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SummitTIMES

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MP points out contradictions in departmental reports

MPLAD FUNDS TO BE USED EXCLUSIVELY FOR EDUCATION IN 2020

**SUMMIT REPORT
GYALSHING, 22 JAN:**

Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba pointed out some contradictions in progress reports placed by various departments while chairing a coordination meeting of District Development and Monitoring Committee 'DISHA' today at Zilla Panchayat Bhawan of Kyongsa, West Sikkim.

"While PHE department claims that 99% drinking water facilities have been made available in West Sikkim, HRDD department complains that many schools have no drinking water facilities. Such contradictions cast doubt on the progress report placed by the concerned department,"



said Mr Subba.

He added that while implementing public welfare schemes, departments should resolve issues in convergence with each other.

During the meet-

ing, many departments raised the problem of lack of manpower. In this regard, the MP talked about the 'Transfer Policy' which is being formulated at the State Level to resolve issues related to lack of

manpower in the districts.

He further mentioned that the MP-LAD fund would solely be used for Education Department purposes for the year 2020.

The MP urged public representatives and

leaders of the society such as panchayat members and government representatives to work in tandem for the development of the state and for the welfare of the common people.

He also suggested that the DISHA coordination meeting should be held on quarterly basis.

The meeting organized by Rural Management Development Department in coordination with West District Administration also had the presence of DC (West), Karma R Bonpo, ADC (Development), Milan Subba, Zilla Adhakshya (West), Devika Subba, heads of all departments, panchayat members and others.

BJP's priority is not development, but to create Hindu rashtra: Tharoor



KOLKATA, JAN 22 (PTI):

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Wednesday asserted that in the absence of any development agenda, what the Bharatiya Janata Party wants is to create a "Hindu rashtra".

Speaking at the Kolkata Literary Meet here, Tharoor also claimed the real "tukde tukde gang" is the ruling party which is dividing the country into "bits and pieces".

"With no development on its agenda, the ruling party is making a complete exposition of its agenda to create a Hindu rashtra," Tharoor, also an acclaimed author, claimed.

The present central government does not have the mentality for development, the Congress leader alleged.

"The real tukde tukde gang is the ruling party which is dividing the country into bits and pieces. The party wants to divide us further the way the British Raj did through the divide and rule policy," he said.

"Tukde tukde gang" is a term often used by the right-wing parties to attack those who they think are out to divide the country. The term was coined and used against the Left and Left-backed outfits during the campus unrest at the Jawaharlal Nehru Uni-

versity in 2016.

"Should religion be a determinant for nationhood? Mahatma Gandhi went for a secular India, unlike Pakistan which went on to become an Islamic state.

"Our Constitution reflects dignity and equality for all. The Constitution reflects that and also essentially rejected the idea of religion-based citizenship," Tharoor said.

For the first time in India, religion is considered as a determinant for citizenship and excluding one religion, Islam, the former Union minister said.

"The onus will be on us to prove that we are Indians," the Thiruvananthapuram MP claimed.

BJP leaders often quote Swami Vivekananda but the monk in his famous Chicago speech had greeted people of all faiths of the world as brothers and sisters, he said. "But BJP has reduced this to six faiths and three nations," Tharoor said.

He was referring to the amended Citizenship Act that seeks to provide Indian citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis entering India on or before December 31, 2014 from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan after five years of residence here.

Referring to the pro-

posed nationwide NRC, Tharoor said 65 per cent of people do not have documentation. "This is what the present government has burdened us with".

On the economic front, he alleged that the BJP has destroyed the economy and brought in demonetisation "in Tughlaqi style".

"There is high level of unemployment, record number of farmers committing suicides. There is food price inflation", he said.

Even investors' confidence is shattered as seen the way the BJP sneered at Amazon's proposal of USD one billion investments in India, he said at the Question and Answer section after taking part in a session - "When The Lions Write Colony in Indian Ink".

Earlier during the session, Tharoor said it is regrettable that no British politician has so far apologised for the colonial exploitation of India during the British Raj.

"The British were complicit as the colonial exploitation of India was done by an enterprise, the East India Company, where a large number of British Parliamentarians had held shares. They ran a collective extortion racket in a political mafia kind of operation," he said.

India falls to 51st position in EIU's Democracy Index

NEW DELHI, JAN 22 (PTI): India slipped 10 places to 51st position in the 2019 Democracy Index's global ranking, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit, which cited "erosion of civil liberties" in the country as the primary cause for the downtrend.

India's overall score fell from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90 in the Index that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide for 165 independent states and two territories.

On India, the report said, the country dropped ten places in the Democracy Index's global ranking to 51st. The primary cause of the democratic regression was an erosion of civil liberties in the country. The index is based on five categories -- electoral process and pluralism; the functioning of government; political participation; political culture; and civil liberties.

Based on their total score, the countries are classified as one of four types of regime: "full democracy" (scores greater than 8); flawed democracy scores greater than 6 and less than or equal to 8; hybrid regime scores greater than 4 and less than or equal to 6; authoritarian regime scores less than or equal to 4". India was included in the "flawed democracy" category.

Meanwhile, China's score fell to 2.26 in the 2019 index, and the country is now ranked 153rd, close to the bottom of the global rankings.

"Over the past year discrimination against minorities, especially in the north-western region of Xinjiang, has intensified. Digital surveillance of the population continued apace in 2019, representing a further constraint on individual freedoms," the report said.

Among other emerging economies, Brazil was ranked 52nd with a score of 6.86, Russia stood at 134th with a score of 3.11.

Meanwhile, Pakistan was ranked 108th on the overall list with a score of 4.25, while Sri Lanka was at 69th place with a score of 6.27, Bangladesh (at 80th with 5.88 score).

The overall list was topped by Norway, followed by Iceland and Sweden. Other countries in the top 10 include New Zealand at the fourth place, Finland (5th), Ireland (6th), Denmark (7th), Canada (8th), Australia (9th) and Switzerland (10th).

North Korea was at the bottom of the global ranking at 167th place.

Khaling unashamedly lying to people: Passang Sherpa

"Sikkim State Public Services Act 2006 in itself violative of Rule 4/4"

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 JAN:**

"In an attempt to save SKM party and Government from public embarrassment, Political Secretary Jacob Khaling is unashamedly lying to Sikkimese people about the appointment of non-Sikkimese Sunil Saraogi as non violative of Rule 4/4," Passang Sherpa [Coordinator, I Am 371F Campaign] has said in a press release today.

Mr Sherpa has alleged that the appointment of Sunil Saraogi goes against Rule 4/4 of

the Sikkim Government Establishment Rules of 1974, an old law protected under Article 371F of the Constitution.

In response, Mr Khaling had stated on Tuesday that the appointment was made under the Sikkim State Public Services Act 2006.

To this, Mr Sherpa has said that Sikkim State Public Services Act 2006 in itself is violative of Rule 4/4 of the Sikkim Government Establishment Rules of 1974.

"Jacob Khaling and SKM Party should be reminded that Sikkim State Public Services Act 2006 in itself is violative of Rule 4/4 of the Sikkim Government Establishment Rules of 1974 and on the basis of which, SKM leadership includ-

ing Chief Minister PS Gojay and senior minister Kunga Nima Lepcha had vehemently protested the appointment of one Anita Gupta as an OSD during SDF regime. It is worth recalling here that the appointment of Anita Gupta was also made possible because of the same Act which Jacob Khaling is referring to," the release states.

Mr Sherpa adds that SKM had promised Sikkimese people that non-Sikkimese appointment in any government post will be stopped and the violation of Rule 4/4 will be rectified when they come to power.

However, right after forming the Government they appointed a non-Sikkimese Sunil Saraogi

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CAA pleas: SC says no stay without hearing Centre, gives govt 4 weeks to respond

NEW DELHI, JAN 22 (PTI): Making clear it will not stay the Citizenship (Amendment) Act without hearing the Centre, the Supreme Court on Wednesday gave the government four weeks to respond to petitions challenging the CAA and said a five-judge Constitution bench will hear the matter.

Hearing a batch of 143 petitions, an apex court bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde issued notice to the Centre and restrained all high courts from hearing pleas on the CAA till it decides on the pleas.

The bench, also comprising Justices S Abdul Nazeer and Sanjiv Khanna, said it will hear the petitions pertaining to Assam and Tripura separately as the problem with the CAA in these two states is different from rest of the country.

"The matter is uppermost in everybody's mind. We will form a five-judge bench and then list the case," the court said.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for some petitioners, said the issue be referred to a Constitution bench and the NPR exercise be postponed by a couple of months. He also urged the bench to put on hold the operationalisation of the CAA. The bench said,



"Even we think that the matter should be heard by a Constitution bench."

Asserting that it will not grant any stay on the CAA without hearing the Centre on the matter, it said, "Will pass order on granting any interim relief to petitioner opposing CAA after four weeks."

The court also made it clear it will not pass any ex-parte order without

hearing the Centre on staying the operation of the CAA and exercise of the National Population Register (NPR).

It said the earlier cut off date for citizenship in Assam was March 24, 1971 and noted that it has been extended till December 31, 2014 under the CAA.

The petitions concerning Tripura and Assam as well as the matters re-

lated to Uttar Pradesh, which is going ahead with the implementation of CAA without framing any rules, can be dealt with separately, the bench said.

The bench said it will decide in-chamber the modalities of hearing the batch of petitions on the CAA and may fix them for day-to-day hearing after four weeks.

Attorney General K K Venugopal, appearing for the Centre, told the bench the government has been given copies of around 60 pleas out of the 143 petitions. He said it wanted time to respond to all the pleas.

The CAA seeks to grant citizenship to migrants belonging to the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, Jain and Parsi communities who came to the country from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan on or before December 31, 2014.

President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 on December 12, turning it into an Act.

Several petitions have been filed challenging the constitutional validity of the CAA. Among those who have filed pleas are the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML),

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4th Kalinga Global Film Festival begins

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 JAN:

The 4th edition of Kalinga Global Film Festival (KGFF) was inaugurated on 18 Jan, 2020. KIIT School of Film and Media Sciences is the organizer of the festival, a press release informs.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Minister, Sports & Youth Service, Tusharkanti Behera, Electronics & Information Technology, Govt of Odisha; MP, Anubhav Mohanty, Lok Sabha; Chairman Odisha Film Development Corporation, Satyabrata Tripathy; Director, Bijay Kumar Nayak, Culture Department, Govt of Odisha; Professor of Screen Studies and Research FTII, Prof Pankaj Saxena, Pune; Founder, Dr Achyuta Samanta, KIIT &



KISS and CEO, Himanshu Khatua, KIIT School of Film & Media Sciences.

The objective of this film festival is to encourage and ignite young

minds, enrich intellectually inclined cineastes and promote aspiring film makers. KGFF intends to organise a festival that would connect

regular movie goers, budding filmmakers and the movie buffs with the distinguished film makers so as to bring about greater understanding of

the art and craft of film making, said Mr Khatua.

KGFF is presenting a selection of feature films, short films and documentaries from all

over Asia and screening of more than 15 films in Asian Window section. The selection of competitive students' short films has been made out of 50 films submitted. Delegates and critics from the country and abroad have participated in the festival. Besides this, there will be three panel discussions on Film Society Movement, Film Appreciation and Critical Analysis, and Film Education.

All awards will be presented at the closing ceremony of the festival and all films screened under competitive category as official selection process are only eligible for completion. All the winners will get a KGFF trophy, Cash Prize and certificate of excellence as award. The best film will be awarded Rs. 1 lakh.

Centre designates Daman as HQ of merged UTs



NEW DELHI, JAN 22 (PTI): The Centre on Wednesday designated Daman as the headquarters of the merged Union Territories of Daman & Diu, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

The Central government has also approved amendments or extension or repeal in the legislations and regulations dealing with Goods and Services Tax (GST), Value Added Tax (VAT) and State Excise.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an official statement said.

These amendments will lead to 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance' by way of having common taxation authorities, better delivery of services to the

citizens by reducing duplication of work and improving administrative efficiency, it said.

These will help in bringing more uniformity in laws relating to GST, VAT and State Excise and it will also help to avoid any legal complications in the levy and collection of GST Tax, VAT, State Excise, including recovery of arrears, it said.

Moreover, the said amendments not only bring uniformity in taxation laws but also strengthen the system of laws, it said.

The statement said Daman has been designated as the Headquarters of UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu in view of the merger of the two UTs on January 26, 2020.

Two women arrested for drug peddling

YOGEN THATAL

SINGTAM, 22 JAN:

Singtam Police arrested two women from Singtam for peddling drugs on 18 Jan, 2020.

Both the accused are around 40 years of age and were arrested under Sikkim Anti Drugs Act.

A police team under the supervision of SI, Sonam Thendup Bhutia and constable, Deepak Pokhrel, raided the house of the accused at 3:00 pm.

They recovered 600 capsules of Spasmo Proxyvon and 90 loose Nitrosun-10 tablets.

CBI registers four fresh cases against Chhota Rajan

NEW DELHI, JAN 22 (PTI):

The CBI has taken over the probe into an attempt to kill a veteran journalist in 1997 and three other fresh cases allegedly involving jailed gangster Chhota Rajan, officials said on Wednesday.

Baljeet Shersingh Parmar, a noted crime reporter in Mumbai, was severely injured after motorcycle borne shooters of Rajan allegedly attacked him outside a building at Antop Hill on June 12, 1997, they said.

The agency has taken over the Mumbai police FIR in the case filed under IPC sections related to attempt to murder, they said.

The agency has registered two more cases of extortion by alleged gang members of Rajan and one case related to issuing threats to life, the officials said.

The agency has booked Rajan and his henchmen Guru Satam and Suresh for allegedly demanding Rs 20 lakh as extortion money from businessman Devang Bipin Parikh in 1995, they said.

The other case pertains to alleged demand

of Rs 25 lakh in 1998 from a man named Ghisulal Jain by Hemant, who is believed to be a member of Rajan gang, they said.

The Mumbai police had filed charge sheets in both the cases but Rajan remained absconding, they said.

The last case is related to threats issued to the life of builder Shabbir N Patel and his son in 1996, they said.

In November last year, the CBI had taken over 10 cases, including those of extortion and murder, in which Rajan was allegedly involved. These cases were registered in a 14-year period since 1992, they said.

These cases include killing of trade union leader Datta Samant in 1997 in Mumbai in which Rajan's role is suspected, they said.

Rajan was arrested at Bali airport in Indonesia on October 25, 2015, and deported to India. He is an accused in around 70 cases in Maharashtra, including the J Dey murder case in 2011. The Maharashtra government has handed over all these cases to CBI.

BJP calls Cong 'Muslim League Congress', oppn party hits back with Godse jibe

NEW DELHI, JAN 22 (PTI):

The BJP on Wednesday cited reported comments of Maharashtra minister Ashok Chavan to accuse the Congress of "Muslim appeasement" and "insulting" Hindus, and said that the opposition party should be called "Muslim League Congress".

At a briefing, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra referred to comments of several opposition leaders, including those from the NCP and the AIMIM, to allege that they were "abusing" Hindus in the name of anti-CAA protests and sought apology from Congress president Sonia Gandhi and NCP's Sharad Pawar.

Referring to Chavan's reported remarks that the Congress joined hands with the Shiv Sena

in Maharashtra as Muslims wanted the party to stop the BJP from coming to power, Patra said, "The Congress leader says they joined the government for Muslims. What is the sin of Hindus, Sikhs and others. The Congress has insulted Hindus and this comment has exposed it."

Hitting back, Congress spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill said an empty mind is a devil's workshop and added that BJP spokespersons are calling names because of the impact the "rising unemployment" is having on them.

He referred to the BJP as "Nathuram Godse party", "bhrasht jumla party" and "bikau janata party".

In his press conference, Patra also referred to a statement from an

NCP leader to attack the opposition. Asked about Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge's reported jibe at the RSS for its "non-participation" in the freedom movement, the BJP leader shot back, asking if parents of Sonia Gandhi, who is of Italian origin, had fought in India's independence struggle.

The Indian National Congress, he said referring to the opposition party's full name, should be called "Muslim League Congress". The Congress does "Muslim appeasement" for the community's votes but has never done any good for it, he claimed.

Highlighting a report in an Urdu daily, Patra said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had once described his party as a "party of Muslims" and

its leaders coined terms like saffron terror.

Since 1946, Patra claimed, the Congress has done "Muslim vote bank politics".

He also highlighted comments of AIMIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi, whose brother Asaduddin Owaisi heads the party, that Muslims ruled over the country for eight centuries to refer to him as Jinnah, Pakistan's founder.

Patra claimed that a video of Shaheen Bagh protests purportedly showed children talking about "murdering" the prime minister and the home minister and asked who has spread such "poison".

"It is a tragedy that poison against Hindus is being sowed in the country," he said.

Owaisi dares Amit Shah to debate on CAA with "bearded man"



HYDERABAD, JAN 22

(PTI): After Home Minister Amit Shah threw a challenge to leaders like Rahul Gandhi for a public debate over CAA, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi joined issue and wanted the former to discuss the law with him instead of others.

Addressing a rally in Karimnagar district on Tuesday night ahead of the municipal polls on January 25, the Hyderabad MP said the Home Minister called for a public debate on CAA with the opposition even as he asked Shah to debate with him on the legislation.

At a rally in Lucknow in support of the CAA on

Tuesday, Shahhad emphatically said the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) will not be withdrawn and those protesting can continue to do so even as he challenged opposition leaders for a public debate on the amended legislation.

Accusing the opposition of "misleading" people on the amended citizenship law, Shah threw the challenge for the debate to Rahul Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee, Akhilesh Yadav (Samajwadi Party) and Mayawati (Bahujan Samaj Party).

Reacting to Shah's challenge, Owaisi said, "I am here.. debate with me.. why (debate) with

these people.. 'Daadi wale se karo na' (Debate with a bearded man). We will talk and debate on CAA, NPR and NRC."

The CAA allows easier citizenship for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Parsis and Jains who entered India from three neighbouring countries before 2015 after facing religious persecution. Muslim migrants don't figure on this list.

The AIMIM chief hit out at the BJP over re-naming of places, while mentioning about the 'Halwa' ceremony ahead of the Union budget.

"BJP says it will change names. I want to ask from where did the word halwa originate?

It is an Arabic word. It is neither Hindi nor Urdu (word). now remove the Arabic word..

They (BJP) say they will (continue to) change names.

Inshallah people of the country will change you," the Hyderabad MP said adding "remember I am not halwa.. I am lam mirchi (red chilli)."

Meanwhile, the AIMIM has requested the Telangana State Election Commission not to use face recognition app being used on pilot basis in the polls for urban local bodies, alleging that it would invade the privacy of the citizens, among other violations.

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SATA team bags 28 medals at Inter-District Taekwondo C'ship

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 JAN:**

Sikkim Amateur Taekwondo Association (SATA) bagged 28 medals in the 4th Open Inter-district Taekwondo Championship 2020 held at Jalpaiguri on 19 Jan, 2020.

The SATA team bagged 14 gold medals, 11 silver medals, and 3

bronze medals, a press release informs.

The team led by coach, Sanjay Subba, comprised of Saroj Gurung, Sandeep Sharma, Asbin Chettri, Shidarth Chettri, Shreyas Tewari, Dorjee O. Bhutia, Smriti Chettri, Pasang Diki Tamang, Anna Lepcha, Yalmola Mukhia, Sanjana Rai, Gracy Sharma, Smriti Rai and Chumsang Bhutia.

Prez confers Bal Shakti Puraskar to 49 children

NEW DELHI, JAN 22 (PTI): Ishan Sharma who saved a Russian tourist from two robbers, Omkar Singh who holds the world record for the youngest theoretical author and youngest pianist in India Gauri Mishra were among those who were given the Bal Shakti Puraskar 2020 by President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday.

Kovind conferred the awards to 49 children in the age group of 5-18 years at a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhawan here. The Bal Shakti Puraskar is given to children in the fields of innovation, social service, scholastic, sports, art and culture and bravery and carries a medal, a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh, a certificate and a citation.

The 49 awardees also included 12-year-old Darsh Malani, who has performed over 50 magic shows worldwide

and 11-year-old Manoj Kumar Lohar has been awarded for his mastery in "tabla vadan".

Gauri Mishra, who has the "Youngest pianist of India" record in her name and Korok Biswas, an exceptional dancer despite being diagnosed with down syndrome and 50 per cent intellectual disability are also among the awardees in the Art and Culture category.

Fifteen-year-old Ishaan Sharma who saved a Russian female tourist from two robbers and helped police catch them, 10-year-old Lalkansung who saved the lives of three girls from drowning in a large fish pond in Manipur and Pema who saved lives of two girls when the boundary wall of her school collapsed due to rainfall and landslide, were also among those awarded in the Bravery category.

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SNG Zone president visits Newa Language Classes



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 JAN:**

Zone president, Singtam-Rangpo Sikkim Newar Guthi, TB Pradhan and Newar Bhay Bowneykuthi president, Singtam Branch, Binod Pradhan, visited the ongoing Newa Language Classes in Singtam today, a press release informs.

Addressing the students, TB Pradhan highlighted the objective

behind organising such classes in the state. He appealed and encouraged all the students to be serious about learning more about the Newari culture and tradition.

'All Newars should have basic knowledge of the language,' he said, Regarding Newar Guthi, he informed that the 60 branches are divided into nine different zones and all branches

are active.

Teacher, Rhenock Senior Secondary School, Renuka Pradhan and teacher, Sonamati Memorial Senior Secondary School Khamdong, Nirmala Pradhan, will also be teaching the language classes from today to provide more knowledge about the language, tradition and culture.

The month-long course started from 04 January.

ASSOCHAM to mark 100 years with strategy meet

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 JAN:**

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) is celebrating 100 years of establishment this year. As the apex industry chamber having a family of 4.5 lakh members it has been in service of the nation since 1920.

To mark the occasion, ASSOCHAM is organizing a strategy meet on uplifting organic food processing of Sikkim for Global Connect on 24 Jan, 2020, at Summit Denzong Hotel, Gangtok, Sikkim with active support of Ministry of Food Processing, Govt. of India to discuss new investments into

organic sector and will focus on linking farmers with the companies to strengthen access to domestic & global markets.

A press release informs that the program will also focus on ways to promote economic vibrancy of the state in terms of trade and commerce, organic mission, logistics, thus enabling sustainable and inclusive development of Sikkim. There will be the discussion on the local solutions and experiences of other experts from other parts of the country shall be shared.

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad is scheduled to attend the occasion as chief guest and

inaugurate the program, the release mentions.

Additional Chief Secretary, Commerce & Industries Department, Govt. of Sikkim, Thomas Chandy, and Secretary, Horticulture Department, Govt. of Sikkim, MT Sherpa, will also attend the program and release the knowledge report.

ASSOCHAM under the guidance of Ministry of Food Processing Industries have several initiatives with special focus on North East. Through local and international partners ASSOCHAM is connecting North East entrepreneurs especially women entrepreneurs with larger markets to promote the products and services.

Stock markets to be open on Budget day

NEW DELHI, JAN 22 (PTI): Stock markets will be open for normal trading on February 1, Saturday, when the Union Budget will be presented.

Generally, the markets are closed on Saturdays and Sundays, except for special circumstances.

In separate circulars on Wednesday, leading exchanges BSE and NSE said the markets would be open for trading on

February 1 on account of Union Budget presentation. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is to present the Budget for 2020-21.

Trading would be conducted during normal hours from 9 am to 3.30 pm, as per the circulars.

According to markets sources, the decision has been taken following requests made in this regard by market partici-

pants as Budget contains several market-moving announcements.

In 2015, stock exchanges were open for trading on February 28, Saturday, when then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had presented the Budget.

Stock markets have always been open on normal timings since budget presentation timings were changed from 5 pm to 11 am in 2001.

CONTRIBUTIONS INVITED FOR AMBA SCHOOL LIBRARY UPGRADATION

Wandering Souls of Sikkim is excited to announce our plan to upgrade the school library of Govt. Secondary School, Amba, East Sikkim. This will be fourth such upgradation of school libraries by WSOS.

We have successfully upgraded 3 school libraries so far with the support and contributions of our generous patrons and are looking forward to receive more such contributions.

We request all to kindly contribute books either old or new or cash for the upgradation of school library at Amba.

Our Library Initiative is aimed at upgrading School libraries specially in rural areas of the state and for laying a foundation for better future of our young minds studying in these schools.

To Contribute Contact WSOS at 7384639193.



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Union Ministers meet Lt Governor in Jammu

Jammu, Jan 22 (PTI): Two union ministers, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Renuka Singh Saruta, on Wednesday separately met Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor G C Murmu here, a Raj Bhavan spokesperson said.

Shekhawat, Union Minister for Jal Shakti, and the Lt Governor discussed wide ranging issues pertaining to the management of water resources, National Water Policy, groundwater development, and implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the Union Territory, the spokesperson said.

He said they also discussed the Integrated Water Management which is vital for environmental sustenance and sustainable economic development.

"The Lt Governor observed that the conservation of water bodies and the sustainability of natural resources are of great importance and the present Government is taking effective measures to ensure judicious, eq-



uitable and sustainable management, allocation and utilization of water resources and generating public awareness in this regard, besides having the target of providing tap water to every household by ending 2021," the spokesperson said.

He said Saruta, Union Minister of State for Tribal Affairs, and the Lt Governor discussed the various issues related to the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes Community and the activities undertaken by

the Tribal Affairs Ministry for the welfare of the tribal population.

They also had a discussion on several developmental interventions made by the Government in critical sectors through specially tailored schemes comprising of economic, educational and social development for promoting the interests of Scheduled Tribes Community in Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, several delegations including Ahmadiyya Muslim Commu-

nity, Jammu, J&K Cultural Foundation, Kashmiri Samiti Delhi and a public delegation from Inderwal area called on Murmu and highlighted their issues and demands.

The delegation of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Jammu led by Gohar Hafeez Fani apprised the Lt Governor about various activities undertaken by them to promote peace and inter-religious harmony, the spokesperson said.

He said the members of the delegation also presented to the Lt Gov-

ernor a book titled 'World Crisis and the Pathway to Peace' by Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Worldwide head of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

The delegation of J&K Cultural Foundation headed by Ayash Arif apprised the Lt Governor about the issues related to the conversion of Tagore Hall into a Cinema House, while the delegation of Kashmiri Samiti, Delhi led by its President Sumeer Chhurgoo raised several issues and demands pertaining to the welfare of the migrant Kashmiri Pandits including their rehabilitation, creation of employment for the youth, relief and rehabilitation of the affected traders, enhancement of monthly cash assistance, the spokesman said.

The Lt Governor assured the delegations that there will be a review of all the genuine issues and demands put forth by them for their early redressal and urged them to continue working towards promoting public welfare.

Let's Give the Young a Library

Private collaborations to help children access the world of books

The weather just might be warming up, and the winter break is still holding strong. What the lull of winter weather should also be alleviating is the guilt the Sikkimese must collectively feel for not having factored in anything for the young when the crores were being apportioned for infrastructure development. Children in Sikkim do not have much to choose from by way of safe and healthy outdoor spaces. And now that the children are forced indoors by the weather and the holidays, another denial that the younger generation is suffering comes into focus – it is bad enough that Sikkim denies its young with convenient, accessible and safe outdoor spaces, the situation worsens in the face of the fact that they are even denied literary escapes. Not only is there no presence of children's literature either in the local publishing scene or substantially enough in the book-stands (we speak of 'local' reading material here), even access to a decent public library remains largely non-existent. The largest library in the State, the one housed in the erstwhile Gangtok community hall continues to pushed into a corner of an establishment still appropriated by the VIPs. Hopefully, now that the secretariat has at least officially moved out and the multipurpose Manan Bhawan will be allowed to serve more purposes for the young than its current single-purpose to house drab government offices. Till that happens, one continues to miss reading rooms and libraries in Sikkim. The only hope comes in the form of groups like the Wandering Souls of Sikkim which are building and refurbishing libraries in government schools. Unfortunately, they remain a very small minority.

The lack of well appointed libraries is not a new theme for this section and has been visited often and will definitely keep resurfacing until things improve. The absence of libraries is unfortunate because libraries, even though they are going under the world over, remain the only window available to most children to access the world of words and inspire creative thinking. And no, Facebook and Wikipedia cannot make up for that loss. The failure, like with most things in the State, is not so much of the government as it is of the society at large. Libraries and reading rooms or even child-specific activities need not necessarily come from the State exchequer. In fact the more successful endeavours have come from private initiative.

It is apt here to cite the example of the Bakul Children's Library in Odisha. This library in the Satya Nagar residential area of Bhubaneswar houses some 20,000 books, includes a multimedia section, has internet access and stocks substantial educational material. All of these have come from community partnership. Everything is donated, children are charged no membership fees and access is free for every child. When it started about a decade ago, it was single-unit operation. Within a few years it had 8,000 books. Now, as mentioned, it has 20K titles and has opened its doors to general readers, yes, even grown-ups. It is managed by volunteers and children throng to it, as much to browse and borrow as to attend story-reading sessions, creative thinking workshops, staging of plays by other kids and everything else that children do. The library was born from a campaign in the year 2006 to collect books for free sharing with children. In its first attempt itself, the volunteers received pledges for book donations from 1,000 people! Not just books, people also pledged time and professional skills to set up the library and sustain it. Its operations now include a mobile library which routinely services 24 villages in Odisha. The model works because the society got involved. They operate on the motto: "If not us, who? If not now, when?"

The feeling to do something for the young surely exists in Sikkim as well, but like in Bhubaneswar, it requires a core group to take the initiative and harness the desire. Surely, there are enough 'donors' around to stock a decent library to begin with. What will a library achieve? It will open a window for the young in what is becoming an increasingly claustrophobic and consumerist environment. A children's library is not only about books, it is about sharing, learning and even escaping; experiences and options that every child should have access to.

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The Ominous Metaphors of China's Uighur Concentration Camps

AIDAN FORTH
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The recent leak of Chinese Communist Party documents to the New York Times offers a chilling glimpse into the 21st century's largest system of concentration camps.

A million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities are now detained in a Chinese operation that combines the forced labour and re-education of Mao-era laogai with the post-9/11 rhetoric of the "war on terror." U.S. President Donald Trump's Muslim ban, border camps crowded with migrant children and America's global archipelago of so-called black sites detaining terror suspects deserve condemnation. So too do the concentration camps of the world's newest superpower.

Retina scans, DNA databanks and facial recognition technology are now ubiquitous across China's Xinjiang province. They are modern-day updates to earlier surveillance technologies like Soviet internal passports.

KGB TACTICS

Satellite images and clandestine video footage of watchtowers, concrete barracks and barbed-wire perimeters conform to the prison esthetic described by Holocaust survivor Primo Levi and Russian labour camp detainee Alexandr Solzhenitsyn.

Nighttime roundups resemble KGB tactics, while involuntary medical injections recall the dark history of forced sterilization, from Nazi eugenics to the targeted sterilization of Indigenous women in Canada.

Another haunting parallel is the language Chinese officials use to justify their actions. Speaking of the concentration camps of totalitarian Europe, the late social theorist Zygmunt Bauman, himself a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor, wrote that "gardening and medicine" have offered "archmetaphors" for the management of unwanted populations.

To cultivate a garden is to ensure the survival of some plants while eliminating others. Gardens require fences, walls and the extermination of weeds. As if to illustrate Bauman's point, a Chinese official in Kashgar recently informed a crowd of Uighers:

"You can't uproot all the weeds hidden among the crops in the field one by one. You need to spray chemicals to kill them all."

The tenderly pruned gardens of classical China were peaceful retreats for poets and philosophers. By contrast, the association of human beings with noxious weeds and the Chinese Communist Party's embrace of industrial agricultural metaphors have yielded dystopian results.

LANGUAGE OF DISEASE

More than anything, Chinese statements about Uighur concentration are saturated with the language of disease. Likening Islam to a contagion, an official Communist Party document suggests Uighers have "been infected by unhealthy thoughts."

"Freedom is only possible," it adds, "when the 'virus'...is eradicated."

In an exercise in victim blaming for which cultural theorist Susan Sontag argues medical metaphors are especially conducive, Chinese officials have warned: "If you were careless and caught an infectious virus, like SARS" (a scenario that led to mass medical detention in China in the recent past), then "you'd have to undergo enclosed isolated treatment. Because it's an infectious illness."

Chinese officials are thus defending the camps as quarantine cells that will safeguard China from the Uighur epidemic while eliminating religious and cultural pathogens.

The human body has long served as a metaphor for state and society both in Western and Chinese thought. And medical analogies have proven central in the political calculus of extrajudicial detention. With a pseudo-scientific endorsement, policy-makers around the world have classified unwanted populations as parasites or social pathogens that need to be cured, physically isolated or excised completely.

FIRST CONCENTRATION CAMPS

The first concentration camps in contemporary history, established by Britain during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), were directly inspired by plague quarantine camps in India and South Africa. The goal was to "cleanse" besieged towns of

"disease, crime and poverty" by introducing war-time refugees to sanitary enclosures administered by British medical officials.

The Soviet Union likewise consigned "parasitic classes" to the gulag, while earlier generations in China referred to political prisoners as "convalescents." Even today, xenophobic voices in America associate Latino migrants with "tremendous infectious disease."

The biological metaphors revealed by the Chinese government's recent document leak, however, find their most sinister analogies with Nazi Germany.

"The battle in which we are engaged" against the "Jewish virus," Hitler proclaimed, "is of the same sort as the battle waged...by Pasteur and Koch. We shall regain our health only by eliminating the Jew."

A germaphobe, Hitler imagined fighting "battles against a veritable world sickness, which threatens to infect the German people, a plague that devastates whole peoples." In this imaginary landscape, Nazi apologists invariably depicted concentration camps as sanitary spaces that isolated Jewish "parasites" in the name of racial hygiene.

The genetic emphasis of Nazi racism ultimately meant "curing" Jews was an impossibility. By Hitler's logic, outright extermination — or "euthanasia" in sanitized state-speak — was the only recourse. China, by contrast, holds out hope that Uighur camps, or "re-education hospitals", can cure their "patients" and thus "clean the virus from their brain."

Yet like cancer, Chinese Communist officials fear, "there is no guarantee the illness will not return." And just because an inmate has "recovered from the ideological disease doesn't mean they are permanently cured," the documents reveal.

The language of disease justified some of the 20th century's worst crimes. If left unchecked by the international community, China is poised to continue that tradition in the 21st century. And where China leads, others are likely to follow.

[the writer is Assistant Professor, History, MacEwan University]

Why Young Nigerians Risk Illegal Migration to Find Their 'Eldorado'

LANRE IKUTEYIJO
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Young Nigerians make up the largest population of the growing flow of migrants from Africa to developed countries. In 2016, over 20,000 involved in the Mediterranean Sea crossing were reported to be from Nigeria.

In addition, from 2017 until late 2019, hundreds of Nigerian migrants were deported from various destinations including Italy, Libya and South Africa.

These young people embark on very risky journeys across the globe, and casualties continue to increase on a daily basis.

Understanding their reasons for leaving the country is important if Nigeria is going stem the tide.

I conducted a study to establish the extent to which young people aged between 15 and 35 were susceptible to illegal migration and whether they were aware of what it entailed. I also examined the attitudes and survival strategies adopted by irregular migrants returning to Nigeria.

I focused on three groups of migrants who fall into the "irregular migration" category. The first were those who arrived in a country illegally. The second, those who arrived legally – for instance on the basis of tourist or student visas – and then overstayed the period covered by their visas. And finally, asylum seekers whose claims have been rejected and who have not left the country as required.

My findings showed that most

young people who migrated under irregular circumstances were motivated by three factors: economic reasons, family dynamics and social media.

Most said they believed that the "end will surely justify the means". And that they perceived ability to travel abroad as a sign of success.

RESEARCH

We conducted interviews with 63 young people who had not yet left the country in four Nigerian cities: Lagos, Ibadan, Ile-Ife and Benin City. We targeted those susceptible to migration. These included those who were unemployed, in their final year at a tertiary-level education institution and those engaged in Nigeria's compulsory National Youth Service Corps. We also included seven young people who had tried to migrate but had been returned.

We also ran separate focus group discussions for men and women. We chose people on the basis of whether or not they were familiar with the process of irregular migration.

Once in the groups we asked questions to determine their familiarity with the concept of irregular migration. Most said they were. We also established that most were unfamiliar with formal immigration procedures and that more than half did not have a valid passport.

Most knew someone personally who had travelled out of the country through illegal means such as forging a passport, using unauthorised agents, and travelling to "Europe by road" – as irregular migration is re-

ferred to in the popular idiom.

Most expressed positive attitudes about irregular migration, stating that the end would justify the means. They all shared the view that migrants were far better off than those who stayed behind because they had access to a better quality of life.

Bola, a 29-year-old female unemployed youth from Osun State, asserted:

"Sincerely, those who migrate outside the country often live far better than we in Nigeria. They enjoy constant power supply, good weather, eat good diet and to a reasonable extent, they are secured."

THE DRIVERS

Irregular migration tends to fester in the face of economic adversity. Nigeria's economy is in a bad shape. Unemployment among young people is particularly high at 36.50% in 2018.

In addition, poverty levels have got worse. In 2019, the number of extremely poor Nigerians was estimated at 91.6 million, nearly half of the country's total population. Nigeria also has 87 million people living in poverty.

This increase is one of reasons Nigerians leave the country in search of "Eldorado". In other words to find security, work and new ways of life in other countries.

A recent report launched by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on irregular migration echoed my findings. In documenting the experiences of Africans who had migrated to Europe using irregular means, it identifies

a lack of opportunity to exert influence on their governments as reasons for migration.

SOLUTIONS

Finding answers isn't easy. For example, some of the recommendations made in the UNDP report, such as creating more incentives for young people at home and expanding legal pathways for migration – come across as rhetoric. Most aren't new either.

Several suggestions have been put forward by scholars and development bodies. These include: facilitating circular migration between European and African countries, tackling the issues of unemployment and underemployment in countries of origin, and addressing the problems resulting from violence and other forms of political instability.

The common denominator is that all efforts must be designed with the aim of making the home a place people don't want to leave. And programmes to discourage young people from irregular migration must go beyond deterrence and punishments.

There should also be a concerted effort to challenge the fundamentally erroneous beliefs about migration. This must include demystifying fantasies about life abroad and educating young people about the realities of life as an irregular migrant.

Finally, those who stay home and succeed must be celebrated.

[the writer is with Obafemi Awolowo University]

First unmanned mission, part of Gaganyaan, this December: ISRO

BENGALURU, JAN 22 (PTI): Ahead of the launch of India's maiden human spaceflight venture 'Gaganyaan' in December 2021, the ISRO will undertake two unmanned missions in December 2020 and June 2021, its chairman K Sivan said on Wednesday.

Addressing the inaugural session of a symposium on "Human Spaceflight and Exploration - Present Challenges and Future Trends," Sivan said the Gaganyaan mission not only aims at India's maiden human flight to space but also setting up a new space station for 'continuous space human presence.'

"We are doing all this (Gaganyaan) on three points - short term plan of two unmanned mission in December 2020 and June 2021, followed by human space flight demonstration in December 2021.

"We have the mid-term goal of sustaining the human space programme and continuous space human presence in space on a new space station", he said.

In this regard, the ISRO has initiated a full-fledged astronaut training facility in close proximity to Bengaluru



for meeting its future requirements. It is also in talks with NASA and other space agencies and industries on how it can collaborate on human space flight and learn from their experience.

The Gaganyaan will also assist in ISRO's long term goal of inter-planetary mission.

"Inter-planetary mission is also on the agenda in the long term," the ISRO chief said.

On the Gaganyaan mission, Sivan said the space agency has already developed and demonstrated key technologies such as having an operational launcher

with 10-tonne payload capability to lower orbit, demonstration of mission design and management and recovery system like space qualified parachutes.

"The only missing elements were human life science and life support system, which we are developing now," he said.

ISRO, Sivan said has taken onboard many national labs, academic institutions, DRDO labs, Indian Air Force, CSIR lab as well as many industries as stakeholders for the Gaganyaan programme.

Noting that four astronauts have been se-

lected from a pool of Indian Air Force test pilots, Sivan said the generic space flight training will commence in India shortly.

Later, speaking reporters, Sivan said the number of astronauts going to the space will be decided towards the end of the project. "In the first mission people will be very cautious.

So, how many people will go and how many days they will be there in the first mission - that will be decided much later," he added.

Sivan refused to share the details about the astronauts selected for the

mission. "At the right time that will be known to the outside people," he added. Along with the humanoid, micro gravity experiment will also fly in this unmanned mission in December 2020, he said.

A mission specific training will be carried out in India using a host of simulators and other facilities near Bengaluru, he added.

On the Chandrayaan-3 mission, the ISRO Chairman said the work has started and it is going on in full steam.

It may be launched in the beginning of next year.

Have 'all relevant information' on foreign students: JNU

NEW DELHI, JAN 22 (PTI): The JNU administration on Wednesday said it had "relevant information" on the nationality of all the 301 foreign students enrolled in the varsity, contrary to the claim made by an RTI activist.

The Right to Information (RTI) application was filed by Kota resident Sujete Swami. According to the RTI response, the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) said that it did not have the information on the nationality of 82 foreign students.

While the JNU alleged that Swami gave "incomplete data" to the media, the activist hit back saying the varsity's "RTI handling system" was deeply flawed and dared the Vice Chancellor to take legal action against him.

The varsity "has all the relevant information regarding the foreign

students who have registered in the various academic programmes in the university," it said.

"When an RTI comes, a time limit is given to provide the answers... The RTI has a set of different questions pertaining to the different branches of the university," the varsity said.

The RTI question was related to the varsity's admission, evaluation and CIS branch.

"Different branches of the university keep their data in different formats. The Central Public Information Office directly sends the data available in their respective branch to the applicant," the varsity said.

The RTI applicant gave the inputs to the media before getting all relevant information asked by him, the varsity said.

"No conclusion should be drawn on the

basis of incomplete data from the sources. It is unfortunate that report was published without getting complete information," the varsity said.

Swami, however, said that nowhere was it mentioned that the information he had received from the varsity was "incomplete or partial".

"In its response, the varsity clearly stated that information regarding nationality of 82 students was 'not available'. If the varsity had lied, then it's a serious matter and all RTI replies given by the JNU till date should be probed," he said.

"The JNU's RTI handling system is deeply flawed. I was not informed that different branches of the university will be replying to my queries... If I have indeed misled the media, then the JNU administration should take legal action against me," Swami said.

LA Galaxy confirm signing of Javier Hernández from Sevilla

LOS ANGELES, 22 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: Sevilla have agreed a fee with LA Galaxy for the Mexico striker Javier Hernández. In an interview published on Tuesday with the Los Angeles Times, the 31-year-old said it was "the right time, the right opportunity" to make the move to the MLS club.

The Galaxy confirmed the move on Tuesday morning, and a photo of Hernández in the club's shirt appeared at the top of their Twitter page. Reports say the Galaxy paid €8.5m (\$9.4m) for Hernández, and he will earn around \$6m a year under the terms of a three-year deal.

During his career in Europe, Hernández played for high-profile clubs including Manchester United and Real Madrid. However, many believe he never quite lived up to his potential, and the last time Hernández scored more than 10 league goals in a campaign was for Bayer Leverkusen in the 2016-17 season.

However, he denied he was moving to MLS for an easier ride. "I'm going to be playing" Hernández told



the LA Times. "That's what I want in my life. People are going to say it was because I couldn't make it [in Europe], but sometimes in football there are things that are not in your hands."

He added that he had spoken to his compatriot Jonathan Dos Santos, who also plays for the Galaxy, about life in MLS before making the move. "Jonathan told me the league is very underrated," Hernández said. "I really believe you don't go there to retire."

Hernández is Mexico's all-time leading goalscorer with 52 goals and has been viewed as an attractive target for MLS clubs, particularly the LA teams, who have large Mexican-American fanbases. "I'm going to be able to play in front of

a lot of Mexican fans, Galaxy fans, American fans," Hernández said. "That's what's great about football. They give you a lot of opportunities." Chris Klein, Galaxy's president, hailed the signing as a signal of the club's ambition. "The LA Galaxy continue to pursue top talent across the world that will improve our team," said Klein. "Javier is one of the most successful players in our region and an iconic figure in this community."

The Galaxy are the most successful club in MLS history, with five titles, although they have not reached an MLS Cup final since their last victory in 2014. They lost their highest profile player, Zlatan Ibrahimovic, at the end of last season shortly before he rejoined Milan.

Court directs police to file action taken report against Jamia students

NEW DELHI, JAN 22 (PTI): A Delhi court Wednesday directed the police to file an action taken report on the plea of Jamia Millia Islamia University seeking registration of FIR against police action on students at the varsity last month.

Metropolitan Magistrate Rajat Goyal sought report from Delhi police by March 16.

JMIU students and locals had protested at Jamia Nagar in Delhi on December 15, 2019 against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Protesters torched four buses and two police vehicles as they clashed with the police in New Friends Colony. Police baton charged the protesters and used tear gas shells to disperse the mob before entering the varsity campus, detaining several persons allegedly involved in the violence.

Resurgent Neroca to host leaders Mohun Bagan

IMPHAL, JAN 22 (PTI): A win in their previous outing boosting their confidence, Neroca FC will host leaders Mohun Bagan in a tricky I-League match here on Thursday.

Despite their initial struggle, there has been a sense of calm in the Orange Brigade with over half the season still left to play. The home side will be walking into the match with a huge boost in morale following their home victory against Real Kashmir, which saw them climb up the table to sixth place.

Mohun Bagan, on the other hand, are sitting comfortably on top of the table while also coming into the match

after their 2-1 Kolkata derby win against arch rivals East Bengal.

A win for Neroca would see them break into the top three, which would be an outstanding turnaround given that the Imphal-based outfit was in the dreaded relegation spot at the turn of the year.

Head coach Gift Raikhan said ahead of the game, "The match will be very difficult for Neroca. They (Mohun Bagan) have not lost in a while now. They are strong, experience-wise. Their marquee players are very good and their Indian players are very talented."

"We have been incon-

sistent due to our lack of experience, but my team will improve with each passing day. As a team, we are going to fight until the end. The result will be there for everyone to see after the final whistle."

Mohun Bagan are now unbeaten in six games and they are now three points clear of second-placed Punjab FC with a game in hand.

"The derby is behind us now. We are very happy with the result and the three points but we have been thinking about tomorrow's game ever since Monday. We know that it is going to be very difficult," Mohun Bagan head coach

Kibu Vicuna said.

Taryk Samson at the Neroca backline will be up against Nongdamba Naorem on the left, who has been nothing short of phenomenal this season, while the likes of Chanso Horam, Siam Hanghal and Zodingliana Ralte will be in the middle of the park against Bagan's Spanish contingent of Joseba Beitia and Fran Gonzales.



New book to chronicle history of Yoga

NEW DELHI, JAN 22 (PTI): From the caves and forests of ancient India to the gyms, studios and village halls of the modern West, a new book unravels how the practice of Yoga reached its present-day ubiquity.

Touted to be the "first definitive history" of Yoga, "The Story of Yoga: From India to the Contemporary World" has been written by Scottish cultural historian Alistair Shearer, and will hit the stands later this month, announced publishing house Penguin Random House.

"This is not a 'how to' book -- there are already more than enough of those -- but a 'how come?' one. How come a time-honoured road to enlightenment has turned into a 25 billion-a-year wellness industry? What have the original teachings of the sages lost, or perhaps gained, while being transplanted onto foreign soil?"

"...This book is in part an attempt to define what this thing we call 'yoga' really is," writes the author in its introduction.



According to the book, in the US alone, where in the closing decades of the 20th century only a few hundred thousand were engaging in some form of yoga, the number rose to about "4 million" in 2001, and then to over "37 million" by 2016.

"That was twice as many as five years before, and the upward

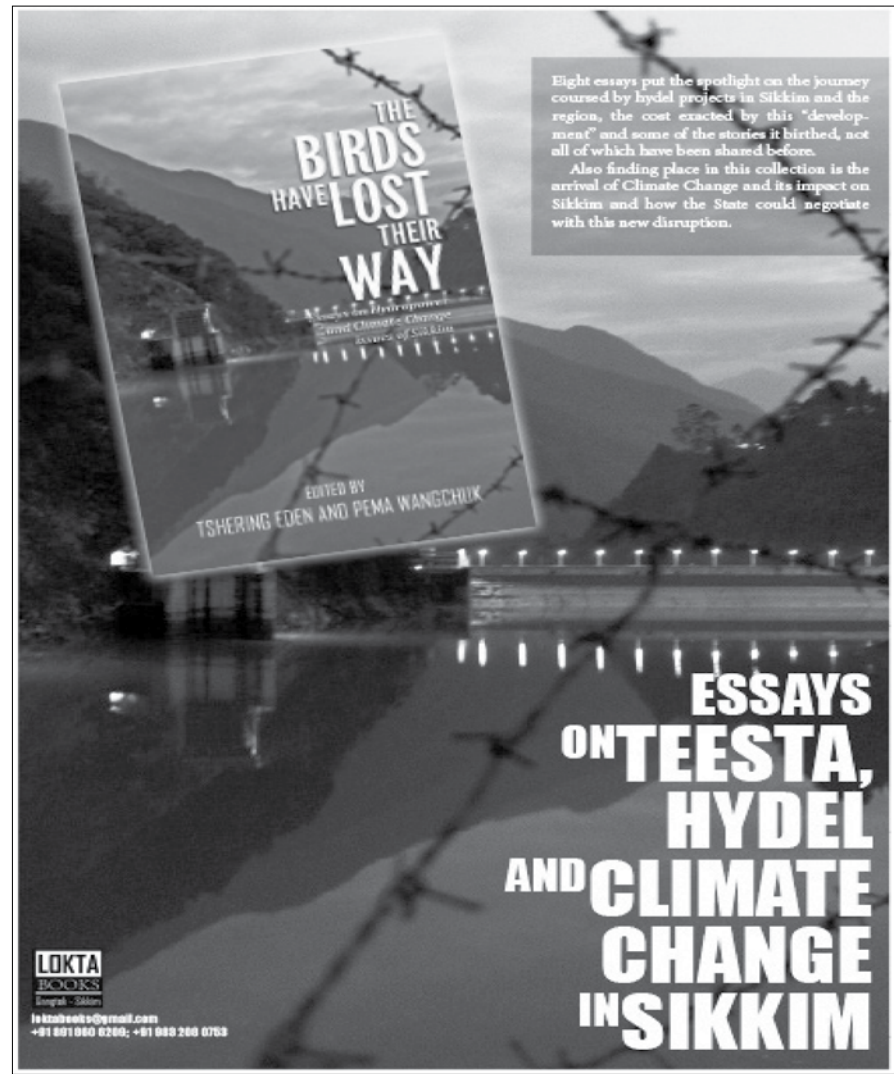
trend continues. According to surveys conducted by 'Yoga Journal', another 80 million are 'very interested' in beginning some sort of practice," it said.

Divided into two parts, "Today" and "Yesterday", the book has nine chapters, including "The Age of Invasions", "Female Fitness" and "Yoga Goes West".

It has been endorsed by the likes of Philip Goldberg, author of "American Veda and The Life of Yogananda", John Zubrzycki, author of "Empire of Enchantment: The Story of Indian Magic" and author-politician Shashi Tharoor.

"The Story of Yoga" offers an absorbing chronicle of the rise of yoga, tracing its evolution through history to its rapid global proliferation today, with insights into the challenges on the way ahead.

"Exceedingly accessible and engaging, this is the definitive account of the remarkable growth of one of the world's most popular and beneficial human activities," reads a blurb by Tharoor.



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Aston Villa haul themselves out of bottom three with late win over Watford

LONDON, 22 JAN [AP]: Tyrone Mings's last-gasp winner lifted Aston Villa out of the relegation zone and ended Watford's revival in dramatic style. The defender grabbed a fortunate deflection on Ezri Konsa's shot in the fifth minute of stoppage time with virtually the last touch of the game to snatch victory.

Douglas Luiz had earlier come off the bench to level in the second half, just as Villa looked like they would be plunged into further trouble. That cancelled out Troy Deeney's opener as Watford's six-match unbeaten run in the league was ended.

Villa's third victory in 11 Premier League outings moved them up to 16th and two points clear of the teams in the relegation zone, while Watford slipped back into the bottom three.

"We have to keep concentrating on the next game. The next one in the Premier League is against Bournemouth, another team below us," said the Villa manager, Dean Smith.

"Catching the teams above you and overtaking them, that's the players' job at the moment. Teams of mine finish the season better and I'm expecting a better points haul in the second half.

"It's the biggest win at this moment because it's the latest one. We have to concentrate on each game. With Watford being around us and giving us a good hiding at their place I said before the game it would be a different Villa team they faced. It was an important one because Villa Park is an important place for us in this league."

The defeat put a dent in Watford's revival, Nigel Pearson having hauled them off the bottom of the table. They looked like continuing their run when Deeney gave them the lead seven minutes before the break, heading in Gerard Deulofeu's cross.

Pepe Reina's save denied Deeney a second after the break and Douglas Luiz levelled after 68 minutes, following up after Ben Foster parried Matt Targett's shot.

Villa snatched victory in injury time when, after Watford failed to deal with a deep free-kick, the ball ran to Konsa and his strike clipped Mings on the ground and found the corner.

Konsa had the news broken to him on live television that he was not to be credited with the goal. He joked he was "heartbroken", while Mings added: "The three points is the most important thing but once you've got the three points, it's also nice to score!"

Watford are now second bottom, in the relegation zone on goal difference, but Pearson kept defeat in perspective. "I think we're a bit unlucky but that's life and we'll deal with it," he said. "It's easy to reflect on performances when things go your way, we've been a bit unlucky.

Aguero strikes as Man City blunt Blades

SHEFFIELD, JAN 22 (AFP): Pep Guardiola admitted Aymeric Laporte's return from injury will be key to Manchester City's hopes of a successful end to the season after Sergio Aguero sealed a 1-0 win against Sheffield United on Tuesday.

Guardiola's side were labouring to break down United until Aguero came off the bench to end their stubborn resistance at Bramall Lane.

City striker Gabriel Jesus had a penalty saved by Dean Henderson in the first half but with 17 minutes left Aguero bagged his seventh goal in four appearances in 2020.

His 21st goal of the season in all competitions moved second-placed City to within 13 points of runaway Premier League leaders Liverpool, who have two games in hand on the champions.

While City's hopes of winning a third successive title have been shattered by a combination of their own failings and Liverpool's incredible form, there is still much to play for this term.

Guardiola harbours dreams of leading City to their first Champions League crown and they also face an FA Cup date with Fulham this weekend, followed by the League Cup semi-final second leg against Manchester United.

With those cup ambitions in mind, Guardiola will have been encouraged by the way City coped with the Blades' aggressive game-plan and emerged with a fourth win from their last five league matches.

"Sergio is on fire right now. Strikers need momentum. It's good for us to have strikers in this form," Guardiola said.

"I'm so happy with the team.



I know what it's like to play here, it is a tough place. We controlled it well and in the end we created chances to win."

Keeping just their third clean sheet in 14 league games was another boost for Guardiola, who gave French defender Laporte his first appearance since August after recovering from a serious knee injury.

Laporte had been back in training for over a week, but his presence in the starting line-up for the first time in 143 days was a surprise as Guardiola had hinted he was not set to feature just yet. "We knew that

Aymeric couldn't play for 90 minutes, that's why we played five at the back to protect him a little bit. He's a crucial player for us, we've missed him, it's good for us to have him back," Guardiola said after Laporte came off in the closing stages.

Guardiola might have been regretting his gamble when Muhamed Besic crashed into Laporte's ankle with an ugly tackle that earned a yellow card.

- CRUCIAL CONTRIBUTION -

City's first half pressure should have yielded the opening goal in the 35th minute after Riyad Mahrez su-

perbly prised open United's defence. Sprinting down the right flank, Mahrez cut into the area and evaded two defenders with some nimble footwork before Chris Basham's trip sent him sprawling.

With Jesus replacing Aguero in starting line-up, it was the Brazilian who took the penalty, but his effort was superbly pushed away by Henderson.

City felt Henderson moved off his line before Jesus made it three misses from his last six penalties, but their appeals for a retake were ignored.

City were not on peak form but

even at less than full power they were still dangerous and Henderson had to keep out Jesus's close-range header.

Guardiola sent on Aguero for Jesus and within six minutes the switch paid off as City finally broke through in the 73rd minute.

Kevin De Bruyne wriggled into space for a perfectly-weighted pass that picked out Aguero's run to the far post, where the Argentine had the simple task of slotting home.

De Bruyne's crucial contribution made him the first player in Premier League history to provide 15 or more assists in three different campaigns.

Héctor Bellerín leaves it late to secure 10-man Arsenal a draw at Chelsea

JACOB STEINBERG

FULHAM, 22 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: There were two rookie coaches hopping around on the touchline and both will feel they have spent a lifetime in management after this emotional roller-coaster. While Frank Lampard seethed at Chelsea's lack of conviction at both ends of the pitch, Mikel Arteta wondered what on earth he is going to do with Shkodran Mustafi and marvelled at the fearlessness of Gabriel Martinelli. It was that sort of night, absorbing and bonkers in equal measure, and in the end it was difficult to know whether to focus on Chelsea's sense of bewilderment or Arsenal's joy.

For Lampard, the twist was tough to take but easy to explain. Chelsea played for more than an hour against 10 men, led twice and still dropped more points at home. They lacked creativity again, bolstering the argument that they need attacking reinforcements before the transfer window closes, and paid for their carelessness when Martinelli, an 18-year-old winger with a wonderfully direct style, hauled Arsenal level with a stunning solo goal just after the hour.

Chelsea's imprecision is hurting their push for Champions League qualification – fifth-placed Manchester United will go three points behind

them if they beat Burnley at home on Wednesday – and it spoke volumes that they were incapable of holding on after César Azpilicueta restored their lead with six minutes left. Lampard's side are too loose and Kepa Arrizabalaga's indifferent form was captured by the moment when Héctor Bellerín, cutting on to his left foot, rescued a point for Arsenal with a shot that somehow squirmed beyond Chelsea's goalkeeper.

Arrizabalaga has conceded too many soft goals this season but Arteta was entitled to argue Arsenal merited a draw after a show of defiance in the second half. His side stood up to be counted after Mustafi's disastrous error led to David Luiz's red card on 26 minutes. Granit Xhaka excelled as a makeshift centre-half, Martinelli ran Azpilicueta ragged on the left and Arteta, who has lost only one of his seven games, was delighted with his new side's spirit on a ground where they have suffered in the past.

Initially David Luiz was the story against his old side. There was no respectful celebration from the Brazilian when he scored here for Paris Saint-Germain in a Champions League tie in 2015 and he looked to make his presence felt from the start, attracting the ire of the Chelsea fans when he charged into the back of Tammy Abra-

ham and kneed the striker up the back-side. Battle lines had been drawn.

Abraham would have the last laugh, though David Luiz's dismissal owed much to the brainlessness of Mustafi. While there have been signs of progress under Arteta, the fact remains the Spaniard has inherited a squad containing a multitude of weaknesses. There is only so much Arteta can improve with his work on the training ground and that was underlined by Mustafi's blunder.

After a promising opening Chelsea simply had to wait for Arsenal's most unreliable player to self-destruct. Abraham had fooled Mustafi with a clever turn before scoring his side's late winner at the Emirates last month and this time he was in the right place when the centre-half sold Bernd Leno horribly short with a staggeringly incompetent back-pass. Abraham raced away, rounded Leno and went down following a desperate lunge from David Luiz.

Stuart Attwell pointed to the spot and how the Chelsea fans chortled when they saw the referee reaching for his red card. David Luiz had denied Abraham a clear goalscoring opportunity and he departed with mocking chants ringing in his ears. All that was left was for Jorginho to tuck his penalty away, giving Chelsea a lead their enterprising football deserved.

Yet Lampard, who hopes to beat Atlético Madrid to the signing of PSG's Edinson Cavani, would despair at Chelsea's inability to kill the game. While Callum Hudson-Odoi tested Leno with a rasping drive, they struggled to make the most of their numerical advantage. They lost their shape in midfield, where N'Golo Kanté had a disappointing game, and allowed Arsenal's belief to grow.

The hosts flirted with disaster early in the second half, Arrizabalaga almost playing Jorginho into trouble. Chelsea's game management was dismal and Arsenal, who looked blunt at first without the suspended Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, equalised in the 63rd minute. A Chelsea corner was cleared, Martinelli took possession in his own half, outpaced Emerson, raced clear after a slip from Kanté and slipped the ball past Arrizabalaga.

Lampard turned away in disgust. Chelsea are an infuriating side and they did not convince even after Azpilicueta turned Hudson-Odoi's cross past Leno. Arsenal fought and Lampard struggled to understand why his players turned down opportunities to put the ball out of play when Abraham went down with an ankle injury. The move progressed, Bellerín drove inside and the Arsenal right-back's tame shot left Lampard fuming.

Greece elects first woman president

GREECE, JAN 22 (AFP): Greece's parliament on Wednesday elected the first woman president in the country's history, a senior judge with an expertise in environmental and constitutional law. A cross-party majority of 261 MPs voted in favour of 63-year-old Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou, parliament chief Costas Tassoulas said. "Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou has been elected president of the republic," Tassoulas said. The new president, until now the head of Greece's top administrative court, the Council of State, will take her oath of office on March 13, he added.

The daughter of a Supreme Court judge, Sakellariopoulou completed postgraduate studies at Paris's Sorbonne university. She was also the first woman to head the Council of State. Although the president is nominally the head of the Greek state and commander-in-chief, the post is largely ceremonial.

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Flat Earth FC: the football club who represent a conspiracy theory

CHARLIE CARMICHAEL

LONDON, 22 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: Javi Poves was a promising young footballer. Having risen through the ranks at Sporting Gijón, the Spanish defender made his La Liga debut in 2011 on the final day of the season. He retired that summer having made that one appearance for the club. He was 23 years old.

"What I've seen from within makes it clear: professional football is only money and corruption. It's capitalism, and capitalism is death," said Poves. "I don't want to be part of a system based on people earning money at the expense of the deaths of others in South America, Africa and Asia. To put it simply, my conscience will not let me continue with this."

Disillusioned and resentful,

Poves hung up his boots and decided to travel the world. He made a brief return to football three years later with SS Reyes before eventually stumbling upon CD Móstoles, a club based 15 miles south of central Madrid. Poves became the club's president in 2016 and took them up to the fourth division last season. With his club's status on the rise, he decided it was time for a rebrand. It wasn't just any rebrand, though: Poves renamed the club Flat Earth FC.

Football clubs have always represented their local communities. More recently, some clubs have taken on bolder messaging, such as Deportivo Palestino in Chile, who were founded by a group of Palestinian immigrants, or St Pauli in Germany, who represent their politically

left-leaning fanbase. Flat Earth FC is the first professional football club that represents a conspiracy theory.

"Football is the most popular sport and has the most impact worldwide, so creating a club dedicated to the flat earth movement is the best way to have a constant presence in the media," said Poves earlier this year. "Flat Earth FC is the first football club whose followers are united by the most important thing, which is an idea."

The club's crest is now a circular image of the earth, pressed flat on to all kits, and fans are encouraged to spark regular conversations in their pursuit of answers from the powers that be. The team mascot? An astronaut. It's a radical move, but the club is bringing in support-

ers from afar. "It's really amazing to be part of this amazing movement," says Flat Earth player Mario Cardete. "I think it's more than a club."

"More than a club" is a familiar phrase in Spain, given it is the adopted club motto of current La Liga champions, Barcelona. But, as journalist Rodrigo Fdez explains, Flat Earth FC are trying to push an even more radical message. "The rest of the clubs try to change something in people's lives," said Fdez in our film. "Poves tries to change everything in people's minds." What started out as local controversy may soon become national debate. Who knows, in years to come we may well see Flat Earth FC lining up at the Camp Nou, as "més que un club" meet "mas que un planeta".

China warns virus could mutate and spread as death toll rises



CHINA, JAN 22 (AFP): A new virus that has killed nine people, infected hundreds and reached the United States could mutate and spread, China warned Wednesday, as authorities scrambled to contain the disease during the Lunar New Year travel season.

The coronavirus has caused alarm for its similarity to SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), which killed nearly 650 people across mainland China and Hong Kong in 2002-2003.

In Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak, authorities cancelled large public events, called on visitors to stay away and urged residents not to leave the central Chinese city of 11 million people.

The illness is mainly transmitted via the respiratory tract and there "is the possibility of viral mutation and further spread of the disease", National Health Commission vice-minister Li Bin

told a news conference in Beijing.

He added that 1,394 people are still under medical observation, while 765 others have been discharged.

The World Health Organization (WHO) will hold an emergency meeting Wednesday to determine whether to declare a rare global public health emergency over the disease, which has now been detected in the United States, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, South Korea and Macau.

The first case in the United States -- a Seattle resident in his 30s -- is in good condition, American officials said.

The Chinese government has classified the outbreak in the same category as the SARS epidemic, meaning compulsory isolation for those diagnosed with the illness and the potential to implement quarantine measures.

But they still have not been able to confirm the

exact source of the virus, which has infected at least 440 people across the country.

"We will step up research efforts to identify the source and transmission of the disease," Li said, although he said experts believe "the cases are mostly linked to Wuhan".

Plane passengers are facing screening measures at five US airports and a host of transport hubs across Asia.

North Korea will ban foreign tourists entirely to protect itself against the virus, according to a major tour operator.

- Virus source - A prominent expert from China's National Health Commission confirmed this week that the virus can be passed between people. However, animals are suspected to be the primary source of the outbreak.

"We already know that the disease originated from a market which

conducted illegal transaction of wild animals," said Gao Fu, director of the Chinese centre for disease control and prevention.

He said it was clear "this virus is adapting and mutating".

Countries have been intensifying efforts to stop the spread of the pathogen -- known by its technical name 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) -- as the number of cases jumped.

This week, China celebrates the Lunar New Year, the most important event in the Chinese calendar, with hundreds of millions of people travelling across the country to celebrate with family. Many also venture abroad.

- Containment - On Wednesday, the commission announced measures to contain the disease, including sterilisation and ventilation at airports and bus stations, as well as inside planes and trains. People

are being urged to wash their hands regularly, avoid crowded places, get plenty of fresh air, and wear a mask if they have a cough.

Anyone with a cough or fever was urged to go to hospital.

Surgical masks and antibacterial products were starting to sell out on some popular online sites and pharmacies.

"These days, I wear masks even in places that are not too crowded, although I wouldn't have done so in the past," said Wang Suping, 50, who works at a Beijing arts school.

At the city's main international airport, the majority of people were wearing masks.

Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Airlines said they agreed to allow staff to wear surgical masks on mainland China flights, adding they would offer masks and antiseptic wipes to passengers travelling from Wuhan to the city.

Wuhan police were conducting vehicle spot checks for live poultry or wild animals leaving and entering the city, state media said. Officials also screened people on roads, the airport and the train station for fevers.

"If it's not necessary we suggest that people don't come to Wuhan," Mayor Zhou Xianwang told state broadcaster CCTV.

The local government has cancelled major public activities and banned tour groups from heading out of the city.

Hong Kong and British scientists have estimated that between 1,300 and 1,700 people in Wuhan may have been infected.

36 civilians killed in northern Burkina Faso



OUAGADOUGOU, JAN 22 (AFP): Militants killed 36 civilians when they attacked villages on Monday in northern Burkina Faso, the government said Tuesday, appealing for local support in the fight against jihadists. A "terrorist group" killed 32 civilians when they attacked and burned the market in Nagraogo village before killing four more people in Alamou village, the government said.

Three other people were wounded in the attacks, it added.

"The Burkina government has learned with consternation and anger of the deaths of 36 Burkinade in Sanmatenga province, after a terrorist attack," communi-

cations minister Remis Fulgance Dandjinou said.

Faced with these "repeated attacks" against civilians, the government launched an appeal for the people's "frank collaboration" with the defence and security forces.

The Burkina parliament on Tuesday adopted unanimously a law allowing for the recruitment of local volunteers in the fight against jihadists, providing them with "light weapons."

Burkina Faso, as well as neighbouring Mali and Niger, has seen frequent jihadist attacks which have left hundreds of people dead since the start of 2015 when Islamist extremist violence began to spread across the

Sahel region. According to the UN, around 4,000 people were killed in jihadist attacks in the three Sahel countries last year.

The Burkina Faso army is ill-equipped and poorly-trained to deal with the threat posed by jihadists in the country.

However, in recent months they have enjoyed a series of successes, claiming to have killed a hundred jihadists in many operations.

There are 4,500 French troops deployed in the Sahel region as well as a 13,000-strong UN peacekeeping force in Mali to fight insurgents, backing up national forces of the G5 -- Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

Charity brands number of UK prison deaths 'national scandal'

UK, JAN 22 (AFP): The death toll in British prisons is "a national scandal", a pressure group said on Wednesday, calling for a reduction in inmate numbers just as the government is promising tougher sentences.

Inquest, which probes state related deaths, said in a new report that there were six deaths and nearly two suicides every week inside British jails last year.

It called the rate "shocking and unacceptable", noting many fatalities were found to be preventable, and criticised record levels of distress and self-harm within the system.

The charity said Prime Minister Boris Johnson should make "a substantial reduction in the prison population" and invest instead in health and community-based alternatives to jail. Johnson and his Conservative party won a comfortable parliamentary majority at elections in December on a manifesto that included vowing to be tougher on crime.

On Tuesday, interior minister Priti Patel and

justice minister Robert Buckland unveiled plans to increase sentences for more serious crimes, including terrorism offences.

The plans also target the end of the early release of some prisoners.

The Tories pledged during the election they would create 10,000 more prison places and spend an extra £100 million (\$130 million, 118 million euros) cracking down on crime in jails.

Inquest's executive director Deborah Coles said the current rate of prison deaths, alongside the repeated failure to enact change, were leaving inmates and their families "traumatised".

"Appalling inspection reports, damning inquest findings, and statistics on yet more deaths, have become so regular that those in power seem to forget these are human beings to whom the state owes a duty of care," she added.

In its report the charity found there were 308 deaths in prison in the 12 months to September 2019 -- nearly double the number of a decade ago.

Meanwhile in the

year to June 2019, there were 166 incidents of self-harm every day -- 60,594 incidents in total, compared to 25,253 in 2009.

"Prisons are not just 'in crisis', they are places of crisis," the report said. "Deaths in custody are a national scandal in need of immediate and urgent attention."

As well as calling for a halt to prison expansions, it said the government should establish a "national oversight mechanism" to focus on prison deaths.

Inquest added the new body must be accountable to parliament to provide real oversight and debate, and allow a role for bereaved families and community groups.

Prisons Minister Lucy Frazer conceded "far too many prisoners are self-harming" and said getting every offender dedicated support was a priority.

"We never completely know what drives someone to suicide but I am determined that the prison service does everything it can to avoid contributing to that pressure," she added.

S. Korea posts lowest growth in a decade for 2019

S. KOREA, JAN 22 (AFP): South Korea's economy expanded at its slowest pace for a decade last year, hampered by prolonged trade tensions between the US and China and the sluggish semiconductor market, the central bank said Wednesday.

The world's 12th-largest economy grew 2.0 percent in 2019, down from 2.7 percent the previous year and the worst performance since 2009 in the wake of the global financial crisis.

Slowing growth presents a challenge for the South, which enjoyed a decades-long boom known as the "Miracle on the Han" but where a highly educated youth now struggles to find well-paid jobs and frustration is mounting over inequality.

President Moon Jae-in has been criticised for a controversial economic policy featuring public spending increases and the concept of "income-led growth", which has seen the minimum wage rise more than 30 percent in three years. Opponents say it hurts those it is intended to help by raising employ-

ment costs.

The trade-dependent economy slowed "due to factors such as a decrease in semiconductor prices", the Bank of Korea said in a statement.

"While the growth of government consumption expanded, construction and facilities investment contracted as private consumption expenditure and export growth slowed," it said.

Under pressure from the China-US trade row, outbound shipments grew 1.5 percent, compared with 3.5 percent a year earlier and the smallest expansion since 2015. Imports fell 0.6 percent.

Growth in the fourth quarter was higher at 2.2 percent year-on-year, the BOK said, boosted by government spending to offset weaker private consumption growth, which rose by 1.9 percent last year, its slowest in six years. Moon's administration is set to raise public spending 9.1 percent this year and spend 30 percent of its infrastructure budget in the first quarter, ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled for April.

South Korean transgender soldier pleads to stay in army

KOREA, JAN 22 (AFP): A transgender South Korean soldier who enlisted as a man and underwent a sex change last year pleaded tearfully to be allowed to stay in uniform Wednesday after the military decided to discharge her.

The country remains deeply conservative about matters of sexual identity and is less tolerant of LGBT rights than some other parts of Asia, with many gay and transgender Koreans living largely under the radar.

Byun Hee-soo, a staff sergeant in her 20s, enlisted voluntarily in 2017, and went on to have gender-reassignment surgery in November in Thailand.

She had expressed her desire to remain in the army but a military panel ruled on Wednesday that she will be compulsorily discharged.

Byun waived her previous anonymity to appear at a press conference, wearing her fatigues and saluting the gathered journalists and cameras.

"I'm a soldier of the Republic of Korea," she said, her voice breaking.

Serving in the military had always been her childhood dream,



she said, but she had suffered from depression due to gender dysphoria, prompting her to undergo the sex-change surgery. "Putting aside my sexual identity, I want to show everyone that I can be one of the great soldiers defending this country," said Byun, fighting back tears. "Please give me that chance."

South Korea has a conscript army to defend itself against the nuclear-armed North, with all able-bodied male citizens obliged to serve for nearly two years. A defence ministry spokesman said Byun had undergone tests at a military hospital, which classified the loss of male genitals as a mental or physical handicap, prompting the panel review. Her case "corresponded to one of the reasons for being unable to continue service", the army said in a statement,

without giving specifics and saying it sought to avoid "unfair discrimination and treatment".

The Military Human Rights Center for Korea, an advocacy group in Seoul, said the army had ordered Byun to be effectively discharged when she leaves hospital on Thursday.

"It shows the military's determination to not allow a transgender in the army even for one second," said the organisation's head Lim Tae-hoon. "It is truly cruel."

It is the first case of its kind in the South.

International rights groups have expressed concern about the way the country treats gay soldiers, who are banned from engaging in same-sex acts and can face up to two years in prison if caught -- even though such actions are legal in civilian life.

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HEY GIRL! The model, Winnie Harlow waves as she leaves her hotel during Paris Fashion Week.

BTS Plot 2020 'Map of the Soul' World Tour

K-pop group's 37-date trek hits North America this spring

BTS are hitting the road in support of their upcoming album, Map of the Soul: 7, which arrives on February 21st via Big Hit Entertainment. The K-pop sensations will kick-off their world tour with four dates in their native Seoul, South Korea at Olympic Stadium in April before heading to North America for a 15-date run that will see the seven-member group perform in nine cities. Following the North American leg, the trek also makes several stops in Japan and Europe. Additional dates will be announced later.

Tickets go on sale on February 7th via Live Nation, with pre-sale offerings available beginning February 5th through 6th for official fanclub ARMY members. Registration for the fan pre-sale is open now through February 2nd.

Earlier this month, the band unveiled their dance-inspired visual for Map of the Soul: 7's single "Black Swan." BTS also announced they will be funding 22 art installations in five cities around the world. Conceived and curated by Daehyung Lee, the Connect, BTS project will oversee sculpture and experimental art installations in London, Seoul, New York, Ber-

lin and Buenos Aires.

BTS 2020 NORTH AMERICAN TOUR DATES
April 25 – Santa Clara, CA @ Levi's Stadium
April 26 – Santa Clara, CA @ Levi's Stadium
May 2 – Los Angeles, CA @ Rose Bowl Stadium
May 3 – Los Angeles, CA @ Rose Bowl Stadium
May 9 – Dallas, TX @ Cotton Bowl Stadium



May 10 – Dallas, TX @ Cotton Bowl Stadium
May 14 – Orlando, FL @ Camping World Stadium
May 17 – Atlanta, GA @ Bobby Dodd Stadium
May 23 – East Rutherford, NJ @ MetLife Stadium
May 24 – East Rutherford, NJ @ MetLife Stadium
May 27 – Washington, DC @ FedEx Field
May 30 – Toronto, ON, Canada @ Rogers Centre
May 31 – Toronto, ON, Canada @ Rogers Centre
June 5 – Chicago, IL @ Soldier Field
June 6 – Chicago, IL @ Soldier Field

Want to make film on Chandragupta Maurya: Kangana Ranaut



PATNA, JAN 22 (PTI): Actor Kangana Ranaut has expressed her desire to make a movie on Chandragupta, the shepherd-turned-emperor who founded the Maurya dynasty, noting that the film industry has "not done enough justice to our history".

The national award winner was here to take part in a programme organised by the publishers of a leading Hindi daily where she performed a jig to the tunes of Bhojpuri songs along with actor-turned-politician Ravi Kishan before the duo participated in a question and answer session.

Replying to the questions posed by Kishan, who is also the BJP MP from Gorakhpur, Ranaut on Tuesday said it was her second trip to Bihar.

"The last time, I was here as a child though I have not yet got a chance to explore the state with which I feel a connect as my Yoga teacher has his roots here," she said.

Ranaut, who won acclaim for portraying Rani Laxmibai -- the valiant queen of Jhansi who took on the British during the revolt of 1857 -- in 'Manikarnika', when asked if she would like to be associated with a film on any historical figure from Bihar, said, "It would be Chandragupta Maurya. The film industry has not done

much justice to our history".

A self-confessed admirer of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the 32-year-old, who has won three National Awards in the Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress categories, replied in the affirmative when asked about reports that she has turned producer and her first venture is based on the theme of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The Himachal Pradesh-born actress, who has courted controversy for taking on well-entrenched Bollywood "insiders" like Karan Johar and Hrithik Roshan, said she has had a rebellious streak since childhood and shared an anecdote about her breaking her teacher's stick upon being hit for chatting with a classmate in school.

When Kishan asked why she has gained so much weight, Ranaut replied it was in preparation for her upcoming biopic "Thalaivi", based on late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa.

The actress said her forthcoming release "Panga" is a family drama.

Ranaut said after landing in Patna, she gorged on 'Litti Chokha', a local delicacy.

She also regaled the audience by greeting them in Bhojpuri and repeating several commonly used phrases of the dialect after Kishan.

Ozzy Osbourne announces Parkinson's diagnosis

LOS ANGELES, JAN 22 (PTI): Rocker Ozzy Osbourne has revealed that he has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

The musician was said he was "a lot better now" than he was in February 2019 as he appeared on the TV show "Good Morning America" with his wife Sharon and children Kelly and Jack. "It's been terribly challenging for us all," Ozzy, 71, said.

It all started last year after a fall and the health battle aggravated after his Parkinson's diagnosis, he said.

"I did my last show New Year's Eve at The Forum. Then I had a bad fall. I had to have surgery on my neck, which screwed all my nerves... I'm a lot better now than I was last February. I was in a shocking state," the vocalist of the heavy metal band Black Sabbath added.

Sharon said her husband was diagnosed with "PRKN 2".

"There's so many different types of Parkinson's. It's not a death sentence by any stretch of the imagination, but it does affect certain nerves in your body. And it's like you have a good day, a good day and then a really bad day," she said.

Ozzy said he detested being at home and doing nothing. "Coming from a working-class background, I hate to let people down. I hate to not do my job. And so

when I see my wife goin' to work, my kids goin' to work, everybody's doing - tryin' to be helpful to me, that gets me down because I can't contribute to my family," he said. The singer-songwriter said his fans have been a good source of support



during the ordeal.

"They're my air. I feel better. I've owned up to the fact that I have a case of Parkinson's. And I just hope they hang on and they're there for me because I need them," Ozzy said.

He added in wake of his recent single "Ordinary Man," the singer plans to get back to performing.

"I wanna see my people. I miss them so much," he said.

Laura Dern to star in Quibi series 'Just One Drink'

LOS ANGELES, JAN 22 (PTI): Golden Globe winner Laura Dern is the latest name from Hollywood to team up with Quibi and the actor will star in the series, "Just One Drink".

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Dern will also executive produce the series, penned by "About a Boy" writer Nick Hornby.

Set at the shortform streaming platform, "Just One Drink" will be a series of one-act vignettes between a bartender (Dern) and the customers she serves, all of whom are in various states of emotional disrepair.

Hornby and Platform One's Elisa Ellis are also attached to executive produce.

Dern has been nominated for best supporting actress Oscar for her turn as the fiery divorce lawyer Nora Fanshaw in "Marriage Story".

She was last seen in Greta Gerwig's big screen adaptation of "Little Women".

'SNL' Adds Justin Bieber, Luke Combs as Upcoming Musical Guests

Houston Texans star J.J. Watt will host February 1st episode with Combs; RuPaul hosts February 8th

Justin Bieber and Luke Combs will serve as musical guests on Saturday Night Live's first two episodes of February.

Bieber, who released the new song "Yummy" earlier this month, will perform on the February 8th installment, hosted by pop-culture icon RuPaul. The country singer Combs, who is nominated for a Grammy at this Sunday's awards for his performance of "Brand New Man" with Brooks & Dunn, will make his SNL debut on February 1st. Houston Texans defensive end J.J. Watt hosts that episode.

"Yummy" is the first taste of Bieber's upcoming fifth studio album, the follow-up to 2015's Purpose. He'll launch a tour May 14th at CenturyLink Field in Seattle. Combs, meanwhile, is becoming Nashville's latest bona fide superstar. He released the album What You See Is What You Get in November on the strength of the hits "Beer Never Broke My Heart" and "Even Though I'm Leaving," and will hit the road February 7th on his What You See Is What You Get Tour.

Saturday Night Live returns from its holiday break on January 25th with host Adam Driver, who this week scored an Oscar nomination for his performance in Marriage Story, and musical guest Halsey. Previous Season 45 musical guests include Lizzo, Harry Styles, Taylor Swift, and Chance the Rapper, who also hosted.

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ARIES: Building your psychic muscles is a process, Aries, just like working out. Your guides are trying to get in touch with you, sending you messages from the beyond. But are your receptors working to their optimum capacity? Today, you're being asked to tune into your third eye, the space between your brows. Envision a luminescent golden light descending from the heavens, clearing any and all blocks.

Tip: Your spirit guides are trying to get through. **TAURUS:** Brian Leaf, author of Misadventures of a Garden State Yogi, defines inner wisdom "as a knowledge that comes from quieting the mind, setting aside the ego, setting aside one's ideas of how things should be, and listening and feeling for what feels truly right."

Tip: Quieten your mind in order to tune in. **GEMINI:** The emotional is an extension of the physical. How we care for our sacred vessel directly affects our state of being. So, where do you want to vibrate at, Gemini? Today, you're being asked to consider

detoxification. What are the things that are causing more harm than good? Once you've eliminated the harmful substances, consider switching to a wholesome, plant-based diet. Tip: Eliminate the toxins.

CANCER: The moon signifies 'Shakti' or the sacred feminine. She's infamous for activating our intuition or inner wisdom. As a Cancerian, you are directly affected by her movement. Take a moment to understand her cycles and rhythms and how they affect you on a soul level. Today, la Luna is in the waning phase, one step away from the new moon, urging you to retreat into your sacred space and focus on shadow work.

Tip: Tune into the phases of the moon.

LEO: An important aspect of being a leader is training others to be one too. Leo, we know you are the master of masters, you can do everything by yourself. Do you need to push yourself to your limits though? Learn the art of delegation. Consider this as a testimony of your team's skills; a testimony of how well you have taught them.

Tip: Let your baby birds fly.

VIRGO: We are always talking about manifestation and making space for the big stuff. Truth is, new energy cannot enter until we have cleared out the clutter. Work with the cycles of the la luna, Virgo. Today, we are under the influence of the waning moon. This is considered to be a sacred time to practice shadow work and confront our so-called dark parts. Resistance to letting is but natural.

Tip: Make space to receive what you have asked for.

LIBRA: Embrace the beauty of endings, Libra. They signify the completion of a phase, thereby making space for beginnings. Now isn't that a wonderful place to be in! Think of this as a period of surrender; of letting go. Be grateful for the journey and the soul lessons. When you find yourself pushing against the flow, make a list of things that you'd like to release from your existence, whether it's a limited belief or a relationship that's no longer in alignment.

Tip: Cut the cords where you need to.

SCORPIO: Our body is three quarters water. Therefore, it is paramount to keep replenishing this reserve. Word for the wise: stay hydrated! Beginning your day with two or three glasses of water is a good way to set a precedent. Exposing our bodies to different temperatures of water is known to have varying effects on the system. For instance, cold showers are invigorating, while hot baths help calm the nerves and release stress.

Tip: Allow the element of water to heal you.

SAGITTARIUS: Take a look at the recurring patterns in your life. Why do you think the story is repeating itself, Sagittarius? Is there a lesson here you haven't been paying attention to for a long time? Quieten the mind and listen to what Spirit is trying to communicate.

Tip: The Universe is supporting you to break this cycle.

CAPRICORN: "Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly." You are in the midst of a massive transformation, Capricorn. Ready to blossom and become who you were meant to be all

along? While some people are going to applaud your courage others may attempt to bring you down to their level.

Tip: Embrace the changes.

AQUARIUS: Late President Abdul Kalam once said, "To succeed in your mission, you must have single-minded devotion to your goal." Aquarius, tap into the power of focus. Put paper to pen as you word your intentions. Then, like an arrow, move straight towards the target. When you are aware of your destination and certain of the route you want to take, there is no reason why you will not hit the target.

Tip: Let focused intention be the secret to your success.

PISCES: Starting a project? Now that's the easy part. Sustaining that inner fire is where the real challenge begins. What do you do when you face challenges or when things refuse to go as planned? Channel your inner improv artist. Be flexible when you can. This will help you navigate the obstacle course.

Tip: Yes, you can do it!