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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Delhi violence: 11 FIRs registered

DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI): The Delhi Police on Tuesday said 11 FIRs have been registered in connection with the violence in northeast Delhi, in which 11 people were killed, and the force is responding to incidents involving anti-social elements.

Delhi Police spokesperson Mandeep Singh Randhawa said the situation in northeast Delhi is under control, even as several parts of the area continued to reel under violence. Over 20 persons have been detained and one person arrested till now, police said.

Among the 11 dead was Delhi Police head constable Rattan Lal.

Sources said he was shot in the left shoulder.

Randhawa said 11 FIRs have been registered in connection with the violence. He was also questioned whether action will be taken against BJP leader Kapil Mishra, who has been accused of instigating violence.

"All these things are under investigation. We will investigate and take action against conspirators," he said, in response to the query.

Sources also said Shahrukh, who had fired a few rounds in the air, after brandishing a gun at a policeman, has been arrested.

He said the situation was such as these areas are congested and inhabited by mixed population.

"We are responding to stray incidents of violence. Sufficient force has been deployed in northeast Delhi. RAF, SSB and CRPF have also been deployed. "The MHA has given us additional force and we are deploying it," he said.

Sixty-seven companies of police and paramilitary personnel have been deployed across the area, police sources said.

He also said senior officers are on ground and even the Crime Branch and other units are working in close coordination to monitor the situation.

Senior police officers are also monitoring the situation closely, he added.

Randhawa said the police started receiving calls related to violent incidents from Monday.

"We received calls from Gokulpuri, Maujpur, Bhajanpura, Karawal Nagar about such incidents and our force was deployed there. "We had deployed force on important points. Clashes happened between groups of protesters and we sent forces there to control the situation," he said.

Randhawa said 56 police personnel sustained injuries, including two IPS officers. DCP (Shahdara) Amit Sharma sustained head injuries and is under medical observation.

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Traffic Police removes Hospital Dara stop, taxi drivers protest

SAGAR CHETTRI GANGTOK, 25 FEB:

Vehicular traffic in the capital was disrupted briefly this morning following a strike called by taxi drivers in response to the removal of the taxi stop at Hospital Dara near Urban Development and Housing Department.

As angry drivers came out on the road, UDHD Minister, Arun Uprety reached the spot to intervene and bring the situation under control. The Minister assured the taxi drivers that the stop will continue to function as usual and the drivers will be informed the next time a new initiative to ease traffic congestion is planned.

Drivers on protest said that they were not informed or consulted about the removal of the taxi stop and they came to know about it today. They said that the Hospital Dara stop caters to government employees and public who need to travel to the Secretariat and Public Works Department at Zero Point



and removing this stop will create a lot of problems.

"We were not consulted regarding this decision and were directly served an order today. So we decided to take similar action and call a strike on the spot," said Sikkim Krantikari Morcha Chalak Morcha president, Chung Chung Bhutia.

He added that the

Traffic police has been removing taxi stops in other places in Gangtok in the past few days.

At the same time, the taxi drivers also brought up the issue of fines under the new Motor Vehicle Act where they said that the fine amounts are exorbitant and the traffic police should offer relaxation in some cases.

Speaking to media persons, UDHD Minister, Mr Uprety said that the initiative was taken by the Traffic Police to address traffic congestion problems in the State but taxi drivers have expressed their dissatisfaction on the initiative so the taxi stand will be continue to function as usual.

Responding to que-

ries on taxi driver's dissatisfaction over the enhanced traffic fines, Mr Uprety said these fines have been implemented under the Central Motor Vehicle Act for the security of passengers. However, he assured to review fines of the State government, if there were any, and provide some relief to the drivers.

Akhil Gogoi to stage 24-hour dharna in jail against CAA

GUWAHATI, FEB 25 (PTI): Peasant leader Akhil Gogoi, arrested under stringent UAPA during anti-CAA protests in Assam, said on Tuesday he will stage a 24-hour dharna in the jail from March 1 in protest against the contentious law.

A Special NIA Court on Tuesday extended the judicial remand of Gogoi, adviser of peasant body Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS), till March 7.

The organisation's general secretary Dhairjya Konwar and Bittu Sonowal, president of KMSS students' wing Satra Mukti Sangram Samiti (SMSS), were also remanded to judicial custody for the same period.

Both were arrested for their alleged roles in violence during anti-CAA protests.

While being produced before the court on Tuesday, Gogoi told journalists that the movement against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is weakening because people are not united.

"We must be united.

We are facing problems because we are not united. From March 1, I will sit on a 24-hour dharna in the jail against CAA and for strengthening the movement," Gogoi said.

He has been lodged in the Guwahati Central Prison.

Gogoi said if BJP has to be defeated in the 2021 Assembly elections in the state, "we must create an alternative force".

Gogoi, also an RTI activist, has been in judicial custody since December 26. He had mobilised public protests against the CAA across several districts in Upper Assam before his arrest on December 12.

His colleagues were taken into custody the next day.

Assam Police had registered an FIR against Gogoi under sections of the IPC and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act on December 13 and the case was handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) the next day.

turn to pg 02

Violence wracks northeast Delhi again, toll rises to 11

NEW DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI): Smoke billowed in the air and mobs roamed unchecked through the streets, burning shops, pelting stones and threatening locals, as fresh violence tore through northeast Delhi, killing six more people on Tuesday and taking the toll in the communal clashes over the amended citizenship law to 11.

As tension smouldered in the national capital's northeast and the sun set over another restive day, violence cut a swathe through several localities, including Chand Bagh and Bhajanpura, with stones and other missiles hurled and shops set ablaze.

Rioters damaged two fire tenders in Gokulpuri and crowds raising incendiary slogans set on fire fruit carts, rickshaws and anything that came in their way in the epicentre of the trouble Maujpur and other places.

With US President Donald Trump also in the city, Delhi Police ramped up security. It fired teargas shells to disperse the rioters -- armed with stones, rods and even swords and many wearing helmets to protect themselves -- and was assisted by paramilitary personnel.

Streets were littered with mangled remains of vehicles, bricks and burnt tyres, mute testimony to the violence and bloodshed that took on a communal taint on Monday and injured about 180 people, including 48 police personnel.

According to GTB Hospital Medical Superintendent Sunil Kumar, six people were declared brought dead on Tuesday, taking the death toll in 11. At least 35 injured people were also taken to the hospital today.

"Fifty per cent of those injured have sustained bullet injuries," Kumar added.

As the violence continued unabated, police officials said the situation was under control and flag marches were con-

ducted in Bhajanpura, Khajuri Khas and other places.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah convened a meeting with Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi Police chief Amulya Patnaik and others to address the situation.

The meeting resolved that workers of political parties should join hands to restore peace and peace committees should be reactivated in all localities.

In scenes not seen in the national capital for decades, frenzied groups thrashed people on the road and vandalised vehicles.

The media also came under attack.

Akshay, a journalist with JK 24X7 News, received a bullet injury and was in a serious condition in hospital, and two reporters from NDTV were beaten and punched by rioters. Many other journalists were heckled and told to go back.

Schools were shut and fearful residents stayed indoors as restless crowds roamed the streets, seemingly unmindful of prohibitory orders restricting the assembly of more than four people imposed on Monday.

"There is hardly any police presence in the area. Rioters are running around threatening people, vandalising shops. Families need to be evacuated. We are unsafe in our own homes," said a resident of Maujpur, requesting anonymity.

Another added that this is the first time in 35 years -- possibly since the 1984 anti-Sikh riots -- that he has seen a situation such as this. "The area had always remained peaceful," he told PTI.

Trouble continued through the day.

Around 5 pm in Chand Bagh, for instance, security personnel were pelted with stones. They chased the mob, only to be attacked afresh with some people also armed with petrol bombs.

turn to pg 02

World cinema comes to town this weekend



SAGAR CHETTRI GANGTOK, 25 FEB:

Host the debut edition of Global Cinema Festival Sikkim with screening of around 40 films and a series of film appreciation activities. This is going to be a busy weekend for film aficionados with the festival playing out from 28 Feb to 01 March.

The festival is being organized by the Film Federation of India in collaboration with Sikkim Film Cooperative Society supported by the State Government and the Government of India.

Around 40 films from across the country and five foreign countries have been shortlisted for screening during the festival at Manan Kendra.

The festival is also scheduled to have technical sessions on script writing, film marketing, digital marketing, production management, sound management, a visit to potential filming locations in the State and a gala fashion show.

Addressing a press conference here today, Festival Director, Mrinalini Shrivastava, informed that preparations are underway to ensure a special treat for cinema lovers.

She mentioned that the three-day long festival will have the presence of Bollywood artists Manisha Koirala and Padmini Kohlapuri and a celebrated cinematographer, Binod Pradhan, along with other film personalities.

Ms Shrivastava added that the event will also provide a platform for short film and non-feature filmmakers to showcase their work to a delegation invited to the festival.

The organisers also hope that the event will open the doors to a wider market and audience for local directors, filmmakers, technicians, producers, artists and technicians.

Also screened at the festival will be five movies made from Sikkim.

Director, Information

& Public Relation Department, Benu Gurung, add that the festival will also feature the release of the Sikkim Film Policy. One of the salient features of this policy is to establish a single window system to shoot in Sikkim.

"Filmmakers do not need to go to different departments to take permissions to shoot their films in the State and we have made it easy for them to start shooting their film without hindrance," Ms Gurung said.

Sikkim Film Cooperative Society president, Dipen Mohora, in turn informed that such a festival would be very beneficial to connect local artists and technicians with the mainstream film industry. He mentioned that the society was an umbrella organization for around 42 Sikkim-based production houses and 300 artists.

The press conference was also addressed by Priya Entertainment Managing Director, Arijit Dutta.



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Sikkim takes part in Indian Students Parliament



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 FEB:

The Indian Students Parliament (Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad) 2020 was held in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi from 20-23 Feb. Executive member of Sikkimese Students Association Delhi (SSAD), Sagar Neopaney, who hails from Takchhang, East Sikkim represented Sikkim in the Parliament, a press release informs.

The event was chaired by Vice Presi-

dent of India, M Venkaiah Naidu and attended by many dignitaries.

Students from across the country and many European countries participated in the programme.

The four-day parliament took in discussions on issues related to casteism, poverty, population, terrorism and economy. With the end of every session, bills and resolution were passed in the parliament.

Governor visits Maharshi Dayanand Veda Vidhya Arsh Gurukul



KARNAL [HARYANA], 25 FEB: Governor Ganga Prasad today visited Maharshi Dayanand Veda Vidhya Arsh Gurukul, Nalvi Khurd in Karnal district of Haryana. The in-charge, Swami Sampurnanand Saraswati, escorted the

Governor and provided insights into the Vedic curriculum, management and the practices being followed in the Gurukul. Later, the Governor also visited the Gausala at the Gurukul and participated in the Gauseva.

Consider revamp of your panel of advocates: HC to SRA

MUMBAI, FEB 25 (PTI): The Bombay High Court on Tuesday called for re-constitution of the panel of lawyers who represent the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA), noting that its lawyers often can not assist the court properly. The court was hearing a petition about a project undertaken by construction groups HDIL and RKW Developers.

RKW Developers is owned by Dheeraj Wadhawan from the Wadhawan family which also owns the beleaguered HDIL. A division bench of Justices S J Kathawala and R I Chagla was hearing a petition filed by Cyril Mecwan claiming that there were irregularities in the slum rehabilitation project undertaken by RKW Developers in Bandra.

During the hearing on Monday, the bench had asked the SRA -- a state authority for rehabilitation of slum-dwellers -- for some details.

The SRA lawyer as well as its officer present in the court could not give a satisfactory reply. The bench then directed SRA CEO Deepak Kapoor to remain present.

On Tuesday, the court told Kapoor that in several matters SRA's lawyers and even its officers could not assist the court.

"At the end, your organisation is suffering. Are you not interested in getting the cases represented properly? You have to consider reconstituting the panel of advocates," Justice Kathawala said.

As per the plea, while RKW developers were constructing resale component (the part which the developer can sell off in open market) of the project, HDIL was to construct the rehabilitation building for the original tenants (slum dwellers).

In October 2018, the SRA issued stop-work notice over alleged violation of project terms.

Akhil Gogoi...

Konwar and Sonowal's cases were also handed over to the agency.

Various organisations, including the Congress, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chhatra Parishad (AJYCP) have been demanding the immediate release of Gogoi.

Delhi violence...

He also said 130 civilians have been injured and admitted to hospitals.

He appealed to people to maintain peace, cooperate with police and not to pay heed to rumours.

"Despite prohibitory orders being in place, incidents were reported and we took action. We are tackling incidents and taking strong action. All miscreants and anti-social elements will be dealt with severely," Randhawa said.

Drones are also being used to monitor the situation and CCTV footage is being used to identify those who threw stones from their terraces.

Darjeeling Philatelists hold annual meeting

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 FEB:

Members of the Alpine Philatelic and Numismatic Society (APNS), Darjeeling, held their Annual Meeting at North Point Academy School Hall on 23 Feb, a press release informs.

The meeting was presided over by the president of the Society, Sushil Karthak. Secretary, Vivek Yonzon presented the Secretary's report and review of the year 2019. He said that the year 2019 was a successful year for the Society with many workshops and programs organized.

Dr Ranjana Yonzon (Moktan) was nominated as the new treasurer of the society.

APNS has been functioning in Darjeeling and surrounding areas since its inception in February 2018 with the motive of reviving and promoting Philately - stamp collecting and Numismatics - coin collecting.

"We have been successful in encouraging youngsters as well as el-



ders in these wonderful hobbies by conducting workshops in schools and also by organizing major exhibitions in town," said Vivek Yonzon.

We are now recognized at State as well as National level since our members have successfully participated and won awards in both State and National Level philatelic competitions, he added.

Plans of organizing

workshops at different schools before their half yearly exams were chalked out. Other important decisions taken by the Society were to organize major yearly exhibitions not just in Darjeeling and Kalimpong as it has been in the last two years but in all the sub divisions.

It was also decided to conduct more activities in association with Sikkim Philatelic and Nu-

mismatic Society, which has been a major guiding light for the Society.

Members present at the meeting included Anand Yonzon, Sitesh Chettri, Nilema Yonzon, Sumit Shah, Palzer Sherpa, Gyalzen Sherpa and a new member Ugyal Yolmo. Members exchanged ideas, philatelic and numismatic materials. The meeting was concluded with the vote of thanks by the secretary.

ICFAI partners with NRDC and Purnea University



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 FEB:

ICFAI University Sikkim has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) and a Memorandum of Understanding with Purnea University Bihar.

A press release informs that the MoA with NRDC was signed on 19 Feb by Vice Chancellor of ICFAI University Sikkim, Dr. Jagannath Patnaik and Chairman & Managing Director of NRDC, Dr. H Purushotham.

NRDC is a company established by the Government of India with the objectives, inter alia of promotion, development, licensing and commercial exploitation of indigenous technology, know-how and inventions, including the technical and engineering know-how generated by various publicly funded R&D laboratories, universities and institutions.

Through the MOA it is agreed that ICFAI will provide NRDC technical and engineering know-how relating to such technologies. ICFAI will also provide demon-

stration of the technologies which are licensed by NRDC.

In return, NRDC will render all possible assistance to ICFAI for filling of patent applications on technologies which ICFAI assigns to NRDC for licensing.

The MoU with Purnea University Bihar was signed on 22 Feb by Vice Chancellor of ICFAI University Sikkim and Vice Chancellor of Purnea University Bihar, Prof. Rajesh Singh.

Through the MoU it is agreed that each institution will promote the exchange of faculty for teaching and research programs. Each institution will promote internship or semester exchange of qualified undergraduate or graduate students in the academic programs.

The institutions will also exchange admissions. Both the institutions have agreed to exchange documents and information that will contribute to the effective cooperation between the two institutions and facilitate their understanding of university requirements and academic programs.

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BEFORE THE OATH COMMISSIONER, EAST SIKKIM AT GANGTOK AFFIDAVIT

I, Sangay Diki Denzongpa, daughter of Mr. karma Denzongpa, aged about 31 years, by faith Buddhist, resident of Tathangchen, P.O. Raj Bhawan & P.S. Gangtok, East Sikkim, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under:-

1. That my actual and correct name is "Sangay Diki Denzongpa" which has been recorded in some of my relevant documents including in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar Card No. 5697 1395 8612 issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India.
2. That my name has been recorded as "Sangay Deeki Denzongpa" in my Pass Certificate bearing No. 039303 issued by the Vice-Chancellor, University of Calcutta and also in all my School and College records.
3. That my name has been recorded as "Sangay Deki Denzongpa" in my Passport bearing Passport No: E3780821 issued by the Regional Passport Officer, Calcutta.
4. That I am swearing this Affidavit to state and declare that the person by the names "Sangay Diki Denzongpa", "Sangay Deeki Denzongpa" and "Sangay Deki Denzongpa" are the names of one and same person i.e. myself.

DEPONENT

BEFORE THE LD.OATH COMMISSIONER, EAST SIKKIM AT GANGTOK. AFFIDAVIT

I, Devendra Chettri, son of Lte Rajendra Prasad Chettri, aged about 61 years, by faith Hindu, resident of Pakyong, Kartok block, East Sikkim do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under:-

1. That my actual and correct name is "Devendra Chettri" and the same is recorded in all my relevant documents including in my PAN Card bearing Permanent Account Number ANXPC4120D issued by the Income Tax Department, Government of Sikkim.
2. That inadvertently my name has been recorded as "Devendra Prasad Chettri" and "Tara Nath Chettri" in my Sikkim Subject bearing Serial No. 82 Vol.No. IV, under block Kartok issued by the Secretary, Land Revenue Department, Government of Sikkim.
3. That one document has also been issued by the Office of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Pakyong Sub-Division, East Sikkim bearing Memo No. 704/SDOP dated: 09.05.2006, stating that the person by the names "Tara Nath Chettri" and Devendra Prasad Chettri are the names of one and the same person.
4. That this affidavit is made on oath to declare that the names "Devendra Chettri", Devendra Prasad Chettri" and "Tara Nath Chettri" are the names of one and the same identical person i.e. myself.

**Sd/-
DEPONENT**

Violence wracks...

A few residents in Yamuna Vihar and Jaffrabad told PTI they had seen rioters with swords in their hands.

The 11 killed include Delhi Police head constable Ratan Lal. While Lal died of gunshot wounds, it is still not yet clear what killed the others or who they all were. Among those killed was Vinod Kumar, a resident of Ghonda who was brought dead to the hospital and whose body is at the morgue of the Jag Parvesh Hospital.

Also killed was Mohammad Furkan from Kar-dampuri, near Jafrabad, who got married in 2014 and has two children. His brother, Mohammed Imran, overcome with grief, said they were both in the handicrafts business. "He had gone to get some food for his children. Someone told me he had been shot. I couldn't believe it as I had met him barely an hour earlier. I kept calling him... I then rushed to GTB Hospital where I was told that he is dead," he told reporters, sobbing inconsolably outside the hospital.

Imran blamed BJP leader Kapil Mishra's tweet, giving Delhi Police an ultimatum to clear the streets of protesters and saying people would be quiet only until Trump is in India. "Before that everything was peaceful," he said.

One person seen brandishing a gun before police on Monday was identified as Shah Rukh and been arrested yet. Police said 11 FIRs have been filed.

Kejriwal, who held a meeting with senior officials and MLAs of all parties to discuss the situation, asked people to refrain from violence and said all issues can be dealt with through dialogue.

"Stop this madness," he said after visiting the injured in GTB Hospital.

"I have met the people who were injured, also met some people who sustained bullet injuries. The biggest concern is to stop the violence. I appeal to everyone to stop the violence," he said.

Five stations on the Delhi Metro's Pink Line were closed for the second consecutive day on Tuesday in the wake of the trouble.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Amit Sharma underwent an operation on Monday night for the head injury sustained during the clashes.

BEFORE THE LD OATH COMMISSIONER, SOUTH SIKIM AT NAMCHI AFFIDAVIT-CUM-DECLARATION

I, UID12150207 RANK ASI/GD Manoj Tamang, son of Boudha Man Tamang, aged about 41 years, resident of Melli Gumpa, PO Melli Dara & PS Melli, Sikkim Sikkim do hereby solemnly affirm on oath and declare as under:-

1. That Smt. Mamta Tamang is my Divorcee wife as our marriage was dissolved on 07/11/2016 before the Judge, Family Court at Namchi, south Sikkim in Family Court (Civil) Case No. 03 of 2016 (Manoj Tamang and Mamta Tamang) as a Mutual Divorce as per the terms and conditions laid down in "Deed of Agreement" dated 12/02/2016 at Namchi in presence of witness.
2. That after our marriage was dissolved, my ex-wife Mamta Tamang re-married with another man and is presently settled herself in Kathmandu, Nepal with her new family members.
3. That I hereby declare through this affidavit that my ex-wife, Mamta Tamang has no objection if her name is omitted/deleted from the family details in the column of Spouse/wife of my service records.
4. That I further declare that my ex-wife had already consented and declared that she will not claim maintenance or alimony from me for herself during her lifetime in Deed of Agreement dated 12/02/2016.
5. That I have sworn this affidavit to declare on oath that my ex-wife Mamta Tamang has re-married with another man and is presently settled in Kathmandu, Nepal with the new family members and she has no objection if her name is omitted/deleted from the family details in the column of Souse/wife of my service records.
6. That this affidavit is made as a token of evidence and nothing material is concealed therefrom.

**Manoj Tamang.
DEPONENT.**

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Research Methodology workshop concludes at Rhenock college



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 FEB:

The valedictory session of the two-week national level workshop on Research Methodology for faculty and research scholars was held at seminar hall of Government College Rhenock on 21 Feb, 2020, a press release informs.

The event was attended by V Chancellor, Sikkim Central University, Prof Avinash Khare, as

guest of honor, Director Higher Education, Kapil Meena and Joint Director, RUSA, Education Department, Government of Sikkim, Rajiv Roka.

Altogether 36 resource persons from various disciplines were invited, 14 were from different parts of India and 22 from Sikkim University and affiliated colleges. There were 51 participants from different colleges and outside the

state from other specialized fields, the release mentions.

Resource persons from various disciplines (Mathematic, Psychology, Statistic, Geology, Mountain Studies, English, Nepali, Press Trust of India) gave talks on preparation of research proposal, writing of minor and major projects, developing theoretical framework, different methods used in research of social and

live sciences, qualitative and quantitative methods in research, hypothesis testing content and text analysis, creative writing and most importantly ethics and values in research, communication and positive journalism etc.

VC, Sikkim University, highlighted about the strength of the university and importance of research in different disciplines and congratulated

ed the College fraternity for being the first college to organize a two-week Research Methodology Workshop.

Likewise, Director Higher Education, Kapil Meena also congratulated the college for the successful completion of the workshop. He also talked about the various schemes under the Education Department, Government of Sikkim and ensured future support for different student and faculty centric workshops.

Participants also shared their experience from the workshop. Principal, Dr Iyatta M Upreti summarized the two-week workshop and thanked faculty, non-teaching staff, students and stakeholders for contributing towards the successful completion of workshop.

She also extended her gratitude to all the Resource Persons who came all the way to Rhenock College.

Intra GPU sports begins in Dzongu



SUMMIT REPORT MANGAN, 25 FEB:

Intra Gram Panchayat Units traditional sports events for Lingdong Barfok GPU and Sakyoung Pentong GPU by Rural Development Department in coordination with Sports & Youth Affairs Department got underway today. The games are scheduled to continue till 29 Feb.

Today, matches were held in the disciplines of football, kho-kho, volleyball,

musical chairs etc at the two GPUs of Dzongu.

The programme was attended by former Zilla Adhyaksha(N), Anguli Lepcha, as chief guest accompanied by BDO [Dzongu], Tempa Bhutia, Panchayat Presidents, Zilla Panchayats, Panchayat Development Assistants and Headmasters and Deputy Director, SYA, Dathup Lepcha, who is also the nodal officer of the Rural Sports Activities.

World Bank team hails Jagan Reddy govt's initiatives

AMARAVATI, FEB 25 (PTI): Hailing the YSR Congress government's initiatives, particularly in health and education sectors, a visiting World Bank team on Tuesday said the things Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy learned during his 3,648-km paada yatra (foot march) clearly reflected in his policies.

Led by World Bank regional director (South Asia-Human Development) Lynne Sherburne-Benz, the team of officials held a meeting with Reddy, state Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney, Principal Secretary Praveen Prakash and other senior officials at the Secretariat and discussed a host of issues.

A release from the Chief Minister's Office quoted the World Bank team as saying Reddy initiated several reforms based on the issues he learned during his paada yatra, which culminated early last year.

We have learnt about Jagans paada yatra. The impact of the paada yatra

is clearly visible in the Chief Ministers words, thoughts and actions. They clearly reflected the things at the ground level, the visiting delegation said.

The World Bank officials said investment on human resources would ensure positive results and lead to realistic development.

Your steps in education and health sectors are inspirational. Efforts to improve high-end skills among youth are the best. Bringing in e-governance through village and ward secretariats is good, it added.

The chief minister elaborated on the various initiatives of his government like developing school and health care infrastructure, introduction of English medium in all government schools, setting up of skill development centres in all Lok Sabha constituencies, establishing village clinics and Rythu Bharosa Centres as one-stop-shop for farmers.

Trump describes Kashmir as 'big problem'

NEW DELHI, FEB 25 (PTI): US President Donald Trump on Tuesday described the Kashmir issue as a "big problem" and a "thorn" for a long time, and offered to mediate in de-escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. However, he clarified that he is not offering to mediate on the Kashmir issue. At a packed press conference, the US president also said ways to deal with terrorism figured prominently in his talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi who, Trump stressed, is determined to check the menace.

"We talked a lot about Pakistan. I have a very good relationship with Prime Minister Khan. We talked about it today at length with Prime Minister Modi. No question it is a problem. It is a problem, they are working on it," Trump said.

He further added: "We just hope, and I just said I'll do whatever I have to do, if I can do that because my relationship with both gentlemen is so good. But there has been difficulty in Pakistan. We are seeing what we can do about it. Anything I can do to mediate, anything I can do to help I would do."

Later, asked about India's rejection of his earlier offer to mediate on Kashmir, the US president said he is not offering to mediate on the issue. "Kashmir has been a thorn in a lot of people's sides for a long time. There are two sides to every story," said Trump.

Since withdrawal of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, Trump has made his offer to mediate on Kashmir at least four times.

QUOTATION NOTICE

SIST, Chisopani, Jorethang invites quotations from eligible interested local vendors for supply of materials and manpower for establishment of server room and LAN connection in its campus

Hong Kong's Lee tunes out critics for cycling worlds

BERLIN, FEB 25 (AFP): Sarah Lee will attempt to defend women's keirin and sprint gold at this week's track cycling world championships in Berlin, although some argued she should have been banned from representing Hong Kong over accusations of supporting anti-government protests.

Lee, who considering quitting cycling after her 2016 Rio Olympics flop, found herself in the middle of a social media storm last year over comments perceived as backing pro-democracy protests in the semi-autonomous city.

While she received plenty of support for embracing freedom of speech and speaking out for Hong Kong, Lee's remarks also prompted calls from netizens for her to be stood down.

The 32-year-old suspended her social media account in the wake of the controversy, but Hong Kong's Sports Institute -- where Lee trains -- declined to take action, saying "there are no grounds for saying her comments had anything to do with the protest".

Upon reopening her Facebook page three months later, Lee wrote that she had closed it for "a lot of different reasons, among the biggest was that I did not want to see people abusing each other on the page, especially among Hong Kong people." She continued: "I have to say I have been struggling for a while, fearing there may be fabrication from the media, fearing people who may use their own words to interpret my sentences, fearing speculation made by people on the internet, fearing getting involved in political turmoil, fearing it may affect the Olympic Games."

"But in the end I don't want to abandon it. I won't back down because of these fears."

Lee wrote herself into Hong Kong's history books by winning the city's first ever Olympic

cycling medal -- only their third overall -- with a bronze in the keirin at London 2012.

The Berlin Velodrome, built as part of the city's failed bid to host the 2000 Olympics, will from Wednesday welcome nearly 400 riders from 46 nations -- with India and Latvia set for their world championships debut.

The event, held on a track rebuilt in 2017, will be the final one in the Tokyo Olympic qualifying window. The ranking cut-off is on March 2.

- KENNY DOUBLE ACT -
Husband-and-wife Olympic champions Jason and Laura Kenny will be among the names to watch, the latter opting against surgery on a broken shoulder in order to compete.

Laura Kenny, double Olympic gold medallist in the omnium and team pursuit, intends to defend both titles in Tokyo.

However, injury means she will miss the latter event in Berlin.

Three-time sprint silver medallist Stephanie Morton returns as part of an Australian squad that won a joint-best six golds alongside the Netherlands at the 2019 worlds in Poland.

Former sprint champion Matthew Glaetzer, who underwent surgery and treatment in November for thyroid cancer, was a late withdrawal due to a leg injury. Kelland O'Brien, a member of the 2017 and 2019 gold-medal winning men's team pursuit line-up, has also been ruled out.

Germany's Roger Kluge and Theo Reinhardt will bid for a third successive triumph in the madison, which will be reinstated to the Olympic programme in Tokyo.

Dutch two-time defending women's omnium champion Kirsten Wild, 37, is again the favourite in the multi-race event, while Russian duo Daria Shmeleva and Anastasia Voinova will look to regain the women's team sprint title they last won in 2017.



Dorokha Friends proceed to next round of CM's Archery Gold Cup

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 FEB:

Dorokha Friends of Bhutan progressed to the next round of the ongoing 19th Chief Minister's Gold Cup Archery Tournament [Compound].

Dorokha Friends was declared the winner by walkover when its opponent, Bhutan Youths [Kalimpong]

did not show up for the match.

The tournament is underway at the Tenzing Namgyal Memorial Ground's Archery Shooting Range at Tathangchen. Tadong MLA, GT Dhungal, was present as the chief guest today.

On Wednesday, Todhay Zarbas or Kalimpong will take on Navey Shotak [East Sikkim].

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM NORTH SIKKIM, MANGAN

WALK IN INTERVIEW

Applications from interested and eligible candidates are invited for filling up the following posts purely on Ad-hoc basis on consolidated pay, under Education Department, North District. The term of appointment will be for the current academic session., i.e.; till the end of academic session 2020 for PRTs and GTs, whereas for PGTs the term will end on 31st March 2021.

A panel list will be prepared on the basis of merit and the vacancies that may arise during the session on account of retirement/transfer/ long leave etc. will also be filled from the merit list.

The candidate who qualifies should work anywhere in North District. The appointments are made purely based on the need of a particular school. And hence, **once appointed no transfer requests will be entertained.**

If any person on the merit list denies to accept the posting given to any school, he/she has to give the denial in writing, immediately, and the next person in the list will be eligible for the appointment.

Having denied the acceptance of the posting order, the candidate will lose his merit seniority and will reach to the bottom of the list and has to wait for his next chance.

Candidates having degrees from universities outside Sikkim must get copies of their testimonials attested from Examination Cell, Education Department Gangtok. No copies without attestation will be considered.

Interested Candidates may submit their applications with relevant documents including CoI and Employment Card to the District Education Office on or before 26th February 2020. (No Applications will be accepted after 4.00 p.m. 26/02/2020)

For Further details contact: Exam Cell, District Education Office, Mangan : 9083484256, 9775979007, 9775449079

Walk-in - Interview Dates:

- PGTs & GTs: 02/03/2020 10.00 a.m onwards
- PRTs : 03/03/2020 10.00 a.m onwards

Venue : Conference Hall , District Education Office, Mangan.

Deputy Director
District Education Office
Mangan, North Sikkim

What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

Symptoms of nCoV

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

Treatment

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

Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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

If you seek help, you may call :
-Toll free no. 104
District surveillance Officer
EAST : 7029372100
WEST : 9593297809
NORTH : 9641957468
SOUTH : 7407691463
New STNM
AMS : 9434711402

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Hitting the Bottle

And no, the Supreme Court order is not enough

Of late, there has been so much written about substance abuse in the State that the more pervasive problem of alcoholism remains ignored. One speaks of media reportage here. And when the media overlooks the problem of alcoholism, it is, in a way, reflecting the societal acceptance of this problem which is no longer even looked at as a shared problem. It is something that families suffer in private, not realizing that so many of them are grappling with the problem that it should actually have become a priority intervention undertaking by now. And no, the Supreme Court ban seeking to push liquor shops away from the highways will not solve the problem because this problem has not been created by easy access, and has set in because its progress was ignored.

Look around, few people are disturbed in Sikkim by conspicuous drinking. Few people are worried enough to intervene even when they notice a colleague reporting to duty reeking of alcohol and only the rare family member will attempt counseling for someone who is obviously in need of it. Where empathy was required, Sikkim has served up ridicule. The only response that an alcoholic evokes nowadays is a snide remark and jokes behind her/his back. There is no real concern, or so it appears.

Sikkim's indifference towards this problem will weigh heavy on its collective conscience one day. Many justify alcoholism with the argument that the person is earning enough to indulge himself. Substance abuse, because it starts at a much younger age is more scandalous because of the petty crimes that the addicts invariably resort to finance their addictions. While there is no denying the fact that drug abuse is a matter of serious concern, alcoholism, because no one seems to be taking it seriously is even more debilitating.

Even if one were to keep the emotions aside for once, the impact alcoholism has on the economy is debilitating enough to demand action. Most people turn alcoholics in what should be the most productive years of their lives. Enslaved to the bottle, their faculties are compromised and their work suffers as a result. Those who suggest that alcohol boosts their creativity or energises them to work better are just peddling excuses to cover up for a weakness and we find refuge in these excuses to cover up for our vacuity towards the problem. We put much at risk with this indifference because alcoholism does not only affect the individual, but impacts the entire family. While a younger drug addict makes the elders of the family suffer guilt pangs, an alcoholic ends up abusing all members of the family. While the elder ones can just ignore the ranting of an alcoholic, the younger ones are scarred forever by their experience.

This is a social problem and requires the community to step forward and get proactive in its battle against the problem. Anytime now will be a good time to begin...

WRITE US:

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

Depression and language: analysing Edgar Allan Poe's writings to solve the mystery of his death

RYAN BOYD
theconversation.com

On October 3 1849, the famed American horror and mystery author Edgar Allan Poe was found in a complete state of delirium – incoherent, dishevelled and wearing a stranger's clothes. Four days later, he died in a hospital. His final words were "Lord, help my poor soul".

The nature of Poe's untimely demise at the age of 40 remains a mystery today, having baffled scholars for over 170 years. Dozens of possible causes of death have been suggested — from rabies to syphilis. Some suggest Poe was victimised in a form of voter fraud known as a cooping scheme, in which gangs working for corrupt politicians would sometimes beat unwilling bystanders to make them vote repeatedly for a certain candidate.

Others have suggested suicide. Poe's contemporary, Charles Baudelaire — a French poet who also translated Poe's works — suggested that the incident was "almost a suicide, a suicide prepared for a long time".

At first, the suicide hypothesis may seem a touch dramatic. The idea of an author whose works were famously dark and gruesome being so disturbed as to take his own life almost sounds like a bad cliché. However, there may be something to this theory.

Poe's personal life was a complex blend of factors that are reliably associated with an above-average risk for depression and death by suicide. He was male, often felt overwhelming hopelessness, had a history of alcohol and substance abuse, and repeatedly lost loved ones. Critically, Poe had made previous suicide attempts — having tried to overdose on laudanum a year before his death.

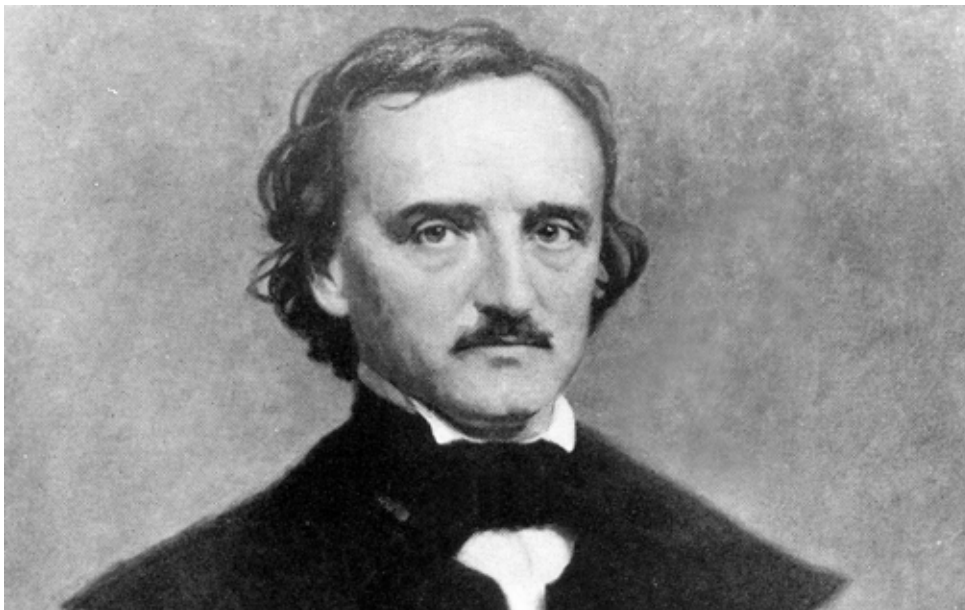
All possible causes of Poe's death have, to date, been purely speculative. He received no autopsy, and no medical records of the event have survived (if they ever existed). Yet even in the absence of medical data, we are now able to examine Poe's life and death through an objective lens.

Today, we have tools that can measure a person's psychology from the words they use in everyday life. My colleagues and I have used text-analytic methods to better understand everything from the emotional underpinnings of political ideology to entrepreneurial personality profiles to the psychological effects of childhood sexual abuse.

LANGUAGE AND DEPRESSION

The links between language, depression and suicidal behaviour are well established. Researchers consistently find that depressed people use language differently than their non-depressed peers.

People who are depressed tend to use more negative language. They also use language consistent with social withdrawal, including more self-referential words ("me" words) and fewer collective pronouns ("we" words). Depressed people also typically use more "working through" language –



also called "cognitive processing" words – which includes "think", "suppose" and "understand".

Research has found that people who died by suicide can be identified by such language patterns. For example, they consistently use more "me" words and fewer "we" words. Importantly, these patterns tend to increase drastically as they get closer to suicide. Analyses of the language patterns in Marilyn Monroe's Fragments and the diaries of explorer Henry Hellyer have been used to support the case for each of their suicides.

Building on this past research, our research team created an index of depression language. We then used it to assess whether Poe's language showed signs of recurrent depression or feelings of suicide. We analysed over 400 stories, poems and personal letters written by Poe throughout his life. Accounting for his own unique linguistic patterns, we identified any prolonged spikes that signalled likely periods of major depression:

Throughout Poe's life, nearly 20 texts scored abnormally high on our depression index, half of which were written in 1843, 1845 and 1849 — the year of his death. Poe's depression scores were

most pronounced in his personal letters, which are often the best reflection of one's "authentic self". They are largely absent from his professional writings. Notable exceptions include The Light-House, which scored extremely high on our depression index and was still a work in progress at the time of his death.

Looking deeper, we explored the events of Poe's life during his most depressed periods. Surprisingly, 1843 and 1845 were two of his most successful years. Poe earned overnight fame for The Gold-Bug (1843) and The Raven (1845). Both were reprinted dozens of times to keep up with popular demand. Yet Poe's relationship with his newfound fame was complicated. He earned practically nothing from his accomplishments. He deeply resented his own poverty, and fame likely betrayed his expectations.

WAS IT SUICIDE?

From our analyses, we can conclude that Poe's final months were indeed quite dark. This was primarily evident within his personal life. For example, Poe's personal letter that scored highest on our depression

index was one written to his mother-in-law in July 1849, where he wrote about the poor state of his health, finances and clothes.

Although our analyses reveal that Poe was spiralling into a depression at the end of his life, we can't say for sure whether his death was a suicide. Considering his rather high suicide risk from a clinical perspective, paired with our objective analysis of his mental states, it remains a real possibility that he did kill himself. Following our analyses, the suicide hypothesis currently stands as the only cause of death that has objective evidence behind it.

We cannot definitively rule out other theories of Poe's death. Given the less consistent results from his professional writings, and that suicide is often influenced by numerous factors simultaneously, a more complex picture emerges. At the very least, his mounting depression could have played some role in his judgement and decision-making leading up to his death. Ultimately, the nature of Poe's death remains a mystery quite befitting the master of the macabre.

[the writer is Assistant Professor in Behavioural Analytics, Lancaster University]

Julian Assange's extradition case is finally heading to court – here's what to expect

HOLLY CULLEN
theconversation.com

The extradition hearing to decide whether to send Julian Assange to the United States to be tried for publishing classified military documents on Wikileaks is expected to finally begin today in London.

Assange is charged with 17 counts under the Espionage Act, involving receipt, obtaining and disclosing national security information. He has also been charged with one count of conspiracy to assist Chelsea Manning to crack a US Department of Defense password to enable her to access classified information.

Assange has been in Belmarsh prison since his arrest in April 2019. He had been in solitary confinement in a prison medical unit, but was recently moved into a less isolated section of the prison due to concerns about his mental health.

From May to September of last year, Assange served a sentence for bail absconding, but since then has been waiting for the extradition hearing.

HOW WILL THE PROCESS PLAY OUT?

The case will be heard at Woolwich Crown Court before Judge Vanessa Baraitser, who has agreed to split the hearing into two parts to give both sides more time to gather evidence and prepare.

Legal arguments will be heard this week and evidence will be presented in a three-week hearing in May.

Unless Assange's legal team successfully argues the extradition request should be dropped for legal reasons without the need to hear evidence, this week's hearing will just be a step in the process.

Given the complex legal questions involved, Baraitser will likely deliver her judgement later in the year, taking time to consider the evidence and arguments.

WHAT ARGUMENTS CAN WE EXPECT TO BE MADE?

One key argument for Assange is

the assertion he would not receive a fair trial if extradited to the US, as advanced by professor Guy Goodwin-Gill of UNSW.

International human rights instruments, including the European Convention on Human Rights, include access to legal representation as part of the right to a fair trial. The European Court of Human Rights has also ruled a defendant has the right to confer with counsel in private.

Revelations that Assange may have been spied on in the Ecuadorian embassy in London, including while meeting with lawyers, raise serious questions concerning the fairness of any process where prosecutors might have access to defence material.

The claim Assange will not receive a fair trial in the US has been unintentionally strengthened by US government lawyers. In a new affidavit submitted in January, the lawyers argued the First Amendment of the US Constitution, which protects freedom of expression, would not apply to foreign nationals like Assange.

Assange's lawyers are also expected to argue the extradition request should be blocked because it is an abuse of process or politically motivated.

In a preliminary hearing last week, Edward Fitzgerald QC, one of the barristers representing Assange, proposed bringing evidence the US allegedly offered Assange a pardon if he stated Russia had nothing to do with the 2016 hacking of the Democratic National Committee and leaking of Democratic emails to Wikileaks.

The White House has acknowledged Republican Congressman Dana Rohrabacher contacted then-Chief of Staff John Kelly to discuss a potential deal with Assange, but the discussions didn't go any further.

Baraitser ruled the evidence is admissible at this week's hearings.

The extradition hearing will focus on the UK's Extradition Act and the UK-US Extradition Treaty.

The treaty has been frequently criticised because it imposes unequal conditions on extradition between the countries. When the UK seeks to extradite someone from the US, it must demonstrate a "reasonable basis" for believing the accused committed the offence. The US does not need to provide similar evidence when requesting the extradition of someone from the UK.

However, there are still arguments available to Assange's legal team under the UK Act that could lead to extradition being refused. In particular, they could argue either the extradition's true purpose was to prosecute or punish Assange for his political opinions, or that he would be prejudiced at his trial because of those opinions.

A POSSIBLE APPEAL TO THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

There are also several scenarios which could unfold when the judge makes her decision.

Whether or not she orders extradition, an appeal from the losing side is almost inevitable. This would go to the Court of Appeal, and afterwards, probably to the UK Supreme Court.

If Assange loses at that stage, he may make an application to the European Court of Human Rights, which has decided state parties to the European Convention on Human Rights may not extradite someone to another country where serious human rights violations are likely. This includes cases where they may be subject to a "whole life" sentence with no prospect of release.

The combined maximum sentence in the US for the crimes Assange is accused of is 175 years.

Given this, human rights arguments will likely be a significant part of the legal process before the British

and European courts. While the European Court of Human Rights has no enforcement powers, states do follow its rulings, including in cases when extradition would infringe human rights.

WHAT HAPPENS IF ASSANGE IS DEPORTED TO AUSTRALIA?

Pressure for the Australian government to intervene in Assange's case has grown, led by MPs George Christensen and Andrew Wilkie, who visited Assange and his legal team last week. They want the Australian government to intervene with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to stop the extradition.

If Assange does win the extradition fight and ends up deported to Australia, his lawyers have expressed concern the US could make a new extradition request.

However, there are mechanisms under the Australia-US extradition treaty that are not available under the UK-US treaty, which could be used to boost Assange's case. Notably, either party can refuse to extradite its own nationals.

Much depends on politics. The US government would certainly put pressure on the Australian government to extradite, and Australia would be reluctant to refuse an extradition request from an ally. However, if the British courts find Assange is unlikely to receive a fair trial in the US, it would be difficult for the Australian government to ignore that ruling.

And if the Australian government does act to bring Assange back, it would be difficult for it to then support another extradition request.

But as Assange's lawyer Jennifer Robinson has noted, the threat of extradition will continue, at least in some form, until the US withdraws the charges.

[the writer is Adjunct professor, University of Western Australia]

Kolkata Police grants permission for Amit Shah rally

KOLKATA, FEB 25 (PTI): Union Home Minister Amit Shah will address a BJP rally here on March 1 with Kolkata Police Tuesday saying it has granted permission for the event, days after the West Bengal unit of the party alleged delaying tactics by authorities.

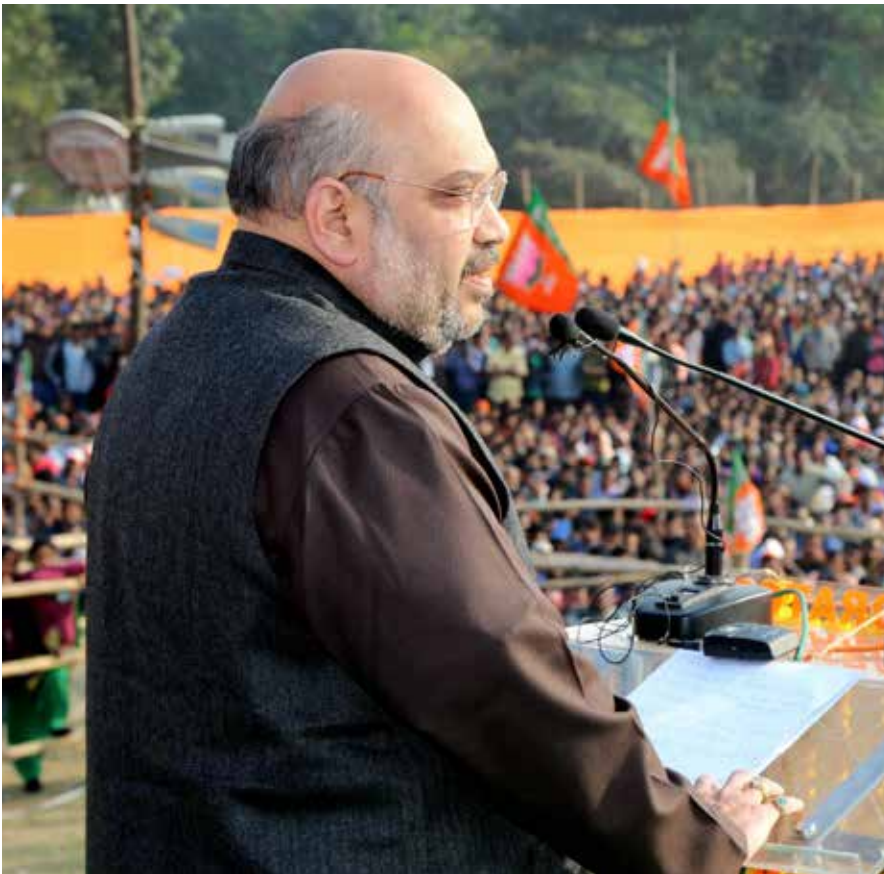
"Permission has been granted for BJP's rally scheduled on March 1," a senior police officer said.

The BJP had submitted a letter to the Kolkata Police on February 20 seeking permission for the rally, party sources said.

The party had earlier alleged that there was "dilly-dally" by police over granting permission for the rally.

"We have got the permission on Monday. Now things will move as per schedule. It will be a mega event," BJP state general secretary Rathindra Bose said.

Shah is scheduled to address the rally at Shaheed Minar Ground where state BJP leaders will felicitate him for the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act



(CAA) in Parliament, party sources said.

This will be Shah's second visit to West Bengal after assuming the office of the Union home minister. He had addressed a seminar on the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 at Netaji Indoor Stadium on Oc-

tober 1 last year. Reacting to the development, senior TMC leader and West Bengal Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Tapas Ray, said the BJP was "deliberately trying to make an issue out of a non-issue".

"They had applied (for the permission) on

Thursday and expected that it would be given by Friday morning. This is absurd," he said.

Senior CPI(M) leader Sujana Chakraborty claimed that had the Left parties applied for any programme, permission would not have been granted. "Had we applied

for any programme or seminar, it would have been cancelled right away. But as it is a BJP event, permission has been granted," he said.

West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh had last week accused the Kolkata Police and the district administration of dilly-dally over granting the permission by giving "lame excuses".

"The police is delaying the issue by citing board exams and said we will not be able to use loudspeakers during our programme," Ghosh had said.

Kolkata Police, however, had denied the allegations and said they had "just followed the rules".

The Madhyamik examinations began on February 18 and will end on February 27. The class 12 examinations will be held from March 12 to March 27.

The use of loudspeakers has been restricted for the examinations.

The TMC government had earlier denied police permission for several rallies of Shah when he was the BJP president.

Bihar assembly passes unanimous resolution on NPR, NRC



PATNA, FEB 25 (PTI): The Bihar assembly on Tuesday passed a unanimous resolution holding that there is no need for NRC in the state and updating of the National Population Register (NPR) should be done according to the 2010 format.

The all-party resolution followed a debate on adjournment motion moved by leader of the opposition Tejashwi Yadav and others in the House.

It got the approval of the house in the post-lunch session.

Earlier, while replying to the debate on the motion, Chief Minister

Nitish Kumar had reiterated his opposition to "additional clauses" having been inserted into the NPR.

He told the house that the state government has written to the Centre requesting that these be dropped.

Kumar told the assembly that there should be "no confusion" regarding how the NPR exercise would be carried out in the state and that nobody would be asked to furnish information like place and date of birth of one's parents.

Reading out the text of the letter to the Centre, he said it has also

been proposed by the Bihar government that "transgenders" be included in the gender column of the NPR.

A strong opponent of National Register for Citizens (NRC) despite his alliance with the BJP, Kumar, however, disapproved of 'hauva' (bogey) of NRC being raised by the opposition despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's categorical statement that its countrywide implementation was not on the anvil.

Kumar said that CAA is a central act passed by Parliament which is currently pending with the Supreme Court.

Rains in parts of West Bengal bring down temperatures

KOLKATA, FEB 25 (PTI): Most places in West Bengal received light to moderate rainfall on Tuesday owing to a western disturbance, the Met department said. The weather office has forecast that light to moderate rain in different parts of the state will continue till Thursday morning.

Heavy rain may occur at one or two places in the sub- Himalayan

districts of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar, Alipurduar, South and North Dinajpur and Malda districts.

An overcast sky and rain brought down the day temperature in most parts of the state by a few notches.

Port town of Haldia received the highest rainfall in 24 hours till 5.30 pm at 21.4 mm, followed by Kalaikunda (5.8 mm),

Jalpaiguri (4.4 mm) and Diamond Harbour (4 mm), the Met department said.

Light rain in Kolkata since the morning kept the day temperature down to a maximum of 22.6 degrees Celsius.

The Met said that the night temperature will fall by 2-3 degrees Celsius below normal over three days from Wednesday.

Paddy procurement: Bedlam in Odisha House for second day

BHUBANESWAR, FEB 25 (PTI): Odisha Assembly witnessed ruckus for the second consecutive day with the opposition BJP and Congress members alleging non-procurement of paddy in several 'mandis' (markets) because of a nexus between the BJD government and rice mill owners.

The House was adjourned twice due to the bedlam but normalcy returned after an all-party meeting. The House had witnessed 16 adjournments over the procurement issue on Monday.

As soon as the House assembled for the question hour on Tuesday, opposition members displayed anti-government placards, dubbed the BJD administration "anti-farmer" and trooped into the well, forcing Speaker S N Patro to adjourn the house twice.

The Congress and BJP members demanded a discussion on non-procurement of paddy in several 'mandis' in the state

They claimed that hundreds of quintals of paddy the farmers had brought to the 'mandis' were not procured due to a nexus between the government and rice mill owners.

The speaker later convened an all-party meeting to resolve the impasse where opposition members agreed to call off the agitation as budget discussions are getting affected.

"Our demand that the government purchase all the paddy from farmers remains intact. However, we will cooperate in the budget discussion," Leader of Opposition Pradipta Kumar Naik of the BJP said.

Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra said there is no end to the plight of farmers. Their condition has been miserable following unseasonal rains on Monday and Tuesday, he said.

Mishra said his party members will cooperate in the budget discussion.

SS Saluja of the Congress criticised the state government for introducing e-token system for paddy procurement, saying most of the farmers are mostly uneducated and they do not understand how to register themselves in e- platform and get token.

"We demand that the government procure all the paddy of farmers," he said.

BJP member J N Mishra claimed that the government has stopped some mandis in Sambalpur and Bargarh districts causing hardship for the farmers.

The government must accept all the paddy from farmers as the grain is getting affected in rain, he said.

Speaker Patro said Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister R P Swain has started discussions with MLAs from different districts.

Swain will sort out the problems of farmers after consulting with MLAs, the speaker said.

Opposition members said since the procurement will continue till March, they will keep a watch on the process.

"If required, we will again agitate in the Assembly," said Congress member Taraprasad Bahinipati.

Dolphin population in Bhitarkanika comes down to 62



KENDRAPARA, FEB 25 (PTI): The population of endangered dolphins has come down by more than half in Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park and nearby Gahirmatha seawaters, Forest officials said.

Only 62 dolphins were spotted during the latest headcount of these aquatic species this year, down from 126 found during last year, they said. The dolphin census report was released on Monday.

The forest officials spotted only 62 dolphins during the census con-

ducted this year on January 19, while last year it was 126, Deputy Conservator of Forest (Wildlife Management) Pradipta Kumar Sahoo said.

In the 2018 census, 307 dolphins were spotted. It dropped to 126 in 2019 and this year only 62 were spotted, he said.

The drop in the population of dolphins, accorded endangered status in the International Union for the Conservation of Natures (IUCN) Red List, has apparently assumed alarming proportion, officials said.

Conservationists are worried about the decline in dolphin population in Bhitarkanika National Park and its nearby areas.

Bhitarkanika National Park is spread over 145 square km in Kendrapara district. The park is one of the richest storehouses of mangrove genes.

The deputy conservator of forest (wildlife management) said factors leading to the drop in the number of dolphins in Bhitarkanika and Gahirmatha are being studied.

Tests for Kolkata Metro's China-made rake in limbo amid coronavirus scare



KOLKATA, FEB 25 (PTI): The deadly coronavirus outbreak is forcing Chinese manufacturer CRRC Dalian to look at other avenues to get its rake for the Kolkata Metro Railway tested, an official said here on Tuesday.

A team of Chinese engineers was supposed to come to the city for conducting Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) tests of the first rake that arrived in March last year but it has now become uncertain, the official said.

Radio frequency interference is the conduction or radiation of radio frequency energy that causes an electronic or electrical device to produce noise that typically interferes with the function of an adjacent device.

At present there are 10 to 12 Chinese engineers here for coordination and integration of

the Dalian-made rake, a metro official said, adding that they have been working here for the last six months.

The Railway Ministry placed an order for 14 rakes from Dalian for the Kolkata Metro Railway.

"They are involved in various tests of the rake for integration into the Kolkata Metro system and are working with engineers of the Metro Railway and the RDSO," the official said.

The RFI test of the rake was to be done by the manufacturer, but owing to the outbreak of the virus, the arrival of the experts has become uncertain, the official said.

"Engineers of an agency of Dalian was to arrive in the first week of March, but the outbreak has jeopardised the schedule," Kolkata Metro Railway spokesperson Indrani Banerjee said.

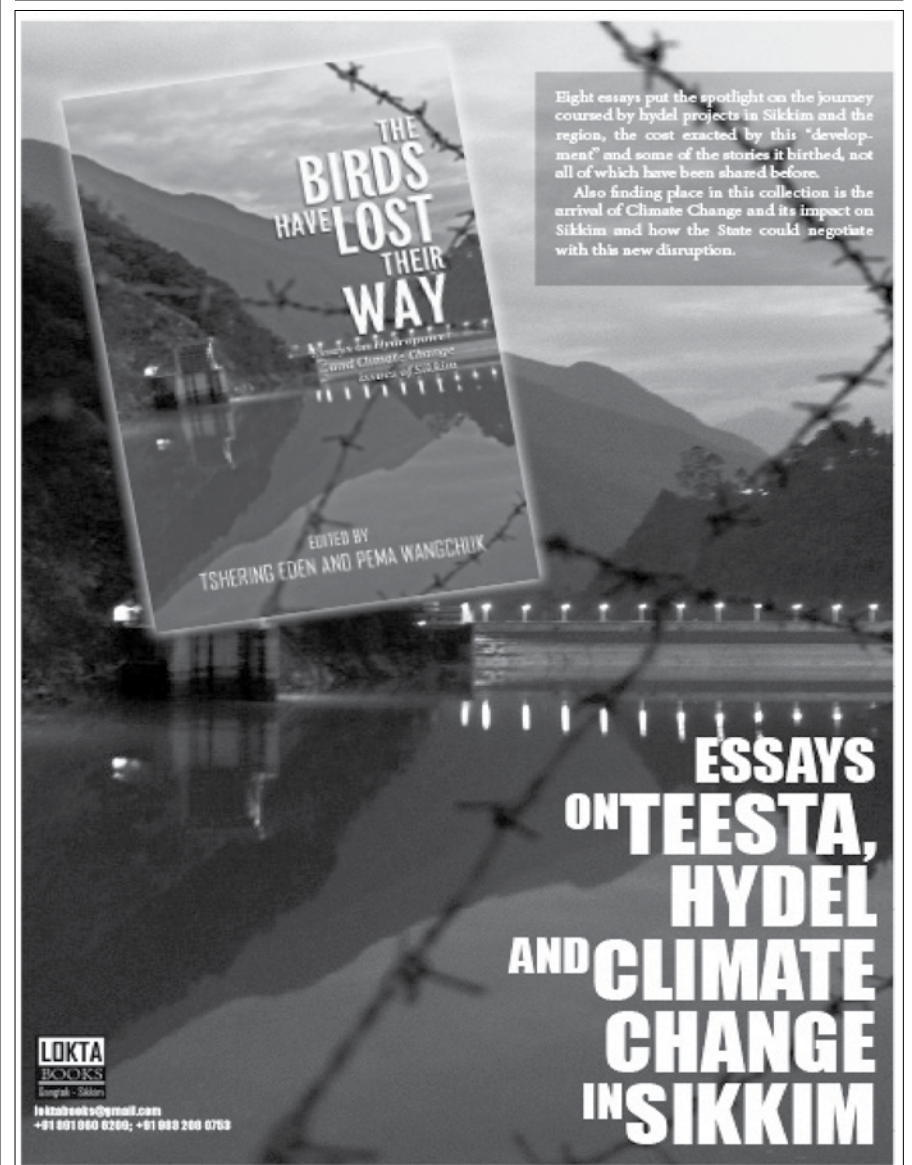
She said that since the RFI trials cannot be put off indefinitely, Dalian is consulting the Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER), which is under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Union government, for the purpose.

SAMEER has expertise in conducting RFI tests and has done such trials for the Medha rakes manufactured by ICF Perambur for the Kolkata Metro, Banerjee said.

These rakes are currently in service.

"Dalian is in talks with this company and the set of protocols to be followed are being discussed," she said.

"If the talks are fruitful and Dalian contracts the Indian company for the test, then the RFI trials can be completed without delay by March or April," Banerjee said.



Dhoni to start training for IPL-13 from March 2



CHENNAI, FEB 25 (PTI): Mahendra Singh Dhoni will start training for his much-anticipated return to action in the Indian Premier League (IPL) from March 2 amid never-ending speculation on his career, which has been on hold since last year's ODI World Cup.

The talismanic Chennai Super Kings captain, who led India to two world titles, will start his training at the M A Chidambaram Stadium along with some other players of the franchise.

The 38-year old has not played since the World Cup semifinal loss to New Zealand last year and has maintained a stoic silence on what his next move would be. He was dropped from the BCCI's list of centrally contracted players in January.

"Dhoni will train at the M A Chidambaram stadium from March 2. He will practice with players who are available at that time," CSK CEO K S Viswanathan said here.

"The full camp will begin on 19 March when all the players would have joined the squad," he added.

The IPL 2020 begins with CSK taking on defending champions Mumbai Indians in Mumbai on March 29.

Dhoni is expected to practice for a couple of weeks with the likes of Suresh Raina and Ambati Rayudu among others. He would then take a break before returning, a source said. Raina and Rayudu have been training here for the past three weeks or so.

A source said it would help the veteran stumper to bond with the new players in the CSK set-up.

Dhoni had commenced training with the Jharkhand team some time back.

The Super Kings' practice sessions in the last two years has attracted thousands of fans and with Dhoni set for an early arrival for preparation, similar numbers can be expected this time around too.

The three-time IPL champions had picked up veteran leggie Piyush Chawla, Australian pacer Josh Hazlewood, England all-rounder Sam Curran and Tamil Nadu left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore during the players' auction held in December last year.

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How Real Sociedad thrashed a third-division team 8-0 but won their hearts

SID LOWE

LONDON, 25 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]: At the end of training on Friday night, the players from Club Deportivo Becerril packed everything away and headed straight home. It was quarter past 10 and they had to be up early the next morning. Not long after 7.30am they were back, boarding the bus heading north, a four-hour journey ahead. One of the buses, that is. They had a game, but this time it wasn't theirs. Instead, they were going to San Sebastián, singing songs all the way there, and the whole town was going with them. For once that's not much of an exaggeration, either: there are 754 people in Becerril de Campos, a tiny, previously unremarkable town in the province of Palencia; on Saturday, 502 of them set off and didn't come back until after dark, happy as they had ever been.

It had been the perfect day. No sangria in the park but plenty of patxarán. Cider too, and txakoli. They walked the prettiest city there is, down old, narrow streets where every doorway is a bar and every bar is crowded with pintxos, a thousand things nailed to a thousand pieces of bread. They ate. Well. And they swam in the sea. Some did, anyway. They were invited into peñas, supporters' clubs, and given gifts. They took a hundred photos and made dozens of friends, learned a little Euskera. Then they went – all of them, two-thirds of an entire town – to watch a football match in the place that might just be the best place to do so in the whole of Spain right now. For free.

Becerril play in the third division, which makes it sound much better than it is. There's a First Division, a Second Division and a Second Division B – 80 teams split across four divisions, roughly by region. Then there's tercera, 361 teams in 18 provincial groups of 20 or more. Becerril, who came up from regional preference in the summer, are not far off relegation in Group 8. This year for the first time ever, they also played in the Copa del Rey – new, improved

and at last open to almost everyone – becoming the team from the smallest town ever to appear in the competition. They were beaten 8-0 by Real Sociedad and afterwards, la Real's president Jokin Aperribay invited them to Anoeta – the Reale Arena it's called now now – to watch a game.

All of them.

It took a little while to get sorted, but the promise was for real. Which is why on Saturday morning there were eight buses and a load of cars leaving the town virtually empty. "There are going to be so few people left that we've asked the Guardia Civil to send patrols to watch over the houses," said the club's president, Juan Antonio Redondo, "there's pretty much only some old folk left behind." They'd been going on about this excitedly for weeks – "no one's talking about anything else; there's a WhatsApp group, which is basically the whole town," said the mayor, Fran Pérez – while walls there were getting regaled with Real Sociedad stuff, a new team for the town to support. The president's daughter asked for a Real Sociedad tracksuit for Christmas, and she wasn't alone. When they departed, some already wore blue and white; by the time they returned, more did.

Pérez had gone ahead the night before, received by the mayor of San Sebastián. Becerril's staff and directors were invited to the formal pre-match lunch attended by directors of la Real and opponents Valencia, meeting past and present. Fans were welcomed in by Real Sociedad supporters, which they were becoming too. The hosts paid for everything: the buses, the tickets, many of the meals – 58 went to that directors' lunch, 30 of them free. "Real set no limits but we didn't want to abuse their generosity," Redondo explained. The food they ate was "like being at a wedding," said David González, the club captain. Kids from Becerril accompanied the team on to the pitch. In the stands, they sang. Becerril's name rang round, their

songs adapted for la Real while they learned the rest, ready.

And then, when they thought it couldn't get better, it got better. Turns out, they haven't just encountered a great club, they've encountered a great team too: Copa del Rey semi-finalists, a goal up from the first leg against Second Division Mirandés, and now looking beyond that. The next trip may be even further afield.

"We're competing for the same thing," the Real Sociedad manager Imanol Alguacil had said before Saturday's game, but it didn't look that way for long – and not just because over the last few weeks Valencia, left without a decent defender, are barely able to compete at all. "We have to be men [but] in the first half we played like kids," Dani Parejo said afterwards.

Valencia started the day a point above Real Sociedad, two teams chasing the final Champions League place, but within 11 minutes Mikel Merino put la Real ahead. Just before half-time it was two, Nacho Monreal scoring; and just after half-time, it was three, Adnan Januzaj completing a hat-trick from former Premier League players with a belting shot. It was done, 40 minutes still to go, time to enjoy it.

La Real are the youngest side in primera, prone to occasionally drift from games, occasionally vulnerable against the tougher teams, but there may be no one as much fun to watch. And, running track gone, noise raised, there may be no more fun place to go, either. Put the two together and it's the perfect day. La Real dominated Valencia, firing off 19 shots, "hurricane real" as one headline put it, Alguacil insisting: "We did a lot well." And yet they blow their opponents away without even being at their very best. This is the team that battered Madrid at the Bernabéu: skilful and swift, every pass forward, playing like they're determined not to waste a moment, like they're enjoying this as much as the rest of us. A lot has been said



about Martin Ødegaard, and rightly, but Merino has been outstanding too and Alexander Isak has left mouths open lately.

They all have.

It was la Real's sixth consecutive win at home in all competitions – their best run in 24 years. They have won 10 of their last 13 matches. "I don't know if we're really conscious of the moment we're living through at the moment," wrote Miguel González. His paper, El Diario Vasco, which had joyfully followed their visitors around town, called the Reale Arena a "footballing paradise" and it was hard for them to disagree. Alguacil was happy, too. "This is a moment to be enjoyed," he said. "The euphoria is normal. The passion for this team belongs to everyone."

Everyone in one particular small

town in Palencia, especially. The population of Becerril boarded their buses home around nine, promising that next time Real Sociedad could come to their place, although how they'll accommodate 34,199 members in the Mariano Haro is another matter.

"I just hope we can be friends for ever," one fan said. "This is football, the way it should be," insisted the vice-president José Esteban. "There are no words to describe the way they treated us, from Aperribay to the very last citizen. They hung on our every need, from arrival and throughout our stay. On the streets people said hello, they cheered us on. It's been unforgettable," said the mayor, but now it was time to go. Club Deportivo Becerril had a game the next day.

They won 1-0.

Frank Lampard warns Chelsea will 'have to suffer' against Bayern Munich

JACOB STEINBERG

LONDON, 25 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]: Frank Lampard has warned that Chelsea have to be prepared to suffer when they play Bayern Munich on Tuesday and urged his players not to let their standards drop after halting a worrying run by beating Tottenham.

While Chelsea's manager said greater focus was key to his inconsistent side's 2-1 home win over Spurs on Saturday, he knows they are likely to come under severe pressure in the first leg of their last-16 Champions League tie against Bayern.

Lampard believes it will take a performance of immense tactical discipline to progress against the German champions, who reached the knockout stages by winning all six of their group games. He also spoke about the importance of making sure the tie is still alive before the second leg in Munich on 18 March.

Bayern have far more experience at this level than a youthful Chelsea side and they enjoyed their last trip to London, smashing Spurs 7-2. Spurs chased the game after falling behind and Lampard does not want his defence to become exposed against a finisher of Robert Lewandowski's class.

"We've got players with Champions League experience in this group, as well as younger play-

ers in the early stages of their careers, particularly in the Champions League," Lampard said. "They have to understand why I keep talking about the levels going up, and what the mindset levels are. A big part of my job is to explain to the players that over two legs we need to be at our maximum. "Going into the game we must make sure every box is ticked in both games. We can't get caught up in game moments. After the game, we will probably suffer. Bayern Munich are an incredible side with the ball. They've got some really talented players who keep the ball and use the ball well. If we have to suffer, we have to suffer. That's our job over the next two games."

Chelsea had gone four league games without a win before facing Spurs and Lampard, who could bring Willian and Tammy Abraham in for Ross Barkley and Olivier Giroud respectively, spoke to his players about developing a more ruthless mindset before they faced their London rivals.

"I felt if you look at our recent form in the league, we were playing well," he said. "It's difficult to keep saying that. A lot of parts of our game are good but the important parts of the game, which is in the final third, scoring goals, finishing off what you've created and then making sure we

don't concede with absolute focus, were slightly short. It was clear we were slightly short.

"If you have 20 shots in a game and don't score, and the other team have two and score, and that's recurring, then that's an issue. When I wrote that down, it felt like a mindset thing. If you're not scoring, it can be a mixture of many things. It can be confidence. It could also maybe be something that's slack, slightly, or how you prepare through the week.

"It was just about being honest. The beauty of the meeting was everyone felt the same. I've been in meetings where people can't find the reason – even if the managers says what it is and players disagree. But I've got a really good group. The reaction to the meeting, and the reaction against Tottenham, was spot on. What we can't do now is forget what made us beat Spurs. That was a start for us on Saturday. We need to keep going."

Lampard captained the side when Chelsea upset the odds by beating Bayern on penalties in the 2012 Champions League final. He is not concerned if they are the underdogs again. "My job is just to prepare for the game and look at the opponent, see their strengths, see our strengths and ask can we find weaknesses there?" he said.

Anthony Joshua would be underdog against Tyson Fury, says Eddie Hearn



STUART GOODWIN

LAS VEGAS, 25 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]: Eddie Hearn has said "we'd be clowns" if he failed to agree a deal for Anthony Joshua to fight Tyson Fury, adding that his camp relish the prospect of their fighter going in as the underdog.

Since Fury's seventh-round stoppage win against Deontay Wilder in Las Vegas on Saturday, which ended when the beaten WBC heavyweight champion's corner threw in the towel, clamour has inevitably grown for an all-British unification fight with Joshua, who holds the WBO, IBO, WBA and IBF belts.

Hearn said he has no intention of getting in the way of a showdown between the pair. The promoter told Sky Sports News: "I said to AJ last night: 'The great thing about this is, you're going into the fight as the underdog'."

"Very rarely will you

see AJ go into any fight as the underdog but this time, you look at the betting markets, AJ is the underdog against Tyson Fury. Perfect – just how we want it.

"We believe we've got the man who can be the undisputed heavyweight world champion. Tyson Fury believes he can beat Anthony Joshua. Only one way to find out – let's make it happen."

Joshua regained his belts after atoning for his loss last June to the unfancied Andy Ruiz Jr with an emphatic points victory in December's rematch. He showcased impressive skills and tactics rather than the all-power approach that had marked the bulk of his 21 knockout wins.

Of Fury, Hearn said he is a "great fighter ... a very clever fighter and now he's shown a little bit of another dimension where he's gone in and been aggressive in the fight.

"Will he do that against Anthony Joshua?

Different kettle of fish ... Joshua is not a 15st Deontay Wilder who can punch a bit but looks bad going backwards, can get mauled in clinches and get punched around. Joshua is a big, big heavyweight – as they both are. When they come together it's going to be something very special."

Fury said he was "almost sure" he would face Wilder again to complete a trilogy of meetings with the Alabama fighter, having shared a draw at their first outing in December 2018. The deal for the return featured a rematch clause which gives Wilder's team 30 days to consider the option of a third fight in which the purse would be divided 60-40 in Fury's favour.

Hearn had earlier said: "I don't think anyone wants to see a third fight, it was that conclusive, but we will see if he wants to exercise that. I probably expect Wilder [to take the rematch]. I don't

see where else he has to go." Joshua has been lined up to defend his belts in London against the IBF's mandatory challenger, Kubrat Pulev of Bulgaria, with a June date ready to be announced should his camp fail to secure a Fury fight.

Hearn said of the potential implications should the pair take other bouts first: "Everybody wants this fight. I promise you this fight will happen. If we have to fight Pulev, we've got to beat Pulev and if Fury has to fight Wilder he's got to beat Wilder again. Both of those things will happen – Fury will beat Wilder again and AJ will knock Pulev clean out. You will get this fight.

"We will do everything that it takes to make this fight. You have two camps who want this fight. We'd be clowns if we didn't make this fight ... in Britain we are the kings of the world in boxing right now. Let's not waste it."

China reports 71 more virus deaths



BEIJING, FEB 25 (AFP): China on Tuesday reported another 71 deaths from the novel coronavirus, the lowest daily number of fatalities in over two weeks, which raised the toll to 2,663.

The National Health Commission also reported 508 new confirmed cases, with all but nine in hard-hit Hubei province.

It is up from Monday's 409 cases nationwide.

Multiple provinces in China have reported zero new cases for several days in a row now, with the World Health Organization saying Monday that the coronavirus epidemic has "peaked" in China.

WHO chief Tedros

Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the peak in China occurred between January 23 and February 2 and the number of new cases there "has been declining steadily since then".

However, WHO expert Bruce Aylward, leader of a joint WHO-China mission of experts, warned on Monday of outbreaks in other countries "in-

creasing at exponential growth rates".

Despite a downward trend in new case numbers, China continues to struggle to resume normal activity after the virus brought the world's second-largest economy to a standstill.

The country also decided to postpone its annual parliament session

for the first time since the Cultural Revolution.

Tens of millions of people remain under lockdown in Hubei province, where the virus is believed to have originated late last year.

A slight easing of the lockdown in Wuhan, Hubei's capital, was retracted shortly after being announced on Monday.

White House unveils \$2.5B emergency coronavirus request

WASHINGTON, FEB 25 (AP): The White House on Monday sent lawmakers an urgent budget request for 2.5 billion to address the deadly coronavirus outbreak, whose rapid spread and threat to the global economy rocked financial markets.

The White House budget office said the funds are for vaccines, treatment, and protective equipment. The request could advance quickly through Congress and came as coronavirus fears were credited with Monday's 1,000-plus point drop in the Dow Jones Industrials and are increasingly seen as a potential political threat to President Donald Trump.

The request was released Monday evening and came as key government accounts were running low. The Department of Health and Human Services had already tapped into an emergency infectious disease rapid response fund and was seeking to transfer more than 130 million from other HHS accounts to combat the virus but is pressing for more.

Today, the Administration is transmitting to Congress a 2.5 billion supplemental funding plan to accelerate vaccine development, support preparedness and response activities and to procure much needed equipment and supplies, said White House budget office spokeswoman Rachel Semmel.

We are also freeing up existing resources and allowing for greater flexibilities for response activities. Senators returning to Washington after a weeklong recess will receive a classified briefing Tuesday morning on the government's coronavirus response, a Senate aide said.

All of the warning lights are flashing bright red. We are staring down a potential pandemic and the administration has no plan, said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., who blasted a shortage of kits to test for the virus

and President Donald Trump's proposed budget cuts to health agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

We have a crisis of coronavirus and President Trump has no plan, no urgency, no understanding of the facts or how to coordinate a response.

Trump was a vocal critic of President Barack Obama's response to the 2014 Ebola scare, which barely touched the U.S. but was seen as a factor in that year's midterm elections, which restored control of the Senate to Republicans.

Trump took to Twitter Monday to defend his record.

The Coronavirus is very much under control in the USA. We are in contact with everyone and all relevant countries. CDC & World Health have been working hard and very smart. Stock Market starting to look very good to me! he tweeted.

Among the needs is funding to reimburse the Pentagon, which is housing evacuees from China who are required to undergo 14-day quarantines at several military bases in California.

Democrats controlling the House wrote HHS Secretary Alex Azar earlier this month to request funds to help speed development of a coronavirus vaccine, expand laboratory capacity, and beef up screening efforts at U.S. entry points. Azar is slated to testify before the Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday, and the U.S. response to the outbreak is sure to be a major topic.

The White House budget office, led by Russell Vought, worked with HHS to shape the request, with the agency seeking more than the White House is likely to approve.

There is a receptive audience for the request on Capitol Hill, though stand-alone emergency spending bills can be tricky to pass since they are invariably a target for lawmakers seeking add-ons.

Democrat Bernie Sanders slams Trump for selling weapons to India



BY LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON, FEB 25 (PTI): Democratic presidential front-runner Senator Bernie Sanders on Monday slammed President Donald Trump for selling weapons to India, saying that the US should instead partner with New Delhi to fight climate change to save the planet.

Sanders, who has won the Nevada and New Hampshire primaries and tied in Iowa, made the comments after Trump, who is on a two-day visit to India, on Monday announced that the US will sign defence trade deals worth USD 3 billion with India.

In an address at a massive "Namaste Trump" rally at Motera stadium in Ahmedabad, Trump announced that deals to sell state-of-the-art military helicopters and other equipment worth over USD 3 billion will be sealed with India on Tuesday.

Instead of selling USD 3 billion in weapons to enrich Raytheon, Boeing and Lockheed, the United States should be partnering with India to fight climate change, Sanders said in a tweet, the first by a Democratic presidential candidate on Trump's India visit.

We can work together

to cut air pollution, create good renewable energy jobs, and save our planet, he said.

However, a former White House official defended the US' decision to sell arms and weapons to India.

I'm proud of my service in the White House, in which we poured enormous energy into deepening climate and green tech cooperation w/ India... and also advancing security cooperation and defense sales. I'd like to think both can be part of a strong, values-based partnership, Joshua White said.

According to the US State Department, India plays a vital role in the US vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

In 2016, the US designated India as a Major Defence Partner. Commensurate with this designation, India in 2018 was granted Strategic Trade Authorization tier 1 status, which allows New Delhi to receive license-free access to a wide range of military and dual-use technologies that are regulated by the Department of Commerce. Bilateral defence trade with India in a little over a decade has increased from near zero in 2008 to USD20 billion.

Among some of the key foreign military sales

notified to Congress include MH-60R Seahawk helicopters (USD2.6 billion), Apache helicopters (USD2.3 billion), P-8I maritime patrol aircraft (USD3 billion), and M777 howitzers (USD737 million).

India was the first non-treaty partner to be offered a Missile Technology Control Regime Category-1 Unmanned Aerial System the Sea Guardian UAS manufactured by General Atomics.

The State Department is also advocating for the Lockheed Martin F-21 and Boeing F/A-18 two state of the art fighter aircraft that India is currently evaluating.

These platforms provide critical opportunities to enhance India's military capabilities and protect shared security interests in the Indo-Pacific region, it argued.

Since 2008, the US has also sold to India over USD 6.6 billion in defence articles via the direct commercial sales process, which licenses the export of the defense equipment, services, and related manufacturing technologies controlled under the 21 categories of the US Munitions List (USML). The top categories of DCS to India include aircraft, electronics and gas turbine engines.

More virus deaths outside China raise pandemic fears

Fresh deaths and a surge in new coronavirus cases in Iran, Japan and South Korea on Tuesday fuelled fears of a pandemic, as the disease took root in some of the world's poorest -- and worst-equipped -- countries.

The rapid spread abroad came as the World Health Organization announced that the epidemic had peaked at its epicentre in China, where it has killed more than 2,600 people and infected over 77,000 others.

But the situation has worsened elsewhere with nearly 2,700 other cases and more than 40 deaths globally, prompting restrictions on travellers from infected nations, the cancellation of football matches and national efforts to isolate suspected patients.

South Korea, Italy and Iran have each logged sharp increases in infections and deaths, while several Middle Eastern countries also reported their first confirmed COVID-19 cases.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus insisted the virus could still be contained, praising China's drastic quarantine measures in several cities for helping to prevent an even bigger spread.

"For the moment we are not witnessing the uncontained global spread of this virus and we are not witnessing large-scale deaths," Tedros told reporters in Geneva on Monday.

He added, however, that countries should do everything they can to "prepare for a potential pandemic" -- a term is used to describe an illness that spreads across numerous communities.

The White House plans to spend \$2.5 billion to combat the epidemic, according to US media. There are 53 cases in the United States so far.

- Iran hotspot -

Iran has emerged as a major hotspot with the death toll rising to 15 on Tuesday as three more people succumbed to the disease.

The country has been scrambling to contain the epidemic since last week when it announced its first two deaths in Qom, a centre for Islamic studies and pilgrims that attracts



scholars from abroad.

Iran has confirmed 61 cases so far, making its mortality rate exponentially higher than anywhere else in the world and raising suspicion that many more people have contracted the disease there.

A WHO team was due in Iran on Tuesday.

Several neighbours have enacted measures to block arrivals from Iran but the virus has already spread to Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Middle East.

The WHO has warned that poorer countries with weak health care systems are the most at risk.

- Games off -

South Korean President Moon Jae-in warned that the outbreak was "very grave" as the country's death toll rose to 10 and the number of confirmed infections approached 1,000 -- the largest total outside China.

Scores of events have been cancelled or postponed as the outbreak has spread in the world's 12th-largest economy, from K-pop concerts to the World Team Table Tennis championship.

Parliament closed for cleaning Tuesday after confirmation a person with the coronavirus had attended a meeting last week.

More than 80 percent of the infections have been in and around Daegu, South Korea's fourth-largest city.

Streets there have been largely deserted for days, apart from long queues at the few shops with masks for sale.

Most of the country's infections are linked to the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, an entity often accused of being a cult.

The US Centers for Disease Control warned Americans against "all nonessential travel to South Korea". In Japan, a fourth former passenger of the coronavi-

rus-stricken Diamond Princess cruise ship died, according to local media. The man was in his 80s.

Nearly 700 people from the quarantined ship have tested positive for the illness so far.

Infections have also spiked inside Japan, with at least 160 cases including one death.

The government has expanded the number of hospitals that can receive suspected patients and asked people with moderate symptoms to stay home.

Businesses were asked to "let people stay away from offices, to avoid rush hour commuting hours, and to encourage telecommuting," Health Minister Katsunobu Kato said.

Italy -- which has reported seven deaths and over 200 cases -- has locked down 11 towns, while upcoming football matches in its Serie A and the Europa League will be played behind closed doors.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has said that residents could face weeks of lockdown.

- China cases slow -

In China, 508 new cases were reported, with all but nine at the outbreak's epicentre in central Hubei province.

The death toll nationwide reached 2,663 on Tuesday after 71 more people died, the lowest rise in almost three weeks.

Reassured by the official numbers, the country is gingerly returning to business.

Beijing is seeing more cars on the street, factories are resuming work, Apple is reopening several stores, and some regions are relaxing traffic restrictions.

But schools remain closed, the capital has a mandatory 14-day quarantine for returning residents, and authorities are keeping some 56 million people in Hubei under lockdown.

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BRING THEM 80's BACK! The Shameless actress, Emmy Rossum strikes a pose displaying some of her ample assets while on set of her new film Angelyne taking places in the 80's in Los Angeles.

Being a mother has been most important thing for me: **Karisma Kapoor**

MUMBAI, FEB 25 (PTI): Actor Karisma Kapoor, who is making her digital debut with ALTBalaji and ZEE5 web series "Mentalhood", says the show was able to resonate with her because it puts spotlight on a mother.

Talking to reporters at the show's trailer launch event on Monday, Karisma said nothing is more important to her than being a mother to her two children and she is confident that series will be able to connect with women all over the country.

"When Ekta (Kapoor) approached me for the show and I heard the story, I just couldn't say no. The script is so relevant today. Being a mother has been the most important thing for me. All my awards on one side and my children on the other. My entire career on one side, my kids on the other," the 45-year-old actor said.

"When I heard the script and what it teaches you... It's so relevant to so many mothers and women out there that I just couldn't say no," she added. The series also stars Shilpa Shukla, Tillotama Singh, Dino Morea, Shruti

Seth and Sandhya Mridul. Karisma said the show aims to entertain but at the same time, it also addresses relevant issues like surrogacy and bullying.

"There's a meaning, a learning behind the show. Each episode has a message for everyone. Even men watching it would say 'Oh my



God! I didn't realise this.' We deal with bullying, gender, exam fever and surrogacy. It's actually entertainment with a learning which is so beautiful," the actor said. Written by Ritu Bhatia and directed by Karishma Kohli, the show will start streaming from March 11.

Metallica Cancel Two Festival Appearances as **James Hetfield** Continues Therapy

"The reality is that I have not prioritized my health in the past year of touring and I now know that my mental health comes first," singer says

Metallica are canceling their appearances at this summer's Sonic Temple and Louder Than Life festivals, while James Hetfield continues to seek treatment following a relapse last fall.

All of Metallica's other scheduled concerts this year, including their appearances at Welcome to Rockville (May 8th and 9th) and Aftershock (October 9th and 11th) will go on as planned. Despite the cancellations, Hetfield said his fans should count on him and that the therapy is working.

"As part of my continuing effort to get and stay healthy, I have critical recovery events on those weekends that cannot be moved," the singer and guitarist said in a statement. "I apologize to all of our fans who have bought tickets for

these festivals. We are working with the festival promoters to provide for refunds or exchanges. My intent with this

for May 15th and 17th (Sonic Temple) and September 18th and 20th (Louder Than Life). The Red Hot Chili Peppers,



statement is saying 'I apologize' to each one of you." The festivals, which will go on without Metallica, are still scheduled

Tool and Slipknot now serving as Sonic Temple headliners; Louder Than Life's headliners are yet to be announced.

Hollywood Is Reacting To Harvey Weinstein Being Found Guilty Of Rape And Sexual Assault



After Harvey Weinstein was found guilty on Monday for raping a woman and sexually assaulting another woman, members of Hollywood are speaking out about his conviction.

More than 80 women have accused Harvey Weinstein of sexual harassment and assault since the groundbreaking New York Times and New Yorker investigations were published in October 2017. The former film producer has repeatedly denied the accusations.

Actor Mira Sorvino, who accused him of sexual harassment, tweeted, "The beginning of #justice. More to come, my sisters. #weinsteingUILTY."

She said that in 1995 while she was promoting the film Mighty Aphrodite, which was produced by Miramax, Weinstein's then-company, he had invited her to his hotel room and massaged her. Director Peter Jackson, known for the Lord of the Rings and Hobbit trilogies, said he didn't cast Sorvino or Ashley Judd in his films because of advice that Weinstein gave him.

"I recall Miramax telling us they were a nightmare to work with and we should avoid them at all costs," Jackson said.

Judd, who also accused Weinstein of sexual harassment, tweeted on Monday, "For the women who testified in this case, and walked through traumatic hell, you did a public service to girls and women everywhere, thank you. #ConvictWeinstein #Guilty."

Judd accused Weinstein of inviting her to his hotel room, offering to massage her, and then asked her to watch him shower.

She said he then derailed her career, discouraging directors and other Hollywood filmmakers from working with her.

Rosanna Arquette, who also accused Weinstein of sexual misconduct, tweeted that she's thankful to the people who testified and played a role in putting the former producer in jail.

"Gratitude to the brave women who've testified and to the jury for seeing through the dirty tactics of the defense," she wrote. "We will change the laws in the future so that rape victims are heard and not discredited and so that it's easier for people to report their rapes."

Top Chef host Padma Lakshmi said she's "hoping for consecutive sentences."

"Harvey Weinstein is now a convicted rapist," she wrote. "If there's a man who doesn't deserve bail, it's him."

And Mariska Hargitay, best known for her role on the NBC drama Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, tweeted that the Weinstein case "represented some of the ugliest behavior I have seen in the criminal justice system."

Filmmaker Judd Apatow added to the chorus of people tweeting about Weinstein's conviction. "Don't forget Harvey Weinstein faces four more charges in Los Angeles," Apatow wrote. "This is just the beginning of holding him accountable."

Rosie O'Donnell tweeted in celebration, "Oh happy day - off to the pokey #HarveyWeinsteinGuilty."

Bail for Weinstein was revoked Monday, and he was immediately sent to jail until his sentencing on March 11.

Finneas responds to claims his and Billie Eilish's success is down to parents' "connections"

"Our parents gave us love but knew no one in the record industry" Finneas has responded to claims that his and Billie Eilish's success is down to their parents' "connections". The pop star and her producer brother are the children of Maggie Baird and Patrick O'Connell, who are described in Finneas' Wikipedia entry as an actress and screenwriter and an actor.

In a now-deleted tweet, one Twitter user suggested those occupations gave the siblings industry connections that had helped to catapult them to success. Finneas - a solo musician in his own right - responded, setting people straight on their background.

"During my life time, our parents were never able to fully financially support us off of their work as actors," he wrote. "Our dad worked 12 hour days 7 days a week as a construction worker for Mattel and our mom was a teacher. Our parents gave us love but knew no one in the record industry."

He continued to say that he had paid off their mortgage in 2019 and that his sister paid them both salaries to tour with them, even "though they have told us many times they would work for us for free."

"Anyone who saw us tour in 2019 knows our dad insists on sweeping the stage each night before we perform," he added.

Meanwhile, Eilish scored the biggest opening week of all time for a Bond theme when 'No Time To Die' hit Number One on the Official UK Singles Chart last week (February 21).

The song, which was co-written and produced by Eilish and Finneas, racked up 90,000 chart sales across the past seven days including 10.6 million streams.

ARIES: "I call all of my power back to me now. I am whole and complete." Let this affirmation by Danielle LaPorte give you the strength you need to break past limiting beliefs and reinstate your faith in yourself. Aries, you are capable of so much more than you believe you are. This is also a time of big manifestations. Get ready to receive the cumulative reward of all the work you have put in. Tip: This is a time of stepping into your personal power.

TAURUS: Today, you are being asked to address the blocks in your femininity—the side that gives so freely, but shies away from receiving. Where do you think this wound is stemming from? What's keeping you from making space for the love you deserve? Word for the wise: realign internally. On the career front, however, you will find that things are looking up. You're at a point where the work you do, no longer feels like 'work'. Instead, it has become an extension of you. Continue to create from a space of authenticity and shine your light on the world. Tip: Your work is an extension of who you are.

GEMINI: Today, you're being called to

step back and reassess your personal space. Have you been over-extending yourself lately? Are you carrying the regret of offering help at your own cost? Be mindful of when you're saying 'yes', even though your head is screaming 'no'. Your time and energy are sacred, Gemini. If you don't prioritise yourself, nobody else will. Does that mean you need to go to war in order to make yourself heard? Anything but. Let 'gentle, yet firm' become your mantra. Tip: Learning to draw boundaries will prove to be life-changing.

CANCER: What is your idea of home, Cancer? What are the places, people and experiences that provide you with a sense of safety? You are connecting with your roots like never before. This is also a period of reconnecting with old friends, especially the ones you have lost touch with. Don't take your relationship for granted, moon child. Reach out and tell your tribe just how important they are. Tip: Home, family and community are taking centerstage.

LEO: You're allowed to be a hot mess for no more than five seconds today. The

rule states that after your customary moping session, you must pull yourself together, put on the suit that makes you look and feel like a snack, and walk into the room like you own it. You've earned your place in the sun, Leo, and nobody gets to take that away from you. As for the so-called losses, know that the Universe is only protecting you from harm. You will only understand this once you gain perspective. Tip: Pull yourself together.

VIRGO: Love at first sight is overrated. What the two of you have is a rare and precious love that gets better with the passage of time. Raise a toast to the deep connection you share. Single Virgos, the suitor in question has been giving you the signs for a while. Now it's time for you to let them know how you feel. Word for the wise: take things in your hands. Tip: Know your love language.

LIBRA: With the blessings of goddess Venus, you are likely to start the week on a romantic note. As always, don't wait for Cupid to intervene with his arrow. You take charge of the situation. The man across the hallway you've been

making eyes at? It's time to accidentally (read: on purpose) bump into him. Even better, consider getting coffee after work. Coupled Librans will find that they are experiencing a greater degree of connection with their partners. You know that friend who is really hands on with kids? Ask them to watch over the little ones as you and your beau paint the town red. Tip: Love and romance are on the cards.

SCORPIO: "Feelings are just visitors, let them come and go." Let Mooji's golden words give you the strength you need to disengage from the ebb and flow of the emotional world. Remember, everybody is dealing with their own struggles privately. It's best not to take anything personally. But, sitting at home and marinating in your miseries isn't going to help your cause either. Sometimes, the simple act of going for a walk in the park or taking yourself out for coffee can turn things around. PS: It's all going to be over soon. Tip: Become an observer of what's coming up.

SAGITTARIUS: That big breakthrough moment is finally here. Your hard work

and loyalty have begun to pay off, Sagittarius. Bask in your glory and enjoy the recognition that comes from being on the top. Not everybody is going to partake in your success, though. They don't have to. Be mindful at every stage so their mentality doesn't get to you. Word of warning: the highs have a way of magnifying mistakes in judgment. As always, learn to be easy with yourself. Tip: A breakthrough moment is on the cards.

CAPRICORN: Each one of us, irrespective of our outer appearance, is an amalgam of both the masculine and feminine energies. While the former prides itself on the raw and primal (i.e. physical strength), the latter relies on a gentle inner force to turn things around. Both are equally important and serve us in their own way. However, the situations you will face in the days to come may not be solved by taking an aggressive stance. Move beyond the ego space and choose the path of least resistance. Find a way to work with, rather than against people. Tip: Rely on your gentle inner force.

AQUARIUS: Happiness is an inside job, Aquarius. If you think somebody outside is going to change the internal

setting, you're wrong. If you think an upgrade in your job profile will take away your blues, you're wrong once again. See how and where you are relying on external factors and the manner in which you need to readjust your gaze. This is likely to be a deeply emotional time for most. Don't think of it as being haunted by your past demons. Rather, acknowledge this as an opportunity to give yourself closure and kiss goodbye to the old wounds. Tip: You are responsible for your cup of sereni-tea.

PISCES: The trouble is, we save our kindness and compassion for the world, while being unkind to ourselves in private. But your self-talk is undergoing a drastic upgrade. You are learning to be easy on yourself; to hold space for yourself to become the ray of light you were always meant to. Trust that your relationship with the world will also undergo a drastic change. Under the influence of the Pisces new moon, you will be able to see who your people are through the eyes of clarity, and forge a deeper connection with your tribe. Tip: You are connecting with your soul tribe on a deeper level.