



**KENDALL JENNER MAKES ROMANCE WITH DEVIN BOOKER INSTAGRAM OFFICIAL ON VALENTINE'S DAY**  
pg 08

**TAKE POLITICAL DELIBERATIONS BEYOND RHETORIC AND ATTEMPT REAL ENGAGEMENT**  
pg 04

**AUTHOR MURAKAMI HOSTS LIVE JAM FOR RELAXATION AMID PANDEMIC**  
pg 08



# Summit **TIMES**

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Pages 8 | RS. 5

## CM offers prayers at SaraswatiMandir



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 15 FEB:**

On the eve of Saraswati Puja 2021, Chief Minister, PS Tamang visited SaraswatiMandir at 5th Mile Tadong and offered prayers. In a Facebook post, the CM wrote, "I also interacted with the committee members and assured every possible support towards the augmentation of the temple and the recovery of debts invested during the construction and repairing of the Mandir structure, before the inception of the new Government." Present on the occasion were Advisors, Chief Engineer (UDD), DC (East), SP (East), President of the Mandir committee and other members.

## Self-centered groups sabotaging demand seeking tribal status for left-out communities: NSUO



**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 15 FEB:**

Nationalist Sikkim United Organization [NSUO] today alleged that "a section with narrow minded people" was currently at work trying to obstruct efforts of the State Government to secure Scheduled Tribes status for Sikkim's 12 left-out communities.

Addressing a press conference here today, NSUO chief coordinator, DK Pradhan, alleged that this section has deliberately been sowing fears about dilution of Article 371F in the event that the left-out communities were provided tribal status.

"Article 371F will stand firm till the Constitution of India is alive," he asserted.

In Mr Pradhan's crosshairs is the statement of 'I am 371F' campaign coordinator, Passang Sherpa, who has argued that tribal status for the left-out communities would dilute Article 371F or suggesting that Hindus cannot

## COVID-19: India records 11,649 new cases, 90 fresh fatalities

New Delhi, Feb 15 (PTI): India's tally of COVID-19 cases rose to 1,09,16,589 with 11,649 new infections, while fresh fatalities were recorded below 100 for the ninth time this month, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Monday. The death toll increased to 1,55,732 with 90 daily new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,06,21,220 which translates to a national COVID-19 recovery rate of 97.29 per cent, while the COVID-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.43 per cent.

The total COVID-19 active cases remained below 1.5 lakh. There are 1,39,637 active cases of

be tribal. These contentions are "totally wrong and unfortunate," he said.

"Passang Sherpa should also immediately take back his allegation that some people are instigating and prompting NSUO to take up this issue. Nobody is backing us in this issue," he asserted.

He added that Mr Sherpa's claim that Hindus cannot be recognized as Scheduled Tribes was also "totally wrong" because Limboos and Tamangs became tribals in 2003. Most of the Scheduled Tribes in the country follow the Hindu faith, he further claimed.

Mr Pradhan is convinced that a section of people here are fanning false fears because they do not want to share their privileges.

"We support the decision of the government wholeheartedly and appeal to every Sikkimese to support the move of the State government to secure tribal status for the left-out communities," he said.

coronavirus infections in the country which comprise 1.28 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to the ICMR, 20,67,16,634 samples have been tested up to February 14 with 4,86,122 samples being tested on Sunday.

The 90 new fatalities include 40 from Maharashtra and 15 from Kerala, 6 from Tamil Nadu and 5 from Madhya Pradesh.

## Sikkim appears to have turned the curve on Covid

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 15 FEB:**

Sikkim, given the falling number of daily new cases, appears to have turned the curve on Covid-19. Over the past week, it registered a few days with no new cases after some harrowing months of worrying high numbers and today again brought the positive tiding that no new infections were detected in the past 24 hours. This news, however, needs to be tempered with the fact that the VRD Labs, one at STNM Hospital and one at CRH-Tadong, where RT-PCR tests can be carried out are closed on Sundays.

There were however 26 samples screened through RAT and TrueNat on Sunday and

all returned negative for Novel Coronavirus.

Even as no new cases were reported today, the number of active cases inched further down to 54 with the discharge of two more asymptomatic Covid patients from home isolation. What is even more reassuring is that none of these 54 patients are in the ICU.

The number of active cases has dropped back to two-digits only on 29 Jan after having hovered in the upper reaches of 500 in early December 2020.

To put the falling number of active cases in context, exactly a month back, on 15 January, Sikkim 162 active cases. By 15 Jan, 2021, Sikkim had already lost 130 lives to Covid after having recorded the first Covid-

fatality on 26 July 2020. In the month since, only five more lives have been lost to the virus. While every life lost is distressing, what cannot be lost sight of is that where Sikkim was losing, on an average, more than 20 lives per month to Covid between end-July 2020 and mid-January 2021, this has now come down to 5.

Sikkim has carried out a total of 76,756 tests thus far - 54,800 via the touchstone of Covid tests, RT-PCR [of which 4,439 returned positive], 16,525 through Rapid Antigen Testing which picked up 1,431 positive cases and 5,431 TrueNat tests which detected 248 positive cases of Covid-19.

Meanwhile, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in

Sikkim held at 6,118 on Monday, 5,833 of whom have already been discharged so far from isolation facilities.

Continuing with the good news, Covid vaccination is continuing on a smart clip in the State.

In his daily health bulletin on Monday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam Gyaltzen Bhutia informed 208 health and frontline workers were vaccinated on Monday - 99 at Pakyong PHC in East District and 109 at District Hospital, Gyalshing in West District.

Thus far, a total of 9,334 health and frontline workers have received their first shots of CoviShield vaccines in the State and there are currently no cases of adverse reactions.

## TET exam fake alleges Bimal Gurung

**SMRITA KHAWAS**  
**DARJEELING, 15 FEB:**

Gorkha Janmukti Morcha [Bimal faction] held a public meeting today in Kaushal which was attended by thousands of supporters along with the leaders.

President of GJM, Bimal Gurung said, "I sacrificed everything for my community but right now, we can see that in the Hills politics is only about money. Yesterday the TET exam was held in the hills and I was very happy about it since there are so many educated unemployed youth here and I believe this type of exam will benefit our youth but the exam was fake. It was just held to stop Bimal Gurung and our



public meeting."

Mr Gurung alleged that the Education Minister, ParthaChatterjee had no knowledge of the exam being held when asked by his party's delegation

in a meeting today.

"The Education Minister said he is not aware of any TET exam which is being held in hills, so who will be responsible for this fake exam and I want

to appeal to GTA to get those who sat in this exam appointed by the Education department," he said.

He further said that under his leadership in 2002, 630 teachers were

appointed and none of them are members of his family or asked for any donation to get the job.

Mr Gurung said that he will be supporting the TMC Government and give an answer to BJP for whatever they have done to the public.

"And few days back in Assam, Mr JP Nadda announced tribal status to some communities of Assam. I want to ask him what has happened to our demand which is older and even Prime Minister Modi had promised to solve the problems of the Gorkhas by giving tribal status to 11 communities. It has been more than 7 years and nothing has been done," said Mr Gurung.

## Puzzling Covid drop in India sparks shopping spree, gains for companies

**CHRIS KAY & VRISHTI BENIWAL**  
**NEW DELHI, 15 FEB**

[BLOOMBERG]: For the home to the world's second-largest Covid-19 outbreak, life in India is almost back to normal.

Shopping mall parking lots are full again. Stores are buzzing, and there are long lines for hair salons and restaurants.

"We just got fed up sitting at home, for how long can you do that?" said Kaniz Zehra, a 32-year-old stay-at-home parent to a toddler and a 5-year-old. In recent months, she's flown for two domestic holidays; last month, she braved the crowds at the DLF Mall of India, one of the country's largest, outside of New Delhi.

"Initially there was a fear of getting the infection," she said. "But now it appears it hasn't affected Indians as badly as it hit people in other countries."

While the U.S. and large swaths of Europe remain in crisis and China stays vigilant over new outbreaks, concerns about Covid seem to have ebbed across India. Infection and death rates have dropped, and as shoppers like Zehra re-emerge, the economy and consumer companies are

posting strong gains, far sooner than most expected.

The steady decline of reported Covid infections in India has puzzled scientists, especially given that many countries are battling second, third and fourth waves. Since daily cases peaked close to 100,000 in September, new transmissions have dropped nearly 90%. Deaths have fallen by a similar rate, from more than 1,000 a day in September to fewer than 100 now.

Epidemiologists have questioned those numbers, pointing to low rates of testing and habitual underreporting of causes of death, particularly in rural India. But even if the numbers are artificially low, a lull in the country's Covid wards suggests the trend is real.

Government economists are predicting 11% economic growth for the financial year that begins April 1, enough to reverse the 7.7% contraction in 2020. "Consumer confidence is reviving," Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das said in February, pointing to renewed domestic migration, growing demand for energy and electricity and other indicators.

Already, some of the nation's largest retail and consumer companies are reaping the fruit of Indians' pent-up demand. Reliance Industries Ltd. posted record profits for the quarter that ended in December, buoyed by billionaire Mukesh Ambani's growing bet on retail. Aditya Birla Group's fashion retail business also reported quarterly profits, after a corresponding loss in the same period a year ago.

Unilever Plc's local arm posted a 20% jump in sales for the fourth quarter. "India after a very difficult period with the virus is bouncing back quickly," Unilever's Chief Executive Officer Alan Jope said in an interview with Bloomberg Television this month.

Passenger vehicle sales have ramped up, along with the import of electronic goods. Traffic at India's airports and on the roads has picked up. Nomura Holdings Inc.'s India Business Resumption Index showed a sharp increase earlier this month, coming within 3.5 percentage points of its pre-pandemic level.

"In Mumbai and Delhi -- the two main cities in India which were also the worst affected --

life certainly seems to be back to normal in terms of movement," said Abhishek Gupta, who covers India at Bloomberg Economics.

Returning confidence has so far been offset by worsening poverty, with an estimated 85 million swelling the ranks of the newly poor, especially migrant workers who fled urban centers during last year's lockdown.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is hoping that the vaccination drive that began in January will spur a wider recovery. So far, vaccine uptake has been slower than officials hoped, the rollout beset by technical hiccups. Frontline workers have also reported skepticism about the shots, following the hasty approval of a local shot before it reached final-stage tests.

"I don't think anyone really thinks that without vaccines and a vaccination program being widely available that we can go back to whatever is full normalcy," said Sireesha Yadlapalli, a Hyderabad-based senior director at the United States Pharmacopeia, a 200-year-old scientific nonprofit organization. "Hopefully this is the slowdown and there's no second wave."

# Community Outreach at Assangthang by SAATHI



## SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 15 FEB:

Sikkim Against Addiction Towards Healthy India supported by Titan Co Ltd organized a Community Outreach at Assangthang GPU, on 13 Feb, 2021. There were around 40

participants who participated in this awareness program, a press release informs.

The aim of the outreach program was to spread awareness on the role and responsibilities of women towards society with

regards to substance abuse.

During the program, resource person Prashant Sharma emphasized on how community plays an important role in supporting people suffering from addiction.

## FCAS celebrates World Consumer Rights Day at Mangan



## SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 15 FEB:

This year's World Consumer Rights Day & Consumer Awareness Program was organised and celebrated by Federation of Consumers Association Sikkim [FCAS] at Mangan, North Sikkim, today.

A press release informs that the Federation has been organizing such events and awareness programs for many years now. Today's program is one of the major consumer awareness programs that the Federation organises every year to create awareness on consumer rights.

FCAS is the only such body in the state which has been advocating for consumer rights to safeguard the interest of consumers in the entire state.

The federation will soon initiate Consumer Clubs in schools for widespread awareness on consumer rights in the state. The new executive body has called on members of the public to join the movement of consumer awareness.

"We must realize our power and come together to create a healthy ecosystem in the economy," said FCAS general secretary, Praveen Pradhan.

## Mamata condemns Disha Ravi's arrest

**KOLKATA, FEB 15 (PTI):** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday condemned the arrest of 22-year-old climate activist Disha Ravi and said the BJP government should first take action against its own IT cell which, she alleged, is spreading fake news.

She also came down heavily on the BJP government at the Centre for the rise in the prices of LPG and fuel.

"Arresting anybody who is protesting against government policies is not unacceptable. The BJP should first take action against its own IT cell members who are spreading fake news. Why two sets of rules?" Banerjee told a press conference here.

Banerjee alleged that the IT cell members of the saffron party are calling up people posing as TMC members and are maligning her party.

"I have asked Kolkata police to look into it," she

said.

"Besides, every day LPG and fuel prices are going up and the Centre is not bothered about it. It is only interested in making false promises ahead of elections," she said.

West Bengal Assembly poll is due in April-May and BJP which made deep inroads in the politically polarised state is looking to dethrone the 10-year-old TMC regime in the state.

Disha Ravi, a 22-year-old climate activist was arrested from Bengaluru recently for allegedly sharing with Greta Thunberg the "toolkit" related to the farmer's protest against the Centre's agri laws, police said on Sunday.

Delhi Police claimed that Disha Ravi, who was arrested by a cyber cell team of the force on Saturday, was an editor of the "toolkit Google doc" and the "key conspirator" in the document's formulation and dissemination.

## SKM women's wing begins series of coordination meetings in South Sikkim



## AARON RAI NAMCHI, 15 FEB:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha's Nari Shakti held a coordination meeting for Namchi-Singithang and Poklok-Kamrang constituencies at Namchi Veterinary Ground today. This was the first of the four-day series of coordination meetings to be held in South Sikkim. Similar meetings will also be held for Melli and Temi Namphing constituencies.

President SKM Nari Shakti, Kala Rai, was the chief guest of the meeting which was attended by chairpersons of various departments; Sunita Sharma, Pooja Sharma, Sunita Gajmer, Ganga Prasai, Doma Lepcha, Additional Political Secretary to the Chief Minister, Anjita Rajilim, South District Nari Shakti President, Tenny Doma Bhutia, Upadhakshya, Tshering Dem Bhutia and others.

On behalf of the Chief Minister's wife, Krishna Rai, the chief guest distributed water filters, induction cookers, wheelchairs, gas cylinders and other items to various societies, monasteries and SHG groups on the day. Addressing the gathering, Kala Rai said that the meeting is being organized on the direction of the party president, PS Tamang, to listen to the grievances of grassroots women workers of the party and gather feedback.

Accusing the former SDF government of victimising those who did not vote in its favour,

she said that SKM has never been biased and is bringing unity in the society.

She said that in the coming days, the government has many plans for women's empowerment and anybody can contact party leaders if they need help. The present government has set an example of good leadership by doing an excellent job in the COVID-19 pandemic, she stated. Sikkim Film Promotion Board Chairperson, Pooja Sharma said that the current government has nominated many women as chairpersons of various departments and is handing out contract work to many women.

There is no new or old party worker, she said further adding that she joined the party just before the elections and has been given serious responsibilities by the party. Namchi Singithang Nari Shakti convenor, Rima Gurung stressed on the need for women to play a strong role in the upcoming municipal elections. She urged the state level women representatives to consult grassroots women's representatives before nominating anyone for the municipal elections.

Poklok Kamrang Nari Shakti convenor, Minu Rai lauded the contribution of the party president's wife, Krishna Rai to the society.

Former Sikkim Democratic Front leader, Santa Ghatani said that she had struggled in SDF for 25 years but the party never appreciated her contributions. She alleged that SDF did not respect women.

## SKM Panchayat Cell meeting held in Ravangla



## SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 15 FEB:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha Panchayat Cell held a coordination

meeting with Panchayats and Ex-Panchayats of Ravangla under Barfung Constituency, South Sikkim, was conducted

today, a press release informs.

The meeting was organized under the chairmanship of

advisor, Dechen Phigu

Bhutia, and was attended by other SKM executives and functionaries.

## North dairy farmers provided milk cans and deep freezers



## WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 15 FEB:

The dairy farmers of North district were provided with milk cans and deep freezers by the North District Milk Union at Mangshila, North Sikkim, today under National Programme for Dairy Development.

The function was attended by Chairman State Women Commission, Chungkipo Lepcha as chief guest in the presence of Zilla member, Zomin Limbo, Panchayat President, Joint Director NDMU, Meena Limboo and other Panchayat members,

officials and farmers.

Managing Director NDMU, Basanta Raj Khatiwaragave a brief introduction of the organization and informed that the Milk Union acts like a bridge between government and farmers. He further urged the dairy farmers to focus on hygiene and also informed that the equipments be handled with proper care and maintenance.

Also in the function, a work order for the construction of society house at Mangshila-Tibuk GPU was handed over to the members of

the society.

The members cum farmers from different societies shared their experience in the dairy sector.

Panchayat vice president, Mangshila-Tibuk GPU, Dilli Ram Limboo talked about how dairy farming was initiated in Mangshila GPU.

Zilla member, Zomin Limboo, informed that there has been a rapid increase in dairy farming and milk production from Mangshila-Tibuk GPU.

Farmers were provided the cans,

buckets, strainers and deep freezers in the function.

While addressing the function, the chief guest stressed that there should be more interest in dairy farming and North Sikkim should be made the highest milk producer of the state. She further urged farmers to take up cluster dairy farming in the village and added that the government is always there to support the farmers.

The function ended with the vote of thanks delivered by Dy Director AH&VS, Dr Seema Rai.

## STA thanks CM for Suswastha Yojna

## SAGARCHETTRI GANGTOK, 15 FEB:

Sikkim Teachers Association [STA] has expressed its gratitude to the Chief Minister, PS Tamang for announcing the Suswastha Yojna for government employees of Sikkim. The association has said that the scheme is very beneficial for government employees and their dependents.

Addressing a press conference here today, STA CEC general secretary, MK Pradhan mentioned that Suswastha Yojna is not health insurance, but it is a scheme to provide maximum health care benefits to government employees and their dependents. This scheme is first of its kind in the entire north-

eastern region, he added.

"We are very happy with such a scheme and express our deep gratitude to the State government and the CM for taking such a unique initiative in the interest of government employees," he said.

Mr Pradhan mentioned that the scheme ensures quality treatment for government employees in 400 hospitals of the country empaneled with the State government. The scheme even covers pre-existing diseases of the beneficiary and there is no need for any referral as the beneficiary can go to the hospital of their choice by only informing the concerned authority, he added.

He informed that



a beneficiary under the scheme can avail coverage of Rs 10 lakh just by paying Rs 2400 per year.

STA publicity secretary, Bhim Sharma mentioned that the association has learnt that the government has started the scheme with regular government employees and will later cover ad-hoc and temporary employees on consolidated pay and then the general public. On the same, he

urged the government to include ad-hoc and temporary employees on consolidated pay to cover under this scheme at the earliest. He added that ad-hoc and temporary employees on consolidated pay have more problems in financing their treatment.

STA congratulated the teachers' fraternity of the State for working constantly to strengthen the education system especially during the pandemic period.

## Tripura CM says Amit Shah shared plans for BJP expansion to Nepal, Lanka

**GUWAHATI:** Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Deb has run into another controversy over his remarks on politics and policy, and this time it is international politics.

At a BJP event in state capital Agartala, Biplab Deb said the party has plans not only to expand across the country but in neighbouring nations as well.

Biplab Deb said Home Minister Amit

Shah has plans to set up BJP governments in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

During a pep talk with the party workers, the Chief Minister shared a conversation he said he had while preparing for the Tripura assembly election in 2018. The BJP defeated the Left Front government in the state eventually.

Biplab Deb said Amit Shah, who was then BJP chief, during a meeting

spoke about "overseas" expansion after winning in all the states in India.

"We were talking in the state guesthouse when Ajay Jamwal (northeast zonal secretary of BJP) said that BJP formed its government in several states. In reply, Amit Shah said that now Sri Lanka and Nepal are left.

"We have to expand the party in Sri Lanka, Nepal and win there to form a

government," Biplab Deb said of the conversation he claimed they had then. It's not yet clear if these remarks were made in jest; there was no official reaction from the party till the time report was filed.

The Chief Minister also said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress will be defeated in the state election to be held soon.

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# Valentine's Day special exhibition cricket match

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 15 FEB:**

A Valentine's Day Special Exhibition Match was played between President XI and Secretary XI of Sikkim Cricket Association at SICA Ground, Rangpo, today. President XI won the match by 30 runs.

A press release informs that President XI won the toss and chose to bat first. In the first innings, they scored 190 runs with the loss of 3 wickets in 25 overs.

Prakash Lama scored 15 runs, Biwash Lamichaney 72, SICA President Lobzang G Tenzing scored 31 runs, Bikash Pradhan 11 runs, Vice President Karma Geley Bhutia 5 runs, Sonam Palden Bhutia 6 runs not-out and Gopal Gupta 17 runs



not-out. Karma Thendup Bhutia took 2 wickets and Tika Subba took 1 wicket for Secretary XI. In the second innings, Secretary XI made 160 runs with the

loss of 8 wickets in 25 overs. Som Tshering Lepcha scored 42 runs, Rinzing Namgyal Bhutia 41 runs not-out, Secretary Tshewang Lama

scored 17 runs, Mukesh Agarwal 8 runs, Dhiraj Gurung 7 runs, Karma Thendup Bhutia 7 runs, Tika Subba 2 runs, Sonam G Tenzing 5 runs and Santosh Rawat 7 runs

not-out. Vice President Karma Gelay Bhutia took 3 wickets, Lakpa Chettri 2 wickets, Bikash Pradhan, Namgyal Wangdi and Karma Namgyal Bhutia took 1 wicket each.

## Lingtam school sets up committee for enrolment drive



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 15 FEB:**

Government Secondary School, Lingtam, East Sikkim constituted a temporary committee in order to organize an enrolment drive during a short meeting held in the school today.

A press release informs that the committee comprises of teachers, non-teaching staff, SMC members and students. The members of the committee were divided into groups covering different areas.

KB Mangar, Jeewan Mangar and IB Mangar shall oversee enrolment in Subaneydara and Bhakutar area, while RL Pradhan and Renuka Bhujel will oversee Agamlok; Chomu Bhutia and KC Bhutia are in charge of Lingtam and Dakline; TD Bhutia and Bimal Pradhan of Maneydara Bajini and Kewkhola; KM Rai and Manita Pradhan of Sisney and Arubotay Area.

All the groups shall be monitored by the school in-charge IB Pradhan and shall be assisted by

RL Pradhan for strict compliance. RL Pradhan and Renuka Bhujel started the initiative of an enrolment drive in far flung localities under Lingtam on 14 Feb, 2021.

The drive informs the local public about various scholarship schemes offered to their children in government schools besides highlighting all other facilities available in Lingtam school in particular.

Around six students are now expected to get admission as a result of their effort from those catchment areas.

## Police say Nicki Minaj's father killed by hit-and-run driver



**MINEOLA, N.Y. (AP):** The 64-year-old father of rapper Nicki Minaj has died after being struck by a hit-and-run driver in New York, police said.

Robert Maraj was walking along a road in Mineola on Long Island at 6:15 p.m. Friday when he was hit by a car that kept going, Nassau County police said. Maraj was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead Saturday.

Police are asking any witnesses to the fatal crash to come forward.

Minaj, 38, was born Onika Tanya Maraj in Trinidad and was raised in the New York City borough of Queens. She has not made any public statement about her father's death.

An email seeking comment was sent to a representative for Minaj.

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**MANGAN NAGAR PANCHAYAT**  
R.N MARG , MANGAN NORTH SIKKIM  
email@mnpnorthsikkim@gmail.com

**NOTICE TENDER**

The Tender are invited from individual having COI/ SSC and registered organization for the award of following contract under Mangan Nagar Panchayat for the year 2021-22 under Mangan Nagar Panchayat.

The details of the contract and the tender documents can be obtained from the office of the Municipal Executive Officer, Mangan Nagar Panchayat, Mangan, North Sikkim on payment by depositing the amount at Canara Bank, Mangan on all working days between 11.00 AM TO 3.00 PM.

The costs of tender forms are as follows: Rs 1500/-

SL. NO	NAME OF THE CONTRACT
1	CAR PARKING ( PLAZA & R.N,MARG )
2	PAY & USE TOILET AT BUS DARA
3	BAZAR CONTRACT
4	UTILITY CUM CAR PARKING AT SHOPPING COMPLEX LALL BAZAR
5	PAY & USE TOILET AT DZONGU TAXI STAND
6	CANTEEN CUM TOILET PAY & USE AT SHOPPING COMPLEX
7	TOILET PAY & USE AT PLAZA
8	CLOTH SHREDDING MACHINE

**DATES.**

1. First Date for issuance of Tender Documents : 22.02.2021
2. Last Date for issuance of Tender Documents : 25.02.2021
3. Last Date for submission of Sealed Tender : 26.02.2021 By 12.00 p.m
4. Date and Time of Opening of Tender : 26.02.2021 1.00 p.m. Onwards
5. The rate quoted below the offset price will be out rightly rejected.
6. The detail terms and conditions can be seen in the Tender Documents.

Municipal Executive Officer  
Mangan Nagar Panchayat.

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## I-League: Aizawl face Sudeva in a mid-table clash

**KALYANI, FEB 13 (PTI):** Aizawl FC and Sudeva Delhi FC will be keen to outdo each other when the two sides meet in a mid-table clash of the I-League here on Sunday.

"We were fantastic draw against Churchill Brothers, Aizawl were stunned by TRAU 1-0, dragging the former champions down to the eighth position with eight points from seven games.

With four rounds remaining in the first

phase, a victory for Yan Law's side will give them a chance to make up for lost ground and start moving into the top half of the standings to eventually fight for the top six spots.

"We were fantastic in the last game. The better team lost. The boys were fantastic, tactically disciplined. We kept most of the ball and creating chances. We just failed to convert.

"Despite the defeat, I am really proud of the

players, and if we convert our chances, I am sure we can win this competition," Law said. "The gap between the second and us is just three points. We are really hungry for a win, and I am sure if pick up a victory, it is going to change the table completely. I am really happy with the attitude and mentality that the players have shown in training and am hoping for a positive result," he added.

Sudeva Delhi FC put up an eye-catching display in their last game as they beat Chennai City FC 4-0. The newcomers loom in seventh place with eight points from six games but have a chance to make it a memorable debut campaign by making it to the top six.

After getting a 10-day rest, Chenchu Dorji's all-Indian contingent will be raring to get on the field and win the game against the former I-League champs.

**BUREAU OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY**  
(A Statutory body under Ministry of Power, Government of India)  
4th Floor, Sewa Bhawan, R. K. Puram, New Delhi - 110066  
Website: www.beeindia.gov.in, Ph: 011-26766700

**KIND ATTENTION : ENERGY USERS IN 13 NOTIFIED SECTORS**  
Submission of Report on the Status of Energy Consumption under Energy Conservation Act 2001 (52 of 2001)

All users/class of users of energy in the following energy intensive sectors having Annual Energy Consumption of and above the specified limit shown against the following energy intensive sectors are notified as designated consumers vide S.O. 394 (E) dated the 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2007, S.O. 3542 (E) dated 29<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2015, S.O. 1388(E) dated 02<sup>nd</sup> May, 2017 and 502147 (E) Dated 17th June, 2020, under clause (e) of section 14 of the Energy Conservation Act (52 of 2001).

S. No.	Notified Sector	Threshold Energy Consumption in metric tonne of oil equivalent (mtoe) per year
1.	Aluminium	7,500
2.	Cement	
	(a) Integrated Cement Unit	30,000
	(b) Cement Grinding Unit	10,000
3.	Commercial Buildings or Establishments	
	(a) Hotels	500
	(b) Airports	500
4.	Chlor-Alkali	12,000
5.	Electricity Distribution Companies (DISCOMs)*	-
6.	Fertilizer	30,000
7.	Iron & Steel	20,000
8.	Pulp & Paper	20,000
9.	Petroleum Refineries	90,000
10.	Petrochemical units having gas crackers or naphtha crackers or both	1,00,000
11.	Railways	
	(a) All Zonal Railways (Traction)	70,000
	(b) Workshops	750
	(C) 8 Production Factories of Railways namely, ICF, RCF, CLW, DLW, DCW, RWF, MCF & RWP	-
12.	Textile	3,000
13.	Thermal Power Stations	30,000

\* All entities having issued distribution licence by State/Joint Electricity regulatory commission under electricity Act, 2003 (36 of 2003) are Notified as Designated Consumers (DCs) vide S.O. 3445(E) dated 28.09.2020.

All units/establishment consuming more than the listed threshold energy consumption under respective sectors, notified by the Central Government under S.O. 687 (E) dated the 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, S.O. 1264 (E) dated 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016 and S.O. 998(E) dated 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2017, S.O. 1409(E) dated 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2018, S.O. 1473(E) dated 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2019, S.O. 1254(E) dated 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 are requested to submit to the concerned designated agency, with a copy to the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, a report on the status of Annual Energy Consumption, together with their annual production, for the last two years, namely, 2018-19 and 2019-20 in Form 1 notified under clause (I) of Section 14 of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 (52 of 2001), duly authenticated by the Energy Manager/Chief Executive Officer.

A copy of the required sector applicable Pro-forma or Form-I could be downloaded from BEE website : <https://beeindia.gov.in/content/pat-performa>

If any person fails to submit a report on the status of annual consumption etc by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021, he shall be liable to a penalty under clause 26 of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.

For more information/query please contact us on 011-26766700 or send mail on [newdc@beenet.in](mailto:newdc@beenet.in).

## Rectify Roles

Take political deliberations beyond rhetoric and attempt real engagement

One hears frequent complaints that “virtues” of accountability, transparency and decency have become almost alien to the political culture, but when was the last time you heard of the citizenry holding the feet of leaders to the fire and demanding accountability [at least in delivering on the roles shouldered on them by the people]?

Mudslinging, unrestrained criticism of opponents and the total lack of accountability for what one does or says have become an almost routine phenomena in what goes by way of ‘politics’ now. Although not unique to Sikkim, it is the trend here that should concern everyone here. The last election was less than two years ago and before one notices, the next will have arrived as well. The manifestos, those documents that political parties circulate to woo the electorate have meanwhile been returned to the cold storage. And while that happens, the favourite whipping horses are being flogged afresh with an angle decided by which political alignment is driving the comments. It is obviously the lack of a clearly thought out ideology among political parties, both national and regional, about their plans for Sikkim that forces them to choose rhetoric over logic or significance. While this might work for the charged times of election campaigning, people tire of these shenanigans in the more peaceful 5-year reprieve that they get in between. Even the recent acquisitions of RTI and PILs are now losing their potency to generate even interest, let alone engagement, because of their ad-nauseam duplication and, one may add, misplaced priorities. While the tools of democracy and its institutions are available to all, even if they are ‘misused’ to pursue political and/or apolitical ends, when the public domain gets proliferated only by such noises, the real issues stand at risk of getting sidelined... important debates remain uninitiated.

For example, the now rested but at one time obsessive single-minded pursuit of the then Opposition to make corruption charges against the then Chief Minister stick, came at the price of reducing the challenge of corruption to an individual. It failed to address the real challenge of a corrupt system, many times even at the cost of important public issues getting ignored. Central Direct Taxes for instance saw earnest involvement at the time only from the State Government and the party in office, with other players in the political front remaining aloof for all practical purpose. Without such involvement, consensus will not be possible for the much more vexed issues like reserved seats for the Limboos and Tamangs or even ST status for the left-out communities or how development should be planned and consultations carried out.

There are also several special schemes and initiatives underway in the State, which, if monitored properly [through scrutiny by the Opposition and “social vigilance” by the people], could deliver exceptionally generous results. Initiatives like capacity building, rural housing, combating addiction, suicides, identity & recognition, have the potential to be more than sops or token efforts if they receive wider attention and stock-taking, but this has not happened, exposing these issues to avoidable compromises and again, the occasional name-calling.

Complicated issues have traditionally remained without active involvement of the Opposition or community organizations. Discourse has traditionally received less than mature response from the groups in office and media’s penchant for sensationalism invoked to sidestep engagement. Those in office have to accept that “healthy criticism” is just a euphemism. There is no healthy or unhealthy tint to criticism; at least not on the part of the critic, it is just criticism. It is up to the subject of the criticism to decide in which spirit it is taken. The party in office has been awarded public mandate and the only awkwardness for it in the public domain is really of its own making. As far as the people are concerned, even if they appear distant in their refusal to jump to the government’s defence against allegations and have quicker instincts to ridicule, have handed the present dispensation the responsibility of governance, and with the quality of other representatives they chose, bolstered its ranks with easy opportunistic realignments... so, left no room for excuses. Should the ruling and the Opposition choose performance over rhetoric [no matter how eloquently] and public interest over score-settling, it would benefit itself a lot and the Sikkimese would profit even more.

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# Trump’s acquittal is a sign of ‘constitutional rot’ – partisanship overriding principles

JOHN E. FINN  
THECONVERSATION.COM

The Senate’s decision to acquit former President Donald Trump in his second impeachment trial may have been a victory for Trump, but it is a clear sign that democracy in the U.S. is in poor health.

As a constitutional scholar, I believe the United States – the world’s first constitutional democracy – is in a state of what I call “constitutional rot.”

In a constitutional democracy, the majority’s authority to govern is limited by the rule of law and by a set of legal rules and principles set out in the Constitution.

Constitutional rot is a condition in which we appear to be formally governed by constitutional rules and the rule of law, but the reality is quite different. When rot sets in, public officials and the public routinely ignore or subvert those rules while sanctimoniously professing fidelity to them.

Constitutional rot is not only a failure of constitutional law — it is a failure of constitutional democracy.

**APPEARANCE IS NOT REALITY** Among the practices and principles of a constitutional democracy are limited government and the separation of powers, majority rule through elections that are fair and free, respect for minority and individual liberties, and government based on reason and deliberation. These were famously stated in Federalist #1, an essay by Alexander Hamilton that laid out:

It seems to have been reserved to the people of this country ... to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force.

In my book, “Peopling the Constitution,” I asked citizens to “imagine an ugly picture: A citizenry unwilling to hold its representatives

or itself accountable to basic, fundamental constitutional rules and values.” This could happen either because fidelity to them is outweighed by some other goal, such as security or holding on to power, or because of a base impulse such as fear.

Or perhaps the people fail to hold representatives or themselves accountable because they do not know what those principles and values are or why or even if they are at risk.

Election 2020 and its long aftermath, culminating in a second impeachment trial of Trump, is a clear and undeniable sign of just how rotten things are, constitutionally speaking.

Trump and many of his Republican supporters inflamed an insurrection and encouraged violence directed at a coequal branch of government – Congress – as it discharged one of its most basic constitutional responsibilities – determining the results of the presidential election.

What ended on Jan. 6, 2021, as an assault on the peoples’ representatives began months earlier as an attack on the electoral process.

Trump and his allies justified both as the work of true constitutional patriots intent on saving the republic from imaginary electoral fraud.

### ELECTIONS: THE BASICS

Elections that are free and fair are central to constitutional democracy. This is why elections are a good marker of constitutional rot.

A constitutional democracy that cannot run elections that are free and fair, and which are acknowledged by winners and losers alike to be legitimate and conclusive, cannot call itself a democracy.

Just as important: The perception of fairness and the anticipation of fairness are critical to electoral legitimacy and public confidence in both the process and the result.

Unwarranted and baseless attacks on the legitimacy of electoral results do long-term, insidious damage to the very fabric of constitutional democracy.

Election 2020, as assessed by professional and nonpartisan election officials, policy experts and academics, was one of the safest and most secure in American history. Consider a simple and overwhelming fact: Trump and his allies filed over 60 lawsuits trying to overturn the presidential election in federal courts and lost all but one.

In many of those cases, the judges involved – many of them Trump appointees – wrote opinions that spoke in unusually harsh language about the frivolity of the lawsuits.

And yet Trump and many of his Republican compatriots, rather than acknowledge defeat, determined instead to baselessly delegitimize the election.

Republican leaders, many of whom knew that Trump’s allegations were without merit, cynical and deeply corrosive of democracy, said nothing or encouraged him. That culminated in the certification vote in the House of Representatives on Jan. 6, when 121 Republican representatives voted not to accept the results from Arizona, and 138 voted not to accept the results from Pennsylvania.

But that was not even the most significant evidence of constitutional rot on Jan. 6. Building on a series of lies months – if not years – in the making, the nation’s president encouraged his supporters to march on Capitol Hill, with tragic, deadly results.

### IS CONSTITUTIONAL ROT IRREVERSIBLE?

The constitutional customs and rules that govern elections require public officials and citizens alike to enforce and apply them. Otherwise they are sterile formalities.

In the end, a safe and healthy constitutional democracy depends

upon elected public officials and an educated citizenry that values the principles and practices of constitutional democracy more than it values political power and partisan politics.

This is why the Senate’s failure to convict Trump should be seen as a sure sign of just how deep our constitutional rot goes.

As the nation moves on, overcoming constitutional rot, I believe, requires public officials who have the courage to speak the truth and to defend the Constitution. That’s especially the case when the threat comes from one of its own. Trump’s acquittal in the Senate shows us just how uncommon public-minded officials are.

The country is fortunate that many judges, and some public officials, such as Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, honored their oaths.

The Senate’s failure to convict Trump is a constitutional failure not just “in legal terms but in civic terms – a failure not primarily of political institutions but of civic attitudes,” as constitutional scholar George Thomas recently wrote.

Overcoming rot would also rely on a foundation of constitutionally literate citizens who insist upon respect for basic constitutional values.

There is no guarantee that responsible citizens will always effectively guard constitutional values, but the best remedy for rot is civic education. Citizens will not hold their representatives – or themselves – to constitutional principles they don’t know or don’t understand.

As Thomas Jefferson counseled, “If we think the people not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.”

[the writer is Professor Emeritus of Government, Wesleyan University]

## Should I Stay or Should I Go? Here are the relationship factors people ponder when deciding whether to break up

GARY W. LEWANDOWSKI JR.  
THECONVERSATION.COM

Where do you see yourself in five years? It’s a standard job interview question, but it’s an even better question to ask yourself about your relationship.

The person you talk to, date, move in with, get engaged to, marry, break up with or divorce – it’s all up to you. You’re in the driver’s seat regarding your relationship’s trajectory.

Most of the time, you probably cruise along on autopilot, maintaining the status quo. Every once in a while, though, something disrupts that equilibrium and you seriously ponder your relationship’s fate.

At some point, most people find themselves facing the complicated decision of whether to stick with it or call it quits. While there’s lots to consider when you’re pondering your own situation, maybe it would be helpful to know how others deal with these important life decisions. Recent research, including my own in the field of relationship science, has explored how people make these choices.

### FACTORS WHEN WEIGHING A RELATIONSHIP

It feels as if there could be as many reasons someone would decide to maintain or end a relationship as there are relationships.

To learn more about what people actually consider, psychology researchers Samantha Joel, Geoff Macdonald and Elizabeth Page-Gould asked over 400 individuals who were questioning their own relationship: “What are some reasons someone might give for wanting to stay with or leave their romantic partner?”

Out of all the specific circumstances, 50 common themes emerged.

People came up with 27 broad reasons for staying. These focused on key relationship components such as attraction, physical and emotional intimacy and support. People were reluctant to lose the time and effort they had already invested and were fearful of being alone. They considered pluses, such as the desirable aspects of their partner’s personality and how much fun they had together. They also factored in practical issues, including potential family disruption and financial implications. Participants also suggested 23 general reasons to leave. These included many of the same

themes as the reasons to stay, but focused on the negative side – things like a partner’s problematic personality, acts of deception or cheating, emotional distance, lack of support and insufficient emotional or physical intimacy.

### SO MANY REASONS, BUT WHAT TO DO?

Listing these themes is one thing. How do individuals factor them into real-life decisions of whether to stay or go? To find out, the researchers did a follow-up study with over 200 people who were contemplating breaking up or getting a divorce.

Roughly half of these participants reported feeling, on balance, more inclined to stay in the troubled relationship. That makes sense – inertia is powerful. Staying often takes the least effort.

However, those same exact people simultaneously had an above-average inclination to leave, meaning they rated themselves as leaning toward breaking up. See the problem? Participants were motivated to stay with their partner at the same time they were motivated to end things. And this ambivalence was very common.

That relationship doubts are so common and people are often conflicted about what to do are what make this kind of research potentially helpful. It lends some order to the chaos by helping to identify what’s most important.

### A LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Relationship decisions are rarely as clear cut as “should I stay or should I go?” Instead, people experience subtle shifts in their commitment that build up over time. What contributes to these variations in commitment?

Relationship researchers Laura Machia and Brian Ogolsky sought to find out by interviewing participants in stable relationships. At each of eight monthly interviews, 464 participants indicated how serious their relationship was by rating how likely it was they’d marry their current partner – “0% if they were certain they would never marry their partner or never thought about marriage, and 100% if they were certain they would marry their partner in the future.” Each time their “commitment to wed” percentage shifted from one interview to the next, researchers asked why.

Participants expressed a lot of reasons for commitment fluctuations – 13,598, to be exact. The researchers distilled them down to 14 key themes. The most influential reasons were

positive and negative characterizations of the partner and relationship. These included direct statements about the partner – such as “he was fun, considerate and kind” – or about them as a couple – such as “we were drifting apart.” As you’d expect, positive statements related more to increased commitment, while negative statements were associated with declines.

The next-most-mentioned reason was circumstances – unforeseen events or experiences such as job loss, a partner becoming ill or needing to move. Interestingly, this kind of life change could either increase or decrease an individual’s commitment to the relationship. This finding is further evidence that events by themselves – say, a worldwide pandemic – aren’t the sole determinant of a relationship’s fate. A couple’s existing dynamics play a large role too.

Out of all the possible reasons that nudged people up or down the commitment scale, there was one that stood out as actually predicting whether a couple would break up: cheating. As much as other factors made people feel more or less likely to consider marriage, involvement with another dating partner was the one true relationship-killer.

In the other direction, the study also identified one factor that increased commitment and pushed relationships closer toward marriage: positive disclosure. That’s what psychologists call it when you share information with each other that encourages positive feelings, which in turn supports your relationship. Think exchanging stories about your childhoods, getting to know each other on a deeper level, or sharing good news. These kinds of disclosures strengthen relationships.

### LOVE IS A DECISION – AND RARELY CLEAR CUT

Relationships are complicated, and no one knows for sure what the future holds. It’s hard to know what the best decision is if you’re thinking about whether to stay with a partner or move on. The best relationships have their issues, while the worst relationships still have their virtues. While you don’t want to get stuck with an awful partner, you also don’t want to be unnecessarily harsh on what could be a great relationship. Maybe knowing what others consider important factors can help you make your own best choice.

[the writer is Professor of Psychology, Monmouth University]

# Oli was chosen to strengthen the charter. He has left it weakened

TIKA R PRADHAN

**KATHMANDU, 15 FEB [KATHMANDUPOST]:** When KP Sharma Oli was elected prime minister three years ago, he emerged as a strong leader. Expectations ran high as the country had achieved a long-cherished dream of having political stability and an administration that would govern for the full term. Nepalis were fed up with political instability and frequent changes in government.

Oli who had established himself as a nationalist leader declared the high-sounding slogan of "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali" his mantra. But as months passed by, Oli's slogan gradually became an annoying refrain. Analysts say Oli badly failed in utilising the mandate he was given and he rather started to walk on the regressive path from the outset. There is hardly anything remarkable about Oli's three years as prime minister except that he got a new map published, according to them.

The joint election manifesto of the CPN-UML and the CPN (Maoist Centre), which had forged an alliance to fight the 2017 elections, had said that results of the development would be seen from the third year of the government, as the first two years would be spent to set the foundations.

One of the major tasks of the Oli government was strengthening federalism and implementing the constitution.

But Oli's lack of commitment to federalism was on display from the very beginning. Despite making development his agenda, people were hardly convinced. As Oli entered his second year, the pandemic had hit the country. While the Oli government's response to Covid-19

remained poor, ministers faced corruption charges. Oli's promise to control corruption was limited to his speeches.

And just when he was about to complete three years in office, he dealt a massive blow to stability—and the constitution.

On December 20, Oli dissolved the House of Representatives over his fight with his opponents—Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhav Kumar Nepal—in the Nepal Communist Party.

He has called elections for April 30 and May 10—one and a half years before schedule. Most of the political forces are out on the streets calling his House dissolution move unconstitutional. The House dissolution move is being heard by the Supreme Court. Declared poll dates are less than three months away.

Oli was elected to ensure stability but he has thrown the country into



uncertainties, analysts say.

"By the time he completed his three years, Oli has pushed the country into such a grave situation that we are at risk of becoming a failed state," said Rajendra Maharjan, a political commentator. "The prosperity and socialism slogans were just smoke and mirrors. There was no concrete plan, vision or commitment."

Ever since dissolving the House, Oli has been repeating that elections were a must to ensure stability—something which he destroyed with a stroke of the pen on December 20.

As Oli threw the stability dream down the drain, he also assaulted the constitution and democratic values, analysts say.

"Oli utilised his three years in office in such a way that he did everything that would take the country downwards," said Shyam Shrestha, a political analyst, who has followed left politics for decades. "He has burnt the constitution and turned it into ashes. He has ignored major issues like federalism, inclusiveness and secularism."

With a strong mandate, Oli had the opportunity to institutionalise federalism and strengthen the constitution. While federalism was always at risk under Oli, the constitution got a deadly blow from him.

Oli showed his penchant for centralising power ever since he took office. He continued to make statements that provinces are just administrative units under the federal government, which showed his lack of commitment to federal set-up

ensured by the constitution.

Observers say Oli did not give two hoots about the constitution and democratic values, as his authoritarian tendencies had become apparent from his early days in power. Oli never hid his contempt for civil liberty, freedom of expression and media freedom—the tenets of a democracy.

In a democracy, the government is accountable to the people through the elected representatives, but Oli treated the hallowed Parliament as the executive's subservient. Fearing that he could be held accountable for his government's failures and could even be removed from the office, Oli suddenly prorogued the House on July 2 last year. The next season never commenced. He killed the very House that had elected him prime minister.

"Oli showed no respect for rules, laws and procedures. He was bent on governing through ordinances," said Shrestha.

Days before dissolving the House, Oli tried to disturb the balance of power by introducing a controversial ordinance on the Constitutional Council Act. Despite criticism and his promise to withdraw the ordinance, he went on to make appointments to the constitutional bodies, installing people of his choice. The constitutional bodies are envisioned by the constitution as independent agencies whose job is to put a check on the government.

According to Maharjan, the political commentator, Oli's commitment to the issues of federalism, secularism and inclusiveness was questionable even during the constitution drafting process.

Even though Nepali Congress' Sushil Koirala was prime minister when the

constitution was promulgated, Oli was the main protagonist in rushing the charter amid opposition from various sections of the society.

"Now Oli has turned out to be a leader who could go to any extent to hold on to power—even if it means undoing democracy," said Maharjan. "We are seeing democratic backsliding under Oli."

Oli, however, has been blaming his opponents for not being able to perform well. Oli has on a number of occasions tried to justify his House dissolution move, saying he was forced to take the step because of his opponents in the Nepal Communist Party led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhav Kumar Nepal.

After the House dissolution, the party has politically split, with the Dahal-Nepal faction protesting against Oli's move.

A leader from the Dahal-Nepal faction said by wasting three years in office, Oli squandered the opportunity history had bestowed on him.

"It was as though he was on an ego trip," said Raghuj Pant, a Standing Committee member of the Nepal Communist Party (Dahal-Nepal faction). "He had the people's mandate and the party's backing. In three years, he could have done so much to strengthen federalism and the constitution. Instead, he did the opposite."

Shrestha, the political analyst, said apart from carrying out development works, taking care of citizens and protecting the country from outside interference, a government's yet another important task is strengthening democracy.

"But the Oli government plunged our democracy into an abyss," said Shrestha.

## Another elephant found dead in Odisha sanctuary, sixth death this month



**BHAWANIPATNA, 15 FEB [PTI]:** Another female elephant was found dead near a waterbody at Karlapat Wildlife sanctuary in Odisha's Kalahandi district, a forest official said.

With the latest jumbo death, six elephants five female and a calf - have died at Karlapat Wildlife sanctuary within 14 days of this month, the official said.

According to the 2018 census the sanctuary had 17 elephants.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Kalahandi South Division Ashok Kumar and his team and veterinary doctors are camping in the area undertaking surveillance. "The death of elephants is due to Haemorrhage Septicemia (HS)," the DFO said.

However, the DFO said that there was no such report about the death of other animals in the sanctuary and also the cattle entering the forest from nearby villages.

Coordinator from Centre for Wildlife Health, OUAT (Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology), Bhubaneswar, Niranjan Sahu after visiting Karlapat sanctuary said: "The death of elephants is believed to be by HS. The post-mortem report and laboratory report of one dead elephant is hinting at HS (Haemorrhage Septicemia).

Cattle do get infected by HS if not vaccinated, Mr Sahu said, adding that this is perhaps the first incident where elephants are also infected with HS.

He said vaccination of domesticated cattle in the villages located inside the sanctuary and sanitization is in progress by veterinary staff supported by forest staff.

Chief District Veterinary Officer (CDVO) Dr Chaitanya Sethi said that as of now there is no reported death of domesticated cattle in the area due to HS. During October there was vaccination but in view of the present scenario further vaccination cover is in progress by veterinary staff now.

Local people and wildlife lovers, however, do not take the incident lightly. Pramod Kumar Singhdeo, a local from Karlapat belonging to the erstwhile Zamindar family of Karlapat and having in-depth knowledge on the flora fauna of the locality, said: "The forest department has dug salt ponds

in different places to provide salted drinking water to the wild animals."

The possibility of poachers poisoning some ponds to kill wild animals cannot be ruled out, he said demanding an investigation into the matter.

"The water from the salt ponds should be sent for laboratory analysis to ascertain the fact. It may also happen that the cattle infected with HS might have transmitted infection in the salt pond which affected the elephants also," he said.

However, forest department officials rejected the second argument saying that no domestic cattle is found to have the HS infection.

Another local person claimed that though the forest department had earlier installed CCTV Cameras in several spots to monitor movement of wild animals, those were removed for unknown reasons.

Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary is spread over 175 square kilometre area and is famous for lush green dry deciduous forest, varieties of flora and fauna and animals like, elephant, leopard, Gaur, Sambar, barking deer, Indian wolf, wild dog, wild pig, sloth bear, Malabar giant squirrel and Pangolin.

This apart a variety of birds like peafowl, peacock, hornbill, Red jungle fowl, partridges, Spurfowl, Hill Myna, Brahminy kite and reptilian fauna includes Mugger, crocodile, monitor lizard, snakes both poisonous and non-poisonous are found in the sanctuary.

The forest consists of flora like Sal, Bija, Asan, Harida, Amala, Bahada and Bamboo and varieties of medicinal plants.

This sanctuary was first notified in 1969 by the conservator of Forest and was formally notified under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 in 1992. The undulated topography of the sanctuary, with hills, valleys and perennial streams including Sagada river and its tributaries with deep water pools in places gives it a unique charm, officials said.

There are several small and big waterfalls inside the sanctuary like Phurlijharan, Ghusrigudi, Dumnijhola, Kamalajharan, Koyirupa, Kuang and Raja Rani.

## Former chief justices of Nepal respond to Supreme Court, say they are not in contempt

**KATHMANDU, 15 FEB**

**[KATHMANDUPOST]:**

Four former chief justices have said that exercising their right to freedom of speech guaranteed by the constitution cannot be a contempt of court. Of the four former chief justices, Min Bahadur Rayamajhi, Kalyan Shrestha and Sushila Karki—have furnished a joint response while Anup Raj Sharm has furnished a separate response.

A single bench of Justice Manoj Kumar Sharma on January 28 had asked the four former justices to reply in writing over their January 8 statement in which they had said that the Constitution of Nepal doesn't allow the Oli government to dissolve the House of Representatives.

Reiterating that the executive's move of

dissolving the House of Representatives was unconstitutional, all four former chief justices have said the petition accusing them of committing contempt of court must be annulled as there was no explanation on how and on what basis the press statement was tantamount to contempt of court.

"It's not that as a legal practitioner the freedom of expression should be blocked on the issues of justice," states the joint response of the three former chief justices. "International standards including the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary and Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct have stated that even the incumbent legal practitioners can form organisations, gatherings, and express their opinions using

their inherent right to freedom."

The former justices have said if the court wanted to establish that public debate should be banned on sub-judice case as demanded by the writ petitioners, all the intellectuals, writers, journalists, legal experts, politicians and general public who are currently debating the House dissolution issue should be punished for contempt of court which is not acceptable as per freedom of speech is guaranteed by the constitution.

In his response, former chief justice Sharma has said the writ petitioners seemed to have filed the petition just for cheap popularity with an ill-intention. "Since human rights, fundamental rights, independent judiciary, rule of law and good

governance are the matters of my concern, it is obvious that I would comment on an issue like the House dissolution which is of public concern," Sharma has said in his response. "The statement issued after analyzing the articles mentioned by the executive head and seeing that it was unconstitutional, it cannot be contempt of court."

On January 27, two separate contempt of court cases were filed at the Supreme Court by advocates Lochan Bhattarai and Dhanjit Basnet claiming that the joint press statement of the four former chief justices on the sub-judice case amounts to contempt of court. The retired chief justices on January 8 had made a joint statement saying that

governance are the matters of my concern, it is obvious that I would comment on an issue like the House dissolution which is of public concern," Sharma has said in his response.

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## Gujarat CM tests Covid+ve hours after he fainted on stage

**NEW DELHI, 15 FEB**

**[NDTV]:**

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has tested positive for coronavirus, hours after he fainted on stage during an election rally in Vadodra, and was flown to Ahmedabad to be admitted to a hospital. He has mild symptoms. Two other BJP leaders in the state - Bhikhubhai Dalsaniya and MP Vinod Chavda - have contracted the virus, Gujarat BJP chief CR Paatil said.

Last evening, Mr Rupani, 64, was addressing a rally for the upcoming civic polls when he suddenly fainted on stage; he was given first-aid shortly afterwards and was later flown to Ahmedabad in a helicopter, news agency PTI reported.

"He fainted on stage and I gave him a primary medical treatment. He was fine and walked back to his car from the stage," Vadodra BJP chief Dr

Vijay Shah was quoted as saying by PTI.

In Ahmedabad, he was admitted to the UN Mehta hospital. His sample for Covid was collected on Sunday night and sent for RT-PCR test which has come out positive for coronavirus, said a health bulletin issued by the hospital.

"His (Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani's) condition is stable. All his medical check-up reports including ECG and CT scan are normal. There is nothing to worry about," Dr RK Patel, Director of UN Mehta hospital, Ahmedabad, was quoted as saying by news agency ANI earlier today.

Six municipal corporations in Gujarat, including Vadodra, will hold elections on February 21 while polls for municipalities, districts and taluka panchayats will be held on February 28.

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## Games can go on: why stick to Tokyo when a global Olympics would unite the planet?

SIMON BURNTON

LONDON, 15 FEB [THE GUARDIAN]: Careful, caution, achtung, cuidado, those of a nervous disposition please look away now and others please fasten your seatbelts and place yourselves in the brace position: I am about to praise the IOC for its wisdom and foresight.

In the middle of 2019, months before whatever took place between a bat and a pangolin to set off this interminable period of dreary house arrest/long-term state of fear and danger (delete as appropriate according to level of privilege), the IOC met in Lausanne to choose a host for the 2026 Winter Games, to inaugurate its new headquarters, to hold a two-hour award ceremony for its broadcast partners, and to update and ratify the Olympic charter. Among the less eye-catching decisions taken, announced to little fanfare in the fifth subsection of the accompanying press release, was one that could end up rescuing the 2021 Olympics.

Looking back now, nearly two years on, some of the decisions made in Lausanne have proven – and these are words not frequently used to describe sporting administrators, least of all the IOC – astonishingly perspicacious. In the section of the charter that focuses on the Olympic Games themselves, there were two alterations, motivated – according to what we were told at the time – by a long-term ambition to add “flexibility” to the process of choosing hosts. It may just be a happy accident, but these now appear of such precognition that the most sensible explanation is that someone travelled back in time from the post-Covid world to warn of the troubles ahead.

For a start, clause four – “the non-celebration of the Olympic Games during the year in which they should be held entails the cancellation of the rights of the host city” – some version of which had been in the charter since it was first produced in English in 1930, was deleted in its entirety. Though the Games have not always been able to proceed as



planned, most obviously in 1940 (also when Tokyo was supposed to host), when a war broke out they were first relocated to Helsinki and then abandoned altogether, no host city had ever attempted to move them to a different year; within nine months of the IOC meeting, Tokyo had sought a postponement.

Amid fevered speculation about an outright abandonment, last month Thomas Bach, president of the IOC, insisted that the Games would go ahead in Tokyo as re-planned and promised that “we are not speculating about whether the Games are taking place, we are working on how the Games are taking place”. Their task, if not completely insurmountable, is considerably more daunting than anything to be faced by those involved in the first Olympic sport climbing competition, due to start in five months, three weeks and one day.

The Olympic Village, where athletes and coaches of all nations – in 2016 there were 11,384 athletes representing 205 countries competing in 306 events – would live cheek by jowl in a series of apartment blocks – 21 buildings, 3,850 flats, 10,000 rooms, 18,000 beds – while eating in a single cavernous 24-hour catering facility, seems completely unsustainable in a world coping with Covid. Before the pandemic struck around 25,000 media accreditations were being issued, 600,000 tourists expected and 150,000 staff recruited. It is hard to see how any one of these groups can be brought together this year, let alone all of them.

The loss of spectators diminishes all sporting events, but at the

Olympics the loss of the village, and as the 1958 Olympic charter innocently put it “the opportunity enabling all nationalities to be together, without discrimination of race, colour, religion, or politics” – a togetherness now traditionally celebrated through the medium of wild post-event partying and unrestrained McDonald’s consumption – would do most to change the athletes’ experience. Once competitors have to be scattered across the host city you might as well keep going, and take advantage of the other key decision of the 2019 IOC Commission.

Other than in 1956, when equestrian events were held in Stockholm because Australia’s savage quarantine regulations made the idea of transporting horses to join the two-legged athletes in Melbourne unappealing, and occasions when landlocked hosts have forced sailors and rowers to nearby waterways, Olympic events have always been held in one city. But in 2019 an extra sentence was added to the charter here: “Where deemed appropriate, the IOC may elect several cities, or other entities, such as regions, states or countries, as host of the Olympic Games.”

Nobody could have anticipated that the time to trigger that rule would so swiftly be upon us. If the barriers to holding these events together in Tokyo prove unsurmountable, either the 32nd Olympiad is cancelled altogether, denying a generation of athletes the chance to reach the pinnacle of their careers and denying the world its quadrennial fix of briefly considering synchronised swimming and rhythmic gymnastics

important, or a different path is found.

One of my favourite Olympic stories is the tale of Don Thompson, the race walker who managed to prepare for the heat of the 1960 Rome Olympics during winter in Cranford, Middlesex, by bringing every portable heater he could find into his bathroom, blocking doors and windows with towels, wearing his mum’s anorak over a full tracksuit and exercising as vigorously as he could in the space between the bath and the toilet. He won the gold medal. As tales of adversity go it is relatively trivial, but it demonstrates a truth about the Olympics and, even more clearly, the Paralympics: it is a festival for those who will always find a way, for people who cock a snook at the impossible. Never has that attitude been more necessary than now.

Make the Games global. Spread events and athletes around the world, in every time zone, creating an Olympic marathon of 24-hour-a-day elite sport. Let Tokyo host as many events as it can safely handle and redistribute the remainder among the world’s greatest venues, from Wembley to Wrigley Field, and among nations unlikely to host a full Olympics, from Morocco to Moldova, Mexico to Malaysia. If Japan cannot host the Games in their entirety they should instead be celebrated in true Covid fashion, by people forced to be physically distant yet managing to feel united – a unity not of place but of purpose. It might not be what we have come to expect our Olympics to look like, but as Pierre de Coubertin was so fond of saying, it is the taking part that counts.

## Lionel Messi “Happy” Leading Barcelona Revival But PSG A Reminder Of What Could Await

BARCELONA, 15 FEB [AFP]: Lionel Messi put his arm around Ilaix Moriba, the 18-year-old born in the same year Messi made his Barcelona debut and who was now being given his own chance to play for the club’s first team. Ilaix had just set up the opening goal against Alaves on Saturday when he was congratulated by his 33-year-old captain, whose task it is on Tuesday to lead this youthful Barca to an unfancied victory against Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League last 16. From nurturing the next generation of Barcelona talents to confronting one of Europe’s richest, most

ambitious clubs, the fork in the road for Messi’s future is becoming clear.

PSG may not be Messi’s preferred choice this summer, especially if Manchester City decide the Argentinian is the final piece of the jigsaw for a team already ahead of the rest in the Premier League.

But the two clubs remain his most realistic destinations, both united in representing almost everything that staying put at Barcelona would not. Clubs ready, in theory, to win the biggest trophies immediately and able to spend whatever it takes to do it.

Meanwhile Messi’s suspicions in August, when he sent the burofax requesting he depart for

free, have arguably been confirmed. Barcelona appear neither ready to win the biggest trophies immediately nor able to spend what is needed to do it. As it stands, Koeman’s team sit third in La Liga, eight points behind Atletico Madrid. They were beaten by Athletic Bilbao in the Spanish Super Cup and trail Sevilla 2-0 after the semi-final first leg of the Copa del Rey. And yet while nobody knows what Messi will decide, perhaps not even Messi – who told La Sexta in December he “wouldn’t be right to say what I’m going to do because I don’t know either” – there is reason to think Barca’s chances have not only survived the disappointments but been

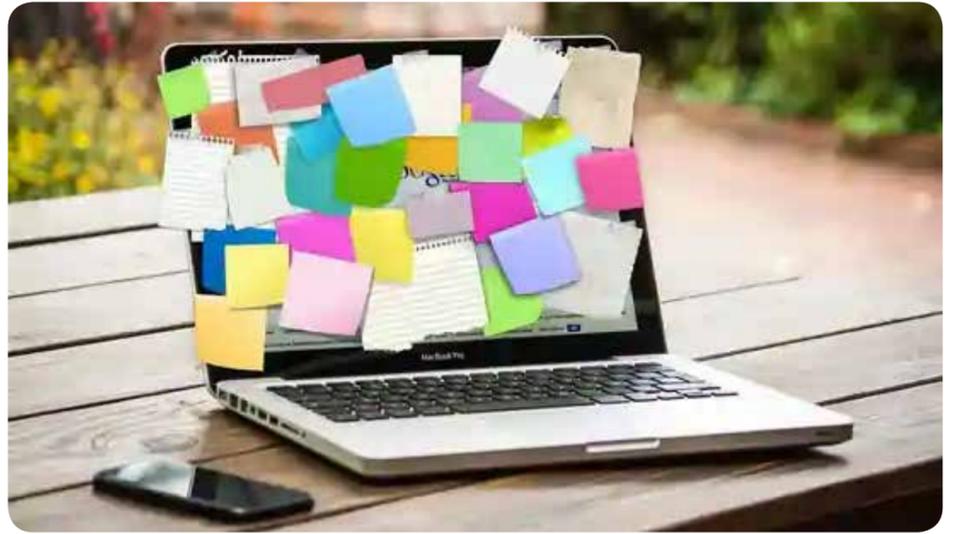
improved in spite of them. Barcelona stabilised

When Messi explained to goal.com why he wanted to go last summer, he reiterated his desire for a “winning project” but also said he “wanted to live my last years in football happily”. He admitted how hard it was to tell his family they were leaving.

For the first few weeks of the season, he seemed distracted, like a player giving his all while simultaneously wishing he was somewhere else.

Yet Barcelona stabilised under Koeman – never perfect and always far from the finished article – but with a renewed sense of purpose emerging.

## Book explores myriad career dilemmas people face



NEW DELHI, FEB 15 (PTI): A new book traces the journey of a professional from trainee level to the top post in an organisation, providing insights on different dilemmas in a person’s career, how to navigate and resolve them.

In “The Right Choice: Resolving 10 Career Dilemmas For Extraordinary Success”, management thinker Shiv Shivakumar discusses 10 commonly faced dilemmas, providing his perspective based on his experience and observations of CEOs and colleagues.

He shares lessons and learnings on each of these 10 dilemmas.

The book, published by Penguin India, contains real-life perspectives of 24 outstanding professionals who faced these dilemmas or have helped people resolve them. These include 11 CEOs, six HR leaders and six entrepreneurs. Of the 24, there are 11 women professionals.

Shivakumar, who is currently group executive president (corporate strategy) at Aditya Birla Group, says careers rarely follow a straight-line path or a neat upward

curve unlike what most business articles, leadership interviews and speeches would have us believe.

“The most successful careers are, in fact, a set of zigzag patterns, marked by spells of stagnation, interspersed with rapid growth,” he writes.

What constitutes a good career?

Shivakumar says what defines a good career is in itself a dilemma though a good career is “one where you learn at the start, then go on to contribute at the end when you multiply that learning, coupled with all the experience and wisdom garnered along the way”.

According to the author, from the plethora of both successful and unsuccessful careers he has seen and studied over decades, his five big career lessons are: there is no Manual 101 for a successful career; no two careers are alike, even though candidates may well have many things in common; timing is of paramount importance for a good career; a good career reaches out beyond your job’s boundaries; and the

maturity to deal with frustrations at work.

He also says that this book is all about the “different dilemmas you face in a career where many alternatives may look good but you still have to make a choice.

It aims to equip you to smoothly navigate your career journey - a dream journey everyone sets out on wanting to progress from management trainee to the coveted position of managing director”.

On the 10 dilemmas highlighted in the book, he says they aren’t sourced from any textbook.

They are “drawn from my varied observations and experiences over the years. They contain an even blend of logic and magic in them, where the best people talk of the magic of how they resolved the dilemma. All of these were actual situations faced by people in some manner, shape or form, at some point in their professional journey”.

Shivakumar says his objective behind sharing these learnings is to “help readers form a better understanding and appreciation of such scenarios”.

## India’s buzzing crowd take joy from knowing where to look in grim times

ANAND VASU  
CHENNAI, 15 FEB [THE GUARDIAN]:

Television viewers of a certain vintage will have a clear memory of this experience: the picture on the screen is hazy, shaky, doing things that would today be called glitching, with the sound either a static buzz or simply nonexistent.

You then fiddle with the butterfly antenna vigorously, perhaps give the box a thump or two for good measure, and it just clicks: you can see again and the audio is crystal clear. Everything just comes to life magically. It felt that way to be at the cricket at the Chepauk stadium in Chennai on a warm yet not unpleasant February morning, as normal service resumed in Test cricket in India.

OK, it wasn’t quite normal service – 15,000 tickets were made available and around 12,000 turned up – but just how much was missed by not having a crowd was apparent early on. And it wasn’t as though this was a long hiatus. The first Test against England was the only one to be played in front of deliberately empty stands in India, with the IPL staged overseas. But the crowd still made its presence felt once more.

The first auditory element that caught the attention was when the two captains were in the middle with the match



referee and broadcasters. Even before the result of the toss was shown on TV screens, you knew what had happened: the roar meant Virat Kohli had won the toss and it would be a batting day.

Not long after, the first chant rang around the ground – “Ro-hit, Ro-hit” – as India’s opening batsman took strike, waiting for Stuart Broad to begin his run-up. Shubman Gill went before he could feel the love, while Cheteshwar Pujara’s arrival meant that the heart rate was being settled at one end even as it raced at the other.

Rohit Sharma is the kind of batsman who likes to take his time early on knowing full well that he can go big, but this was not that sort of day. The full face of the bat was in evidence, first sending the ball through cover, then mid-off. Soon enough, another delivery was chipped over mid-on. Pujara was content just enjoying the best seat in the house, contributing eight of the first 50 runs of the partnership.

When England’s quick bowlers hit the deck, and sometimes even when the batsmen played the ball into the

pitch, the top loosened, a puff of dust showing this was a very different surface to the one the previous Test had been played on.

But even as pace gave way to spin, Rohit could not be checked. The opener’s scores the past three times he went past 50 at home were 176, 127 and 212 and he looked in that mood once again, despite losing Pujara.

The crowd let out the loudest cheer of the day at that point, not to celebrate Jack Leach’s bowling but to welcome the arrival of Kohli. It is a tradition that bemuses visiting teams but one that is ingrained in the Indian psyche by two decades of waiting for Sachin Tendulkar to come to the crease at No 4.

But the “Koh-li, Koh-li” chant was shut down before it could reach a climax when Moeen Ali combined flight, dip and turn to bowl the captain through the gate.

Momentarily the oxygen was sucked out of the ground and it sounded empty, but Rohit’s ascendancy and Ajinkya Rahane’s calm seeded the first “India, India” chants of the day.

If the first session

was won by Rohit, the second, wicketless one, was India’s. But England took the third as the sun began its descent and the flags atop the Anna Pavilion flagged for the first time in the day.

While the intensity remained throughout there was more action off the field towards the close, the third umpire ruling Rohit safe on a tight stumping call and then failing to see that Rahane had gloved one to short-leg.

Twitter was afire, the lost review was reinstated, but these were not issues that gripped those present. For the crowd all that mattered was that India had 300 on the board, Rohit had treated them to a sumptuous feast and India were optimistically ahead in conditions they are best placed to make the most of.

This was a throwback to simpler times for those at the ground. There was a sense of gratitude at just being able to be there, allied with a reminder, if only in a cricketing sense, that even in these most depressing of times, there are things from which to take joy if you know where to look.

# As vaccinations lag, Israel combats online misinformation

**JERUSALEM (AP):** After surging ahead in the race to vaccinate its population against the coronavirus, Israel is blaming online misinformation for a sudden slowdown in the campaign. Now, officials are fighting back.

Israel's Health Ministry, which is spearheading the vaccination efforts, is employing both warnings and incentives as it tries to persuade reluctant holdouts to get immunized. It has beefed up a digital task force to counter spurious claims about the vaccines, while local governments are turning to DJs and free food to lure people to vaccination centers. Concerts and museums could soon be off limits to the unvaccinated.

"Decide whether you are part of the celebration or whether you will be left behind," Health Minister Yuli Edelstein declared on Twitter. "Just lend a shoulder to the vaccine."

Since launching its COVID-19 vaccine campaign in December, over a quarter of the population — 2.5 million people — has received both doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, according to the Health Ministry. Over 42% have received the first shot.

The vaccination rates are among the highest in the world, and many countries are looking at the Israeli experience to understand what may lie ahead in the future.

But in a cause for concern, Israel has seen a drop in immunization rates since making the vaccine available to everyone over the age of 16 this month. In February, Israel averaged just over 106,000 vaccinations per day, down from January's daily average of more than 127,000 per day, according to Health Ministry statistics.

The reluctance of some groups in the population to get vaccinated is a key reason why infection rates remain high.

Israel, a country of



9.3 million people, has reported over 5,000 new cases each day over the past week, according to the ministry. In all, the country has recorded over 723,000 cases of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic and nearly 5,400 deaths — over 20% of them in the past month.

Last week Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has pinned his reelection hopes on the vaccination campaign, said the only obstacle to completing the task was "the fake news and the superstitious and sometimes malicious beliefs that are planted in the public and on the internet."

The Health Ministry has reportedly invested millions of dollars in its efforts to educate the public.

The task has been complicated because different segments of society have resisted vaccination calls for different reasons.

In the case of the ultra-Orthodox, some influential religious leaders have called on their followers not to be immunized. Meanwhile, Israel's Arab minority tends to suffer from a lack of trust in the Jewish leadership. And younger Israelis often think they can't get seriously ill.

Einav Shimron, the Health Ministry's deputy director for international relations, said the ministry is working with physicians and religious leaders to counter misinformation, such as

claims that the vaccine can cause infertility.

The ministry manages a command center with 11 trackers who monitor social media activity for anti-vaccination posts in Hebrew, Russian, Amharic, Arabic and English on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Telegram. The center is adding more staffers in the coming days.

The undertaking is akin to whack-a-mole for conspiracy theories.

Shimron said center alerts the Justice Ministry to any misinformation, and the ministry immediately presses the social media networks to remove the false claims. "There are several times we even called the police" on grounds that the false claims are a public health risk, she said.

In the ultra-Orthodox community, where internet use is low, the response is often more low tech. Anti-vaccination rabbis have posted false claims on posters — known as pashkevils — commonly used to spread messages among the faithful. The ministry is countering with pashkevils of its own.

Rabbi Yuval Hacohe Asherov, a popular Jewish preacher with an online following who has stated that germs do not cause diseases, has posted numerous anti-vaccine videos with hundreds of thousands of views. A recent video falsely claimed the COVID-19 vaccine caused death.

"Why run? Why vaccinate now? Let's do it in another half a year — maybe. Let's see what happens," Asherov said. "Why should the Swiss and Chinese use us as guinea pigs to see what happens?"

The Health Ministry has asked the Justice Ministry to try to get Asherov's videos pulled from YouTube and said that he "endangers the public."

Asherov declined requests for comment. It was not clear if YouTube has been formally approached.

But Avishai Matia, another anti-vaccine activist, said his Facebook and Twitter accounts with thousands of followers were suspended this month in what he called a "violent reaction by the technology giants in cooperation with the WHO and other groups."

Matia has wrongly claimed the Pfizer vaccine is "an experimental drug" that is being tested on Israeli citizens.

In fact, it has been granted approval for emergency use in the U.S. and Europe. In exchange for getting sufficient quantities for its population, Israel has agreed to share data with Pfizer, though it is not conducting any experiments.

Facebook did not respond to requests for comment about its collaboration with Israeli authorities.

At the same time, authorities are devising

incentives for people to get the jab. The Health and Culture ministries said Sunday that museums, libraries, concert venues and other cultural events will reopen later this month — but only to those who have been fully immunized.

The Health Ministry is also enlisting dozens of Israeli social media influencers to promote immunization in concert with its own online video campaign.

One new message released on Valentine's Day showed a man presenting his girlfriend with a small box appearing to contain an engagement ring. "Will you get vaccinated with me?" he asks, as she opens the box to find a vaccine vial.

The ultra-Orthodox town of Bnei Brak has tried to encourage immunization by serving free cholent — a hearty stew — to residents who turn up for a vaccine. A municipal spokesman said Thursday's "Operation Cholent" brought in three times the typical number of recipients.

Holon, a Tel Aviv suburb, has enlisted the help of DJs and a party atmosphere to draw over-16s to receive immunizations. Ministry figures show Israelis between 16-30 have been vaccinated at levels far below the national average.

For many young and middle-aged Israelis, however, the availability of coronavirus vaccines has been enough of an incentive to line up.

At an immunization center in Tel Aviv, Moran Keret, 44, said that a friend convinced her to go. "The corona is not going away. So if it's not disappearing, I'm here."

## Dragnet, planned law boost French fight of Islamic radicals

**PARIS (AP):** More than three dozen police officers descended on a small private school in Paris, blocked the 92 students inside their classrooms, took photos everywhere, even inside the refrigerator, and grilled the school director in her office.

"It was like they were moving in on a drug deal," HananeLoukili, the director and co-founder of the MHS middle and high school said, recalling the Nov. 17 scene.

Loukili didn't know it then, but a team from the Cell to Fight Radical Islam and Community Withdrawal, or CLIR, had arrived for an inspection. The dragnet sweeps schools, shops, clubs or mosques to rout out "radicalization." Within a week, a shaken Loukili informed students their school was shutting down.

Loukili insists she is no radical, but such operations illustrate the extent of French efforts to fight extremism as lawmakers prepare to vote Tuesday on a bill aimed at snuffing it out.

The MHS school had an unusual profile. It was secular and co-educational but allowed female Muslim students to wear headscarves in class — forbidden in public schools — and to pray during breaks. Unlike private Muslim schools in France, where headscarves are allowed, MHS did not offer religion or theology courses.

Loukili and others at the school claim it was a perfect target in what some say is an uncomfortable climate for France's Muslims.

Scrubbing France clean of radicals and their breeding grounds is a priority cause of President Emmanuel Macron in a nation bloodied by terror attacks, including the beheading of a teacher outside his school in a

suburb outside Paris in October, followed by a deadly attack inside the basilica in Nice.

The proposed legislation is intended to re-anchor secularism in a changing France, where Muslims are increasingly visible and Islam — the nation's No. 2 religion — is gaining a stronger voice.

The legislation, expected to pass the first critical vote, will also expand and facilitate the crackdown.

Along with the bill, contested by some Muslims, politicians and others, such strong-arm inspections risk accentuating the climate of suspicion many Muslims feel in a country where the vast majority of Muslims don't hold extremist views.

Loukili, herself a Muslim, is well aware of major problems she and her school faced linked to fire hazards, but fervently denied in an Associated Press interview, any links to radicalism by her or staff at the school, which opened in 2015.

Only on Dec. 9, did Loukili learn her situation was graver than she thought. A statement from the Police Prefecture and prosecutors office suggested the closure was part of a growing push to "fight all forms of separatism" — the word coined by Macron for extremists who undermine the nation's values in a bid to create a "counter society."

Dragnet raids like those unleashed against Loukili's school, which were initially carried out as an experiment shortly after Macron took office in 2017, have become the underside of the presidential priority, unearthing soft spots on a local level to nip Islamic radicalization in the bud. They now reach across the country, with police accompanied by education or other

specialists depending on the target.

In December alone, teams carried out 476 raids and closed 36 establishments of various types, according to Interior Ministry figures. Since November 2019, when the program marked its first year, 3,881 establishments have been inspected and 126 closed, mostly small businesses but also two schools, ministry figures show.

One was an underground school with no windows or educational program, along with sports clubs where preaching and obligatory prayer are behind-the-scenes activities. Five were closed.

The proposed law and the Cell to Fight Radical Islam program, led by prefects in each region, are just part of a many-layered operation to rout out what authorities call "enemies of the Republic." Mayors of towns considered "most impacted" by the extremist threat have been asked to sign a charter agreeing to cooperate in the hunt for radicals, like flagging potential suspects, the AP has learned.

The Cell to Fight Radical Islam would also get a boost from the planned law, which would provide new legal tools to shut down facilities.

"Today, we're obliged to use administrative motives to close establishments that don't respect the law," said an official close to Citizenship Minister Marlene Schiappa, who oversees the Cell to Fight Radical Islam program and is also a sponsor of the proposed law, along with Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin.

The official, not authorized to speak publicly, could not address the case of the MHS school. Police also would not comment.

# Peru's foreign minister quits over secret vaccination

**LIMA, FEB 15 (AP):** Peru's foreign minister resigned Sunday amid an uproar over government officials being secretly vaccinated against the coronavirus before the country recently received 1 million doses for health workers facing a resurgence in the pandemic.

President Francisco Sagasti confirmed that Elizabeth Astete stepped down and told the local television channel America that Peruvians should feel outraged and angry about this situation that jeopardizes the enormous effort of many Peruvians working on the front line against COVID.

The scandal erupted Thursday when former President Martin Vizcarra, who was dismissed by Congress on Nov. 9 over a corruption



allegation, confirmed a newspaper report that he and his wife had secretly received shots of a vaccine from the Chinese state pharmaceutical company Sinopharm in October.

Health Minister Pilar Mazzetti resigned Friday after legislators accused her of concealing information.

Sagasti said on Twitter that during Vizcarra's administration, an extra 2,000 doses of the vaccine had been received from Sinopharm and that some senior

public officials were vaccinated.

New Health Minister Oscar Ugarte said Sunday night that Sagasti ordered the resignation of all officials who secretly received the Chinese vaccine.

Ugarte said an investigation is underway to identify officials who were secretly vaccinated in September.

Astete, who led the Peruvian negotiations to buy the 1 million doses of Sinopharm's vaccine, said Sunday in a letter that she was vaccinated

with the first dose Jan. 22. I am aware of the serious mistake I made, which is why I decided not to receive the second dose.

Peru bought the vaccines in early January at a price that is secret under the contract.

Doctors and nurses have protested because they were not included in the first lists to be vaccinated with doses received from Sinopharm. The pandemic has caused the deaths of 306 doctors and 125 nurses, with more than 20,000 doctors and nurses being infected.

Peru has had more than 1.2 million cases of coronavirus infections, with 43,491 deaths related to COVID-19 according to Johns Hopkins University's tally of cases around the globe.

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**SummitTIMES**



**PARK PERFECTION!** The actress, Natalie Portman is seen enjoying the outdoors with her family in Sydney, Australia.

## Kendall Jenner Makes Romance With Devin Booker Instagram Official on Valentine's Day

Kendall Jenner posted for the first time about NBA star Devin Booker by sharing a cuddly Valentine's Day photo to Instagram on Feb. 14.

Kendall Jenner and NBA player Devin Booker are moving their relationship further up the court.

The Keeping Up With the Kardashians star posted about the athlete on social media for the first time as she shared a playful pic of the pair to her Instagram Story on Sunday, Feb. 14.

The Valentine's Day post shows Devin, 24, lying on top of Kendall, 25, near the kitchen sink while she has a big smile on her face. She did not caption the cute shot but did include a simple white heart.

Later in the day, she shared a pic of an opened bottle of red wine next to a decanter, perhaps offering a hint at what her Valentine's plans entailed. She had also reposted mom Kris Jenner's pic showing a bouquet of roses that Kendall sent her for the love-centric day.

Kendall and Devin were first spotted together in Arizona in April 2020, and then in Los Angeles the following month over



Memorial Day weekend. In August, they enjoyed a night out at Nobu Malibu with Kylie Jenner.

A source told E! News in August, "She's excited to have him out in L.A. so they can spend some in person time together. They have been staying together and hanging out in Malibu with friends and family."

The insider added at the time, "She definitely prefers to keep her relationships on the down low, but she likes him, and she's happy to be with him right now."

The Phoenix Suns star raised eyebrows last month when she shared a bikini pic of the model to Instagram. He captioned it, "Whew," and added a panting emoji.

See Kendall's post in our gallery below, and keep scrolling to check out how more stars enjoyed this year's Valentine's Day.

peace with a career that is merely self-serving. Serving the community around you and the world at large has always been a part of the grand plan—and today you're being called to put your compassion into action. To make choices that not just improve your life conditions, but also become a catalyst of positive change. The mysterious forces are working with and through you. Take the action you're being guided to, beloved.

**LEO:** Everything in life is essentially a trade-off. Saying yes to one thing means saying no to another. Sometimes, many others. It's true that you have the kind of wealth, resources and power that were once a distant dream. But, what are you giving up on in order to create a life that looks good on the outside? It's time to get real with yourself, Leo. It's time to let go of all that is false and lead a simpler life. The Universal forces are helping you make this shift. The real question is: will you answer the call this time?

**VIRGO:** Virgo, you've always had a penchant for art and beauty—and you've always been a perfectionist at heart. Now, mix both of these skills in a way that they can benefit yourself and others. There's a big shift on the cards for you, one that will put your ability to be a curator of cool to the test. Those who are stuck in a nine-to-five routine may be yearning for something different. It's a good idea to find a creative outlet that allows you to express your hidden talents.

**LIBRA:** You're being shown all that is false, Libra. You're being shown all that is no longer in alignment with your highest good. Have the courage to cut the cords where you need to before the Universe steps in and does the dirty work for you. If the cosmic cues are anything to go by, you'll find yourself changing, and you need to make that drastic move. Remember, your life story is yours to write.

**SCORPIO:** There are two kinds of people in the world: people who plan their every move and people who follow their instinct without questioning a thing. Today, you're being asked to embody the gambler. To take a risk you have been terrified of taking before. Yes, there is a lot that is unknown on this journey. Yes, there is a lot you could possibly lose on your way to the destination. Trust that the things you will gain by way of life experiences will trump all of it.

**SAGITTARIUS:** What are you addicted to, Sagittarius? What do \*you\* turn to in order to fill the so-called void? The cards are highlighting excesses and unhealthy behavioral patterns of all kinds. Patterns that are not only sabotaging your growth, but also lowering your vibrations. So, do what you need to before you hit rock bottom. If that means seeking professional help, so be it. The support you need in order to break the habit is available to you in this moment.

**CAPRICORN:** If you've been struggling with your finances, it's time to change the game around. It's time to expand your offerings in a way that they include and uplift others. Yes, we're talking about adopting a service-oriented approach. Putting 'we' before 'me' in any and all circumstances will make all the difference, Capricorn. You may feel like you're losing out on what is essentially yours by dividing the pie into so many slices. However, the truth is that this shift in your vibration will put you on the cosmic payroll for the rest of your life.

**AQUARIUS:** A passionate encounter is on the cards for single Aquarians. We're talking about a certain somebody who wears their heart on their sleeve and possesses the ability to make you feel like the most beautiful person in the room. Their passion is intense, but it's also real. So, allow yourself to receive the love you have been manifesting for so long. As such, desire will be a big theme in the coming days for coupled water bearers as well. Not that your partner is complaining about your moves in the least.

**PISCES:** Aren't you tired of trying to control every aspect of your life? Aren't you tired of playing tug-of-war with the mysterious forces above? The cards are urging you to surrender, Pisces. To allow for the magic to unfold. Remember, what is yours will always be yours, and nobody can take that away from you.

# Author Murakami hosts live jam for relaxation amid pandemic

**TOKYO (AP):** Japanese author Haruki Murakami has a remedy for those who need relaxation from stress and worries in a pandemic — bossa nova.

"As we are going through a time of anxiety, I hope to help you relax even just a little bit," Murakami said as he hosted a live music event, "Murakami Jam — Blame it on the Bossa Nova," bringing together renowned Japanese performers of bossa nova, jazz and classical music.

Despite the pandemic, Murakami — known for bestsellers including "A Wild Sheep Chase," "The Wind-up Bird Chronicle" and "1Q84" — said he still maintains a daily routine including running and writing, but the frequent world traveler has stayed in Japan.

Murakami, who on his radio show has expressed concern about prejudice and discrimination against coronavirus patients, said he finds that the rhythm of bossa nova has a healing effect.

"I think good music is something that heals people and fires up your kindness," he said.

During Sunday's approximately two-hour show, he recited his 1982 short story "The 1963/1982 Girl from Ipanema," in which a narrator details his memory of his meeting with a metaphysical girl from the song, with live guitar performed by his guest Kaori Muraji.

The show, also featuring bossa nova artist Ono Lisa, jazz pianists Junko Onishi and Yosuke Yamashita and singer Miu Sakamoto, was held at Tokyo FM hall with just 100 fans chosen by a lottery and is viewable online until Feb. 24.

Music is an important motif in Murakami's stories. An avid



listener and collector of music, he has also written books on the topic.

Murakami, 72, began writing while running a jazz bar in Tokyo after graduating from university. Following his 1979 debut novel, "Hear the Wind Sing," the 1987 romance "Norwegian Wood" became his first bestseller, establishing him as a young literary star. His latest collection of short stories "First Person Singular" came out in Japan last year.

A perennial contender for the Nobel Prize in literature, Murakami now appears as a DJ for his roughly bimonthly "Murakami Radio" show, but he is known as a social recluse and public appearances are still rare.

"Some people doubt if I really exist, and others think I'm an imaginary figure," he said.

## Machine Gun Kelly Says He Wears Megan Fox's Blood "Around My Neck" in Valentine's Day Post



The 34-year-old Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles actress continued, "the journey will likely be perilous but there is no destination without him happy valentine's day rehab barbie."

Included in her carousel was footage of Megan holding onto his waist from behind him while she had her feet on top of his as he walked her around the room. Machine Gun Kelly, whose real name is Colson Baker, shared this video to his Instagram Story.

Additionally, one of the pics Megan posted showed the "My Ex's Best Friend" rapper licking her pursed lips.

As fans recall, Angelina Jolie and Billy Bob Thornton famously wore vials of each other's blood around their necks during their short-lived marriage in the early 2000s.

It's appropriate that Machine Gun Kelly mentioned the words "my bloody valentine" in his post, as Megan appears in his music video for his single "My Bloody Valentine." The steamy spot debuted in May 2020, just as rumors had started to spread about the pair's then-budding romance.

Long story short, a lot of people buy jewelry for Valentine's Day, but we're guessing not many have the same taste in necklaces that MGK does. To see how other celebrities posted about the holiday in ways that didn't involve bodily fluids, scroll through our gallery.

In a Valentine's Day tribute to girlfriend Megan Fox, Machine Gun Kelly posted that he wears her blood around his neck. See the photo that appears to offer proof.

Machine Gun Kelly appears to be channeling his inner Angelina Jolie as he posted a heartfelt Valentine's Day tribute to girlfriend Megan Fox.

The 30-year-old musician took to Instagram on Sunday, Feb. 14 to share a carousel of images and footage of the pair together.

In his caption, he claimed that he wears Megan's blood around his neck. Sure enough, one of the pics featured a vial that appeared to contain a drop of blood and was hanging from a necklace.

(See, we meant it literally when we called his post "heartfelt")

"I wear your blood around my neck," he wrote, adding emojis that symbolize a knife, a drop of blood, a DNA symbol and a rose. "my bloody valentine."

On the same day, Megan also shared a carousel to her Instagram of video and photos featuring the couple in honor of Valentine's Day.

"there goes my heart," she wrote, "manifest outside of my body draped in the towering silhouette of a most unusually handsome boy magical and haunted kinetic and tortured ethereal and dangerous cosmic lawless eternal creative genius."

## Shenae Grimes Is Pregnant With Baby No. 2

90210's Shenae Grimes took to social media on Valentine's Day to reveal she's expecting her second child with husband Josh Beech.

Shenae Grimes chose a perfect day to announce the expansion of her family.

The 31-year-old 90210 alum shared via Instagram on Sunday, Feb. 14 that she

and husband Josh Beech are expecting their second child. She posted a solo baby bump photo, in addition to a sweet pic of their 2-year-old daughter Bowie sucking her thumb while holding onto her mom's back.

"Here we go again!!!" the actress wrote in the Valentine's Day post. "We're feeling incredibly blessed

to be growing our family and this gift truly couldn't have come at a better time. We've just settled into our new house and it really feels like home now. Bowie is absolutely itching for a little sibling to play with and look out for. And as for @joshbeech and I, we are teammates in this life and we've shown ourselves how

incredibly strong and capable we are after tackling our recent cross-country move... in a car.. with a toddler and a dog.. during a pandemic. So bring it on, Baby Beech #2! We're ready for ya!!!"

Shenae continued, "Thanks to those sending well wishes + congrats. We appreciate and love you."

**ARIES:** The trouble is, you've been thinking you need to do it all by yourself. But, you are not the 'doer', Aries. You are simply the medium through which the Universe expresses itself. So, make that shift within. Begin to see yourself as a co-creator in the journey of life. By summoning the divine forces to assist you, you will be taking your work to a whole new level.

**TAURUS:** You came here with a sacred mission. A mission that is unique to you and can be fulfilled by you alone. So, let go of the need to compare your journey with that of those around you as you make a conscious effort to tune in. Ask your inner guide how it is that you are being called to serve in this moment. PS: We sense a big breakthrough moment for you, Taurus.

**GEMINI:** Spoiler alert, Gemini: you cannot heal or fix anybody. Everybody has to walk their path themselves. By trying to do the dirty work for them, you're not only interfering with their karma, but also creating havoc in your own life. So, step back from the drama. Become a watcher of both your actions and your words. Practicing a certain degree of detachment will help you deal with your circumstances in an evolved manner.

**CANCER:** You have never been the kind of person who could make