwanathan, while the session

on digital marketing was conducted by Uddipan Nath.

The third and final day of the festival will showcase three films from Sikkim, among several films from around the world. An important workshop on Film Facilitation will be conducted which will have panel discussion by industry experts, and attended by officers of the State Government Departments, stakeholders, and officers of NDFC and FFI.

Child Parliamentarians elected at Singhik-Sentam GPU

MANGAN, 29 FEB [IPR]: Village-level Child Parliamentarians of Singhik Sentam GPU, North Sikkim, were elected today at Singhik School with participants from Pakshok School and Singhik School as well. The election was organized by the District Child Protection Unit of North district in coordination with the Village level Child Protection Committee of the GPU.

DCPO North, Wendy Lepcha, emphasised the four pillars of UNCRC - The rights of Survival, Participation, Protection and

Development; the Child Protection mechanism existing in the State and the District and the child-related legislations.

The election was conducted for Ministerial post of all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the roles of each were explained to the children.

Principal, Singhik School, encouraged the children to take advantage of the platform and utilize it for the betterment of the community.

Panchayat president, Pem Tshering Lepcha, who is also the Chairperson of the Village level Child

Protection Committee of the GPU administered the oath of office and assured his support towards their responsibilities and well-



come the children to use the child-friendly room appointed in each GPK.

He encouraged the children to use the resources and knowledge at their

disposal to bring change in their society and community.

The Prime Minister elect of Singhik-Sentam

GPU's Children's Parliament, Chogyal Lepcha, pledged to make all the villagers and seniors in her community aware of child rights.

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Rural Sports Meet concludes across Sikkim

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 FEB:**

Rural Sports Meet 2020 concluded today in grand manner at all four districts of Sikkim.

It has been great desire by Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Goyai] that each GPU spend an amount of Rs 50,000 for promotion of sports in their respective areas. A fairly good deal of talent is available in various streams of sports in the villages which needs to be tapped and nurtured.

In order to encourage games and sports, rural talent hunts and awareness for healthy lifestyles, the State Government had directed that Rural Sports be held



at the GPU level.

All the GPUs organised rural sports meets in collaboration with the Sports & Youth Affairs Department from 25 to 29 Feb. This sports meets were organised keeping in mind that child welfare and sports were crucial to Sikkim. This event was open to all age-groups, especially for people from rural areas in order to hone their

sporting skills.

The East District SYA Department also conducted these events in all the GPUs of the district. Competitions were held in the disciplines of football, volleyball, badminton, athletics, tug of war, musical chair and archery.

Today, Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari, accompanied

by BDO/ Pakyong, Nilkantha Bhandari, covered Rural Sports Meet in the four GPUs under Pakyong BAC.

Their final stop was at Padamchey School Ground where competitions were held for East Pendum GPU. Area MLA Bishnu Khatri was present as chief guest. The programme was also attended by former Sikkim

turn to pg 02



**We are grateful to the Honorable
Chief Minister of Sikkim
for launching the Sikkim
Film Policy 2020**

**With gratitude from Sikkim
Film Co-operative Society Ltd.
Deorali, Gangtok**



Sikkim Film Co-operative Society Ltd.



BL land for sale. Road site 100ft by 50ft at Lower Syari. Enroute Ranipool to Deorali via Syari. 10 Minutes Drive from Ranipool. Serious Buyer may contact : **83720-77482/ 94341-36989/ 98320-82664**

WSOS's NEEV festival held at Rongli



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 FEB:**

Wandering Souls of Sikkim organised an inter-school festival, NEEV: A Foundation for Better Future at Rongli Community Hall on 28 Feb, 2020. The festival supported by BAC, Regu & Rhenock saw the participation of more than 100 students from 14 secondary and senior secondary schools of Rhenock and Rongli area in various competitions like quiz, elocution, essay writing, poetry recitation, etc, in various categories.

Various competitions were judged by Rhenock College Assistant Professors Pranmya Rai, Rachana Sharma, Saraswati Sharma, Nirkamal Dahal, Yogesh Neopaney and Swachh Bharat District Coordinator, Sunil Pradhan.

Quizmaster Chleopus Subba conducted the

quiz competition. The festival also saw cultural presentations by the students of Rongli School & Rhenock College.

RDD Special Secretary cum Mission Director, Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), Anil Raj Rai attended the festival as chief guest along with Pakyong ADC (Dev), Radha Pradhan, Rongli SDM, PR Dulal, BDOs of Regu & Rhenock, Education Deputy Director, Dorjee Sherpa, Panchayats, teachers, students & others.

This festival was organised with the objective of laying a foundation for better future by providing a platform to the young minds in rural Sikkim to foster their creative genius, the release mentions.

WSOS has thanked BDO, Regu, Bhim Pradhan and BDO, Rhenock, RK Gurung for supporting the event.

Rural Sports Meet begins in South Sikkim

NAMCHI, 28 FEB (IPR): The State Government is organizing five-day Rural Sports Meet II 2020 in all the Gram Panchayat Units (GPU) of the state from 25-29 Feb.

Similarly, the South District Sports department is also conducting this sports meet in all GPUs of the dis-

trict. In the meet, various sports activities namely football, volleyball, badminton, athletics, tug of war, musical chairs and archery are being held. It may be mentioned here that this sports meet is open to all age groups and especially to people from rural areas.

Training on Women's Empowerment by SIRD



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 FEB:**

State Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Karfector, South Sikkim organised a three-day training on "Women's Empowerment" at Karfector today, a press release informs.

The training was attended by Panchayat members along with Self-Help Group (SHGs) members from South Sikkim. The resources persons especially spoke on the topic of Women and Child Protection, the release mentions.

Rural Sports Meet concludes...

Krantikari Morcha Nari Morcha Convener (East) Prabha Pradhan, former Social Media Secretary of SKM, Boom Tshering Yonzon, and head of institutions of different schools, school staff and local gentry.

The event concluded with distribution of certificates and trophies to the winners and participants as well as token of appreciation to the officials and volunteers involved in organising the event.

The event also featured a colourful cultural programme presented by school students.

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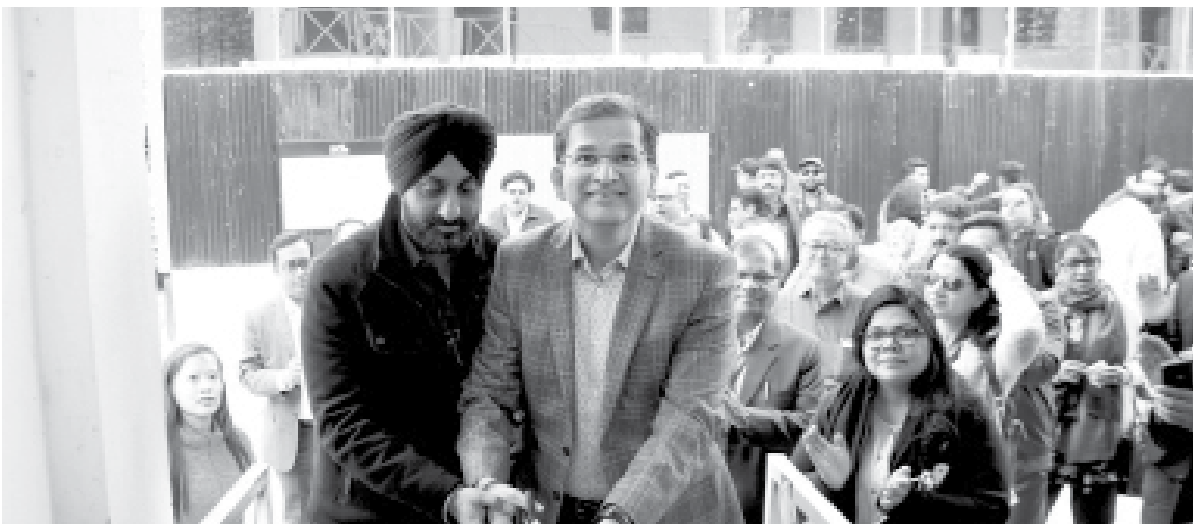
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Temi Creative Studio inaugurated

NAMCHI, 29 FEB (IPR):

In connection with the ongoing Global Cinema Festival, 2020 'Temi Creative Studio' was jointly inaugurated by Director and COO, Graphiti (Mumbai), Munjal Shroff, Director, Editft Studios (Kolkata), Harcharam Singh. Present, amongst others were Managing Director Temi Tea, Mrinalini Shrivastava, officials from Temi Tea Garden and visiting dignitaries.

Temi Creative Studio project is funded by Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME), Government of India. MSME play a crucial role in providing employment opportunities at lower capital and aids in industrialization of rural areas reducing regional imbalances and encouraging equitable



distribution of wealth.

The main aim of this project is to provide training and employment avenue to the youth especially who are school drop outs. This project will be assisted by Brand Consultant for Temi Tea Estate, Aaron Leonart Bhutia who will be imparting

knowledge on creative skills and various other facets of animation. This free of cost training will ensure that the learner can be self sufficient and can venture into their own entrepreneurship sector in the field of technology.

It may be mentioned that Temi Tea Estate

is run by Sikkim State Government which was established in the year 1969. It is one of the Organic Tea Estate in the country the organic certification was done in the year 2008. Grown at an elevation ranging from 1400 to 2000 meters above sea level, this estate brings about

a range of exclusive tea flavors from the small state of Sikkim. Temi Tea is available in various flavors namely that of green, white, Oolong tea's. Additionally, there are a total of four Temi tea flush which is falls under Spring, Summer, Monsoon and Autumn seasons.

Rural Sports Meet concludes at Bermiok Berthang



GYALSHING, 29 FEB (IPR):

The five-day Rural Sports Meet-II organised by Bermiok Berthang GPU, Rural Development Department in collaboration with Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Government of Sikkim concluded today

at Bojek, Upper Bermiok, West Sikkim.

The sports meet was attended by Minister-cum-MLA Gyalshing Bermiok, Lok Nath Sharma as chief guest.

Minister Sharma, in his address, congratulated participants and encouraged them to prac-

tice regularly to achieve their goals in the field of sports.

He also talked about the importance of sports as envisioned by Chief Minister, P. S. Tamang and his vision to provide various types of facilities at village level.

Addressing the pub-

lic and trainees, Minister Sharma informed about the ongoing Global Cinema Festival 2020 that was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Sikkim, yesterday. He also highlighted newly released Sikkim's Film Policy, constructive approach of the state government and future scope for the state of Sikkim.

The Minister also spoke on the ongoing developmental activities in his constituency and shared future roadmap to uplift the area and urged for co-operation and support at all levels. He also assured to address the public demand of

drinking water.

The concluding day of the five-day event also witnessed colourful cultural program by the students of various schools.

Minister Sharma also handed over certificates to the participants. Also present were BDO Hee-Martam along the officials from concerned department, Panchayats, Teachers, Students and general public at large.

CM attends Srimad Bhagwad Katha at Jorethang

NAMCHI, 29 FEB (IPR):

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang accompanied by his spouse Krishna Rai, attended the Srimad Bhagwad Katha Gyan Yagya Anusthan at Jorethang playground, today. At the onset, the Chief Minister offered prayers and attended spiritual discourse and witnessed devotional presentations by the devotees.

Present on the occasion were Minister Transport Department, Sanjeet Kharel, MLA Salghari Zoom, Sunita Gazmer, Officers of South District administration and the devotees at large.

In his address, the Chief Minister expressed his delight on being a part of the puja and congratulated the people of the locality who have contributed for Srimad Bhagawad Katha Gyan Yagya Anusthan.



The Chief Minister expressed his gratitude to the renowned Bhagwad Acharya, Rohit Raj Maharaj for enlightening a large number of devotees on Bhagwad Katha and other motivational sessions on substance abuse which was attended by the students of surrounding schools along with large number of devotees.

Additionally, the Chief Minister directed the officials and check-post In-charge to be alert and stop crimes such as

human trafficking, drug peddling and other anti-social elements. He also assured to render every possible support from the State Government in rehabilitation of the drug abuse victims.

"Our endeavour is to promote tourism for all the districts of Sikkim which will be initiated by opening Ramam checkpoint, for the upgradation of West Sikkim in the first phase and gradually in other districts as well," the Chief Minister in-

formed.

Furthermore, he also elaborated the State Government's initiatives on the promotion of religious tourism in Sikkim so that entrepreneurship and employment avenues are created for the Sikkimese youth.

The government is planning to offer suitable employment and entrepreneurship for the needy people of Sikkim, therefore all should come forward to make Sikkim a model state, he informed.

The Chief Minister also reiterated plans to make Sikkim a disease free, drugs free and plastic free and to achieve the goal, one must introspect and transform the inner self to change the society, he added.

The Chief Minister thanked the organising committee and individuals behind organising the spiritual discourse.

Bhawana Educational Academy organizes Literary Contest



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 FEB:

Bhawana Educational Academy, Mamring, South Sikkim organised its 1st Bhawana Literary Contest, 2020 at the School Complex today, a press release informs.

The programme was attended by senior citizen cum social worker, TP Kharel as the chief guest along with guardians of the school. More than 30 students from Little Bells School, Tiny Tots School, Rangpo Senior Secondary School, Government Junior High School, Mamring and Bhawana Educational Academy participated in the competition.

Poem recitation and elocution competition was organised wherein the top three students were awarded with trophies and certificates by the chief guest.

Prince of Football...

The selection trial held under the supervision of officials and coaches of Sports & Youth Affairs Department, was also joined by Bhaichung Bhutia.

Speaking to media persons, Bhaichung Bhutia thanked the State government and Sports & Youth Affairs Department for working enthusiastically in this joint collaboration. He expressed that the response in the district-level camps was very good and over 40 young footballers joined the camp in North, West and South Districts and more than 200 in the East District camp.

"Overall, response was very good and the camp has witnessed very good standard of players in all districts," he said.

Bhaichung informed that an 18-member squad in U-13 and U-15 will be put together from this final selection and taken for a Delhi tour completely sponsored by BBFS and the best footballer in each category will later be taken to Europe tour this summer.

He stated that BBFS is in talks with Barcelona, Manchester United, Arsenal and other European clubs for the same.

"Looking at the talent this time there is high possibility that BBFS will provide 100% scholarship to 2-3 players from Sikkim," he said.

He added that this initiative seeks to produce an Indian international footballer from Sikkim.

LOST

NAME : SABITA KUMARI
D/O : JALESHWAR PRASAD
Address : Near ICICI bank Jorethang, South Sikkim.
Lost : BA Degree Certificate while travelling between Jorethang to Namchi on few months ago.
Lost GD Entry NO.115 at Jorethang Police Station on 18.02.2020.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

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

market experience.

Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Sikkim Manipal University, Gangtok has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NSE Academy (a wholly owned subsidiary of National Stock Exchange of India).

Senior Director, Chintan Modi, IIFL Securities Ltd. reinforced the opportunities of Financial Market and Investment and future possibilities of the untapped markets in India.

Associate Director, Vikash Jain, IIFL Securities Ltd. briefly provided a discourse on Financial Market and Investment.

Seminar on Financial Awareness at SMU

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 29 FEB:**

Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Sikkim Manipal University conducted a One-Day National Awareness Seminar on "Financial Awareness" on 28 Feb, 2020. The event held at SMU Campus was presided by Vice-Chancellor, Lt Gen (Dr) MD Venkatesh, Sikkim Manipal University, a press release informs.

Assistant Professor, Aditya Rai, DHSS, SMU introduced the gathering with an overview of the seminar and motivated the congregation for financial awareness and shared how correct

guidance and hand-held support can be provided to all the students to encourage them to further their interest in capital market.

Chief guest Vice-Chancellor, Lt Gen, (Dr) MD Venkatesh, SMU delivered words of blessing focusing more on the simple yet important aspects of financial awareness. He assured to develop Sikkim Manipal University with specific focus on financial awareness and anticipated such future collaborations.

Senior Manager, Avik Gupta, NSE provided an overview of the NSE Academy's Certified

Capital Market Professional (NCCMP) 100 hours certificate course to be offered in the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Sikkim Manipal University jointly collaborated with NSE Academy. MBA, Finance, Achal Jaiswal, Cardiff University UK, (MDP) IIM Ahmedabad, Vice President, National Stock Exchange (NSE) addressed the gathering on Financial Awareness. He provided highly valuable information in relation to financial matters and investment decision for both the working professionals and its career prospects for the students directly from his

CAEPHT observes National Science Day

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 FEB:

34th National Science Day was observed in the College of Agricultural Engineering & Post Harvest Technology (CAEPHT), Ranipool on 28 Feb, 2020, a press release informs.

This day is being observed to mark the discovery of Raman Effect by great Indian Scientist, Dr Chandrasekhara Venkat Raman. He was awarded Noble Prize in Physics in 1928. Main purpose of observing this day is to honour scientists for their achievements in different fields of science and encourage students for scientific experimentations. Theme of this year is 'Women in Science'. It aims to recognize contributions of women in



various fields of science.

On this occasion, debate and slogan writing competitions were organized for students and staff of the college. The valedictory programme was chaired by Dean (I/c), Prof RP Misra, CAEPHT.

The programme

started with welcome address by Prof. NS Chauhan, President, Institutional Innovation Council (IIC), CAEPHT, Ranipool. He spoke about the importance of the day and activities of IIC CAEPHT.

Dr Sujata Jena and Dr Diana S discussed the role of women in science

and engineering. The winners of competitions were awarded and all female faculty members were felicitated by the Chairman of the program.

In his address, Prof RP Misra discussed important contributions of Dr CV Raman and how Dr

Raman struggled to pursue his passion for scientific research. He also encouraged the students and faculty to contribute in scientific advancement.

The programme was organized by the Institutional Innovation Council of CAEPHT.

Sustainable Sikkim team creates climate change awareness



NISIM SUBBA

GANGTOK, 29 FEB:

Members of Sustainable Sikkim, a group working on climate change awareness, organized a program at MG Marg, Gangtok on Friday. The team holds an awareness program every Friday.

"Sustainable Sikkim

was created by a team of experienced strategic business, operations, and research/scientific professionals brought together with a single goal. That goal is to prepare all of us, through innovation, organizational stewardship, and planning, for a world transformed by the global climate crisis.

We believe that with thought and conscious intent both individuals and organizations can find a way to survive and even thrive going forward," reads the Sustainable Sikkim website.

The Sustainable Sikkim team is headed by Avinow Ankit as operations manager.

National Science Day celebrated at Tiny Tots School

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 FEB:

Tiny Tots School, Rangpo, East Sikkim, celebrated National Science Day 2020 at the school premises in a grand manner, a press release informs. The program was attended by Director, Principal, staff and students.

The main attrac-

tions of the program were drama and quiz competition. Principal, Ajit Sharma and Director, Gopal Baraily in the speech mentioned that science is in everything we do. The induction program of the new captain of the school was also organised on the day.



Visually impaired Chandra Bahadur Baraily sings to the strumming of his guitar as his wife, Fulmaya Baraily, sits by his side holding their 18-month old child on the steps of Tharo Line near Lall Bazaar in Gangtok. They have been together for the past 15 years and have four more children. Singing on the streets and collecting donations from passers-by supports this family of seven. [from NISIM SUBBA]



Win for Bayul Demazong in CM's Gold Cup Archery Tournament

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 29 FEB:

Bayul Demazong has entered the next round of the ongoing 19th Chief Minister's Gold Cup Archery Tournament [Compound] here at Archery Shooting Range in Tenzing Namgyal Memorial Ground, Tathangchen.

In a contesting match played today, Bayul Demazong defeated KRG Ralong by 30-20 points. The next match of the tournament will be played between Samtse Friends, Bhutan and Lachung United on Sunday.

Some signs of normalcy in riot-hit northeast Delhi

NEW DELHI, FEB 29 (PTI):

Some signs of normalcy returned to riot-hit areas of northeast Delhi on Saturday as people stepped out of their homes to buy groceries and medicines from a few shops that opened amid intensified patrolling by security personnel.

Since early morning, civic workers were seen clearing roads of bricks, glass shards and burnt vehicles in the aftermath of the violence that left 42 dead and over 200 injured. At some places, even bulldozers were used as it became difficult to manually remove debris.

In Jaffrabad, Maujpur, Yamuna Vihar, Chand Bagh, Mustafabad and Bhajanpura, which were among the areas worst hit by the communal violence, there were more vehicles and people on the roads than in the last five days.

Personnel from the Delhi Police and paramilitary forces encouraged people to open their shops and appealed for peace and communal harmony. They started their march at Jaffrabad and moved through Maujpur and then into the narrow lanes of Noor-e-Ilahi, Yamuna Vihar and Bhajanpura, areas where mobs ran riot vandalising shops, houses and torching vehicles early this week.

Schools in northeast Delhi still remain closed. "It is only the smaller shops that have opened today. The bigger shops

and showrooms have still not opened and their owners are being cautious," a showroom owner, whose property was attacked during the riots, told PTI.

Shakib, a resident of Noor-e-Ilahi, said people selling vegetables on carts made rounds of colonies. "Not many, only a couple of them could be seen. The rates are still a little high than the usual, but at least they have resumed sale," he said.

Yamuna Vihar resident Amit Tanwar said the situation has improved and grocery stores and other shops opened during the day.

However, some establishments like restaurants are still not open as their workers have not come to work, he added.

Officials on Saturday said schools will remain closed in northeast Delhi till March 7 in view of the violence. The annual exams have also been postponed since the situation is not conducive for conducting examinations in the violence-affected areas, they said.

Sources said the Delhi government is considering to issue a WhatsApp number for people to report circulation of provocative messages and take complaints on those spreading rumours.

Among the several houses torched by rioters was that of Border Security Force (BSF) Constable Mohammad Anees, who is currently

posted at a camp of the force the in West Bengal's Radhabari. The BSF has decided to rebuild his house and hand it over to him as a 'wedding gift'.

At the Guru Tegh Bahadur (GTB) Hospital people are still frantically searching for their

loved ones, either in the casualty ward or at the mortuary.

Forty-eight-year-old Madeena, whose son has been missing since Tuesday following the violence, has been running to police stations to find if he is still alive.

GRATITUDE



The family members of the Late Pasang Lhamu Ethenpa wish to sincerely thank, where words cannot express our deep gratitude for the outpouring of support during our period of grieving. To one and all who visited our house, attended the funeral which undoubtedly provided us with huge strength. The cards and the flowers sent were beautiful. Your kindness touched our hearts and lifted us up. Your thoughtfulness will never be forgotten.

Our special thanks goes to most of the retired aged teachers of PN Girls Senior Secondary School who visited us as well as attended funeral of our beloved "Mummy". Our thanks also goes to the Principal, faculty members & the students of PN Girls Senior Secondary School, Gangtok and above all, we thank President & the members of PNGites for their soothing going heavenly abode tribute and singing favorite school songs loved by our Late Mummy, Pasang Guruma always had her heart attached to this beloved school, staff and the students. Our Mummy's 49th Day death ceremony (Kutse Shugu) falls on 1st April 2020 & will be held at Ethenpa Villa, Lower Tadong, Gangtok.

Mr. Menla T. Ethenpa, Dr. Sonam T. Ethenpa (Sons)
Mrs. Tshering Pem Ethenpa, Mrs. Chunki Bhutia (Daughter-in-laws)
Mrs. Diki Y. Ethenpa, Ms. Chopel Ethenpa, Mrs. Sangay Pema Ethenpa (Daughters)
Mr. Karma Chankapa, Mr. Pemba Lama (Son-in-laws)
& host of Grand Children & Great-Grand Children

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM BUILDINGS & HOUSING DEPARTMENT

No.41/ETENDER/BHD/2019-20

Dated: 26/02/2020

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

On behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Chief Engineer, Buildings & Housing Department, Government of Sikkim invites percentage rate tenders from qualified Class I A contractors, within the state of Sikkim, enlisted with the SPWD in the cover system through e-procurement. The bids should be submitted online through the website www.sikkimtender.gov.in for the work as listed below.

Sl. No.	Name of the work	Bid security 2.5.% of the bid value (Rs. In lakhs)	Bid Value (Rs. In lakhs)	Cost of tender/bid form (Rs. In lakhs)	Completion Period.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Construction of Proposed Sikkim Civil Services Officers Institute Near Chintan Bhawan Gangtok East Sikkim.	34.08	1363.066	1.00	36 months.

IMPORTANT EVENT

1.	Publishing of Online Tender in e-procurement portal	26 th February 2020
2	Uploading of bidding documents in e-procurement portal	26 th February 2020
3.	Document download/Sale start date and time	26 th February 2020 1500 hrs onwards
4.	Last date & Time for seeking clarification regarding bids	4 th March 2020 upto 1500 Hrs.
5.	Last date for online submission of completed bids	16 th March, 2020 up to 1600 Hrs.
6.	Date for Submission of hard Copies (Tender fee and Bid security)	18 th March 2101 up to 1600 HRS.
7.	Date of opening of Tender bids	19 th March 2020 at 1300 HRS.

For all details on the bid visit www.sikkimtender.gov.in.

R.O No. 383/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20
Date: 27.2.2020

Sd/-
 Chief Engineer
 Buildings & Housing Department
 Government of Sikkim.

What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

The Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) is new strain of Coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, China. Notorious for mutating quickly and acquiring new qualities, it is a rising epidemic that was previously not identified in humans.

Symptoms of nCoV

- Fever
- Difficulty in breathing
- Dry Cough
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome
- Pneumonia - like symptoms

Treatment

- Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition.
- No vaccinations available as of now.
- Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected.

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

- Wash your hands often with soap.
- Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Observe good personal hygiene.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms.
- Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats.
- Avoid travel to nCoV affected places.
- Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.



If you seek help, you may call :
 -Toll free no. 104
 District surveillance Officer
 EAST : 7029372100
 WEST : 9593297809
 NORTH : 9841957468
 SOUTH : 7407691463
 New STNM
 AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Sikkimese Enough

Some Sikkimese have won, and no one has lost

The High Court recently corrected a wrong which too many in Sikkim had pointedly ignored even as a few consciously perpetrated. The reference here is to the recent High Court judgment which scrapped a series of executive practices of the State which, with their arbitrariness, had snatched the rights, privileges and even the identity of an entire segment of the Sikkimese population.

Until 1975, Sikkim had subjects, and following the Merger, all Sikkim Subjects became Indian citizens when the kingdom became a part of the Indian Union. It is common knowledge that several people, by 1989-90 around 70,000 of the Sikkimese, who qualified to get recorded as Sikkim Subjects never got around to getting themselves listed in the Sikkim Subjects Register even though they were always treated as Sikkimese for all practical purposes when the State was still a kingdom even if they did not have a “certificate” attesting their being Sikkimese. Things got complicated for them when Sikkim became a part of India. Since only those on the Sikkim Subjects Register became Indian citizens, the many Sikkimese who had no other home but Sikkim and had no other country to call their own became stateless. This section was eventually recognized as local and first recognized as Sikkimese and then Indian citizens in an elaborate exercise overseen by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1989-90. Before that, when Certificates of Identification were being issued to descendants of Sikkim Subjects, the State also realized that there were many government servants of the erstwhile kingdom who had served Sikkim and knew no other home but did not have Sikkim Subject Certificates. Most such employees would have qualified for Sikkimese citizenship under the pre-Merger laws which allowed government servants to become Sikkim Subjects after 10 years of Darbar service or, in special cases, if they were recognized for meritorious service. When Certificates of Identification were introduced, this group was also included in those who qualified.

Here is a short timeline of how things played out for this group – 1981, when the practice was formalized, they [those who were in government service on or before 31 Dec, 1969] were included in the first list of four categories enumerating who qualified to receive COIs, documents which are issued to “locals.” Until 1995, all four kinds of COIs enjoyed the same privileges and rights, and it was in 1995, that the segregation began with the Home Department, for reasons best known to its officers at the time, issued a Notification announcing that COIs issued to those whose husbands or fathers were in Sikkim Darbar Service on or before 1969 could be used only for the purpose of employment. To drive the humiliation home, a few months later, a follow-up notification was issued stressing that such COIs were for the purpose of employment only and “no other purpose.” From the Merger till November 1995, all Sikkimese were equal in status, but with the Notification of 1995, those who had received COIs because of their [or their father’s] service to the State were overnight left with only the right to apply for a government job. Till then, they could buy and sell land here, apply for local quotas in education and enjoy all other facilities available to locals.

One would not be faulted to suspect that this category was targeted for continuing denials and even humiliation in Sikkim and this came to the fore in the year 2006 when the Home Department issued a “letter” surmising that COIs for those in government service before 1969 was to go only one generation deep and that their grandchildren were not to be issued COIs. When this confusion was processed in government files, the only legal minds included in the file notings had pointed out that such a denial would be unfair, but the babus prevailed and imposed this denial. Where the second generation of those who had served the Sikkim Darbar were issued documents which allowed them only the right to apply for government jobs, the grandchildren were denied even the right to receive a document which attested them to be Sikkimese forget about enjoying any rights here.

When a petition was moved in the High Court challenging these denials, the petitioners, apart from pointing out that there was no legislative backing or proper explanations provided to explain why they were being so treated, had also submitted that: “...by such exclusion [they] are being treated as ‘non-locals’ in Sikkim, whereas, they have always considered themselves as ‘locals’ and ‘Sikkimese’.” That, the discrimination strikes at the Petitioners’ right to live with dignity in their own land besides subjecting them to an identity crisis...” No one with any sense of propriety and fair-play can believe otherwise. Where politicians ignored their plight and bureaucrats consistently undermined their rights and identity, the High Court has recognized the unreasonability of things and corrected the picture.

Some sections are however responding negatively to what this segment of the Sikkimese has won. It is important to bear in mind that this section has not won any new rights and is hence not siphoning anything away from anyone – what they have won is a status they enjoyed in Sikkim until it was taken from them in 1995. It is not an Old Law that they have militated against, but a Home Department notification which “short-changed” them when in fact, at the time of the Merger, the State Government should have addressed the specific case of non-Sikkimese government servants, many of whom could have possibly become Sikkimese for all practical purposes save the acquisition of a Sikkim Subjects Certificate. The Court has observed as much when it points out that even being in possession of rural land in pre-Merger Sikkim is otherwise considered enough to be counted as a Sikkimese.

Five surprising benefits of a plant-based diet



SHIREEN KASSAM
THECONVERSATION.COM

Many of the important benefits of a plant-based diet – particularly for climate health and animals – are well known. Yet despite the science being very clear, there remains confusion about the impact on human health.

We have long known for example, that a diet centred around whole plant-foods – fruits, vegetables, whole-grains, beans, nuts and seeds – significantly reduces the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity and certain cancers. In fact, a low fat plant-based diet is the only diet to have been shown to actually reverse established coronary artery disease. It has also been seen to reverse type 2 diabetes, enable effective and sustained weight loss without portion control or exercise, and arrest the progression of early stage prostate cancer.

Here are five additional benefits of a plant-based diet that may surprise you.

1. IMPROVES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Diet choices can have a major impact on mood and mental health, and there is a very good reason for this. Diet affects the health of our gut bacteria, which produce many of the hormones active in the

brain. Gut bacteria thrive on fibre, which is only found in whole plant foods. So it is no surprise to find that a plant-based diet can benefit mental health.

In one US study conducted at a large insurance company, participants who were overweight or had a history of type 2 diabetes were either prescribed a low-fat vegan diet or asked to continue their usual diet for 18 weeks. The results showed a significant improvement in mental health, wellbeing and work productivity in those on the vegan diet, as well as lower levels of depression and anxiety.

2. REDUCES ARTHRITIC PAIN

Osteoarthritis, the painful breakdown of cartilage in the joints, appears to be an inevitable conse-

quence of ageing. It is not reversible but it is manageable, usually with pain medication and sometimes surgery.

So what role could a plant-based diet play here? One small study looking at the diet’s impact showed a significant improvement in self-reported pain and functioning in people with osteoarthritis. One reason for this could be the anti-inflammatory properties of the micro-nutrients present in plant foods, as inflammation is the main cause of pain in arthritis. Meat-based diets have the opposite effect and, in general, increase the level of inflammation in the body.

3. IMPROVES PERIOD PAIN IN WOMEN

So if a plant-based diet can improve arthritis pain, could it also perhaps improve other types of pain? Some research suggests it could help with period pain in women.

For this study, women swapped to a low-fat vegan diet for two menstrual cycles, and then back to their usual omnivorous diet for their next two. Pain duration and intensity and pre-menstrual symptoms were recorded and levels of a hormone affecting oestrogen levels were measured.

On the low-fat vegan diet, women reported less

pain duration and intensity, shorter duration of premenstrual symptoms and tests showed a lower level of oestrogen. People are often surprised to hear that diet can impact hormone levels in the body. This study shows exactly that, and how lower oestrogen levels can benefit women’s health in a number of ways.

4. REDUCES THE RISK OF URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are one of the most common causes of infection in the general population with the bacteria Escherichia coli (E coli) often being the culprit. Infection can occur because E coli from the intestine finds its way into the urinary tract. But UTIs can also be caused by E coli strains commonly found in farm animals such as chickens and pigs, so eating contaminated sources of meat can lead to infection.

Given the link between E coli and UTIs, It might seem obvious that those on a plant-based diet who avoid meat might have a lower risk of infection, but whether this was the case was not known for sure until recent research came out.

The analysis of several studies shows that vegetarians have a 16% lower risk of UTIs compared to non-vegetarians. This confirms previous data suggesting that meat-borne bacteria are a major contributor to the risk of UTIs. Increasingly these food borne bacteria are displaying antibiotic resistance.

5. SAVES ON HOSPITAL COSTS

So if those following a health plant-based diet have a lower risk of ill health then surely this will save on health costs.

In a large Taiwanese study, vegetarians were found to have a lower rate of outpatient visits, which translated into a 13% lower outpatient expenditure and a 15% lower total medical expenditure. So it is interesting to hypothesise the health economic impact of a plant-based diet on the UK’s cash-strapped National Health Service.

In 2017, spending on healthcare in the UK totalled £197 billion – approximately £2,989 per person. If everyone in the country shifted to a vegetarian diet, this could (using the 15% reduction as a guide) reduce healthcare expenditure by £30 billion.

Plant-based diets then, not only have the potential to dramatically improve human and planetary health, but could have significant benefits for the health of the economy too.

[the writer is Visiting Professor, Health and Wellbeing Research Group, University of Winchester]

How India came to love cricket, favored sport of its colonial British rulers



LARS DZIKUS & ADAM LOVE
THECONVERSATION.COM

After emphasizing that “America loves India” during the “Namaste Trump” event, President Donald Trump opened his address with several references to India’s most popular sport, cricket. A crowd of more than 100,000 responded with cheers.

“Five months ago, the United States welcomed your great prime minister at a giant football stadium in Texas,” Trump noted on Feb. 24. “And today India welcomes us at the world’s largest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad.” Next, Trump mentioned Indian cricket stars Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli, although he mispronounced the names and was called out by social media users, including the sport’s governing body, the International Cricket Council.

Like many Americans, Trump

likely knows little about the history or the significance of cricket in India. As scholars who study the social and cultural significance of sports and their globalization, we understand how this 18th-century colonial import grew into a revered – and lucrative – cultural institution in India.

A BRITISH COLONIAL LEGACY

Originating in England, cricket came to India with the East India Company – an English company formed to develop trade in Asia.

According to British sailor Clement Downing’s “A History of the Indian Wars,” written in 1737, the first cricket match in India was played between sailors like him in 1721 in Khambhat, near India’s western seaboard, only 55 miles from the stadium where Trump gave his speech.

The introduction of English traditions and sports helped the colo-

nizers affirm their supposed cultural superiority and justify their rule. Some Indians, however, were actively involved in making the foreign sport their own.

The Parsis, an ethnic minority, who were enterprising traders with close ties to the British, for example, were particularly enthusiastic about the sport. By the mid-1800s, they had formed their own cricket teams.

Thereafter, English sports began to surpass traditional Indian games in popularity, such as local forms of wrestling. Other pastimes, such as “Kabaddi” – a team sport involving chasing and tagging opponents – started to be organized like English sports in the 1920s with rules, formal competitions and federations.

However, leading up to India’s independence in 1947, fierce de-

bates raged over this British influence. Student protesters saw the cricket contests between different Indian groups as “a slow poison given to the rising Indian generation and blocking the path to independence.”

Cricket fans, however, continued to flock to local contests, including the Bombay Pentangular, an annual tournament between teams consisting of Europeans, Parsis, Hindus, Muslims and other minority faiths.

FROM COLONIALISM TO COMMERCE

A major stepping stone in cricket’s rise to a national sport was India’s 1971 triumph in England. The Indian cricket team defeated the former colonizers at their own game, on their own turf.

Then again, in 1983, India won the cricket World Cup at Lord’s Cricket Ground in London – the original home of the sport, once called the “cathedral of cricket.”

In addition to its success in international competition, India has also turned cricket into a multi-billion-dollar industry. The Indian Premier League, inaugurated in 2008, features a fast-paced variety of cricket known as Twenty20. As opposed to traditional “test matches” between national teams that last up to five days, Twenty20 matches are typically completed in three hours and encourage aggressive, offensive play.

David Richardson, the chief executive officer of the International Cricket Council, said in March 2019 that the Indian Premier League had helped locate India at the center of the cricketing world.

When President Trump delivered his remarks at the new stadium, located in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s home state of Gujarat, the venue served as more than just a convenient space to accommodate a large crowd. It symbolized the evolution of a sport with a political history. Or, as historian Boria Majumdar notes, a sport that is like “religion at home.”

[Lars Dzikus is Associate Professor in Sport Studies, University of Tennessee; Adam Love is Associate Professor, University of Tennessee]

Teen kills father, buries body at home

AURANGABAD, FEB 29 (PTI): A 16-year-old boy was detained on Saturday for allegedly killing his 50-year-old father at their house in a village in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra last December and burying his corpse into a pit inside, police said.

The decomposed remains of the victim Namdev Chavan were recovered on Saturday evening from the house in Jamdighat village in Kannad taluka, around 62 kms from here, an officer said. The incident came to light after the teenager confided in the brother of the victim about the incident recently. In the meantime, word spread about the mysterious disappearance of Chavan from his house, he said.

Police received the information from Police Patil of the village, he said.

After police visited the spot on Saturday, they found a pit inside the house and subsequently recovered the body around 7 pm, he added.

Narrating the sequence of events, the officer said the accused youth hit his father with a stick on his head in a fit of rage following an argument. "He also strangled the victim with a rope, resulting into his death. The accused then buried the body inside the house by digging a 2.5 feet deep pit to destroy evidence," he said, adding that a case of murder was being registered against the youth.

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Modus operandi in APSSB exam irregularities unearthed

ITANAGAR, FEB 29 (PTI): The Special Investigation Cell (SIC) of the state police, which has been probing into the alleged irregularities in Arunachal Pradesh Staff Selection Board examination, has claimed to have cracked the modus operandi of the accused.

The investigating team has so far arrested five persons including APSSB undersecretary Kapter Ringu and two data-entry operators of the board.

They were arrested after a suspicious optical mark recognition (OMR) sheet of a candidate was widely circulated on social media for which the board came under public criticism.

Several candidates, who appeared in the examination, had alleged that Senia Bagang, the examinee whose OMR sheet went viral, had submitted the blank answer sheet, though he was shortlisted for the

skill test.

The investigation has revealed that Mongam Basar, one of the accused in the case, received money from Bagang and some other candidates at the behest of the then under secretary Ringu.

"Mongam received money from the candidates and passed it on to Kapter Ringu in lieu of getting them selected in the exam," SIC (vigilance) SP M Harsha Vardhan claimed in a statement.

Ringu also received money directly from other candidates, he said.

"After the examination was conducted on February 2, the trunks containing the used OMR sheets and other materials were brought to the strong room in the APSSB's office.

Ringu, aided by data entry operator Khem Raj, went about tampering the OMR sheets," the SP said.

Vardhan also claimed that another data entry operator Tame Tania helped Ringu tampering with the CCTV footages after the issue of malpractice came to light.

"We have also found that the two arrested data entry operators had also appeared in the exam and qualified for the skill test," he said.

The SIC is trying to find out the number of candidates who paid money to Ringu and Mongam and the investigation is still on to figure out various other aspects of the case, he said.

"Senia Bagang, one of the candidates arrested in the case, has recently been granted bail by the court as she has a 5-month-old baby. Tame Tania was granted bail by the court on medical ground," the SP said.

Ringu, Mongam and Khem Raj have been in police custody, Vardhan added.

Delhi govt no less ill-informed than Centre in understanding sedition law: Chidambaram



NEW DELHI, FEB 29 (PTI): Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Saturday hit out at the Delhi government for its sanction to prosecute former JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar and nine others in connection with a sedition case, saying the Kejriwal dispensation is "no less ill-informed than the Centre" in its understanding of the sedition law.

The Delhi government has given a go-ahead to the city police to prosecute former Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) president Kanhaiya Kumar and nine others in connection with a four-year-old sedition case,

as the ruling AAP denied the persistent BJP charge of blocking the proceedings in the matter.

"Delhi Government is no less ill-informed than the central government in its understanding of sedition law," Chidambaram tweeted.

"I strongly disapprove of the sanction granted to prosecute Mr Kanhaiya Kumar and others for alleged offences under sections 124A and 120B of IPC," the former home minister said.

The sanction was granted by the Delhi government on February 20, he said.

The Delhi Police had last year filed the charge sheet at a city court

against Kanhaiya Kumar and others, saying he was leading a procession and supported seditious slogans at an event in February 2016.

It also charged former JNU students Umar Khalid and Anirban Bhattacharya with allegedly shouting anti-India slogans during the event to commemorate the hanging of Parliament-attack mastermind Afzal Guru.

The prosecution sanction was granted nearly a year after a city court asked the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government to take a decision within a reasonable timeframe and noted that the delay was leading to violation of the due process of law.

Turkey-Russia tensions soar after deadly Syria strike

ISTANBUL, FEB 29 (AFP) The leaders of Russia and Turkey held crisis talks Friday after 33 Turkish soldiers died in an air strike in Syria, as Ankara ramped up pressure on Europe by threatening to flood in migrants.

The United States and United Nations urged an end to the Russian-backed Syrian offensive against rebel holdouts, but Turkey appeared intent on easing tensions with Moscow by pinning the blame squarely on President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

The flare-up raised fresh concerns for civilians caught up in the escalation of the horrific eight-year civil war, with the UN saying nearly a million people -- half of them children -- have been displaced in the bitter cold by the fighting since December.

Thirty-three Turkish troops were killed late Thursday in the air strike in the northwestern province of Idlib, in the biggest single loss of life

by the Turkish military in years.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke by telephone and looked to scale down tensions, with the Kremlin saying the two expressed "serious concern" about the situation.

"There is always room for dialogue," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

He said the two leaders spoke of "the necessity to do everything" to implement a 2018 ceasefire that has since collapsed between the two countries in Idlib.

Erdogan may travel next week to Moscow for talks, Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Before the killing of troops, Erdogan spoke of a meeting with Putin on March 5 but said it would also include the leaders of France and Germany.

US President Donald Trump condemned the attack on Turkish troops in a call with Erdogan and again urged Russia



and Syria to halt the Idlib operation, the White House said.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called the attack "despicable and brazen" and said the US was looking at ways to support Turkey, a NATO ally that has recently drifted from the West.

A senior US official, while acknowledging that Turkey had blamed the Assad regime for the strike, said that Russia closely planned all operations with Syria.

"Russia is responsible for this offensive -- period," the official said in Washington on condition of anonymity.

The idea of the "pathetic, keelhauled, draft-ee Assad military forces fighting the Turks and some of the opposition forces... is laughable," he said.

Turkey said it retaliated by hitting more than 200 regime targets in drone and artillery bombardments.

The reprisals killed

45 Syrian soldiers in Idlib, according to a monitor, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. There was no confirmation from the Syrian government.

Rebel and Turkish fire also killed 10 fighters from Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite group backed by Iran that is supporting Assad, the Observatory said, adding that Russian strikes killed seven civilians.

Adding to the ten-

sions, Moscow said two of its warships were transiting through the Bosphorus Strait in Istanbul in plain sight of the city.

At emergency talks on Friday, Russian Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia told the Security Council that Moscow was "ready to de-escalate with anyone who wants to" in Idlib.

The UN has repeatedly warned that the fighting in Idlib could potentially create the most serious humanitarian crisis since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the world body was planning to send a humanitarian mission there.

Diplomats said the mission to Idlib could start next week and include representatives of major UN agencies.

"The most pressing need is an immediate ceasefire before the situation gets entirely out of control," Guterres told reporters.

But Russian vetoes,

often backed by China, have chronically crippled UN action.

Turkey again called on the international community to establish a no-fly zone over Idlib, where Islamist fighters backed by Ankara pose the biggest obstacle to Assad seizing back control over all of Syria.

On Thursday, jihadists and Turkish-backed rebels had re-entered Saraqeb, a key Idlib crossroads town they had lost earlier in February -- reversing one of the main gains of the government's devastating offensive.

Erdogan's communications director Fahrettin Altun accused Assad on Twitter of "conducting ethnic cleansing" to drive millions out of Idlib, but said Turkey does not have the resources to accept more refugees.

Turkey has already taken in around four million Syrians and is wary of more arrivals in the face of growing popular discontent about

their presence.

In a move seen as putting pressure on the West, Turkey threatened to go back on a deal with the EU and open the way for refugees to go into Europe.

"We will no longer keep the doors closed for refugees who want to go to Europe," a Turkish official told AFP.

In response, both Bulgaria and Greece said they were tightening border security as groups of migrants moved westwards across Turkey.

Greek border guards blocked hundreds of migrants from entering the country at the Kastanies border crossing in the northeast of the country as army trucks loaded with barbed wire raced past.

The EU called on Ankara to uphold its side of the 2016 migrant pact, in which the Europeans offered six billion euros in exchange for Turkey stemming the flow of migrants who had triggered a major backlash in the country.

Virus hammers China's February economic activity: data

China's manufacturing activity fell to its lowest level on record in February as official data on Saturday confirmed the massive damage the deadly coronavirus epidemic has caused to the world's second-largest economy.

The announcement comes as the epidemic has rapidly spread to a growing number of countries, pushing stock markets to their lowest levels since the 2008 global financial crisis this week over fears that the coronavirus could wreak havoc on the world economy.

Analysts have warned that China's economic growth will likely take a major hit in the first quarter, and Saturday's data was the first glimpse at the devastation the virus has caused to industries across the country.

The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), a key gauge of activi-

ty in China's factories, was at 35.7 points in February, well below the 50-point mark that separates growth and contraction every month.

This was down from 50 points in January and the worst level since China began recording the figure in 2005.

It was also nowhere near expectations of a smaller contraction, at 45.0, according to a Bloomberg poll of analysts.

It was the first official economic indicator published for the month of February, showing the crushing impact of the epidemic on China's economy -- with fallout likely to be seen around the world.

- Impact 'weakening'

The National Bureau of Statistics said the auto and specialised equipment industries were hit hard, but the effect was

"more severe" in the non-manufacturing area.

"There was a plunge in demand for consumer industries involving gatherings of people, such as transportation, accommodation, catering, tourism, and resident services," the NBS said in a statement.

Non-manufacturing activity was at an abysmal 29.6 points in February, down from 54.1 points in January.

"The reality could be worse due to a big distortion to the manufacturing PMI data," Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura, said in a research note.

He estimated the February manufacturing PMI to be even lower at 33.0 because of supply disruptions caused by travel bans.

Authorities have taken drastic steps to contain the virus, curbing the movement

of people, temporarily closing factories across the country and quarantining central Hubei province, a key industrial region where the epidemic first appeared.

The government has encouraged companies to progressively return to work as the number of new cases has been generally dropping in the past 10 days.

"Although the new coronavirus pneumonia epidemic has caused a larger impact on production and operations of Chinese enterprises... currently the epidemic has come under initial containment, and the negative impact on production is gradually weakening," the NBS said.

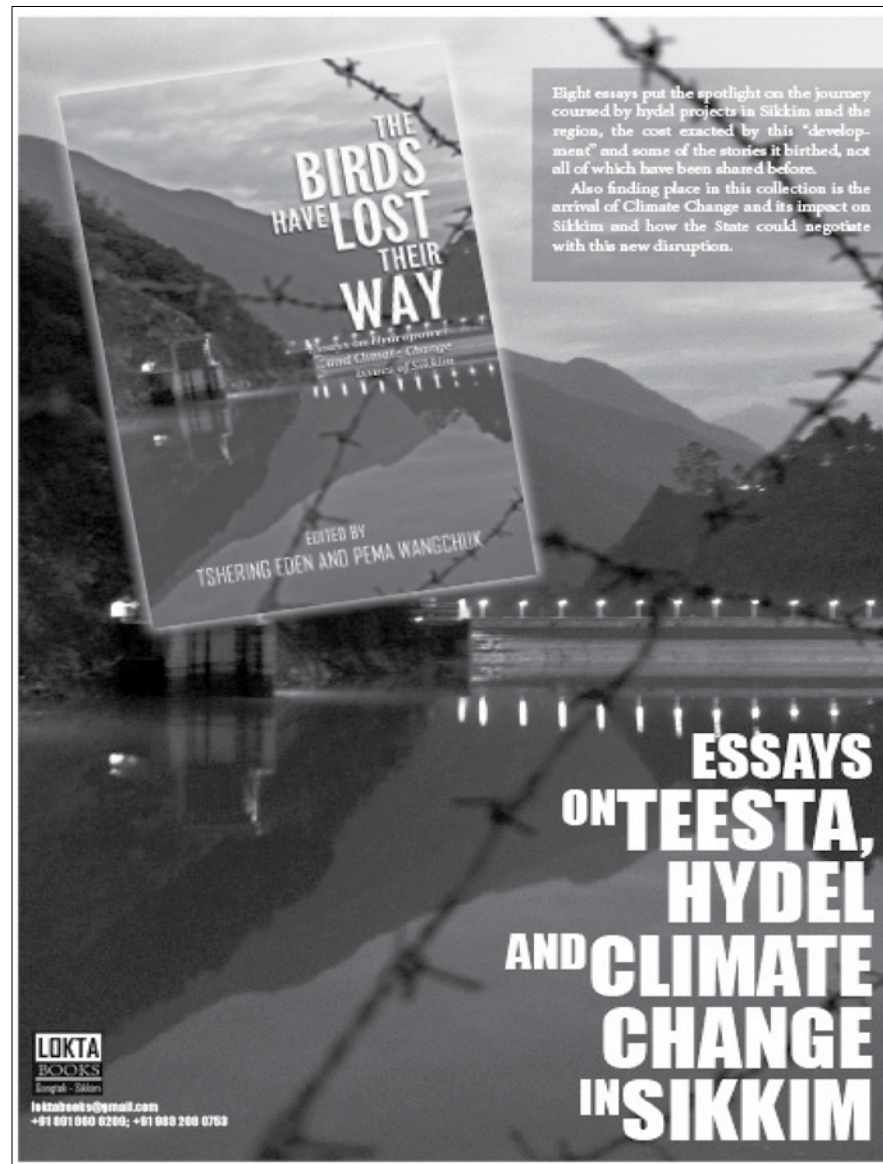
- No stimulus - Small and medium companies are the worst hit. Only 43 percent of small- and medium-sized

manufacturers have reopened as of February 26, China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said Thursday.

"China is running on 20 percent capacity. So not a surprise, and will set the lowest point for the year," said Hong Hao, head of research and chief strategist at Bocom International.

"The question now is how fast or how safe can people return to work. But a March improvement is likely."

The Chinese economy is expected to contract by two percent compared with the previous quarter, Raymond Yeung, chief China economist at ANZ Research, said in a note. China's GDP growth rate this year will cool to 4.1 percent, down from 6.1 percent last year, in the absence of a government stimulus, Yeung said.



Late comeback earns Aizawl crucial point in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, FEB 29 (PTI): Relegation-threatened Aizawl FC pulled off a spectacular come-from-behind 2-2 draw against hosts Real Kashmir FC in the I-League here on Saturday.

The Snow Leopards were given the lead by Scotsman Mason Robertson (36th minute) in the first half and it was looking quite comfortable for the hosts after Englishman Kallum Higginbotham (54th) doubled it at the beginning of the second.

However, young Rochharzela (84th and 87th) had other ideas, coming up with a double-strike in the space of three minutes to stun the home supporters present in the stands.

School children, dressed in their uniform, turned up at the TRC Ground to cheer their home team.

Kashmir join the likes of Chennai City and Churchill Brothers on 19 points to enter the top five at least momentarily after 13 games, while Aizawl secure a crucial point to climb just above the relegation zone with 16 points from 14 matches.

Aizawl continued their trend of scoring late as Hero of the Match Rochharzela's twin strikes were their seventh and eighth goals scored in the last 15 minutes this season.

Aizawl had as much as 68 percent possession in the first half and three corners as compared to Kashmir's none, and were looking enterprising with their passing game. But, it was the home side that got the all-important goal.

It came from coach David's son Mason, who can now easily be called Kashmir's most lethal scorer with six goals to his name already this season.

The scoring opportunity came through an error from Aizawl's Lalh-mangaihikma, who started in place of Jonathan.

Kima received a loose ball outside his own box with an open field in front of him to initiate a counter but needlessly handled the ball. From the resultant set-piece, Robertson unleashed a right-footer around the

wall and into the Aizawl net. Keeper Zothanmawia scrambled haplessly to get a hand to it but the shot had too much power.

"It was a wonderful game and RKFC was at its best. However, last few minutes made the rivals lucky as they cancelled out the lead," said RKFC co-owner Sandeep Chattoo.

Kashmir did manage to get their first corner as soon as the second half began but their second goal came a bit later. Mason had a role in this one as well as he played Ritwik Kumar Das in after another defensive lapse from Aizawl -- this time by Ghanaian Joseph Adjei, who conceded possession with a loose clearance.

The talented Ritwik, who displayed some deft moves throughout the game, broke inside the Aizawl box in a flash with a couple more and squared the ball back to an unmarked Higginbotham. The English winger made no mistake with a calm and composed finish, slotting it home between the keeper and defender.

Even though Robin Singh made a hash of a 78th-minute penalty, which was won thanks to another dangerous Mason cross handled inadvertently inside the box by Adjei, it did look as if Kashmir would log all three points.

However, with barely minutes left for the final whistle, Aizawl got a penalty for themselves when Zoherliana was deemed to have been fouled inside the box by Loveday Okechukwu.

From the resulting opportunity, Rochharzela converted confidently. Just three minutes later, the youngster brought down a long ball by Rosanga beautifully inside the Kashmir box on the right and in one action, he got ahead of his marker to find just keeper Phurba Lachenpa standing between him and the target.

Zela placed a perfect right-footer over the keeper's head and away from him to lodge the ball into the top left corner to complete a sensational comeback for his side.

Tiger to skip Bay Hill with stiff back as Masters looms

MIAMI, FEB 29 (AFP): Reigning Masters champion Tiger Woods will skip next week's Arnold Palmer Invitational to rest a stiff back and continue preparations for Augusta National, according to multiple reports Friday.

ESPN and Golf Digest reported that the 15-time major winner will not compete at Bay Hill, a course where he has captured eight titles.

"He's not going to play," Woods's agent, Mark Steinberg, told ESPN.

"Back still stiff and just not quite ready," Woods, 44, felt back stiffness at Riviera two weeks ago, saying it was his new normal after multiple back surgeries. He skipped last week's WGC Mexico event.

His next chance to

compete will be in two weeks at the Players Championship, a major tuneup for the year's first major tournament next month in Augusta.

"My prep has been just like it usually is," Woods told reporters earlier this week.

"It's what I need to do to get ready for the Masters."

Last year, Woods withdrew from the Arnold Palmer Invitational with a neck strain, then played in the Players and the WGC Match Play before going to Augusta National.

Woods captured his fifth green jacket and first major triumph in 11 years, an epic comeback tale from spinal fusion surgery and multiple back operations that had him doubting at one stage if he would have a normal life much less play golf again.

Mohun Bagan start favourites against TRAU in Imphal

IMPHAL, FEB 29 (PTI): Unbeaten in 11 matches on the trot, runaway leaders Mohun Bagan start favourites in their I-League match against Tiddim Road Athletic Union FC here on Sunday.

Since losing to Churchill Brothers in their second match of the season in December last, Mohun Bagan have been unbeaten so far. After four wins on the trot, they were held to a 1-1 draw by Punjab FC on January 14.

After that Ludhiana match and till going into Sunday's match at Khuman Lampak Stadium in Imphal, the Kolkata giants have been in a six-match winning streak.

Kibu Vicuna's had also beaten Sunday's opponents 4-0 in the first leg match in Kalyani in December last.



Vicuna, however, remained wary of TRAU and said, "TRAU have included some good players. They have come a long way. We have to remain focused and play to the best of our abilities."

There has been little

to worry at the Green and Maroon camp but Daneil Cyrus' fitness still hangs in the balance, as confirmed by Vicuna himself.

"I have my full squad with me, except for Cyrus," said the Spaniard on the eve of the match.

TRAU have made a good account of themselves in their first season, despite their early stumbles. They forged a seven-game unbeaten run and rose to third on the points table but are now winless in five games -- drawing twice

India Open: Government seek health of Chinese shuttlers

NEW DELHI, FEB 29 (PTI): The Government of India has sent a questionnaire to the Badminton Association of India (BAI), seeking clarity on health status of the Chinese shuttlers, scheduled to travel to the national capital for next month's Indian Open.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Wednesday asked the BAI to furnish some details about the Chinese players before it takes a call regarding their entry into the country for the Super 500 tournament, which is a crucial event for the Tokyo Olympics qualification.

Some of the questions asked by the Ministry include: "Players/Officials are from which state of China?", "How many players/officials have undergone for medical check-up and medical certificate has been issued?", "How many players / Officials are coming from the other countries?"

After receiving the queries, BAI has directed the questions to their Chinese counterparts and is awaiting a response.

"We have sent the questions received from the external affairs ministry to the Chinese



Badminton Association. We are waiting for a response. Once they revert, we will send them to the Ministry to start the visa process," BAI secretary Ajay Singhania told PTI.

World No 1 Chen Yufei, world number eight He Bingjiao and former All England champion Shi Yu Qi are some of the stars of the 60-plus Chinese squad who are expected to compete at the Indira Gandhi International Stadium from March 24 to 29.

BAI is optimistic about China's participation in the India Open despite the fears surrounding the deadly coronavirus as Chinese shuttlers were in quarantine for almost a fortnight in Europe earlier this month.

The deadly coronavi-

rus, which originated in Wuhan, China, has so far killed close to 3000 people and infected nearly 80,000 globally and there are concerns about the spread of the virus.

Given the health hazards, India have put flying bans on China and Hong Kong, besides issuing a mandatory 14-day quarantine period for the people who are travelling to the country from the affected nations such as Korea, Iran, Italy.

Earlier this month, government didn't grant visas to Chinese wrestlers for the Asian Championships due to same concerns.

However, Chinese players were cleared to play three tournaments in Europe -- German Open, the All England

Open and the Swiss Open, with the Chinese Badminton Association claiming that "no one is infected".

Most of the Chinese team members have been training in Britain to play in the tournaments in Europe and BAI is hopeful they will be granted visas.

"The Chinese shuttlers have been in Europe for quite sometime now. They have been quarantined there and they have applied for visas at UK. Since the team hadn't been to China since the outbreak, we are hopeful they will be granted visa," Singhania said.

Concerns over the rapid spread of the deadly virus has already forced the postpone-

and losing on three occasions but none as deflating as their 0-5 loss to city rivals Neroca.

As a result, TRAU find themselves just one point clear of the relegation zone with a goal difference of minus 10.

"It has been a tough period for us. We have created chances but we have somehow lacked the killer instinct going forward in order to see off games but we are trying to improve with each passing day. I believe the results will start to show, like they have before," said captain Princewill Emeka.

"Mohun Bagan have been the best team in the league this season. It is going to be a really difficult challenge for us but since we faced them last time in December, we have evolved a lot as a unit," he said.

ment of the four Olympic qualifying events so far -- Lingshui China Masters (February 25 to March 1), Vietnam International Challenge (24-29 March 24-29) and German Open (March 3 to 8) and Polish Open (March 26-29).

Many top players such as two-time Olympic champion Lin Dan, London bronze medallist Saina Nehwal and Rio Olympics quarterfinalist Kidambi Srikanth are racing against time to book their ticket to Tokyo.

India Open thus is an important tournament considering the deadline to make it to Tokyo ends on April 28 with the ranking published on that day to be considered for qualification.

Badminton's world body (BWF) on Friday said it has currently no plans to make any adjustments to the regulations related to the Tokyo Games qualification period.

The world body said it is monitoring the situation and as of now other events will go as per schedule.

"All other tournaments on the BWF calendar within the Olympic qualification period are scheduled to run," it said.

Delhi Senior Division

Football C'ship begins Sunday

NEW DELHI, FEB 29 (PTI): Eighteen clubs, including defending champions Garhwal Heroes FC, will vie for top honours in the Football Delhi Senior Division Championship which begins at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Sunday.

The participating teams have been divided in two groups of nine teams each.

Garhwal Heroes will open their campaign against City FC in a Group A match on Sunday. The second match of the day -- also of Group A -- will be played between Youngmen SC and Hindustan FC.

National United Delhi United, Friends United, Tarun Sangha and Royal Rangers are the other teams in Group A.

Group B has Indian Air Force (New Delhi), Delhi FC, Indian National FC, Rangers SC, Sudeva Moonlight, Ahabab FC, Shastri FC, Jaguar FC.

Four foreigners can figure in the 30-player team list but only three can play in a match.

Left Railways job to play for Bengal, says Majumdar

KOLKATA, FEB 29 (PTI): Bengal's saviour in the Ranji Trophy quarterfinal and semifinal, Anustup Majumdar had left a secured Indian Railways job to play cricket for his home state, and says he is not short of motivation at 35.

Despite not playing all the matches this season, the batsman has been instrumental in Bengal's march into the semifinals.

On Saturday, he scored an unbeaten 120, his second century on the trot, to lift Bengal to 275 for nine from a precarious 67 for six in their semifinal against a star-studded Karnataka.

"You never know what is in store for you tomorrow. I left my job to play cricket. I never thought of quitting cricket," Majumdar said after his knock.

Majumdar left Railways in 2016 following a string of inconsistent outings for his employers.

In the ongoing season, Majumdar scored two half-centuries -- 99 and 59 -- in crunch games against Delhi and Hyderabad.

"Cricket is a game of uncertainty. It takes one ball to get you out. I just kept working hard, kept motivating myself. There was no other motivation. Maybe I've matured now and the sense of grief and frustration have lessened," the team's senior-most member said.

Majumdar stitched two fruitful partnership lower down the order, adding 72 runs with Shahbaz Ahmed, which was followed by an entertaining 103-stand with Akash Deep (44). He gave credit to Shahbaz for his support.

"When I was inside the dressing room, I was making a plan for each bowler and assessing their line and lengths. It helped, but the real success came after Shahbaz came in.



to participate at the Khelo India University Games. I have won a gold medal as well. I am really happy with my result," Dutee said after her win.

"This is the first meet for me in 2020. So the start of the year has been good. I will improve by 10-15 seconds in the next tourna-

ment. I am feeling very fit at the moment, however, I have to improve my speed now."

Dutee, who bettered her own national record with a timing of 11.22 seconds at the National Open Athletics Championships last year, needs to clock 11.15 seconds to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics.

"My practice is going on really well for me. I am training for six-seven hours every day. My coach has been guiding me well in track and gym workout," she said.

She will take part in the 200 metres on the final day of the Games.

In men's 5000m race, Narendra Pratap Singh of Mangalore Uni-

versity bagged the gold, his second of the Games after the 10,000m win. He broke his own 5000m university record in the process.

His time of 14:18:19 was almost 10 minutes faster than his teammate Adish, who finished second.

It was also almost a minute quicker than the previous record that he himself had set at the Inter-University Games earlier this year.

"The 5k is my favourite event. Recovery was going to be the biggest challenge, and I was surprised by how good I felt today actually," said the 23-year old B.Com student.

"The next stop is the Federation Cup of course, but to be honest I am really looking forward to the Nationals later this year," he added.

Death toll of coronavirus in China climbs to 2,835 with 47 more fatalities

K J M VARMA

BEIJING, FEB 29 (PTI): Forty seven more people have died of the deadly coronavirus, rasing the death toll in the country to 2,835 while the number of confirmed cases climbed to 79,251, Chinese health officials said on Saturday.

China's National Health Commission (NHC) in its daily report on Saturday said it received reports of 427 new confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus infection and 47 deaths on Friday.

Among the deaths reported, 45 were from the epicentre of the virus Hubei Province, one in Beijing and Henan respectively, it said.

The overall confirmed cases on the mainland have reached 79,251 by the end of Friday, and 2,835 people have died of the disease, it said.

The virus, though slowing down its virulence, continued to affect more people as another 248 new suspected cases were reported taking the total to 1,418 people.

Also on Friday, 2,885 people were discharged from the hospitals after recovery, while the number of severe cases decreased by 288 to 7,664, the NHC said.

The existing data do not support the concept of a pandemic so far, he said, highlighting that China has clearly shown that it is not necessarily the natural outcome of the COVID-19 epidemic if indispensable responses are made quickly.

By the end of Friday, 94 confirmed cases, including two deaths, have been reported in Hong Kong, 10 confirmed cases in Macao and 34 in Taiwan, including one

death.

Meanwhile, a senior World Health Organisation (WHO) expert said in Geneva on Friday that it is unhelpful to declare a pandemic when people are still trying to contain COVID-19, although the WHO has raised the epidemic risk alert to the highest level.

The WHO revised on Friday the risk assessment of the COVID-19 from "high" to "very high" at global level, as an increasing number of cases in more countries were reported over the last few days.

"A Pandemic is a unique situation, in which all citizens on the planet will likely be exposed to a virus within a defined period of time," state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Michael Ryan, executive director of WHO Health Emergencies Programme as saying.

However, in the case of COVID-19, it has been proved that the course of the epidemic can be significantly altered through containment measures and robust public health response, the expert noted.

The word "pandemic" is "colloquial," Ryan said, appealing for actions that go beyond colloquial terms.

The existing data do not support the concept of a pandemic so far, he said, highlighting that China has clearly shown that it is not necessarily the natural outcome of the COVID-19 epidemic if indispensable responses are made quickly.

Russian opposition to protest Putin's 'leader-for-life' reforms

Russia's opposition on Saturday holds its first major protest since President Vladimir Putin in January announced plans which critics fear will help him stay in power after his mandate ends in 2024.

The rally marks five years since the assassination of opposition politician Boris Nemtsov but its organisers want the event to also send a message to Putin after he proposed major constitutional changes.

Organisers, including the country's most prominent opposition leader Alexei Navalny, called for a mass turnout. Many see the protest as a test of society's willingness to push back against Putin's apparent plans to extend his grip on power.

"The Kremlin is going to look at how many people attend the Nemtsov March," said Navalny.

In January, Putin unleashed a political storm, proposing an overhaul of the constitution, the first changes to the basic law since 1993.

Analysts see the plan as beginning preparations for succession when Putin's fourth presidential term ends in 2024, while the opposition says the Kremlin strongman wants to remain leader for life.

Putin first came to power as prime minister in 1999 under Boris Yeltsin before becoming

president in 2000. He served the maximum two consecutive terms between 2000 and 2008 before a four-year stint as prime minister. He returned to the Kremlin in 2012.

The demonstration will also be the first major street action by the opposition since police violently broke up a series of anti-government protests last summer.

Authorities however authorised a 30,000-strong rally after dozens of prominent figures, including writers and scientists, petitioned the city hall.

Smaller rallies are expected in a number of cities including Saint Petersburg.

Russia is planning to hold a public vote on the constitutional amendments on April 22.

More than 48,000 people have so far signed a petition against "a constitutional coup and usurpation of power".

According to the Levada Center, an independent pollster, a quarter of Russians will back the constitutional proposals, while 56 percent said they were not sure why the changes were needed.

- 'An inspiration to all'

Forty-four percent also said Putin should quit power in 2024, while 45 percent said he should stay.

Viktoria Popova, an artist, said she would join Saturday's march

Activist investor wants to oust Twitter chief Dorsey: media

An activist investor known as a major Republican political supporter wants to wrest control of Twitter from co-founder and CEO Jack Dorsey, US media reported Friday.

Elliott Management, founded by billionaire Paul Singer, has acquired a stake in the social media firm and wants to remove Dorsey, CNBC said, citing an unnamed source.

The firm pushed for the change stating that Dorsey's attention is divided between running Twitter and his financial transactions startup Square, and that Dorsey intends to live part of each year in Africa.

Twitter early this month reported that it added millions of new users and boosted ad revenue in the fourth quarter, sparking optimism over its growth prospects.



Dorsey said during an earnings call that the results capped "a great year for Twitter" and that Twitter has been able to boost users by making the service "more instantly relevant."

"This is an incredibly strong foundation to build upon," he told analysts.

The latest report suggested Twitter is making headway as it seeks to keep pace with bigger social networks like Facebook and Instagram while it works to filter out abuse and manipulation.

Twitter will have growth opportunities this year from the 2020

US elections and Olympic Games.

The platform has been seeking to expand its user base beyond celebrities, journalists and politicians.

Dorsey has stressed that a priority for Twitter is to "increase healthy public conversation" by rooting out inappropriate content and misinformation.

Despite his plans to spend part of the year living in Africa, Dorsey said he won't be hampered by his travel. "We do need to figure out how to build a company that is distributed, that is not burdened by time zones but advantaged by them," he said.

Afghanistan's future in the balance as US, Taliban sign deal

Washington and the Taliban are set to sign a long-sought deal in Doha on Saturday that would see the two foes agree to the withdrawal of thousands of US troops from Afghanistan in return for insurgent guarantees.

President Donald Trump urged the Afghan people to embrace the chance for a new future, saying the deal held out the possibility of ending the 18-year conflict.

"If the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan live up to these commitments, we will have a powerful path forward to end the war in Afghanistan and bring our troops home," he said on the eve of the event.

Trump said he was sending Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to witness the signing of the treaty, and that Defense Secretary Mark Esper would separately issue a joint declaration with the Kabul government.

The agreement is expected to lead to a dialogue between the Kabul government and the Taliban that, if successful, could ultimately see the Afghan war wind down.

But the position of the Afghan government, which has been excluded from direct US-Taliban talks, remains unclear and the country is gripped by a fresh political crisis amid contested election results.

The deal, drafted over a tempestuous year of



dialogue marked by the abrupt cancellation of the effort by Trump in September, is expected to lay out a timetable for a US force withdrawal.

"There's been so much speculation about the contents of the deal... we know the broad outlines but it's not even clear whether the full terms of the deal will be made public," said Andrew Watkins, senior analyst at the International Crisis Group consultancy.

While Kabul will not be represented at the Doha signing, set for around 1245 GMT, it will send a six-person taskforce to the Qatari capital to make initial contact with the Taliban political office, established in 2013.

- 'Enormous opportunity'

Qatar, a peninsula nation protruding from the Arabian desert into the Gulf and better known for

its gas riches and controversial 2022 World Cup bid victory, was a seemingly unlikely choice to host negotiations.

But by providing neutral space for talks on ending the conflict it has boosted its international profile and helped it defy a painful regional embargo enforced by Saudi Arabia, which accuses it of being too close to Islamist movements.

Talks have taken place in a plush members' club in Doha, where turbaned Taliban fighters-turned-negotiators and suited American officials have rubbed shoulders with club-goers in Hawaiian shirts and swimwear.

As many as 30 nations are expected to be represented at Saturday's signing in the Qatari capital. The US will stage a separate ceremony in Kabul with the Afghan gov-

ernment at 1215 GMT, an Afghan source told AFP.

The inking of the deal will come after a week-long, partial truce that has mostly held across Afghanistan aimed at building confidence between the warring parties and showing the Taliban can control their forces.

While isolated attacks have continued in rural areas, Pompeo said Tuesday that the truce period was "working".

"We're on the cusp of an enormous, enormous political opportunity," he said.

- Blood and treasure - The US, which currently has between 12,000 and 13,000 troops in Afghanistan, could draw that number down to 8,600 within

months of the agreement being signed.

Further reductions would depend on the Taliban's engagement with the government of President Ashraf Ghani, whom they have until now dismissed as a US-backed puppet.

"This is just a precursor to get that process started, it's not a cause for celebration among the government or its allies," Watkins said.

Ghani has been declared winner of last year's elections, but his main rival, Abdullah Abdullah, is refusing to recognise the win and has vowed to set up a rival government.

Any insurgent pledge to guarantee Afghanistan is never again used by jihadist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Islamic State to plot attacks abroad will be key to the deal's viability.

The Taliban's sheltering of Al-Qaeda was the main reason for the US invasion following the 9/11 attacks.

The conflict has cost the US taxpayer more than \$1 trillion in military and rebuilding costs since the US-led invasion of 2001.

More than 100,000 Afghan civilians have been killed or injured over the past decade, according to the United Nations.

Henry Cavill to play Wolverine in MCU?

Henry Cavill might play Wolverine in the upcoming Captain Marvel movie. Although there has been no official word on this from Marvel, fans seem to have somewhat of a mixed reaction to this rumour.

After playing Superman, Henry Cavill might star as another superhero. Recently, reports emerged that Cavill might play Wolverine in the next Captain Marvel movie.

Although there has been no official word on this from Marvel, fans seem to have somewhat of a mixed reaction to this rumour, especially considering that Cavill will have to fill fan-favourite Hugh Jackman's shoes as Wolverine.

Henry Cavill, who was last seen in Netflix's The Witcher, gained worldwide popularity for his portrayal of DC's Superman. But even though his character did not receive any backlash (compared to Ben Affleck's Batman), the Justice League movie tanked at the box office. This leaves his future as the DC superhero looking doubtful as DC moves towards individual superhero movies like Wonder Woman, Aquaman etc.

Kevin Feige, head of Marvel Studios, has gone on record to say that he is planning to bring Marvel's First Family (The X-Men) up to the level that they deserve. He said, "I'm extremely excited about those characters and about bringing Marvel's First Family up to the platform and the level that they deserve. The truth is, I'm excited for all of them. I'm excited, and it's not just the marquee names you know — there are hundreds of names on those documents, on those agreements. And the fact that Marvel is as close as we may ever get now to having access to all of the characters, is something I've been dreaming about for my almost 20 years at Marvel. And it's very exciting."

He also added that even though the work on them has begun, it will be a long time before we see them on screen.

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VIDEO NEWS SECTION

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FEELING THAT MIAMI HEAT! Singer, Justin Bieber wore a colorful Miami Heat jersey while showing off his hockey skills on the set of his music video shoot in Miami.

Caloric restriction study suggests aging could be “reversible” in the future

Everybody knows: You are what you eat. But new research suggests, if your wish is to live longer, what matters most is how much you eat.

Scientists have known that — at least when it comes to lab animals — that cutting calories leads to a lengthening in lifespan: in worms, rodents; even in monkeys. The first study on calorie restriction to promote longevity in animals dates back to the 1930s. Despite this glut of research whether the approach works for humans has yet to be determined.

This new study, published in Cell on Thursday, brings us one step closer, by helping to elucidate the underlying mechanisms behind this phenomenon.

Researchers from the United States and China put rats on a calorie-restricted diet and found ignited a number of anti-aging effects. This included protection against cellular aging, reversing age-related immune dysfunction, and alleviating chronic inflammation. These results suggest that caloric restriction has the propensity to rewrite the physiological aging process.

“The effect of caloric restriction on extending healthspan and lifespan suggests that aging is reversible and druggable,” co-author Guang-Hui Liu, a professor at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, tells Inverse. “We hope that we can identify the intervention target to mimic the benefi-

cial effect of caloric restriction in the future.”

CALORIES AND CELLULAR AGING

Researchers pitted two groups of rats against one another: One group received 30 percent fewer calories versus the other group, who were kept on a normal diet. The researchers followed the rats over the course of nine months, from age 18 months (middle-aged for a rat) to 27 months, deliberately choosing older rats as this is when potential clinical applications would prove most effective. The rats’ ages were comparable in humans to about the ages 50 through 70.

They found that the rats who were subjected to calorie restriction didn’t display almost 60 percent of the age-related changes in cell composition that occurred in the rats on a normal diet.

Older rats on a calorie-restricted diet were also found to share similarities in tissue and cell composition with young rats on a normal diet, suggesting that older rats maintained similar physiology to rats much their junior.

THE FUTURE OF “AGING” SCIENCE

The build-up of pro-inflammatory cells in the tissues of the rats — a process associated with aging — was found to be reversed thanks to calorie restriction. This finding lends weight to the theory that many chronic illnesses are closely linked to age-related inflammation, including cancer, diabetes, and Alzheimer’s disease.

you. I love you.

GEMINI: We’ve all had our ups and downs. What makes your relationship strong is your willingness to work things out despite the rollercoaster ride. The gates of hope and healing are opening up for you. Trust that you are moving towards a better time. Whether you choose to stay together or stay apart, you will find that there is love towards the other in your heart.

Cancer: How does holding onto clutter make you feel and what is the void you are trying to fill by in the process? Two words: spring cleaning. The cards are asking you to be ruthless. Yes, this means getting rid of the things that no longer spark joy and organising the ones that remain in a manner that makes them accessible. What you are doing in the process is making space for good chi to come in. But, why limit the cleanse to the physical front alone? Pay attention to your heart space, Cancer. Bid farewell to that which was never yours.

LEO: Exercising is not just about getting a summer bod or twisting your

body into pretzel-like poses. It’s about getting active, stimulating the blood flow, and reconnecting with your body temple. Oh, and let’s not get started on the endorphin rush that follows! If that doesn’t inspire you to put your running shoes on, what will? If you’re not one for hot and sweaty workouts, consider mindful practices like yoga and Tai Chi. Joining a Bollywood dance class is another way to get those feel-good hormones flowing.

VIRGO: In the mood to up your style game? Upcycle what you already or swap with your most stylish bff. Let creativity become the name of your game, Virgo. Some of you may feel inspired to play around with your hair. Go to a stylist you trust and ask them to surprise you (in a good way). Maybe you’ll like what they come up with. Maybe you’ll feel you’ve got puberty all over again. The only question you want to ask yourself in the process: am I having fun with this? Remember, fashion is transient. Style, on the other hand, is eternal. Let it become an extension of who you

are on an internal level.

LIBRA: The cards are bringing with them the message that you are playing it too small by thinking you can do everything by yourself. Spirit wants to co-create with you, Libra. Make space for your guides to step in and light the path ahead. Some of you may be dealing with anxiety at the moment. Your dreams and desires have been duly noted. By believing that miracles are on their way to you, you will be able to invite them into your experience.

SCORPIO: “To love someone fiercely, to believe in something with your whole heart, to celebrate a fleeting moment in time, to fully engage in a life that doesn’t come with guarantees—these are risks that involve vulnerability and often pain.” But leaning into the discomfort promises magnificent rewards like joy, gratitude and grace. Let Brené Brown’s words encourage you to embrace the virtue of vulnerability. Push past the self-created barriers, let go of the baggage and expand your heart space as allow yourself to receive. Trust that this is going to be one of your most significant transformations.

Sagittarius:

What if our physical vessel is a good indicator of our emotional and mental health? If you’ve been taking your body for granted, it’s time to get back on the holistic bandwagon. Be mindful of what you’re putting on your plate (think less takeout, more greens), and ensure you get an hour of physical activity every day or at least 5 days a week. Working with a nutritionist could help you understand what’s best for your constitution. PS: Small changes make a big difference.

CAPRICORN: French-born American chef Jacques Pépin famously said, “If you are a jeweler, or a surgeon or a cook, you have to know the trade in your hand. You have to learn the process. You learn it through endless repetition until it belongs to you.” Your thoughts exactly, Capricorn. You know that experimenting and trying new things is the fun part. It’s the endless hours dedicated to mastering your craft that is the real challenge here, one that you seem to be getting better at with each passing day. Your power words this weekend: patience and persistence.

AQUARIUS:

There are two types of people in this world: those who wait for things to happen and those who make things happen. As you reclaim your power this weekend, you begin to realise your ability to attract opportunities that will ultimately lead to success. Seize the day, Aquarius! A question you want to ask yourself before you progress to the next stage: “What are the ways in which I have been limiting myself?” Now is the time to move beyond the self-imposed prison.

PISCES: If and when you find yourself at odds with somebody, ask yourself if the matter at hand is worth going to war for. In moments of silence, you will find the right answer. Remember, it’s okay to make mistakes. We are human, after all! The true test of your enlightenment: your ability to admit where you have erred. Trust that the other person will respect you a lot more when you let go of your ego and listen to the voice of your higher self.

Xbox Game Pass Adds Perfect Game to Play With Friends

Microsoft, following the addition of two great games this week, has added a new game to Xbox Game Pass on Xbox One. More specifically, the official Twitter account for the subscription service has revealed that on Xbox One, Xbox Game Pass subscribers can now enjoy The Jackbox Party Pack 3, the third game in The Jackbox Party Pack series, which, like the name suggests, is a series of party games.

At the moment of publishing, it’s unclear how long the game will be available for Xbox One subscribers. Unfortunately, Microsoft doesn’t divulge this type of information. It could be around for a few weeks, a few months, or a few years. So, if you’re interested in checking it out, you should do this sooner rather than later.

For those that don’t know: Xbox Game Pass is a monthly subscription service that costs \$10 a go. In other words, \$120 a year. As a subscriber -- whether on Xbox One or PC -- you get unlimited access to a vast and constantly evolving library of games that you can play whenever you want. In addition to this, you also get perks like exclusive discounts, the ability



to play select games early, and more. “The threequel to the party game phenomenon features the deadly quiz show Trivia Murder Party, the say-anything sequel Quiplash 2, the surprising survey game Guessionage, the t-shirt slugfest Tee K.O., and the sneaky trickster game Fakin’ It,” reads an official pitch of the game.

If this game doesn’t tickle your fancy, don’t forget that plen-

ty of new games released this week that may just tickle your pinky toes. For more on these new releases, be sure to take a quick gander at our latest Out This Week. Meanwhile for more news, rumors, and leaks pertaining to Xbox Game Pass -- and everything related to it -- click right here.

Did you know ComicBook.com has a Pokemon podcast? That’s right folks, A Wild Podcast Has Appeared is available every Thursday bringing you the best breakdowns of the week’s biggest news from Jim Viscardi, Megan Peters & Christian Hoffer. Catch the newest episode right here or subscribe on iTunes today!

Adam Levine apologizes for lackluster performance, says it ‘wasn’t our best’

Fans took Maroon 5 to task online after their performance Thursday at a music festival in Chile.



SAMANTHA KUBOTA

Maroon 5 frontman Adam Levine apologized Friday for the band’s lackluster performance at a festival Thursday night.

The band took the stage for a set as part of the Vina del Mar festival in Chile, which is a huge music festival there and broadcast on TV.

Videos from the official festival account show Levine less animated than his usual performances.

Friday, Levine posted a mea culpa to his Instagram story, saying he wanted to be honest with his fans.

“To be totally frank, there were some things holding me back sonically last night and I let them get to me and it impacted how I was behaving on stage and it was unprofessional and I apologize,” the singer said.

In a statement to Billboard, the band echoed those sentiments, saying they also experienced numerous technical

difficulties “including monitor issues and with both of Adam Levine’s in ears.”

“It created a very difficult situation for the band to deliver their normal show,” a representative for the band said in a statement.

Levine added he tried to “zero in” and focus on singing as the issues in their 70-minute set unfolded.

“I wanted to sound good, number one, and look good, feel good, number two,” he said. “I struggled a lot and sometimes it’s really hard for me to mask the struggle and so for that, I did let you guys down and I apologize.”

“Last night, it wasn’t our best. And for that, all I can say is that I’m really sorry,” he said.

Despite videos showing fans cheering at the actual performance, many fans were not happy in the comments.

“One question for the fans of Ma-

roon 5: are they always this boring? Or are they phoning it in only because we are from Chile and he doesn’t know who we are?” one person tweeted.

Another person commented on YouTube, “This is like someone singing karaoke.” “This is a festival transmitted to ALL OF LATIN AMERICA, Adam didn’t greet people, didn’t interact with the public, didn’t accept the prizes he was given, didn’t even say goodbye, that disappointment the lack of desire that he put into this show,” another person commented. “The Latin American public deserves the same respect and delivery in any part of the world.”

In the statement to Billboard, Maroon 5 added they do have several more shows coming up in South America.

“It’s one show of many, coming to South America and performing is one of our favorite things to do,” Levine said in his video. “We absolutely adore our Chilean fans and love coming here.”

Jadakiss Reveals Styles P Was Taking Shots at JAY-Z on “Reservoir Dogs”

The recording sessions for JAY-Z’s 1998 track “Reservoir Dogs” were a bit tense.

During a recent appearance on Genius’ For the Record, Jadakiss recalled the day The Lox were asked to appear on the song off Vol. 2,

which also featured Beanie Sigel and Sauce Money. Jada said JAY’s team had called the trio as they landed in

New York following a week-end of shows. The Yonkers rapper said he and his fellow Lox members were down to collaborate ... but after they went home and dropped off their bags.

“So we’re like, ‘That’s cool. We’re gonna go home, put our luggage [away].’ And they were like, ‘Nah, [JAY] wants you to come there

right now.” Jada said the request was both confusing and inconvenient.

“We ain’t got carry-ons. We got big shit we had to check,” he recalled. “So that put us on edge a little, ‘cause we always lookin’ at it like, ‘If [JAY] just landed, would he just come to the studio with his luggage? No!’ But that was a good edge.” Jada said they arrived af-

ter the studio shortly after, and began recording. Jada recalled he, Sheek Louch, and Beanie Sigel laid down their contributions on the first day, and Styles P recorded his verse the day after. But even with that gap, Styles was still feeling tight about JAY’s short-notice. His frustration was on full display in his first few lines: