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SummitTIMES

Vol 05 | Issue 04 | Gangtok | Tuesday | 07 January 2020

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RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

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Darjeeling shivers at 0.6 deg C

KOLKATA, JAN 6 (PTI): The Himalayan town of Darjeeling shivered at near-freezing temperatures on Monday, while the mercury stayed below 10 degrees Celsius in other parts of West Bengal.

The Met department said that Darjeeling recorded a minimum temperature of 0.6 degrees Celsius, while hill town Kalimpong was a little warmer at 3 degrees.

Contai in East Midnapore recorded the lowest temperature of 8.2 degrees Celsius in the plains, while other places that clocked sub-10 degrees Celsius are Cooch-behar, Balurghat, Siliguri, Sriniketan and Krishnanagar, the Met said.

Kolkata recorded a minimum temperature of 12.6 degrees Celsius, while the day's maximum temperature stood at 22.6 degrees Celsius.

The weatherman has forecast no change in night temperatures in the state for the next two days.

JNU violence: HRD Ministry meets univ officials, VC Jagadesh Kumar stays away

NEW DELHI, JAN 6 (PTI): The HRD Ministry met officials from the JNU administration on Monday and took stock of the situation on the campus following Sunday's violence, even as Vice-Chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar skipped the meeting.

Meanwhile, Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', who was in Bhubhaneshwar, on Monday said educational institutions cannot be allowed to become "political adda" and vowed "strong action" against the perpetrators of the violence at JNU.

The meeting at the HRD Ministry which went on for over two hours was attended by the JNU registrar, proctor and other admin officials who briefed the ministry officials on the sequence of events that unfolded on the campus and the measures taken to restore normalcy.

"HRD Secretary Amit Khare held a meeting with a team of JNU authorities, including Pro-VC Chintamani Mahapatra, Registrar Pramod Kumar, Rector Rana Pratap Singh and Proctor Dhananjay Singh, today. The secretary held a detailed discussion with them and was also briefed about the current situation in JNU," a senior HRD Ministry official said.

The ministry had on Sunday sought an immediate report from JNU Registrar Pramod Kumar after the violence broke out and students and teachers were attacked.

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Jorethang Premier Badminton League set for Feb showdown

Amol Rai sets new record after attracting highest bid

SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 06 JAN:

Sixty-six shuttlers were picked up by six teams during the auction for Jorethang Premier Badminton League-2 held at Jorethang in South Sikkim on Sunday evening.

The event is being organized by Badminton Association of Jorethang [BAJ] in association with Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party's Sports wing and Labour front under the aegis of Badminton Association of Sikkim [BAS].

Transport Minister, Sanjit Kharel, was present as the chief guest for the auction ceremony accompanied by Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari, present as the guest of honour.

Two franchises have returned from the last edition of JPBL - Red Panda GMTS



owned by former Minister GM Gurung and Tshering Sherpa; and United Sikkim Shuttlers, the runners-up of last year now under a new name as Namchi Smashers, owned this year by Indian Olympian archer, Tarundeep Rai and football icon, Bhaichung Bhutia.

Four additional franchi-

sees in this edition are The Poklok Warriors owned by RB Tamang who popularly known as Captain Jojo, Dal-

lam Express owned by Power Minister MN Sherpa, David Warriors owned by Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling, and Chakung-

and the home team, Salghari Zoom Blockers owned by area MLA, Sunita Gajmer.

Amol Rai, the much sought-after player, ultimately went to Poklok Warriors for a whopping Rs 20,800, setting a new record.

In the women's category, Tashi Choden was the highest

bid player at Rs 8,400 by Red Panda GMTS while Sunandita Bist was taken by Dallam Express for Rs 8,200.

All the 66 players were bought by the 6 teams at various bids within their kitty set at Rs 60,000 each.

The evening was abuzz with a tension filled air, but

the charismatic aura of the auctioneer, Dewakar Basnet shone through with his calm demeanor and witty banter. The franchisees were filled with zest as they bid furiously to bag the best players under their team's banner.

In between the auction process, the organizers have also felicitated BAJ vice-president, Bijay Tiwari, for his medal-winning performance in the recently held National Strength Lifting Championships at Udaipur and general secretary of BAS, Sukanta Das for becoming the Manager of the Indian National Badminton team and his contributions to the game in Sikkim.

BAJ president, Jigme Namgyal, who is also the head of the organising committee, thanked all the franchise owners as well as the associate partners, SKM Sports Wing and Labour Front, for their contributions in making the event a big success.

The showdown of the 6 teams is scheduled for the second week of February.

IPFT launches indefinite stir against CAA, for Tipraland

AGARTALA, JAN 6 (PTI):

The Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT), an ally of the ruling BJP in the state Monday launched an indefinite sit-in against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) near the headquarters of Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council, about 25 km from here.

The party also pressed for a separate Tipraland by carving out of the tribal council from the state which constitutes two third of the state territory. IPFT spokesperson Mangal Debbarma said, The demonstration will continue till the Centre takes positive step. We want either the scrapping of the act or exempting entire Tripura from its purview".

IPFT general secretary Mevar Kumar Jamatia said Though our alliance partner, the BJP does not agree with our stand we will

continue our agitation unless an amicable solution is achieved. "We feel achieving the separate Tipraland is the ultimate solution to end the tribal angst in the state, Jamatia, who is also the Tripura tribal affairs minister said.

The party's leaders said different tribal bodies had met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi on December 12, 2019 soon after the Citizenship Amendment Bill was passed in Parliament and he had assured them that he would make sure that the tribals are protected in the state. But nothing was communicated to them so far.

The Centre and many government agencies have confirmed that there are illegal immigrants in Tripura and if CAA is implemented here, it would harm the interests of the indigenous people," party president N C Debbarma told reporters.

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Inter-Constituency Football Tournament kicks off



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 06 JAN:

Inter-Constituency Football Tournament 2019 kicked off at three different venues in the State on Monday. The tournament is being organized by Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Government of Sikkim under Rural Sports.

The preliminary matches of this knock-out tournament started

today at Paljor Stadium for constituencies in East and North Districts; at Sangha, Singhithang playground, Namchi for constituencies in South District; and Dentam Public Ground for constituencies in West District.

All matches from quarter-final round onwards will be played at Jorethang ground in South Sikkim. The final match is scheduled to be played

on 15 January. The tournament carries the cash prize of Rs 3 lakhs for the winner and Rs 2 lakhs for runners-up team.

Speaking to SummitTimes, Secretary to Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari mentioned that the main objective of the tournament was to promote sports culture in all corners of the State and

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HOUSES draped in snow in Lachung, North Sikkim, on Monday.

[PIC COURTESY: WANGCHUK BHUTIA]

JNUTA writes to Prez, demands removal of VC

NEW DELHI, JAN 6 (PTI): The Jawaharlal Nehru Teachers' Association has written to the President, who is the Visitor to the varsity, demanding the removal of the Vice Chancellor.

Holding the Vice Chancellor responsible for the "orgy of violence" in JNU on Sunday, JNUTA said entry of goons into the campus without connivance of the administration was not possible.

"The JNUTA with full sense of responsibility accuses the JNU Administration headed by the Vice-Chancellor of being responsible for the orgy of violence in JNU," they said.

"It is evident that without the connivance of the Administration, the entry into the campus of several of the goons who were not from the campus, and their subsequent exit without being caught, would not have been possible, they said.

Gold prices hit lifetime high of Rs 41,730 per 10 gm, zoom Rs 720

NEW DELHI, JAN 6 (PTI): Gold prices in the national capital hit an all-time high level on Monday and zoomed Rs 720 to Rs 41,730 per 10 gram following a pick-up in safe-haven demand for the metal amid weak equities and bullish global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

Silver also witnessed increased buying as it surged Rs 1,105 to Rs 49,430 per kg from Rs 48,325 per kg in the previous trade.

Gold had in the previous trade closed at Rs 41,010 per 10 gram.

"Safe-haven demand continued in the precious metal with word of war between the US and Iran. Along with a weaker rupee, rise in international gold prices supported domestic gold prices to trade at life-time high level," Devarsh Vakil, Head (PCG-Advisory), HDFC Securities, said.

In the global market, gold traded with gains at USD 1,575 per ounce and, likewise, silver also quoted higher at USD 18.34 per ounce.

International gold prices at COMEX climbed as much as 2.3 per cent to USD 1,588.13 an ounce, the highest level since April 2013, and traded at USD 1,575 an ounce. Along with the other Asian currencies, the rupee traded with a loss of 25 paise amid higher crude oil prices.

In the morning trade, the rupee depreciated 31 paise to 72.11 weighed by the spike in crude oil prices, amid rising concerns over US-Iran tensions.

The Sensex crashed nearly 788 points on Monday as heightened tensions in the Middle East kept investors on edge.

The domestic market witnessed intense sell-off in line with global stocks after US President Donald Trump warned Iran of major retaliation if Tehran carries out any attack against America to avenge the killing of top military commander Qassem Soleimani.

Sakewa 'Udhawli Puja' Celebration in West Sikkim

MARTAM, 06 JAN (IPR): Sakewa (Udhawli Puja) Celebration 2019-20 was held at Arithang Martam, West Sikkim, today. Minister-cum-MLA of Gyalshing Bermiok constituency, Lok Nath Sharma was the chief guest in the special presence of Sub Divisional Magistrate Dentam Sub Division, Bimal Rai, Block Development Officer, Martam BAC, Pratima Tamang, Joint Director (Accounts) Agriculture Department, Jag Bahadur Karki, Officials, and host of other dignitaries. The programme was organised by Akhil Kirat Rai Sangh (AKRS), Bermiok Martam, West Sikkim.

The Minister, in his address, congratulated the organizing committee, AKRS and extended



best wishes on behalf of the state government. The newly formed government under the leadership of the Chief Minister, PS Tamang has ensured cultural freedom and equality before law without any discrimination based on religion and party affiliations,

headed.

He also outlined various activities and schemes being implemented in the field of Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services departments and underlined importance of ef-

fects and indispensability of agricultural profession in our daily life of human society. He also assured to develop and transform Bermiok Sr Secondary School as a Model School in the West District during his tenure.

He reassured to shoul-

der all the responsibilities to deliver commitments for overall development of Gyalshing Bermiok constituency in all spheres.

President of Heavenly Path Organization, Ganesh Yangma called for unity amongst various communities.

President of AKRS, West District, Bishnu Chamling also addressed the gathering and highlighted historic and religious significance of Sakewa festival.

During the celebration Rtd. MPH, NL Sharma was felicitated and honoured for his contribution in health services. Also the guests from Nepal, Ashok Mukarung and Prabhu Mukarung and president of Heavenly Path Organization, Ganesh Yangma were presented mementos.

The final match of the Open Volleyball tournament was played between Biraj Berthang Six and Gyalshing Traffic Police. Biraj Six Berthang won the Open Volleyball tournament by 3-0 in best-of-five set.

Winter coaching for class X & XII begins in North



WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 06 JAN:

Winter Coaching Camp for class X & XII standards for Government schools of North Sikkim is being conducted by Education Department, North District, funded by NHPC (HEP) under CSR-SD, 2019-20.

The 28-day camp is being held at Government Senior Secondary Girls School and Singhik Government Secondary School from today onwards. The students will be provided free coaching with fooding and lodging.

The inaugural function today was attended by Senior Manager, NHPC(HEP), Abdul Malik as chief guest accompanied by Dy Director, Education Department, North district, Sajan V Sebastian, Scientific Asst, NHPC (HEP), SS Basnet,

Asst Project Coordinator (APC), Samagrah (SSA) Education Department, Kalzang Bhutia, Principal, MSS School, BM Pradhan, HM, Singhik Sec School, Karma Bhutia, teaching staff and students.

The programme was welcomed by Principal, MSS School, Mr Pradhan who informed that NHPC (HEP) has been undertaking positive initiatives in education and students should also take advantage of these coaching classes.

APC, Samagrah (SSA), Education Department, Mr Bhutia talked about last year's coaching camp and this year's camp.

Chief guest, Senior Manager, NHPC (HEP), Mr Basnet, in his address explained about Hydro Electric Projects, there works and CSR funding for social issues.

IPFT launches...

Debbarma, who is also the state revenue minister, said after partition many non tribals had entered Tripura from the then East Pakistan and the tribals, who were then in majority, were reduced to minority.

They would be further alienated if CAA is implemented and foreign nationals are allowed to settle here taking the advantage of CAA, he said.

Meanwhile, a joint forum of three tribal political parties and different social organisations, announced a series of agitations from Tuesday to press for scrapping of CAA and the proposed NRC in Tripura.

The Joint Movement Against CAA (JMACAA), a joint forum of three tribal political parties and social organisations, announced a series of agitations from Tuesday.

JMACAA too had met Shah on December 12 in New Delhi and had sought his approval for exempting Tripura from the ambit of CAA.

JMACAA convener Anthony Debbarma Monday said, Shah had assured them of a second round of discussion with it for an amicable solution to the problem.

We also met Uion Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy for further correspondence and twice held meetings with Tripura Chief Minister Bipin Kumar Deb, but are yet to receive any positive indications for solution of the problem.

"We cannot wait for indefinite period, so we decided to launch our movement, he told reporters on Monday.

The constituents of JMACAA are Indigenous Nationalist Party of Twipra (INPT), Tripura Students Federation (TSF) and Borok Peoples Human Right Organisation.

9th All India Chief Minister's Gold Cup



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 06 JAN:

The second day match of 9th All India Chief Minister's Gold Cup International Football Tournament, 2020 at Jorethang, South Sikkim, Darjeeling XI defeated Sikkim South

West XI in a tie-breaker, a press release informs.

Earlier, the match had ended in 2-2 draw. Ashish Dewan, Jersey no.17 and Pujan Subba, Jersey no.14 scored a goal each for Darjeeling XI while Abhishek Rai Jersey no. 10

and Brijesh Manger Jersey no.12 scored a goal each for Sikkim South/West XI.

In the tie-breaker, Darjeeling XI defeated Sikkim South/West XI by 5-4 goals.

Ashish Dewan of Darjeeling XI was declared "Hero of the Match" with

cash prize Rs. 10,000.

PHE Minister, Bhim Hang Subba was the chief guest of the programme who was accompanied by Area MLA, Sunita Gajmer as guest of honour along with Principal Jorethang School, Archana Gurung.

Month-long winter sports camp kicks off at Namchi



NAMCHI, 06 JAN (IPR): A month-long winter coaching camp and talent hunt 2019-20 South District was kicked off by Ganesh Rai at Central Park, today. The camp is organized by Department of Sports and Youth Affairs in coordination with the office of DC (South).

This camp will focus on various sports disciplines such as Football,

Badminton, Taekwondo, Karate, Table Tennis, Boxing and Volleyball. The venue for playing these sports will be at Singhithang Playground and Indoor Stadium Namchi.

This camp will have players who are below the age of 19 years. It may be mentioned that today there were 105 participants in the camp.

Indra Hang announces library under MPLADS for Radhu school



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 06 JAN:

Lok Sabha MP from Sikkim, Indra Hang Subba has announced that he will set up a library at Government Junior High School, Radhu in West Sikkim under the

Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme. During his visit to Radhu JHS under Maneybong-Dentam constituency on Monday, he also interacted with staff of the school and local gentries.

Meeting reviews Jorethang Maghey Mela preparation



NAMCHI, 06 JAN (IPR): A review meeting for the upcoming Jorethang Maghey Sankranti Mela 2020 under the chairmanship of Area MLA cum Chief Patron, Sunita Gazmer was held at Green Park, Jorethang, today.

Addressing the gathering, MLA, Sunita Gazmer informed about Jorethang Maghey Sankranti Mela which is one of the oldest festivals of Sikkim and is observed annually amidst much fanfare. She also updated that this mela is also an important state level festival held at Jorethang. Additionally, she emphasized that the concerned line departments should work diligently and in proper coordination to make it a grand success.

SDM Jorethang, RB Bhandari called for collective shouldering of responsibility by the concerned officials as well as the public for upholding the grandeur and tradition that depicts Jorethang Maghey Sankranti Mela. The mela which is an annual event is also

a platform to showcase the hidden talents of Sikkimese people through various cultural and sports activities, he added.

During the meeting, progress report for the ensuing mela was also presented by the officials from the concerned departments. Various aspects of the mela corresponding to cultural programs, traditional folk cultural presentation, rural tourism, rural sports, SARAS fair, and many other events were discussed at length.

It may be mentioned here that the Jorethang Maghey Mela 2020 is a five-day event and will commence from 15 to 19 January.

Also present were SDM Jorethang cum president of Jorethang Maghey Mela Celebration Committee 2020, RB Bhandari alongside MEO Nayabazaar Jorethang Municipal Council, Rajani Pegha, Navraj Gurung Publicity Secretary of Maghey Mela, officials from various line departments and representatives of Mela Committee.

Inter-Constituency...

to engage youth in productive activities through sports and games.

He further stated that the tournament was also a talent hunt to provide exposure to talented footballers in different corners of the State. He mentioned that the tournament has been conducted under the guidance and direction of the Chief Minister and Minister to Sports & Youth Affairs Department.

The inaugural match at Paljor Stadium was played between Gangtok and West Pendum, in which the match was won by the former 3-1. In the second match, Khamdong-Singtam defeated Sangha 5-1 and Lachen-Mangan outplayed Gnathang-Machong by a lone goal in the third match. In the last match of the day, Chujachen defeated Dzongu 3-1.

At Dentam public ground, Rinchenpong edged past Zoom-Salghari 3-2, while Daramdin defeated Gyalshing-Bermiok 5-3 in another match. At Singhithang ground, Barfung defeated Temi-Namphing 3-1 in the first match, while in the second match, Melli outplayed Tumin-Lingee 7-3.

JNU violence...

There was heavy deployment of police on Monday outside the Shashtri Bhawan here which houses the HRD Ministry.

"A detailed report has been sent to the HRD Ministry about the sequence of events. The top administration officials are at the ministry to provide all details leading to present situation," JNU Vice-Chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar told PTI.

Violence broke out at the Jawaharlal Nehru University on Sunday night as a group of masked people armed with sticks attacked students and teachers and damaged property on the campus, prompting the administration to call in the police.

Many sustained injuries and were admitted to AIIMS Trauma Centre here. They were discharged on Monday. JNU Students' Union president Aishe Ghosh suffered a head injury.

The Left-controlled JNUSU and the ABVP blamed each other for the violence that continued for nearly two hours.

The Union HRD minister had urged JNU students to maintain the dignity of the university and peace on campus.

"I have said this earlier also that these autonomous institutions cannot be allowed to become political 'adda' (dens). Strong action will be initiated against people involved in such an attack," he told reporters in Bhubhaneshwar on Monday.

JNU Proctor Dhananjay Singh appealed the students to not panic and leave the campus.

"We appeal to students to not panic and leave the campus. Measures are being taken to normalise situation on the campus and ensure safety of everyone," he said after the meeting at the HRD Ministry.

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NRC is mischievous plan to divide India: Chidambaram

NEW DELHI, JAN 6 (PTI): Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Monday dubbed the National Register of Citizens a “sinister and mischievous plan” to divide the country and alleged that the NRC-CAA-NPR exercise is part of the RSS-BJP plan to push its “divisive” agenda of a ‘Hindu Rashtra’.

Terming the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) “patently discriminatory”, he said three neighbouring countries have been included, while Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bhutan excluded and some minority groups, including Muslims, kept out of its ambit.

The people who will be directly affected will be the Muslims of India, Chidambaram said, adding that all other religious groups, even if excluded under the NRC, will be included under the CAA and it is only the Muslims who will be identified as illegal migrants under the NRC and excluded under the CAA.

“Naturally, there is widespread fear and uncertainty among the Muslims of India, the former Union finance minister said.

He also clarified that there is a world of difference between the National Population Register of 2010 and the NPR of 2020 and it must be opposed after a “failed” Assam NRC-like exercise.

“The NRC is a sinister and mischievous plan to divide India. Under the NRC, every person residing in India has to prove



that he is a citizen of India. In modern, liberal democracies, citizenship is based on the principle of territoriality,” he told reporters.

Chidambaram said if the state suspects that a person is not a citizen, the burden of proving that the person is not a citizen lies on the state. On the contrary, under the NRC, the burden of proving that he is a citizen falls upon the person concerned, he said.

“This is contrary to the basic tenets of a democracy. It is this perverse burden of proof that was applied in Assam: the result was that 19,06,657 people were identified as illegal migrants or stateless persons. Most of them belong to the poorest and

vulnerable sections of society. No one knows what their fate will be,” the senior Congress leader said.

The NPR of 2020 with additional fields of information is a disguised attempt to carry out an Assam NRC-like exercise throughout the country and must be “stoutly opposed”, he told reporters.

“The NRC-CAA-NPR exercise is part of the RSS-BJP plan to push its divisive agenda of a Hindu Rashtra. The Constitution of India embodies the values of equality, equal protection of the laws, secularism, humanism and constitutional morality. In order to protect these values, every patriotic Indian has the duty to fight the pernicious doctrine of Hindu

Rashtra,” Chidambaram said. The Congress leader said that is why thousands of people, especially students, are on the streets to save the idea of India and protect the Constitution given to us by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Babasaheb Ambedkar. “Abraham Lincoln saved the Constitution of the United States in 1865, our task and our duty are not different,” he noted.

Chidambaram said the widespread protests have forced the government to backtrack on what the home minister and other ministers had said in Parliament on many occasions, the most recent being December 9 in Lok Sabha and December 11 in Rajya Sabha.

“The government has therefore come up with the idea of National Population Register (NPR) and has attempted to liken it with the census-related exercise undertaken in 2010. There is a world of difference between NPR 2010 and NPR 2020. NPR 2010 was conducted in a few states when there was no controversy about NRC and without the unhappy experience of the Assam NRC,” he said.

He said earlier there was no CAA looming large and the NPR 2010 gathered data in respect of only 15 fields while to the contrary, NPR 2020 will be conducted all over the country.

Chidambaram said it will be done in the background of the “disastrous experience of the Assam NRC and the discriminatory CAA”, and the form that will be used in NPR 2020 will have many additional fields -- “all mischievous and irrelevant to a census”.

“NPR 2020 will ask for information on the last place of residence, the place of birth of the parents, voter identity, passport number, driver’s licence, PAN and Aadhaar. Who added these additional fields and why? In terms of text and context, NPR 2010 and NPR 2020 are very different. NPR 2020 with the additional fields is a disguised attempt to do an Assam NRC-like exercise throughout the country and therefore, it must be stoutly opposed,” the Congress leader said.

Agri Minister addresses farmers on FM Radio



MARTAM, 06 JAN (IPR): Agriculture Minister, Lok Nath Sharma addressed farmers through 91.2 FM, Radio Kanchenjunga, this morning. He highlighted various schemes and programmes dedicated to the farmers of Sikkim.

He also articulated future scope of newly launched Model Villages in the state, futuristic

benefits for farmers through Sikkim IFFCO Organic Limited, governmental intervention to address issues of wildlife interference along with the provision of compensation for producers, upcoming financial incentives for Milk Producers and progressive farmers, conservation of variety of Siri cow and other endangered species.

He also drew lights on the provision of subsidized loan for farmers and encouraged people to adopt agriculture as a lucrative profession.

He also congratulated Martam based community radio station Kanchenjunga 91.2 FM for the initiative and advised the station to disseminate social centric programmes.

Wardens of JNU's Sabarmati hostel resign

NEW DELHI, JAN 6 (PTI): The wardens of the Sabarmati hostel at the Jawaharlal Nehru University resigned on Monday, stating in their resignation letters that they were quitting on “moral grounds” as they were unable to provide security to the hostel residents. Sources close to war-

dens Ramavtar Meena and Prakash Chandra Sahoo, however, alleged that a group of students cornered them when they reached the hostel and accused them of not providing security.

The students made the wardens sign the resignation papers forcefully, the sources claimed.

The Sabarmati hostel on the JNU campus witnessed violence on Sunday as a group of masked people armed with sticks and rods barged in, attacking students and damaging property.

Meena and Sahoo said they had fled the campus after being threatened by the masked group.

ED cautions public against fake summons, impostors



NEW DELHI, JAN 6 (PTI): The Enforcement Directorate on Monday cautioned the public against “impersonation” of its summons or letters by unscrupulous elements to extort money, even as it asked victims to contact the federal probe agency in case of trouble.

In a statement, the agency said such fake communications have been brought to its notice and accordingly, FIRs have been registered.

“The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) shall continue to take impactful action against unscrupulous impostors who attempt to impersonate ED officers and indulge in making fake correspondences with general public with ulterior motive to extract money,” the statement read.

behalf of ED to private parties in the form of summons or letters with “synonymous or anonymous identity.”

“On receipt of complaints of such nature, ED takes swift action by approaching local police authorities and file complaints and FIRs,” it said.

“Such FIRs have been made by ED at various police stations across India in recent past,” the statement added.

In one such case, the agency said, an accused was arrested for his involvement in sending email from a fake email ID “synonymous” to an ED officer.

In order to “overcome” such nuisances, the agency has taken appropriate measures and started following certain practices so that these unscrupulous elements are not able to harass private persons, according to the statement.

The agency that en-

forces the stringent Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) in the country said victims of such frauds can contact the agency at Chandigarh regional office (0172-2540465), Delhi (011-23210692), Mumbai (022-22614091), Chennai (044-28255051) and Kolkata (033-23378343).

People can also contact the ED head office in Delhi at 011- 24692055 or email at dir-enforcement@nic.in.

“The ED always stands by its five core values of integrity, accountability, commitment, excellence and impartiality. ED seeks close co-operation from all stake holders and appeals them to share such instances immediately with ED without any hesitation,” the agency said.

AAP will fight Delhi Assembly election on basis of its govt’s work: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, JAN 6 (PTI): Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday said the upcoming Assembly elections will be fought on the basis of the AAP government’s work and noted that his party will run a “positive” campaign.

At a press conference on Monday evening, Kejriwal appealed to the people of Delhi to “vote for us (AAP) only if you think we have done good work in the last five years”.

“We will run a positive campaign, will not abuse anyone,” he added.

Earlier, he said on Twitter that the election will be fought on the basis of the AAP government’s work.

The election to the 70-member Delhi Assembly will take place on February 8 and results will be declared on February 11, the Election Commission announced on Monday.

Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said the notification for the polls will be issued on January 14 while the last date of withdrawal of candidature will be January 24.

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NOTICE

This is to inform all that the nine days theater workshop cum acting course is going to be held at Gram Prashasan Kendra for age between 08-18 years old under CHILD FRIENDLY GPU from 4th to 12th January 2020.

Interested participants may apply for registration.

CORRIGENDUM

Ref to tender no: - 09/NSCL/WORKS/2018, Dated 05/12/2018, the following tenders have been cancelled-

1. Construction of pedestrian walkway from Namchi Bazar to Entry Gate (Job-A1, Job A2, Job B, Job C) vide file no- 03/NSCL/WORKS/2019/60/1,03/NSCL/WORKS/2019/60/03/NSCL/WORKS/2019/60/03/NSCL/WORKS/2019/62

The respective contractors are hereby directed to be present in the office of undersigned within 1(one) month from the publication of this corrigendum.

Sd/-
CEO,NSCL

Divisional Engineer
cum
GM (Tech),NSCL

DATE: 03-01-2020

FIRST ROUND OF THE TOURNAMENT (SOUTH- WEST)

VENUES: NAMCHI SINGITHANG PLAYGROUND AND DENTAM PUBLIC PLAYGROUND

FIXTURE-II

Venue: Namchi Singithang Playground (South District Constituencies)

Tumin Lingee	6/1/2020; 1:30 PM	E	Burfung	6/1/2020; 11:30 AM	F
Melli	8/1/2020; 11:30 AM		Temi Namping	8/1/2020; 1:30 PM	
Namchi Singithang	7/1/2020; 11:30 AM		Namthang Rateypani	7/1/2020; 1:30 PM	
Rangang Yangang			Poklok Kamrang		

Venue: Dentam Public Playground (West District Constituencies)

Rinchenpong	6/1/2020; 11:30 AM	G	Gyalshing Bernyak	6/1/2020; 1:30 PM	H
Salghari Zoom	8/1/2020; 1:30 PM		Daramdin	8/1/2020 11:30 AM	
Yoksam Tashiding	7/1/2020; 1:30 PM		Maneybong Dentam	7/1/2020; 11:30 AM	
Yangthang			Soreng Chakung		

Note:

- The first round matches will be played at Namchi Singithang and Dentam Public ground for South & West constituencies respectively.
- The duration of the matches will be 35-10-35 minutes
- Matches will be played as per FIFA Rules
- Organizing committee reserve the right to reschedule the fixture (if required)
- Every player should show their Voter ID Card at the time of Technical check up (if player is under 18 years than Aadhar Card)
- Each Team should submit one constituency flag (6x4 feet) during registration.

New Year, New Resolution

At least allow space for new collaborations, more understanding

Accepted, still talking about the prospects of a New Year already a week in, a time by when even the resolutions have started failing, is a bit too much. But then again, this is also an exercise which will not present itself for another whole year and the wheels of government offices have only just begun turning for 2020, here goes another attempt.

There are rarely good years or bad years, the annual cycle playing out in a mixed bag kind of routine. In individual experiences, of course, years can be brilliant or disappointing, lucky or depressing, but when it comes for a collective people, like say the residents of Sikkim, the best one can hope for is a “normal” year – one in which the dejections and shocks are balanced out by a fair share of euphoric delights.

Year 2019 was a largely uneventful year in that very little of lasting consequence happened in it beyond a regime change and the attendant swings in political alignments. In a way this was perhaps well prescribed since it allowed Sikkim a pause from the frenetic stirring that Election 2019 whipped up here. The “stirring” has now settled, almost gone comatose, which was not the case post-2014 and one needs go over those five years – 2014-2019 – to realize how stressed those years were. So, while alignments changed even as status quo prevailed, the animosities that 2019 entrenched, let’s accept it, did not dwindle and held firm and occasionally expressed itself overtly. This was a rather new phenomenon for an otherwise laidback Sikkim. The environment is expected to get roiled some more as arrogance deepens with more months in office and as the quickly capitulating administration and political wannabes infect those now in government. It is going to be a semi election year soon with panchayat and ULB elections, which, even if the challengers will likely be uninspiring, the contest, should there be one, will be incendiary. While nothing could have prepared Sikkim for abrasive post-election days and weeks, even that situation thankfully settled faster than was feared.

Sikkim is not new to political violence, but save the rare face-to-face, it was mostly limited to sabre-rattling in the form of an occasional effigy burning or a parked vehicle getting torched in the dead of night. One thought that Sikkim was too small a place and people here too closely connected/ related to allow for any “real” violence. Election 2014 dispelled all such notions and brought home the nightmare of hate, spite and violent hostility, people were worried for 2019 as well. Gangtok escaped with only secondhand experience of the terror, but wide swathes of South and West districts and parts of East Sikkim lived through traumatic months after 2014. Investing in violence could thankfully not be cashed in at the polling booths and when the votes were counted, it became apparent that violence only closed ranks instead of opening doors. And because 2019 saw a more civil campaign by comparison, fates changed. There were many more reasons, but this was also one of them.

While violence has ended, an environment of general distrust, disillusionment and hostility pervades. These emotions marked the post-election months, events through which have played out in a manner and tone which suggest that the repairing remains a work in progress. While there can be no justification for violence, one can still explain it away to the pressures of political ambitions. The distrust which continues between groups and in how people are engaging each other and how one views institutions and initiatives is something which should have been addressed better. It would have been wonderful for Sikkim if suspicions were informed responses, but that is clearly not the case and most of the distrust that permeates all sectors at present is born from prejudice and individual bias.

Sikkim is too small a place to hold on to its grudges for too long; its people should bury at least the irrational dislikes that have been allowed to take root. Such positions will serve no one any good. Once that has been done, a wider awareness can be generated to inculcate healthy skepticism instead. Sikkim needs to converse more; at present, those who have found a voice, shout and shut out, it will be nice to see some conversations going, some deliberations, disagreements and a respect for divergent approaches and attitudes. For this process to begin, more civil voices will need to engage in the public space which is currently monopolized by political noise.

Let that be a New Resolution for a New Year.
Happy New Year, Sikkim!

Government Response to Australia’s Bushfire Crisis Has Been Evasive, Tepid, Tone-Deaf and Above All, Too Late

KEVIN RUDD
theGuardian

It’s hard to know what to write in the midst of a national apocalypse. I’m like most Australians, feeling every shade of human emotion each day as we see this living tragedy unfold before us. Each morning comes with a dull thud as we wake to the awful realisation that the new day could still be worse than the last.

The fear on people’s faces is palpable. It reminds me of Black Saturday. There the horror was quick, although the scars, still deep, remain. Remember those survivors today as the fires of recent weeks reignite the living hell of trauma a decade ago.

Then there’s the helplessness we feel as we sit, watch and wait. Often the best we can do is stay glued to the ABC, ring people we know in harm’s way, and then give to charity.

Then there’s pride in our firefighters, the unsung men and women who, without fanfare train week in week out, for years on end. Although no training can prepare you for war like this. They’re our new Anzacs. In the line of fire, literally, before the nation’s eyes. Of course there’s anger and rage as well. Much of it justified. Some of it not. Our national government will have much to account for once the current crisis has passed.

The uncomfortable truth is the government’s response just doesn’t pass the pub test. It’s been evasive, tepid, tone-deaf and, above all, too late.

It’s been conducted as an exercise in “issue management”, rather than a substantive response to one of the worst natural disasters in our history, with every shoulder to the wheel. And the Australian public can spot a fraud at a thousand paces.

So in the midst of all this, what can be said that’s in any way productive for the future?

First, the feds should be taking their marching orders from the state fire chiefs each day.

It’s just not good enough when the New South Wales Rural Fire Service chief says he first heard of the call-out of the army reserve through the media.

Canberra’s job is to help provide whatever financial and physical resources firefighters and other emergency services need there and then. And on the question of “who’s going to pay”? I remember it well during the Victorian fires.

The answer should simply be: “Whatever it takes. Just get it done.”

Second, the National Bushfire Recovery Agency announced on Sunday should be underpinned by national legislation, jointly with the states, and empowered to slice through red tape. There should be a national bushfire appeal – the Black Saturday appeal raised more than \$400m – and its disbursement should be coordinated by new agency to avoid waste and duplication.

The taxable 13-week disaster recovery allowance should immediately be extended to 26 weeks

and be exempted from tax, as it was in Victoria. The disaster relief payment of \$1,000 has also lagged inflation, meaning its real value has fallen substantially since 2009. Third, provide proper permanent funding for the nation’s bushfire services. The public will not tolerate any longer a discretionary “top-up” by the feds, or the usual buck passing between the various levels of government. Each brigade needs to be confident of their long-term funding. The formula should be hammered out and rigorously implemented.

Fourth, the nation needs the biggest, best national aerial fire-bombing fleet in the world.

We are the driest inhabited continent on Earth. It will get worse. Therefore we need a standing capability the likes of which the world hasn’t seen before. Whenever and wherever a fire breaks out, we then have a fighting chance of containing it at its earliest stages. Bill Shorten was right to take this to the last election. It will cost. There will be accusations of waste if it remains idle for a while. Just like we were accused of waste when we co-funded Adelaide’s desalination plant – until everybody realised we needed it.

Fifth, what more warning does Australia need on the absolute imperative of accelerated action on climate change? Not enough it seems for Scott Morrison, who says there will be no change in policy whatsoever. Nor for the high priest of climate change denial himself, Tony Abbott. Indeed, in the midst of the fires, there was Abbott on Israeli radio telling a global audience the real problem for Australia was that we had been taken over by a “climate change cult”! Abbott! He who famously proclaimed climate change was “absolute crap”. The political opportunist who stopped my government imposing a carbon price by toppling Malcolm Turnbull and revoking the deal we’d struck to pass it.

The partisan thug who played cheap politics, ridiculing Australian efforts with our partners to broker a global deal at Copenhagen to keep temperatures within 2C. The political cynic who ran the biggest fear campaign in recent memory against our carbon price in order to become prime minister in 2013. Yup. The very same Abbott who destroyed Turnbull all over again in 2017 over climate policy – this time the national energy guarantee.

So why does Abbott do it? The truth is he doesn’t give a damn about policy. Abbott has always been 100% politics. He’s always seen climate as the perfect political wedge against Labor among working families, deploying fear campaigns based on wildly exaggerated projections about jobs and the cost of living. He’s done the same internally, using it to divide and conquer his moderate opponents in the Liberal party. Pretty tawdry when now we see half the country going up in smoke!

But here’s the rub. The Abbott denialist cult has taken over the entire Coalition. It continues under Morrison and, when they oust him soon, it will continue under Peter Dutton. It’s become the battle cry of the far right which now runs the entire conser-

vative show in Canberra. And yes, before the Murdoch media leap to Abbott’s defence, I know he is a firefighter. Good on him. The problem is most of the fire chiefs just don’t agree with him on the impact of climate change. Nor does the CSIRO. Nor does any credible climate scientist in the world.

In Australia, as in America, the conservatives’ strategic partner in climate change denial has been the Murdoch media. Rupert Murdoch, feeling the heat of public opinion, claimed recently there were no climate deniers at News Corp! The Murdochs, senior and junior, must believe the Australian people are total fools. Murdoch’s papers remain a command centre for the entire mission of climate policy obstruction. Just look at their climate coverage over the last four federal elections.

In the midst of today’s tragedy, we still see the old denialist trope trotted out that Australia, with only 1.3% of global emissions, can have no influence, and shouldn’t bother trying. What pathetic nonsense.

If other middle-sized economies did the same – there are about 20 with a similar share of emissions – that’s a quarter of the global total. We cannot work globally to get the biggest emitters – the US, China and India – to act unless we are also acting to clean up our own backyards.

Our national interest dictates that Australia becomes once again a global climate change leader, not a follower. Unless we lead, and convince others to follow, Australia has a bleak future indeed.

The Australian people are angry. The Liberals and Nationals are now reaping what they have sown for more than a decade – through climate inaction at home, sabotaging climate negotiations abroad and a continuing pathology of poisonous fear mongering. The melancholy truth is the only policies restraining Australian emissions today were taken under our government a decade ago.

Principal among these is our legislated mandatory renewable energy target for 20% of electricity supply to be renewables by 2020. The conservatives said it would destroy the economy. It didn’t. As a result, renewables are now 21%, up from 4% when we started.

But this is just the foundation stone of what must now become a bigger, bolder plan of national and international action. I stand by what I said a decade ago: climate change represents the greatest economic, environmental and moral challenge of our time. Moral because it’s about what’s right and wrong for the nation. Moral because it’s about intergenerational justice.

The Liberals won’t change on climate. Denial is now their DNA. They may start pretending to care. Scotty from marketing is good at that. But we all know it will be paper thin. That’s why this lot have to go. Before it’s too late for us all.

[the writer is a former Australian prime minister]

How the extinction of ice age mammals may have forced us to invent civilisation

NICK LONGRICH
theconversation.com

Why did we take so long to invent civilisation? Modern Homo sapiens first evolved roughly 250,000 to 350,000 years ago. But initial steps towards civilisation – harvesting, then domestication of crop plants – began only around 10,000 years ago, with the first civilisations appearing 6,400 years ago.

For 95% of our species’ history, we didn’t farm, create large settlements or complex political hierarchies. We lived in small, nomadic bands, hunting and gathering. Then, something changed.

We transitioned from hunter-gatherer life to plant harvesting, then cultivation and, finally, cities. Strikingly, this transition happened only after the ice age megafauna – mammoths, giant ground sloths, giant deer and horses – disappeared. The reasons humans began farming still remain unclear, but the disappearance of the animals we depended on for food may have forced our culture to evolve.

Early humans were smart enough to farm. All groups of modern humans have similar levels of intelligence, suggesting our cognitive capabilities evolved before these populations separated around 300,000 years ago, then changed little afterwards. If our ancestors didn’t grow plants, it’s not that they weren’t clever enough. Something in the environment prevented them – or they simply didn’t need to.

Global warming at the end of the last glacial period, 11,700 years ago, probably made farming easier. Warmer temperatures, longer growing seasons, higher rainfall and long-term climate stability made more areas suitable for cultivation. But it’s unlikely farming had been im-

possible everywhere. And Earth saw many such warming events – 11,700, 125,000, 200,000 and 325,000 years ago – but earlier warming events didn’t spur experiments in farming. Climate change can’t have been the only driver.

Human migration probably contributed as well. When our species expanded from southern Africa throughout the African continent, into Asia, Europe and then the Americas, we found new environments and new food plants. But people occupied these parts of the world long before farming began. Plant domestication lagged human migration by tens of millennia.

If opportunities to invent farming already existed, then the delayed invention of agriculture suggests our ancestors didn’t need, or want, to farm.

Agriculture has significant disadvantages compared to foraging. Farming takes more effort and offers less leisure time and an inferior diet. If hunters are hungry in the morning, they can have food on the fire at night. Farming requires hard work today to produce food months later – or not at all. It requires storage and management of temporary food surpluses to feed people year round.

A hunter having a bad day can hunt again tomorrow or seek richer hunting grounds elsewhere, but farmers, tied to the land, are at the mercy of nature’s unpredictability. Rains arriving too soon or too late, droughts, frosts, blights or locusts can cause crop failure – and famine.

Agriculture has military disadvantages as well. Hunter-gatherers are mobile and can travel long distances to attack or retreat. Constant practice with spears and bows made them deadly fighters. Farmers are rooted to their fields, their schedules dictated by the seasons. They are predict-

able, stationary targets, whose food stockpiles tempt hungry outsiders. And having evolved to the lifestyle, humans may simply have loved being nomadic hunters. The Comanche Indians fought to the death to preserve their hunting lifestyle. The Kalahari Bushmen of southern Africa continue to resist being turned into farmers and herders. Strikingly, when Polynesian farmers encountered New Zealand’s abundant flightless birds, they largely abandoned agriculture, creating the Maori moa-hunter culture.

HUNTING ABANDONED

Yet something changed. From 10,000 years ago onward, humans repeatedly abandoned the hunter-gatherer lifestyle for farming. It may be that after the extinction of mammoths and other megafauna from the Pleistocene epoch, and the overhunting of surviving game, the hunter-gatherer lifestyle became less viable, pushing people to harvest and then cultivate plants. Perhaps civilisation wasn’t born out of a drive to progress, but disaster, as ecological catastrophe forced people to abandon their traditional lifestyles.

As humans left Africa to colonise new lands, large animals disappeared everywhere we set foot. In Europe and Asia, megafauna like woolly rhinos, mammoths, and Irish Elk vanished around 40,000 to 10,000 years ago. In Australia, giant kangaroos and wombats disappeared 46,000 years ago. In North America, horses, camels, giant armadillos, mammoths and ground sloths declined and disappeared from 15,000 to 11,500 years ago, followed by extinctions in South America 14,000 to 8,000 years ago. After people spread to the Caribbean Islands, Madagascar, New Zealand and Oceania, their megafauna vanished as well. Megafaunal extinctions inevitably followed humans.

Harvesting big game like hors-

es, camels and elephants produces a better return than hunting small game like rabbits. But large animals like elephants reproduce slowly, and have few offspring compared to small animals like rabbits, making them vulnerable to overharvesting. And so everywhere we went, our human ingenuity – hunting with spear-throwers, herding animals with fire, stampeding them over cliffs – meant we harvested large animals faster than they could replenish their numbers. It was arguably the first sustainability crisis.

With the old way of life no longer viable, humans would have been forced to innovate, increasingly focusing on gathering, then cultivating plants to survive. This let human populations expand. Eating plants rather than meat is a more efficient use of land, so farming can support more people in the same area than hunting. People could settle permanently, build settlements, then civilisations.

The archaeological and fossil records tell us our ancestors could have pursued farming, but did only so after they had little alternative. We probably would have continued hunting horses and mammoths forever, but we were just too good at it, and likely wiped out our own food supply.

Agriculture and civilisation may have been invented not because they were an improvement over our ancestral lifestyle, but because we were left no choice. Agriculture was desperate attempt to fix things when we took more than the ecosystem could sustain. If so, we abandoned the life of ice age hunters to create the modern world, not with foresight and intent, but by accident, because of an ecological catastrophe we created thousands of years ago.

[the writer is Senior Lecturer, Paleontology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Bath]

Mamata reviews Gangasagar mela preparations; asks admin officials, cops to be on alert

KOLKATA, JAN 6 (PTI): Apprehending “politically influenced disturbances”, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday directed administrative officials and police personnel to stay alert and ensure CCTV coverage of the entire Gangasagar Mela ground, ahead of Makar Sankranti.

Addressing an administrative meeting at Kakdwip in South 24 Parganas, Banerjee, without taking names of any party, said “some elements” might try to create trouble during the week-long mela. She also stated that her government had arranged an insurance policy of Rs 5 lakh per person for all individuals visiting the Gangasagar Mela, set to begin on January 11.

The CM, while reviewing the preparations for the mela, enquired about drinking water supply and accommodation facilities for the pilgrims. Thousands of pilgrims gather at Sagar Island during this time of the year to take a dip at the confluence of the Hooghly river and the Bay of Bengal and offer prayers at the Kapil Muni Ashram.

Meanwhile, a government official said frequency of ferry movement would increase this year, now that the dredging work for two ferry channels has been completed. The state government had allocated Rs 120 crore for the dredging project.

Low tide in the Ganges delta often made it difficult for the vessels to operate, leaving the pilgrims waiting at the ghats for long, he said. “Ferries will now operate round the clock without getting affected by low tide,” the official added.

NCPA to pay musical tribute to ‘Chandrayaan’

MUMBAI, JAN 6 (PTI): A musical odyssey will pay tribute to India’s lunar mission ‘Chandrayaan’ and the eminent scientists behind it, the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) announced. Organised in collaboration with Sahachari Foundation, the musical concert, “Chandrayaan: Celebrating India’s journey to the Moon”, led by famous composer Shantanu Moitra will be held here at Tata Theatre on January 18.

Celebrating the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successful mission to the moon, it will capture Chandrayaan’s journey -- from launch to landing -- in a unique sound and light extravaganza. “Chandrayaan is our tribute to India’s eminent scientists and celebrates the country’s recent mission to the moon. All compositions are original creations based on Indian classical and folk tunes, along with the chants mingled with contemporary sounds in a mix of traditional and modern, making it a unique musical experience,” said Suvarnalata Rao, head programming (Indian music) at NCPA.

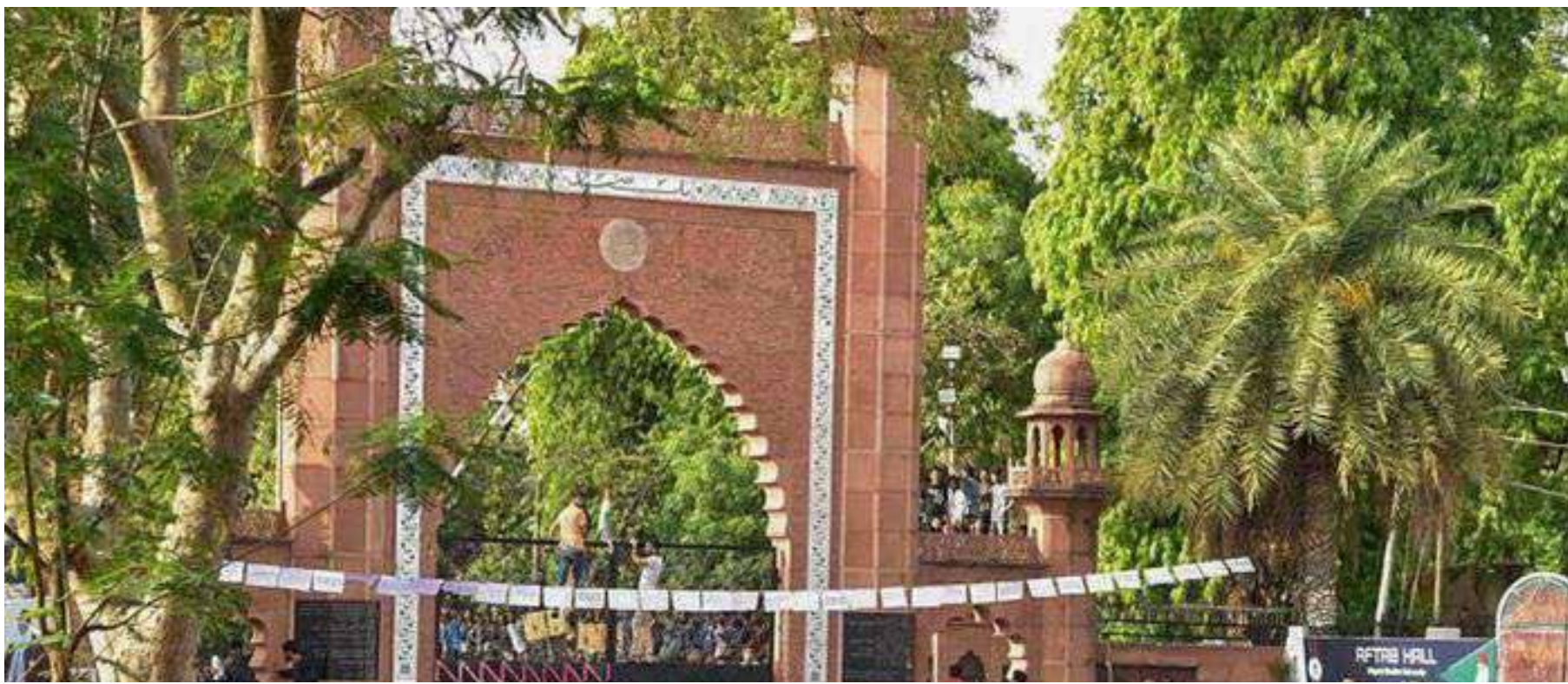
AMU committee demands resignation of JNU VC

ALIGARH, JAN 6 (PTI): The AMU Students Co-ordination Committee (AMUSCC) has demanded the resignation of JNU Vice Chancellor Prof Jagadesh Kumar, asking him to take “moral responsibility” for the violence in the varsity.

In a statement, AMUSCC said reports from JNU that even medical teams going to assess the injured were prevented by the mob from entering the JNU campus are shocking and only a time-bound judicial inquiry would uncover the full truth.

AMUSCCC is spearheading an agitation against the amended Citizenship Act.

The alleged involvement of goons associated with the ABVP would be confirmed by a judicial probe, it said while strongly condemning the manhandling of Swaraj Party President Yogendra Yadav by goons allegedly under



the patronage of the police.

Protesting students at AMU will also be holding a Tiranga march inside the AMU campus later in the day in solidarity with JNU students and all other student bodies currently holding peaceful

protests against the CAA.

The Resident Doctors Association (RDA) at the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, AMU is also holding a protest at the Trauma Centre of the Hospital against Sunday’s violence at JNU.

In a statement, RDA President Dr Mohammad Hamzas alleged that Delhi Police served as facilitators for the mob.

Secretary of the AMU Staff Association, Prof Najmul Islam said the President, Prime Minis-

ter and the Chief Justice of India have to directly step in before the situation worsens.

Meanwhile, BJP Lok Sabha Member Satish Gautam, in a statement, demanded that all protesting students at the AMU

campus should be immediately suspended and thrown out of the campus.

Gautam said that a university is a place for seeking education and not for indulging in politics. He said that if the protesters want to in-

dulge in politicking, they should leave the campus.

The BJP is holding a mass rally at the Exhibition grounds here on January 12 to build up public support for the Citizenship Amendment Act.

Gogoi decries attack on JNU students

GUWAHATI, JAN 6 (PTI): Senior Congress leader Tarun Gogoi Monday decried the attack on Jawaharlal Nehru University students and said it points to BJP’s policy of repressing protests by youths.

The attack indicate that the Narendra Modi government has no concern for democratic norms and the democracy in the country is under threat, he told newsmen here.

“We condemn this act. Such actions will bring further misfortune to the country as the very fabric of the nation’s unity and integrity has been threatened.... The protests against the CAA started in Assam and the movement against it strengthened in the state. But soon it spread across the country with the government adopting repressive measures to repress it,” the Congress leader said.

The protests against the Citizenship Amend-



ment Act and National Register of Citizens across the country have made it clear that Indians do not want the kind of Hindutva that the BJP and the RSS want to bring in the country, he said.

Continuing his attack, the Congress veteran said “The prime minister alleges that we (Congress) are talking the language of Pakistan, but it is he who has reduced himself to the level of the neighbouring country. He is following Jinnah’s two-nation theory on the basis of religion and has emerged as an avatar of

India’s Hindu Jinnah,” Gogoi said.

“We are Hindus but we don’t want our country to become a Hindu Rastra. The majority of the people who are protesting and even those killed are Hindus. They do not want the Hindutva the BJP and RSS are propagating,” he said.

But the Modi government is so arrogant that it will go to any extent to ensure that its agenda is imposed on the people and will not budge an inch as far as the implementation of the Act is concerned,

the former Assam chief minister said. He said in Assam five unarmed innocent youths were killed during the protests against the CAA, but the BJP governments at the Centre and the state sing the same tune saying that Congress and the Left are involved in the violence.

“Are we so powerful that we can instigate AASU, AJYCP, KMSS and all other regional organisations to come out on the streets to protest.... There is no conspiracy. But the BJP has no political knowledge and are not interested in listening to the voice of the people,” Gogoi said.

He challenged the BJP to call an election immediately in Assam and claimed that they will not win even 25 seats.

“The BJP must go from power and all parties must ensure its defeat at the polls. It is only if the BJP is defeated in Assam that we can ensure that the CAA is not implemented in the state,” Gogoi added.

JU, Presi students hit city streets against JNU violence

KOLKATA, JAN 6 (PTI): Students of the Jadavpur and the Presidency universities on Monday took out rallies in the city to protest the violence inside the JNU campus in New Delhi.

The AISA and SFI organised a protest march from the varsity campus to nearby 8B Bus Stand and shouted slogans against the BJP government at the Centre and RSS-affiliate Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP).

They carried posters and placards condemning the JNU violence and demanded immediate arrests of the people involved in the incident.

Violence broke out at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus on Sunday night as masked men armed with sticks and rods attacked students and teachers and damaged property on the campus, prompting the administration to call in the police which conducted a flag march.

At least 28 people, including JNU Students’ Union president Aishe



Ghosh, were injured as chaos reigned on the campus for nearly two hours.

“Yesterday (Sunday) was the darkest day of Indian democracy because of what happened inside the JNU campus.

Beating up of students and teachers by goons and attacking girls’ hostel by ABVP activists brought shame to our democracy.

“But, such attacks will not deter us from continuing our fight against

fascist forces,” a JU student said. Referring to the Jadavpur University fracas on September 19, he said, “The way the ABVP workers had vandalised the campus in September and JNU campus yesterday (Sunday) reflects the fascist mindset of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar,” he said.

Students of the Presidency University took out a rally on College Street expressing solidarity with the JNU students. “We condemn

such violence inside the JNU campus, which is a cradle of free and liberal thinking. The ABVP and BJP want to curb free thought and want to impose their fascist ideology on us. But we will continue our fight till the last breath,” a Presidency varsity student said.

The Congress students’ wing, Chhatra Parishad burnt effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on College Street.

Calcutta HC sets Tuesday for fresh meeting of civic body

KOLKATA, JAN 6 (PTI): The Calcutta High Court on Monday ruled that a fresh meeting of Bhatpara Municipality councillors for moving a no-confidence motion against its chairman be held on Tuesday.

The division bench asked the chairman of the civic body and the district magistrate of North 24 Parganas to issue separate notices for the proceedings at 1 pm on Tuesday.

Directing the district magistrate to be present at the meeting, the bench, comprising Justices Dipankar Datta and Protik Prakash Banerjee, sought a report on the proceedings in a sealed cover on Thursday.

It also ordered the Barrackpore Police to ensure that law and order was maintained during the process.

Three TMC councillors had on Friday moved an appeal before the division bench, challenging a single bench order that set aside a no-confi-

dence motion brought by the party against Sourav Singh, the BJP chairman of Bhatpara Municipality.

The no-confidence motion against Singh was passed by a margin of 19-0 in the 35-member civic body on Thursday, as other councillors were not present during the proceedings.

A BJP councillor, however, moved the court, challenging the notice issued by TMC councillors for a meeting to move the no-confidence motion against the chairman.

The single bench on Thursday declared that the meeting called on January 2 for moving the no-confidence motion as “null and void”. Justice Arindam Sinha, after hearing a writ petition by a BJP member, had said that “any action taken pursuant thereto is of no consequence.”

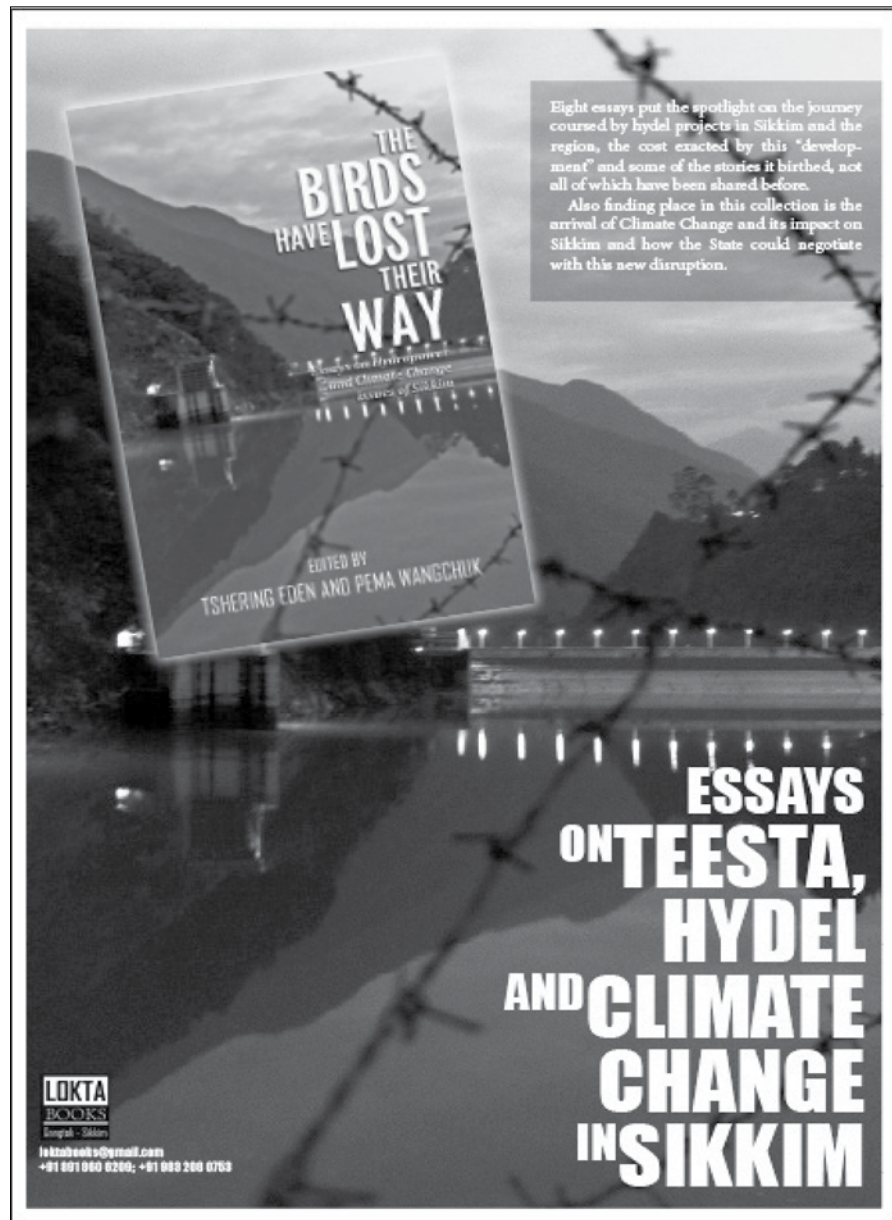
The Bhatpara Municipality chairman had convened a meeting on January 20 for bringing the no-confidence motion.

However, the TMC councillors had refused to wait till then and issued a notice on December 30 for holding the meeting on January 2.

The BJP petitioner had argued that councillors cannot issue such a notice on their own, as it was against the state municipal laws.

Equations had changed in the civic body last year, with 26 TMC councillors switching over to the saffron party following the Lok Sabha polls, in which former TMC MLA Arjun Singh won the Barrackpore seat on a BJP ticket. Arjun Singh, who was earlier the chairman of the Trinamool Congress-run board, resigned and his nephew Sourav Singh took charge in June.

Over the past few months, however, most the defectors returned to the ruling party, following which the TMC councillors moved a no-confidence motion against the chairman.



‘Shame on you’: Balotelli lashes out in new Italy racism storm

MILAN, JAN 6 (AFP): Mario Balotelli lashed out on Sunday after again being targeted by racist insults, this time from Lazio fans after he scored for Brescia in a 2-1 Serie A defeat, telling his tormentors: “Shame on you”.

“A defeat that hurts but we will come back stronger and we are on the right track,” the 29-year-old Italy international wrote on Instagram.

“Lazio fans that were today at the stadium SHAME ON YOU! #sayno-toracism.”

Balotelli struck the first goal after 18 minutes at Brescia’s Stadio Mario Rigamonti before title-chasers Lazio hit back with a Ciro Immobile double.

But the game was overshadowed by insulting chants aimed at the former Manchester City and Liverpool player.

“It’s already the second time,” Balotelli told referee Gianluca Manganiello after half an hour, with the latter replying: “Now I’ll take care of it”.

Lazio coach Simone Inzaghi gestured in front of the visiting fans to stop the chanting, as an announcement was read over the stadium speakers reminding spectators play would be suspended and their club penalised if they continued.

Brescia fans tried to drown out the insults with whistles and cheering which Balotelli applauded.

Lazio later issued a statement condemning the behaviour of “a very



small minority of fans”.

“The club confirms once again that it condemns these unjustified excesses and it intends to prosecute those who betray their own sporting passion and cause serious damage to the image of the club and the Biancocelesti team,” Lazio said.

In November, Balotelli threatened to walk off the pitch after being the target of monkey chants at Verona, with Inter Milan’s Romelu Lukaku, AC Milan’s Franck Kessie and Fiorentina’s Dalbert also victims of abuse this season.

An anti-racism campaign launched by Serie A featuring three monkeys last month drew widespread criticism and ridicule.

Balotelli picked up where he left off before the winter break pulling

clear of Luiz Felipe to volley in his first home goal for Brescia and first of the decade.

He also scored the first goal of the previous decade in January 2010 with Inter Milan.

- LAZIO STRETCH WINNING RUN -

However, Lazio still stretched their winning streak to nine consecutive league games to consolidate third place, three points behind leaders Inter Milan and Juventus who play on Monday.

Immobile struck the winner after 91 minutes, having also converted from the penalty spot before the break.

Relegation-threatened Brescia were reduced to 10 men when Andrea Cistana was sent off for a second yellow card after bringing down Felipe Caicedo after 39 minutes. Serie A top scor-

er Immobile pulled Lazio back on level terms from the penalty spot three minutes later.

Immobile brought his league tally to 19 goals connecting with a Caicedo cross to fire in the injury time winner.

Inzaghi, meanwhile, equals Sven Goran Eriksson’s record of nine consecutive league wins set in the 1998-99 season.

The Swedish coach led Lazio to their last Serie A title in 2000.

“We absolutely want the Champions League,” said Inzaghi, whose side beat Juventus to lift the Italian SuperCup trophy last month.

- ROMA FALL - City rivals Roma, four points behind in fourth, lost ground with an Andrea Belotti brace giving Torino a 2-0 win in the Stadio Olimpico.

Belotti broke through

just before the break and converted a penalty four minutes from time after Roma’s Chris Smalling handled the ball. Goalkeeper Salvatore Sirigu pulled off big saves as the ninth-placed northerners back winning.

Verona are just behind in tenth with Giam-paolo Pazzini and Mariusz Stepinski scoring in either half in a 2-0 win over ten-man SPAL, who drop to bottom place after their 12th defeat this season. New Genoa coach Davide Nicola got off to a winning start with a 2-1 victory over Sassuolo, the port side’s first since October.

Inter Milan restart the title battle with Juve on Monday, with both sides level on 42 points after 17 games.

Antonio Conte’s side travel to Napoli with the champions at home against Cagliari.

Leaving injuries behind, Dhawan wants to be more impactful in 2020

GUWAHATI, JAN 6 (PTI): Plagued by injuries in 2019, opener Shikhar Dhawan is aiming for a fresh start in the new year and wants to become a “more impactful” batsman in his quest to help India lift the ICC T20 World Cup in Australia.

Dhawan did not have a very good 2019 as he was in and out of the team because of injuries.

The left-handed opener was ruled out midway from last year’s ICC ODI World Cup after sustaining a thumb fracture. Injuries continued to haunt Dhawan as he missed the home T20 series against the West Indies in December after hurting his knee during a Ranji Trophy match.

“Last year I had lots of injuries but that’s part and parcel of our work. It’s a new year and I am looking forward for a

new start and it’s gonna go a long way,” Dhawan told ‘bcci.tv’.

“This year looking I am forward to score lots of runs for the team and for myself and be a more impactful player, win matches for my team and win the World Cup,” he said, elaborating on his goal for 2020.

The ICC T20 World Cup will be hosted by Australia from October 18 to November 15 this year.

Asked how difficult it was for him to be in and out of the team, the 34-year-old dasher from Delhi said: “I am always positive, I always take things in a positive manner.

“Injuries are quite natural, so I just take it in my stride. I don’t make a fuss about it. I make sure that I always stay in a positive mindset

and that helps things to heal very quickly.”

Dhawan, who is back in the Indian team for the three-match T20 series against Sri Lanka, believes the ongoing rubber is a great opportunity for him to be back among runs.

“I am really looking forward to this series. It’s a good opportunity for me to come and express myself and score big runs,” he said.

“I am always developing my game, developing new shots. I always make sure that I do my preparation well and come on the ground and enjoy myself.”

The first T20 of the series against Sri Lanka was washed out without a ball being bowled here on Sunday night.

The second match will be held in Indore on Tuesday.

Serena Williams, Caroline Wozniacki win 1st doubles match



BRISBANE, JAN 6 (AP): They’re friends, they’re former World No. 1s in singles and on Monday they became doubles partners for the first time as Serena Williams and Caroline Wozniacki teamed to win a first round match at the ASB Classic in Auckland.

Williams and Wozniacki overwhelmed Japan’s Nao Hibino and Mikoto Ninomiya 6-2, 6-4 in a match which was both historic and poignant.

The pair jointly have won 24 Grand Slam titles and 102 WTA singles titles.

Williams additionally has won 23 doubles titles, including 13 Grand Slam and three Olympic titles, mostly in partnership with sister Venus.

Serena hasn’t played doubles with anyone other than Venus since 2015 and last played a WTA tournament with anyone other than Venus in 2002.

Wozniacki hasn’t played doubles at all in the last three years.

But the pair have long

harbored a desire to take the court as a doubles pairing and on Monday they took what may be their last opportunity to do so.

Wozniacki is playing the Auckland tournament for the sixth-straight year as a prelude to the Australian Open after which she will retire from competitive tennis. She was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis shortly after winning at Melbourne Park in 2018 and has decided to make the Australian Open her last professional tournament before retirement.

Wozniacki and Williams will face each other one last time in an exhibition match in Copenhagen in May which will be Wozniacki’s tennis farewell.

On Monday the pair formed a relaxed and intuitive combination, laughing and exchanging high-fives as they swept past Hibino and Ninomiya in 70 minutes.

“It was so much fun, I really enjoyed that,” Wozniacki said. “I’ve been around for a long

time and to get to play with Serena was amazing. “It wouldn’t be the same if I didn’t at least once get to play with her on the same side.

“She’s beaten me a lot of times on the other side so it’s actually nice that we can win together for once.” Williams added “it doesn’t seem like she hasn’t played in a long time because she played unbelievable.

“It’s cool. I can’t let the rest of both of our amazing careers go without playing with her. With her doing so well as a Grand Slam champion and a long-time No. 1 for so long, of course I want to share the court with her”

Earlier, American teenager Coco Gauff beat Slovakia’s Viktoria Kuzmova 6-3, 6-1 in 61 minutes to stay on course for a quarterfinal meeting with Williams.

Williams, the top seed, plays Camilia Giorgi of Italy in her first round singles on Tuesday while Wozniacki plays New Zealand wildcard Paige Hourigan.

Mumbai lads win medals at Singapore chess meet

MUMBAI, JAN 6 (PTI): Mumbai boys Aditya Patil and Vedant Karthik bagged silver and bronze medals, respectively, at the prestigious Singapore chess meet.

A total of 663 players from 15 countries vied for the top honours at the tournament that concluded in Singapore on Sunday.

Patil, a former Asian schools games medallist, played with great maturity in the Under-9 category to bag the silver medal. The gold went to Yea Hao Loong of Malaysia, a media release said here on Monday.

For the record, Aditya also drew with top seed and fellow Indian Muthukumar Mukesh en route to his podium finish.

Karthik, with an international rating of 1,025, too, scored creditable 6.5 points out of possible 8 games, but had to be content with the bronze medal.

This is Karthik’s maiden international medal which came from a field of 96 players in the Under-7 category. The medal-winning boys are trainees of the South Mumbai Chess Academy.

Klopp hails Minamino’s ‘outstanding, super’ Liverpool debut



LONDON, JAN 6 (AFP): Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp described Takumi Minamino as “super and outstanding” after the Japanese international made his debut in the 1-0 FA Cup win over Everton on Sunday.

The 24-year-old Minamino, who signed for

£7.25 million (9.4 million) from Salzburg in Austria, was part of a much-changed Reds line-up at Anfield.

The 22-time international almost enjoyed a goal-scoring debut when he glanced a header wide of the mark before he was eventually replaced

by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain after 70 minutes.

“Super, outstanding. Exactly the player we wanted, exactly the player we wished for,” said Klopp of his new forward. “Your first game in a team you don’t know, if it’s a settled team it’s already difficult -- this

team we threw more or less on the pitch with two sessions together.

“And then showing this kind of game understanding, football skills are exceptional, attitude is outstanding, led the chasing pack so often in different situations, which I loved.”

Chelsea complete comeback win over Reading in Sam Kerr’s promising debut

SUZANNE WRACK

LONDON, 06 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: Sam Kerr’s all-action Chelsea debut yielded everything but a goal as Emma Hayes’s side came from behind at home to Reading.

“It was pretty high-paced,” said the forward of her introduction to the Women’s Super League just over a week after landing in London. “I’ve been a bit rusty coming back from a break but I always want to start.”

The Australian provided her first assist in a Chelsea shirt, for Beth England, and was responsible for Reading’s reduction in their numbers after Grace Moloney was shown red for taking out the NWSL and W-League record goalscorer. Second-half goals from Guro Reiten and the substitute Erin Cuthbert ensured the Blues keep pace in the title race after Fara Williams had given Reading an early lead.

After the game Kerr highlighted the devastating bushfires ravaging her home country. “It has been really tough. You feel quite helpless over here. Hopefully it can gain the media

coverage it deserves like other natural disasters,” she said. “It is really sad and tough but hopefully everyone at home has had some rain overnight and it gets better.”

Hayes was keen to praise the attitude of her recruit. “She’s a doll,” she said in her best faux-Aussie voice. “She’s humble, hardworking, honest, thoughtful. An unbelievable team player, she cares about what the team think of her and she will work and do her job for the team at any point. You have top players but to have a top player who is a top person? Happy days.”

It took only two minutes for Kerr to find herself clean through and yet, having taken a touch to set herself up, the prolific striker skied her shot over the bar. New club nerves perhaps? “I was nervous,” said Kerr, grinning, who has an ability to peel off the shoulder of defenders like no other. “It was my first one on one in a few months. I haven’t been playing much so I was nervous. But it will come, get the jitters out and it’s only my first game. I

can go from here.” Talk before her arrival about whether the in-form England would lose out was quickly fast answered when the pair were handed starting berths alongside each other in a 4-1-3-2 designed to get the best out of both. “Two years ago,” joked Hayes when asked when she had decided to start Kerr.

And it was the new strike partnership that would find the equaliser after Williams’ opener. “Oh what a backheel,” purred Hayes, of the pass to England, who then rounded the stand-in goalkeeper Rachael Laws to score. “It’s exciting to see the pair of them together and I’m sure they’re happy to get the first one out the way.”

The celebrations from the forward looked full of the relief of a player who has had to field and dodge questions about the threat of Kerr to her own position since the latter’s signing was announced in November. “It’s nice playing with Beth,” said Kerr. “I feel like we’ve just connected really quickly. She’s a quality player and hopefully she can keep

scoring because we need her.”

What one of the hottest forward lines in the league could not hide though is a defensive fragility.

One minute after Williams had swept low past Ann-Katrin Berger, Kerr sprang to life up the other end. Catching some hesitation between Jo Potter and her goalkeeper, Moloney, the forward swept across the edge of the box, nicking the ball ahead of the keeper, who clattered into her and handled the ball outside the box at the same time, earning a red card.

In the second half an excellent Laws was helpless as, after blocking a Kerr effort with her legs, the ball looped to the feet of Reiten on the edge of the box and her side-footed volley flew over her into an otherwise unguarded net.

Chelsea extended their lead with 15 minutes to play, Jonna Andersson flying down the left and volleying a cross on to the head of England. Laws did well to keep the shot out but Cuthbert was first to the loose ball to kill the game.

Iran general replacing Soleimani vows revenge for US killing

TEHRAN, JAN 6 (AP): An Iranian general who replaced the leader killed by a US airstrike in Baghdad vowed Sunday to take revenge as Tehran abandoned the remaining limits of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers in response to the slaying.

Esmail Ghaani's threat comes as the blowback over the U.S. killing of top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani mounted Sunday with Iraq's parliament calling for the expulsion of all American troops from Iraqi soil.

The three developments could bring Iran closer to building an atomic bomb, see an proxy or military attack launched by Tehran against America and enable the Islamic State group to stage a comeback in Iraq, making the Middle East a far more dangerous and unstable place.

Adding to the tensions, President Donald Trump threatened to demand billions of dollars in compensation from Iraq or impose sanctions like they've never seen before if it goes through with expelling U.S. troops.

Ghaani made his remarks in an interview with Iranian state television aired Monday.

"God the almighty has promised to get his revenge, and God is the main avenger. Certainly actions will be taken," Ghaani said.

Ghaani now serves as the head of the Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, an expeditionary arm of the paramilitary organization answerable only to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

As Soleimani's long-time deputy, Ghaani has been sanctioned by the U.S. since 2012 for his work funding its operations around the world, including its work with



proxies in Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen.

Those proxies likely will be involved in any operation targeting U.S. interests in the Mideast or elsewhere in the world.

Already, the U.S. Embassy in Saudi Arabia warned Americans of the heightened risk of missile and drone attacks.

In Lebanon, the leader of the Iranian-backed militant group Hezbollah said Soleimani's killing made U.S. military bases, warships and service members across the region fair game for attacks.

A former Iranian Revolutionary Guard leader suggested the Israeli city of Haifa and others could be targeted should the U.S. attack Iran.

"We promise to continue down martyr Soleimani's path as firmly as before with help of God, and in return for his martyrdom we aim to get rid of America from the region," Ghaani said.

On the nuclear deal, Iranian state television cited a statement by President Hassan Rouhani's administration saying the country would not observe the nuclear deal's restrictions on fuel

enrichment, on the size of its enriched uranium stockpile and on its research and development activities. The Islamic Republic of Iran no longer faces any limitations in operations, a state TV broadcaster said.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson specifically urged Iran to withdraw all measures not in line with the 2015 agreement that was intended to stop Tehran from pursuing its atomic weapons program.

Iran insisted that it remains open to negotiations with European partners over its nuclear program. And it did not back off from earlier promises that it wouldn't seek a nuclear weapon.

However, the announcement represents the clearest nuclear proliferation threat yet made by Iran since Trump unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018 and reimposed sanctions. It further raises regional tensions, as Iran's long-time foe Israel has promised never to allow Iran to produce an atomic bomb. Iran did not elaborate on what levels it would

immediately reach in its program. Tehran has already broken some of the deal's limits as part of a step-by-step pressure campaign to get sanctions relief. It already has increased its production, begun enriching uranium to 5% and restarted enrichment at an underground facility.

While it does not possess uranium enriched to weapons-grade levels of 90%, any push forward narrows the estimated one-year breakout time needed for it to have enough material to build a nuclear weapon if it chose to do so.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations watchdog observing Iran's program, did not respond to a request for comment.

However, Iran said that its cooperation with the IAEA will continue as before.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi earlier told journalists that Soleimani's killing would prompt Iranian officials to take a bigger step away from the nuclear deal.

In the world of politics, all developments are interconnected, Mousavi

said. Soleimani's killing has escalated the crisis between Tehran and Washington after months of back-and-forth attacks and threats that have put the wider Middle East on edge.

Iran has promised harsh revenge for the U.S. attack, while Trump has vowed on Twitter that the U.S. will strike back at 52 targets VERY FAST AND VERY HARD. He doubled down on that threat Sunday, dismissing warnings that targeting cultural sites could be a war crime under international law.

They're allowed to kill our people. They're allowed to torture and maim our people. They're allowed to use roadside bombs and blow up our people. And we're not allowed to touch their cultural sites? It doesn't work that way, Trump told reporters.

On Sunday, hundreds of thousands of mourners accompanied the coffin carrying Soleimani's remains in the Iranian cities of Ahvaz and Mashhad. A similar procession was expected in Qom and Tehran on Monday. Tens of thousands already filled the streets of the Iranian capital early Monday morning.

Merkel, Macron, Johnson urge Iran not to flout nuclear deal

BERLIN, JAN 6 (AFP): The leaders of Germany, France and Britain on Sunday urged Iran to drop measures that go against the 2015 nuclear deal, after Tehran announced it would no longer abide by a limit on enrichment.

"We call on Iran to withdraw all measures that are not in line with the nuclear agreement," German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron and British PM Boris Johnson said in a joint statement.

The 2015 agreement negotiated between Iran and the UN Security Council permanent members -- Britain, France, China, Russia and the United States -- plus Germany offered Tehran relief from stinging sanctions in return for curbs to prevent it acquiring nuclear weapons. But US President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the deal last year had largely left it in tatters, with Iran in turn progressively dropping key commitments in the accord.

With tensions rising following the US drone strike at Baghdad airport that killed Iranian general Qasem Soleimani and



top Iraqi military figure Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the European leaders also urged Iran to refrain from taking "further violent actions or support for them."

"It is crucial now to de-escalate. We call on all the players involved to show utmost restraint and responsibility." The European leaders also pleaded with the parties to not jeopardise a battle against IS jihadists, after the Iraqi parliament passed a resolution demanding that thousands of US troops be ousted.

"Preserving the (anti-IS) coalition is of great importance in this con-

text. We call on the Iraqi authorities to continue to provide the coalition with the necessary support," they said.

The US soldiers stationed across Iraqi bases are deployed as part of the broader international coalition, invited by the Iraqi government in 2014 to help fight IS.

The joint statement issued by the three leaders came hours after they spoke on the phone.

Earlier Sunday, a German government spokesman said the three leaders agreed to cooperate towards reducing tensions in the region.

Trump rules out US troop withdrawal from Iraq, threatens 'very big' sanctions

BY LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON, JAN 6 (PTI): President Donald Trump on Monday threatened to impose "very big" sanctions on Iraq after its Parliament called on the US military to leave the country for assassinating top Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in a drone attack in Baghdad.

The Iraqi Parliament on Sunday voted to expel the US troops from its territory which have been there to help the Iraq dispensation fight the Islamic State terror group.

Some 5,000 US soldiers are in Iraq as part of the international coalition against the IS terror group.

Iraq's move comes in response to the killing of Maj Gen Soleimani, 62, the head of Iran's elite al-Quds force and architect of its regional security apparatus, in a US drone attack on a convoy that was leaving the Baghdad International Airport early on Friday. The strike also killed the deputy chief of Iraq's pow-

erful Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary force Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

Soleimani's killing was the most dramatic escalation yet in spiralling tensions between Iran and the US, already hit by serious differences over Tehran's ambitious nuclear programme.

We're not leaving (Iraq) unless they pay us back for it," Trump said while responding to a question on the resolution passed by the Iraqi Parliament.

He was speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One while travelling from Mar-a-Lago in Florida to Andrews Joint Base in Maryland as he returned to the White House from his Christmas and New Year vacation.

We have a very extraordinarily expensive air base that's there. It cost billions of dollars to build. Long before my time We're not leaving unless they pay us back for it, he said.

However, Trump did not name the airbase.

If they do ask us to leave, if we don't do it in a very friendly basis. We will charge them sanctions like they've never seen before ever. It'll make Iranian sanctions look somewhat tame, Trump said issuing a strong warning to Iraq.

Trump also threatened to put "very big" sanctions on Iraq if there is any opposition from the Gulf country. If there's any hostility, that they do anything we think is inappropriate, we are going to put sanctions on Iraq, very big sanctions on Iraq, he said.

Trump said that the US has spent a lot of money in Iraq.

I told you, Iraq, was the worst decision, going into the Middle East was the worst decision ever made in the history of our country, and I've said that publicly so I guess I can say that right now going into the Middle East was the worst decision ever made in the history of our country, but we are there and they went into Iraq, he said.

Women perform in favour of abortion before Mexican cathedral

MEXICO CITY, JAN 6 (AP): A dozen women wearing green scarves lined up in front the Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City's central square on Sunday to call for legal and safe abortions throughout Mexico.

Abortion is highly restricted in the country of 120 million inhabitants, with the exception of the capital Mexico City and the southern state of Oaxaca, where the procedure is allowed up to 12 weeks of gestation.

To the sound of a metal spoon clanking against an iron frying pan, the women performed a variation of A Rapist in Your Path the viral dance sequence concocted by the Chilean feminist collective La Tesis to protest violence against women.

The moves are the same, but the words have changed; in this version, an 'objector' stands in their path.

Japan vows to improve border checks, bail after Ghosn flight

TOKYO, JAN 6 (AP): Japan's justice minister vowed Monday to strengthen border departure checks and review bail conditions after Nissan's former Chairman Carlos Ghosn fled the country.

Masako Mori told reporters at a news conference the ministry has already acted to prevent a recurrence but declined to give details.

Ghosn skipped bail while awaiting trial on various financial misconduct allegations and later said from Lebanon that he did to escape injustice.

Mori declined to say who might be responsible for such a high-profile flight, stressing it was still under investigation.

She said Ghosn left illegally, denouncing it as an unjustifiable crime.

Japan's justice system allows investigating the facts while it ensures the individual basic human rights at the same time," Mori said.

It is set with appropriate procedures and it is operated appropriately. So, there is no reason to justify the escape by those on bail.

Details of Ghosn's



stunning escape last week are not yet clear. But Turkish airline company MNG Jet has said two of its planes were used illegally, first flying him from Osaka, Japan, to Istanbul, and then on to Beirut, where he arrived last Monday and has not been seen since.

He promised to talk to reporters Wednesday. His lawyers in Japan said they knew nothing and felt betrayed by his action.

Ghosn, once a superstar of the auto industry, was first arrested in November 2018. He had been out on bail and most recently had lived

in a home in an upscale part of Tokyo.

He was under strict surveillance as part of his bail conditions, raising questions about how he left undetected.

Security cameras at his home operated 24 hours a day, but the footage was only required to be submitted to the court monthly, according to lawyers' documents detailing Ghosn's bail conditions.

Ghosn had been charged with underreporting his future compensation and breach of trust in diverting Nissan money for his personal

gain. He has repeatedly said he was innocent.

His bail has been revoked, and Interpol had issued a wanted notice. Japan does not have an extradition treaty with Lebanon, but Mori left open the possibility Japan could seek Ghosn's return.

It is indeed possible to ask for extradition of criminals based on the principle of reciprocity," she said. But, upon doing that, we need to carefully study whether it is possible to guarantee this principle of reciprocity and their internal justice system.

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BEACH BOD! Television show host, Andy Cohen showed off his pumped-up physique on the beach in Miami.

Want to fall in love again: Anil Kapoor



MUMBAI, JAN 6 (PTI): Bollywood veteran Anil Kapoor on Monday said whenever he sees younger actors perform well on screen he always misses his youth.

The 63-year-old actor, whose next "Malang" features him alongside Aditya Roy Kapur, Disha Patani and Kunal Kemmu, said looking at the chemistry of the lead pair he felt the need to fall in love again.

"After this film, Aditya and Disha are going to be major, special and big stars. I genuinely mean it. What-

ever I've seen, every frame, I enjoyed it," Kapoor told reporters here at the trailer launch of the Mohit Suri-directed movie.

"I wished I was young. I wish I would go on a bike like him (Aditya) and was having fun... Looking at them in the film, I want to fall in love. I'm in love but I want to fall again," he added.

The romantic-action-drama also features Amruta Khanvilkar.

Kapoor, who stars in a negative role of a cop, said he was initially wanted to play

Kunal's part in the film.

"I first heard the script, I wanted to do Kunal's role. He has done a brilliant job with the role now but I wanted to do that one. Mohit, Luv (Ranjan, producer) and all of them wanted me to do this character of Agashe.

"My heart was there but they told me to do this. I would thank them that they convinced me and I went with their conviction. I'm very happy I did this role," he added.

"Malang" is scheduled to be released on February 7.

Golden Globes: Joaquin Phoenix drops F-bombs, calls for action on climate change in speech

LOS ANGELES, JAN 6 (PTI) Actor Joaquin Phoenix's Golden Globes acceptance speech was laden with expletives, call for action on climate change and certain moments of reflection in a rambling address. The Hollywood star took home the golden gong for the best actor in a motion picture - drama for his performance in "Joker", directed by Todd Phillips.

Phoenix started his speech thanking the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) for its "bold move" of serving a vegan feast at the award ceremony.

The decision to serve a vegan feast at the Golden Globes was made out of concern for climate change, the HFPA said earlier this week.

The actor then gave a shout-out to his fellow nominees. "We all know there's no f***** competition between us. It's like thing that is created to sell advertisements for the TV show. I'm inspired by you... f*****

"I can't believe the beautiful, mesmerising, unique work that you have all done this year. I really do feel honoured to be mentioned with you," he said. Phoenix added he earlier reached out to some of the fellow nominees personally, some he is still "intimidated" by.

"Even though we share the same agent, 'Hi Christian' (Bale). You're not here," he said about the actor, who didn't attend the ceremony due to illness.

He thanked Phillips and called the "Joker" director for being an "amazing friend and collaborator".

Phoenix, known for being notoriously moody, acknowledged that he can be "a pain in the a**". "I cannot believe you put up with me. I'm so indebted to you,"

he said. The actor, who is engaged to his "Mary Magdalene" co-star Rooney Mara, also gave a sweet nod to her: "Rooney, I love you".

"Contrary to popular belief, I don't want to rock the boat. But the boat is f***** rocked," Phoenix said in a statement partially redacted by network cen-

surer. He also called out Hollywood to walk the talk on voting and climate change.

"Nice that many people have sent their well wishes to Australia. But we have to do more than that. I've not always been a virtuous man, I'm learning so much. So many of you in this room have given me the opportunities to get it right. I'm deeply grateful but I think together we can be unified and actually make some changes.

"It's great to vote but sometimes we have to take that responsibility on ourselves and make changes and sacrifices in our own lives. I hope that we can do that we don't have to take private jets to Palm Springs sometimes or back, please,

swered this for six months" and elaborated on the character.

Phoenix later scratched his head and turned the questions on the crowd.

"Have you guys been sitting here all night? Do they bring you food? Do you have drinks?" Asked about the HFPA's decision to serve vegan food only this year in the ballroom, the actor said,

"This is the first time I've ever eaten the food at this ceremony." "I thought it was excellent. I was so moved by the decision to make tonight plant-based. It's such an important statement," he added.

"My publicist is telling me I need to go home. Thank you. Thank you very much," he finished.



Manoj Bajpayee starts shooting for 'Suraj Pe Mangal Bhari'

MUMBAI, JAN 6 (PTI): Actor Manoj Bajpayee on Monday started filming his next, family comedy "Suraj Pe Mangal Bhari". Directed by Abhishek Sharma, the film also features Diljit Dosanjh and Fatima Sana Shaikh.

"Shooting begins, now #SurajPeMangalBhari! Produced by @ZeeStudios_ & directed by #AbhishekSharma, our film goes on floor today," Manoj wrote on Twitter.

The director said the team has attempted to recreate '90s Mumbai with a massive set to showcase a chawl where they start the shoot on Monday.

"We are delighted to have one of the best ensemble cast to come together in one film in recent times! It's a start-to-finish schedule till mid-March and release before year-end," Sharma said in a statement.

"Suraj Pe Mangal Bhari" boasts of an ensemble cast including Annu Kapoor, Manoj Pahwa, Seema Pahwa, Vijay Raaz, Supriya Pilgaonkar, Manuj Sharma.

John Legend to guest star in 'This Is Us' season 4

LOS ANGELES, JAN 6 (PTI): Singer John Legend is set to make a guest appearance in the fourth season of critically-acclaimed family drama "This Is Us".

Legend's surprise appearance was revealed in a promo that aired during the 77th Golden Globes ceremony.

While the preview did not reveal the details of Legend's role in the NBC show, according to Entertainment Tonight, he will star as himself as in the promo he appears in a tailored suit playing a piano.

Other celebrities to make guest appearance on the new season of the show are Omar Epps, Marsha Stephanie Blake, Tim Matheson and Timothy Omundson.

After the promo released a fan asked Legend's wife, model Chrissy Teigen, on Twitter if she was aware of the the singer's appearance on the show, to which she replied, "I had no idea until now and still don't get it? his song or himself?"

He is unique, complex: Rami Malek on his Bond villain



LOS ANGELES, JAN 6 (PTI): Hollywood star Rami Malek says his villain in the upcoming James Bond movie "No Time to Die" is "unique and complex".

The Oscar winner dished out a few details about his character in the film and his experience of working with British actor Daniel Craig on the red carpet of the 77th Golden Globe awards.

"He's quite unique. He's very complex. Daniel calls him misunderstood. But I had the most extraordinary time going head-to-head with that man," Malek told E! News' Ryan Seacrest at the red carpet.

The actor also praised Craig, who has been play-

ing the fictional British spy since 2006, for being a great professional.

"He is a consummate professional. What is really special about that is you see these movies and I love the Bond films. On day one, going out on stage, on set in front of the lens, well, to everybody else, I actually got a Broadway version sitting in the front seat watching Bond do it first hand and there is something that it took a second to step back and go, 'What's my first line again?'" he said.

At the 2020 Golden Globes, Malek was nominated for the best actor in a TV series, drama for his role on "Mr. Robot".

ARIES: Emotional intelligence is described as "the capability of individuals to recognise their own emotions and those of others, discern different feelings and label them appropriately, use emotional information to guide thoughts and behaviour, and manage and/or adjust emotions to adapt to environments or achieve one's goal(s)." How do you feel about your EQ, Aries? In what manner do you show up for those around you?

Tip: Be kind.

TAURUS: Here's some Monday motivation courtesy Oprah Winfrey: "Don't worry about being successful, but work towards being significant, and the success will naturally follow." How do you stay relevant, Taurus? In what manner do you strive for perfection? The cards are reminding you of the importance of putting in the work and staying updated with current trends.

Tip: Strive for perfection.

GEMINI: We celebrate our victories with much aplomb. But what happens when we trip and fall, or fail to meet the unrealistic expectations we set for ourselves? See this

experience as a turning point, one that is teaching you the importance of strength and resilience. Another thing you want to keep in mind as you perfect the art of breezing through your day.

Tip: Let go of unrealistic expectations. Be present in this moment.

CANCER: You don't always have to tell people what to do or how to get their lives in order. Let's leave that to self-help books and the new-age gurus, shall we? What you can do instead: hear them out, hold space for them to express what is weighing them down, and throw in an inappropriate joke or two when they least expect it. Cancer, you are your most charismatic self this week, one who is connected to their higher wisdom.

Tip: An inappropriate joke (or two) can go a long way.

LEO: Look at you breaking old habits and turning your wounds into wisdom. You've come such a long way, Leo! Don't fall into the old trap of worrying about the things you have zero control over. Taking a step back emotionally will help you gain perspective.

Remember, if you're struggling, it's okay to reach out for help. Your best friend will be more than happy to show up with a bottle of Prosecco and hold your hand through the troubles.

Tip: You've got this!

VIRGO: Transitions can be an especially confusing time. You know you can't go back to where you came from. But you don't know what the next step is either. The Universal plan will reveal itself in due course of time. Be aware of the signs and symbols. Some of you may feel inspired to share the knowledge you have acquired over the years with those who are following the same path as yours.

Tip: This is a time of career transitions.

LIBRA: The holiday season may have passed us by, but you're in no mood to hang your dancing boots. Today calls for yet another celebration with your soul crew, sponsored by the Universe, of course! This 'new year, new me' business is also inspiring you to look beyond your own circle and be open to new interactions.

Tip: Make new connections.

SCORPIO: Familiar with the old saying

"as you sow, so shall you reap"? We live in a just and fair Universe, one that wants to help you create an abundant life and luxuriate in the fruits of your labour. Your perseverance and persistence will go a long way, Scorpio. But before you move forward, take stock of things. Be grateful for the lessons you have learned and the ones you are yet to learn. You want to make 2020 your best year yet.

Tip: We live in a benevolent Universe.

SAGITTARIUS: Here's a word you want to consider now and for the rest of the year: no. Your time is your currency. Your energy is your currency. Be mindful of how you are choosing to spend your resources. If you've been failing at the self-care game, a crash-and-burn is but inevitable. Some of you could be dealing with health issues at this time.

Tip: Your body is cracking for tender love and care.

CAPRICORN: In her bestseller, Big Magic, Elizabeth Gilbert wrote, "So this, I believe, is the central question upon which all creative living hinges: Do you have the courage to bring forth the treasures that are

hidden within you?" Take a moment to ponder upon this at the start of the week as you dedicate the rest of the year to discovering latent talents and polishing existing skills.

Tip: Step into your light.

AQUARIUS: "Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine, and at last, you create what you will." Let the words of George Bernard Shaw inspire you to set your intentions for the coming year as you align them with inspired action.

Tip: Magical beginnings are on the cards.

PISCES: What if we said you can have anything you want? Yes, anything! Get ready to see the results of what you have been manifesting—especially on the work front. For some, it could be something tangible like a new job offer, a raise or a promotion. For others, it may be the sense that they finally have a roadmap and are heading in the right direction. Thinking of investing in something of your own or taking the entrepreneurship route?

Tip: The time is right for you to start a business of your own.