



**AMITABH BACHCHAN
WRAPS 'BRAHMASTRA'**
pg 08

**AN ETHICAL FUTURE COULD MAKE
LIFE HARDER FOR THE POOREST
— BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO**
04

**PROUD TO BE KNOWN
FOR ACTION FILMS:
ROHIT SHETTY**
pg 08



SummitTIMES

Vol 05 | Issue 59 | Gangtok | Tuesday | 03 March 2020

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

*Two fresh
coronavirus
cases reported
in India*

NEW DELHI, MAR 2 (PTI):

Two fresh cases of the novel coronavirus -- one in Delhi and another in Telangana -- have been reported in India, taking the number of people who have tested positive for the respiratory virus in the country to five so far, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday.

The infected person from Delhi recently travelled to Italy while the other patient from Telangana travelled to Dubai, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said, adding that the government has stepped up its vigil and efforts to detect and prevent the spread of the deadly virus that has killed 2,912 people in China and has spread to at least 58 countries.

The three persons, which include two medical students of a university at Wuhan, who had earlier tested positive for COVID-19 in Thrissur, Alappuzha and Kasargod districts in Kerala were discharged following recovery.

Addressing a press conference here, Vardhan advised people to refrain from non-essential travel to Iran, Italy, South Korea and Singapore.

Italy is reeling under swelling cases of the coronavirus infection while UAE has reported 19 cases so far.

The infected person from Delhi recently travelled to Italy, while the other patient from Telangana has travelled to Dubai, the Union Health Minister said.

He said both the patients had self-reported after they developed symptoms like respiratory problems, cough and fever.

"They have tested positive. They are stable and being closely monitored," Vardhan said.

The minister further said the Indian government is in discussion with Iran and Italian authorities to evacuate Indians there.

Vardhan, who held a meeting of the Group of Ministers constituted to monitor the current status and actions for prevention and management of novel coronavirus, said India has already suspended e-visas/visas issued to Iranian and Chinese nationals over the rising number of confirmed COVID-19 patients in these countries.

"Depending on the evolving situation, visa restrictions may be extended to other countries," he said.

Vardhan said around 1,086 people who returned from Iran in recent times have been recommended for community surveillance.

turn to pg 02

CM inaugurates Tertiary Cancer Care Centre

*Announces
separate
management
team soon
for STNM
Hospital*

GANGTOK, 02 MAR (IPR): Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang (Golay) inaugurated the Tertiary Cancer Care Centre under the Department of Radiation Oncology at New STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, today. The function was hosted by Minister for Health & Family Welfare Department, Dr. M.K. Sharma, and Minister for Building & Housing Department, Sanjit Kharel.

The new infrastructure was executed by Civil Engineers Enterprises Pvt Ltd, Kolkata under turnkey basis.

After inaugurating the facility, the Chief Minister in his address congratulated the health fraternity in the State and

STNM hospital in particular for the much-needed infrastructure.

He said that with the establishment of this Tertiary Care Centre, people of Sikkim would not have to travel outside the State to seek cancer related treatment. He however stated that there should be adequate awareness at every level of the society on health-seeking behaviour, which would rule out occurrence of such life-threatening ailments. He stressed on the need to involve students and the youth to raise awareness among the masses.

The Chief Minister stated that the Government has laid the highest priority on the health sector and would facilitate quality health care system at every level. He, however, said that the Government has its limitations, and it is the people who have to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Referring to frequent report on social media



about lack of adequate management in the Hospital, the Chief Minister announced that the Government will soon constitute a separate management team headed by an efficient officer of the State Government, so that issues such as hygiene and public grievances, safety and security, and other is-

ssues can be addressed without disturbing the routine of doctors.

The Chief Minister also informed that a separate police outpost has been set up at the premises of the Hospital to ensure the safety of the hospital staff and property. The Chief Minister further suggested that an emergency OPD can be

set up at the old STNM to cater to out-patients, which he said would reduce the load on the new hospital.

Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Dr. M.K. Sharma in his address said that the department is doing its best to ensure improvement in the primary health care services to avoid load on

tertiary care centres. He reiterated the commitment of the Government to offer the best of medical facilities to the people of Sikkim.

Earlier, Principal Secretary, Health & FW, K. Shrinivasulu in his welcome address expressed the Department's gratitude to the Government and the Chief Minister

for inaugurating this much needed facility, and for laying great emphasis on the health sector in the State. He said that the Tertiary Care Centre will be a huge boon to people as they would not have to take referrals to hospitals outside the State, which will improve their economic health as well.

HOD, Oncology Department, STNM, Dr. Ashish Rai, made a power point presentation and explained how the Cancer Care Centre ran from an inadequate facility in the old STNM Hospital, and has now evolved into a state-of-the-art facility inaugurated today.

He said that the newly inaugurated Centre is the best in the north eastern region and is comparable to the best centres in big cities. He expressed his gratitude to the Government for inaugurating the facility for the people of Sikkim. Dr. Ashish also shared the statistics of cancer prevalence in the State

turn to pg 02

SKM taking Sikkim to dark ages: Chamling

SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 02 MAR:

Sikkim Democratic Front president and former Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling, said today that recent happenings in the State are proof that Sikkim Krantikari Morcha does not know how to run the government and is only good at accusing the previous government. SKM is trying to take Sikkim to the dark ages, he said.

"After coming to power, it is the responsibility of SKM to run the government instead of accusing SDF and Pawan Chamling," said the former CM.

Speaking with media persons at SDF Bhawan on Bye-pass road on Monday, Mr Chamling took questions on a number of topics. Regarding the recent High Court judgment on COI



issued to pre-1969 Government employees, he alleged that the State Government has been careless on this issue due to which, the people of Sikkim will have to suffer.

"We respect the judgment of the High Court but being a party in the case it is the responsibility of the State government to properly study the judgment and take steps accordingly," said Mr Chamling. He added that the government

should have consulted legal and constitutional experts as well as stakeholders on this case.

Now not only the people from the neighbouring hills but all people who worked here during that time will get status at par with other Sikkimese people, said Mr Chamling further adding that the society should think on this issue as it will affect the coming generations.

turn to pg 02

Sunday Clinic travels Rabong sub-division under Reach Out initiative



BISHNU SHARMA

& KESANGLA D

LHASUNGPA

RABONGLA, 02 MAR:

"Service to mankind is service to God." We have often heard this saying, but today we witnessed a true example of this in the person of Dr Pallavi Pariyar, Medical Officer, Rabong PHC, South Sikkim.

An alumni of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Med-

ical Science, after her busy schedule treating patients at the Primary Health Centre on weekdays, Dr Pariyar along with her support staff visits various far-flung places of the area on Sundays and provides medical facilities there as part of a "reach out" initiative.

As on date, under this initiative, Dr Pariyar has reached medical support

to people of Phamtam [on 09 Feb], Lingzoo [16 Feb] and Namlung [01 March].

Apart from this, she also conducts frequent health camps in different parts of the sub-division.

"We, the people of Barfung constituency, wholeheartedly support and salute the efforts and dedication of Dr Pariyar. We wish her success in all future endeavours."

CM chairs coordination meeting Red Panda Tourism Festival

GANGTOK, 02 MAR [IPR]: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] chaired a coordination meeting today at Samman Bhawan for the Red Panda Tourism Festival. The festival is scheduled to be held in Soreng-Chakung constituency from 24 to 26 April, 2020.

After hearing out the suggestions, inputs and advice placed in the house, the Chief Minister explained that the State Government has taken the conscious decision to take such festivals to rural area of Sikkim primarily to ensure that the unexplored parts of Sikkim can be placed on the tourism map.

He remarked that places like Gangtok and Tsomgo have become highly popular among tourists and impetus should now be directed on rural Sikkim so that the rural economy is strengthened and more tourism destinations throughout the State are given due importance and visibility.

He also pointed out the current trend of tourists preferring rural sojourns and nature-based tourism and also shed light on the potential and unique specialty of rural Sikkim and stressed the need to introduce rural parts of Sikkim like Soreng-Chakung, Rinchenpong, Hee-Berموik and Daramdin in West Sikkim and similar lesser-explored places in the other three districts.

He said that in this regard, the



Red Panda Tourism Festival this year will have the tagline, "Rediscover West Sikkim," and that this focus will change every year as the festival moves to other destinations.

He further urged that activities and components for sustainable growth and development be initiated for the long-term benefit of the areas.

He said that the festival should not be seen just as a tourism festival, but cater to holistic development in every sector.

The Chief Minister also advised that the festival include education, farming, health and sports through innovative awareness sessions on relevant issues.

He also directed that a permanent State Level Committee for Red Panda Tourism Festival be constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary with

Tourism as the nodal department for the festival.

He also advised that the Red Panda Tourism Festival be placed on the national calendar with proper execution of assigned works at all levels.

He also informed about the initiatives of the state govt to resolve the pending issue of Pakyong Airport and spoke about the recently-held Global Cinema Festival and future scope of the state to become a film shooting destination.

He urged the people to embrace the enormous opportunities that can be created once Sikkim becomes a preferred film shooting destination.

Soreng-Chakung MLA, Aditya Golay, in turn stressed the need to create a benchmark for the festival by giving priority to the Sikkimese people.

turn to pg 02

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

Children's Parliament formed at Phensang

MANGAN, 02 MAR [IPR]: District Child Protection Unit, North, under Child Protection Scheme, Social Justice and Welfare Department conducted a sensitization programme on child rights at Phensang GPK for children of the GPU. The programme also included formation of Village Level Children's Parliament for children of Phensang GPU in coordination with the Village Level Child Protection Committee.

The children voted for their leaders unanimously and the Panchayat president, Diki Doma Bhutia, administered the



oath. She enthusiastically supported the children to stand up for pertinent issues in their community right from such young age so they may grow up to be more confident individuals who contribute well to their society.

The Prime Minister elected by the children who is a Child with Special Needs(CWSN), Passang Thendup Lepcha, expressed his gratitude for this platform and pledged along with the other Ministers to work

for the children of their community and especially focus on inclusiveness.

The DCPO North, Wendy Lepcha, informed that the Parliaments formed were inclusive so every Parliament formed shall have a CWSN to represent and fight for reduced inequality; that the Special Educator cum Coordinator, Education Department, Diki Doma Lepcha, has been coordinating with the District Child Protection Unit, North to encourage participation of all CWSNs in the Children's Parliaments so no child may be left out.

SKM taking...

On being asked about the Central Motor Vehicle Act implemented in the State, he said that like the West Bengal government, SDF would have never implemented the Central Motor Vehicle Act in the interest of drivers of Sikkim.

Regarding Transport department's proposal to review the appointment of temporary employees appointed between 2014 to 2019, Mr Chamling said that if the government wants to take action then it should be implemented to all employees and not only Transport Department employees.

SKM had promised to provide jobs to unemployed youth but has started snatch jobs away, he alleged.

"We provided jobs with proper process and budget provision. The SKM government is saying it does not have money to give salary to the government employees because it has diverted funds for some other works of its interest," Mr Chamling further alleged.

Responding to queries on the criticism of his statement during an interview in Nepal where he had said that his ancestors were from Nepal, he said, "I was responding to a media query about my ancestors. I told them my ancestors were from Nepal who later came to Sikkim around 300 years back. Every person's ancestors had migrated from some place or the other."

He added that Presidents of the United States of America and other countries have proudly announced their ancestry but it is an irony in Sikkim that some people do not want to accept the truth.

On the recent arrest of SDF workers, Barap Namgyal and Santosh Rai, a senior SDF leader, KT Gyaltsen stated that all charges were false, baseless and fabricated and charges framed by the police will not stand in court.

"The party is fully behind them and we have been pursuing the matter legally and with proper process," he said.

On the occasion, SDF president has also invited party workers and supporters to attend the 28th SDF foundation day to be held on 04 March at SDF Bhawan.

ASKCBKS executive members call on CM



GANGTOK, 02 MAR [IPR]:

The newly-elected executive members of Akhil Sikkim Khas Chettri Bahun Kalyan Sangh [ASKCBKS], led by their president, Raju Basnet, called on Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] at Samman Bhawan here in the capital this evening.

During the meeting

the new ASKCBKS president introduced the members to the Chief Minister and also apprised him about the various issues of the organisation.

The Chief Minister congratulated Mr Basnet and his team and also assured full support and co-operation from his end.

Now you can whatsapp
Summit TIMES @
9832556698
9832080753

Maenamla beats Bhutan team in CM's Gold Cup Archery



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 MAR:

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

Ground, Tathangchen.

In a very closely played match on Monday, Maenamla outplayed Helping Bhutan with 29-26 points.

On Tuesday, the next match of the tournament will be played between Denzong Dapen, Gangtok and Sharabo, North Sikkim.

CM chairs...

He also informed that the baton of Red Panda Tourism Festival will be passed to other districts and constituencies once the upcoming celebration is over. He urged the forum to ensure uniqueness of the programme with different components so that every section of the society can be involved.

Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling, also urged alls to maintain proper data on footfalls of domestic and international tourists to the state of Sikkim after the upcoming event.

He also advised that a meeting be held with the tour operators to motivate and attract them towards the upcoming Red Panda Tourism Festival 2020.

Earlier, Chief Secretary SC Gupta suggested that components based on tourism be incorporated so that the festival is exclusively dedicated for tourism promotion in the State.

Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Dr K Jayakumar, outlined the importance of Red Panda Tourism Festival and mentioned that the speciality of the state should be showcased.

Minister Tourism and Civil Aviation, BS Panth, Minister Education KN Lepcha, Minister Energy and Power MN Sherpa, Minister UDHD Arun Upreti, Forest Minister Karma Loday Bhutia and other dignitaries also placed their views and inputs.

Principal Secretaries, Secretaries and HoDs from various departments including Industry, Information & Public Relations, Forest, Sports & Youth Affairs, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Rural Development Department, Agriculture and Horticulture, Culture, Exercise, Police, Ecclesiastical, Transport department put forth their suggestions, inputs and departmental activities which can be showcased and presented to make the event more entertaining, informative, educative and life orientated event.

Press Advisor to the Chief Minister, CP Sharma, Sub Divisional Magistrate Soreng who is also the President of the Sub Division Level Organizing Committee, Representative from local NGO shared their inputs and advocated for inclusion of components for sustainable development of the area.

Two fresh...

Authorities are screening travellers arriving from Kathmandu, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, China, Hong Kong, Thailand, South Korea, Singapore, and Japan at 21 designated airports in the country for possible exposure to the novel coronavirus.

A total of 5,57,431 passengers have been screened at airports and 12,431 at major and minor seaports so far, Vardhan said.

He also informed that around 10,24,922 people have been screened in the villages of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim bordering Nepal.

Besides, as many as 25,738 people are under community surveillance across India while 37 people suspected to have COVID-19 symptoms across the country are currently hospitalised. Their samples have been sent for testing, a senior health ministry official said.

Responding to a question on whether there could be shortage of drugs in the country as around 70 per cent of the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) come from China, Vardhan said he has spoken to the minister in-charge of the Department of Pharmaceuticals and that he has informed that "we are adequately prepared to deal with the situation as of now".

So far, 3,217 samples have been tested out of which five have tested positive for COVID-19 while reports of 23 are awaited.

Vardhan also urged people to pose their queries on the helpline numbers made available in case they have symptoms.

CM inaugurates...

and details of the number of people seeking treatment.

The programme concluded with vote of thanks proposed by PCC cum MS STNM Hospital, Dr. Passang D. Phempu.

The programme had the presence of Minister, Education Department, Kunga Nima Lepcha, Minister for IPR Department, L.N. Sharma, MLA Namcheybong, Em Prasad Sharma, MLA Martam Rumtek, Sonam Venchungpa, Press Advisor to CM, C.P. Sharma, Chairman State Bank of Sikkim, D.B. Gurung, Mayor GMC, Shakti Singh Choudhary, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance & Planning, V.B. Pathak, Principal Secretary, Health & FW Department, K. nivasulu, Secretary cum DG, Health, Dr. P.T. Bhutia, PCC cum MS STNM, Dr. Passang D. Phempu, senior officers of the Health Department, Heads of various Departments under New STNM Hospital, Doctors, Nurses, paramedical staff, and officers of the Buildings & Housing Department.

www.summittimes.com | news@
summittimes.com | advertise@
summittimes.com

BEFORE THE OATH COMMISSIONER SOUTH SIKKIM AT NAMCHI

AFFIDAVIT

I RAKESH RAI, Son of Late. Chandra Bahadur Rai, aged about 56 Years, resident of Bul Singtam P.O. and PS Namchi, South Sikkim do hereby Solemnly affirm on Oath and declare as Under:

1. That I am natural Son of Late "CHANDRA BAHADUR RAI".
2. That Me and my deceased father's officials name are "RAKESH RAI" and "CHANDRA BAHADUR RAI" and the same has been recorded in my Electoral Identity Card bearing Card No.WJF0071464 and Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar Card No. 657670073242.
3. That me and my deceased father are also known by the names "BAMBEDRAM RAI" and "BAL BAHADUR RAI" "in our Locality and the same has been found recorded in my Old Electoral Identity Card bearing Card No. IBN1217470.
4. That I have Sworn this affidavit to declare that the names "RAKESH RAI" and "BAMBEDRAM RAI" are the names of one and the same Person i.e.,myself and further to declare that the names "CHANDRA BAHADUR RAI" and "BAL BAHADUR RAI" are the names of one and same person I.e. My Father.

VERIFICATION

I, do hereby verify that the statements made in the above photograph 1 to 4 are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I believe the same to be true and I have sign this affidavit on this the 19th day of August 2019 at Namchi, South Sikkim at around 10:50 am.

[Directorate of Public Relations, Ministry of Defence, Government of India]

The International Women's Day is celebrated across the globe on 8th March every year to recognise the achievements of women without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. It provides an opportunity to reflect on the progress made, to call for change and celebrate acts of courage and determination by those women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities. The theme of International Women's Day 2020 is, 'I am Generation Equality: Realising Women's Rights'. It is aligned with United Nations Women's new multigenerational campaign, Generation Equality, which marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the most progressive roadmap for the empowerment of women and girls all over the world.

The Government of India, led by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, gives utmost importance to the women empowerment and strives to provide them with equal opportunities as their male counterparts. 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', launched by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, is a prime example of Government's resolve to empower women across all platforms.

In line with the Government's vision, Ministry of Defence has taken a slew of initiatives to increase women participation in various departments and field operations.

Raksha Mantri, Rajnath Singh stressed Defence Ministry's resolve in further empowering women in the armed forces when he said "Women empowerment has been an underlying theme of the Government led by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. Several policies and programmes have been formulated to empower the women in our society. We are also working towards strengthening the 'Stree Shakti' in our Armed Forces and we stand committed to keep moving forward in this direction."

The borne strength of women officers in the Defence Services, including Army Medical Corps (AMC), Army Dental Corps (ADC) and Military Nursing Service (MNS) is 10,247. As on July 01, 2019, the strength

of women officers in Army was 6,868, while the number of women officers in the Air Force stood at 2,302 as on 01 Nov, 2019. The number of women officers in the Navy as on 15 Nov, 2019 are 1,077.

A significant step to induct women in more branches has been the commissioning of Short Services in 1992. Initially the Short Service Commission was granted for 5 years, which was eventually extended to a total of 14 years in 2007.

One of the historic decisions taken by the Ministry of Defence was granting a permanent commission to women in all 10 branches of the Indian Army. On February 25, 2019, the Government promulgated policy to extend the grant of Permanent Commission to Women Officers in the eight arms/services in Indian Army viz. Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Army Air Defence, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME), Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps and Intelligence, in addition to the existing two streams of Judge Advocate General (JAG) and Army Education Corps (AEC). Prior to this, a significant step to induct women in more branches has been the commissioning of Short Services in 1992. Initially the Short Service Commission was granted for 5 years, which was eventually extended to a total of 14 years in 2007. The Step of increasing tenure of women officers in SSC and improving their promotional prospects in Army have been taken essentially to increase participation of women in the Army.

The proposal for induction of women in Corps of Military Police in Indian Army as soldiers was approved by the Government on January 22, 2019 to recruit a total of 1,700 women Military personnel.

Steps like increasing tenure of women officers in SSC from 10 to 14 years and improving their promotional prospects in Army have been taken to increase participation of women in the Army.

A few of the shining examples of individual officers as given below indicate that women officers are second to none when it comes to fighting for the security of our nation.

Very few would know that Squadron Leader Minty Agarwal was the eyes behind the Balakot airstrikes as fighter controller. She was conferred with the Yudh

Seva Medal for her stellar performance during the operation that taught an unforgettable lesson to the enemy.

Captain Tania Shergill also entered history pages by becoming the first Indian female Parade Adjutant to lead an all-male contingent at Army Day function on January 14, 2020. She comes from a family where three generations served in the Indian Army.

Another glass ceiling was broken in 2019 when Lt. Commander Karabi Gogoi became the first woman officer of the Navy to be posted as defence attache in the Indian Embassy, Moscow.

The nation also got its first woman fighter pilot in 2019 when Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth qualified to undertake missions by day on a fighter aircraft. She completed her day operational syllabus as a fighter pilot on the MiG-21 Bison aircraft and was posted to a frontline airbase at Nal in Rajasthan to operate the aircraft with her squadron. In 2016, three women fighter pilots - Bhawana Kanth, Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh - proudly brandished their stripes and wings at the Combined Graduation Parade at Air Force Academy, Dundigal on the outskirts of Telangana. The vanguards of the IAF roared into the sky and smeared the clouds with tricolor as India joined the select few nations in the world that have women fighter pilots in their ranks. The three fighter pilots were conferred with the President's Commission. Way back in 1997, Major Ruchi Maini raised the bar by becoming the first woman operational paratrooper in the Indian Army. Air Marshal Padmavathy Banerjee, was the first uniformed woman to be a part of a research expedition to the Arctic in the late eighties. A member of the Indian Society of Aerospace Medicines, International Medical Society and New York Academy of Sciences, she was also First woman Air Marshal in The Indian Air Force (IAF) who became the Director General Medical Services (Air).

The basis for these achievements should start right at young age. Realising this, the Sainik Schools which prepare our young boys to join the armed forces were thrown open to girls as well. Approval for the proposal for admission of girl children to Sainik schools w.e.f. academic session 2021-22 in a phased manner was one of

the first major decisions taken by Shri Rajnath Singh when he became Raksha Mantri in 2019.

Indian Coast Guard has been inducting women officers since 1997 as permanent appointee Assistant Command in General duty and Aviation Cadre (Pilots) since 1998. The strength of women officers in ICG approximates to about 10% of the total strength.

National Cadet Corps (NCC) special entry was extended to women Air Wing Cadets with 'C' Certificate for the first time ever in 2019. This enabled them to directly go for SSB, without any screening test to become a Short Service Commissioned Officer in the flying branch of Indian Air Force. Women pilots have been performing admirably well in the transport and helicopter streams of IAF. As a natural progression, IAF inducted women pilots in the fighter stream as well. Diplomatic posts on Indian mission abroad are traditionally manned by male officers. Wg Cdr Anjali Singh was the first woman officer who was nominated by IAF as Dy Air Attaché in Embassy of Russia.

Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) established with a vision to empower India with cutting-edge indigenous defence technologies and systems, has been according equal opportunities for enhancement of their skills and fulfilment of their potentials. This has resulted in many women scientists having top positions in DRDO.

2018 saw the first-ever Indian circumnavigation of the globe, Navika Sagar Parikrama, by an all-women crew. INSV Tarini returned to India on 21 May, 2018, on completion of the first Indian all-women circumnavigation of the globe. The expedition depicted 'Nari Shakti' on the world platform and helped discard the societal attitudes and mindset towards women in India by raising visibility of their participation in challenging environs. Also, the indigenously built 56-foot sailing vessel, INSV Tarini showcased the 'Make in India' initiative on the International forum.

Thus women in various wings of our armed forces over the years excelled in all fields and have proven that they are second to none. They are marching ahead shoulder to shoulder along with their male compatriots.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College. Flat Land no cutting required. Price 27 Lakhs (negotiable).

Contact: 9800201335

LAND FOR SALE

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

LAND FOR SALE

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

Punjab scraps service extension policy for employees

CHANDIGARH, MAR 2 (PTI): The Punjab government on Monday scrapped the policy of granting extension in service to its employees after retirement. A press release said the decision was in line with the Budget announcement of reverting to the earlier retirement age of 58 from 60.

“The Punjab government has decided to do away with the policy of optional extension in service period after retirement/superannuation in order to generate employment for the state’s youth,” the statement said after a meeting of the state cabinet under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Amarinder Singh here.

The state government had earlier allowed extension in service to all categories of employees up to the age of 60 or 62 on the submission of an option in this regard. This had enabled the government to fill vacancies and tackle a shortage of staff in various departments.

The state cabinet approved an amendment to the Punjab Civil Services Rules to make the necessary changes in accordance with the announcement made by Finance Minister Manpreet Badal in his Budget speech on February 28.

With this decision, employees who are currently on second year of optional extension, ie, who have attained the age of 59 or 61, as the case may be, and are availing the second year of optional extension in service, or whose second year optional extension is scheduled to start from April 1, 2020, will stand retired from the service with effect from March 31, 2020. Employees on first year of optional extension in service i.e. who have attained the age of 58 or 60 years, as the case may be, and are availing the first year of optional extension in service, or whose first year optional extension is scheduled to start, shall stand retired from the service from September 30, 2020.

During the cabinet meeting, the chief minister also asked the ministers to take steps to identify the corrupt employees and weed them out to improve efficacy and transparency, the statement said.

The cabinet also decided to amend the Punjab Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003, to allow the state to make an additional borrowing of Rs 928 crore in 2019-20, over and above its net borrowing ceiling of 3 per cent of gross state domestic product (GSDP).

In order to provide relief to the states on account of lower tax devolution during 2019-20, and in view of the hardships being faced by them in managing their finances, the Centre had earlier decided to allow an additional borrowing of Rs 58,843 crore in 2019-20 to the 29 states as a one-time special dispensation.

Three-day SMIT fest ‘Kaalrav’ concludes



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 02 MAR: The largest college cultural fest of North Bengal and Sikkim, Kaalrav, came to an end at the premises of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology on Sunday, a press release informs.

The three-day cultural fiesta saw participation from 20 colleges and schools from around the nation with more than 500 participants across the events. The events ranged from cultural events, sports and games, e-games, literary events and many more.

The first day started off with the inaugural ceremony attended by Vice Chancellor, SMU, Lt Gen (Dr) MD Venkatesh

as the chief guest. It also saw the presence of Registrar, SMU, Prof (Dr) KS Sherpa and Director, SMIT, Prof (Dr) Ashis Sharma along with HODs, HODs, faculty members and students.

The inaugural ceremony witnessed cultural performances by the students along with the introduction to the Kaalrav Theme- ‘The Devil’s Prophecy’ showcasing the seven deadly sins and their positive side to life. Prof (Dr) Ashis Sharma encouraged everyone to actively participate and enjoy the fest. The chief guest in his address appreciated the theme and its presentation.

The first day also saw a stand-up performance

by Jasmeet Singh Bhatia, actor and stand-up comedian at TVF. The first day ended with a band performance by AsWeKeepSearching title sponsored by Winkies.

Along the three days, events like DJ Wars, Battle of Bands, Treasure Hunt, Parliamentary Debate, Raise your Mic, etc., saw participants showing their talent and skills impressing the masses. Mister And Miss Kaalrav in association with Mega Entertainment was yet another event of great stature, the winners of which shall receive a wildcard entry to Mr and Miss Northeast. Kanishka Sharma was crowned Miss Kaalrav while Rohan Sharma won the title of Mister Kaalrav.

The second night was Bollywood Night with title sponsors, Gaana. Bollywood singer, Nikhil D’Souza mesmerized the crowd with his voice.

The final day of Kaalrav saw the prize distribution ceremony where the winners were awarded with certificates, medals and cash prizes. The last day saw the students dance to the tunes of DJ NYK, one of the best DJs in the country.

Kaalrav 2020 was a great experience and we look forward to coming to SMIT next year too, claimed a student from one of the participating colleges.

General, OBC employees strike begins in U’khand

DEHRADUN, MAR 2 (PTI): Thousands of general and OBC employees in Uttarakhand began their indefinite strike on Monday over the issue of reservation in promotions affecting work at the secretariat and government offices across the state.

Work at the state secretariat in Dehradun and government offices throughout the state was hit by the strike, even as the state government is gearing up for the Budget Session of the Uttarakhand Assembly at Gairsain from Tuesday invoked “no work no pay” in

an attempt to dissuade the employees from going on a confrontationist course.

The General and OBC Employees Association, which has called the strike, said it will gherao the state assembly building at Gairsain on Tuesday to press for its demand for implementation of the recent Supreme Court ruling that says reservation in promotions is not a fundamental right.

It is also demanding beginning departmental promotion meetings in the light of the apex court ruling. General and Other

Backward Classes (OBCs) Employees Association state president Deepak Joshi said the strike will go on until the apex court ruling was implemented.

“Our stir will continue indefinitely until we succeed in ensuring implementation of the Supreme Court order on reservation in promotions,” he said.

Charging the state government with contempt of the highest court of the land by not enacting its ruling, Joshi said its implementation is the sole objective of the agitation.



South counseling on stress of exams

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 02 MAR

The State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights organised a counselling programme as part of “Pariksha Parwa” at Namchi Government Girls’ Senior Secondary School today. SCPCR Chairperson, Deekila Bhutia, spoke about

the various activities being conducted by NCPCR to make exams a joyful activity.

Outreach worker, Tek Maya Sharma, District Child Protection Officer, South, in turn spoke on ways and means to overcome exam fear and stress, while social worker, Sanjok Rai spoke from experience to address ‘exam fear and anxiety’.

POSHAN Pakhwada observed with State Level Orientation Workshop

GANGTOK, 02 MAR (IPR): A State Level Orientation Workshop was organised on the occasion of POSHAN Pakhwada at the conference hall of Social Justice and Welfare Department here at Lumsey today.

The workshop was chaired by Secretary, SJ&WD, HB Chhetri, in the presence of Principal Director, WCD, Principal Director, Phuchung Bhutia along with CDPOs, district officials and officials from the line departments.

It might be mentioned that POSHAN Abhiyaan is a flagship programme of Ministry of Women and Child Development to reduce stunting, under nutrition, anemia and low birth weight.

The main theme and focus of the workshop is increasing the make engagement in POSHAN Abhiyaan to improve nutrition outcomes.

During the workshop,



Secretary, HB Chhetri thanked all the participants for their valuable presence. He spoke on the convergence activities with all the line departments and urged them to be actively involved with the Pakhwada scheme implementation and make the programme a grand success.

He further requested all the line departments to work in a coordinated manner and directed all the district officials from the department to submit reports of all the activities undertaken in all the districts. The reports

of the activities will be submitted to the office of the Chief Secretary which will then be forwarded to the Central Ministry through the state government, he added.

At the outset of the workshop, Principal Director, Phuchung Bhutia provided a brief overview of POSHAN Pakhwada scheme starting 01-15 March.

He highlighted on the use of technology to address malnutrition holistically with targeted approach and convergence.

He also discussed the action plan of Swachhta Pakhwada and spoke on

the areas and activities to be undertaken during 01-15 Mar, 2020.

He further highlighted on the clear role and responsibilities of various line departments, individuals, influencers, community groups and media etc in the efficient implementation of POSHAN Pakhwada.

The workshop also included an interactive questionnaire session among the representatives from line departments and the officials from the SJ&WD wherein various agendas pertaining to the scheme were discussed at length.

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

STATE BANK OF SIKKIM
(A Government of Sikkim Undertaking)
Ref: SBS/GTK(HO)/51/2020/606 Dated : March 2, 2020

CIRCULAR

In supersession to the earlier circular on the rate of interest on term deposits and on approval of the competent authority, the following revised rates shall be applicable w.e.f 03-03-2020. Rates are applicable for deposits upto Rs.1.00 Crore only. For deposits above Rs.1.00 Crore rates Bank shall prescribe rates on daily basis.

PERIOD	NORMAL	SR. CITIZEN
	REVISED RATES	REVISED RATES
7 DAYS TO 14 DAYS	4.55%	4.75%
15 DAYS TO 30 DAYS	4.75%	4.75%
31 DAYS TO 45 DAYS	4.75%	4.75%
46 DAYS TO 59 DAYS	6.00%	6.00%
60 DAYS TO 90 DAYS	6.50%	6.50%
91 DAYS TO 179 DAYS	6.50%	6.50%
180 DAYS TO 269 DAYS	7.00%	7.00%
270 DAYS TO 364 DAYS	7.00%	7.00%
1 YEAR TO 2 YEAR	7.50%	8.00%
2 YEAR 1 DAY TO 3 YEARS	7.00%	7.00%
3 YEARS 1 DAY TO 5 YEARS	6.50%	7.00%
ABOVE 5 YEARS	6.50%	7.00%

1. The Revised rates shall be applicable to all new deposits and renewals effective on and from 03-03-2020.
2. Penalty of 1% shall be levied for premature closure.
3. 0.50% above normal rates in the bracket of 1 Year and above shall be made applicable to Sr. citizens.

BY ORDER

Sd/-
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Regd Office & HO: National Highway 10, Gangtok – 737101 (Sikkim)
Phones: 202465
Website: www.statebankofsikkim.com Mail-id: info@statebankofsikkim.com

Pride with Self-Reliance

Follow through on initiatives to inspire merit

Story goes that a senator in Ancient Rome was sput in chains and debarred from ever holding a public post again after he was found distributing bread to beggars. No, the Romans did not detest beggars or ignore poverty, they feared that by making himself popular in this manner, the senator would one day grow to become an all powerful tyrant. The Romans, it is thus obvious, valued freedom more than Welfare.

A millennium later, we have managed to inverse the equation and actually demand welfare as a matter of right. Elections see politicians outbidding each other on populist measures, and this is not a fixation unique to Sikkim or even the country and is being increasingly deployed with electoral success across the world, even the so called First World. The democracy that we celebrate every five years with the right to decide is pawned to parties which have the best ‘welfare’ schemes. Sops, freebies, potentially undeserved windfalls and even more protectionism return in amped-up decibels as elections approach.

While a government which is concerned about the welfare of the underprivileged is undoubtedly preferred, what would have been best was if this concern manifested itself with schemes which brought relief with self-respect instead of just dispensing lazy hand-outs. It is a no brainer to accept that for the long run manufacturing dependence is not as desirable – for the people, not votes - as facilitating sustainable reliance. But to make such assurances is no longer politically wise; not in India, not in Sikkim. But fact remains that this remains the only way to real progress. But, for that to happen, apart from the political will, what is required in even larger measure is the people’s recognition of competition and merit as being of more significance than protection. This is not to suggest that quotas are a failed model; they have an important role to play to correct centuries of denial but more a comment on how the corrective measures should not end with protection, but should in fact take off from it to inspire bigger ambitions.

Further, Sikkim has had it easy for quite some time now. It will not remain so for ever. The State has to have an economy of its own, its own industries, its own private sector (not just investments from outside). The economic pressures on the purse-strings in Delhi and the increasingly federal make-up of national politics will see to it that the Central largesse that Sikkim enjoys so lavishly is slowly turned off (it is already drying up). It is already happening. There will be those who will continue to expect the State Government to bail them out, but even the State’s coffers will become miserly once the doles from Delhi dry up and liabilities here pile up. The only way to ensure that public services and amenities remain operational will be if the people pull their weight more efficiently. The State Government has been trying to get this message across by earmarking years for youth revolution and skill development. These were expressions of intent. For these initiatives to succeed, the youth have to be interested in getting revolutionized and get their skills enhanced. Awareness and skill enhancement camps will remain token efforts till the time the youth don’t demand better and deploy the skills they acquire into productive and profitable enterprises. It is not enough to aim at self-sustaining efforts any more or even just supporting start-ups. The bar has to be raised to target lucrative undertakings; sustenance enterprises might just become possible then. And that will still be the first step, Sikkim has to march on in leaps and bounds from thereon to stay proud, something that will come only with self-reliance.

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

An Ethical Future Could Make Life Harder for the Poorest – but it doesn’t have to

DONALD HIRSCH
theconversation.com

The British supermarket chain Morrisons recently announced that it will only sell free range eggs. This is a telltale example of how business and government are starting to do more to encourage or require ethical consumption in the UK.

The government recently announced that solid coal and wet wood can no longer be used in domestic burners and fireplaces. And the Chancellor of the Exchequer is reported to be considering an increase in fuel duty in the budget, in line with carbon reduction objectives.

All these things have the potential to increase basic living costs, including for worse-off households who are already struggling to make ends meet. Poorer working-age households have seen their buying power squeezed in recent years. For example, my team’s research on minimum household living costs in the UK shows that these typically rose by 8%-12% from 2015 to 2019 (varying by household type). This is the same period over which benefits and tax credits were frozen in cash terms.

Growing use of food banks reflects the vulnerability of households living on the edge when there is nothing to fall back on if things go wrong. For such families, increasing the cost of the basics even by what may seem like small amounts can cause additional hardship.

In the coming years, there will be growing pressures to increase the cost of basic food and fuels in response to a range of environmental and ethical concerns. From reducing energy use through rationing, and switching to less polluting modes of consumption, to responding to ethical concerns around issues such as animal welfare, environmentally responsible farming and fair trade.

Where this involves regulation or supply changes like Morrisons’s decision on eggs, rather than free choices by consumers about buying ethically, worse-off households will be vulnerable to further increases in living costs. Food and energy

form a disproportionately high proportion of overall spending for the worst-off.

This has the potential to create tensions between the interests of needy groups and a range of ethical concerns. But this does not need to be a straight trade-off if policies can be designed to take both aspects into account. To understand some of the complexities, consider the case of meat.

RED MEAT

Most people in rich countries eat far more red meat than they need to or is good for the planet. But when we asked members of the public if they would view, for example, eating less meat as compatible with an acceptable living standard, they were resistant. This is partly because some meat, such as chicken and beef, has become relatively cheaper in recent years and so a more economical way of feeding the family.

Our research showed that people are heavily influenced by price. They were most committed to doing things to “save the planet” when this also saved their wallets, such as reducing their energy use after gas and electricity prices rose.

Over the past 15 years, British lamb prices have risen much faster than other meats, and lamb consumption has fallen. This shows that over the long term, eating patterns can gradually change, influenced by price. This makes our relatively recent shift to a more meat-based diet reversible – a change that would also help improve living standards by making people more healthy.

But this doesn’t address the immediate issue of how to avoid creating extra hardship by raising the price of goods in the interests of ethical consumption. In doing so, it is helpful to think about the meaning of terms like “food poverty” or “fuel poverty”. To what extent is difficulty affording such items driven, on the one hand, by low income, or on the other by high costs?

The official definition of fuel poverty was changed in 2012 to cover only cases where households have both relatively low income and relatively high fuel requirements. In these cases, an im-

portant part of the solution is to get a household’s fuel costs down, for example through subsidies to improve the energy-efficiency of people’s homes targeted at those in fuel poverty.

MAINTAINING LIVING STANDARDS

In cases where the affordability issue is simply down to having very low income, solutions should be to help improve people’s earnings and public benefits. Looked at another way, if the only way people are able to afford to eat is by selling them ultra-cheap food produced in unsustainable ways, the solution is not to lower standards but to raise incomes.

Yet given that there will continue to be people finding it hard to make ends meet, those introducing ethically-driven changes affecting the price of basics need to think actively about what can be done to mitigate the impact.

One option is to consider how when one product is withdrawn or made more expensive through taxes or regulation, affordable substitutes can be made available.

Following the recent banning of solid coal and wet wood for stoves, on which some households rely for heat, it will be important for government to ensure that alternatives, such as kiln-dried wood, are both available and sold at reasonable prices, even if this may initially involve a degree of subsidy or regulation. Similarly, were regulations on caged hens to be tightened, governments may consider whether additional subsidies could help to limit the impact this has on price.

The media and public have grown wary of excessive intervention in free markets, but could come to accept that more interventions are needed to make ambitious commitments on emissions reduction a reality. In such a future, it is crucial that those who intervene to set ethical and environmental standards are also more active in ensuring that this does not increase hardship for the most needy households.

[the writer is Professor of Social Policy, Loughborough University]



CARLY WOOD
theconversation.com

Across the globe, college- and university-aged students are experiencing high levels of stress and mental ill-health. For example, in the past ten years in the UK there has been a fivefold increase in the number of students reporting mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and schizophrenia.

Some of the most common mental health problems experienced by US students include overwhelming anxiety, feeling so depressed it is difficult to function, and hopelessness. Some even reported contemplating suicide. Yet despite mental ill-health becoming increasingly common among students, many face long waits or limited access to mental health services.

But a growing body of research suggests that one way of improving our mental health might be as simple as getting outdoors. In fact a recent review of evidence found as little as 10 minutes a day of exposure to nature could be beneficial to students – although there are caveats.

Evidence shows that being in natural environments can help reduce stress and improve mental wellbeing. While this solution might sound promising, finding the chance to access natural environments can be limited. Many students have to spend a majority of their time indoors studying, attending lectures

or in the library.

Numerous studies looking at the health benefits of being in nature have started focusing on finding out how long we need to spend in nature in order to experience health improvements. One study found that a nature visit of 20 to 30 minutes three times a week was most effective for reducing levels of cortisol (the “stress” hormone) in the body.

Another study showed spending a minimum of 120 minutes in a natural environment – compared with having had no contact with nature in the last week – significantly increased the likelihood that a person would report feeling in good health and having high wellbeing. However, neither of these studies specifically focused on college- or university-aged students.

MINIMUM DOSAGE

The recent review sought to identify the minimum nature dose needed to improve the mental health of college- and university-aged students and what types of nature-based activities these benefits came from. They looked at a total of 14 studies, which altogether included 706 students from Japan, the US and Sweden.

The authors looked specifically at studies published in English or French, where the participants were aged between 15- and 30-years-old. They also looked only at studies that examined how much time a person needed to spend in nature, whether the study monitored changes in the

participant’s mental health, and compared these changes across at least two environments. All the studies they looked at compared urban environments to natural environments (areas like nature reserves, forests, urban parks, and nature areas on University campuses).

Overall, the review found that compared with equal time spent in an urban setting, as little as 10 to 20 minutes (and up to 50 minutes) of sitting or walking in a range of natural settings led to significant health improvements. These included reduced heart rate, blood pressure and cortisol, improved mood and reduced anxiety.

These findings support the results of previous studies that looked at people of all ages. This suggests that college and university settings could provide regular doses of nature to target and improve the mental wellbeing of their students. Students might also do well to incorporate nature exposure into their every day lives as one way of combating stress and mental ill-health.

But despite these encouraging findings, they should be interpreted with caution. Most of the studies included in this review were conducted in Japan and in male participants. So these findings might not be true for students of all genders and from across the globe.

It’s also unclear whether the students studied were suffering from mental ill-health at the time of the re-

search. Emerging evidence suggests that nature exposure might be most beneficial for individuals with low wellbeing. So it’s important to determine which groups of students this kind of experience will most benefit.

The review also failed to investigate what benefit physical activity (other than walking) in natural settings would have. So-called “green exercise” has been shown to have additional health benefits compared to nature exposure or physical activity alone, resulting in greater improvements in self-esteem and mood.

Finally, the researchers didn’t include a meta-analysis of the studies – a technique for bringing together multiple scientific studies to find any common effects – in order to determine the strength of the overall evidence. Nor did it consider the bias or quality of the studies included. So it’s not clear how strong the overall effect is or how reliable the included studies are. Further research will need to address these gaps.

Based on the findings of this review, and the growing body of research that supports the mental health benefits of nature exposure and green exercise, both students and the general population should try to spend time in nature as part of their daily lives as a way of combating stress and improving mental health.

[the writer is Lecturer in Nutrition and Exercise Science, University of Westminster]

Meghalaya violence: Man stabbed, shops set ablaze

SHILLONG, MAR 2 (PTI): A 28-year-old man was stabbed with a broken glass bottle in the Mawprem area here, as sporadic incidents of violence were reported from across Meghalaya in the aftermath of clashes between tribal and non-tribal groups that has left three people dead, police said on Monday.

Four shops rented to non-tribal businessmen were set on fire in Photkroh town in South West Khasi Hills District in the early hours, they said.

Police said nobody was injured in the incident.

"A 28-year-old man was stabbed with a broken bottle by an unknown miscreant on Sunday evening, while he was walking in the Lower Mawprem area. He suffered shoulder injuries and is under treatment at the Civil Hospital," Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIGP) Gabriel langrai said.

There were also reports of stone pelting on vehicles plying along the



national highway near Puriang village in East Khasi Hills District on Sunday evening, he said.

The situation in Meghalaya is "under control" and additional forces are deployed in vulnerable areas, the AIGP said.

Curfew, which was imposed in the city and its outskirts, was relaxed from 6 am to allow students to appear in board examinations, East Khasi Hills District Magistrate

Matsiewdor War Nongbri said. He, however, said curfew will be reimposed as soon as the exams get over.

The indefinite curfew imposed in areas under Sadar police station, Lumdiengjri police station and those under the Cantonment Beat House will continue, Nongbri said.

Most shops, banks and business establishments were shut and attendance in government

offices was thin in the affected areas, officials said. Mobile internet and messaging services have been temporarily suspended in six districts of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills region to curtail rumours that can deteriorate law and order, they said.

The death toll in the clashes between tribal and non-tribal groups increased to three on Sunday after a 37-year-old man was killed by three unidentified people at

his house in East Khasi Hills district, police said.

The clashes had broken out between KSU members and non-tribals during a rally organised against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and to demand implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP), at Ichamati on Friday.

Eight people have been arrested and a magisterial inquiry has been instituted to probe into the incident, police said.

East Bengal seek revenge against Gokulam



KOZHIKODE, MAR 2 (PTI): East Bengal will look to continue their four-match unbeaten streak and avenge their home leg defeat when they face Gokulam Kerala FC in an I-League clash here on Tuesday.

In the last four matches, East Bengal have won two and drawn as many. They had lost to Gokulam 1-3 in Kalyani.

While East Bengal still has plenty of work to do, a couple of steps have been made in the right direction by new coach Mario Rivera.

New signing Victor Perez has been a breath of fresh air in the midfield. He is allowing Juan Mera more freedom on the flanks and making Jaime Santos Colado play his natural game.

"The objective is to try and win all matches for the remainder of the season," said an upbeat Rivera. However, the Spanish coach is wary of the threat Gokulam possesses.

"Gokulam are a good team. They have a quality squad with great foreigners and besides that, they know this league inside out. It's going to be a tough one for us," he added.

Gokulam, on the other hand, will be looking to shake off their recent woes. In their last five matches, Gokulam have

only managed to pick up five points (one win, two draws and two losses).

The Malabarians have struggled to find consistency and it has come back to haunt them time and again. They are languishing at seventh place on the league table with 18 points, one point adrift of their Tuesday's opponents, who are at fourth.

Gokulam have a game in hand, though, and could leapfrog to third place with a win on Tuesday.

"East Bengal is a competitive team, a club with a lot of history and recognition. The two foreign additions have empowered the team and it will be a really difficult team for us, although we always rely on our potential, our qualities and our character," said Gokulam head coach Fernando Santiago Valera.

Weighing on his team's struggles, he said, "I think lack of success in front of goal has penalised us a lot. We are a team that generates good football and many possibilities to get a goal and with different players involved, not only our forwards.

"Maintaining the same philosophy is what makes us strong as a team and the progression of the players is clearly visible.

Doha training boost for Odisha FC quartet

BHUBANESWAR, MAR 2 (PTI): Training at the Doha-based Aspire Academy has boosted the confidence of four young footballers of Odisha FC -- Deven Sawhney, Ruben Letkhotinchon, CVL Remtluanga and S Lalhzuala -- and they now aspire to play for the senior team.

The quartet are from the youth (Under-18) team of Delhi Dynamos (now Odisha FC) which won the Elite League in Delhi Zone for the 2018-19 season. Manipur teenager Reuben lost his father at a young age and his brother is the only earning member of the family which is not so well-to-do.

Reuben's mother has also some serious illness but the striker chose to take up football professionally and this decision has gone well for him.

"We train at Aspire

which is a world-class academy. It's a whole new level when it comes to facilities. In short, I have become a better player. I have become more responsible and more technical in my approach towards the game," Reuben, who joined Odisha FC in January 2018, said.

A defender from Delhi, Deven, who joined the club in February 2018, said he now aims to make the club and the country proud in the future.

"It has been an amazing experience, the training facilities are world-class and the coaches are very professional, knowledgeable and cooperative. I hope to make the club and country proud," Deven said.

CVL Remtluanga and S Lalhzuala have also expressed their happiness on getting a chance to train in Doha.

"The intensity of the

game and training there is very high. Major areas like my speed, crossing etc have improved after I train here. I have learnt a lot from here which will be useful for my future," Remtluanga said.

Lalhzuala said the training has boosted his confidence and he's now fitter than before.

"This opportunity also encouraged me to do well. Besides this, it also helped me to now myself and other's viewpoints. It has also helped me in remembering to keep working hard to achieve success in life."

Odisha FC has been associated with the Qari based world-famous football academy since 2017-18.

Defender Shubham Sarangi was one of the first to get trained at the Aspire Academy and he is now a regular starter in the club's senior team.

Assam Congress MLA suspended for disrupting House

GUWAHATI, MAR 2 (PTI): Assam Assembly Speaker Hitendra Nath Goswami on Monday suspended Congress member Sherman Ali Ahmed for the first day of the Budget session when the MLA refused to sit down after he was denied permission to raise an issue related to the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

As soon as the Question Hour got over, Ahmed wanted to raise a point of order over some anomalies allegedly committed by the Office of the State Coordinator of the NRC.

Denying him permission, Goswami said the issue did not fall under the point of order category and asked Ahmed to meet him in his chamber to discuss it further.

The opposition MLA, however, did not pay any



heed to the Speaker's ruling and continued to speak. Announcing that his speech would not be recorded, Goswami stood up and repeatedly asked Ahmed to sit down, which he did not do.

"When I am standing, you must sit. This is the rule," Goswami shouted several times but the MLA continued to argue with the Speaker. Finally, Goswami said, "I suspend

Sherman Ali Ahmed for obstructing the House. Please leave. You cannot spoil the precious time of the House."

When Ahmed looked unmoved, marshals escorted him from his seat to the gate.

During the entire episode, none of the Congress MLAs said anything, but a few BJP members shouted at Ahmed.

Walkout by Congress, AIUDF members in Assam House

GUWAHATI, MAR 2 (PTI): The budget session of Assam Assembly began on a stormy note on Monday with Congress and AIUDF members staging a walkout after the Speaker reserved his decision on allowing an adjournment motion over the government's role in the santi-CAA movement.

When MLAs of the two opposition parties trooped to the Well of the House raising slogans, BJP members too reached there and shouted counter slogans against the two parties.

MLAs of the two sides almost came to blows forcing Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary to intervene and made the BJP members return to their seats.

Congress and All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) members then staged a walkout.

After the Question Hour, Assam Assembly Speaker Hitendra Nath Goswami allowed Hafiz Bashir Ahmed of the AIUDF and Congress' Debabrata Saikia to speak about the admissibility of two adjournment motions.

"As per the Constitution's Article 19, protest is a fundamental right, but the government has

taken some steps to curtail peoples' freedom of expression and the right to protest. When a fundamental right is violated, it must be addressed urgently," Ahmed said.

He said now there is a trend to brand protesters as anti-nationals and the "government is doing it for political gains".

Saikia also cited rulings of various high courts of the country legitimising the right to protest.

From the government side, Patowary said there is no need to adjourn all proceedings of the House and discuss this issue as other methods are there to raise the topic.

"Also, the police force is responsible for maintaining law and order. They cannot be a subject of an adjournment motion. Besides, several petitions related to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act are pending in the Supreme Court. So, it is a sub-judice matter," he added.

On this, Saikia said the motion of the Congress did not have anything to do with the CAA and it was related to the government's role in suppressing a democratic movement by people.

"It is about the violation of democratic

rights. Five persons were killed without any provocation. No tear gas, no lathicharge, no rubber bullets were used, but they were killed in firing. We need to discuss that," he added.

Listening to both sides, the Speaker said, "There are some points which I need to read. I will verify both the notices and I reserve my ruling for tomorrow."

Reacting sharply to this, both Congress and AIUDF members started shouting slogans, and came to the Well of the House. They were also carrying placards.

BJP MLAs too followed them and raised slogans against the opposition parties.

The Speaker repeatedly requested the BJP members to go back to their seats but the ruling party members paid no heed to that. When the BJP members returned to their seats on request from Patowary, Congress and AIUDF MLAs staged a walkout and did not return to the House for the rest of the day.

"Even if I allow the adjournment motion, it will not be today. I will fix a date for this. There are points that I need to evaluate. So, I am taking time," Goswami said.

Mir, Mansi win bronze at Dutch Junior International

NEW DELHI, MAR 2 (PTI): Young Indian shuttlers Tasnim Mir and Mansi Singh won a bronze medal each in the girls' singles event at the Yonex Dutch Junior International 2020 in Haarlem, Netherlands.

It was the first time India won two bronze medals in girls' singles at this BWF Junior International Grand Prix tournament.

Mir put up a gritty show against the third seed So Yul Lee but it was not enough as the Korean pulled off a 19-21 10-22 win in 36 minutes in the semifinals on Sunday.

The 11th seeded Mir, gold medallist at the Dubai International Series last year, has had a sensational run at this tournament and showed exceptional fighting spirit against higher-ranked



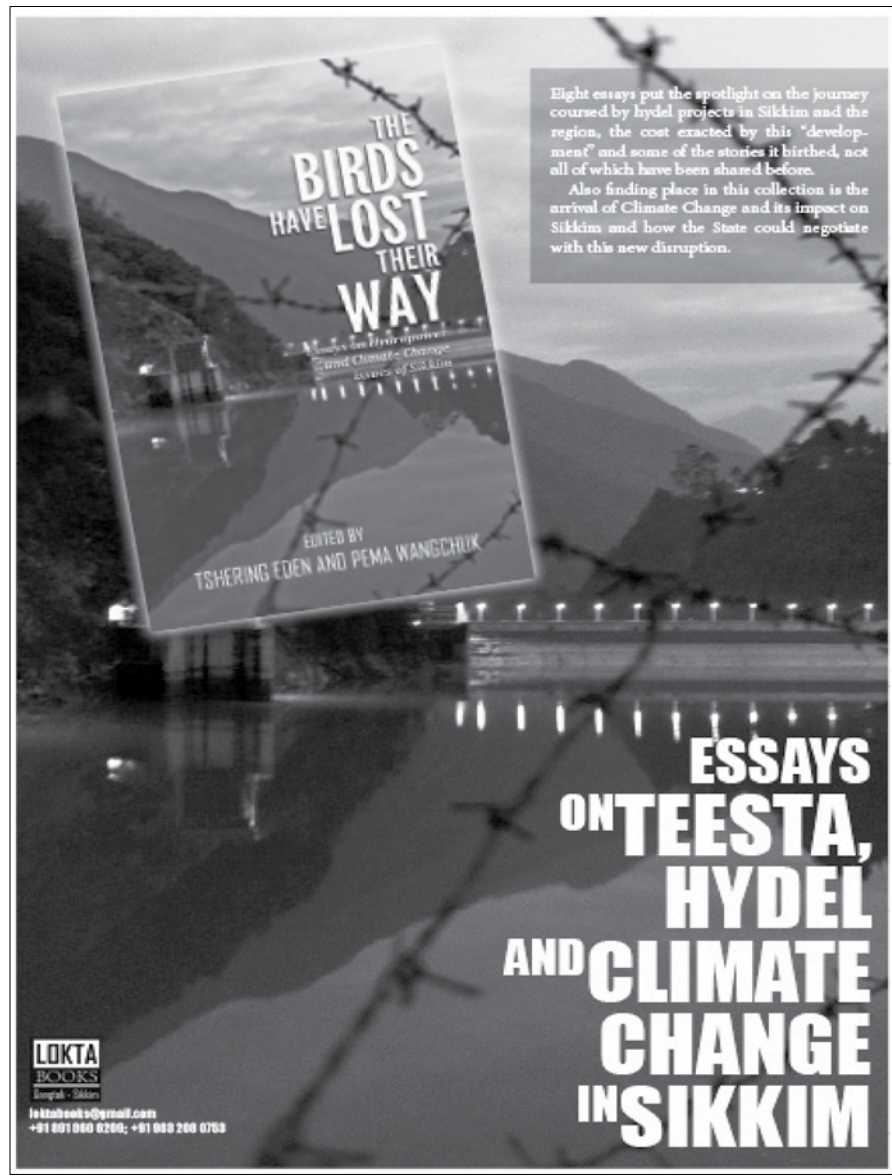
players, a release from the Badminton Association of India said.

Mansi was the other Indian who stood out. She had won both the selection tournaments in the run-up to the Dutch International and carried that momentum to make it to the semifinals, where she lost to Indonesia's Saifi Rizka Nurhidayah 11-21 16-21. Mansi had earlier toppled fifth seed Amy Tan 22-20 21-14 in the third round.

The Indian contingent will now look to

continue their heroics at the Yonex German Junior 2020 to be held in Berlin from March 4 to 8.

Meanwhile, India's rising stars Aakarshi Kashyap and Anupama Upadhyaya won gold and silver medals respectively in the girls' singles at the Kenya International held in Thika, Kenya. The sixth-seeded Kashyap needed 36 minutes to beat Haryana girl 21-15, 21-6 who had reached the final after toppling second, third and fifth seeds.



No excuses, batsmen didn't do enough for bowlers to attack: Kohli

CHRISTCHURCH, MAR 2 (PTI): "No excuses," said Indian captain Virat Kohli after yet another batting capitulation led to his team's 0-2 series defeat at the hands of New Zealand here on Monday.

A forthright Kohli admitted that his batsmen let the team down after the bowlers brought them back into the game on the second day.

"We accept it upfront and if we have to win away from home, we have to do that. No excuses, just learning moving forward. In Tests, we weren't able to play the cricket we wanted to," Kohli said.

After making 242 in the first innings of the must-win second Test, India folded for 124 in their second essay, leaving the hosts with a victory target of 132 for a series sweep.

"The batsmen didn't do enough for the bowlers to try and attack. The bowling was good, I thought even in Wellington we bowled well. Sometimes if you bowl well and things don't happen, you have to take it in your stride," the skipper said. At the presentation ceremony, Kohli said his team would have to "go back" to the drawing board.

"It was a matter of not having enough intent in the first game, and not closing out here. We didn't bowl in the right areas for long enough. They created a lot of pressure. It was a combination of us not executing well enough and New Zealand sticking to their plans. "Disappointing, have to go back to the drawing board and correct things going forward."

Asked if the coin not landing in his favour had any impact, he said, "Toss, you could think about it being a factor, but we don't complain. It did give extra advantage to the bowlers in each Test but as an international side, you're expected to understand that." New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson said beating world number one India was immensely satisfying.

"It's a fine line, India are a world-class side and to beat them is quite satisfying. A great effort," Williamson said.

"Fairly supporting surfaces, you could create opportunities throughout. History suggests it does a bit initially and flattens out. 30s and 40-run partnership was huge on this surface. "A fantastic series from outside, the way we stuck at it."

He was full of praise for Man of the Match Kyle Jamieson, who impressed in both matches.

"Jamieson is an exciting talent, contributed very well in both games. The runs he scored towards the back end of both games were incredibly valuable. "These two games are opportunities for us to try and take steps forward. Looking to finish off the season on a high."

In only his second Test, Jamieson picked up five wickets and scored a valuable 49 when New Zealand were in all sorts of trouble in their first innings.

Lock, Stock and Barrel: NZ thrash India inside three days, win series 2-0

KUSHAN SARKAR

CHRISTCHURCH, MAR 2 (PTI):

A star-studded Indian team was given a reality check by a disciplined New Zealand side that completed a memorable series sweep with a seven-wicket win inside three days in the second Test here on Monday.

New Zealand chased down a modest victory target of 132 in just 36 overs after India's second innings folded for 124 in less than an hour on the third day.

Tom Latham (52 off 74 balls) and Tom Blundell (55 off 113 balls) had a good batting session as Mohammed Shami didn't bowl post lunch due to a ball-impact injury while batting.

A solid 120 points took New Zealand's tally to 180 even as India stayed on top with 360 points courtesy their series wins against the lowly West Indies, depleted South Africa and a below-par Bangladesh.

The feel good factor of a 5-0 T20 series victory seemed like ancient history as a dream start turned into a virtual nightmare for Virat Kohli's bunch that has always taken immense pride in performing in overseas conditions.

However, a look at India's overseas performance indicates that whenever the ball had swung and seamed, reputations had been laid in tatters. It happened in England in 2014 and 2018 and now



New Zealand have exposed them one more time. More than the margin, the manner of surrender will come back to haunt the current Indian team, which leaves this part of the world with a lot of unanswered questions.

It's not only about technique of some top players against the moving deliveries but also about their mindset when put under the pump.

There were only four half-centuries across four innings in this series with techniques of some of the players

like Ajinkya Rahane, Mayank Agarwal against seam and swing leaving a lot to be desired. Skipper Kohli's 38 runs in four innings was one of the biggest setbacks for the visitors in the series.

Prithvi Shaw is a work in progress when it comes to his decision-making on deliveries on the fourth stump and, of course, the short ball, which the Kiwis used liberally to get rid of him since the start of the practice games.

Kohli's problems against the seaming deliveries resur-

faced again during the series but there is little time to go back to the drawing board with a packed schedule for the remaining part of the year.

India will next play in seaming conditions in England in 2021 and hence some of the issues may just persist with no time in the interim for a course correction.

On Monday, there was another lower-order collapse as the last four wickets went for 34 runs, but lack of gumption from someone like Rishabh Pant, playing for his place in

the side, was disheartening.

It was the pair of Tim Southee (3/36 in 11 overs) and Trent Boult (4/28 in 14 overs), which once again tormented the Indian batsmen, who were all at sea against quality bowling on a slightly challenging track.

In the morning, Hanuma Vihari (9) was caught down the leg-side off an innocuous Southee delivery.

On a track where it was next to impossible to defend, Pant was seen pushing and prodding defensively, something

that's not his natural game. The result was a half-hearted poke at an away going delivery that safely landed in the wicket-keeper's gloves.

The much talked-about "intent" was completely missing in Pant's game and his approach defied logic. Especially after coach Ravi Shastri spoke about how his aggressive batting scored over Wriddhiman Saha, but questions will certainly be asked on if scores of 19, 25, 12 and 4 justify his inclusion over a more accomplished stumper.

Anthony Joshua to fight Kubrat Pulev at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in June



LONDON, 02 MAR

[THEGUARDIAN]:

Anthony Joshua will face Kubrat Pulev, the IBF's mandatory challenger, at Tottenham Hotspur's 62,000-seat stadium on 20 June. The Bulgarian confirmed the fight against the world IBF, WBA, WBO and IBO heavyweight champion on Monday.

"The contract is already officially signed," the 38-year-old former European amateur super-heavyweight champion wrote on his Facebook page. "I am happy to be able to show the world how strong I am."

Joshua, 30, beat Andy Ruiz Jr on points in a December rematch in Saudi Arabia to win back the world titles Ruiz had taken from him at Madison Square Gardens six months earlier.

Known as "The Cobra," Pulev challenged for the IBF world heavyweight title in 2014, losing against Wladimir Klitschko in Hamburg on a fifth-round knockout. He pulled out of a scheduled meeting with the Briton in 2017 because of injury. Joshua last fought in London in September 2018 when

he beat Alexander Povetkin at Wembley Stadium. If Joshua beats Pulev he could be in line for an all-British title unification fight against Tyson Fury.

A third fight between the WBC champion Fury and Deontay Wilder is on and set for the US by early July, the Briton's promoter Frank Warren said on Monday. Fury took the title in Las Vegas last month with a seventh-round stoppage of Wilder, who fought the Briton to a split-decision draw in their first meeting in December 2018. Warren had said he wanted Fury to fight Joshua next in a world title unification bout but Wilder had a rematch clause.

"He's invoked the rematch clause so that is what we are working towards," Warren told TalkSport radio. "It's contracted to take place in the States. That is in the contract and set in stone unless anyone agrees differently. But at the moment it is due to take place in the US. It will take place by the end of June, early July - no later than that."

Manchester City sink Aston Villa to win third successive Carabao Cup

DAVID HYTNER

LONDON, 02 MAR [THEGUARDIAN]:

Manchester City had no time for the romance of Aston Villa's Carabao Cup final story. Pep Guardiola and his players deal only in the hard currency of domestic trophies and they extended their grip on it via a performance of near suffocating control.

It was important to add the qualification. Goals from Sergio Agüero and Rodri had put City in charge and, although Mbwana Samatta halved the deficit against the run of play before half-time, it looked as though Villa would be unable to fashion a shot at the equaliser, let alone score it. Guardiola's team dictated the tempo for so long that it was hard to foresee the drama at the end.

But as City failed to score again, the drama did come. The noise from the Villa support that greeted the winning of an 88th-minute corner reflected their belief in an implausible comeback and it almost happened when Bjorn Engels met the substitute Conor Hourihane's delivery with a thumping header. The City goalkeeper, Claudio Bravo, reacted to turn the ball against a post and his team could clear.

There were further nerves from a City point of view in stoppage-time - including another Villa corner for which the goalkeeper, Ørjan Nyland, came forward - but they closed out the win and, despite Villa's spirited showing, nobody could say they did not deserve it.

Guardiola has now won eight of the past nine trophies on offer in England, including Community Shields, and this one was a testament to his insatiable hunger for success and that of his players. Do they get enough credit? Their fans say no but one thing is clear. They will want to add the FA Cup and Champions League before the end of the season. The hope is this triumph can be the springboard to another



treble, taking in the latter competition, which is the one that they really want.

Villa were chasing a first major trophy since Brian Little led them to the League Cup in 1996 and how Dean Smith, the manager, and Jack Grealish, the captain - both Birmingham boys and lifelong supporters of the club - would have loved to pull it off. They gave it their all and, when it was over, those in claret and blue crumpled to the turf, their spirit finally broken. They could leave with their heads held high, courtesy of the late push, in particular, and the applause of their fans in their ears. It might serve as a consolation in the coming days before the fight for Premier League survival resumes.

It was always going to be tough for the team who sit second from bottom of the table, who had been thumped 6-1 by City when they last met in January and it was not for nothing that the bookmakers had Villa somewhere between 12-1 and 14-1 to win. Smith's starting 4-5-1 system betrayed a wariness of City's threat, a desire to block their midfield runners and it would have hurt him to see how easily they got in for the opening goal. Raheem Sterling passed

to Rodri and, from there, it was a pinpoint ball dropped over the top of Matt Targett for Phil Foden to use. His dart forward caught out Targett and, when he headed square, Agüero's shot flicked off Tyrone Mings to beat Nyland.

Guardiola started Foden on the right of his front three and the 19-year-old was the outstanding performer, decorating the occasion with his rich talent. There was one moment in the early running when he was knocked off balance by a Villa challenge only to keep his feet and surge forward. The balance and quick feet were breathtaking and it was not the only time that this could be said.

Anwar El Ghazi had headed high for Villa in the fourth minute but they would be pinned back and, after City had scored the second and started to monopolise possession, finding spaces in dangerous areas, particularly through David Silva, it threatened to become an ordeal for Smith's team.

Yet Samatta changed the complexion of the occasion, his flying header re-energising the Villa support - which included Prince William - offering not only that indescribable rush of a Wembley goal but hope. John

Stones got his feet into a tangle and fell over as he failed to deal with a chipped ball from Targett and El Ghazi crossed for Samatta to find the net.

Before that it had been all City. Foden shot wide after a nonchalantly excellent touch; Agüero was denied by an Engels block; and Sterling was similarly thwarted by Mings. City's second had been straightforward, too, with Frédéric Guilbert failing to challenge Rodri following Ilkay Gündogan's corner. The set piece ought not to have been awarded with the last touch coming off Gündogan rather than Grealish but Villa had to defend it properly.

There was niggles as tensions rose in the second half. Sterling clashed with Guilbert and Rodri was booked for a tactical foul on Douglas Luiz after a slip by Kevin De Bruyne, used only as a substitute. Marvelous Nakamba was also cautioned after he cleaned out Agüero with an excessively robust tackle. He was lucky to avoid red.

Villa found it hard to generate any momentum but they knew one chance might be all they needed. City missed chances through Foden, Rodri and the substitute, Gabriel Jesus and, in the end, they would be indebted to Bravo.

EU and UK begin talks on post-Brexit relationship

BRUSSELS, MAR 2 (AFP): With Brexit “done” as far as London is concerned, UK and EU negotiators on Monday begin talks aimed at forging a future relationship - while brandishing red lines that may yet prove to be irreconcilable.

The discussions covering trade and trading standards, agriculture, security, transport, energy, fisheries and police cooperation kick off in Brussels under teams run by Frenchman Michel Barnier for the EU and governmental advisor David Frost for Britain.

They take place just over a month since Britain ceased to be an EU member, and are meant to wrap up by the end of this year -- an exceedingly tight timeframe that few see as feasible for anything more than the barest of bare-bones accords.

The UK's current transition period, during which it trades like an EU member with no tariffs or other barriers, ends on December 31. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has ruled out extending it, though he has the option to do so.

The negotiations will be clouded by mistrust and weeks of chest-beating leading up to them. Each side has accused the other of shifting away from goals set out in a nonbinding political declaration struck late last year.

Rival mandates published last week highlighted the EU's aim of securing a “level playing field” to prevent Britain undercutting costly European standards on labour, tax, environment and state subsidies.

Meanwhile the UK is



insisting on setting its own rules in the name of “economic and political independence”.

Barnier, in an uncharacteristic display of podium-thumping, has told Britain to fully respect the binding Brexit withdrawal treaty. That, notably, requires checks on British goods crossing the Irish Sea into the UK territory of Northern Ireland, which remains in the orbit of the EU single market.

Johnson has insisted those checks are unnecessary. But senior British ministers and officials confirm London will abide by the terms of the treaty.

Experts say they see a potential landing zone for an agreement on future relations based mainly on trade in goods, but only if both sides give

up a little ground from their political rhetoric.

“Clearly, at the beginning of any negotiation, there's a bit of posturing. Both sides want to state the strongest possible case,” said Fabian Zuleeg, head of the European Policy Centre.

The EU demand for parallel standards and the UK's insistence on legal autonomy could be bridged in ways both sides claim as wins, they say.

But fishing -- of relatively minor economic importance but of totemic significance to Britain and EU states such as France and Spain -- could be the flashpoint that scuppers a deal.

Barnier has emphasised that fishing is “inextricably” linked to the whole agreement. The EU is demanding its

fishing boats continue to have access to British waters in return for British fishermen being able to sell their fresh catches to their biggest and closest market.

That hump has to be resolved by the end of June when both sides are to get together for a stock-taking of the talks, to decide whether it is worth continuing.

If no deal is reached, economic pain will be felt on both sides -- but especially in Britain and in Ireland, the EU member most dependent on trade with the UK.

UN economists calculate the trade hit would see the UK annually lose export revenues of up to 29 billion euros (USD 32 billion) in that case. The EU buys nearly half of all British exports. Zuleeg said he was “pessimis-

tic” about the outcome, because the UK was so strongly emphasising its desire to diverge from EU rules. “It's very difficult to see where they could meet to make this work,” he said. If the British government “stick to their line there cannot be a deal”.

An EU official, speaking to AFP on condition anonymity, warned however that Brussels did not have an alternative negotiating line up its sleeve.

“There is only a Plan A, no Plan B. Because Plan B is to extend the negotiations and we know the British don't want that,” the official said.

Another analyst, Jill Rutter, a senior fellow at think-tank The UK in a Changing Europe, said the fact that the EU is stressing there will be trade friction even if a deal is done, in the form of checks on goods entering the European single market, means “the benefits aren't enormous” for Britain.

Also, Johnson and his government appear ready for British businesses to bear the pain from a no-deal.

“What's very intriguing about this government, and what makes it so hard to judge, is that Johnson is apparently unwilling to take any account of business concerns,” Rutter told AFP.

The main argument she sees in favour of a deal is that when Johnson decides he really wants to achieve a goal, he goes for it no matter his past positions.

“He's prepared to ditch prior commitments, and he's actually a very good sales person,” she said.

China steps up visa threats against foreign reporters: media group

BEIJING, MAR 2 (AFP): The Chinese government is threatening to remove visas from journalists as a weapon to intimidate foreign media “like never before”, a press group said Monday, following the expulsion of three reporters last month.

In its annual report, the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China said it also feared Beijing was preparing to kick out more reporters, with two journalists this year given working visas of only a single month.

At least 12 correspondents received press credentials valid for six months or less -- more than double the number given short-term visas the previous year, in what the FCCC called a record. Resident journalist visas, which are mandatory for all foreign media based in mainland China, are typically issued for one year.

“Chinese authorities are using visas as weap-

ons against the foreign press like never before,” the report warned, flagging a “continued decline in reporting conditions”.

Since President Xi Jinping came to power in 2013, China has forced out nine foreign journalists, either through outright expulsion or by non-renewal of visas, the FCCC said.

The report also found a majority of journalists surveyed -- 82 percent -- said they had experienced interference, harassment or violence while reporting in China over the past year.

Nearly double the correspondents surveyed this year faced difficulty renewing their credentials, and almost all of them believed this was related to their reporting.

In late February, Beijing ordered three reporters from The Wall Street Journal to leave the country over what

it deemed a racist headline in an opinion piece they were not involved in writing.

Deputy bureau chief Josh Chin and reporter Chao Deng, both US nationals, as well as reporter Philip Wen, an Australian, were given five days to leave.

The reporters had reported on Xinjiang, covering forced labour, surveillance and re-education camps.

Last August, China refused to renew the press credentials of Wall Street Journal correspondent Chun Han Wong after he and Wen wrote an article on one of Xi's cousins.

The group warned that “hostility toward foreign press is now so pervasive that the most basic elements of journalism are often frustrated in China”.

The foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump aides defend US coronavirus response

WASHINGTON, MAR 2 (AFP): Vice President Mike Pence on Sunday defended the US administration's handling of the coronavirus epidemic after the first confirmed death on American soil and rising criticism of the state of US preparedness.

Pence and Health Secretary Alex Azar made the rounds of Sunday talk shows with the message that risks from the disease remain low for most Americans, while promising to make up for testing shortfalls.

“We could have more sad news, but the American people should know the risk to the average American remains low,” Pence said on CNN's “State of the Union.”

The assurances came a day after officials confirmed that two men had died in the northwestern state of Washington after becoming infected with the virus. The first was a man in his 50s, with no known contact with persons infected abroad. The second was a man in his 70s. Both had “underlying health issues,” according to the public health officials.

Azar told “Fox News Sunday” the man in his 50s was in a hospital to which a nursing home, hit by a coronavirus outbreak, had sent patients.

“So right now there's a large investigation

going on in the nursing home, the hospital, contact tracing to try to determine where that disease was introduced and how it might have spread,” he said.

The United States has had at least 70 confirmed coronavirus cases in all, including 47 patients who were repatriated from virus hotspots in Asia and quarantined for 14 days on their return, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Pence put the number of cases among repatriated Americans at 46.

More than 20 other people have been infected in the United States, including the first case in New York state confirmed on Sunday -- a woman who had travelled to Iran. She was described as not being in a serious condition.

Genetic analysis suggests the novel coronavirus had probably been spreading undetected for about six weeks in Washington state, The New York Times reported.

The spread of the virus through communities would be an ominous development that would almost certainly intensify the epidemic in the United States.

US health authorities have been slow to distribute coronavirus testing kits, however, making

the dimensions of the problem uncertain. “It's a very fair question, and it's one of the first issues that governors I spoke to raised with me,” Pence said when asked on CNN why the US was so far behind other countries in producing testing kits.

He said more than 15,000 testing kits were released over the weekend, the federal Food and Drug Administration has approved a testing regime, and the government was working with a commercial provider to produce an additional 50,000 kits.

President Donald Trump put Pence in charge of the US response last week, amid rising complaints that the administration had been slow to prepare for the virus's spread.

Trump himself had been criticized for seeming to low-ball the risk, even as experts from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned of a looming health emergency. Former vice president and Democratic candidate Joe Biden attacked what he described as Trump's “incompetence” in dealing with the epidemic, accusing him of muzzling the government's top experts.

“I see no preparedness other than political talking points,” he said on ABC's “This Week.”

North Korea fires two unidentified projectiles: South's military

SEOUL, MAR 2 (AFP): North Korea fired two unidentified projectiles on Monday, the South's military said, weeks after Pyongyang declared its moratorium on long-range missile tests over.

The two devices were fired eastwards over the sea from the Wonsan area on the east coast, the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

“The military is monitoring for additional launches and maintaining readiness,” the statement added. The North carried out a series of weapons tests late last year, the last of them in November, often describing them as multiple launch rocket systems, although others called them ballistic missiles.

It also carried out static engine tests, most recently in December.

At a party meeting at the end of that month, leader Kim Jong Un declared that Pyongyang no longer considered itself bound by its moratoriums on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests, and threatened a demonstration of a “new strategic weapon” soon.

Israelis vote for third time in 12 months

JERUSALEM, MAR 2 (AFP): Israelis were set to vote for a third time in twelve months Monday, with embattled Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seeking to end the country's political crisis and save his career. The vote comes just two weeks before the right wing premier stands trial over a series of corruption allegations, but final polls indicated his support was holding, suggesting another close race between his Likud and the centrist Blue and White party.

Both will fall well short of a majority in Israel's proportional system and the winner will seek to form a coalition with multiple smaller parties.

After elections in both April and September last year neither were able to do so, and a similar deadlock remains possible.

With few undecided voters in a divided country, turnout will be key and all parties were campaigning to get their vote out Sunday.

Netanyahu, in power since 2009, said Sunday internal polls suggested they were close to winning and finally breaking the political deadlock.

“We are very close to victory,” Israel's longest-serving premier told a press conference. “Leave your homes and vote Likud.” Blue and White leader Benny Gantz, a former military general, urged supporters to vote and end Netanyahu's divisive rule.

“You can't just sit at home clicking your tongue, saying ‘what's happening here,’” Gantz told public radio Sunday. “Get out and vote.”

In April's election each party

won 35 seats, while in September Blue and White garnered 33 against Likud's 32. A number of rightwing parties, including two ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties who last time won 17 seats between them, have already pledged to support Netanyahu.

The Joint List, a coalition representing Israel's Arab minority, won 13 seats in September and backed Gantz, as did a number of smaller leftwing parties. In January, Netanyahu was officially charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust, becoming the first sitting Israeli leader to be indicted.

The 70-year-old will face trial from March 17 on charges including receiving improper gifts worth thousands of dollars and offering a media mogul lucrative regulatory changes in exchange for favourable coverage.

Netanyahu has dominated Likud for twenty years and maintains a deep loyalty in the party, easily defeating a recent leadership challenge.

He has denied all charges, accusing the state prosecution, media and others of a witchhunt. Polls suggest Likud's support has held firm.

In January, US President Donald Trump unveiled controversial peace proposals greenlighting Israel's annexation of settlements and swathes of land in the occupied West Bank, sparking Palestinian outrage.

Bolstered by US support, Netanyahu has campaigned on building thousands more homes in Jewish settlements in the territory. All

settlements are considered illegal by the international community. Gantz, a security hawk who previously led the Israeli military, has also welcomed the Trump proposals.

Despite backing Gantz, the Joint List has campaigned on opposition to the Trump proposals, which were immediately rejected by the Palestinian leadership. Gantz has pledged to clean up politics and focused heavily on corruption allegations against his rival.

But in recent days the campaign has become particularly vicious, with a series of leaked recordings and mudslinging.

Voting is taking place despite fears over the coronavirus epidemic, with seven cases so far confirmed in the Jewish state.

Special polling booths have been erected for the 5,600 Israelis under self-quarantine, many of whom visited countries where the virus is prevalent.

They are not allowed to use normal polling stations and will wear masks while voting.

Polls open at 7am local time (0500 GMT) and close at 10pm.

Exit polls will be released immediately after, with final results expected Tuesday morning.

The previous two elections have seen the rightwing and centrist-left blocs remain roughly static in size, and polls suggest the political status will continue.

“It is hard to see what could convince someone who voted twice for the same party to shift this time,” said Ofer Zalzberg, an Israeli analyst at the International Crisis Group think-tank.

Sikkim SCAN / CapitalTIMES / Neighbourhood WATCH / Sports & Specials / ElseWhere / EtcETERA

It's easy to relax... When you can trust the News.

To book ad-space, contact SummitTIMES at

GANGTOK:
For circulation details Contact: +91-9749897495, +91-9647102492
& for Advertisement booking at +91-9933427505 or at office no 03592
208498. Mail us at advertise@summittimes.com

SILIGURI:
Mr. Mani Rai, M/s. Space Ads. B.R. Ambedkar Building, Room No.7, Ist. 983108397. E-mail: contact.synapse@gmail.com/irshad_sil23@gmail.com

Phone:
03592-208498
+91-9832556498
+91-9832080753

www.summittimes.com
news@summittimes.com
summittimes1a@gmail.com
advertise@summittimes.com

KOLKATA OFFICE:
Irshad Ali/ Indeevaz. Synapse, 6, Madan Street, Mazine - 2, 2nd floor: Kolkata - 700072. Ph. 033-22124348/ fax 033-22124337/ mob. +91-9830547774/ +91-9830547774

Address:
Santa Bhawan Complex, Church Road
Near Diesel Power House (DPH)
Gangtok, East Sikkim, 737101

VIDEO NEWS SECTION
facebook.com/SummitTimes



MODEL WALK! Model, Bella Hadid showed off her supermodel strut while headed to the Balenciaga show at Paris Fashion Week in Paris.

It was a bit of letdown: Jennifer Lopez opens up on Oscar snub

LOS ANGELES, MAR 2 (PTI): Finally addressing her Oscar snub for “Hustlers”, singer-actor Jennifer Lopez says she was “sad” when she didn’t bag a nomination for the crime drama despite major buzz ahead of the awards season. She starred as Ramona, the ringleader to the group of strippers who take revenge on their wealthy Wall Street clients. The actor also produced the film.

“Hustlers”, directed by Lorene Scafaria, was both a critical and commercial hit, and was touted worthy of a best supporting actress Academy Award nod for Lopez, an overall first for the actor.

She was not nominated and Laura Dern took home the Oscar in the category for “Marriage Story”.

“I was sad, I was a little sad because there was a lot of buildup to it. There were so many articles, I got so many good notices more than ever in my career and there was a lot of: ‘She’s going to get nominated for an Oscar, it’s going to happen, if it doesn’t you’re crazy.’ ‘I’m reading all the articles going: ‘Oh my God, could this happen?’ And then it didn’t and I was like: ‘Ouch’, it was a little bit of a let-down,” Lopez told TV veteran Oprah Winfrey during her “2020 Vision: Your Life in Focus

Tour”. The 50-year-old actor said she also felt bad for her team after the snub.

“Also, I felt like my whole team most of my team has been with me for years, 20, 25 years and I think they had a lot of hopes on that and they wanted it too, so I felt like I

let everyone down a little bit,” she said. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences received a lot of flak for overlooking women directors and some worthy performances from actors of colour in its nominations list.

But Lopez said, award or not, she was content with herself as an actor after working on “Hustlers”. “I was a good actress always I can say that now to

myself, but what I do now is so much different than what I did then. You realise you want people’s validation, you want people to say you did a good job and I realised, No, you don’t need that. You do this because you love it,” she said.

“I don’t need this award to tell me I’m enough,” she added.

“Hustlers” also featured Constance Wu, Julia Stiles, Keke Palmer, Lili Reinhart, Lizzo, and Cardi B.



Proud to be known for action films: Rohit Shetty

MUMBAI, MAR 1 (PTI): Action-packed films are director Rohit Shetty’s forte and the filmmaker says he is proud that his name is synonymous with high-octane stunt-laden movies.

Rohit, son of legendary stuntman-actor M B Shetty, said he always knew action was his calling.

“My father was doing it. My mother and I knew, I will also do it. I started at the age of 16, I am 45 today. Stunts and action have become my identity now. I never thought it would go up to this level. “I am happy and proud about it. The only thing is even if others are doing action today, people say, it is ‘Rohit Shetty’ style. That makes me happy and proud,” Rohit told PTI in an interview.

The director, best known for actioners such as “Singham” series, “Simmba”, and action-comedies like “Golmaal” films, “All The Best: Fun Begins” and “Chennai Express”, currently hosts action-adventure show “Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi”.

Rohit said the Colors TV reality series, shot in Bulgaria, suits his personality.

“When I do a show like this it looks real as people relate it with me. It works for me as well. I enjoy it and look for-

ward to it. Every year has been great. The action is great. I had explored Bulgaria in ‘Dilwale’ so I know the team and it became a bit easier to design the stunts this time,” he added. For the director, safety is the top priority while doing stunts. “There is a lot of calcula-

physically but mental strength is more important,” he said.

On the direction front, Rohit’s next directorial venture is the much-awaited “Sooryavanshi”, featuring Akshay Kumar and Katrina Kaif. This is the third film in the filmmaker’s cop uni-



tion that goes into designing a stunt. You need to be calm and calculative, and that comes with experience. It is very important to be prepared both mentally and physically. We train ourselves

verse, which will also see Ajay Devgn as Singham and Ranveer Singh as Simmba in special appearances.

“Sooryavanshi” is slated to be released on March 24.

Not in a rush to get married: Jennifer Lopez

Los Angeles, Mar 1 (PTI): Singer Jennifer Lopez says she is no hurry to tie the knot with fiancé, former professional baseball player Alex Rodriguez.

The pop diva shared her wedding plans in a conversation with veteran TV personality Oprah Winfrey at her “2020 Vision: Your Life in Focus Tour” here.

“It’s so funny because when we first got engaged I was like, ‘Oooo, we’re gonna get married in a couple months?!’ You’re old thinking comes right back, all that hopeless romantic (stuff) that made me get married three times. He’s like, ‘Whatever you want to do, we can talk about it.

“I said, ‘But if we’re going to be together for the rest of our lives, what is the rush’. If that’s what we’re really going to do, if we’re really going to be partners. If we’re really going to try to build something together that we both never had or both never felt like we had -- which was a family with a husband and a wife, and a mother and a father -- and we embrace all of our children and we show them something that we didn’t have,” Lopez said.

The singer has 12-year-old twins Emme Maribel Muniz and Maximilian David Mu iz with Marc Anthony, while Rodriguez has daughters Natasha Alexander Rodriguez, Ella Alexander Rodriguez from his first marriage.

‘The Family Man’ S2 completes shoot

MUMBAI, MAR 2 (PTI): The filming of the second season of Amazon series “The Family Man” is finished, director duo Raj & DK announced on Monday.

The directors, who are also the creators of the Manoj Bajpayee-starrer, shared the update on social media.

“It’s a wrap, folks! #thefamilymanseason2 #wrap-party #d2rfilms #rajndk,” they wrote on Instagram.

“The Family Man” follows a middle-class man, played by Bajpayee, secretly working for the National Investigation Agency.

The first season also featured Priyamani, Sharib Hashmi, Neeraj Madhav, Pawan Chopra, Kishore Kumar and Gul Panag.

South star Samantha Akkineni, who is making her web debut with the upcoming season, features in a pivotal role. “The Family Man” started streaming on September 20, 2019 and opened to universal acclaim and great reviews.

Amitabh Bachchan wraps ‘Brahmastra’



MUMBAI, MAR 1 (PTI): Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has completed the shooting of the upcoming film “Brahmastra”.

The 77-year-old actor shared the update on his blog on Saturday.

“So they tell me it’s a ‘film wrap’ for me on ‘Brahmastra’... and as is the norm the unit applauds and everyone embraces and the good byes are done... at times they set off some confetti guns... it’s the done thing they say...

“Really... ? Sounds more like ‘thank God, good riddance... good riddance of the

actor... Had enough of him,” Bachchan wrote.

He also shared some on-set photos with co-star Ranbir Kapoor and director Ayan Mukerji.

“Brahmastra” will be a three-film fantasy adventure series, produced by Karan Johar’s Dharma Productions.

Also starring featuring Alia Bhatt, the first part will see Ranbir play Shiva, a man with special powers. It also features south star Nagarjuna and Mouni Roy.

The long-in-the-works film is slated to be released later this year.

Filming of ‘Laxmmi Bomb’ complete

MUMBAI, MAR 1 (PTI): The shooting of “Laxmmi Bomb”, starring Akshay Kumar and Kiara Advani, is complete, the makers have announced.

Producer Shabina Khan took to her Instagram Stories to share the news.

“It’s a wrap on ‘Laxmmi Bomb’... Missed you @kiaraaliaadvani. Thank you everyone. See you in the cinemas 22:05:2020,” Khan captioned a picture from the wrap party.

The film is the Hindi remake of 2011 Tamil horror comedy “Kanchana”.

Directed by Raghav Lawrence, who also helmed the original, the movie also stars Ashwini Kalsekar, Sharad Kelkar, Manu Rishi, and Ayesha Raza.

“Laxmmi Bomb” is also produced by Cape of Good Films, Fox Star Studios, and Tusshar Kapoor.

It is slated to be released on May 22.

ARIES: Family and community take centre stage, Aries. Spend time with your forever cheerleaders, the ones who have supported you and held space for you to become who you are today. Let them know how grateful you are for their presence, how much you have learnt and continue to learn from them. Commit to the practice of love. Let your compassionate side shine through.

TAURUS: Like you Carrie Bradshaw, you’re in the mood to put your money where you can see it—hanging in your closet. This is the time to reinvent your sartorial game. But don’t go overboard, which you have the tendency to. Set a budget aside from the beginning. Invest timeless pieces that can be styled differently. While you’re at it, consider stepping out of your comfort zone just a little.

GEMINI: Misery loves company, doesn’t it, Gemini? What the Spirit wants you to do: snap out of it already! This is not a healthy space for you to be in. Your vibration is not supporting your soul growth nor is it helping

you attract healthy relationships. Small, simple steps in the right direction will make a big difference. Start by making a gratitude list. Tip: Raise your vibrations by giving thanks for what you have and what is yet to come.

CANCER: Sometimes you need to let your practical side take the wheel. At other times, you need to weave a little bit of magic. But this week, you’re being asked to marry the yin and yang aspects of you. Use the law of attraction to draw in what you desire as you prepare to take concrete steps towards the achievement of your goals. Looks like you’re getting closer and closer to the destination. On the downside, you may have to deal with somebody who has a chip on their shoulder.

Tip: You came here to conquer.

LEO: Michael Curtiz once said, “The only things you regret are the ones you don’t do.” Your thoughts exactly, Leo. You may have a bad rep for being spontaneous (read: impulsive), but you learned early on that nothing worth remembering is ever created within the confines of your comfort zone.

Tip: Throw the rulebook out of the window.

VIRGO: Virgo, you’re a sorceress. Stop trying to live a mundane existence. Pay attention to what the Universe is revealing to you via signs, symbols, visions, and dreams. Your clairvoyant, clairaudient and clairsentient abilities are especially heightened at this moment. Remember, your inner skeptic will make you doubt the voice of wisdom.

Tip: Listen to the voice of wisdom.

LIBRA: Isn’t the boss babe act getting a little tiring? Stay committed to your goals, Libra. Remember what you came here for. But resist the urge to make your work the focal point of your existence. The cards are urging you to break out of that power suit and get in touch with the wild child within. What are the things that make you feel nurtured?

Tip: Find a balance between work and play.

SCORPIO: If you have a friend who is going through the things that you are facing right now, what would you tell them? Time to apply the sage advice to your own life, Scorpio. Clichéd as it is, the answers you seek are already within you.

Tip: Trust the guidance that’s coming

through from within.

SAGITTARIUS: In the wise words of Roman philosopher Seneca, “Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.” You’ve already done the dirty work thereby laying a solid foundation. So prepare for the grand opening, Sagittarius. What you need to keep in mind when the right opportunities come knocking at your door: the importance of striking when the iron is hot.

Tip: You are on your way to realising the grand vision.

CAPRICORN: To quote Oscar Wilde: “Be yourself. Everybody is already taken.” Your relationship with yourself is undergoing a major upgrade. Keep showering yourself with love. Know that accepting yourself, flaws and all, is the key to empowerment and bringing about a change in the way you interact with the world. Practice being your most authentic self in your interpersonal relationships too.

Tip: You are becoming more you than you ever have.

AQUARIUS: Nearing yet another break-

ing point, Aquarius? When you set unrealistic expectations for yourself, you are bound to fail. See how and where you are being hard on yourself. ‘I am enough’ is an affirmation that will help you find wisdom and courage. Some of you may be experiencing guilt around self-care. There’s only so much you can serve from an empty cup. Allow yourself to get the time out you have been yearning for.

Tip: It’s time to prioritise self-care.

PISCES: So this is not the life you envisioned for yourself! Are you really lost though or simply taking a detour? Trust that you are exactly where you need to be, Pisces. Everything that is unfolding right now is a part of the divine plan that is written for you in the constellations. Remember, bringing in the energy of worry and anxiety will salt your game. What you want to do instead: surrender to the mysterious forces. Things have a way of working out better than you envision.

Tip: Release the need to control this situation and the path will reveal itself.