



**I WAS BECOMING  
COMPLACENT AND UNHAPPY,  
SAYS RICHA CHADHA**

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**WHY TEEN DEPRESSION  
RATES ARE RISING FASTER  
FOR GIRLS THAN BOYS**

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HEAD OF VENICE FILM FESTIVAL**

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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Pages 8 | ₹ 5

## Duga School wins Acharya PC Roy Trophy



*Third consecutive win for Sikkim at Eastern India Science Fair*

**KOLKATA, 18 JAN (IPR):** Duga Secondary School from East Sikkim with

its model "Smart Pollution-free Ayurvedic Industrial Model" won the best exhibit Acharya PC Roy Trophy in the 45th Eastern India Science Fair (EISF) 2020.

This year Duga Secondary School won the best exhibit Acharya PC Roy Trophy among the

11 North East and Eastern States including West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha.

The Science Fair was held from 14 to 18 Jan in Birla Industrial and Technological Museum (BITM), Kolkata.

The student participants Iksha Hang Limbu

and Aastha Tamang won a trophy, citation and a cash award of Rs 11,000 each. The teacher guide, Purna Bahadur Rai, Graduate Teacher (Mathematics) also won a citation and cash award of Rs 2000.

This is the third year that Sikkim has won the coveted award after five

days of gruelling judgment. This year, 11 schools from Sikkim had participated in the EISF 2020 after winning the State Level Science, Mathematics and Environment Exhibition 2019-20 held in Government Senior Secondary School, Deorali, from 26 to 28 November 2019.

## Centre must come clear on de-radicalisation camps: Tarigami

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN 18 (PTI):** CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami on Saturday demanded that the Union government come clear on the de-radicalisation camps operating in India and alleged that they were "illegal and unconstitutional".

The central government should make it clear where these camps are operating, Tarigami, who is here in connection with the three-day CPI(M) central committee meet, told reporters.

He also said that "radicalisation should not be associated just with one religion and the fact is it is taking place in other religions also".

The Marxist leader was responding to the January 16 disclosure by Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Bipin Rawat that de-radicalisation

camps were operating in the country as "it was necessary to isolate people who are completely radicalised".

The General had said girls and boys as young as 10 and 12 years are being radicalised in the Valley, which he described as a matter of concern.

"What the General said goes beyond his brief and the BJP government must clear its stand on the issue", Tarigami, a former MLA from Kulgam said, adding that it was shocking to hear such comments.

Operating such camps is "illegal and unconstitutional" and the Centre must answer where the 400 camps are operating, he said.

"There are already a lot of jails, camps and police stations in Kashmir. Why do you need more concentration camps?"

If at all there is radicalisation in Kashmir, it is because of disillusionment," Tarigami said.

He said the de-radicalisation camps were completely "un-Indian" and the assumption that they are needed for a "certain age group in one area of the country was clearly a fantasy". "Whatever unilateral decisions were taken by the Centre on August 5 (2019) is bound to increase disillusionment."

Instead of taking confidence building measures, they are talking about taking boys as young as 10 and 12 years to these camps, which is unfortunate," he said.

Tarigami, who was the first politician to meet the press after the abrogation of Article 370, said the prevailing crisis in Kashmir needs a political response and not deradicalisation camps.

## Centre standing on brink of bankruptcy: Yashwant Sinha

**AHMEDABAD, JAN 18 (PTI):** Former BJP leader Yashwant Sinha on Saturday said the Central government was on the "brink of bankruptcy" due to the economic slowdown.

He also said the economy was passing through its "worst-ever crisis" due to the "death of demand" in sectors.

Sinha was speaking on the sidelines of his "Gandhi Shanti Yatra" against Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) which has arrived in Ahmedabad.

He reiterated the new citizenship law was a ploy of Narendra Modi government to divert attention of people from important issues like the "failure of economy".

"This government ignored problems related to the economy and tried to portray that everything is fine by manipulating figures. But the data cannot be fudged forever."

Now, they have accepted the problem and are saying that they will do something about it,"



Sinha said. As per recent government data, wholesale prices based inflation surged to an eight-month high of 2.59 per cent in December, as against 0.58 per cent in November due to sharp rise in prices of food articles like onion and potato. The annual inflation, based on monthly wholesale price index (WPI) was recorded at 3.24 per cent in April 2019.

Sinha, who had served as finance minister during 1998-2002, said the current government had left with no funds to utilise. "This government has used everything (funds) at its disposal. It is on the brink of bankruptcy now," he said.

"Many people are

saying that the government should spend more to boost the economy, but this government is speaking about curtailment expenses," he said.

Sinha, who heads Rashtra Manch, claimed that Finance ministry had asked all the departments to spend just 25 per cent of the total allocated budget instead of the 33 per cent, which it had allowed in the last quarter. "Private investment has become zero due to the twin balance sheet problem. The NPA of banks has grown bigger instead of shrinking," he said.

Sinha further said the lack of demand was affecting the economy, which

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## Kalapani convicts who never sought British mercy deserve Bharat Ratna: Cong

**MUMBAI, JAN 18 (PTI):** Hitting back at Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut for his remarks on opponents of the Bharat Ratna honour for V D Savarkar, the Congress on Saturday said supporters of the Hindutva ideologue should visit the erstwhile Andaman Jail to understand the sacrifice made by those freedom fighters who never apologised to the British. The Congress' reaction came within hours of Raut stating that those opposing the Bharat Ratna award for Savarkar should be made to spend at least two days in the erstwhile colonial prison to understand the hardships faced by him during his incarceration.

In a swipe, Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant said the BJP can grant the highest civilian honour to Savarkar by virtue of majority at the Centre, if it is willing to ignore Savarkar's statements like calling B R Ambedkar a 'mathefiru' (fanatic) and Buddhists as 'rashtradrohi' (pro-secession)". "Savarkar was different before 1911. The Congress is against his post-1923 ideology," Sawant said in a series of tweets.

"Savarkar had called Ambedkar a 'mathefiru', Buddhists as 'deshdrohi'. He had also criticised good deeds of Chhatrapati Shivaji," Sawant tweeted. "Savarkar had also supported the movement opposing merger of the erstwhile princely state of Travancore with India," he stated.

Sawant said 149 persons were sent for "Kalapani" (Andaman Cellular Jail) during 1909-21, while the number was 30 during 1922-1931 and 386 between 1932 and 1938.

"Many freedom fighters like Yogesh Shukla had served the jail sentence there (in Andaman) and later took part in the freedom movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi," he stated.

Taking aim at Savarkar, Sawant stated, "All those who served the sentence did so with pride and without seeking mercy. Such people should be given the Bharat Ratna".

After his conviction for the murder of A.T.M. Jackson, Collector of Nashik district, Savarkar was brought to the Andamans in 1911.

A controversy rages on on whether Savarkar demanded clemency from the British for his early release from the cellular jail, notorious for its inhuman conditions.

"The freedom fighters who served their jail terms in the Andaman did not support the British. They did not take any honorarium from the British. If Savarkar supporters visit the cellular jail, they will realise the importance of sacrifice made by the great freedom fighters who laid down their lives without asking any pardon."

"Savarkar was different before 1911. The Congress opposes his ideology post 1923," the Congress spokesperson said.

## Fit India Walkathon held in Gangtok

**SAGAR CHETTRI  
GANGTOK, 18 JAN:**

Sports enthusiasts of different age groups walked together in the state-level Fit India Walkathon with the message 'Hum Fit toh India Fit' here at Paljor Stadium on Saturday morning.

The event was organized by State National Service Scheme (NSS) Cell, Department of Sports & Youth Affairs in association with Nehru Yuwa Kendra, Sikkim under the banner of Fit India Movement.

The state-level walkathon witnessed the participation of young children, sportspersons and sports enthusiasts of different age groups along with NSS and NYK volunteers.

On the occasion, Secretary to Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari encouraged youngsters to always engage in healthy and sporting activities to stay fit and healthy. He urged parents to encourage their



children in sports and outdoor activities to keep them fit and healthy.

He also encouraged children to excel in sports and make a career out of it.

The Secretary spoke about the significance of the Fit India Movement to make every Indian fit. He mentioned that Fit India Movement aims to encourage people of

all age groups to live a healthy life by engaging in activities that involve physical movement to make the nation healthier and happier.

The programme was also attended by Additional Director, Doma Tshering and other officials of Sports & Youth Affairs Department and officials of NYK Sikkim.

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 18 JAN:**

To start the implementation of the E-shakti program, one day training was organised for all animators selected for the purpose at Janta Bhawan on 17 Jan, 2020. The training was organized by Sikkim Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) operating under Rural Management and Development Department, a press release informs.

With assistance from NABARD, SRLM has launched a project for digitization of all Self Help Groups (SHG) in East Sikkim. The project was launched formally by Minister/RDD during the month of December, 2019, in the presence of Pr Secretary/RDD, General Manager NABARD and Commissioner-cum SMD/SRLM.

The project aims at digitization of all

the SHG accounts to bring SHG members under the fold of Financial Inclusion thereby helping them access wider range of financial services together with increasing the bankers' comfort in credit appraisal and linkage by way of Integrating SHG members with the national Financial Inclusion agenda.

It ensures e-book keeping for the SHGs, Regular updates of transactional data, Reports generated in the formats as required by stakeholders like bankers, Inbuilt automatic grading of SHGs based on NABARD/IBA(for NRLM) norms and



Auto generation of Loan application for the bankers on input of resolution to borrow by SHG. The training program was attended by the Commissioner/RDD-cum-State Mission Direc-

tor/SRLM, P Senthil Kumar, Lead Bank Manager, Dy GM NABARD and AGM NABARD along with the Block level staff of the Sikkim Rural Livelihood Mission.

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## E-shakti Project for SHGs launched in East Sikkim



# Jorethang walks against child sexual abuse

**JORETHANG, 18 JAN (IPR):** As a part of Jorethang Maghey Sankranti Mela celebration, an awareness programme cum Walkathon themed 'Stop child sexual abuse' was held at MG lane, Jorethang, today.

Organised by Social Justice and Welfare Department, in coordination with the office of DCPO South, the programme was mainly convened to disseminate information and awareness on child sexual abuse and to generate awareness regarding the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Amendment 2019.

The programme was attended by MP, Lok Sabha, Indra Hang Subba as the chief guest accompanied by Political Secretary to CM, Jacob Khaling and Area MLA,



Sunita Gajmer.

The chief guest in his brief address said that the Government of India has taken a significant

initiative to address the issue of sexual offences against children by enacting a special law - POCSO Act which provides for stringent pun-

ishment to perpetrators.

He appealed to spread extensive awareness to every segment of society.

Secretary Social Justice, Hem Kumar Chhetri, in his address, spoke at length on the objective of organizing this programme which is to

bring awareness and information to the general masses.

Additional Secretary Social Justice and Welfare Department, Gloria Namchoy explained about the dissemination of information regarding child sexual abuse and the legislation in safe-

guarding the interest of the child at every stage of the judicial process.

DCPO (South), Roshnila Gurung informed about recently amended POCSO Act.

The programme also saw an impressive performance by UNB (Ugen Bhutia) a rapper from

Gangtok, Kauso Entertainment, and musical performance by children from Turuk Children's Home.

Thereafter, a walkathon was flagged off from MG lane on this theme by the chief guest which was actively participated by the dignitaries and local gentry.

This open for all walk for a cause was organized for the first time in Jorethang covering the entire town and culminating at Green Park.

Also present were DC (South), Ragul K, SP (South), Pravin Gurung, SDM (Jorethang), RB Bhandari, SDPO (Jorethang), Santosh Shrestha, Officials, children from various Child Care Institutes of South District and Jawaharlal Navodaya Vidyalaya Pipalay, IRBn, Police personnel and general public.

## Free Health Camp by Central Pendam GPU



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 18 JAN:**

Central Pendam Gram Panchayat Unit under West Pendam Constituency in East Sikkim organised a daylong Free Health Check-up Camp at Duga Gram Prasashan Kendra, a press release informs.

Doctors team from North Bengal Medical Clinic Siliguri comprising of General Physician, Dr Sangam Gurung, Dr Gulam Hakim Malik, Sabia Khatun, Santanu Ghosh and Saddam Siddiqui (eye), Dr Pratik Agarwal (Ortho), Dr Madhurima (Gynecologist) along with ten-member team checked 250 patients.

Central Pendam Gram Panchayat Samiti president, Dronacharya Sapkota, vice president,

Meera Darjee, member, Bharat Chhetri, Ganga Pradhan, Nanda Sharma along with Panchayat Secretary, CP Khanal, Sister, Chandra Kala Sharma, Baudhh Kala Pradhan and Gopal Dhakal supported the program.

Sharma Impek distributed sanitary napkins to the needy while all the medicines were provided by Central Pendam Gram Panchayat Samiti. Members of ASHA, Anganwadi and Self Help Group supported the program.

Five needy persons were provided with crutches by the Central Pendam Gram Panchayat Samiti. The team from North Bengal Medical Siliguri was felicitated with mementoes by the organising committee.

## North to observe Beti Bachao Beti Padhao week



**MANGAN, 17 JAN (IPR):** Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, has proposed to celebrate "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) week" to mark National Girl Child Day (i.e. 24 Jan, 2020).

In this context, Additional District Magistrate, North, Surat Gurung convened a meeting with SDM, Mangan, Karma Thupden Bhutia, DRCHO, PK Basnett, Sr WO, Norden Lepcha, DO/BBBP, Wangchuk Wangyal Bhutia, and representatives from NGOs of the district.

It was informed that the celebration will commence from 20 January and conclude on 26 Jan, 2020. This week-long special campaign will carry out various activities in a campaign mode, creating awareness and sensitizing people of the district about value of girl child.

ADC/N, Mr Gurung has directed the concerned officers and field functionaries to fulfill their duty with utmost dedication while duly following the guidelines of the Ministry.

## North holds coordination meet for Republic Day celebration

**MANGAN, 18 JAN (IPR):** A coordination meeting for Republic Day 2020 celebration was held here at the conference hall of District Collector, North, on 17 Jan, 2019.

The meeting was chaired by Additional District Magistrate, North, Surat Gurung along with ASP, North, Mahindra Subba, SDM, Mangan, Karma Thupden Bhutia, Head of Offices of the district, representatives from schools and NGOs.

During the meeting, the house unanimously decided that the 71st Republic Day will be celebrated at Zilla Pancha-



yat Bhawan, Pentok, in a grand manner.

The house also resolved various arrangements pertaining to the Republic Day celebration and accordingly all depart-

ments were entrusted with tasks in order to make the celebration a success.

ADC/N, Mr Gurung has urged all the government servants to attend the Republic Day

celebration programme. Further, he has directed all the Heads of offices of the district to maintain strict attendance of their staff though the Republic Day falls on a Sunday.

## Sikkim students reach Delhi for Pariksha pe Charcha

**GANGTOK, 18 JAN [IPR]:** A team of 09 students from different schools of Sikkim escorted by two officials of Samagra Shiksha reached New Delhi today to participate in the interactive programme of the Prime Minister called Pariksha pe Charcha.

The programme is being held at Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi on January 20, 2020, where the Prime Minister will interact with students from all corners of the country.

In Sikkim, the Par-



iksha pe Charcha will be held at TNSSS where about 2000 students are expected to participate and witness the live telecast/broadcast of Parik-

sha pe Charcha at 11 am on January 20, 2020. The programme will be aired live through the Doordarshan and MHRD YouTube channel.

## Assess if central funds are enough before 'brainwashing' people to accept policies: Siddaramiah to Shah

**BENGALURU, JAN 18 (PTI):** As Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrived in Karnataka, Congress leader Siddaramaiah on Saturday sought to know why he doesn't visit the flood-hit areas and assess if funds provided by the Centre were enough, before "brainwashing" people to accept his "divisive policies".

In a series of tweets the Leader of Opposition also sought an "adequate" probe into violent anti-CAA protests in Mangaluru last month during which two people were killed, and pointed out that people have cried foul about the incident.

"Mr @AmitShah, Before investing time to brainwash people to accept your divisive policies, Why don't you visit

flood affected areas again & assess if the Central govt funds are sufficient or not? #AnswerMadiShah," Siddaramaiah tweeted. "Mr. @AmitShah, @BSYBJP has claimed loss of over Rs 35,000 due to floods but your aid is just Rs 1,870 Cr.

When are you planning to give the remaining? Will there be any funds left after the implementation of CAA, NPR & NRC? #AnswerMadiShah" he said in another tweet.

Shah, who arrived in the city will be addressing a public meeting on Citizenship Amendment Act, under BJP's nationwide Jan Jagan Abhiyan, at Hubballi this evening.

"Mr. @AmitShah, Two innocent victims were killed in Mangaluru in

what public opinion says that it is a fake encounter. You are the Home minister of the Country.

Don't you think adequate investigation has to take place when people cry foul about the incident? #AnswerMadiShah," Siddaramaiah said.

The former Chief Minister has been demanding a judicial probe by a sitting judge into the violence during anti CAA protest in Mangaluru, while Yediyurappa government has ordered CID and magisterial probe into the incident.

Also raising the inter-state Mahadayi river dispute in which Karnataka has locked horns with neighboring Goa, Siddaramaiah demanded that the BJP Chief make his stand clear.

"Mr. @AmitShah,

Your colleagues give contradictory statements on the initiation of Mahadayi project.

Why is there a change in stance after elections? What is your stand on the issue? #AnswerMadiShah, he said in another tweet.

The Congress in Karnataka, in a series of tweets attacking Shah, asked why the central government was behaving in a "dictatorial way," despite country wide public opinion against CAA, NRC.

"Why don't BJP respect democracy and constitution?" it asked.

Alleging that BJP government in the state was only indulging in the "business of transfers", the party said the administration has not yet taken off.

### E-shakti Project...

There are more than 32 animators trained at the rate of at least one animator per 30 SHGs in the field. All of them attended the training.

During the Program, Dr Senthil Kumar explained the significance of this program to the animators and the need to collect and upload correct data of the SHGs at right time in the portal of e shakti maintained by NADBARD.

The e shakti portal will act as a medium to show case the financial credibility of the SHGs so that the bankers could able to take quick decision in extending the credit to the SHGs.

The DGM and AGM, NABARD explained in details about the project and the benefits to the SHGs and to the animators. Lead Bank Manager explained about the usefulness of this project for the bankers in extending credit to the SHGs. DPM-FI and MIS team acted as resource persons for explaining the finer details on collecting data and uploading in the e-shakti portal. The program ended with the vote of thanks by Silesh, DPM-FI of SRLM.

### Centre standing...

"started with rural distress and gradually spread to urban areas due to demonetisation in 2016".

"The problem has now spread to all sectors. For example, the transport sector is witnessing a slump in the demand of cars and two-wheelers. In the past, we had seen the demand slump, but this time it is the 'death of demand' which is unprecedented," Sinha said.

He said the upcoming Budget will be crucial. "Another thing which never happened in the past is PM Narendra Modi himself conducting 13 pre-budget consultations with stake-holders unlike in the past when finance ministers used to conduct the same," Sinha added.

In such scenario, the government had introduced the "divisive CAA".

He said Union Home Minister Amit Shah had announced in Parliament that the government will bring in National Register of Citizens.

"The CAA and probable NRC are aimed at diverting attention of people and dividing the country on religious lines. There was no need to bring in the CAA, as the old act had the provision to give citizenship, and many people were given citizenship under it," Sinha said.

Considering the experience of the NRC in Assam, the exercise should never be introduced in the country, he added.

He also questioned the need for the National Population Register (NPR), saying Aadhaar is equivalent to the NPR.

"The question before the UPA government and later the NDA government after 2014 was to whether go for Aadhaar or NPR, the Modi government opted Aadhaar," he said.

He accused the BJP government in Gujarat of misusing section 144 (of CrPc) and not allowing even a peaceful protest against the CAA and NRC.

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Roadside plots for sale at Adampool, Ranipool-Rumtek highway.

**For details contact: 9083826462**

### FLAT FOR RENT/LEASE

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

**For more details: 9083826462 /9832556698**

### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College. Flat Land no cutting required. Price 36 Lakhs (negotiable).

**Contact: 9800201335**

### LAND FOR SALE

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

### LAND FOR SALE

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

**HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?**

email us: news@summittimes.Com



# Footballers in training briefed on nuances of refereeing



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 18 JAN:**  
Senior national referee from Sikkim, Chamchuk Lama, spoke about the rules of football with aspiring footballers at the ongoing Winter Football Coaching Camp here at Paljor Stadium on Saturday morning.

During the interaction, Mr Lama explained the different rules of the game, technical aspects and the revised rules of football. Footballers undergoing coaching also

placed their queries with the national referee and clarified their doubts.

The coaching camp, which had begun on 05 January, is part of a talent hunt campaign, 'Prince of Football' by the Sports & Youth Affairs Department and Bhaichung Bhutia Football Schools in the U-13 and U-15 age-groups.

The main objective of the collaboration is to promote football and scout for talented footballers from across the State.

Speaking to media

persons, Mr Lama mentioned that it was important for players to know and understand the rules and shared that lack of knowledge about referring creates misconceptions among players during the game.

He stressed the need for such sessions to give players a better understanding of referring for the smooth conduct of games and thanked the Department of Sports & Youth Affairs for organising such a session.

Sports & Youth Affairs Department Deputy Director [coaching], Milan Singh, in turn mentioned that the coaching camp has been successful in providing basic knowledge about tactics and techniques to players.

The camp will continue till 31 January. Participants have been divided into three age-groups of 8 to 10 years, 11-12 years and 13 to 15 years.

He shared that there were many talented footballers at the camp.

## Sikkim squad leaves for T Ao NE Football c'ship

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 18 JAN:**  
A 19-member Sikkim squad left on Saturday to represent the State at the T Ao North East Football Championship to be held from 18 to 28 January at IG Stadium, Kohima in Nagaland. Sikkim has been placed in Group-B along with Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram for the group stage and will be playing its first match against Assam on 21 January. Sikkim will be in the field next on 23 January against Meghalaya and its last match, against Mizoram, is scheduled for 25 January.

The State team members are: Urgen Pintso Sherpa, Nindup Lepcha, Afzal Ansari, Sameer Pradhan, Sonam Zangpo Bhutia, Kintup Lachungpa, Tempa Lhendup Bhutia, Dawa Sherpa, Klip Namgyal Barfungpa, Don Tshering Lepcha, Prashant Chettri, Roshan Pradhan, Ashish Chettri, Milan Chettri, Sanjay Rai, Mayal Dok Lepcha, Sanjay Chettri, Sonam Tshering Bhutia and Zamyang Bhutia. The team has been led by Sanjay Chettri as team camp and has also been accompanied by Arjun Rai as team manager and Mayal Dok Lepcha as team coach.

During a see-off programme at Paljor Stadium on Friday, Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari, wished the team luck and handed over track-suits and jerseys to the team members.

He also conveyed the best wishes of Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] to the State team.

**HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?**

email us: [news@summittimes.com](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

## Swachhata Pakhwada at SMIT

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**RANGPO, 17 JAN:**  
National Service Scheme (NSS) volunteers of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology are observing 'Swachhata Pakhwada' [Cleanliness Fortnight]. Under the guidance of NSS Nodal Officer, Jhuma Sunuwar, the volunteers undertook


an awareness programme and other activities.

The Pakhwada started with a cleanliness and plantation drive and the taking of the the 'Swachhata Pledge' which had the students vowing to involve in cleanliness activities for at least two hours a week.

Various competitions

like best out of the waste, essay writing, photography, logo design have been lined up as well, informs Mr Sunuwar.

Conservation awareness programs in and around the campus will also be undertaken by the volunteers spreading the message of 'Clean India, Green India'.



**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**  
**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR PENSION, GROUP INSURANCE & PROVIDENT FUND**  
**FINANCE DEPARTMENT**  
**GANGTOK**

NO. 338 /PGIPF

Date: 13.01.2020

**NOTICE**

The PGIPF Division of Finance Department, Government of Sikkim is conducting Pension Adalat at the District Head Quarters as per the schedule detailed below. All Pensioners including Family Pensioners are requested to kindly attend the said Pension Adalat with their queries and grievances between 10.30 AM to 1.30 PM

Date	District	Venue
20.01.2020	North	Conference Hall of District Collector, Mangan
22.01.2020	South	Conference Hall of Zilla Panchyat, Namchi
23.01.2020	West	Conference Hall of District Collector, Rabdentse
27.01.2020	East	Conference Hall of District Collector, Gangtok

Sd/-  
Deepak Kumar Pradhan  
Director, PGIPF  
State Pension Nodal Office

**R.O. No. 325/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20dt. 13.01.2010**

**SIKKIM STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (SSDMA)**  
**LAND REVENUE AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**

**Tashiling Secretariat, Block - B, Gangtok, East Sikkim - 737101**  
**Phone No: 03592-201145/Fax: 03592-201075/website:www.ssdma.nic.in**  
**Email:ssdma01@gmail.com**

Ref no: 249/SSDMA/LR&DMD/GoS/2020      Date: 14/01/2020

**Expression of Interest**

National Disaster Management Authority, Government of India has approved the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Mitigation of Mangan Landslide, North Sikkim submitted by Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA) as a Demonstrative Landslide Mitigation Programme. The approved cost of the civil works is around Rs.10 crores which includes Scaling & Dressing works, Driving of Self Drilling Anchors, Construction of Catch Drains, Shotcreting works along with quality & Post Monitoring Cost including HM instrumentation. The main areas of work fall along SNT complex, vicinity of Senior Secondary School Mangan, and areas below Multi Storey Car Parking. The Detailed Project Report with Detailed Estimate is available at the Office of Additional Director, SSDMA, Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok and can be accessed at [www.ssdma.nic.in](http://www.ssdma.nic.in) and [www.sikkimlrdm.gov.in](http://www.sikkimlrdm.gov.in).

The registered Firms/Contractors having requisite qualification, equipments and expertise to undertake the above work can submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) to the office of undersigned in a sealed envelope within 28th January 2020 before 2 pm with necessary documents mentioning qualification and experience.

The EOI will be opened at 3:30 pm on 28th January 2020 in the presence of Committee constituted for this purpose who shall have the right to accept and reject the EOI based on the acceptance criteria.

Sd/-  
Additional Director  
SSDMA  
LR&DM Deptt., Govt. of Sikkim  
Gangtok, East Sikkim.

**R.O. No. 330/IPR/Pub/Class./19-20    Date: 16.01.2020**

**POWER DEPARTMENT**  
**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM,**  
**GANGTOK**

**PUBLIC NOTICE IN RESPECT OF**

**AGGREGATE REVENUE REQUIREMENT & TARIFF PETITION FILED BY PCE CUM SECRETARY, POWER DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM, BEFORE SIKKIM STATE ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION.**

Notice is hereby circulated to all consumer & stake holders, that the Power Department, Government of Sikkim a deemed licensee engaged in the distribution & retail sale of electricity has filed the tariff petition before the Sikkim State Electricity Commission (SSERC) for Sikkim State, the true-up for the FY 2018-19 Review for FY 2019-20, ARR& Tariff proposal for FY 2020-21 under the MYT control period for FY 2018-19 to 2020-21 in respect of Distribution, Transmission & Generation functions for Power Department formulated in accordance with the guidelines outlined as per the Regulations 17.1 to 17.5 of the Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission (Terms & Conditions for Determination of Tariff for Generation, Transmission, Wheeling, Distribution and Retail Supply under Multi Year Tariff Frame work) as per (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2017.

The Commission has registered & admitted the petition filed by the Department of Power Vide Case No MYT/2020-21/P-01/PDs dated 05.12.2019.

The summary of ARR- Actual 2018-19, Estimated 2019-20& Projection for 2020-21 under the MYT control period 2018-19 to 2020-21 is given in table below:

Sl. No.	Item of Expenditure	2018-19 (Actuals)	2019-20 (Estimated)	2020-21 (Projected)
1	2	3	4	5
1	Cost of Fuel	0.18	0.20	0.22
2	Cost of Power Purchase	256.23	269.04	282.66
3	Cost of Generation	17.34	18.83	19.19
4	Employee Costs	85.97	107.26	136.69
5	R & M Expenses	16.50	23.71	26.53
6	Adm. & Gen. Expenses	3.36	4.86	4.86
7	Depreciation	16.85	18.10	20.17
8	Advance Against Depreciation	0.00	0.00	0.00
9	Interest Charges	0.00	0.00	0.00
10	Interest on Working Capital	11.94	12.92	13.77
11	Return on Equity	0.00	0.00	0.00
12	Income Tax	0.00	0.00	0.00
13	Transmission Charges (Intra State)	40.37	42.60	44.51
14	<b>Total Revenue Requirement</b>	<b>448.74</b>	<b>497.52</b>	<b>548.60</b>
15	Less: Non-Tariff Income	1.27	1.31	1.35
16	<b>Net Revenue Requirement (14-15)</b>	<b>447.47</b>	<b>496.21</b>	<b>547.25</b>
17	Revenue from Tariff	226.18	237.47	256.45
18	Revenue from Outside State Sale	218.14	218.14	218.14
19	<b>Gap (16-17-18)</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>40.60</b>	<b>72.66</b>
20	Revenue Surplus Carried Over	-	-	-
21	Additional Revenue from Proposed Tariff	-	-	9.57
22	Regulatory asset	-	-	-
23	<b>Energy Sales (MU)</b>	<b>380.81</b>	<b>422.61</b>	<b>460.39</b>

- Distribution loss: The Distribution loss for the FY 2018-19 actual, 2019-20 estimated& 2020-21 projected have been mentioned as 29.79 %, 27.14 %, and 25.74 % respectively.
- Copies of Petition / application refer to at para-1 above are available in the following Offices.  
i) Chief Engineer, (O&M/SDA)cum Nodal Officer (Revenue), Power Department, Kazi Road Gangtok  
ii) Additional Chief Engineer, South cum ANO (Revenue), Power Department, Kazi Road Gangtok
- Interested parties may peruse the said ARR and tariff proposal and take note thereof during office hours at the above offices free of charges.
- The ARR and the tariff proposal can be viewed and downloaded from the official website of Power Department, GOS “[power.sikkim.gov.in](http://power.sikkim.gov.in)”
- Summary of tariff and charges for retail supply of Electricity to consumers proposed by the Power Department, Government of Sikkim for the year 2020-21 are indicated in the schedule.
- Objections / Suggestions, if any on the ARR filings and tariff proposal submitted by the Power Department, Government of Sikkim, together with supporting materials may be filed with Secretary, Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission, Deorali, Gangtok-Sikkim 737102 in five copies in person or through register post so as to reach the Commission on or before 10.02.2020.
- Objections / Suggestions as above should carry full name and postal address of the person sending the objection which should be supported by an affidavit duly attested thereof. If the objection is filed on behalf of any Organization or any cases of consumer, it should be as per the terms mentioned above. It is also to mention that if the person putting objection/suggestions wants to be heard in person can participate during the day of public hearing.
- The SSERC, after perusing the written objections received in response to this notice may invite such objectors, as it considers appropriate for a hearing on the specified dates, which will be notified by the Commission in due course.
- Tariff Schedule:

Sl. No.	Category of consumers	Existing Rate( FY 2019-20)		Proposed Rate (FY 2020-21)	
		Demand Charge (in Rs /kVA/month)	Energy Charge Paisa/kWH	Demand Charge (in Rs /kVA/month)	Energy Charge Paisa/kWH
<b>1</b>	<b>Domestic</b>				
i)	Up to 50 units		120		130
ii)	51 to 100 units		240		250
iii)	101-200 units		370		380
iv)	201 to 400 units		460		470
v)	401 & above		500		510
<b>2</b>	<b>Commercial</b>				
i)	Up to 50 units		330		340
ii)	51 to 100 units		400		410
iii)	101 to 200 units		560		570
iv)	201 to 400 units		600		600
v)	401 & above		640		640
	Demand Charge exceeding load above 25 kVA(Rural)	60.00		60.00	
	Demand Charge exceeding load above 25 kVA(Urban)	100.00		100.00	
<b>3</b>	<b>Low tension Industrial Supply LTIS(Rural)</b>				
i)	Up to 500 units		360		360
ii)	501 - 1000 units		440		440
iii)	1001 & above		580		580
<b>4</b>	<b>Low tension Industrial Supply LTIS(Urban)</b>				
i)	Up to 500 units		530		535
ii)	501 - 1000 units		620		625
iii)	1001 & above		715		715
	Demand Charge exceeding load above 25 kVA(Rural)	60.00		60.00	
	Demand Charge exceeding load above 25 kVA(Urban)	100.00		100.00	
<b>5</b>	<b>High Tension Supply</b>				
	<b>3.3 kV &amp; Above</b>				
i)	Upto 100 kVA	200.00	400	200.00	425
ii)	100 - 250 kVA	250.00	450	250.00	470
iii)	250 kVA to 500 kVA	290.00	500	290.00	525
iv)	500 kVA and above	560.00	550	560.00	600
<b>6</b>	<b>Bulk supply</b>				
i)	LT		650		650
ii)	HT		660		660
<b>7</b>	<b>Public lighting</b>				
a)	Rural Areas		300		300
b)	Urban Areas		500		500
<b>8</b>	Supply to Army Pensioners	Domestic rates are applicable			
<b>9</b>	Supply to Blind				
<b>10</b>	Supply to place of worship				

PCE cum Secretary

**R.No. 329/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20      date: 14.01.2020**



## Discuss LGBT Issues

### *Get the families on board and then the society and laws can be changed*

Enough has been said about the insecurities and trauma suffered by the LGBTQI community. While it is accepted that the community is not targeted with any direct physical violence in Sikkim, what cannot be denied either is that they continue to remain closeted. They suffer ridicule and misunderstanding like anywhere else in the country, and even though they might not be singled out and demonized, there is no overt acceptance of even their existence.

In most instances, Sikkim slips into its standard response – ignores it.

Families, even when the obvious stares them in the face, pretend not to comprehend. They probably don't do this because they are revolted, which is also one of the responses, but because they don't know how to react. As it is the generation gap is so wide in most families that they cannot even converse about simple challenges like education or careers, so addressing a situation as complicated as sexual orientation becomes impossible for them to grapple with. Since most families cannot even speak to their children about sex even when it is necessary to keep them safe and responsible for their choices, matters of sexuality hence become impossible conversations to even broach. While this might explain why families opt for the ignore button, what this response also does is that it pushes the already confused youth deeper into their complexities. This complicates their confusions into trauma as they try to negotiate their way around their awakenings with no one there to even talk to. Some are lucky to find friends they can open up to, and while sharing is therapeutic to some extent, they still remain denied the counsel and acceptance beyond their circles. Needless to add, this comes at a substantial psychological cost and cause long-term damage. And all this because we felt too awkward to talk...

Yes, the laws dealing with homosexuality are still obnoxiously regressive in our country and given the extreme right wing that the nation is gravitating to, it is unlikely that the situation, in as much as real rights and empowerment are concerned, will improve any time soon in that regard. But that should not stop the society at large from developing some empathy. It will have to start with families which should start measuring up to their responsibility towards the young in their fold. Do not think that intentionally ignoring the LGBT in the family is enough of a signal of tacit acceptance. It is not. Until families are openly accepting a supportive of the LGBT among them, the world outside never will. No one expects you to celebrate the coming out, but by accepting it without sitting on judgment will be a very important step towards normalizing the world for the LGBT. It will also go a long way towards saving them from the darkness they otherwise keep withdrawing into, always holding back, always watchful, always on guard. No young person should have to do that.

And once the family is on board, the rest too will fall in line, and as the society starts normalizing we can begin the challenge of amending the laws and ensuring that the LGBT receive equal status in our country. Let's accept it, just because cops are not going around arresting homosexuals does not mean that they enjoy equal status in our country. To begin with, a majority of them cannot be open about their sexual orientation and that itself makes them less equal than those we see as "normal". And it keeps getting worse for them. For instance, a gay couple cannot get officially married. And before someone starts sermonizing on the sanctity of the institution of marriage and all that, what such denials essential mean is that as far as the country is concerned – homosexuals are not equal to the heterosexual citizens because while couples of the latter club can get married, homosexual couples cannot. They just don't enjoy the same rights and privileges as the rest even when it come life choices and decisions which impact only them. That will be the bigger battle we will need to wage once we have got the families on board.

#### WRITE US:

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

# Why teen depression rates are rising faster for girls than boys

JEAN TWENGE  
*theconversation.com*

We're in the middle of a teen mental health crisis – and girls are at its epicenter.

Since 2010, depression, self-harm and suicide rates have increased among teen boys. But rates of major depression among teen girls in the U.S. increased even more – from 12% in 2011 to 20% in 2017. In 2015, three times as many 10- to 14-year-old girls were admitted to the emergency room after deliberately harming themselves than in 2010. Meanwhile, the suicide rate for adolescent girls has doubled since 2007.

Rates of depression started to tick up just as smartphones became popular, so digital media could be playing a role. The generation of teens born after 1995 – known as iGen or Gen Z – were the first to spend their entire adolescence in the age of the smartphone. They're also the first group of teens to experience social media as an indispensable part of social life.

Of course, both boys and girls started using smartphones around the same time. So why are girls experiencing more mental health issues?

Mining three surveys of more than 200,000 teens in the U.S. and U.K., my colleagues and I were able to find some answers.

#### THE SCREENS WE USE

We found that teen boys and girls spend their digital media time in different ways: Boys spend more time gaming, while girls spend more time on their smartphones, texting and using social media.

Gaming involves different forms of communication. Gamers often interact with each other in real time, talking to each other via their headsets.

In contrast, social media often involves messaging via images or text. Yet even something as simple as a brief pause before receiving a response can elicit anxiety.

Then, of course, there's the way social media creates a hierarchy, with the number of likes and followers wielding social power. Images are curated, personas cultivated, texts crafted, deleted and rewritten. All of this can be stressful, and one study found that simply comparing yourself with others on social media made you more likely to be depressed.

And, unlike many gaming systems, smartphones are portable. They can interfere with face-to-face social interaction or be brought into bed, two actions that have been found to undermine mental health and sleep.

#### ARE GIRLS MORE SUSCEPTIBLE THAN BOYS?

It's not just that girls and boys spend their digital media time on different activities. It may also be that social media use has a stronger effect on girls than boys.

Previous research revealed that teens who spend more time on digital media are more likely to be depressed and unhappy. In our new paper, we found that this link was stronger for girls than for boys.

Both girls and boys experience an increase in unhappiness the more time they spend on their devices. But for girls, that increase is larger.

Only 15% of girls who spent about 30 minutes a day on social media were unhappy, but 26% of girls who spent six hours a day or more on social media reported being unhappy. For boys, the difference in unhappiness was less noticeable: 11% of those who spent 30 minutes a day on social media said they were unhappy, which ticked up to 18% for those who spent six-plus hours per day doing the same.

Why might girls be more prone to unhappiness when using social media?

Popularity and positive social interactions tend to have a more pronounced effect on teen girls' happiness than boys' happiness. Social media can

be both a cold arbiter of popularity and a platform for bullying, shaming and disputes.

In addition, girls continue to face more pressure about their appearance, which could be exacerbated by social media. For these reasons and more, social media is a more fraught experience for girls than for boys.

From this data on digital media use and unhappiness, we can't tell which causes which, although several experiments suggest that digital media use does cause unhappiness.

If so, digital media use – especially social media – might have a more negative effect on girls' mental health than on boys'.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

What can we do?

First, parents can help children and teens postpone their entry into social media.

It's actually the law that children can't have a social media account in their own name until they are 13. This law is rarely enforced, but parents can insist that their children stay off social media until they are 13.

Among older teens, the situation is more complex, because social media use is so pervasive.

Still, groups of friends can talk about these challenges. Many are probably aware, on some level, that social media can make them feel anxious or sad. They might agree to call each other more, take breaks or let others know that they're not always going to respond instantly – and that this doesn't mean they are angry or upset.

We're learning more about the ways social media has been designed to be addictive, with companies making more money the more time users spend on their platforms.

That profit may be at the expense of teen mental health – especially that of girls.

*[the writer is Professor of Psychology, San Diego State University]*



## Russia's Cabinet Resigns and it's All Part of Putin's Plan

REGINA SMYTH  
*theconversation.com*

#### 1. WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has been in power for 20 years and faces term limits in 2024, has begun his effort to consolidate control and maintain his hold on power after the next elections. The cabinet and prime minister's resignations are part of that effort.

Putin wants his majority in the parliament – the State Duma – to pass constitutional amendments that will allow him to remain in political control.

This move is not unexpected, at least among Kremlin watchers and scholars like me who have studied Russian elections over 30 years. Putin signaled the change in his annual press conference in December, where he spoke about the potential for constitutional reforms.

On Jan. 15, Putin gave his annual state of the nation address and unveiled "serious changes to the political system." In response to the proposed constitutional amendments, which Putin is promoting as "reforms," Prime Minister Medvedev and his government resigned.

This move should not be seen as protest, although it might be useful for Medvedev, a longtime ally of Putin's, to feign independence and appear as if he made the move in dissent. He and Putin orchestrated similar actions in 2008 and again in 2011.

The goal of Putin and his allies is to forestall popular protest among those tired of Putin's long reign.

Putin's proposal to redefine the separation of power between the Duma, presidency and prime minister would allow parliament to select the prime minister, a power now in

the hands of the president. Together with an agreement to impose strict two-term limits on future presidents, this change suggests that Putin will leave the presidency.

Future presidents would retain control of the security forces and the military but must consult the State Council.

The proposal is being touted in leading Russian newspapers as "democratic reform." In fact, while appearing to redistribute power among the high-level players in the Kremlin, the details that will determine power relations remain vague.

On Monday, Putin's spokesman stated that specifics will be developed in consultation with the Russian people. Given regime controls over voting and national campaigns, this nod to the people is a form of window dressing.

In making these changes and accepting the government's resignation, President Putin is laying the groundwork for several paths to retain power, including as prime minister or head of a strengthened State Council, an advisory body to the president.

Putin's proxies are already arguing that these reforms will prevent political crisis in 2024 and increase living standards.

#### 2. WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

President Putin faces two potential roadblocks if he wants to maintain political control through the next election cycle – parliamentary elections in 2021 and presidential elections in 2024.

The first problem is term limits that mandate he leave the presidency. In the face of growing urban protest and declining support for his regime's policies, any political reforms that prolong Putin's tenure are risky. Reform

must be seen by the public as a step forward and not a step toward stagnation.

The second problem is that Putin and his United Russia party need to win large majorities in parliamentary and presidential elections. Russia's sluggish economy and citizens' frustration with poor government services will undermine support for regime candidates.

This plan, betting on the regime's capacity to control elections, is risky. Outright electoral fraud will almost surely provoke protest.

Still, these so-called reforms are timed well before the election to allow Putin and his allies to rebuild support in the wake of any negative reaction. The Kremlin is preserving room to respond and correct course.

In accepting the government's resignation, Putin blamed it for the country's economic decline, and placed recovery and improved standards of living at the top of his political agenda.

#### 3. WHAT'S NEXT?

Putin's regime has successfully sold unpopular reforms to skeptical voters in the past. Earlier government attempts to promote pension and housing program changes provide a model for superficial responsiveness to popular demands.

To channel discontent Putin proposed a national referendum on the changes.

So Duma deputies will hold meetings in their districts. Party leaders will meet with constituents and hear their concerns. Officials will make amendments to the proposed changes that appear to address those concerns, but in ways that don't fundamentally change their intent. The process will occur quickly to thwart any opposition organization.

The new prime minister will an-

nounce economic reforms and an infusion of state funds into the economy. These actions will also create an impression of responsiveness and win voter support.

As elections approach, the Kremlin will warn of potential crisis, offering Putin as the guarantor of stability. The message will be, as it has been in the past, that Putin is the bulwark against crisis.

#### 4. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO THE US?

While the Putin regime's domestic policy is not popular, his ability to project Russian power abroad is. The U.S. can expect Putin to challenge its policies, as he has since the U.S. imposed sanctions on Russia for its invasion of eastern Ukraine.

I believe Putin will continue to meddle in U.S. politics and elections to prolong the country's democratic crisis. This effort will serve both domestic and international agendas, by destabilizing the U.S. and making democracy look unappealing to ordinary Russians, who associate the dismal economic and political conflicts of the 1990s with Russian attempts at democratic reform.

The trajectory is clear in Russia's newly revealed hack of the Ukrainian firm Burisma, where Joe Biden's son Hunter served as a board member. This effort by Russia, presumably to unearth embarrassing information about the Biden family, is likely intended to inflame partisan tensions around the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump.

Distracting the U.S. with domestic strife also limits its capacity to challenge Russia abroad.

*[the writer is Associate Professor of Political Science, Indiana University]*



# Assam cabinet expansion, two new ministers sworn in



**GUWAHATI, JAN 18 (PTI):** Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Saturday expanded his ministry and allocated portfolios giving the charge of education to powerful minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in addition to the existing departments of finance, health, family welfare and PWD, a CMO spokesperson said.

Sonowal expanded his cabinet increasing its strength to 18, including the chief minister. Twelve of the ministers are from the BJP and three each from alliance partners Asom Gana Parishad and Bodo People's Front.

Jogen Mohan who was sworn in as minister of state with independent charge was given

the portfolios of revenue and disaster management, PWD (assisting the cabinet minister), the spokesman said.

Sanjay Kishan, who too was made a minister of state agains with independent charge, was given the charge of tea tribe welfare and labour welfare (to assist the cabinet minister). The

chief minister retained home, political, personnel, general administration, secretariat administration, implementation of Assam Accord, administrative reform and training, election, information and public relation, border areas development, sports and youth welfare, power, labour welfare and any

other department not allotted to other ministers, the CMO spokesman said. Siddhartha Bhattacharya, who earlier held the ducation department was earlier held by Siddhartha Bhattacharya who continues to hold the Guwahati Development department, Law and Justice and Cooperation.

The portfolios of the other ministers of the Sonowal cabinet remained unchanged, the sources added.

Sanjay Kishan and Jogen Mohan were administered the oath of office and secrecy by Governor Jagdish Mukhi at a simple ceremony in the Darbar Hall of the Raj Bhavan here.

Both Kishan and Mohan are first time BJP MLAs and represent Tinsukia and Mahmora assembly constituencies respectively.

Kishan hails from the tea tribe community while Mohan represents the Ahom community.

## Governor attends inauguration of Uma Shankar's statue



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 18 JAN:**

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad, attended the inauguration of the statue of Member of Parliament, Uma Shankar Singh at Renua Siwan, Bihar today on the occasion of the 80th Birth

Anniversary of Late Singh.

The Governor mentioned the contribution of Late Uma Shankar Singh in social service including education. He said that his dedication to service of people is exemplary.

During the function,

the Governor also felicitated martyr families, sportsperson, artist and different personalities of the State of Bihar.

The Governor congratulated all felicitated personalities and saluted the service of martyrs for their supreme sacrifice.

## Bengal look to bounce back against struggling Hyderabad



### KALYANI (WEST BENGAL),

**JAN 18 (PTI):**

Desperately eyeing a return to winning ways, Bengal will rely on their spinners to do the trick against a struggling Hyderabad in their Ranji Trophy fixture here from Sunday.

Bengal suffered a humiliating nine-wicket defeat to Vidarbha inside two days in an away fixture in the last round, slipping to eighth position in the cross pool of Group A and B teams.

With five teams set to make the cut for the quarterfinals, the task for the Arun Lal-coached side has become all the more challenging.

Bengal failed to take any advantage of the home conditions, settling for three points in their last two outings, against Andhra and Gujarat at the Eden Gardens. Bengal

have now gone for a spin-friendly track at the Kalyani Stadium, about 70-kms from here, hoping to win a match.

"Team's looking in good shape. We have practised well and the players are looking focused and confident. It looks a good cricketing wicket. The ball might not turn from the first ball but it can gradually," Bengal skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran said.

"We might go in with three spinners, let's see how's the wicket tomorrow morning. We need to get runs as a group. We need to score good runs and get to a good total."

Under-23 batsman Kazi Junaid Saifi, who was initially named in the squad against Gujarat before being sent back for the Col. CK Nayudu Trophy matches, has been

drafted in. With Ritwik Roy Chowdhury injured, he is likely to make his Ranji debut.

Left-hander Saifi got the nod after scoring 534 runs to help Bengal win the National U-23 one-day tournament this season.

"You can't control things like injury. The batters have prepared well for the game and we just need to get couple of hundreds if we can."

Bengal will also look up to the veteran Utpal Chatterjee, who will assist the side for the Hyderabad match, with bowling coach Ranadeb Bose being left out.

Hyderabad have been one of the weak teams of the group with the Arjun Yadav-coached team losing four of the five matches this season to sit at the bottom of the table.

## Ranjeet Kumar Dass re-elected as Assam BJP president

**GUWAHATI, JAN 18 (PTI):** Assam BJP unit president Ranjeet Kumar Dass was re-elected to the post for a second consecutive term on Saturday.

The announcement was made at a party meeting held at the Sri-manta Sankardeva Kalakshetra here in presence of Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) convenor and state minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Dass has been elected as the party's state president for another three-year term.

The chief minister congratulated Dass and thanked him for motivating the party workers at the grassroots level. "Dass has played a crucial role in strengthening the party," he added.

The NEDA convenor also congratulated Dass on his re-election as the party's state president.

"Dass has infused a new energy in the party and I am certain that together we shall continue to take the BJP to greater heights," Sarma said.

Dass said he was grateful that the party workers had given him another chance to serve them. "We shall work with renewed vigour and ensure that the BJP's mission of winning more than 100 seats in the 2021 assembly elections is achieved," he said.

The Assam Legislative Assembly has 126 seats. Dass was first elected as the party president on January 30, 2017. Dass had joined the saffron party in 1992 and was elected as an MLA from Sorbhog assembly constituency in 2011. He was the party's deputy leader in the House from 2011 to 2016.

He was re-elected from the Sorbhog constituency in 2016 assembly polls and was elected as the Speaker of the House.

Dass had resigned from the Speaker's post on being elected as the party president.

## Kalburgi murder case: Two prime accused have absconded, cannot be traced, SIT tells SC



### NEW DELHI, JAN 17

**(PTI):** Two of the main accused in the murder of rationalist MM Kalburgi have absconded and cannot be traced, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has told the Supreme Court on Friday in its status report.

Kalburgi, a former vice-chancellor of Hampi University and well-known epigraphist, was shot dead at his residence in Kalyan Nagar in Dharwad, Karnataka, on August 30, 2015.

Born in 1938, he was a Sahitya Akademi award-winning writer of old Kannada literature.

The SIT, in its status report filed before a bench of Justices R F Nariman and S Ravindra Bhat, said that investigation has been completed and charge sheet filed in the murder case.

"We have gone through the status report filed by the SIT. It says that two of the main accused have been absconding and cannot be traced. They also say that a charge sheet has been

filed in the case and matter has been remitted to a Sessions Court for trial," the bench said.

As the Karnataka High Court is monitoring the case, nothing survives in the petition filed by Kalburgi's wife Umadevi and disposed of her plea, it said.

Umadevi moved the apex court in 2017 for a probe by a National Investigation Agency (NIA) or Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) claiming that no substantial probe has been carried out so far in the murder case by the state police.

She alleged that there was a common link between the murder of her husband and that of rationalist Narendra Dabholkar and social activist Govind Pansare, and hence the probe should be done by a Central agency.

On February 26 last year, the top court had transferred the probe into the killing of Kalburgi to the SIT, already investigating the murder case of journalist-activist

Gauri Lankesh after Karnataka government said there were common links in the two cases.

The state's Crime Investigation Department was earlier probing Kalburgi's killing and a SIT was investigating the murder of Lankesh in September 2017, in Bengaluru.

The apex court had asked the Dharwad bench of the Karnataka High Court to monitor the SIT investigation into Kalburgi's killing.

It had said that if killings of Kalburgi, Lankesh, Pansare and rationalist Dabholkar are linked, it should be probed by one agency and monitored by one high court.

Maharashtra's SIT was probing the killing of Pansare in 2015 and CBI has been investigating the murder of Dabholkar on August 20, 2013.

The apex court, which had earlier termed the plea "very serious case" had initially favoured a CBI probe into the murders of Kalburgi, Pansare and Lankesh, if there was

any "common thread" in these incidents.

The killings of all these three activists happened within a period of five years.

Karnataka police had earlier in its status report told the top court that there appears to be an "intimate connection" between the killings of Kalburgi in 2015 and Lankesh in 2017.

The court had observed that one probe agency should investigate all the four cases if prima facie it appears that there is a "common thread" in the murders.

The top court had earlier pulled up Karnataka government for "doing nothing and just fooling around" with the investigation and indicated it may transfer the case to the Bombay High Court.

The apex court on January 10, 2018 had sought responses of probe agencies NIA and CBI and the state governments of Maharashtra and Karnataka on the allegation of Umadevi.

## Abetment of suicide case against Ajit Jogi, son

**BILASPUR, JAN 17 (PTI):** The police in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur district on Friday registered a case against former chief minister Ajit Jogi and his son Amit for allegedly abetting the suicide of a domestic help.

The case was registered against Ajit Jogi, president of Janta Congress Chhattisgarh, and his son and former MLA

Amit Jogi at Civil Lines police station on Thursday night, an official said.

Santosh Kaushik (30) allegedly hanged himself in the parking area outside Jogi's residence here on January 15.

His brother Krishnakumar Kaushik blamed Jogi and his son for the suicide. Santosh was falsely accused of theft and tortured, he alleged

in a police complaint.

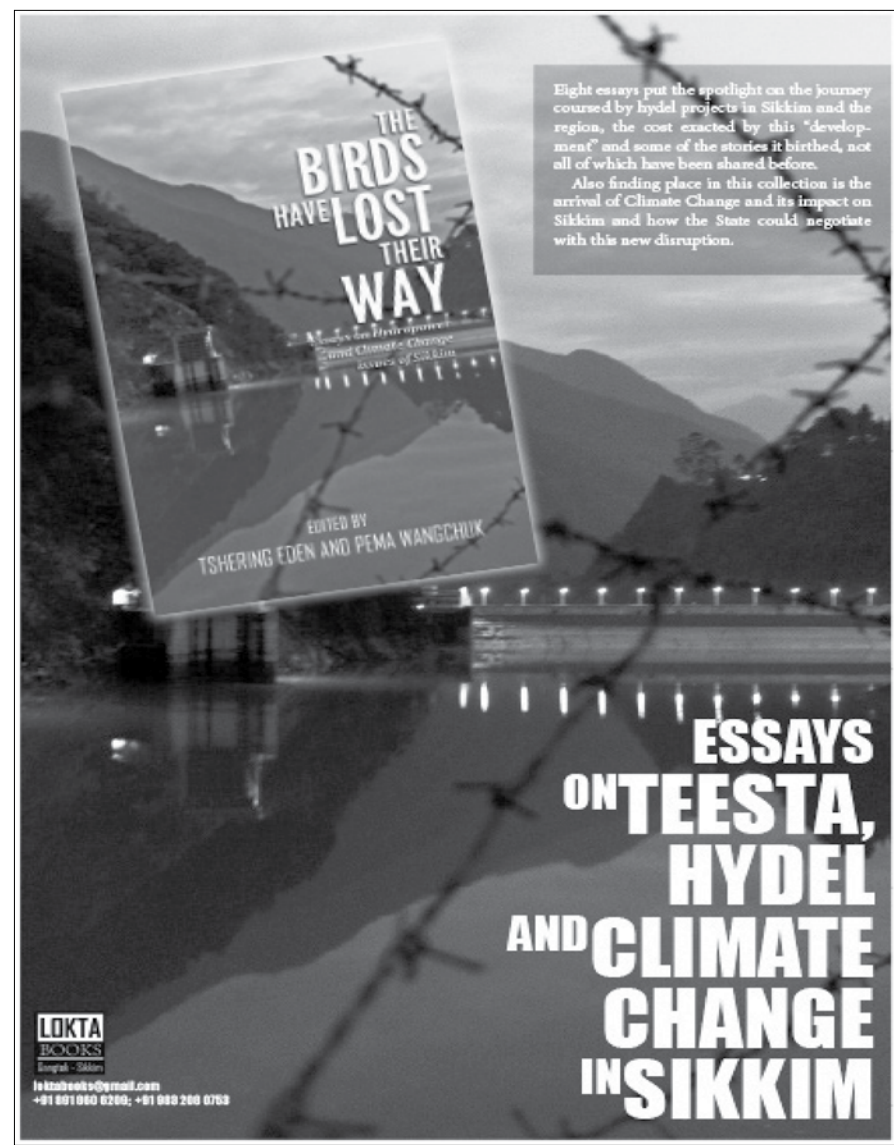
On the basis of his complaint, a case of abetment of suicide under IPC section 306 was registered against Ajit Jogi and Amit Jogi, said Superintendent of Police Prashant Agrawal.

Santosh was working as a servant at Jogi's house for the last four years, the SP said.

In a statement, Amit

Jogi said the case was part of the "political vendetta" the Congress government was pursuing against him and his father. Condoling the death, he said he and his father had nothing to do with it.

As the police had registered the case under the ruling party's pressure, they wanted a CBI probe, he added.





*Gold medal in Rome shows I am on right track in Olympic year:*

**Vinesh Phogat**

**AMANPREET SINGH**

**NEW DELHI, JAN 18 (PTI):**

Her 'ground wrestling' remains a work in progress but Vinesh Phogat on Saturday avowed that a solid gold medal-winning performance in Rome shows that she is on the right track in the Olympic year.

Competing in the first Ranking Series event of the 2020 season, Vinesh downed two tough Chinese rivals on her way to the 53kg gold medal bout, in which she overpowered Ecuador's Luisa Elizabeth Valverde.

"Competing at an international event tests our training. It tells us whether we are moving in the right direction or not? So this result shows we are on right track since it's big year, it's an Olympic year," Vinesh, India's big medal hope at the Tokyo Games, told PTI from Rome. She won by technical superiority against Ukraine's Khrystyna Bereza (10-0) and China's Lannuan Luo (15-5) before getting the better of Qianyu Pang (4-2) in the semifinal.

"At this event, I competed with girls I had never wrestled before and against Pang I was wrestling for the third time. It was important to know if her style has changed or not. These tournaments help in assessing yourself and the rivals too." She was not much troubled by her rivals in Rome but Vinesh said she still lacks when it comes to scoring point from ground positions.

With coach Woller Akos, she has been trying to bring in the required changes and has made progress, but she is still a bit far from what they want to achieve. "We worked on strength and stamina in three months of off-season. The mat training began only in January. I mostly score points from standing wrestling and not much from ground wrestling. It's not easy to change but compared to last year's January, I am much better, so the coaches are happy," she said.

"In India, I do score points from ground wrestling easily and against anyone but at this level, it's difficult. The more I compete in these competitions, the better for me. The training camps outside have helped me. Everything has changed since I switched the category. "The training, the food, the technique, the style, everything has undergone a huge change. Body takes time to adapt though mind accepts. But both mind and body have to come together," the only woman wrestler to win a medal at the 2019 World Championship, said.

It's been a year now that Vinesh is competing in 53kg category after dominating the 50kg weight division. She is gradually getting the belief that this is her category. "In 50kg, I knew each and every rival. Now in 53kg, also I have a fair idea against whom I have to use power and where I need to wrestle smartly. I can say that 60 to 70 percent I am there."

# Will Klopp's team become the GLOAT (Greatest Liverpool Of All Time)?

**JONATHAN WILSON**  
**THEGUARDIAN**

Statistically, this is likely to be Liverpool's greatest league season, which for a club with 18 championships is no small achievement. The only season that could conceivably beat this one came last year, when they did not win the title – a reminder that statistics must always be considered in context. Greatness lies not only in numbers.

And in a world in which Juventus can dispense with their manager after five successive league titles, and Barcelona sack theirs after two straight titles while top of the table, in which 95+ points has come to seem standard for a Premier League champion, it's as well to be aware that domination of a domestic league does not mean quite the same thing that it did in the past.

This should not be seen as in any sense diminishing what this Liverpool side are doing, particularly given a net spend of only around £70m over the past four years and the fact they have had to overcome a brilliant Manchester City; rather it is to say the financial structures of modern football have inflated the gap between top and bottom, through wage bills even more than transfer spending. Even allowing for changes in the size of the league and the number of points for a win, 95 points is easier to achieve than it would have been in the days of Bill Shankly, Bob Paisley or Kenny Dalglish.

All of which is a slightly long-winded way of pointing out that different eras have different tariffs and that greatness comes in many forms. The modern idea of Liverpool was created by Shankly. When he took over the club in 1959, it may only have been 12 years since their previous league title but they had been in the Second Division for five years and had been knocked out of the FA Cup the previous season by non-league Worcester City. He improved Anfield and the training ground, developed a style of play and put together a squad who gained promotion in 1962 and won the title in 1964. It was the following season, though, when Shankly's first great Liverpool probably reached their peak when they beat Leeds after extra time in the FA Cup final.

The image of Shankly was of a great motivator, someone with the charisma and will to build a club and bring a city (or half of it) with him. But that side were also tactically innovative, play-



ing what was effectively a prototype 4-4-2, although with genuine wingers in Ian Callaghan and Peter Thompson. It was not necessarily a popular way to play, as was made clear by the Mirror's report on the final, a clash of two sides who had long abandoned the traditional W-M. "More and more clubs," wrote Ken Jones, "are turning to method and discipline ... there was a certain hypnotic element about the whole thing. The fascination lay in trying to assess which side would first break the stalemate."

But that was the direction football was taking. Contemporary reporters may have been appalled by the spectacle but a modern observer would see nothing especially unusual about the game, other than perhaps to note that it feels more similar in style to modern football than to, say, the final of seven years earlier when a Nat Lofthouse-inspired Bolton had beaten Manchester United. Shankly's first great side broke new ground for the club and they did it in a way that laid down the template for Liverpool for a little over a quarter of a century.

Liverpool always tended to efficiency rather than flamboyance but that did not mean they didn't have their moments of transcendence. Perhaps the best Shankly perfor-

mance was the last, when his second great side, who had won the league and Uefa Cup the previous season, outplayed Newcastle in the 1974 FA Cup final. As Borussia Mönchengladbach had found in the Uefa Cup final a year earlier, Liverpool could physically overpower opponents but Newcastle were beaten at Wembley by a team playing extraordinary pass-and-move football.

Shankly's retirement that summer was at least partially motivated by a sense it couldn't get any better than that. In 15 years he had built two great sides, the first a remorseless machine that laid the foundations for everything that followed, the second a more flexible unit ready for the European domination subsequently enjoyed under Paisley, who had probably been leading most of the tactical development behind the scenes anyway.

It's a mark of how sustained the success was during Paisley's time in charge – six league titles, three European Cups and a Uefa Cup in nine seasons – that isolating his greatest team is so difficult. The greatest season, though, was probably 1978-79, when Liverpool won 30 of 42 league games and conceded only 16 goals. That was Paisley's side pressing on the back of a well-drilled offside

trap and, every now and again, dismantling opponents. They scored four on four occasions and put five past Derby, six past Norwich and, perhaps most memorably of all, seven past Tottenham, overwhelming them physically and tactically, and slicing them apart with the precision of their passing. That 1978-79 side also averaged more than two goals a game, their total of 85 eight more than any other side managed in a season that decade.

That was a team who featured the organisation of the back four, the creativity of Kenny Dalglish, the wing play of Ray Kennedy, the drive of Jimmy Case, Graeme Souness and Terry McDermott and the intelligence of Steve Heighway but their greatness lies in being the apogee at the centre of a protracted period of success and so lacks the romance either of Shankly's pioneering first great side or even his second when, having let the first team grow old together, he defied doubts to build another one.

From that second great Shankly side until 1990, Liverpool's dominance was barely challenged, reaching another peak in 1987-88 with Dalglish's more attacking team, built around the creativity of three signings – John Barnes, Peter Beardsley and Ray Houghton. That side pro-

duced their signature performance with the 5-0 win over Nottingham Forest, a game that, in hindsight, bears an end-of-era feel. Dalglish had moved Liverpool away from their method – perhaps a necessary step as the game changed – and for 30 years they were never quite so good again.

The Rafael Benítez years produced arguably the most memorable occasion in Liverpool's history but the beauty of the 2005 Champions League final, even leaving aside the comeback, was that it was so unexpected. It was the greatness of the underdog rather than of a team who could claim to be one of the greatest of all time. Which was only reasonable given the financial constraints under which Benítez was operating.

So to Klopp. Although Liverpool had not won the title in 25 years when he was appointed, he was taking over a side firmly entrenched in the upper reaches of the Premier League. There was no need to contrive a way of watering the grass at Anfield as Shankly had; the foundations may have been well hidden but they were there. But that perhaps is more significant when assessing the greatness of the job Klopp has done rather than of the side he has produced.

And this is a very great side, one that essentially updates the principles of Paisley's best team, pressing opponents and then cutting them apart with rapid passing moves. This side are less inclined to kill games but that is the nature of modern football; law changes and the increasing financial disparity between the elite and the rest have made the superclubs more attacking, particularly at full-back.

Having conceded 14 goals this season, Liverpool will almost certainly not match the defensive record of 1978-79, despite their run of six straight clean sheets, but they will probably score more goals; their goal difference with 17 games remaining is +36, so the +69 of Paisley's team is within reach. Since last March, the present team have been relentless, a winning machine, but Paisley's side had longevity, sustained success at home and abroad, which may yet come for Klopp.

But as to who would win a one-off game, making all requisite adjustments for fitness, nutrition and changes in the laws? Well, you'd want to watch it.

## Guardiola won't watch 'unstoppable' Liverpool face Man Utd

**MANCHESTER, JAN 18**

**(AFP):** Pep Guardiola will not watch "unstoppable" Liverpool's game with Manchester United this weekend because the gap between the Premier League leaders and his Manchester City side is too big. Guardiola insists his City players still deserve credit for the way they have played this season, even though they go into their clash with Crystal Palace on Saturday trailing 14 points behind Liverpool.

He admits that he is now interested only in securing a top-four finish and chasing honours in three cup competitions rather than events at Anfield involving Liverpool.

"We are far away, they are unstoppable in those terms. We've dropped points, we conceded and didn't win games," Guardiola told reporters on Friday. "This game is about the results and I'm glad we continue to attack quite well but the reality is the reality. They've won 20 of 21 games and they'd be leading all the leagues around the world. "It would be nice to focus on

Wilfried Zaha and Crystal Palace, and then Tuesday we have Sheffield United.

"Being so far away means it's not interesting to look at what Liverpool do. It's better to focus on what we can do for the rest of the season in the Premier League and other competitions." In the past eight years, Chelsea, twice, Leicester and Manchester United have all failed to finish in the top four in a title defence.

But City's 13-point cushion over fifth-placed United makes Champions League football next season look a near certainty for Guardiola.

- 'WE ARE FIGHTING' - "The target was catch Leicester and now it's to maintain this, always there is motivation to play good," Guardiola said. "I think the team show this season that still we are going to do it. What happened to previous champions? They gave up and didn't qualify for the Champions League. "Still we are there fighting, far away but the opponent is exceptional. I'm so proud, now we are in this position we need to qualify as quickly as possible for the top four.

## Buoyant Mohun Bagan look to make most of emotional derby

**KOLKATA, JAN 18 (PTI):** Emotions will run high when Mohun Bagan clash with arch-rivals East Bengal in what will be the penultimate I-League derby between the traditional powerhouses of Indian football here on Sunday.

The oldest football club in India, Mohun Bagan, are all set to enter the lucrative Indian Super League from next season after their merger with ATK.

But East Bengal are struggling to find new investors and their ISL entry is still not confirmed. The passionate fans, who outnumber the seats on most occasions at the gigantic Salt Lake Stadium, will look to make the most of the last two I-League derbies -- in Sunday's first leg and the reverse fixture on March 15.

The 130-year-old club is set to be rechristened as ATK-Mohun Bagan from June and the merger has evoked mixed response from fans.

"We could have done away with the name ATK-Mohun Bagan. The name Mohun Bagan is about pride and heritage and also the freedom movement," Jyoti Ghosh, a fan from Uttarpara told PTI, referring to their historic 1911 IFA Shield triumph, defeating British team, East Yorkshire Regiment.

"We are also not clear whether the iconic sailing ship logo and green-and-maroon colours will remain or not," the 27-year-old added with a tinge of disappointment.



There was another group led by a 42-year-old fan, who was holding the iconic sailing ship mascot on his head and shouting slogans.

"Whatever the people may say, but it's a step in the right direction. Ours is a heritage club and nobody would have wanted to play in the second division. We hope ATK top the table and we get to play the AFC Champions League," he said.

Both the teams, however, refrained from talking about the merger and the buzz around, instead remaining focused on the match.

"We are coming from a good result. We are just focusing on tomorrow's game. The most important thing is to focus on our game. It is a very important

game because we are playing against a very good team we will continue to give our best in the game," Mohun Bagan coach Kibu Vicuna told reporters on the eve of the match.

On current form also Mohun Bagan will be on a high, leading the standings with 14 points from seven matches and will start overwhelming favourites against East Bengal, who are smarting from back-to-back losses to slip to fifth (eight points, six matches).

A win for Mohun Bagan would take them six points clear of Punjab FC but Vicuna said anything can happen and refused to agree that East Bengal would be underdogs.

"Every derby is a special game. The dynamics of the two

teams are different but in the derbies everyone is equal. Not just Kolkata derby but this is true around the world. The good thing is we are in a good mood and we are focused on this match. That's all," Vicuna said.

Mohun Bagan's four-match winning run was halted by Punjab in a hard-fought 1-1 draw as the Kolkata heavyweights conceded the first goal from a corner. Vicuna conceded that set pieces are a concern, especially against a team boasting Lalrindika Ralte, who has a "lethal left footer".

"Every team is conceding goals from setpieces. It's true that last goal we conceded from a corner. Didika has a lethal left foot, especially with freekicks. They also have (Juan) Mera who is a very good player. We have to concentrate in defence but also the attack," Vicuna said.

East Bengal wore an unsettled look having lost their first match of the season to Churchill Brothers and then getting thrashed 1-3 at home by Gokulam Kerala.

But coach Alejandro Menendez said it's not fair to judge the side on the basis of two games.

"15 days ago we were top of the table. It was almost one year without losing a game in I League. I think judging on two games is short perspective. You have to have a bigger picture. We lacked in certain situations. We made some mistakes at some moments but that happens.



# China and Myanmar 'stand together' despite Rohingya backlash

**NAYPYIDAW (MYANMAR), JAN 18 (AFP):** China and Myanmar are set to ink mammoth infrastructure deals following a meeting on Saturday between President Xi Jinping and fallen rights icon Aung San Suu Kyi, who pledged to stand with Beijing "till the end of the world".

The Chinese leader's two-day state visit to Myanmar's purpose-built capital comes as Western investors cast a wide berth around the country due to the Rohingya crisis.

A 2017 military crackdown on the mainly Muslim minority, which UN investigators have called genocide, forced some 740,000 Rohingyas over the border into Bangladesh.

Beijing has stood strong with Myanmar despite the condemnation.

After arriving Friday Xi called the visit a "historical moment" for relations between the two neighbours, according to state-run newspaper the Global New Light of Myanmar.

He also touched on the "unfairness and inequality in international relations" in what could



be seen as a slight against the United States, which has sanctioned Myanmar army chief Min Aung Hlaing.

Myanmar leader Suu Kyi -- whose reputation lays in tatters in the West's eyes due to her defence of the army over the Rohingya crackdown -- said the country will always be at China's side.

"It goes without saying that a neighbouring country has no other choice, but to stand together till the end of the world," she said during a

celebration late Friday.

The Asian giant is now Myanmar's largest investor, and the headline deals include a deep-sea port, several economic zones and a high-speed rail link criss-crossing the country.

The so-called "China-Myanmar Economic Corridor" will carve a path of infrastructure from China's landlocked south to Myanmar's western Rakhine state -- Beijing's long-awaited gateway to the Indian Ocean. The multi-bil-

lion-dollar agreements will be on the table Saturday, in between sit-down meetings with Suu Kyi and the army chief, who stands accused of masterminding the Rohingya crackdown.

China remains an indispensable ally for its Southeast Asian neighbour, wielding a protective veto vote at the UN Security Council.

But widespread mistrust of Beijing's ambitions persists among those who are sceptical the economic benefits

will trickle down to the masses. In commercial capital Yangon, protesters are expected to rally against any reinstatement of a controversial Chinese-backed mega-dam.

The 3.6 billion 6,000 megawatt Myitsone project was suspended in 2011 in the face of vociferous criticism across the country.

This is believed to have been a personal affront to Xi, who signed the deal with Myanmar's then-military junta as vice president in 2009.

## Ukraine PM offers to resign after leaked recording



**KIEV, JAN 17 (AFP):** Ukraine's prime minister offered his resignation on Friday after audio was leaked of him questioning President Volodymyr Zelensky's grasp of economics, in the first major political test for the inexperienced leader.

It was unclear whether Zelensky would accept Oleksiy Goncharuk's offer, which came after a recording emerged of him reportedly saying the president had a "primitive understanding" of the economy.

Zelensky, a comedian with no previous political experience, came to power after a landslide election win last year and his "Servant of the People" party later won a strong majority in parliament.

He has been embroiled in the US impeachment process and faced tough talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, but had so far managed to avoid any significant domestic political problems.

The audio recording was leaked on social media on Wednesday and reportedly came from an informal December meeting between ministers and senior officials

from the National Bank.

According to local media reports, the participants discussed how to explain recent economic developments to Zelensky.

"Zelensky has a very primitive understanding of economic processes, or rather a simple understanding," Goncharuk reportedly said on the recording, adding that he himself was an economic "ignoramus". After initially denying reports he would step down, Goncharuk announced on his official Facebook page on Friday that he had offered to resign.

"To remove any doubts about our respect for and trust in the president, I have written a resignation letter and handed it over to the president," Goncharuk, 35, wrote. He did not deny making the statement, but said the audio had "artificially created an impression that my team and I do not respect the president".

"This is not true," he said. "I came to this post to carry out the president's programme." Zelensky's office said it had received the letter of resignation and would consider it. Contacted

by AFP, his spokeswoman declined any further comment.

Goncharuk became Ukraine's youngest-ever prime minister after Zelensky nominated him for the post in August, part of a team of fresh faces he promised would shake up the country's stagnant political scene.

The young lawyer was tasked with helping to revive an economy hit hard by corruption and Ukraine's five-year conflict with Moscow-backed separatists in the country's east.

Considered a supporter of liberal economic reforms, Goncharuk had co-founded a law firm at the age of 24 and managed an EU-funded NGO to improve the business environment in Ukraine.

Several ministers voiced support for Goncharuk after he offered to resign.

"We are a united team," Social Policy Minister Yulia Sokolovskaya said. "We support the position of the prime minister and are waiting for the decision of the president." It will be up to parliament to eventually consider the resignation and some criticised

Goncharuk for sending his letter directly to the president.

Timothy Ash, a London-based economist and expert on Ukraine, said the resignation offer was a "important test" for Zelensky.

"Removing Goncharuk for saying what he thinks...in a closed meeting, which was leaked, would I think send a very negative message to reformers," he wrote in a note.

"I think Zelensky rejects the resignation...But this is an important test of Zelensky's reform credentials."

Zelensky came to power promising sweeping change and has since taken several steps to resolve the separatist conflict, including prisoner exchanges and a landmark meeting with Putin in Paris last month.

But critics have accused him of doing little so far to boost the economy or tackle endemic corruption. And he has had to work in the shadow of the impeachment case against US President Donald Trump, who is accused of trying to pressure Zelensky into investigating political rival Joe Biden.

# Rainstorms douse bushfires across eastern Australia

**SYDNEY, JAN 18 (AFP):** Rain and thunderstorms doused long-burning bushfires across much of eastern Australia Saturday, but they also brought a new threat of flooding in some areas.

Major bushfires continued to rage in regions of the south and south-east of the country that have so far missed out on the rain, including in wildlife-rich forests on Kangaroo Island off the southern coast.

The fire service in New South Wales (NSW) state, the country's most populous and the hardest hit by the crisis, said 75 fires continued to burn Saturday, down from well over 100 a few days earlier.

"Rain continues to fall across a number of fire grounds," the state's rural fire service said, adding that "benign conditions" of rain and cooler temperatures were helping efforts to contain the remaining blazes.

To the north, Queensland state was hit by severe storms overnight, causing some flash flooding and road closures though no deaths or injuries were reported. Both states have suffered from one of the longest droughts in modern Australian history and some areas saw more rain Friday and Saturday than had fallen in more than a decade.

Fires continued to



burn out of control in southern New South Wales and neighbouring Victoria state, but forecasters expected significant rainfall in those areas Sunday and Monday, raising hopes that some of those blazes could be brought under control as well.

The unprecedented fires, fuelled by climate change and a years-long drought, have claimed 28 lives over the past five months.

They have scorched massive tracts of forest and bushland in eastern and southern Australia, decimated livestock on

already barren farms and destroyed more than 2,000 homes.

On Kangaroo Island, known as Australia's "Galapagos" for the large number of unique animals and other wildlife endemic to the area, fires continued to rage in a big national park.

The flames have already taken a heavy toll on the island's population of koalas, birds and other endemic marsupial species.

Authorities have warned the crisis could worsen again with Australia only halfway through its summer.

## South Koreans among seven missing in Himalayan avalanche

**KATHMANDU, JAN 18 (AFP):** An avalanche in Nepal's Annapurna region has left at least seven people missing, including four South Koreans and three Nepalis, officials said Saturday.

The incident occurred at an altitude of around 3,230 metres (10,597 feet) close to the base camp for Annapurna, one of the highest peaks in the Himalayas, following heavy snowfall on Friday.

"We are getting reports that four South Koreans and three Nepalis are out of contact after the incident. A rescue team was dispatched last night," Mira Dhakal of Nepal's tourism department told AFP.

Local police chief Dan Bahadur Karki said poor weather was hampering



rescue efforts. "The team is on its way. We also have a helicopter on standby to take off if the weather improves," Karki said.

Annapurna is an avalanche-prone and technically difficult mountain and has a higher death rate than Everest, the world's highest peak.

Education officials in South Korea said the four were part of a team of volunteer teachers working with children in Nepal. South Korea's foreign

ministry said in a statement that an emergency team would be sent to Nepal and that the families of those missing had been informed.

Thousands of trekkers visit the Annapurna region every year for its stunning views of the Himalayas.

In 2014, a snowstorm killed about 40 people on the popular circuit, in one of the biggest trekking tragedies to hit Nepal.

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**SHIMMER AND SHINE!** The actress, Florence Pugh rocks a stunning gold and teal dress arriving at Jimmy Kimmel Live! in Los Angeles.

## Cate Blanchett named jury head of Venice Film Festival

**VENICE, JAN 17 (PTI):** Two-time Oscar winner Cate Blanchett will serve as the jury head of the 2020 Venice International Film Festival.

In a statement, the festival organisers said the decision was made on January 10 by the Board of Directors chaired by Paolo Baratta.

The 50-year-old actor's name for jury president was recommended by festival director Alberto Barbera.

Blanchett, who previously served as head of Cannes Film Festival jury in 2018, said to lead the Venice jury is a "privilege" and "pleasure".

"Every year I look expectantly to the selection at Venice and every year it is surprising and distinct. Venice is one of the most atmospheric film festivals in the world a celebration of the provocative and inspirational medium that is cinema in all its forms," she said.

Barbera hailed Blanchett as an "icon of contemporary cinema" and said every filmmaker wants to work with her.

"Her commitment in the artistic and humanitarian fields and to the protection of

the environment, as well as her defence of the emancipation of women in a film industry still coming to terms with male prejudice, have made her an inspiration for society as



a whole. "Her immense talent as an actress, combined with her unique intelligence and sincere passion for cinema, are the ideal qualities for a jury president," he added.

Blanchett is best known for her performances in films such as "The Aviator", "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button", "Carol", "Blue Jasmine" and "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

The 77th edition of the Venice Film Festival will be held from September 2 to 12.

## I was becoming complacent and unhappy, says Richa Chadha

**MUMBAI, JAN 17 (PTI):** Richa Chadha says she has always strived to do roles that challenge her as an actor but there was a time in her career when she felt uninspired.

The actor decided to take time off work to reflect on what was important for her as an artiste.

"There was time when I felt bored as an actor. In the middle, I took six months off, I tried to write, learn music, travel, sketch. It was a time when I would go on sets and the director would say, 'You are a good actress, you will do it'. I was hungry to learn but I was becoming complacent and unhappy."

"In the middle of last year, I got my energy back as I was getting good scripts. It was great working with Ajay Bahl on 'Section 375', he really pushed me. I have done another film, which I can't talk about, where the director pushed me to give my best," Richa told PTI in an interview here.

Richa, who has worked in films such as "Our Lucky! Lucky Oye!", "Gangs of Waseypur", "Masaan", "Main Aur Charles", "Goliyon Ki Rasleela Ram Leela" and "Fukrey", says they all have been learnings in some way or the other.

"These kind of risks are interesting for me. They give me life. I want to do interesting work, I don't want to get boxed. A box is fruitful for a little while and then you get replaced," she said.

Omumg Kumar's "Sarbjit", which featured Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Randeep Hooda in lead roles, is the one film that Richa regrets doing.

"It pushed my career back. I was left with one speaking scene in the film and people questioned that. There are films that have not done well commercially and critically that I have taken as lessons. I learnt a lot from the directors with whom I have worked like Sudhir Mishra in 'Daas Dev', Prawaal Raman in 'Main Aur Charles'. The films that I re-

in more sex and violence. I want quality over quantity," she adds.

Her next release is "Panga", directed by Ashwini Iyer Tiwari, whose work Richa says she has loved immensely and it was one of the reasons she decided to be a part of the film. It also gave her a chance to learn kabbadi.

"I was excited for the film as I will get



gret are those that are forgotten."

Besides films, the 35-year-old actor says she is happy with her work on the digital medium - Amazon Prime Video's "Inside Edge".

There are offers for more streaming shows but she does not want to do anything that is of inferior quality.

"I get a lot of offers from the web but I don't want to do anything lesser than 'Inside Edge'. I mostly say no to other stuff because people use that excuse of not having censorship, they want to put

to learn something new, somebody else will pay for it and someone will get me good coaches, I will train a lot more, get some muscles. Besides, I like Ashwini Iyer Tiwari and her films and I thought it will be interesting to do this film."

Richa plays the role of a Kabbadi player, her character Meenu plays Kanganana Ranaut's on-screen friend.

"Panga" also starring Jassi Gill and Neena Gupta in pivotal roles, is slated to release on January 24. The film is produced by Fox Star Studios.

### 'Love Aaj Kal' is a franchisable idea: Imtiaz Ali

**MUMBAI, JAN 17 (PTI):** Director Imtiaz Ali on Friday teased that he could turn his upcoming film "Love Aaj Kal" into a franchise if he finds a new story to tell in the future.

The film is a follow-up to Imtiaz's 2009 movie, featuring Saif Ali Khan. The new film with Kartik Aaryan and Saif's daughter Sara Ali Khan also explores two stories set in different time periods. At the trailer launch of the film, Imtiaz explained the rationale behind keeping the title of the new film same as its predecessor.

"I feel this is franchisable idea. I have made two films with the same title because after ten years, the basis on which I made the earlier film has changed. I am getting the opportunity to say it in a newer way."

"If we think we can maybe take it ahead in the future after a few years, if the process of the relationship (has evolved) and if there is something new to tell, a new story, then we will try to say it," Imtiaz told reporters here.

The follow-up, which also features Randeep Hooda and debutante Arushi Sharma, will be set in 1990 and 2020.

Imtiaz said he maybe still searching for answers about the relevance of love, he is aware of its power.

"I don't know what the relevance of love is but everything in universe moves because of it. Love turns the universe around. I am at a certain age or when I was younger, I feel everybody goes through the same cycle. They have the same questions in their minds and you have knowledge of when and how it was when you were at that age. But it is not easy to say it and for somebody to follow it and correct your life."

"In some sort, it is my way of saying it to the younger generation what I understand about this question that you asked me at this age. Not that I can tell them what to do but I can show them who I am," the filmmaker said. Imtiaz also believes that the definition of love has certainly changed a lot in recent years.

"The relationship that now happens is different from what it used to be. So 'Love Aaj Kal' comes. Things are fast moving. But the reason why a boy and girl come together hasn't changed," he added.

### 'Better Call Saul' to end with its sixth season

**LOS ANGELES, JAN 17 (PTI):** Popular AMC series "Better Call Saul" is set to conclude after its sixth season.

The show, a spin-off of cult hit series "Breaking Bad", has been renewed for the sixth and final season, reported Variety. The news was shared by showrunner Peter Gould and executive producer and co-creator Vince Gilligan at the show's Television Critics' Association winter press tour panel.

The 13-episode final season will go into production later this year and air in 2021

"Better Call Saul" follows the story of con-man turned small-time lawyer, Jimmy McGill (Bob Odenkirk), beginning six years before the events of "Breaking Bad", showing his transformation into the persona of criminal-for-hire Saul Goodman.

It also stars Jonathan Banks, Rhea Seehorn, Patrick Fabian, Michael Mando and Giancarlo Esposito.

The show's fifth season is scheduled to be premiered on February 23 this year.

### 'Bad Boys for Life' releasing in India on January 31

**MUMBAI, JAN 17 (PTI):** "Bad Boys for Life", the much-awaited threequel to Will Smith and Martin Lawrence's "Bad Boys" franchise, will release in India on January 31. The announcement was made by studio Sony Pictures Entertainment India on Friday.

The third part will see Smith and Lawrence reprising their fan-favourite characters of detectives Mike Lowrey and Marcus Burnett, respectively. The story follows Lowrey and Burnett who reunite once again when someone starts murdering people involved in an old case. The film is a follow-up to the franchise's previous two entries -- "Bad Boys" (1995) and "Bad Boys II" (2003). Directed by Adil El Arbi and Bilal Fallah, "Bad Boys for Life" will also feature Vanessa Hudgens, Alexander Ludwig, Charles Melton, Paola Nunez, Kate del Castillo, Nicky Jam, and Joe Pantoliano.

**ARIES:** You did the best you could, Aries. Release yourself from the burden of guilt. You cannot go back in time and change things. Remembering this will help you move forward and awaken to the blessings. Some of you could be dealing with the demon of loneliness at this point. But are we ever truly alone? Turn inwards and you will find an inexplicable joy in your own company.

Tip: Find a sense of home within yourself.

**TAURUS:** What an anti-climatic start to the week! Things don't go as planned. In fact, they turn out better. Release the need to control the situation and trust the flow, Taurus. This is the only way to get to the desired destination in style. Some of you may find that this is also a time of endings.

Tip: To feel is to heal.

**GEMINI:** Daily reminder, Gemini: it doesn't matter how many times you have had your heart broken. You are being of light, who was born to spread the message of love. The Universe is testing your resolve at this moment. Apply the lessons you have learned

in the recent past and keep your vibrations high, no matter what.

Tip: You are a being of light and love.

**CANCER:** Overheard at the cosmic conference: your gut feelings are nothing but messages from your spirit guides. Take the so-called illogical into consideration, especially if you're making an important decision. If you have been 'feeling' something, it must be for a higher reason.

Tip: Follow the signs. You are being guided by something higher.

**LEO:** Sometimes you just have to light a candle, put on some meditative music, and call upon your spirit team for guidance. Leo, you are a vehicle for higher consciousness and are beginning to undo the layers that are keeping you from accessing your inner wisdom. What this phase of your life requires you to do: awaken your empathy as you understand the pain and suffering of another.

Tip: Awaken your empathetic side.

**VIRGO:** We're so quick to judge others or to look at them from the lens of our precon-

ceived notions. The truth is, we know nothing about them, their struggles, their fears, their insecurities or their challenges. So it's best to keep our biases aside and approach other from a space of purity and openness.

Tip: Approach the situation with a clean slate.

**LIBRA:** "There is a passion inside you, a unique talent that gives meaning to your days and drives you to share the best of yourself until the very end. If you don't know what your ikigai is yet, as Viktor Frankl says, your mission is to discover it." Here's some new-age wisdom for you to consider, Libra.

Tip: Nurture your many gifts.

**SCORPIO:** "We are the products of our past, but we don't have to be prisoners of it," said Rick Warren in his book The Purpose Driven Life. What have you traversed to the earthly realm for? What gives you a reason to jump out of bed every morning? Understand how your past failures are holding you back from making empowered choices and breaking free from the shackles.

Tip: Where is your true North?

**SAGITTARIUS:** Sagittarius, this is the week to redefine fitness goals. Take a break from routine if the monotony is getting to you, and try something different. How about giving Zumba or rock climbing a shot instead. You're also being asked to pay attention to what you put into your body. Consider more plant-based meals. Think fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and seeds—straight from the farmer's market.

Tip: Health and wellness take centre-stage.

**CAPRICORN:** You never thought you'd make it here, yet you did. Focus not on the failures, but the breakthroughs. Forgive yourself for the times you stumbled and understand where you need to realign in order to fulfill your sacred purpose. You are at an important juncture, where new pathways are opening for you. Resist the urge to choose the easy one. Exorcise the demon of self-doubt. An affirmation that will help you in your journey: "I release any beliefs that no longer assist in my soul's growth."

Tip: Trust yourself to make empowered choice.

**AQUARIUS:** Generosity is a virtue, one that your humanitarian soul understands all too well. As somebody who is blessed with the gift of abundance, you often find yourself thinking 'how can I give back?' Today, take a conscious step in this direction. Share the bounty, pay the kindness forward and show some love. Is there a cause that has been calling out to you for a while now? Know that no contribution is too big or small.

Tip: The joy of giving.

**PISCES:** You are both soulful and sensual. In this world but not of it. Don't deny yourself any aspect of this beautiful human experience. You will find that the more you accept the duality within, the more enlivened you will feel. Those who are at odds with their loved one, remember there is no right and wrong. There are simply different ways of looking at the same thing. Broach the subject with an open heart and mind in order to find a solution.

Tip: Embrace every aspect of the human experience.