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**EMINEM REVEALS HOW HE  
KEPT HIS 2020 OSCARS  
PERFORMANCE A TOTAL SECRET**

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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Bhaichung Stadium hopes to become first FIFA stadium in NE

### Stadium looking at March end opening

**ARPAN PRADHAN  
GANGTOK, 10 FEB:**

Sikkim could be looking at having the first FIFA approved stadium in the entire North-East if the proposal submitted by the State Sports and Youth Affairs [SYA] Department to the Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) comes through. The Department has initiated the process and is working towards fulfilling the criteria required for Bhaichung Stadium in Namchi, South Sikkim, to get FIFA approval.

Speaking with SummitTIMES, Additional Chief Engineer, SYA Department, Shanti Tamang informed that the process has already been initiated but FIFA officials have asked for few technical requirements to be put in place in order for the stadium to meet international standards.

"The State Government has initiated the process of acquiring the required set of machinery and equipment to meet FIFA standards," said Ms Tamang.

Meanwhile, Contractor of the Bhaichung Stadium, Shanker Agarwal, said that 80% of the construction work is complete and the aim is to get the stadium ready by the



### About Bhaichung Stadium

Formerly known as Alley ground

Total play Arena is 105/68 meters and total expansion of ground is 115/76 meters.

Seating capacity on completion including Open Green Gallery is about 10,000 seats. Four galleries includes two Double Decker RCC sitting galleries in the North and East side of the stadium and two Natural Green Galleries in the West and Southern Part of the stadium.

VIP lounge, various offices, cafeteria, all facilities including changing room, toilets, etc.

Hall of Fame - that will have Photo Galleries including biography of famous and popular football players from across the world.

Astro Synthetic Turf

Academy cum Hostel for Boys with capacity of housing 60 boys.

Gym for under-17 age group.

end of March 2020.

Construction work of the sta-

dium resumed only 8 months ago,

and is now almost complete.



"The present government has been taking keen interest in the field of sports and youth affairs and has been involved in promoting various sports in Sikkim, that is why the government has directed departments to expedite all ongoing work of various stadiums and other developmental work in the sports sector," said Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Kuber Bhandari.

Tendered in 2011, work on the Bhaichung Stadium got on in fits and starts.

### A STADIUM STALLED

Since it began, construction of the stadium stopped for some time in 2013 and work was again

stopped from 2015 till 2018. Many reasons have been given for the delay, chief among them being the lack of funds.

"Between 2015 and 2018, no

### Why the delay?

- Delay by the consultant to provide final drawing of the Stadium.
- Shifting of road and water supply line, which took a lot of time.
- Delay in release of payment of work executed at site.
- During the financial year 2013-2014, the department was not in a position to release any payment proportionately to the work done due to inadequate budgetary provision from the State Government.

works were initiated and no progress was shown during this period, and the reason was non availability of resources, i.e. funds," said

Additional Chief Engineer, Shanti Tamang who is looking after the Bhaichung Stadium construction project.

The initial construction cost of the Bhaichung Stadium Rs 35.68 crore, which was the original sanctioned cost as per the issued Work Order value.

Bhaichung Stadium is under a Central Project under Special Plan Assistance (SPA) under the Planning Commission of the Government of India. The funding pattern for the project was 90-10 which means that 90 percent of the fund will be provided by the Central Government under Special Plan Assistance (SPA) and the state government would contribute 10% of the total cost of the construction of the stadium.

The state was supposed to provide Rs 35.68 crore as its share for the stadium's construction but only provided Rs 1 crore and that

too in 2016-17. This delay in releasing funds also delayed the Centre releasing its share of funds.

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## SACAA sees hypocrisy in SKM observing Pratiwad Diwas

**SAGAR CHETTRI  
GANGTOK, 11 FEB:**

Sikkim Against Citizenship Amendment Act [SACAA] today accused the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha of hypocrisy in its observing 11 Feb as "Pratiwad Diwas" to mark the lathicharge on SKM party workers in its head office in Gangtok in 2013 when it had itself compromised the case and thus failed to secure justice for its supporters.

SACAA has asserted that if the ruling party was serious in its responsibility towards its party workers, then it should take action against the people involved in the lathicharge instead of withdrawing the case from the Supreme Court.



SACAA is a forum of different political parties and social organizations of Sikkim formed to protest the Citizenship [Amendment] Act.

Addressing a press conference here today, SACAA member Bharat Basnet of the Congress contended that SKM has humiliated and let down its supporters by failing

to take action against the perpetrators of the lathicharge.

SKM, in the Opposition at the time of the lathicharge, had approached the Supreme Court alleging highhandedness by Sikkim Police in the incident and the apex court had instituted a commission of inquiry to

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## SKM observes Pratiwad Diwas, underlines the sentiment of forgiveness

**ARPAN PRADHAN  
GANGTOK, 11 FEB:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha observed Pratiwad Diwas today to mark the anniversary of the day when SKM party supporters were lathicharged in the party head office here in Gangtok on 11 Feb, 2013.

The Sikkim Police action, coming hours after the SKM party workers threw water bottles at the then Chief Minister's motorcade as it was passing by the SKM head office, has since been observed as Pratiwad Diwas and marked as a "Kalo Din" [Black Day] by SKM to protest the police action which left many party workers injured.

The lathicharge was led by IGP Akshay Sachdeva and had subsequently been challenged in the Supreme Court by SKM office bearers who contended that the police



action was illegal, undemocratic and excessive.

The program held here at the party head office today had Minister Sanjit Kharel as chief guest accompanied by MLA Aditya Golay and a large number of party workers, supporters and party leaders.

Addressing the programme, Kala Rai, one of the victims of the lathicharge and also one of the petitioners in the Supreme Court, detailed

the incident and remarked that SKM was a party with a big heart and hence capable of forgiving even its detractors.

This, she said in the context of her withdrawing the petition filed against Mr Sachdeva in the Supreme Court.

She explained that they withdrew the case and have nothing against the person who ordered the lathicharge.

She said that the SKM party president, Chief

Minister PS Tamang, has always advocated forgiveness which is why the case was withdrawn.

"No one should harbor feelings of revenge. Instead, everyone in the party should be forgiving in nature as SKM party is here to treat everyone equally and give justice to the people of Sikkim," Ms Rai stressed.

"The 11 February 2013 incident made us stronger and convinced us

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### SIKKIM AS PART OF EK BHARAT, SHRESTHA BHARAT:

Members of Sikkim Students Association, Delhi, were invited by All India Radio, New Delhi, to join a talk show on "Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat," an initiative announced by the Prime Minister on the occasion of the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Two executive members of the association, Albert Gurung and Kalden Dorjee Wangyel, of the University of Delhi represented SSA-Delhi and talked at length about Sikkim, a press release informs. The programme is expected to be broadcast soon across the nation. The Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat initiative seeks to enhance the understanding about the culture, traditions and practices of different states and UTs. Under this programme Sikkim has been paired with Delhi.

**NEW DELHI, 11 FEB [SCROLL.IN]:** In the end, things turned out as expected. Despite a massive effort from the Bharatiya Janata Party - 5,000 campaign events, rallies by ministers and Members of Parliament, a high-pitched online campaign to polarise the electorate - the Aam Aadmi Party is all set to form the government in Delhi again, for another five years.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has been vindicated. Despite being called a terrorist by his opponents, Kejriwal's AAP looks on course to win 63 [62 at 9PM] of the capital's 70 seats, according to leads and results at 4 pm, well



ahead of the 35-seat halfway mark.

That is a drop of four [five] seats from AAP's massive 2015 victory of 67 seats, but it still

places them miles ahead of the second-placed BJP, which is on course to win just seven seats. The Congress, as widely expect-

## Coronavirus death toll in China

**crosses 1,000**

**KJM VARMA**

**BEIJING, FEB 11 (PTI):** The death toll in China due to the novel coronavirus epidemic has crossed 1,000, while the confirmed cases have gone over 42,000, health officials announced on Tuesday.

As many as 108 deaths were reported on Monday and 2,478 new cases of the lethal disease were confirmed, the National Health Commission said in its daily report.

The death toll due to nCoV rose to 1,016 and the confirmed cases have gone up to 42,638, according to the commission.

Among the deaths, 103 were in Hubei province, the epicentre of the outbreak, and one each in Beijing, Tianjin, Heilongjiang, Anhui and Henan, state-run Xinhua news agency quoted the commission as saying.

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## Kejriwal's huge win, BJP chastened, Congress duck

ed, will not win any.

The Delhi result offers further proof of a very unusual feature of Indian elections at the moment. The BJP completely dominates the national stage, winning Parliamentary majorities by huge margins in 2014 and 2019. In many states, it got more than 50% of the vote share. In Delhi, it pulled in 56% in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

Yet its record at the state level has been poor. The party has not had an emphatic victory in state assembly elections since the Uttar Pradesh win in 2017. BJP leaders blame "local issues" every time, but the trend is hard to ignore.



## SDF prepares for 28th foundation day celebration

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 10 FEB:**

Sikkim Democratic Front party held a meeting at the residence of party president, Pawan Chamling at Ghurpisey, Namchi, South Sikkim today to discuss the 28th foundation day of the party which falls on 04 March, a press release informs.

The meeting was attended by senior vice presidents, DB Thapa, KT Gyaltsen, former Minister, GM Gurung, RB Subba, secretaries, general secretaries of different fronts, spokespersons, youth and members of cheli morchha.

Welcoming all in the meeting, Mr Chamling with the consent of all the members has decided to celebrate the SDF foundation day at the party headquarters at Indira Bye Pass, Gangtok.

The president also

directed the members to form a celebration committee at the earliest and directed all the party members to hoist the SDF flag in different districts and block level offices on the day.

Addressing the gathering, he said that each and every party member should be connected and take responsibility have a grand celebration.

“We should not fear anything; Janta is with us,” he said.

He also urged the youths to participate in the program as youth are the pillar and future, and should take responsibility to make Sikkim better. Regarding the membership drive he said that those who have acquired fresh SDF membership are also equals in the party rung as there are no juniors or seniors in the party.

### Bhaichung Stadium...

According to the contractor, Mr Agarwal, initially work started in full swing and progress was satisfactory but later the department stopped releasing funds and it was impossible to carry forward the construction work.

“We were working tirelessly but I don’t know why the state government stopped releasing funds. I don’t know if it was lack of interest or something else. But it was one of the causes for the delay,” said Mr. Agarwal.

Another cause for the delay has been the revision of the construction plan when the project was handed over to the Sports and Youth Affairs Department by the Human Resource Development Department (HRDD).

When the project began, SYA Department did not have its own Engineering Cell so the initial work was carried out under the Human Resource Development Department. In 2015, HRDD handed over the project to SYA after completion of the realignment of existing water supply pipelines, construction of Diversion Road and finalization of the structural drawings for galleries. The stadium was 38% complete when it was handed over to the SYA.

Thereafter, the project was revised due to changes in the scope of work and addition of certain items of works with another Rs 15.65 crore added to the total project cost. The revised cost estimate of Rs 51.33 crore was finally approved and sanctioned by the government in 2018.

There have also been allegations against the previous SDF government of intentionally delaying the project.

### SPORTSPERSONS SPEAK

Bhaichung Bhutia, in whose name the stadium has been built, has said that ultimately the delay has affected sports and sports persons in the state, especially of South Sikkim.

“Sikkim has very few stadiums and grounds. And once it is locked or under construction then a lot of players don’t get the space to play and we could lose talent in this period,” said Mr Bhutia, former Indian Football Team Captain.

Football enthusiast Sanjay Rai says that the delay has badly affected the career of young football players like him as there is no ground or area where they can practice and this is due to the carelessness of the Government and the Department. Timely completion of construction would have been helpful for all sports persons, he added.

However, he has thanked the Department and the Government for finally making Bhaichung Stadium possible and expressed his hope that the stadium will be ready by March this year.

### UPCOMING STADIUMS IN SIKKIM

As of now there is only one full-fledged professional stadium in the state and that is Paljor Stadium in Gangtok (East District). The second big stadium coming up is Bhaichung Stadium in Namchi (South District) which is expected to have better facilities. Another two stadiums are coming up at Mangan (North District) and Gyalshing (West District).

If all goes as planned, Sikkim will have a professional stadium in all four districts by 2021-2022.

As per the information provided by the Sports Department, stadiums in Mangan and Gyalshing are under construction and will be completed by 2021-2022.

The construction and up gradation work of Kyongsa Play ground with international standard track and field at Kyongsa in Gyalshing is under progress.

### SACAA sees...

look into the allegations. Just as the case appeared to be building up in favour of the petitioners, the petition was withdrawn with a compliance affidavit filed by the Resident Commissioner of Sikkim on 21 November, 2019, SACAA highlights.

This effectively means that the SKM was pulling wool over the eyes of the people and its own supporters, alleges another SACAA member, Nawin Kiran Pradhan.

“The people of Sikkim will always remember the police brutality displayed on this day, but the inaction of SKM even after forming the government has made this day darker,” Mr Basnet alleged.

## Minister visits Rangsang Dobaan area, directs officials to resolve public grievances



### GYALSHING, 11 FEB [IPR]:

IPR Minister Lok Nath Sharma toured the Rangsang Dobaan area of his constituency, Gyalshing Bermiok, in West Sikkim today accompanied by officials from the line departments and resident public to examine and address the grievances and issues pertaining to the construction of a

bridge that connects Bermiok with Gyalshing.

The Minister inspected the ongoing construction and the new road and urged the concerned officials to sort out the issues at the earliest to ensure smooth progress of the work.

He urged the public to cooperate in the completion of the con-

struction and asked the officials to address the public grievances after technical assessment. He shared the vision of the Chief Minister to ensure development with utmost care and protection of the environment.

He further shared the government’s roadmap of developmental works which seeks to introduce

industries in the area and to provide employment and wider scope of income generation for the locals.

Accompanying the Minister were Addl. Chief Engineer, PWD, Thupden Bhutia; AE, PWD, DB Gurung; AE, PWD, Pradip Limboo; BDO, Hee-Martam, Pratiba Tamang; concerned officials, affected land owners and others.

## Governor calls on VP and Ministers in Delhi

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 11 FEB:**

Continuing with his series of engagements in New Delhi, Governor Ganga Prasad today called on Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu, and a host of BJP leaders and Ministers today, a press communiqué from Raj Bhawan informs.

The Governor invited the Vice President to visit Sikkim and the VP conveyed his own desire to visit the State at the earliest possible date, the release states.

Later in the day, the Governor called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah and apprised him of



the issues and concerns of the State.

He also sought the Union Minister’s personal intervention towards resolving several pending issues, it is informed.

In the evening of 10 February, the Governor had

also made a courtesy call on Union Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh at his office in South Block, New Delhi.

Several security and border related issues were discussed during this brief meeting, the release states.

## Delhi loss continues BJP’s woes in assembly polls

**NEW DELHI, FEB 11 (PTI):** The BJP has fought few state elections in recent times with such organisational firepower and ideological fervour as it did the Delhi polls, but this all came to nought as the party suffered a big loss, a defeat that continues its poor run in state elections since 2018.

The only consolation for the party, which several of its leaders keenly pointed out, is that its vote share increased to more than 38 per cent this time from 32 in 2015. This is the most votes it has got in the city after it came to power in 1993 with nearly 48 per cent votes.

The rise in the BJP’s tally, likely to be eight with results yet to be announced in some of them, from three is unlikely to gladden many hearts in the party whose president J P Nadda had expressed confidence of crossing the mark of 45 in the 70-member assembly.

Incidentally, this is the first state poll the party fought under Nadda.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party showed ideological flexibility to dent the saffron agenda of Hindutva and national security and its governance model built around welfarism, and investment in education and health sectors ensured that a whopping 54 per cent of voters backed it in the polls.

Kejriwal’s support to the Modi government on issues like the nullification of Article 370 and muted opposition to the Citizenship (Amendment ) Act even as he spoke against the inconvenience caused by the Shaheen Bagh protest, ensured that the BJP’s shrill attempt to paint him to be working against the “interests” of Hindus and the country did not cut much ice.

The loss will rattle with the BJP’s ranks as its entire organisational might led by home minister and its former president Amit Shah worked overtime to oust the AAP from power. Over 300 of its MPs, including several Union ministers, intensively campaigned in the city’s 70 assembly constituencies but in vain. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed two poll rallies.

Putting up a brave front, BJP general secretary Kailash Vijarvargiya noted

that the BJP’s vote share has risen to 38 per cent and coupled with its allies JD(U) and the LJP this was close to 40 per cent.

Though there will be questions about the BJP’s high-decibel campaign, which the opposition said was divisive and polarising, several leaders within the party asserted that the defeat was not due to but despite this.

“Our vote share could have plummeted as the AAP had a huge lead over us when we began our campaign. It is our ideological drive that charged saffron cadres and energised out support base,” a party leader closely associated with the electioneering said.

The BJP’s biggest drawback, many believe, was a lack of credible local leadership to take on Kejriwal, who enjoyed unmatched advantage in this regard. With Modi as its face in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the party had won near 57 per cent votes and bagged all seven seats.

Its initial assessment suggests that the party’s campaign swayed a sizeable chunk of middle class voters but failed to counter its rival’s appeal among the poor and lower middle class.

The BJP had come close to forming a government in Delhi in 2013 when it won 31 seats but Kejriwal became chief minister for the first time after the Congress backed the AAP to keep its main rival out of power. The AAP and the Congress had won 28 and eight seats respectively.

The factional fight in Delhi BJP followed by the party’s decision to marginalise its local satraps like Harsh Vardhan, a Union minister, and Vijay Goel, a Rajya Sabha member, and groom the likes of Manoj Tiwari, seen by many as an outsider, has ensured that its city unit remains adrift.

Goel was Delhi BJP president when the party’s national leadership decided to project Harsh Vardhan as its chief ministerial candidate in 2013. In 2015 it brought former IPS officer Kiran Bedi from nowhere and pitted her as its face against Kejriwal, a move that backfired and left the party cadres dejected.

Since 2018, the BJP has failed to win a majority in any of the state polls.

### SKM observes...

to work tirelessly for the party and we are here to-day! Every party worker contributed towards the success of the SKM party and bringing the party where it stands today,” she said.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sanjit Kharel lauded the party supporters as selfless workers who had sacrificed much to ensure SKM’s success.

He said that during the 11 February 2013 incident, he was with the SDF and had criticized the incident even then and said that this was a big mistake of the SDF and its president. He also alleged that the incident was obviously planned by the SDF.

Party workers injured in the incident were felicitated today.

The programme was also addressed by other party leaders.

### Coronavirus death...

A total of 3,996 patients infected with the coronavirus have been discharged from hospital till Monday after recovery, it said.

On Monday, 3,536 new suspected cases were reported and 849 patients became seriously ill, while 716 people were discharged from hospital after recovery, the commission said.

As many as 7,333 patients remained in severe condition and 21,675 people are suspected of being infected with the virus. Over 4.28 lakh close contacts had been traced and more than 1.87 lakh others are still under medical observation, according to the commission.

By the end of Monday, 42 confirmed cases, including one death, have been reported in in Hong Kong, 10 confirmed cases in Macao and 18 in Taiwan.

A team of international experts led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) arrived in China on Monday night to assist the Chinese health officials in containing the coronavirus outbreak.

The team is led by Dr Bruce Aylward, a veteran of past public health emergencies.

Composed of international experts in various fields, the expert group will work with their Chinese counterparts to increase understanding of the epidemic and guide global responses, state-run People’s Daily reported.

China and the WHO will form a joint expert team to conduct in-depth discussions on and evaluations of the novel coronavirus epidemic and the containment, a National Health Commission spokesperson said.

They will provide suggestions on joint prevention and control of the coronavirus outbreak to China and other affected countries in the next step, Mi Feng, an official with the NHC, told a news conference in Beijing.

“We welcome international experts including those from the United States to take part in the joint expert team,” Mi said, adding that appropriate arrangements for the team would be made after thorough consultation and communication.

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### KUTSE SHEGU



East Sikkim. We also express our gratitude to all the well wishers who stood by us during our time of bereavement.

The 49th days Kutse Shegu of our late father Ren Rey Mondal or Tenzing Lepcha, who left for heavenly abode on 29th December 2019 falls on 15th and 16th February, 2020.

All relatives, family, friends and well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Rey Busty, Rumtek

**9832015083 Nima Lepcha**

**2. 8167734336 Mingur Bhutia**

**3. 7550819886 NT Lepcha**

**4. 9434407296 Rinchen Lepcha**

**5. 7908711074 PW Lepcha**

**~ SummitTIMES ~  
CLASSIFIEDS**

### FLAT FOR RENT/LEASE

Fully furnished 3BHK flat available for rent/ lease at Church Road near DPH. Roadside and five minutes walking distance from MG Marg.  
**For more details: 9083826462 /9832556698**

### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

General land 30X40 (3 Plots) available for sale at Tadong 6th Mile next to Harka Maya College. Flat Land no cutting required. Price 27 Lakhs (negotiable).  
**Contact: 9800201335**

### LAND FOR SALE

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

### LAND FOR SALE

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

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## Sanjay Agarwal Rangpo Sikkim -11th February 20



**1**0 Days Long Cancer Awareness Bike Rally with the motto of WE (West to East). Started from Mumbai to Gangtok is Reaching Sikkim on 12th February shall be Grand Welcome at Rangpo by Different Organisations and Bikers Club of Sikkim . on 3rd February

Rally Started under the Banner of Nepali Gorkha Sewa Samiti Mumbai the five members of Hamro Cahhahari and Retd Navy Officers Named Me Keshav Sapkota ,Bipen Dahal ,Tshring G Sherpa ,John Karki and Thakur P Adhikari shall Reach Gangtok on 12th February

. Mr Prakash Phaterpekar, MLA, 173, Chembur Assembly Constituency has Flagged off the Bikers. after completing mission completed in different Cities and Towns of Eight State the Bikers Team Shall Enter last Point Sikkim on 12th February .according to the news Ne-

pali-Gorkha Sewa Samiti is running two Ashrams (Hamro Chhahari or Our Shelter) at Kurla/East and Chembur with an aim to provide accommodation to the economically weaker sections of the patients who come to Mumbai for different types of treatment specially the dread-

ed disease Cancer mainly from Sikkim, Darjeeling, North-East, Bhutan, Nepal and other parts. In order to make the people in general aware of the Cancer disease and its prevention, a 10 day long bike rally has been organized 3400 Kilometre Long Bike Rally while entering sikkim shall be Welcome at Chitrey under Kalimpong District also and Shall Join with Rally too .At Rangpo After Welcome the Bikers Team shall Reach Gangtok completing their 3400 Kilometer long .Mission shall Be Grand Welcome and Felicitatation by Different Organisations and Bikers Club also .They Shall Meet with Education Minister Mr Kunga Nima Lepcha also and is expected to Submit a Memorandum too.

## NPF organises dharna demanding rollback of CAA



**KOHIMA, FEB 11 (PTI):** The opposition Naga Peoples Front (NPF) on Tuesday staged peaceful statewide anti-CAA dharnas demanding immediate rollback of the amended citizenship law.

In Kohima NPF secretary general Achumbemo Kikon and other leaders sat on dharna with banners and placards some of which read "CAA is a threat to all indigenous communities of North East", "Injustice cannot be a law", "CAA murdered secularism" and "CAA is draconian law".

Addressing the gathering, Kikon said the claims of the state government that Nagaland is protected by Inner Line

Permit (ILP) and that the state won't be affected as we have been exempted from the purview of CAA is "totally misleading".

He said that Nagaland having its borders with Assam is not far from being overshadowed by illegal immigrants.

"If we (Nagas) remain silent even we are at danger of facing a similar situation," said Kikon.

Asserting that NPF will never compromise the rights and privileges of the Nagas, Kikon said the NPF legislators have moved an anti-CAA resolution in the ongoing budget session of the Assembly, but its the ruling Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party

(NDPP) and BJP alliance government rejected it.

"We have been doing our part in protecting the rights of the indigenous people and will never compromise on the issues concerning the future of the Naga people," Kikon asserted.

NPF general secretary Akho Leyri demanded that the Centre rollback that CAA as it will "divide the entire nation on religious lines."

He said the fight against CAA will continue till the Centre rolls it back.

Addressing the sit-in protest in Dimapur, NPF president Dr Shurhazelle Liezietsu alleged that the CAA is discriminatory and divisive.

## Special training held for Sanskrit teachers

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 11 FEB:**

A three-day Sanskrit teachers training began here at Ranipool today organized jointly by the Sanskrit Division of Education Department and Sanskrit Promotion Foundation sponsored by ONGC.

While addressing the inaugural session, Bhim Thatal, Director Elementary Education and Project Director Samagra Shiksha, urged the Sanskrit

teachers to take maximum benefit of the training to enhance their skills.

He commented that such in-house training, being taken by 50 teachers, would definitely reduce the performance gap between the teachers and students.

He also remarked that Sanskrit was a classical scientific language and that an effort should be made to make it the language of the common people instead of re-

maining only in texts.

Director, Sanskrit Promotion Foundation, Dr Chand Kiran Saluja, appreciated the Education Department's initiative.

Additional Director, Sanskrit Division, Education Department, HP Dhakal, welcomed the dignitaries and informed that such training was being held for the first time in Sikkim since formal Sanskrit education was introduced in the year 1992.

## Tamil Nadu farmers visit ICAR-NOFRI



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 11 FEB:**

A team of 45 farmers and retired officers from Tamil Nadu visited the ICAR-National Organic Farming Research Institute at Tadong and

its "adopted" villages - Nandok, Timpyem, Thanka-Martam and Thanka-Lingtam - earlier this month. The team was here from 05 to 07 Feb, an official press release informs.

Tumin Lingee youth help cancer patient

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 11 FEB:**

At Raley in Tumin Lingee constituency, one Dharma Raj Gautam is suffering from cancer while his son Chun Bahadur Gautam is paralysed due to spine injury. Since they do not have a proper house, local youth have come forward to help construct a house under the guidance of Pintso Bhutia, a press release informs.

"We are thankful that

humanity exists because people helped by contributing wood, stone, money, etc. We are grateful that Mr Pintso Bhutia along with local youths, Bijay Gautam, Harka Bahadur Rajan Karki, Anmol Giri, Sukrash Subba, Ashok Giri, Sanju Dahal, Phurba Lepcha, and many more have made special contributions and given their valuable time for the society," the release states.

## W'shop on Comp Sc at SMIT



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 11 FEB:**

The Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology, in collaboration with National Academy of Skill Development, Kolkata, organised a two-

day workshop on recent trends in computer science. Topics covered in the workshop include UI/UX Design, Ethical Hacking, Augmented Reality and Data Analytics using R. Around 150 students attended the workshop, it is informed.

## HC tells WB govt not to keep Rohingyas in jail after completion of sentence

**KOLKATA, FEB 11 (PTI):** The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday told the West Bengal government that it cannot keep four Rohingya nationals, who had entered India illegally, in correctional homes after completion of their jail term.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice TBN Radhakrishnan and Justice Arijit Banerjee directed that they may be kept in open places, under surveillance if required, till their repatriation to their native country Myanmar.

The bench directed the West Bengal and Union governments to file a report on February 26 on the progress in repatriation of the four Rohingyas.

During the hearing, the bench verbally observed that the court may think of formulating a plan for the stay of the four persons till they are repatriated, if the process takes time.

The four Rohingyas entered the country illegally and following their arrest in 2016 in West Bengal, had each been sentenced to 18 months in jail by a district court under the Foreigners Act.

The four persons served their term and the government has initiated action for their repatriation and the process for repatriation of one of them is over, according to the senior standing counsel for the West Bengal government.

The division bench had earlier directed the state and Union of India to vigorously proceed with the repatriation proceeding of the remaining three persons.

## Himalayan Crusade Pentecostal Church elects new executive committee



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 11 FEB:**

Himalayan Crusade Pentecostal Church, Daragaon, Jorethang, South Sikkim, elected a new executive committee for a one year term today.

Pastor NB Rai, the founder of Himalayan Crusade Pentecostal Church who recently completed his Golden Jubilee in ser-

vice as a Pastor, was elected president. Similarly, NT Bhutia was elected vice president, Elder PB Rai general secretary, Rajen Khanal joint secretary and Chandra Kala Rai treasurer. Next, sub-committees for youth, pantry and other departments will be nominated soon by the executive committee, it is informed.

## Delhi did not vote for 'anti-nationals': Malik mocks BJP



**MUMBAI, FEB 11 (PTI):** Senior NCP leader and Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik on Tuesday mocked the BJP and said the massive mandate to the AAP in the Delhi polls was due to people there accepting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders' appeals "not to vote for anti-nationals".

With counting of votes on, the Arvind Kejriwal-led party has already secured a majority in the 70-member Delhi Assembly and is well on its way to win over 60 seats, leaving the BJP way behind with wins on a handful of seats.

Speaking to reporters in Mumbai, Malik said, "Prime Minister Naren-

dra Modi and other BJP leaders appealed to the people of Delhi to not vote for anti-nationals, so the people there voted for the AAP."

"It seems people are tired of BJP's politics of hatred and pressure tactics. The BJP ensured there were legal cases against several AAP leaders and MLAs. Several inquiries were conducted to demoralise AAP workers but nothing worked in favour of the BJP," he added.

He said the NCP had tried to forge an alliance with the AAP in Delhi and the Congress should also think on similar lines to avoid division of votes in the future.

**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRIES**  
**UDYOG BHAWAN, TADONG, 737102**  
**GANGTOK, SIKKIM**

### NOTICE

THE Department of Commerce and Industries invites Request for Proposals (RFPs) from reputed firms for seating up, operating and management of Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility (HWSTDF)-cum-Biomedical Waste Treatment Facility (BWTF).

The interested firms may download Request for Proposal (RFP) document from the official website of C&I Department [www.industries.sikkim.gov.in](http://www.industries.sikkim.gov.in) where it will be displayed from 08.02.2020 and submit their Expression of Interest (EoI) as per details in the website.

Sd/-

Director  
Commerce & Industries Department  
Govt. of Sikkim.

R.O. No. 351/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20 Date: 31.1.20

## OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT AND SESSIONS JUDGE EAST SIKKIM AT GANGTOK.

### NOTICE

It is hereby informed that the Date and Venue for the written examination for the posts of System Administrator, Junior Accountant, LDA-cum-Computer Operator and Accounts Clerk under the Establishment of the District & Sessions Court, East Sikkim, Gangtok has been rescheduled as follows due to unavoidable circumstances:

Dates: 15.02.2020 & 16.02.2020 instead of 14.02.2020 & 15.02.2020.

Venue: Sir Tashi Namgyal Senior Secondary School, Development Area Gangtok, East Sikkim instead of Palzor Namgyal Senior Secondary School.

-Sd-

H. G. Kazi,

Administrative Officer

District & Sessions Court, East at Gangtok

R.O. No. 363/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20 Date: 11.02.2020.

### What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

#### Symptoms of nCoV

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

#### Treatment

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

#### Precautions to Prevent nCoV

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



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

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE**  
**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**



## Evaluate Results to Empower People

### *Change evaluation from input-driven to result-oriented*

It is not rare in the cramped huddles of share-cabs or service jeeps to overhear complaints of days and hours lost to making the rounds of government offices trying to get even routine works done. Lethargy and impromptu truancy remain ingrained habits in departments across the board. Of course, there is a reassuring club of diligent officers as well, but accept it, their numbers pale in comparison to those who have too many other more chores, priorities and distractions vying for their time. This situation is as entrenched in head offices as in the district, sub-divisional and block level offices and the inconvenience suffered by the people is also evenly spread out among the urban and rural aam janta.

Given the sheer number of government offices now opened across the State and the scale of personnel deployment this entails, it would be too much to expect all these offices to be staffed by able and diligent officials. It will not be unfair though given the perks and security of a sarkari naukari. That said, it will not be surprising to learn that there are more offices which are underperforming, but that really should not be the case since even if there are a more offices now, Sikkim is still a very small state and fixing accountability should not be too difficult.

Admittedly, that is easier said than done. It is not impossible though if the right administrative corrections are allowed through. In fact, the Administrative Reforms Commission [ARC] of the Government of India had made some interesting recommendations on how the country should be administered. And no, compulsory military training for all joining even the civil services was not one of the recommendations. It would be wonderful if the army itself was allowed more funds to improve training and arsenal, but that clearly is not how chest-thumping nationalists and their need to over-express their machismo thinks. But we are talking of the civil services here and the ARC, the draft report of which had suggested that bureaucrats be held responsible for service delivery. That was a decade ago in 2008! And service delivery remains unaddressed. No surprises there since the Centre believes announcements are enough to claim delivery. Hence, performance continues to be gauged on input-centric indices in our country and also the State. Bureaucrats, as also the schemes they oversee, are rated on the basis of money spent, man-hours supposedly devoted and manpower deployed.

The ARC had noticed this fault a decade ago and recommended that assessment be based on quantifiable output targets. This was a good idea, even if an obvious one, and a welcome relief from attitudes which focus only on “effort” [which are all about claims] and ignore the all important aspect of “impact” [as in results]. Schemes are evaluated and sustained [with release of subsequent funds] based on Utilization Certificates. Although Sikkim’s bureaucracy fares poorly even on this formality, should the ARC’s recommendation be adopted [along with its penal clauses on failure], development could attain an even steeper trajectory here upwards.

More importantly, it would also fix accountability and embarrassments like complaints of delays even in routine official processes would not occur too frequently, and if they did, there would be a prescribed process to readdress them. After all, officials who do not report to even push files will not fare too well in service delivery either. Basically, the problem with the present model of evaluation [and thus also work culture] is that because it is “input centric” it makes no demands on the bureaucracy to remain true to its public service epithet.

One of the biggest hurdles holding up effective decentralization of power, despite devolution of substantial responsibilities to the panchayat level, is that lay people still do not have an important enough say. While they can vote for change every five years, that is about the only control they have on delivery of development. They cannot touch the bureaucrats. And the babus can continue to talk down to them because when it comes evaluating their performance, it is based on data of inputs which they control along with the elected representatives [who become a part of the System the moment they get elected].

Should performances instead be evaluated on returns accrued on the inputs made, the end-recipients, that is the people, will have at least a deciding say because it will be their assessment of the effectiveness of administration’s ability to deliver that will decide which officers stay and who is shown the door. Yes, the ARC draft had also recommended that civil servants who continually fail to “perform” are compulsorily retired. The Departments will automatically become populated by “public servants” in the real sense of the term. Devolution of power would have been attained and job-satisfaction ensured for public servants who make the grade and every penny of the pay commission rewards would have been well earned. That said, more than 10 years since the idea was mooted, it has still not happened...



## The coronavirus and Chinese social media: finger-pointing in the post-truth era

HAIQING YU  
*theconversation.com*

As public health authorities in China and the world fight the novel coronavirus, they face two major communication obstacles: the eroding trust in the media, and misinformation on social media.

As cities, towns, villages and residential compounds have been shut down or implemented curfews, social media have played a central role in crisis communication.

Chinese social media platforms, from WeChat and Weibo, to QQ, Toutiao, Douyin, Zhihu and Tieba, are the lifeline for many isolated and scared people who have been housebound for over two weeks, relying on their mobile phones to access information, socialise, and order food.

These platforms constitute the mainstream media in the war on the coronavirus.

I experienced the most extraordinary Chinese New Year with my parents in China and witnessed the power of Chinese social media, especially WeChat, in spreading and controlling information and misinformation.

China is not only waging a war against the coronavirus. It is engaged in a media war against misinformation and “rumour” (as termed by the Chinese authorities and social media platforms).

Information about the virus suddenly increased from January 21, after the central government publicly acknowledged the outbreak the previous day and Zhong Nanshan, China’s leading respiratory expert and anti-SARS hero, declared on the state broadcaster CCTV the virus was transmissible from person to person.

On WeChat, the Chinese all-in-one super app with over 1.15 billion monthly active users, there has been only one dominant topic: the coronavirus. **RUMOUR MONGERS AND RUMOUR BUSTERS**

In Wired, Robert Dingwall wrote “fear, finger-pointing, and militaristic action against the virus are unproductive”, asking if it is time to adjust to a new normal of outbreaks.

To many Chinese, this new normal of fear and militaristic action is already real in everyday life.

Finger-pointing, however, can be precarious in

the era of information control and post-truth.

On WeChat and other popular social media platforms, information about the virus from official, semi-official, unofficial and personal sources is abundant in chat groups, “Moments”, WeChat official accounts, and newsfeeds (mostly from Tencent News and Toutiao).

Information includes personal accounts of life under lockdown, duanzi (jokes, parodies, humorous videos), heroism of volunteers, generosity of donations, quack remedies, scaremongering about deaths and price hikes, and the conspiracy theory of the US waging a biological war against China.

There is also veiled criticism of the government and government officials for mismanagement, bad decisions, despicable behaviours and lack of accountability.

At the same time, the official media and Tencent have stepped up their rumour-busting effort.

They regularly publish rumour-busting pieces. They mobilise the “50-cent army” (wumao) and volunteer wumao (ziganwu) as their truth ambassadors.

Tencent has taken on the responsibility to provide “transparent” communication. It opened a new function through its WeChat mini-program Health, providing real-time updates of the epidemic and comprehensive information – including fake news busting.

The government has told people to only post and forward information from official channels and warned of severe consequences for anyone found guilty of disseminating “rumours”, including permanently blocking WeChat groups, blocking social media accounts, and possible jail terms.

Chinese people, accustomed to having posts deleted, face increased peer pressure in their chat groups to comply with the heightened censorship regime. Amid the panic the general advice is: don’t repost anything.

They are asked to be savvy consumers, able to distinguish fake news, half-truths or rumours, and to trust only one source of truth: the official channels.

But the skills to detect and contain false content are becoming rarer and more difficult to obtain.

**CORONAVIRUS AND THE POST-TRUTH**

We live in the post-truth era, where every

“truth” is driven by subjective, elusive, self-conflicting and emotional “facts”.

Any news source can take you in the wrong direction.

We have seen that in the eight doctors from Wuhan who transformed from being rumourmongers to whistleblowers and heroes within a month.

Dr Li Wenliang, the first to warn others of the “SARS-like” virus in December 2019, died from the novel coronavirus in the early hours of February 7 2020. There is an overwhelming sense of loss, mourning and unspoken indignation at his death in various WeChat groups.

In the face of this post-truth era, we must ask the questions: what is “rumour”, who defines “rumour”, and how does “rumour” occur in the first place?

Information overload is accompanied by information pollution. Detecting and contain false information on social media has been a technical, sociological and ideological challenge.

With a state-led campaign to “bust rumours” and “clean the web” in a controlled environment at a time of crisis, these questions are more urgent than ever.

As media scholar Yong Hu said in 2011, when “official lies outpace popular rumors” the government and its information control mechanism constitute the greatest obstruction of the truth.

“On the one hand, the government has provided an environment conducive to the spread of rumours, and on the other it sternly lashes out against rumours, placing itself in the midst of an insoluble contradiction.”

As the late Dr Li Wenliang said: “[To me] truth is more important than my case being redressed; a healthy society should not only allow one voice.”

China can lock down its cities, but it cannot lock down rumours on social media.

In fact, the Chinese people are not worried about rumours. They are worried about where to find truth and voice facts: not one single source of truth, but multiple sources of facts that will save lives.

*[the writer is Associate Professor, School of Media and Communication, RMIT University]*

## Why aren’t Hollywood films more diverse? The international box office might be to blame

ROBERTO PEDACE  
*theconversation.com*

In 2014, a hacker group leaked confidential information from Sony Pictures Entertainment, including a controversial email written by an unnamed producer.

In the email, which went viral, the producer questioned the decision to cast Denzel Washington as the lead in “The Equalizer”:

“I believe that the international motion-picture audience is racist – in general, pictures with an African-American lead don’t play well overseas... But Sony sometimes seems to disregard that a picture must work well internationally to both maximize returns and reduce risk, especially pictures with decent-size budgets.”

Many actors, activists and newspapers have raised concerns related to diversity in Hollywood films. Several organizations, including blackfilm.com and the Geena Davis Institute, now actively monitor and promote diversity in media.

But was the Sony producer onto something in raising concerns about the biases of moviegoers abroad? Is it possible that the lack of nonwhite and female lead characters in Hollywood films is driven, in part, by economic concerns from movie studios? Our analysis of more than 800 films sampled between 2005 and 2012 suggests the answer is “yes.”

**WHO’S IN THE MOVIES**

Research suggests that films suffer from demographic disparities.

In one study, researchers at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism analyzed the demographic characteristics of over 11,000 speaking characters in hundreds of films and television series released in 2014. Approximately 75 percent of all actors involved were white. Meanwhile, 12 percent were black, 6 percent Asian, 5 percent Hispanic/Latino and 3 percent were identified as Middle Eastern or “other.”

We looked at the top-grossing films each year from 2005 to 2012, using information from Box Office Mojo, IMDb, The New York Times movie reviews and Rotten Tomatoes. Our data include the 150 top films each year that were distributed domestically and abroad, excluding G-rated and animated films.

Just 28 percent of movies in our sample had a female first lead character. Only 19 percent had a nonwhite first lead character.

These figures are in stark contrast to the demographics of the U.S. population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 51 percent of the U.S. is female and 35 percent is nonwhite or Hispanic.

**CONSUMER TASTES**

Recently, film studios have faced more intense competition from independent filmmakers, increased globalization and streaming video sources. In this environment, film studios may be inclined to supply movies with characteristics that appeal to more consumers and increase profits. Since international box office

revenue is now more than twice as large as domestic revenue, the economic incentive for studios to cater to the preferences of international audiences is larger than ever. The top five international box office markets are China, Japan, the U.K., France and India.

Does consumer discrimination in these markets explain the underrepresentation of female and nonwhite actors in Hollywood films?

We analyzed the potential gender and racial biases from the consumer side through their influence on box office revenue, both domestically and internationally. We looked at the relationship between cast demographics and theater audiences, controlling for other factors that may affect a movie’s success, such as production budgets, release timing, genre, critic ratings and star power.

There’s significant evidence that a film cast’s racial diversity negatively affects international box office performance. By our estimates, a 10 percentage point increase in racial cast diversity leads to 17 percent less international revenue, even after controlling for key film characteristics. This effect disappears in the domestic market.

Similarly, adding just one nonwhite lead actor led to a 40 percent decrease in international revenue.

However, we did not find any link between gender diversity and movie revenue. Productions with a female lead character fared as well economically outside the U.S. as

those with a male lead.

**INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES**

The results provide convincing evidence that studio executives have legitimate concerns about the relationship between diversity and revenue.

The negative effects of nonwhite characters on profits could explain the racial disparity observed in Hollywood films. In that case, it could be argued that consumer prejudice leads to roles that favor white actors more, because the increased revenue is attractive to studio executives.

Most movies make a lot more foreign revenue than domestic revenue, but movies with diverse casts can struggle abroad, even if they are incredibly successful domestically. For example, 2012’s “Think Like a Man” made US\$91.5 million in the domestic market but just \$4.5 million in the international market. “The Help,” a 2011 Academy Award-winning period drama, made \$169.7 million in the domestic market compared to \$46.9 million in the international market.

This doesn’t mean that preferences of studio executives are not at all responsible for the demographic disparity, but it does suggest that market forces are at least partly responsible.

Consumer tastes are a likely factor driving studios’ preference of nonwhite underrepresentation in movies. The revenue implications of international audience preferences are simply too large for studios to ignore.

*[the writer is Professor of Economics, Scripps College]*



# Arunachal Pradesh has potential to generate 50,000 MW of hydropower: CM

**ITANAGAR, FEB 11 (PTI):** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Tuesday said the state has the potential to generate 50,000 MW of hydropower.

Khandu said that despite being the richest state in the country in terms of hydropower resources that could overhaul its economy, Arunachal Pradesh still has to depend upon the Center for its sustenance.

He said the state was now producing only two per cent of its hydropower potential.

Addressing a seminar on 'Prosperity of Arunachal Pradesh through accelerated Hydropower development' here, the chief minister said hydropower was the future of the state.

"Time has come to shed the dependency syndrome and we should find ways to generate states own resources from the abundant hydropower resources," Khandu said.

"For the last 10-15 years, we have been told that Arunachal Pradesh is the powerhouse of India. Where is this powerhouse?," he asked.

The chief minister



asked the hydropower development department to prioritise 10 power projects that could be taken up during the next five year period.

"There is no point taking up projects at random. Let us focus on 10 feasible and beneficial projects and we will take these up on mission mode," he said. Khandu, however, advocated that mini and micro hydel projects should also be implemented side by side at places that do not have grid connectivity.

The chief minister said that the state revenue which stood at about Rs 900 crore when he took over as chief minister in 2016, has increased to about Rs

2,000 crore in 2018-19. "As has been projected, think how much will be our revenue when we start earning Rs 15,000 crore per year only from hydropower projects if implemented?," he wondered.

The chief minister blamed 'petty politics' played by some vested interests in putting hurdles or stalling power projects in the state.

"As the government is stable with AN absolute majority, detractors have nothing to do but play 'petty politics' and hamper developmental projects just to harass the ruling government.

"In my opinion those who put hurdles in developmental projects just

for the heck of it are anti-nationals. I call upon all, even those in the Opposition, to shed our politics and join hands with the government to bring in investments and successfully complete all developmental projects including hydropower," he said.

Khandu warned government officials from the top to the lowest level to refrain from conniving with vested interests and indulging in acts hampering projects.

"I have directed the chief secretary to take to task any official found to be misleading the people and hampering implementation of projects," he said. Khandu said that Chin's opposition

had deprived Arunachal Pradesh from getting fund from lenders like World Bank, Asian Development Bank and JICA, but despite such challenges, the state cannot sit idle and should work on modalities for earning revenue from hydropower sector.

Referring to the 2880 MW Dibang multi-purpose project in the state, the chief minister informed that during his recent visit to the area, he convinced the project affected people who agreed to withdraw the case filed in the court, to pave way for early execution of the project.

Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein, who also holds the Hydropower portfolio, said that the state has been 'crying' for lack of resources when the 'resources' are right at the doorstep. Urging all not to look further, he called for united efforts to harness the hydropower potential which is abundant in the state.

Mein said the state government would set up a system where clearances are given in a timely manner and developers are made to feel secure for investment.

## Mamata congratulates AAP, says mandate in Delhi against politics of hatred and CAA-NRC

**HOWRAH / BANKURA (WB), FEB 11 (PTI):** Congratulating AAP over its stupendous victory in the Delhi Assembly polls, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday that people have rejected the "politics of hatred and division" and have given a "mandate against CAA and NRC".

The TMC supremo said that the Delhi Assembly poll result is a reflection of the good work done by the Kejriwal government in the last five years and the saffron party has got a "befitting reply for torturing students and women" in the national capital.

She was referring to the attacks on Jamia Milia Islamia and JNU students and incidents of molestation of Gargi College students in Delhi.

BJP will face similar results in the 2021 assembly polls in Bengal, Banerjee said.

"BJP is losing one election after another - this has been an ongoing trend. It began in Maharashtra, then in Jharkhand and now in Delhi. Everywhere the trend is very clear - the people are rejecting BJP and its politics of hatred," Banerjee told reporters in Howrah.

Claiming that the people had voted against

CAA and NRC in the Delhi polls, Banerjee said there are important issues like unemployment, economy, industry, price hike and development but the Centre is focussing only on the politics of hatred.

"Arrogance and the politics of vendetta have crossed all limits since BJP returned to power at the Centre for the second consecutive time. The country is burning," she said.

On the dismal performance by Congress in the Delhi polls, Banerjee said Congress scores wherever regional parties are not strong enough to counter the BJP.

Earlier in the day, Banerjee had called up Kejriwal to congratulate him on AAP's resounding victory in the Delhi polls.

Later, in a tweet Banerjee said leaders playing on faith and divisive politics should take a cue, as only those who deliver on their promises are rewarded.

"Congratulations @ArvindKejriwal as #DelhiResults show @AamAadmiParty all set to win #DelhiElection2020 with a thumping majority yet again. Leaders playing on faith through hate speech & divisive politics should take a cue, as only those who deliver on their promises are rewarded," she tweeted.

Addressing a rally in Bankura district, Banerjee, who is among the harshest critics of BJP, mocked the saffron party over its string of defeats in the assembly polls post 2019 Parliamentary polls and said it has "got a befitting reply for torturing students and women in New Delhi".

"One state after another is slipping out of BJP's grip, and the party will soon lose all states under its control," she claimed.

"They (BJP) will face similar results in the 2021 assembly polls in Bengal. Only development will work. CAA, NRC and NPR will be rejected," she told the gathering.

Banerjee and Kejriwal have shared a cordial relationship over the years. The Delhi chief minister had come out in support of his West Bengal counterpart during the general elections in 2019 and also during her face-off with the Centre over the erstwhile Kolkata police chief Rajeev Kumar.

Banerjee on her part had condemned attacks on Kejriwal during the general elections and lashed out at BJP over the issue.

The TMC had also thrown its weight behind AAP for the Delhi polls.

## 14 Rohingya refugees die on boat off Bangladesh: official

**COX'S BAZAR, FEB 11 (AFP):** At least 14 people drowned early Tuesday and 70 people were rescued when a boat carrying Rohingya refugees sank off southern Bangladesh, officials said.

"So far we have recovered 14 bodies and 70 people alive," coast guard commander Naim ul Haq

told AFP, adding that navy and coast guard boats were still searching near St Martin's island in the Bay of Bengal.

Many of the 700,000-plus Rohingya who fled a military crackdown in Myanmar in 2017 have tried to leave refugee camps in Bangladesh on boats headed for Malaysia.

## Whips issued for health of House: Naidu

**NEW DELHI, FEB 11 (PTI):** Amid speculation surrounding the whip issued by the BJP in the House, Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday said it is for the health of the House as attendance is normally very less on the last day of the session before the recess.

The Budget session of Parliament, which started on January 31, will go on a break from Tuesday and meet again on March 2.

As the House met for the day, Naidu said no bill will be taken up and the House will only discuss the Budget, and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's reply later in the day.

The BJP had on Monday issued a whip asking its members of Parliament to be present in

their respective Houses on Tuesday.

After whips were issued by political parties, there was speculation in a section of the media that the government may come up with an important legislation in the House.

Naidu said some political parties seem to have issued whips.

"That is for the health of the House because today is the last day (before the break) and we have seen in the past that attendance normally is very less sending a very wrong message as if members are not interested in the Budget and the House," he said.

The Chairman further said, "I will be happy" if a whip is issued regularly throughout the session so that MPs remain present.

## Nepal sees slight decline in tourists in January, India remains its top source



**KATHMANDU, FEB 11 (PTI):** India continued to be Nepal's top source of tourists in January even though there was a slight decline in the total number of tourists visiting the picturesque Himalayan nation.

A total of 79,686 tourists visited Nepal in January 2020 while the number was 81,272 in the same month last year, according to the Nepal Tourism Board.

However, the number of Indian tourists has slightly increased in this period, according to the official figures.

A total of 16,882 Indians visited Nepal by air route this January compared to 14,650 Indians who visited last January.

The number of tourists from China, has decreased apparently due to the novel coronavirus infection in the neighbouring country.

Tourism entrepreneurs fear that the deadly virus infection might hit the industry hard as the death toll is escalating in China and it is spreading across the world.

The death toll in China's novel coronavirus outbreak reached 1,016

with 108 new fatalities reported mostly in the worst-affected Hubei province while the confirmed cases of infection have soared to 42,638, Chinese health officials said on Tuesday.

Outside China, there have been more than 350 infections reported in almost 30 places with two deaths, one in the Philippines and the other in Hong Kong.

Many global airlines have cancelled their flights to China and some countries have barred Chinese nationals from visiting their countries.

## Google draws anger with vacation homes feature

**Brussels, Feb 10 (AFP):** More than 30 travel firms -- including TripAdvisor and Expedia -- complained on Monday to the EU's powerful anti-trust authority that search giant Google is unfairly trying to encroach on their business.

In a letter Google is once again being accused of using the overwhelming dominance of its search engine to launch and promote its own services to the detriment of existing players.

The letter, addressed to EU competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager and published on an association website, lands just two days before

Google is to plead an appeal at an EU court in a similar case involving Google Shopping.

"We are currently witnessing an attempt by Google to expand its dominance in the market for (search) into the separate markets for vacation rental intermediation services," said the letter.

This is done by Google "favouring its own service in general search results," added the letter, which was first reported by the Financial Times.

In a separate document seen by AFP, a German-based signatory formally lodged an official complaint to the EU,

which is under no obligation to look into the case.

The European Commission confirmed the receipt of the letter but refused any further comment. At stake in the case are the many websites and platforms that catalogue holiday homes for European vacation-goers and link them to homeowners.

The signatories -- which also include holiday home associations from Germany, Spain and France -- complained that related Google searches now promote a "visually rich" and specific result that aggregates and duplicates their own services.

## Nepal prepares to evacuate citizens from virus-hit Wuhan city in China

**SHIRISH B PRADHAN KATHMANDU, FEB 11 (PTI):** Nepal is preparing to bring back its 180 nationals struck in China's Wuhan city, the epicentre of the deadly coronavirus that has killed over 1,000 people, officials said here.

The disease emerged in December in a market in central China's Wuhan city that sold wild animals, and spread rapidly.

Outside China, there have been more than 350 infections reported in almost 30 places with two deaths, one in the Philippines and the other in Hong Kong.

Nepal government is

preparing to bring back Nepalese nationals currently residing in Wuhan city of China through a chartered flight of Nepal Airlines in a few days, official sources said.

The government is preparing to send the aircraft to China around mid-February after 180 Nepalese nationals who were struck in Wuhan city, registered their names in the Nepalese embassy in Beijing seeking evacuation, the sources said.

The government said it is setting up an isolation centre before bringing the Nepalese nationals from Wuhan.

Five Nepalese nationals were admitted to a government hospital in Kathmandu for the suspected virus infection after they returned from China last fortnight. However, only one of them was found to be infected and he has already been cured, according to health ministry sources.

The death toll in China's novel coronavirus outbreak has gone up to 1,016 with 108 new fatalities reported mostly in the worst-affected Hubei province while the confirmed cases of infection have soared to 42,638, Chinese health officials said on Tuesday.

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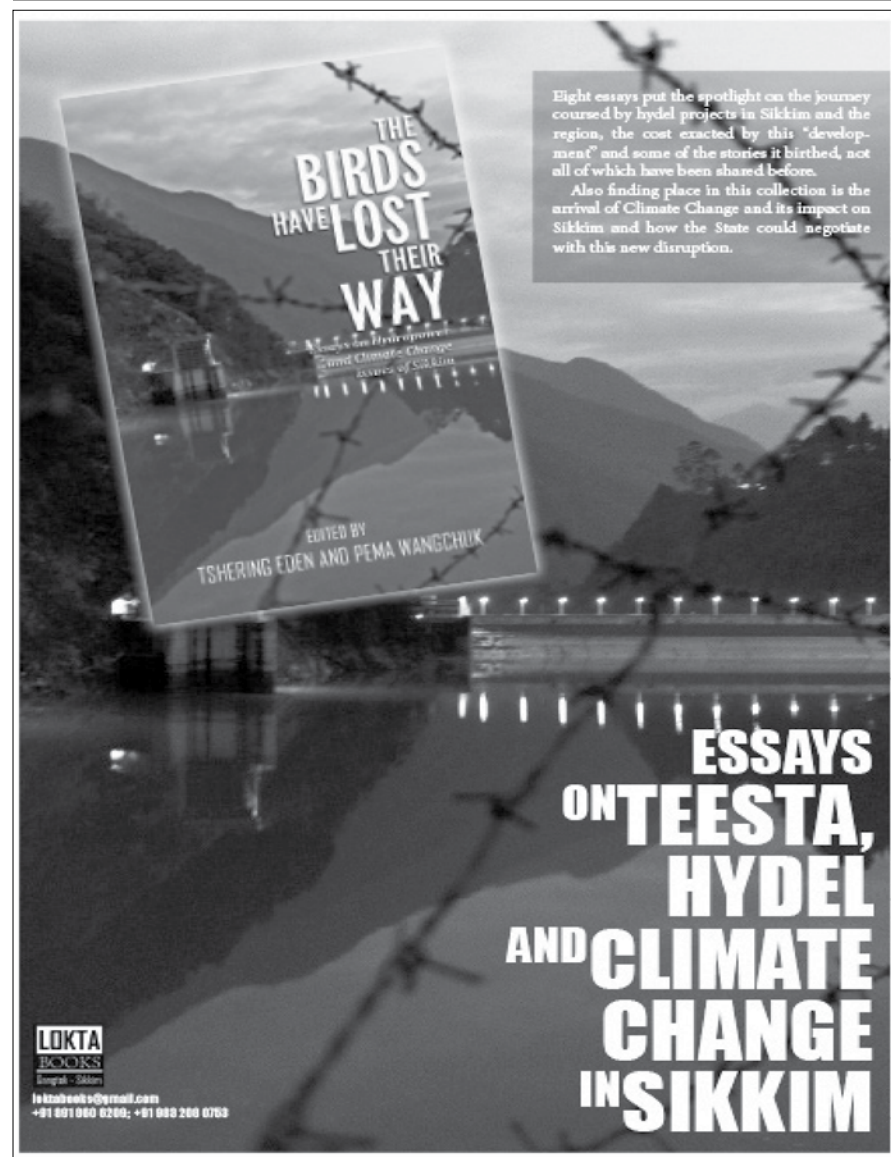
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## Ronaldo, Ibrahimovic set for Italian Cup clash

**MILAN, FEB 11 (AFP):** Cristiano Ronaldo and Zlatan Ibrahimovic are set to go head-to-head in Thursday's Italian Cup semi-final, first leg between Juventus and AC Milan at the San Siro. Both Ronaldo and Ibrahimovic scored at the weekend in defeats as Juventus fell 2-1 at Hellas Verona, while AC Milan threw away a two-goal lead in a 4-2 defeat by city rivals Inter.

"It wasn't the result we wanted," said the 35-year-old Ronaldo despite becoming the first Juventus player to score in 10 successive league games, just one game short of the Serie A record. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner has scored 23 goals in all competitions this season.

Ibrahimovic, 38, has scored three goals since returning to Milan last month. The Swede headed in the second goal on Sunday after setting up the first, but Inter hit back with four second-half strikes.

"I showed that I can still make a difference, even at 38," he said.

But Inter striker Romelu Lukaku will be looking to upstage the two other former Manchester United players against Napoli in the other last-four first leg on Wednesday. Gennaro Gattuso's Napoli, despite their current slump,

ousted holders Lazio in the quarter-finals.

"There's a new king in town," a jubilant Lukaku wrote on Twitter after scoring the fourth goal for Inter in Sunday's derby.

"We run this town."

The Belgian was replying to Ibrahimovic's pre-derby post saying that "lions don't compare themselves to humans".

Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri has reason to be worried by his side's away form, with the defending Serie A champions having lost their last two games on the road.

"I hope that someone will help me, it's something we have to resolve," Sarri said after the loss to Verona. "Right now we have a difference in performance between home and away." Juventus are bidding to reclaim the trophy which they held for four seasons until losing to eventual runners-up Atalanta in the quarters last year.

Antonio Conte's Inter are the only one of the four semi-finalists to win in Serie A at the weekend, with Napoli crashing to a 3-2 defeat by lowly Lecce.

Inter's victory lifted them ahead of Juventus on goal difference at the top of the table, as they target their first Scudetto since 2010. The second-leg ties will take place on March 4 and 5.

## Warner takes step to cricket redemption with top Australia honour



**SYDNEY, FEB 11 (AFP):** David Warner's bid to redeem himself after a damaging ball-tampering scandal has taken another step forward with the opening batsman winning Australia's highest cricketing honour.

The divisive 33-year-old has been awarded the Allan Border Medal for the third time, pipping by one vote Steve Smith, who was also involved in the attempt to alter the ball using sandpaper during a South Africa Test in 2018.

Pat Cummins, the ICC Test Player of the Year, came third in an award voted on by fellow players, the media and umpires.

"When it is that close, you really don't know so it's a big surprise to be honest," an emotional Warner said at the ceremony late Monday.

"I had no doubt that I had the capabilities of coming back and being here again.

"It was a lot of hard work and commitment to put my hand back up for selection, and to go away and do what I know best which is to try and score as many runs as I can in any competition I'm playing in," added Warner, who also won the award in 2016 and 2017.

Warner and Smith were both slapped with

one-year bans for their roles in the ball-tampering scandal, while Cameron Bancroft was given nine months.

They were welcomed back into the Australian fold when their suspensions expired in March last year.

Smith was the undoubted star of their re-tention of the Ashes in England last year, a series where Warner failed to fire, scoring just 95 runs in 10 innings.

But the opener was Australia's best batsman at the one-day World Cup, with 647 runs at an average of 71.88, and excelled in Twenty20 series against Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

He then took apart Pakistan's young bowling attack in the two-Test series that followed, including a career-high 335 not out in Adelaide.

Warner joins a select club of multiple winners of the Border Medal, including Ricky Ponting (2004, 2006, 2007) and Michael Clarke (2005, 2012, 2013), who also shared the gong in 2009.

Shane Watson (2010, 2011) and Smith (2015, 2018) have won it twice.

Allrounder Ellyse Perry joined Warner as a three-times winner by claiming her third Belinda Clark Award as the outstanding women's player.

# Running reaches crossroads as Nike-led footwear arms race infects mainstream

**JONATHAN LIEW**

**LONDON, 11 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]:**

There was a guy at parkrun the weekend before last wearing a pair of lime-green Vaporflys on the start line. At least he looked suitably sheepish about it – pointedly ignoring the sharp whispers, the discreet pointing, the gentle ribbing from his running club mates. With its clownish platform heels and lurid alien colour scheme, the Vaporfly is not a shoe for blending into the crowd. Even in a field of 600 anonymous runners the eye is always going to be drawn to the one wearing what looks like a mutant tropical fish on each foot. The race began and off he streaked: a blur of lime-green disappearing into the distance, leaving the rest of us, with our boring reasonably-priced shoes and sniggering moral judgments, in his dust.

Of course, it's easy to scoff when the stakes are minuscule. Turning up for your local Saturday morning fun run in £250 space-age trainers: objectively very funny, and largely analogous to the guy who wears his Lionel Messi astro boots to Wednesday five-a-side (and leaves with several painful stud-shaped indentations in his ankle). What happens, though, when the stakes are far higher? When the prize is an Olympic gold medal, when the audience is global, when the margins are life-changing? Should it matter what shoes the competitors are wearing? And if not, why not?

These are some of the questions with which athletics has been grappling in recent months. In a way they go well



beyond the optimum thickness of a nitrogen-infused midsole or whether two carbon plates should be allowed to overlap. No question of sporting ethics can be resolved purely through science and, by the same token, the terms of our emotional engagement are far too important to be dictated by administrators bearing formulae. The question of the Nike Vaporflys – and its successor models – is thus one that cuts to the very core of what sport is about, or should be.

By now readers will be aware of how Vaporfly-shod athletes have been laying waste to the record books, quietly and quickly changing the face of the sport. Eight of the 12 fastest men's or women's marathons in history have been run in the last 18 months. In October, in Vienna, Eliud Kipchoge became the first man to run the marathon distance in under two hours. The prototype Alphafly shoes he wore for that effort are banned but

last month World Athletics retroactively declared the Vaporflys legal as well as the records set in them.

The first point to make here – although in the scale of things, not a terrifically helpful one – is that Nike have done nothing illegal or even that novel. Carbon plates date back to the early 2000s, with Paul Tergat breaking the marathon world record in a pair of Filas in 2003. Nor is there much new in the deployment of energy-efficient foam, which Adidas first pioneered almost a decade ago. Nike's stroke of insight has been to synthesise largely existent technologies into a single devastating package, one that with the backing of World Athletics has in effect rewritten the terms of distance running. Either you join the arms race (if, that is, you can negotiate Nike's imperial battalion of patent lawyers). Or you lose.

You don't have to be a luddite or a nostalgic to wonder about where this vision of athletics might ultimately lead.

For those at the vanguard of the revolution these are genuinely transformative times – a chance to rebrand athletics as a high-powered, jaw-dropping spectator entertainment. When Kipchoge states, with all the evangelical zeal of a tech bro in a headset giving a Ted talk, that "we must go with technology" and compares Nike's trainer innovation with the role of tyre manufacturers in Formula One, he is articulating an entirely different sort of sport from the one we grew up with: one in which the turning wheel of technological progress is not merely an auxiliary sideshow but part of the spectacle itself.

The main gripe here is not driven by ideology or anti-progress. We are not talking about returning to cinder tracks and putting everyone in Dunlop Green Flash. Nor is it the increasingly corrosive influence of Nike on athletics, an entire sport now in effect in thrall to a single company; nor

the inevitable human wastage of athletes physiologically unsuited to the new technology or sponsored by companies unable to replicate it or simply unable to afford it; nor even the colossal environmental dereliction of a shoe that has to be thrown away after 200 miles of use.

No, the real point is this: in the same way that nobody reads novels to marvel at the typeface, nobody watches athletics – in many ways the oldest and purest sport of all – to gawp at the trainers. Do you know how many butt-numbingly boring articles about shoe technology I had to read before I could start writing this column? Even its very existence feels like the triumph of the inane over the essential, a lame surrender to the Nike marketing octopus. (Woman in Nike's PR department, reading Vaporfly's press coverage: "Oh, no. Another article criticising our shoes for being too fast. How utterly terrible.")

But then, if you're a sport in 2020 and not somehow facilitating disposable parasite-consumerism, then do you even really exist? Perhaps once, long ago, before we were terminally jaded by doping scandals, we could still cling to the idea that athletics somehow represented the very best of us as a species; that its feats might inspire us, rather than simply inspire us to buy trainers; that this was genuinely a sport operating by the laws of the body, not the laws of the market. Or perhaps this too was always delusion: a lime-green speck on the horizon, gently receding ever further into the distance.

## Former Celtic star McNamara in hospital after collapsing: reports

**GLASGOW, FEB 11 (AFP):** Former Celtic defender Jackie McNamara is in hospital after collapsing near his home, according to reports.

McNamara, 46, is understood to have been admitted to hospital for brain surgery.

A post on McNamara's personal Twitter account read: "This is Jackie's daughter. Thank you all for your kind words and support. My dad is getting the best care possible, as you all can understand this is difficult for us as a family and request privacy at this time."

John Hartson, his former Celtic teammate, stated that McNamara had collapsed on Saturday.

"Worried sick for my former teammate and great friend Jackie McNamara who collapsed at home Saturday with a bleed on the brain... My thoughts are with his wife Samantha and the children," Hartson tweeted. Scottish champions Celtic wrote on Twitter: "The thoughts and prayers of everyone at #CelticFC are with Jackie and his family." McNamara, who claimed four league titles at Celtic and won 33 Scotland caps, also played for Wolves, Aberdeen, Falkirk and Partick Thistle.

He has managed Partick, Dundee United and York City.

# Everton show the way by promoting community rather than gambling

**DAVID CONN**

**LIVERPOOL, 11 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]:**

In a climate of serious concern finally rising about football's drenching with gambling adverts, Everton showed a glimpse of a better future at their home match with Crystal Palace on Saturday. Rather than promoting to the watching world Everton's sponsor, the Kenyan betting giant SportPesa, the players wore a name across their shirts that looked very much more appropriate for the self-styled "people's club": their own Everton in the Community programme.

It was a one-off, Everton taking advantage of the single match a season when clubs generally can promote a good cause rather than their commercial sponsor, which, for 10 of the 20 Premier League clubs, is an online gambling company. Palace were wearing the name of theirs, ManBetX, reported to be a Filipino-owned sports betting and casino outfit, operated by a company registered in Malta.

Sporting the name of their well-regarded community programme looked right for Everton and a clear solution to two major challenges for the Premier League highlighted by the new chief executive, Richard Masters, in his first media interviews last week. First and most obviously, as the government begins its review into gambling regulation, which was unleashed so dramatically in 2005 after decades of behind-frosted-glass restrictions, it would be such a better look for clubs.

Masters talked about resisting any moves to ban gambling sponsorships, saying football and betting have a long association – which felt like an unattractive, unconvincing line the league has decided to take. He acknowledged that "govern-



nance" should be stronger, "particularly to protect the vulnerable", but said that overall the Premier League is not "sniffy or judgmental" about its embrace by gambling. It seemed an oddly casual approach. The alarm is being sounded more strongly than ever now about the transformation of sport's traditionally controlled association with gambling into relentless marketing online, on shirts, on hoardings, on television.

The legal relaxations coincided with the revolution in mobile phone use, which has made gambling, mostly on apps, much more immediate and, some experts say, more addictive. Dr Darragh McGee of the University of Bath has warned of the "gamblification" of football after he studied the lives of young men who could no longer watch a game without betting on it and suffered dire consequences to their finances, mental health and relationships.

One of the most heart-wrenching campaigns for stronger regulation is Gambling with Lives, set up by Charles and Liz Ritchie after their son Jack, a sociable, "normal" young man and football lover, killed himself

in 2017 aged 24, having become addicted to gambling.

The other challenge for Masters, to which Everton's shirt on Saturday presented a clear solution, was his corporate mission to gain more recognition for the community work the clubs do. Before the long, blighted search for a chief executive to replace Richard Scudamore was called off with Masters' in-house elevation from caretaker to the job itself, a senior Premier League source told the Guardian that this was part of the brief. The clubs spend significant resources on their community programmes – the most recent figure provided was 3.6% of the last £8.4bn three-year TV deals – and they want more recognition. The programmes have developed to work at the sharp end: with police, education authorities and social inclusion agencies to help disadvantaged people in tough neighbourhoods.

The area around Goodison Park is one of the country's most deprived and the community programme works with residents, refugees and people who are homeless or suffering addiction problems. The club's chief

executive, Denise Barrett-Baxendale, ran the community programme first and Everton are committed to continuing this work when they move to their planned new stadium on Bramley Moor Dock. Barrett-Baxendale acknowledged at the club's AGM last month that "in an ideal world" they would prefer a "different type of sponsor" than a gambling company.

SportPesa grew and became vastly profitable in the relatively unregulated gambling environment of Kenya, where senior politicians soon became alarmed at the levels of addiction and indebtedness of young people drawn into online betting.

Masters and the clubs are more likely to gain the wider appreciation they seek if their good works are not perceived to be jarring with commercial voraciousness, evidenced most clearly by selling their shirts to gambling companies. If the clubs turn such sponsorships down and promote their own programmes, their claim to have their communities at the heart of who they are will be more credible, and mean more, because they will have put their money on it.



## Palestinians shelve plan for UN vote on Trump's Middle East plan

PATRICK WINTOUR

**NEW YORK, 11 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]:** Palestinian-backed plans for a UN security council vote on Tuesday designed to show international opposition to Donald Trump's Middle East peace plan are expected to be shelved after the US and the UK raised separate objections to the draft text.

In what was being seen as a key test of the diplomatic support for Trump's "ultimate deal", Tunisia, with Arab League and Palestinian support, had tabled a resolution saying it breached basic undertakings to the Palestinian people.

Without the resolution, the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas will use his speaking slot to rail against the US president, who he has long rejected as a brazenly biased in favour of Israel's government.

The diplomatic episode was also seen as a key test of whether post-Brexit Britain would stick to its longstanding positions on the Middle East peace process or instead seek to avoid a clash with the Trump administration by abstaining on the Tunisian text.

In an effort to find a compromise the UK on Monday called for changes to the draft text, including the insertion of a call for both Israel and the Palestinians to return to negotiations. The formula would allow the British not to endorse the Trump plan but to portray it as a possible basis for negotiations.

The US set out an array of objections to the Tunisian text and indicated it would veto the resolution if it was not rewritten. Tunisia may now shelve Tuesday's vote to allow time for consultations. Palestinian sources confirmed that they were not likely to get the support they had once expected for the resolution. The outcome is likely to be seen as a rare diplomatic success for the US at the UN on the Middle East issue.

In a separate failed attempt to rally opposition, Abbas was scheduled to speak alongside former Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, at a joint press conference in New York later on Tuesday.

It was expected that Olmert, who negotiated with Abbas in 2007 for a peace deal, would support the Palestinian president's position on Trump's plan. However, when pressed on the issue by Israeli media, Olmert said the two would only meet privately and refused to reject Washington's proposal.

Washington has been putting pressure on UN security council delegations for days in an attempt to ensure it would not be isolated in Tuesday's planned vote. Such has been the pressure that last week the new Tunisian government felt forced to recall its highly experienced and respected UN ambassador, Moncef Baati.

# Coronavirus 'could infect 60% of global population if unchecked'

SARAH BOSELEY

**LONDON, 11 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]:** The coronavirus epidemic could spread to about two-thirds of the world's population if it cannot be controlled, according to Hong Kong's leading public health epidemiologist.

His warning came after the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) said recent cases of coronavirus patients who had never visited China could be the "tip of the iceberg".

Prof Gabriel Leung, the chair of public health medicine at Hong Kong University, said the overriding question was to figure out the size and shape of the iceberg. Most experts thought that each person infected would go on to transmit the virus to about 2.5 other people. That gave an "attack rate" of 60-80%.

"Sixty per cent of the world's population is an awfully big number," Leung told the Guardian in London, en route to an expert meeting at the WHO in Geneva.

Even if the general fatality rate is as low as 1%, which Leung thinks is possible once milder cases are taken into account, the death toll would be massive.

He will tell the WHO expert meeting that the main issue is the scale of the growing worldwide epidemic and the second priority is to find out whether the drastic measures taken by China to prevent the spread have worked – because if so, other countries should think about adopting them.

The death toll from virus



in mainland China passed 1,000 on Tuesday, with another record daily rise in fatalities, although the number of new confirmed cases fell.

Leung – one of the world's experts on coronavirus epidemics, who played a major role in the Sars outbreak in 2002-03 – works closely with other leading scientists such as counterparts at Imperial College London and Oxford University.

At the end of January, he warned in a paper in the Lancet that outbreaks were likely to be "growing exponentially" in cities in China, lagging just one to two weeks behind Wuhan. Elsewhere, "independent self-sustaining outbreaks in major cities globally could become inevitable" because of the substantial movement of people who were infected but had not yet developed symptoms, and the absence

of public health measures to stop the spread.

Epidemiologists and modelers were trying to figure out what was likely to happen, said Leung. "Is 60-80% of the world's population going to get infected? Maybe not. Maybe this will come in waves. Maybe the virus is going to attenuate its lethality because it certainly doesn't help it if it kills everybody in its path, because it will get killed as well," he said.

Experts also need to know whether the restrictions in the centre of Wuhan and other cities have reduced infections. "Have these massive public health interventions, social distancing, and mobility restrictions worked in China?" he asked. "If so, how can we roll them out, or is it not possible?"

There would be difficulties. "Let's assume that they have worked. But how long

can you close schools for? How long can you lock down an entire city for? How long can you keep people away from shopping malls? And if you remove those [restrictions], then is it all going to come right back and rage again? So those are very real questions," he said. If China's lockdown has not worked, there is another unpalatable truth to face: that the coronavirus might not be possible to contain. Then the world will have to switch tracks: instead of trying to contain the virus, it will have to work to mitigate its effects.

For now, containment measures are essential. Leung said the period of time when people were infected but showed no symptoms remained a huge problem. Quarantine was necessary, but to ensure people were not still carrying the virus when they

left, everybody should ideally be tested every couple of days. If anyone within a quarantine camp or on a stricken cruise ship tested positive, the clock should be reset to 14 days more for all the others.

Some countries at risk because of the movement of people to and from China have taken precautions. On a visit to Thailand three weeks ago, Leung talked to the health minister, who is also deputy prime minister, and advised the setting up of quarantine camps, which the government has done. But other countries with links to China appear, inexplicably, to have no cases – such as Indonesia. "Where are they?" he asked.

Scientists still do not know for sure whether transmission is through droplets from coughs or possibly airborne particles. "It's rather difficult to do that kind of careful de-

tailed work when everything is raging. And unless it is raging you are unlikely to get enough confirmed cases," he said. "In Sars we never had the chance to do these kinds of studies."

Hong Kong, which has 36 confirmed cases of coronavirus, was in the worst possible set of circumstances for fighting a raging epidemic, said Leung.

"You need extra trust, extra sense of solidarity, extra sense of goodwill, all of which have been completely used up – every last drop in that social capital fuel tank has been exhausted after now eight months of social unrest, so it couldn't have come at a worse time," he said.

People needed to have faith and trust in their government while the uncertainties of the new outbreak were worked out by the scientific community, he said, "and of course when you have social media and fake news and real news all mixed in there and then zero trust, how do you fight that epidemic?"

In January, Leung published two papers in the Lancet. The first examined the damage done by social unrest to the mental health of the Hong Kong population. The second was on the spread of coronavirus.

"So the two have now come together. The first has made the second impossible to deal with – impossible. I mean, how do you bring your population along when there's been this huge chasm in society?" he said.

## Food fears grow as swarms of locusts reach Uganda and Tanzania



JASON BURKE

**KAMPALA, 11 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]:** Massive swarms of locusts sweeping across much of east Africa have reached Uganda and Tanzania, the United Nations has said, threatening millions more people with hunger in an already fragile region.

Tanzania has detected swarms in its northern border areas close to Mount Kilimanjaro and hired three planes to spray pesticide, a tactic seen as the most effective means of countering the spread of the insects.

Ugandan authorities have rushed pesticides to affected areas and has mobilised thousands of troops.

"We are using motorised sprayers, a drone and manual sprayers," Stephen Byantwale, the commissioner for crop protection at the ministry of agriculture, said. "They [locusts] are spreading like wildfire, so they are a real, major threat."

The outbreak in east

Africa is the most serious in decades and has already devastated crops across a swath of Kenya and Somalia.

Climate experts have pointed to unusually heavy rains, aided by a powerful cyclone off Somalia in December, as a major factor in the crisis. The locusts arrived from the Arabian peninsula after cyclones dumped vast amounts of rain in the deserts of Oman – creating perfect breeding conditions.

One especially large swarm in north-eastern Kenya measured 60km long by 40km wide. Even a small swarm of the insects can consume enough food for 35,000 people in a day.

The infestation from the Arabian peninsula has also affected India and Pakistan.

With further rains expected in the region in the coming weeks, experts fear the number of locusts if unchecked could grow by up to 500 times by June, when dri-

er weather is expected.

One challenge is that many locusts are breeding in the semi-autonomous Puntland region of Somalia. Much of the territory there is threatened or held by al-Shabaab, the Islamist extremist group. That makes it difficult or impossible to conduct aerial spraying to kill the insects.

A single swarm can contain up to 150 million locusts per sq km of farmland, an area the size of almost 250 football fields, regional authorities said.

There are concerns for South Sudan, where almost half the country faces hunger as it emerges from years of civil war.

Even before this outbreak, nearly 20 million people faced high levels of food insecurity across the east African region long challenged by periodic droughts and floods. Some analysts have blamed the locust outbreak on climate change, though a direct link is difficult to establish.

"We know that cyclones are the originators of swarms – and in the past 10 years there's been an increase in the frequency of cyclones in the Indian Ocean," said Keith Cressman, senior locust forecasting officer at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), earlier this month.

"Normally there's none, or maybe one. So this is very unusual. It's difficult to attribute to climate change directly, but if this trend of increased frequency of cyclones in the Indian Ocean continues, then certainly that's going to translate to an increase in locust swarms in the Horn of Africa."

The threat in east Africa comes from the desert locust, one of a number of species that form swarms. There have been six major desert locust plagues since the 1900s, the last of which was in 1987-89. The last major rise in the number of locust plagues occurred in 2003-05.

## North Korea's most senior defector to run for parliament in the South

JUSTIN MCCURRY

**SEOUL, 11 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]:** The most senior diplomat to have defected from North Korea will run for parliament in South Korea to "give hope" to tens of thousands of others who have fled the regime, media reports said on Tuesday.

Thae Yong-ho was deputy ambassador at the North Korean embassy in London when he defected with his wife and two sons in August 2016, and has since become one of the regime's most vocal critics. Thae, who was denounced as a traitor by North Korea, will run in the national assembly elections on 15 April for Liberty Korea, the country's conservative main opposition party, officials said.

"Thae is someone who risked his life for freedom," Kim Hyong-o, a party official in charge of candidacies, told re-

porters. "As a person who understands the sorrow of the 10 million separated families, and as one of 25 million North Koreans, he could present a vision for peace. "His courage and decision will give hope to North Korean refugees and other South and North Korean people who want genuine unification."

If elected, Thae, 57, would become the second North Korean defector to win a seat in the national assembly. The first was Cho Myung-chul, who fled to the South in 1994 and represented a predecessor to Liberty Korea from 2012-16. Party officials said Thae was likely to campaign for a seat in a Seoul constituency.

He sparked jubilation in South Korea, and anger in his former homeland, when he became one of very few senior North Korean officials to defect. The regime in Pyongyang denounced

him as "human scum" and accused him of misusing government funds and other crimes.

More than 30,000 North Koreans have defected to the South since the end of the 1950-53 Korean war, but most are people fleeing poverty in rural areas near the Chinese border. The most high-ranking North Korean to have defected is Hwang Jang-yop, once a senior official with ruling Workers' party who once tutored Kim Jong-il, the country's former leader and father of its current leader Kim Jong-un. Hwang died in 2010.

Thae said soon after he arrived in Seoul that he couldn't bear the thought of his children leading "miserable" lives in the North, adding that he had lost confidence in Kim Jong-un after the leader began executing officials and developing nuclear weapons.

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**SHINE THROUGH THE NIGHT! Actress Katie Holmes is in good spirits at the Flaunt and Zadig & Voltaire's celebration of The Home Issue: A Return honoring Katie Holmes in NYC.**

## SRK to make comeback with director duo Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK's next?



After starring in Aanand L Rai's much-talked-about film, 'Zero', Shah Rukh Khan has been on a sabbatical of sorts. The superstar has been sitting back, analysing and carefully choosing his next script. He has been missing for over a year now and his fans just cannot wait to watch his back on screen.

According to the latest reports in a news portal, Shah Rukh Khan is all set to make his comeback with director duo Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK's next film. The report stated that their upcoming film with the Baadshah is a script that they have been holding on to for a long time. The report added that they have pitched the idea to SRK and he is elated to join their universe.

The report further stated that the film will go on floors depending upon Shah Rukh

Khan's dates and he is managing them so that the film starts rolling in mid-2020. The director duo also added that they have left the official announcement up to him.

Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK are known for their unconventional films like, 'Stree', 'Shor In The City', 'Go Goa Gone' and others.

Meanwhile, on the work front, he will be seen playing a special cameo in Ayan Mukerji's 'Brahmastra' starring Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt in the lead.

There have been a lot of speculations doing the rounds about Shah Rukh Khan's upcoming projects. He has been linked to doing movies with Rajkumar Hirani, Ali Abbas Zafar, Sujoy Ghosh, Atlee and many others. However, SRK has neither confirmed any reports nor announced any project yet.

# Eminem reveals how he kept his 2020 Oscars performance a total secret

If you were scratching your head as to why Eminem performed "Lose Yourself" at the 2020 Oscars, you're not alone.

Thousands of people, including Idina Menzel and Billie Eilish, had the same exact question the curtains pulled back and revealed the rapper and band on the Dolby Theater stage. For one, he wasn't included on the list of performers provided by the Academy, and two, he wasn't even nominated at that night's show.

But, some people quickly put two and two together and realized he was invited back since he never got to perform when he won Best Original Song for "Lose Yourself" in 2002. "Look, if you had another shot, another opportunity... Thanks for having me @TheAcademy. Sorry it took me 18 years to get here," he tweeted. With that answered, fans then marveled at how the Academy and Eminem managed to keep his performance a secret and why.

Indeed, it was relatively easy to keep it under wraps considering no one ex-

pected the star to perform in the first place. Nonetheless, Mathers, who talked to Variety, said they still took extra measures to ensure everyone was shocked when they saw him on the stage. "We flew in [to Los Angeles] last week, so we probably have four or five rehearsals just to make sure we got everything

why they wanted this to be so top-secret, the 47-year-old explained it was suggested by either his publicist or someone from the Academy, so he went along with it because he thought it was a "kinda dope" idea.

Judging by the shocked faces and thousands of tweets, the team pulled off what it hoped to achieve and more. Plus,



right," the artist shared. "Most of the rehearsals were offsite, not in [the Dolby Theater], just trying to keep it secret." As for

the rapper said he was very pleased to attend the show since it meant he got a hug from Salma Hayak.

## Pitt says he writes his speeches, credits 'funny friends' like Fincher for help

LOS ANGELES, FEB 11 (PTI): Hollywood superstar Brad Pitt has said that he wrote all of his acceptance speeches this award season but took some help from few of his "funny friends".

Pitt's witty and self-deprecating speeches had led to speculation that the actor had hired a professional speechwriter.

But that's not true, Pitt, who won the best supporting actor Oscar for his role in "Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood", said.

"Historically, I've always been really tentative about speeches, like they make me nervous. This round, I figured if I'm going to do this, let's put some real work into it, try to get comfortable. This is the result of that," Pitt said post his win for the Quentin Tarantino film.

"No, I definitely write them. I have some funny friends, I have some very funny friends that help me with some laughs, but no, it's gotta come from the heart," he added.

Asked if he was having the time of his life, Pitt said it has been a "special run".

"I hope not! I hope I got other s\*\*t going on. But it has been a really special run, and again, it's a community I love and friends that I've made over thirty years. It's meant

a lot to me, truly." Prior to his Oscar win, the actor told Variety on the red carpet that his close pal David Fincher helps him with his speeches.

"My man Fincher, we trade barbs every week," he said.

During the award season, Pitt had often made fun of his single status and what his tinder bio would reflect. He also made political wisecracks, telling the BAFTA audience that he was going to name his trophy "Harry", after Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle's decision to step down as senior royals.

His Oscar speech was more reflective and emotional but equally charming.

Noting the 45 second limit for speeches at Oscars, the actor quipped about the impeachment trial, saying his time on stage was "45 seconds more than the Senate gave John Bolton this week".

The actor joked that Tarantino might make a movie on it and in his true revisionist style, create an ending where "the adults do the right thing". The line was a sly dig at the Senate voting against allowing witnesses during President Donald Trump's impeachment trial.

He graciously thanked co-star Leonardo DiCaprio and said director Tarantino was "one of a kind".

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## Salman Khan to romance Pooja Hegde in 'Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali'



Salman Khan has finally found the leading lady for his upcoming film 'Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali'.

The actor has been paired opposite Pooja Hegde, who had romanced Akshay Kumar in 'Housefull 4' and Hrithik Roshan in 'Mohenjo Daro'.

Producer Sajid Naidad-wala confirmed the same to Mumbai Mirror and stated, "Having worked with Pooja in 'Housefull 4', we felt she was a perfect fit for this film. She has an amazing screen presence and will make for a good pair with Salman. They will bring freshness to the story."

'Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali' is a family drama with Farhad Samji calling the shots. The makers of 'Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali' have planned several

workshops for the lead couple to help break the ice before they begin shooting for the first schedule in October.

Revealing deets about Pooja's character in the film, a source informed Mirror, "His lady love is a traditional small-town girl who is the polar opposite of Salman's character. Pooja has played small town roles down South in films like 'Mukunda', and hence the makers found her apt for the role. There's a beautiful mature love story between the two characters, and Pooja's track acts as the catalyst to the plot."

'Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali' will be high on action with Salman fighting for a larger cause.

'Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali' is being planned for Eid 2021.

## Rana's multi-lingual project finally gets a release date

Haathi Mere Saathi is going to be Rana Daggubati's release. The much-delayed film has finally got a release date. The multi-lingual movie is set to release on 2 April 2020.

Directed by Prabu Solomon and produced by Eros International, the movie is made in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu languages. It was

launched two and half years ago but got delayed for various reasons.

Rana is currently shooting for Venu Udugula's 'Virata Parvam' which is expected to hit the screens in May/June. Ill-health was the reason why Rana got a long gap. He is now trying to release movies without much gap.

**ARIES:** Some people marry their childhood sweethearts and live happily ever after. Others serendipitously meet their soulmates in the evening of their lives after two failed marriages and several heartbreaks. Then there are those who have the privilege of meeting the one, but they take years and years to find their way into each other's arms.

Tip: Trust what's happening behind the scenes for you.

**TAURUS:** Wise words by Rupi Kaur to give your perspective on what you are experiencing right now: "It was when I stopped searching for home within others and lifted the foundations of home within myself, that I found there were no roots more intimate than those between mind and body that have decided to be whole." Your thoughts exactly.

Tip: You are finding a sense of home within yourself.

**GEMINI:** How we perceive ourselves de-

fines our relationships with not just the self, but also the world. Where are you vibrating at, Gemini? Do you believe you are being of light who is worthy of being loved? Give yourself the love and care you deserve, wild one. Address the old wounds that are keeping you from making space for the one.

Tip: Claim your independence.

**CANCER:** There is more than enough to go around, Cancer. So where does the feeling of lack arise from? Could our own limited beliefs be creating a sense of mistrust? Awareness is the first step to breaking old patterns and making space for the good stuff to enter. Continue to address the limiting beliefs.

Tip: You are connected to the cosmic flow of Abundance.

**LEO:** Those who resort to aggression in order to make a point are usually the weakest. Understand the difference between assertiveness and aggression.

Course correct if you have chosen the latter. What Spirit wants you to know: there is a way to stand up for your beliefs without going to war.

Tip: Choose assertiveness over aggression.

**VIRGO:** Two's a party, three's a crowd. Now that we have this out of the way, let's talk about you, Virgo. What are you going to do with this precious life of yours? Why do you keep selling yourself short or settling for less-than-perfect love? You've been seeing the signs for a while now.

Tip: It's better to fly solo than to hold onto a relationship causing you harm.

**LIBRA:** Libra, you're a beautiful amalgam of the mother and the crone, offering a warm cup of cocoa and sage advice to your soul circle. While giving unconditionally is truly a gift, today, you're being asked to turn your energy inwards. While, you're at it, refresh your bucket list and do at least one thing that brings you

joy and awakens that spirit of playfulness.

Tip: Live a little.

**SCORPIO:** The trouble is, we save our kindness and compassion for the world, while being unkind to ourselves in private. Pay attention to that inner dialogue, Scorpio. The words you are choosing in order to communicate with yourself. Replace judgements with openness.

Tip: Let your self-talk be a source of empowerment.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Today, you're in the mood to up your style game as you find a sustainable answer to the eternal dilemma of 'I have nothing to wear'. First things first, Marie Kondo your wardrobe. Donate the things that no longer fit right or spark joy. You always have the option to lend it to a friend who resonates with that particular style.

Tip: Reinvent your style.

**CAPRICORN:** Your heart isn't breaking, Capricorn. It's simply coming together.

Allow the old wounds to resurface. Consciously work through emotional entanglements in order to find your freedom. You will find that your relationships will evolve in the process.

Tip: Embrace the in-between.

**AQUARIUS:** What if your experiences have the power to add value to the life of another? Don't shy away from holding space for a circle or sharing your narrative with those who matter. There's a reason storytelling was considered as a form of medicine in ancient cultures.

Tip: Storytelling is a form of medicine, Aquarius.

**PISCES:** Cosmic truth: everybody experiences emotional pain at some point. Should that keep you from radiating like the sun, or believing that you deserve to be loved in the right way? Anything but. You're at a point in your journey where you are integrating the past lessons and seeing your experiences through the eyes of wisdom.

Tip: A period of deep healing is on the cards.