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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Nepal organizations felicitate Chamling “Out of power, not out of politics”

### SUMMIT REPORT

Gangtok, 16 Jan:

SDF president and former Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling is currently in Nepal where in the first two days he has been conferred awards by four organizations. On 15 Jan, he was honoured with Kiraya Yalamber Smriti Samman by Kirat Rai Yayokha, a social organisation of the Kirat Rai in Nepal. He was also felicitated by Kirat Rai Vidhyarthi Sangh.

Today, Mr Chamling was felicitated by Geetkar Sangh, Nepal, in recognition of his contributions as a lyricist and poet. He was also felicitated by Nepal Academy, national institution for promotion of the languages, literature, culture, philosophy and social sciences of Nepal, for his contributions to Nepali literature.

While delivering his acceptance address on Wednesday, Mr Chamling thanked Kirat Rai Yayokha for the honour bestowed on him. He said that he has come to Nepal for the felicitation not as a politician but as a family member of the Yayokha and to pay his respects to his fatherland.

Despite political boundaries that separate Sikkim and Nepal,



the people of the two countries are united by history, language, culture, tradition and similar struggles, said Mr Chamling.

Stating that politics prevalent in developing countries is not based in ideology and values, he said that such politics has earned politicians a bad name and he is a

victim of such politics.

Dwelling on Nepal's nascent democracy, he said that democracy fails when the people only think about their rights while ignoring their responsibilities. He further stressed that those committed to building society and the nation must never give up.

“I have not given up. I'm only out of power but not out of active politics,” he remarked.

He especially highlighted the good relations between India and Nepal and the need to strengthen the relationship.

He informed that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's com-

mitment to solidify the Indo-Nepal relation is evidenced by his personal visit to Nepal last year, and stressed that all the Indian Nepali and the Nepali citizens must work together to further strengthen the relationship between the two countries. The Indian Nepali have an important role to play in ensuring that the friendly bond between the two countries is further solidified.

The programme had Chief Minister of Pradesh No 1, Sher Dhan Rai as the chief guest and was attended by a host of dignitaries that included former ministers, members of Federal Parliament of Nepal, former Ambassador, former Presidents of Kirat Rai Yayokha, amongst others.

In the felicitation ceremony by Geetkar Sangh, Nepal, today Mr Chamling said that to be recognised by a community that has brought music to generations of Nepali speaking people, is one of the biggest awards he has received in his life.

Many other prominent singers and songwriters were also present at the function includ-

ing Kumar Basnet, Usha Sherchan, Shakti Ballabh, Deepak Jangam, Bulu Mukarung and Satya Swaroop Acharya.

Thanking Nepal Academy for the honour, Mr Chamling talked about Nirman Prakashan, a publishing house he had started when he was young. He said that the house has published works of all the renowned writers and poets both from India and Nepal.

He rued about the neutrality of intellectuals and civil society, which he said, has paved the way for the dominance of opinions by negative elements.

“It's the duty of the intellectuals and civil society to stand with the truth and have the courage to speak truth to power,” he asserted.

He suggested that the Nepal Academy organize a Biswa Sahitya Sammelan, a global conference to discuss ideas for bettering not only Nepali literature but also the identity of the Nepali speaking people and called for an emotional unification of the Nepali speaking people. He emphasized that “unless we honour our own people, no one else will.”

## RDD and SIRD hands over National Awards to CM

JORETHANG, 16 JAN (IPR):

Principal Secretary, Rural Development Department, CS Rao, along with Director SIRD, Bishal Mukhiya, handed over the National Award given to SIRD Sikkim and RDD, Government of Sikkim, to the Chief Minister at Karfector, SIRD complex, today.

Rural Development Department, Government of Sikkim, had bagged 8 National Awards in different categories in the National Award Ceremony organized by Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India at National Agriculture Science Complex, Pusa,



New Delhi on 19 Dec, 2019.

The ceremony was chaired by Union Minister RD & PR and Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar along with Minister of State for Rural De-

velopment, Government of India, Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti.

SIRD Sikkim was bestowed with the National Award for overall performance in Training Programmes in North Eastern and Hilly areas

during 2018-19 by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

The award was received by Principal Secretary RDD, CS Rao who was accompanied by Director SIRD & PR, Bishal

Mukhiya.

Chief Minister, PS Golay congratulated the team and encouraged the department to keep working towards the overall development of the state.

Present on the occasion were Minister Power Department, MN Sherpa, Political Secretary to CM, Jacob Khaling, Commissioner RDD, P Senthil Kumar, DC South, Raghu K, SP South, Praveen Gurung, ADC South, Satyen Pradhan, SDM Jorethang, RB Bhandari, SDPO Jorethang, SK Shrestha along with Block Development Officers, officials of South district, and local gentry.

## Olympic medallist gymnast Miller hails Dipa for showing path to youngsters

Mumbai, Jan 16 (PTI): Seven-time Olympic medallist gymnast Shannon Miller on Thursday said Indian trailblazer Dipa Karmakar has shown the young athletes that anything could be achieved with hard work and passion.

“What Dipa (Karmakar) has done has shown the next generation of young athletes all over India that it is possible

with hard-work and passion to go the height of Olympic Games and it is a great way to inspire youth of India,” 42-year-old Miller, the event ambassador of Tata Mumbai Marathon, told reporters here on Thursday.

Miller, a former American artistic gymnast, was the 1993-94 world all-round champion, the 1996 Olympic

balance beam champion, the 1995 Pan American Games champion and a member of gold-winning-magnificent seven team at the 1996 Olympics.

Karmakar rose to fame during the 2016 Rio Olympics where she finished fourth in women's vault event. She was the first Indian woman gymnast to compete in the

Olympics.

Speaking about her inspirational journey, Miller said, “We talk about success but it doesn't come without failure. It is essential to learn how to back yourself up, if not succeeding. For me, it is challenging myself every day to do something more than I usually do.

“I wasn't the most

challenging or most powerful person in the room but I out-worked everyone. I always wanted to be the consistent one and the hardest worker in the group.”

She also said that running was foundation of any sport and in 2007 she ran the full marathon in New York and a half-marathon in Florida earlier.

## India, Bangladesh hold discussions on joint study for proposed free trade pact

NEW DELHI, JAN 16 (PTI): India and Bangladesh on Thursday held discussions on a joint study for the proposed free trade agreement and harmonisation of standards with a view to boost two-way commerce, the government said on Thursday.

“Both sides held extensive discussions on a variety of issues of mutual interest, like Border Haats, joint study for the

proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), CEOs' Forum, sharing of trade data, regional connectivity initiatives, harmonization of standards, upgradation of border trading infrastructure and facilitation of business visas,” the commerce ministry said in a statement.

The CEPA is a free trade agreement under which two trading partners significantly reduce

or eliminate imports duties on maximum number of goods traded between them. They also liberalise norms to promote trade in services sector and boost investments. Before initiating formal negotiations for such pacts, trading partners undertake a joint study to see the potential benefits of such agreements. The two-day commerce secretary level meeting between the two

sides was concluded here on Thursday.

The meeting, it said, was preceded by the 12th meeting of the Joint Working Group on trade.

In a separate statement, the ministry said that the first session of India-Norway dialogue on trade and investment was convened here.

Both the sides discussed issues of various areas like blue economy, shipping and maritime,

ICT, renewable energy and the micro, small and medium enterprises.

“Both the sides exchanged views on investment opportunities available in the respective countries,” it said.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) highlighted various policy initiatives of the government for promoting investment in the country.

## Complete power shutdown on Saturday


### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 16 JAN:

The Energy & Power Department has announced complete power shutdown in East and North districts on Saturday.

Re-arranging of the 66KV PGCIL Switchyard to 66/11KV LLHP sub-station has necessitated the complete shutdown from 8AM to 5PM on Saturday, it is informed.


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## Coffee & Cartoons

with Pankaj Thapa



19TH JANUARY 2020 (SUNDAY)  
4 PM. @ THE TWINS CAFÉ, SALBARI  
Special Guest Performance by  
*Deo Ashish Mothey*

ENTRY FREE



# North discusses HPV vaccination and Pulse Polio immunization

**MANGAN, 16 JAN (IPR):**

The meeting of District Task Force on Immunization on HPV vaccination and Pulse Polio was held at the chamber of Additional District Magistrate, Surat Gurung, today.

The said meeting being organized by the District Health Society North was attended amongst others by Dr DC Sharma (CMO/N), Dr PK Basnett (DRCHO/N), Dr Roshan Poudyal (Paediatrician), Narendra Kumar (Deputy Director/HRDD) and other representatives from ICDS of the district.

During the meeting, Dr PK Basnett informed that Intensified Pulse Po-

lio Immunization (IPPI) program is going to held on 19 Jan, 2020, (Polio National Immunization Day) under which children between the age of 0-5 years will be given Pulse Polio drops.

The main purpose of the programme is to eradicate Polio in the district in particular and also in the state as a whole.

Details of the programme such as implementation process, preparation and logistic arrangement was discussed for conducting booth activity on 19 Jan, 2020 (Sunday) and all the ICDS centers shall remain open



during 19 January followed by house-to-house activity on 20 Jan, 2020 & 21 Jan, 2020.

Dr PK Basnett, informed the house that there is an estimated number of 2518 children below 05 years and the

total households to be covered is 9200 in the district. She also mentioned that Deworming Day will be held on 03 Mar, 2020 and Mop-Up Day will be held on 12 March.

During the meeting it

was appealed to the general public to approach their nearest pulse polio booth centre with children aged between 0-5 years for 100% coverage so that better future of children could be ensured.

## Kokphekwa Tongnam at YMCC

**RUDRA KAUSHIK**

**GYALSHING, 16 JAN:**

Kokphekwa Tongnam, the new year of the Limboo community, was celebrated with a special religious programme by the Yuma Mang Meditation Centre committee at Darap in West Sikkim today.

Sikkim Siyong Sepsing Yuma Mang led the rituals and made traditional offerings to propitiate the deities.

Married women, who fast for a day every month, broke their fast at prayers led by Yuma Mang.

Prayers were held for world peace in general for Sikkim and its people in particular today.

Underlining the significance of the day, Yuma Mang highlighted that a new year meant new beginnings and the



setting of new goals and resolutions.

In her discourse, "Know Your Soul," Yuma

Mang pressed for simple living and humility, stating that materialism leads to peril.

## National Workshop on Special Matrices and Stochastic Games

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**RANGPO, 16 JAN:**

Department of Mathematics, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT), Majhitar, Sikkim organized a ten-day "National Workshop on Special Matrices and Stochastic Games" (WSMSG 2020) in association with CARAMS, MAHE, Manipal, which concluded today.

The workshop is funded by National Board Higher Mathematics (NBHM), Government of India. The workshop was inaugurated on 06 Jan, 2020, with Prof T Parthasarathy from Chennai Mathematical Institute, as the chief guest.

Director, SMIT, Prof (Dr) Ashish Sharma, presided over the function along with Co-ordinator, Prof (Dr) K Manjunatha Prasad, CARAMS, MAHE, Manipal and Organizing Secretary, Prof (Dr)



Anjan Raychaudhuri, WSMSG 2020 & Head, Department of Mathematics, SMIT.

There were eight resource persons for the workshop including Prof RB Bapat [ISI, Delhi], Prof TES Raghavan [University of Illinois, Chicago], Prof T Parthasarathy [CMI], Prof G Ravindran [ISI, Chennai], Prof K Manjunatha Prasad [CARAMS, MAHE,

Manipal], Dr R Balaji [IIT, Madras] and Dr Sachindranath Jayaraman [IISER, Thiruvananthapuram].

Prof SK Neogy from ISI Delhi delivered a lecture over Skype for the participants. There were more than 50 participants (including the local participants from Sikkim) for the workshop from different institutions such as IITs,

NITs and other reputed institutes including Sikkim University and Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology.

This workshop is a continuation of the workshop organized in MAHE, Manipal by Centre for Advanced Research in Applied Mathematics and Statistics (CARAMS) in December 2018. The current workshop covered the neces-

sary basics required for the new participants to follow the lectures.

The workshop started with the basics of game theory, stochastic matrices and covered matrix theory to introduce the linear complementarity problems and special matrices such as positive matrices, completely positive matrices, Q matrices, etc.

This workshop targeted PhD scholars, faculty working in Linear Algebra, Special Matrices, Game Theory, etc., and motivated final year MSc/MPhil students who are interested to pursue a career in matrix theory, game theory, stochastic matrices, and linear algebra.

Every session was supported by one and a half an hour of tutorials on the topic covered in the session. [from Sanjay Agarwal]

## Rynthi FC in CM's Gold Cup finals



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**JORETHANG, 16 JAN:**

Rynthi FC of Shillong made it to the finals of the 9th All India Chief Minister's Gold Cup International Football Tournament after trouncing Sports Hostel, Odisha, 6-0 at

the semifinals played here at Jorethang Playground today.

RDD Minister, Sonam Lama, was present as the chief guest accompanied by Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling, and South District Football

Association members.

Sheen Sohtkung, Donald Diengdoh, Manbha lawphniaw and Hardy Cliff Nongbri scored a goal each while Bickyson Kharkongor scored a brace for Rynthi FC.

## Polio immunization at Rhenock from Sunday

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 16 JAN:**

Meeting of Block Task Force on immunisation was conducted by Rhenock Community Health Centre (CHC) at the conference hall of CHC today, a press release informs.

Medical Officer cum In-charge of CHC, Dr Raju Singh informed that intensified Pulse Polio Im-

munsation Programme is commencing from 19 Jan. He further said that all children below 5 years will be given 2 drops of Polio Vaccine on 19 Jan (Sunday) at Rhenock CHC, PHSC, different ICDS centres of Rhenock, Aitar, Tarpin, Sudunglakha Gram Panchayats with Rorathang, Taza and Amba block which are declared as

Polio Booth.

He also appealed to all stakeholders to cooperate and support this Polio programme in Rhenock. The co-ordination meeting was attended by ANM, ICDS supervisors, BPM & health staff of CHC, Panchayat, Anganwadi Workers and helpers, ASHA members and stakeholders.

## MHA convenes meet to discuss modalities for census, NPR

**NEW DELHI, JAN 16**

**(PTI):** The Union Home Ministry has convened a meeting on Friday to discuss the modalities for the 2020 Census and the National Population Register (NPR), officials said.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai will chair the meeting which will be attended by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla and Chief Secretaries and Census Directors of all states.

The meeting will discuss the modalities for the houselisting phase of the census and the NPR, to be carried out from April 1 to September 30, a Home Ministry official said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has already announced that representatives from her state will not attend the meeting.

A few state governments, including West Bengal, have declared that they will not participate in the NPR exercise now as it is a prelude to

a country-wide National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Officials said the objective of the NPR is to create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country. The database would contain demographic as well as biometric particulars, they said.

The notification for the houselisting and NPR exercise came amid furor over the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

The ministry officials said most states have notified provisions related to the NPR, which is a register of usual residents of the country. It is being prepared at the local (village/sub-town), subdistrict, district, state and national levels under provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.

The rules have a provision for fine of up to Rs

1,000 on those violating it.

The data for NPR was last collected in 2010 along with the houselisting phase of the Census 2011. Updating of this data was done in 2015 by conducting door to door survey.

While updating the register in 2015, the government had asked for details like Aadhaar and mobile numbers. This time, the information related to their driving licence and voter ID card may also be gathered, the officials said, adding that PAN card details will not be collected as part of this exercise.

For the purposes of the NPR, a usual resident is defined as a person who has resided in a local area for the past six months or more, or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next six months.

The law compulsorily seeks to register every citizen of India

and issue a national identity card.

The NPR exercise will be carried out between April and September 2020 in all states and UTs, except Assam, along with the houselisting phase of the census exercise.

Assam has been excluded because the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise has already been conducted in the state.

The demographic details of every individual are required for every usual resident: name, relationship to head of household, father's name, mother's name, spouse's name (if married), sex, date of birth, marital status, place of birth, nationality (as declared), present address of usual residence, duration of stay at present address, permanent residential address, occupation, educational qualification. The Union Cabinet has approved Rs 3,941.35 crore for the NPR exercise.

the agency identified with his first name Shashikant. The provisional order for the attachment of the assets, in the name of the officer and his family, was issued by the ED and the total value of the properties is Rs 3.56 crore. The agency in a statement said the officer is being probed in a case of "acquisition of dispro-

portionate assets beyond known sources of income by a public servant." The ED said it filed a criminal case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against the officer based on a reference received from the CVC and a CBI FIR filed against the officer earlier.

**HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?**  
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## Himachal IG suspended again in custodial death case

**SHIMLA, JAN 16 (PTI):**

The Himachal Pradesh government has again suspended Inspector General of Police ZH Zaidi in a custodial death case, DGP Sitaram Mardi said Thursday.

Zaidi was suspended in 2017 after his arrest in connection with the custodial death of a Nepalese national in the Gudra rape and murder case.

The state government had revoked his suspension in November last year.

Earlier, it had rejected the application for revoking his suspension thrice.

Commenting on the development on the sidelines of a farewell function for Assembly Speaker Rajeev Bindal, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said Zaidi was suspended on Wednesday.

The CM said he was suspended as former Shimla SP Soumya Sambasivan in a written statement before a CBI court in Chandigarh had alleged that Zaidi pressured her over the phone to change her statement in the custodial death case.

Thakur said the CBI forwarded the written statement of Sambasivan

to the state DGP, who in turn sent it to state government, which decided to place him again under suspension.

Zaidi was posted as the CEO of the the state Wakf Board after his suspension was revoked last year.

Eight police personnel, including IG Zaidi and DSP Manoj Joshi, were arrested by the CBI on August 29, 2017 while former Shimla SP DW Negi was arrested on November 16, 2017 in connection with the custodial death.

Suraj, an accused in the Gudra rape and murder case, had died at the Kotkhai police station in July 2017.

Gudra (16) had gone missing in Kotkhai on July 4, 2017 and her body was found from the Halaila forests two days later. The autopsy had confirmed rape and murder. Following a public outcry, a special investigation team, headed by Zaidi, was set up by the then Congress government. The SIT arrested six people and after the custodial death of Suraj, the High Court handed over the investigation of both cases to the CBI.

~ SummitTIMES ~  
**CLASSIFIEDS**

### GENERAL LAND FOR SALE

Roadside plots for sale at Adampool, Ranipool-Rumtek highway.

**For details contact: 9083826462**

### 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 36 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

**NEW DELHI, JAN 16**

**(PTI):** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday said it has attached assets worth Rs 3.56 crore of a deputy commissioner-rank officer of the Customs department in a money laundering and alleged disproportionate assets case filed against him.

The properties include Rs 47.58 lakh in banks, mutual funds of Rs 91.75 lakh, insurance policies of Rs 74 lakh, land in Jharkhand's East Singhbhum district valued at Rs 52.43 lakh, a flat in Patna worth Rs 35 lakh, Rs 40.33 lakh worth of jewellery and Rs 14.50 lakh cash that was seized from the officer, who



## Voice of Nepal to serenade Sikkim on Saturday

ARPAN PRADHAN  
GANGTOK, 16 JAN:

Popular reality TV contest, the Voice of Nepal Season-02 will be live in concert in Gangtok on 18 Jan, Saturday.

Brought to the State by Lazy Bee Events, the concert is scheduled to be held at Manan Kendra here and will feature winner of Voice of Nepal Season-02, Ram Limboo, along with other contestants from the season - Sanish Shreshta, Arif Rauf, Bikash Limbu, Bimochana Lomejail, and Geeta Sharma from Sikkim.

Also in performance



will be Tshering Leezum who was part of the show as the advisor to the one of the judges,

Raju Lama.

Entry passes can be procured from Meet & Greet, G# School of Per-

forming Arts, Food Affairs and on online platform at Mitho.in, it is informed.

## Open Minister's Futsal Tournament kicks off at Mangan

**MANGAN, 16 JAN (IPR):** The 1st Open Minister's Futsal Tournament Mangan, North Sikkim, kicked off on Thursday at the Futsal arena, DAC Complex, Pentok.

It is the first Men's Open Futsal tournament being held in North district by Sikkim Krantikari Morcha's North Sikkim Sports Wing in association with Sports and Youth Affairs Department, North District, which will feature 38 teams. The tournament will be played over a period of nine days up to 26 Jan, 2020.

SKM Dzongu In-

charge, Chungkipu Lepcha attended the opening ceremony as the chief guest where she declared the tournament open alongside Deputy Director, North, Sports Department, Janim Lepcha and host of dignitaries.

It is learned that the final match will be played on 26 January with cash prize of Rs 60,000 to the winner and Rs 30,000 to the runner-up team.

In the inaugural match, Star Boys beat Norgay United by 7-2 goals. On the occasion, chief guest, Ms Lepcha



also felicitated coaches of winter coaching camp 2020 organised by SKM North district sports wing in collaboration with Sports and Youth Affairs department, Government of Sikkim.

Ms Lepcha also interacted with the children

who participated in winter coaching camp 2020, where she said it aims to create and develop a sustainable foundation in archery, football, taekwondo and table tennis as a career alternative for the athletes of North Sikkim.

## Ladorjee Tamang wins 1st prize at National Youth Fest



**LUCKNOW, 16 JAN (IPR):** Ladorjee Tamang, son of Rapden Tamang of Mangarzung, West Sikkim, won the first prize in Guitar (Solo) along with Maharashtra at the ongoing 23rd National Youth Festival held in Lucknow from 12 to 16 Jan, 2020.

## Bhim Rawat re-elect JUS president

Summit Report

**GANGTOK, 16 JAN:**

Bhim Rawat was today unanimously re-elected president of Journalist Union of Sikkim [JUS] at the general meeting held at Golitar in Pangthang on Thursday.

The meeting was attended by JUS executive members and working journalists of the State.


The new committee has Shekhar Khawas as working president, Amber Gurung and Homnath Dawari as vice-presidents, Sujal Pradhan as general secretary and Samir Hang Limboo as joint secretary, Prakash Adhikari as treasurer, Arpan Pradhan as joint treasurer, Kabita Sharma and Dichen Ongmu as publicity secretaries and Bishnu Neopaney as legal secretary.

The new executive members are Prabin Khaling, Bishal Gurung, Wangchen Lama, Prabal Rai, Sagar Chhetri, Bijoy Gurung, Deepak Gurung and Jagan Dahal.

JUS also began its membership drive today.

The meeting also decided to organize a national-level seminar in the State soon.

The meeting was also attended by JUS members Sandip Prasad, Dila Chhetri, Sukraj Rai, Pradip Mizar, Thakur Subedi, Taiong Bhutia, Poonam Lakhandri, Jharna Neopaney, Kiran Mukhia, Dilliram Dulal and Wangchuk Bhutia.



**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM  
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR PENSION, GROUP INSURANCE & PROVIDENT FUND  
FINANCE DEPARTMENT  
GANGTOK**

NO. 338 /PGIPF Date: 13.01.2020

**NOTICE**

The PGIPF Division of Finance Department, Government of Sikkim is conducting Pension Adalat at the District Head Quarters as per the schedule detailed below. All Pensioners including Family Pensioners are requested to kindly attend the said Pension Adalat with their queries and grievances between 10.30 AM to 1.30 PM

Date	District	Venue
20.01.2020	North	Conference Hall of District Collector, Mangan
22.01.2020	South	Conference Hall of Zilla Panchyat, Namchi
23.01.2020	West	Conference Hall of District Collector, Rabdentse
27.01.2020	East	Conference Hall of District Collector, Gangtok

Sd/-  
Deepak Kumar Pradhan  
Director, PGIPF  
State Pension Nodal Office

**R.O. No. 325/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20dt. 13.01.2010**



**SIKKIM STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (SSDMA)  
LAND REVENUE AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM  
Tashiling Secretariat, Block - B, Gangtok, East Sikkim - 737101  
Phone No: 03592-201145/Fax: 03592-201075/website:www.ssdma.nic.in  
Email:ssdma01@gmail.com**

Ref no: 249/SSDMA/LR&DMD/GoS/2020 Date: 14/01/2020

**Expression of Interest**

National Disaster Management Authority, Government of India has approved the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Mitigation of Mangan Landslide, North Sikkim submitted by Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA) as a Demonstrative Landslide Mitigation Programme. The approved cost of the civil works is around Rs.10 crores which includes Scaling & Dressing works, Driving of Self Drilling Anchors, Construction of Catch Drains, Shotcreting works along with quality & Post Monitoring Cost including HM instrumentation. The main areas of work fall along SNT complex, vicinity of Senior Secondary School Mangan, and areas below Multi Storey Car Parking. The Detailed Project Report with Detailed Estimate is available at the Office of Additional Director, SSDMA, Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok and can be accessed at www.ssdma.nic.in and www.sikkimlrmd.gov.in.

The registered Firms/Contractors having requisite qualification, equipments and expertise to undertake the above work can submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) to the office of undersigned in a sealed envelope within 28th January 2020 before 2 pm with necessary documents mentioning qualification and experience.

The EOI will be opened at 3:30 pm on 28th January 2020 in the presence of Committee constituted for this purpose who shall have the right to accept and reject the EOI based on the acceptance criteria.

Sd/-  
Additional Director  
SSDMA  
LR&DM Deptt., Govt. of Sikkim  
Gangtok, East Sikkim.

**R.O. No. 330/IPR/Pub/Class./19-20 Date: 16.01.2020**



## POWER DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM, GANGTOK

### PUBLIC NOTICE IN RESPECT OF

**AGGREGATE REVENUE REQUIREMENT & TARIFF PETITION FILED BY PCE CUM SECRETARY, POWER DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM, BEFORE SIKKIM STATE ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION.**

Notice is hereby circulated to all consumer & stake holders, that the Power Department, Government of Sikkim a deemed licensee engaged in the distribution & retail sale of electricity has filed the tariff petition before the Sikkim State Electricity Commission (SSERC) for Sikkim State, the true-up for the FY 2018-19 Review for FY 2019-20, ARR& Tariff proposal for FY 2020-21 under the MYT control period for FY 2018-19 to 2020-21 in respect of Distribution, Transmission & Generation functions for Power Department formulated in accordance with the guidelines outlined as per the Regulations 17.1 to 17.5 of the Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission (Terms & Conditions for Determination of Tariff for Generation, Transmission, Wheeling, Distribution and Retail Supply under Multi Year Tariff Frame work) as per (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2017.

The Commission has registered & admitted the petition filed by the Department of Power Vide Case No MYT/2020-21/P-01/PDs dated 05.12.2019.

The summary of ARR- Actual 2018-19, Estimated 2019-20& Projection for 2020-21 under the MYT control period 2018-19 to 2020-21 is given in table below:

Sl. No.	Item of Expenditure	2018-19 (Actuals)	2019-20 (Estimated)	2020-21 (Projected)
1	2	3	4	5
1	Cost of Fuel	0.18	0.20	0.22
2	Cost of Power Purchase	256.23	269.04	282.66
3	Cost of Generation	17.34	18.83	19.19
4	Employee Costs	85.97	107.26	136.69
5	R & M Expenses	16.50	23.71	26.53
6	Adm. & Gen. Expenses	3.36	4.86	4.86
7	Depreciation	16.85	18.10	20.17
8	Advance Against Depreciation	0.00	0.00	0.00
9	Interest Charges	0.00	0.00	0.00
10	Interest on Working Capital	11.94	12.92	13.77
11	Return on Equity	0.00	0.00	0.00
12	Income Tax	0.00	0.00	0.00
13	Transmission Charges (Intra State)	40.37	42.60	44.51
14	<b>Total Revenue Requirement</b>	<b>448.74</b>	<b>497.52</b>	<b>548.60</b>
15	Less: Non-Tariff Income	1.27	1.31	1.35
16	<b>Net Revenue Requirement (14-15)</b>	<b>447.47</b>	<b>496.21</b>	<b>547.25</b>
17	Revenue from Tariff	226.18	237.47	256.45
18	Revenue from Outside State Sale	218.14	218.14	218.14
19	<b>Gap (16-17-18)</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>40.60</b>	<b>72.66</b>
20	Revenue Surplus Carried Over	-	-	-
21	Additional Revenue from Proposed Tariff	-	-	9.57
22	Regulatory asset	-	-	-
23	<b>Energy Sales (MU)</b>	<b>380.81</b>	<b>422.61</b>	<b>460.39</b>

- Distribution loss: The Distribution loss for the FY 2018-19 actual, 2019-20 estimated& 2020-21 projected have been mentioned as 29.79 %, 27.14 %, and 25.74 % respectively.
- Copies of Petition / application refer to at para-1 above are available in the following Offices.
  - Chief Engineer, (O&M/SDA)cum Nodal Officer (Revenue), Power Department, Kazi Road Gangtok
  - Additional Chief Engineer, South cum ANO (Revenue), Power Department, Kazi Road Gangtok
- Interested parties may peruse the said ARR and tariff proposal and take note thereof during office hours at the above offices free of charges.
- The ARR and the tariff proposal can be viewed and downloaded from the official website of Power Department, GOS "power.sikkim.gov.in"
- Summary of tariff and charges for retail supply of Electricity to consumers proposed by the Power Department, Government of Sikkim for the year 2020-21 are indicated in the schedule.
- Objections /Suggestions, if any on the ARR filings and tariff proposal submitted by the Power Department, Government of Sikkim, together with supporting materials may be filed with Secretary, Sikkim State Electricity Regulatory Commission, Deorali, Gangtok-Sikkim 737102 in five copies in person or through register post so as to reach the Commission on or before 10.02.2020.
- Objections /Suggestions as above should carry full name and postal address of the person sending the objection which should be supported by an affidavit duly attested thereof. If the objection is filed on behalf of any Organization or any cases of consumer, it should be as per the terms mentioned above. It is also to mention that if the person putting objection/suggestions wants to be heard in person can participate during the day of public hearing.
- The SSERC, after perusing the written objections received in response to this notice may invite such objectors, as it considers appropriate for a hearing on the specified dates, which will be notified by the Commission in due course.
- Tariff Schedule:

Sl. No.	Category of consumers	Existing Rate( FY 2019-20)		Proposed Rate (FY 2020-21)	
		Demand Charge (in Rs /kVA/month)	Energy Charge Paisa/kWH	Demand Charge (in Rs /kVA/month)	Energy Charge Paisa/kWH
<b>1</b>	<b>Domestic</b>				
i)	Up to 50 units		120		130
ii)	51 to 100 units		240		250
iii)	101-200 units		370		380
iv)	201 to 400 units		460		470
v)	401 & above		500		510
<b>2</b>	<b>Commercial</b>				
i)	Up to 50 units		330		340
ii)	51 to 100 units		400		410
iii)	101 to 200 units		560		570
iv)	201 to 400 units		600		600
v)	401 & above		640		640
	Demand Charge exceeding load above 25 kVA(Rural)	60.00		60.00	
	Demand Charge exceeding load above 25 kVA(Urban)	100.00		100.00	
<b>3</b>	<b>Low tension Industrial Supply LTIS(Rural)</b>				
i)	Up to 500 units		360		360
ii)	501 - 1000 units		440		440
iii)	1001 & above		580		580
<b>4</b>	<b>Low tension Industrial Supply LTIS(Urban)</b>				
i)	Up to 500 units		530		535
ii)	501 - 1000 units		620		625
iii)	1001 & above		715		715
	Demand Charge exceeding load above 25 kVA(Rural)	60.00		60.00	
	Demand Charge exceeding load above 25 kVA(Urban)	100.00		100.00	
<b>5</b>	<b>High Tension Supply</b>				
	<b>3.3 kV &amp; Above</b>				
i)	Upto 100 kVA	200.00	400	200.00	425
ii)	100 - 250 kVA	250.00	450	250.00	470
iii)	250 kVA to 500 kVA	290.00	500	290.00	525
iv)	500 kVA and above	560.00	550	560.00	600
<b>6</b>	<b>Bulk supply</b>				
i)	LT		650		650
ii)	HT		660		660
<b>7</b>	<b>Public lighting</b>				
a)	Rural Areas		300		300
b)	Urban Areas		500		500
<b>8</b>	Supply to Army Pensioners				
<b>9</b>	Supply to Blind				
<b>10</b>	Supply to place of worship				

PCE cum Secretary

**R.No. 329/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20 date: 14.01.2020**



## Back to School

### *Let's make this year genuinely about students, learning and schools*

Government schools across the State will soon be opening their gates to welcome students back to a new academic session after a shortened winter break. Some schools begin a new year in upgraded avatars, even as some primary schools will not be reopening this year because the low enrolment numbers just don't justify their continuation and the human resource can be much better deployed elsewhere.

The closure of anything is a difficult moment, especially when it is a place of learning and holds so many memories and significance for so many lives. But some closures are practical necessities, and it makes sense for the Education Department to focus on the schools which still retain students and staff them with the best of faculty and facilities. In this regard, Sikkim's falling fertility rate and growing awareness among the youth could prove a boon for the coming generations. If Sikkim can manage its resources well, then the young can now be lavished with infrastructure, resources and access much in excess of what their numbers require or the previous generation received. It is simple. There might be fewer students coming into schools, and maybe some schools will even shut down, but the number of books, libraries, laboratories, and most importantly, teachers, will not go down and if anything, will only increase. What this means is that if Sikkim's planners can, well, plan, then this abundance of learning resources can be assigned in ways that every child in a government school gets focused and dedicated attention. This is an opportunity which is pregnant with immense possibilities if it is taken as an opportunity and not rued as a downturn.

Meanwhile, the winter break ending soon, and thankfully the new holiday schedule has kicked in to ensure that academic breaks are not so long that too much time is wasted every new session just repairing academic connections for students. There is also a new transfer policy in place for the teachers and the promising EQUIP initiative is looking to expand its footprint. All of these make the start of a new academic year exciting and one hopes that the mood sustains. And the excitement is palpable in more obvious terms as well, as for instance, in the preparatory rush expected at stores dealing in uniforms and books and in the number of laundry-fresh uniforms all over the state as students and teachers return to class.

In the coming weeks, Sikkim will also learn whether the Department responsible for education in the State has done any learning while the students and teachers were away. The good news is that education has always been an expressed priority, and hopefully, some effective teacher transfers and primary education will now receive primary attention.

And what is it that schools, whether primary, secondary or senior secondary, should deliver?

If nothing else, then at least a generation that is better lettered, less parochial and more inquisitive. Look at it this way, Sikkim always had among the best per capita distribution of schools and the most enviable teacher-student ratios. It also now arguably has the highest per capita density of universities and children now have more options to explore by way of higher education. Without getting into the "quality" or reliability of the institutions of higher education, imagine a scenario where the schools here fostered a real thirst for knowledge that universities could help quench and expand. For far too long, schools have been about regimented teaching, and that has clearly not worked too well. How about the State started getting more liberal with the learning process? Open more minds, and they will not only take care of themselves, but also carry the state along. Now that there are fewer students in the classrooms and more options in the staff room, wider explorations are possible if the teachers were freed from clerical chores and inspired to work more with the students. With fewer schools to look after, the finances could also be invested more keenly on improving the learning environments at schools and making classrooms more student and learning friendly. One hopes that fewer teachers are borrowed out of classrooms to stand-in for tasks they are neither trained nor appointed for. One hopes that education-related problems will receive immediate attention and are not kept pending for the next winter holidays. One hopes that the process begins to make school interesting so that fewer students dropout. One hopes that there are fewer schools this year which are short-staffed and more teachers who motivate learning.

Wishful thinking? We wish the same towards the end of every Winter vacation and still continue hoping...

# Why the Gambia's plea for the Rohingya matters for international justice

KERSTIN CARLSON & LINE ENGBO GISSEL  
THECONVERSATION.COM

In early December, the International Court of Justice heard arguments filed by the Gambia against Myanmar for violations of the Genocide Convention. This included a request for "provisional measures", asking that the UN court immediately order Myanmar to cease genocidal activities and to report to it within four months.

Under the 1948 Genocide Convention any member state can bring a claim against any other and be heard by the International Court of Justice. This is in keeping with the principle that the act of genocide harms all of humanity, not just those directly involved in it. Yet the case against Myanmar is only the third invocation of the Genocide Convention before the UN court. It is the first case ever to consider acts and actors of non-contiguous, non-warring countries.

But even a successful judgement on provisional measures may still not bring relief to the minority Rohingya community in Myanmar or Bangladesh. Provisional measures against genocidal acts have an unfortunate history. The International Court of Justice issued them in 1993 against Serbia, for example, and this did not prevent the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.

Moreover, even though legally binding, enforcement of provisional measures will prove difficult. In the meantime the Rohingya are still being persecuted and killed in Myanmar. They are also increasingly unwelcome in Bangladesh.

Yet the Gambia's invocation of the Genocide Convention remains politically and legally significant, not least for the potential it signals about the application of international law by actors in the global south.

#### WHY THE GAMBIA?

The Gambia emerged from 22 years of dictatorship in 2016. President Adama Barrow came to power on a human rights and anti-corruption platform. He has embraced the case, which has been vigorously pursued by his justice minister, Abubacarr Tambadou.

In 2018 Barrow told the UN General Assembly that his government would "champion an accountability mechanism" for crimes against the Rohingya.

Tambadou worked for 13 years in the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. In 2017, he travelled to Bangladesh for the annual meeting of the Or-

ganisation of Islamic Cooperation. This is an international organisation open to countries with a Muslim majority and which the Gambia currently chairs.

Meeting refugees in the settlement of Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh convinced Tambadou of the need for his country to "use our voice" to assist the Rohingya.

#### THE ARGUMENTS

Two central points emerged from the December hearing on provisional measures. First, the hearing reiterated how Myanmar, in the person of the once-celebrated human rights advocate Aung San Suu Kyi, categorically denies the atrocities for which there is overwhelming evidence.

The Gambia, led by Tambadou, relied almost exclusively on evidence collected by UN fact-finding missions, which are officially constituted and rigorously vetted. Yet Aung San Suu Kyi rejected these findings in favour of Myanmar's internal investigations, and concluded:

"It would not be helpful for the international legal order if the impression takes hold that only resource-rich countries can conduct adequate domestic investigations and prosecutions, and that the domestic justice of countries still striving to cope with the burden of unhappy legacies and present challenges cannot be made good enough. The Gambia will also understand this challenge with which they too are confronted."

In this way, Aung San Suu Kyi borrowed from both neocolonialism and "fake news" populism in constructing her argument.

Second, the hearing emphasised how narrowly the International Court of Justice has previously drawn the definition of genocide. In the two previous cases invoking the Genocide Convention, the court declined to find state-sponsored genocide, due to its interpretation of the Convention's "intent" element. As the court stated in its 2007 judgment *Bosnia-Herzegovina v Serbia*:

"It is not enough that the members of the group are targeted because they belong to that group, that is because the perpetrator has a discriminatory intent. Something more is required. The acts listed must be done with intent to destroy the group as such in whole or in part."

Aung San Suu Kyi specifically invoked this judicial history throughout her address to the

court.

The prominent international law scholar appearing on behalf of Myanmar, William Schabas, pushed this definition even further. He argued that the International Court of Justice's jurisprudence suggested that the correct understanding for genocidal intent was necessarily the absence of any other explanation for a state's conduct.

"Myanmar submits that the information in the application and in the materials invoked in its support ... provide ample evidence to indicate alternative inferences.... Should the Court agree that there is ample support for an alternative explanation, then it cannot but conclude that the application has no reasonable chance of success on the merits. Not a 50 per cent chance. Not a 25 per cent chance. No chance."

Schabas went on to cite the International Criminal Court's investigation into deportation of the Rohingya as a demonstration of the kinds of "alternate inferences" that would disallow the court to find the requisite genocidal intent.

Schabas developed this definition through an analogy of how domestic criminal law categorises crime. This interpretation would destroy the possibility of finding states responsible for genocide, however. This is because it is impossible to intentionally destroy a group in whole or in part, which is the core of the legal definition of genocide, without committing other international crimes along the way.

This distortion of the Genocide Convention perverts both its purpose as well as the International Court of Justice's past jurisprudence, and seems unlikely to be adopted by the court. PROMISING NEW DIRECTION?

The Gambia and Myanmar are a world away from one another. Nevertheless, in bringing a case against Myanmar, the Gambia represents "humanity" rather than Africa or world Islam.

The curiosity and surprise that have met the Gambia's bold step remind us that this universal mantle is rarely worn by African countries. The Gambia's initiative signals a promising new direction.

[Kerstin Carlson is Associate Professor International Law, University of Southern Denmark; Line Engbo Gissel is Associate Professor, Global Political Sociology, Roskilde University]

# Screen time: Conclusions about the effects of digital media are often incomplete, irrelevant or wrong

BYRON REEVES, NILAM RAM & THOMAS N. ROBINSON  
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There's a lot of talk about digital media. Increasing screen time has created worries about media's impacts on democracy, addiction, depression, relationships, learning, health, privacy and much more. The effects are frequently assumed to be huge, even apocalyptic.

Scientific data, however, often fail to confirm what seems true based on everyday experiences. In study after study, screen time is often not correlated with important effects at a magnitude that matches the concerns and expectations of media consumers, critics, teachers, parents, pediatricians and even the researchers themselves. For example, a recent review of over 200 studies about social media concluded there was almost no effect of greater screen time on psychological well-being. A comprehensive study of adolescents reported small effects of screen time on brain development, and no relationship between media use and cognitive performance. A review of 20 studies about the effects of multitasking with media – that is, using two or more screens at the same time – showed small declines in cognitive performance because of multitasking but also pointed out new studies that showed the opposite.

As communication, psychological and medical researchers interested in media effects, we are interested in how individuals' engagement with digital technology influences peoples' thoughts, emotions, behaviors, health and well-being.

#### MOVING BEYOND 'SCREEN TIME'

Has the power of media over modern life been overstated? Probably not, but no one knows, because there is a severe lack of knowledge about what people are actually seeing and doing on their screens.

Individuals all around the world are now all looking at pretty much the same screens and spending a lot of time with them. However, the similarities between us end there. Many different kinds of applications, games and messages flow across people's screens. And, because it is so easy to create customized personal threads of experiences, each person ends up viewing very different material at different times. No two people share the same media experiences.

To determine the effects of media on people's lives, whether beneficial or harmful, requires knowledge of what people are actually seeing and doing on those screens. But researchers often mistakenly depend on a rather blunt metric – screen time.

Reports of screen time, the most common way to assess media use, are known to be terribly inaccurate and describe only total viewing time. Today, on a single screen, you can switch instantly between messaging a neighbor, watching the news, parenting a child, arranging for dinner delivery, planning a weekend trip, talking on an office video conference and even monitoring your car, home irrigation and lighting. Add to that more troublesome uses – bullying a classmate, hate speech or reading fabricated news. Knowing someone's screen time – their total dose of media – will not diagnose problems with any of that content.

A media solution based only on screen time is like medical advice to someone taking multiple prescription medications to reduce their total number of pills by half. Which medications and when? Complex and unique nature of media use

What would be a better gauge of media consumption than screen time? Something that better captures the complexities of how individuals engage with media. Perhaps the details about specific categories of content – the names of the programs, software and websites – would be more informative. Sometimes that may be enough to highlight problems – playing a popular game more than intended, frequent visits to a suspicious political website or too much social time on Facebook.

Tracking big categories of content, however, is still not that helpful. My one hour of Facebook, for example, could be spent on self-expression and social comparison; yours could be filled with news, shopping, classes, games and videos. Further, our research finds that people now switch between content on their smartphones and laptops every 10 to 20 seconds on average. Many people average several hundred different smartphone sessions per day. The fast cadence certainly influences how people converse with each other and how engaged we are with information. And each bit of content is surrounded by other kinds of material. News read on Facebook sandwiches political content between social relationships, each

one changing the interpretation of the other.

#### A CALL FOR A HUMAN SCREENOME PROJECT

In this era of technology and big data, we need a DVR for digital life that records the entirety of individuals' screen media experiences – what we call the screenome, analogous to the genome, microbiome and other "omes" that define an individual's unique characteristics and exposures.

An individual's screenome includes apps and websites, the specific content observed and created, all of the words, images and sounds on the screens, and their time of day, duration and sequencing. It includes whether the content is produced by the user or sent from others. And it includes characteristics of use, such as variations in how much one interacts with a screen, how quickly one switches between content, scrolls through screens, and turns the screen on and off.

Without knowledge of the whole screenome, no one – including researchers, critics, educators, journalists or policymakers – can accurately describe the new media chaos. People need much better data – for science, policy, parenting and more. And it needs to be collected and supported by individuals and organizations who are motivated to share the information for all to analyze and apply.

The benefits from studying the human genome required developing the field of genomics. The same will be true for the human screenome, the unique individual record of experiences that constitute psychological and social life on digital devices. Researchers now have the technologies to begin a serious study of screenomics, which we describe in the journal *Nature*. Now we need the data – a collective effort to produce, map and analyze a large and informative set of screenomes. A Human Screenome Project could inform academics, health professionals, educators, parents, advocacy groups, tech companies and policymakers about how to maximize the potential of media and remedy its most pernicious effects.

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# ‘No debate, no democracy’: journalists in Nepal fight new threat to press freedom

ROJITA ADHIKARI

**KATHMANDU, 16 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]:** Jail terms of up to five years could be imposed on people in Nepal who post “offensive” comment on social media sites, including Facebook and Instagram in the latest move by the government to crack down on dissent.

The information technology bill, introduced at the end of December, imposes fines of up to 1.5m rupees (about \$13,000) for anyone posting content deemed to promote hate crime or ridicule. It would apply to all social networking sites.

Last month the ruling Nepal Communist party (NCP) also tabled a “special service bill” that would allow the National Investigation Department to collect information without a warrant or court order.

The information technology bill is expected to be debated by MPs this month. Critics fear it will



pass with ease because the NCP holds a majority in parliament.

The Electronic Transaction Act (ETA), passed in 2008 to fight cyber-crime, has already been used to restrict online comment. Critics say the new law will further curtail free speech.

Arjun Giri, an editor at the online news portal Tandav News, was detained for four days last April under the ETA after writing a story alleging fraud against a powerful local businessman that was shared on Facebook.

“I got a shocking call after a few days from the local police. Police took me into custody, citing that I violated the Elec-

tronic Transaction Act,” Giri said.

Other journalists and activists raised the alarm over his detention. “If media and journalists did not raise their voices for me I would have been in jail now,” he said. “This government is misusing its power and becoming a dictator.”

More recently the rapper Samir Ghising, also known as VTEN, was jailed for a week under the act for “antisocial, vulgar and derogatory language, and spreading the wrong message in society in his songs.”

Comedian Pranesh Gautam was jailed for nine days in June for critiquing a film on his You-

Tube channel.

According to Freedom Forum, 38 journalists were arrested, detained or questioned by police in 2019. Taranath Dahal, the forum’s director, said: “The situation is sinister. If the proposed bill becomes law, the media and journalist[s] will be the most targeted.”

“We are living in the digital era and we will not be allowed to give our opinions, or speak and express our feelings, due to fear of a heavy fine and jail punishment, which will promote self-censorship. That means there will be no public debate.”

“If we don’t debate there is no democracy.”

But Kalyani Kumari Khadka, chairman of the development and technology committee, which introduced the legislation, said: “These clauses on the bill are extremely needed because our society is going out of control.”

Earlier attempts to restrict press freedoms

met with protests that eventually forced the government to row back. But journalist and former newspaper editor Dhruva Hari Adhikary said the situation remained “very dangerous”.

“Both parliamentary bills, if allowed to become law, will adversely affect citizens’ constitutional rights relating to freedom of opinion and expression. The direct effect of [proposed] restrictive provisions will be on journalists, but the ultimate impact will be on people as a whole. Their right to be informed citizens of the country is being curbed for no fault of theirs.”

“Constitutionally, Nepal is a democratic country, not a communist country like North Korea. So, the present ruling party cannot – and must not – be allowed to make laws which seek to dilute the norms and values cherished in a democratic society.”

## ‘Justice Clock’ to be set up at Calcutta High Court



**KOLKATA, JAN 16 (PTI):** A ‘Justice Clock’ is set to be introduced at the Calcutta High Court soon, displaying the status of cases before it and in subordinate courts of West Bengal, an official said here.

The electronic LED display board to be installed will also show the ranking of the high courts and district and subordinate courts, based on their performance in disposing of highest number of cases.

There are at least 22.81 lakh cases pending

before different courts in the state, of which 17.7 lakh are criminal cases, according to the National Judicial Data Grid.

The ‘Justice Clock’ will be installed in the high court premises first and then in subordinate courts and people will be able to view status and pendency of cases before any court in the state, the official said.

The date of the installation of the clock is likely to be announced on Friday, the official said.

Of the total pending cases in the state, including civil and criminal, 3,16,902 cases are pending before different courts for more than 10 years, as per the grid.

There are 2,28,161 cases pending before the Calcutta High Court as on November 30, according to data provided by its administration.

Of these, 1,70,039 are civil and 38,302 are criminal cases pending before the appellate side of the high court, while 19,820 are original side civil matters.

## Protests held at several DU colleges against CAA



**NEW DELHI, JAN 15 (PTI):** A series of protests were organised in several colleges of the Delhi University on Wednesday against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

At Ramjas College, a group of students read out the Preamble of the Constitution. Organisers of the protest claimed that policemen were present inside the campus and the col-

lege administration tried to stop their agitation.

However, police denied that they were present on the campus.

An official of the college administration said authorities have made it mandatory for everyone to take permission for organising events at the institution’s amphitheatre.

He said clashes broke out between

students in 2017, and the college administration does not want the same thing to happen again.

At Ram Lal Anand college and Hansraj college, public meetings were held against the new legislation, while at Zakir Husain college, students protested against the police action on their counterparts at Jamia Millia Islamia in December last year.

## Bulls awe tamers, Jallikattu events in TN continue to be crowd-pullers

**MADURAI, JAN 16 (PTI):** Jallikattu, the popular bull taming sport of Tamil Nadu lived up to its reputation of being a huge crowd-puller as the contest unfolded at Palamedu here and Suriyur in Tiruchirappalli district.

As thousands of spectators continued to flock both the events, the tam-

ers were awed by several bulls which were determined to not allow anyone to even come anywhere near them.

Interestingly, a huge bull not only allowed none to go near it, but also stood boldly on the sporting arena for a while refusing to move on. When a team of men

arrived on a mini-truck to drive it away, it kept charging towards the vehicle. Eventually, a man well trained in cattle rearing managed to throw a rope around its neck and led it away.

Approximately 1,000 bulls and an equal number of tamers are taking part in these two events.

## Eye on 2021 WB assembly polls, BJP re-elects Dilip Ghosh as state chief

**KOLKATA, JAN 16 (PTI):** With an eye on the 2021 assembly polls the BJP on Thursday re-elected Dilip Ghosh, who is credited for the growth of the saffron party in West Bengal, as president of its state unit for the second consecutive term.

Ghosh being the only nominee for the post was elected unopposed as West Bengal BJP president for 2020-2023 at the state committee meeting here, party sources said.

BJP national general secretary Murlidhar Rao handed over the certificate to him.

Ghosh’s re-election to the top post came just days after his controversial remark that anti-CAA protesters “were shot like dogs” in BJP-ruled states drew sharp criticism both from the opposition and his party men.

Opposition parties said Ghosh’s re-election is a reflection of the endorsement of “hardline Hindutva” by BJP top brass.

During Ghosh’s ten-



ure as its state president, BJP witnessed a meteoric rise in West Bengal bagging 18 out of the 42 parliamentary seats in the state.

After his re-election Ghosh said he will fight to win the 2021 assembly polls in the state. “I will continue to fight and won’t stop till BJP forms the next government in West Bengal,” he said.

Hitting out at the opposition, Ghosh said “There are a few people who are criticising me for my comments. I want to make myself clear that the time has come for BJP (to form the government in Bengal). Earlier, they (parties opposed to BJP)

used to speak and we listened, now we will speak and they will listen”.

According to state BJP sources, Ghosh’s re-election reaffirms the confidence that the party’s top brass has in him ahead of the crucial assembly polls.

“The West Bengal assembly poll will be the most crucial one for us. With just a year left for it, the party top leadership felt that they need a leader like Dilip Ghosh to lead the state unit. Despite his controversial remarks, his credit in the growth of the party cannot be taken away,” a senior BJP leader said.

Known to be a good

organizer Ghosh is very popular among the rank file of BJP for his affable nature.

Ghosh’s controversial remarks made time and again had not gone down well either with the opposition parties or with leaders from his own party. He, however, remained unnerved and did not retract.

In November, 2019 he had said there are traces of gold in the milk of Indian cows, a comment which too had courted controversy. Ghosh, However, stuck to it.

Speaking about the re-election of Ghosh, Leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said it reflects the endorsement of the “Hindutva hard line” by BJP top brass in Bengal.

“The kind of comments Ghosh had made in the last few years clearly indicate that he endorses the Hindutva hard line. So his re-election clearly shows that BJP top

brass is endorsing his political line in Bengal,” Chowdhury told reporters.

His views were echoed by senior CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty.

Senior TMC leader Tapas Roy said, “It is an internal matter of the BJP as to who should be its state president. But I feel BJP should keep a tab on the kind of statements Dilip Ghosh is making everyday,” Tapas Roy said.

Ghosh was first appointed the state BJP president in December 2015. Though his term ended in December 2018, he was asked to continue for a year due to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in which he won the Midnapore seat.

55-year-old Ghosh, an old RSS hand, was deputed to the party in 2015 and was elected MLA from Kharagpur Sadar seat in 2016. But he resigned as MLA after being elected MP from Midnapore Lok Sabha seat in the 2019 parliamentary polls.

## Nirbhaya case: Delhi court to hear plea seeking FIR against sole witness

**New Delhi, Jan 16 (PTI):** The father of one of the four death row convicts in the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape-and-murder case moved a Delhi court on Thursday, challenging an order refusing direction of an FIR against the sole eyewitness in the matter.

The application was filed by Heera Lal Gupta, father of Pawan Kumar Gupta, before Additional Sessions Judge Satish Kumar Arora against an order of a magisterial court.

It has sought a direction to the Delhi police to lodge an FIR against the eyewitness, a friend of the 23-year-old victim, for allegedly giving interviews to various television news channels after charging money.

The sessions court put up the matter for hearing on January 27.

The magisterial court had dismissed a similar application on January 6.

The eyewitness was accompanying the victim in the bus when the gruesome incident took

place and he had also sustained injuries.

The application cited certain recent media reports, which alleged that the witness charged money to appear on various news channels, the applicant’s lawyer, A P Singh, said.

It alleged that the act of the witness affected the case by “resulting in a media trial”.

“This calls for an independent investigation into the per-

jury that appears to have been committed by him (witness). Being the sole witness, his testimony has strongly influenced the outcome of the case, which led to the imposition of death penalty on the accused,” the complaint said.

Nirbhaya is the changed name of the December 2012 gang rape-and-murder victim, a 23-year-old physiotherapy intern who was raped and brutalised in a moving bus in south Delhi by six people.

The woman had boarded the almost empty bus in Munirka, along with her male friend, on her way home on December 16, 2012. After raping and brutalising the woman and beating up her friend, the assailants had thrown them out of the bus.

After receiving initial treatment in New Delhi for a few days, the victim was shifted to Singapore’s Mount Elizabeth Hospital, where she succumbed to her injuries on December 29, 2012.

## Ismaila Sarr aims to follow path of his Senegal ‘brother’ Sadio Mané

ED AARONS

**LONDON, 16 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]:** The Watford bus was just about to leave Anfield but Sadio Mané had a message for Troy Deeney. “Take care of my boy,” the Liverpool forward urged. “He’s a shy boy, shy boy.” Standing awkwardly in the background with his hands in his pockets and peering down at the floor, Ismaila Sarr looked exactly that. “He just needs to speak English, he’s working on it,” came the reply from Deeney. “He’s a good

boy.”

After a 2-0 defeat in Nigel Pearson’s first match as manager on 14 December that left Watford six points from safety, Sarr had plenty of reasons to feel sorry for himself. The club’s £30m record signing from Rennes last summer was beset by injury problems after his arrival in England and had just spurned a golden opportunity to record his second Premier League goal against Liverpool, embarrassingly missing the ball when it fell to him un-

marked in front of the Kop with the score level.

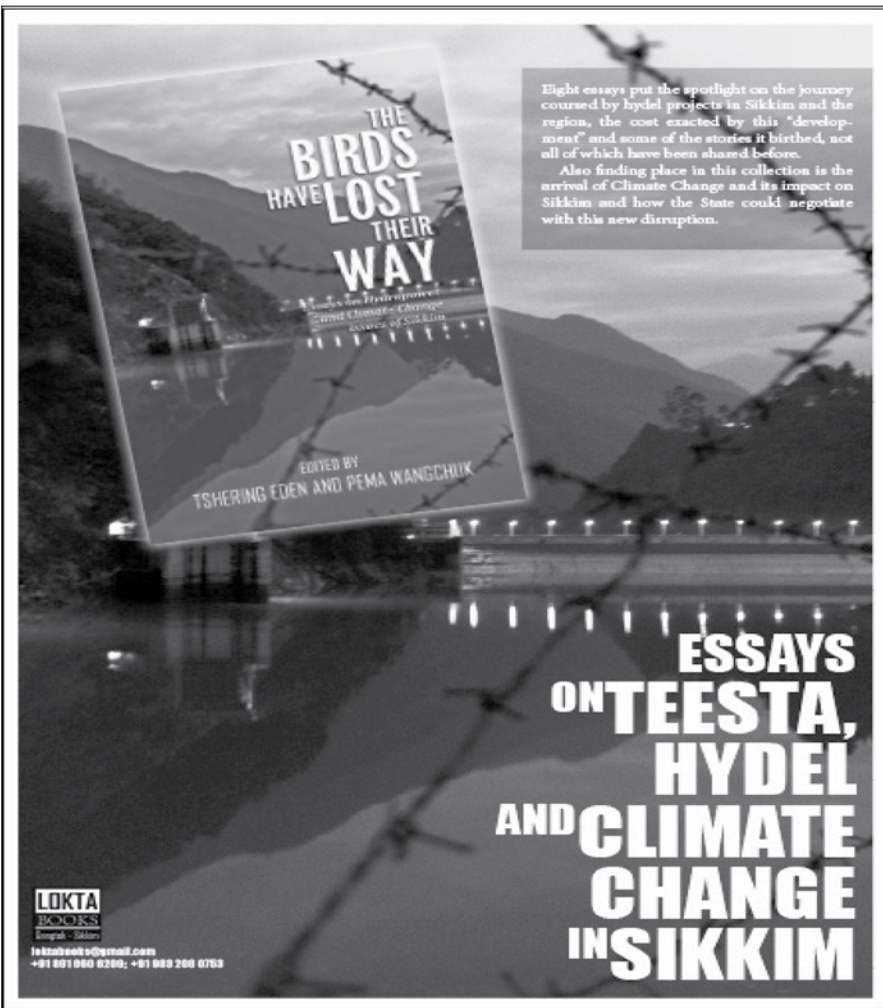
A month on, however, Mané’s advice to Deeney seems to have paid off. Sarr has been an integral reason behind Watford’s rapid rise up the table, having scored crucial goals in the wins over Manchester United and Aston Villa before setting up Abdoulaye Doucoure for the opening goal in the crucial victory against Bournemouth on Sunday. But the 21-year-old’s performances have come as no surprise to Mady

Touré, who first met Sarr at his Génération Foot academy in Dakar when the player was 14.

“He’s doing well at the moment because I think he is starting to adapt to English football,” Touré says. “At the start when he was transferred for €35m there was a sort of handbrake on but I think he has taken that off now. That’s no surprise, he has always been like that, ever since we first took him. Ismaila is a gazelle, so he needs time. Now he has got his bearings and he is starting to play well. It’s not

surprising because he is a very good player.

“He needs to be trusted by the coach. If he has the coach’s confidence ... He’s an introverted lad, you have to go towards him. That’s his nature. Ismaila doesn’t talk much. If the coach takes him under his wing like a son, he is very affectionate but you have to go towards him. He needs to feel people around him. If he feels that, he can do a lot of damage [on the pitch]. I think this is a year of transition for him.”





# How did a world champion squash player emerge from Réunion Island?

**JAMES WILLSTROP**  
**LONDON, 16 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]:** “Bring some sweatshirts. It’s winter here remember,” Thierry Lincou, world squash champion back in 2004, tells me the day before I travel to meet him to play an exhibition event in his homeland, Réunion Island. Forty-eight hours later he is walking me down to the beach near Saint-Pierre, on the south of the island in blazing midday heat. In thick sweatpants, still coming to after 24 hours travelling, I stumble, bleary-eyed into the fire and suggest that he may have forgotten I am English. “I thought you said it was cold! This would practically be the hottest day in England’s history.”

Twelve hours later my shoulders were burned from a day at the beach, during which we lost ourselves in conversation, reminiscing like old men about our experiences on tour. In between we swam with the gorgeous fish – fish unperturbed by human invasion to their waters.

Here I was in Réunion, a French-speaking island in the Indian Ocean, just a short stretch from Mauritius and South Africa. The terrain steadily slopes upwards towards huge volcanoes that

stand ominously as visual centrepieces of the island. From the seafront you can glance inland to capture the captivating view.

Thierry was the star of the squash festivities, which consisted of a demonstration event that ran alongside the Indian Ocean Games, a multi-sport event that is competed for on the island in early August. I was glad to be asked by my former compatriot and his team of organisers to support the event.

Thierry retired from the game a few years ago. You wouldn’t know it to look at him. He’s in great shape and still manages to tuck me up on the court most times we play, as he did in the final of the event here. There’s nothing like a good pre-season confidence booster, that’s what I say.

Away from the court Thierry gave me a tour of his local haunts. We swam, caught too much sun, ate samosas – take-away food stalls win over French brasseries here – and sat on rocks looking out to sea as we watched surfers. It was clear Thierry was in his element being back here. “No offence,” I exclaimed, “but how the hell did you manage to become a world champion squash



player coming from here?”

Thierry always played under the banner of France, so outsiders assume he learned the sport there. But no, he lived in Réunion for most of his young, developmental years in squash, only leaving for France when he was 18. It is outrageously difficult for players, certainly in squash, to come from countries with no system or track record. You don’t suddenly see countries materialising in sports at which they have never previously excelled. It would be difficult for Russia to suddenly become world beaters at cricket. There is no background, no history, no system.

In squash one player is currently materialising in Peru. The world junior champion, Diego Elías, is an outstanding prospect, but Peru have been relatively non-existent in world squash up until his first conjuring. It’s a stunning achievement already.

there was an old advertising poster of Thierry.

He hadn’t been in the place for years and was clearly excited to see it. He described to me, as I stood rapt, the atmosphere of the club that existed all those years ago. It must have been a harsh reminder what time can do as he remembered his training sessions and club nights with the fellow members and players. The interior was completely overrun with cobwebs and the clocks had stopped as the whole entity was left to fester. I almost expected some sort of Réunion Island version of Miss Havisham to appear in a wheelchair to welcome her Pip back.

I knew how much work it took for me to reach high levels in the game, and while I didn’t exactly train in palatial facilities as a kid, I had a decent and welcoming club to go to, a family who were involved in the game, and in my dad I had an expert coach from whom to learn. There were a gaggle of young players to train and compete with and in England we had role models to emulate and copy. In other words, the opportunities, fa-

cilities and inspiration were there. It helped.

Thierry worked with a blank canvas. Only incredibly modest facilities were available to him, with no state of the art gyms in sight and no coaching expertise to bounce off. But maybe that’s enough. Thierry proved that you don’t necessarily need all this and you certainly don’t need money. You just can’t buy excellence, which in this age of fads and quick fixes is gratifying. Thierry told me how he would come down to the courts and train, and he said he had the foresight to train hard. I wondered how on earth he would have done it in this barn? “There were less cobwebs then!”

He was advised to move to France to join the French squads when he was 14 but he said no. People in Réunion and France justifiably thought that his advancement would then falter. I don’t blame them. I can’t stress enough how much the structures, systems and junior tournament play supported me and helped me to keep improving and eventually make it into the professional ranks. Thierry eventually moved to

France when he was 18.

We’ve heard of stories before like this. The Williams sisters spent some formative years on public courts which apparently had potholes and sometimes no nets. Last month Julius Yego became the first Kenyan to win a gold medal in the javelin, having coached himself in the beginning by watching YouTube videos. It’s an unlikely story of success and is even more amazing when you think that Kenyan field athletes hardly exist. He was their only one at the London Olympics in 2012. These people prove that excellence in sport is less about means and resources and more about inclination.

Thierry is an inspirational athlete, perhaps unknown to many readers around the world. God knows, he was hardly even acknowledged in Saint-Pierre as we strode down the beach, me sweating in my heavy clothes. I thought it quite sad that he has done something so extraordinary on this small island and yet nobody knows to celebrate him. I can’t imagine that Réunion has too many world champions. Walking along that beach he was just another local. It’s probably the way he likes it.

## Finch expects India to fight back hard in second ODI

**RAJKOT, JAN 16 (PTI):** Australia captain Aaron Finch has no doubts that India will “fight back” in the second ODI here Friday after being battered in the series-opener in Mumbai.

Australia gave the hosts a reality check with a crushing 10-wicket win in the lung-opener on Tuesday, riding on David Warner and Finch’s unbeaten hundreds.

But Finch said it would be silly to take India lightly as they boast of world-class players.

“That was a pretty good performance. I think our fielding was a little bit sloppy but all in all we are really happy with how the boys went,” he was quoted as saying by ‘cricket.com.au’ after the win in Mumbai.

“They (India) will fight back no doubt. They are a great side, got some world-class players,” Finch said talking about what to expect from Friday’s match.

Chasing a below-par 256, David Warner (128 not out) and Finch (110 not out) shared a record opening stand as Australia cantered home in the first ODI.

Asked about his opening partner’s batting display, the Australia skipper said: “He (Warner) is playing unbelievably well I think. It’s so

hard to bowl to him once he gets in. He hits the ball all around the ground, so stopping him from scoring is so hard.

“He is so clear with how he is going to bat, his footwork is pretty good. His mental state is unbelievable when he is out in the middle. He is so clear with his thoughts and his game. He is in top shape.”

While lauding his bowlers for their superb show in the middle overs, Finch hinted that Josh Hazlewood could get a chance in the second ODI by resting either Pat Cummins or Mitchell Starc in an effort to manage their workload.

“To be able to control such a damaging top-order with their lengths is brilliant. The ball just swung enough to keep them in the game all the time. They were so accurate which you have to be in these conditions,” he said.

“The bowling line-up will obviously be discussed with Josh (Hazlewood) on the sidelines. With back-to-back games and pretty quick and a reasonably heavy Test load, I’m sure Josh will come in for one of them (Cummins or Starc) at some point. “(But) Unless it’s a forced change with a niggles or injury, I don’t think it would be much,” he added.

## Dhoni dropped from BCCI’s central contracts list

**NEW DELHI, JAN 16 (PTI):** Mahendra Singh Dhoni was on Thursday dropped from the BCCI’s list of centrally contracted players, raising fresh doubts on the future of the former India captain who has not played since the World Cup semifinal loss to New Zealand last year.

The BCCI announced the central contracts for the period of October 2019 to September 2020. Dhoni was in the A category, which fetches a player Rs 5 crore, until last year.

Skipper Virat Kohli, his white-ball deputy Rohit Sharma and top pacer Jasprit Bumrah were retained in the highest A+ bracket of Rs 7 crore. Among others, batsman K L Rahul has been promoted from B grade to A.

Dhoni’s contract not being renewed is not exactly a surprise as he has not played a com-

petitive game since that World Cup semifinal on July 9. He has been on an sabbatical and has refused to divulge his future plans.

Head coach Ravi Shastri had recently said that Dhoni may soon end his ODI career but could be in contention for a spot in the T20 World Cup squad provided he does well in the IPL.

Test opener Mayank Agarwal, who has done well since making his debut during the tour of Australia in 2018-19, has been included in the list in Grade B, which also features Hardik Pandya and Yuzvendra Chahal along with two others.

Pacer Navdeep Saini and T20 specialist Washington Sundar are new entrants in Grade C alongside Shreyas Iyer, Deepak Chahar and Shardul Thakur.

The dropped list also

includes the retired Ambati Rayudu and Dinesh Karthik.

Outgoing chief selector MSK Prasad has already made his stance clear on Dhoni, saying the World Cup-winning captain can only be selected again on the basis of performances.

While Dhoni has not revealed anything about his future, he is very much expected to captain Chennai Super Kings in the 2020 IPL.

Since the World Cup, he has missed the tour of the West Indies and the home series against South Africa, Bangladesh, the West Indies and the ongoing one against Australia.

One of the biggest names in Indian cricket, Dhoni led India to two world titles the 2007 World T20 in South Africa and the 2011 ODI World Cup at home.

The veteran has played 90 Tests, 350

ODIs and 98 T20 Internationals for India, accumulating over 17,000 runs and effecting a staggering 829 dismissals behind the stumps.

BCCI Central Contracts for October 2019 to September 2020:

Grade A+: Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah.

Grade A: Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, K L Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma, Kuldeep Yadav, Rishabh Pant.

Grade B: Wriddhiman Saha, Umesh Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Hardik Pandya, Mayank Agarwal.

Grade C: Kedar Jadhav, Navdeep Saini, Deepak Chahar, Manish Pandey, Hanuma Vihari, Shardul Thakur, Shreyas Iyer, Washington Sundar.

## Dhoni starts practising with Jharkhand Ranji squad

**NEW DELHI, JAN 16 (PTI):** Dropped from BCCI’s central contracts list, former India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni began practising with the Jharkhand Ranji Trophy squad on Thursday amid fresh speculation on his future.

The 38-year-old showed up at his home team’s net practice in Ranchi, indicating that he is gearing himself for the upcoming Indian Premier League. This was on a day when BCCI axed him from the list of centrally contracted players.

“Even we did not know that he was going to come and train with us. It was a pleasant surprise. He battled for a while and did the usual training routine,” a source close to the Jharkhand team management told PTI.

Jharkhand’s next match is against Uttarakhand, starting Sunday in Ranchi.

Dhoni has not played a competitive game since the World Cup semifinal loss to New Zealand on July 9.

Head coach Ravi Shastri has hinted that the celebrated wicketkeeper-batsman might retire from ODIs soon but will be in contention for a T20 World Cup berth provided he does well for Chennai Super Kings in the IPL.

The T20 World Cup will be held in Australia in October.



## How Charlton fans united and ousted the club’s unfit owner

**TOM BRANDHORST**  
**LONDON, 16 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]:** In January 2014, an unknown Belgian businessman called Roland Duchâtelet bought Charlton Athletic for £14m. With the club sitting 19th in the Championship, there was excitement among Charlton fans that, in the modern age of billionaire foreign owners, they might just be on the cusp of something great. But it wasn’t to be. Within two years, hundreds of Charlton fans were marching towards the Valley in a faux funeral procession, trailing behind a coffin that symbolised the death of the football club at the hands of its reckless owner.

To many Charlton

supporters, Duchâtelet’s “regime” offers the perfect example of how not to run a football club: belligerently pursuing an unrealistic vision without any consideration for the fans until the club has been driven to ruin, both on and off the pitch.

His ambition was to incorporate Charlton into a wider network of European clubs – a model not far from what the Pozzo family have done at Watford or even City Football Group’s growing global empire. It would be a mutually beneficial, money-saving agreement, in which players would move from club to club, developing and progressing. However, Duchâtelet’s strategy underestimated the tal-

ent required to compete in the Championship. Charlton found themselves ill-equipped for the task, with poor players from mediocre teams in Duchâtelet’s network, and were soon languishing in League One.

Off the pitch, things also took a turn for the worse. Duchâtelet and his choice of CEO, 29-year-old lawyer Katrinen Meire, made a series of bizarre decisions and publicity blunders, which corroded Charlton Athletic’s identity as a club. They signed new players without consulting the club’s manager; they sold star striker Yann Kermorgant as he was deemed “too old for the Championship”; they sacked managers who

refused to field the players in their network; they relied on a scout with no experience in football; they installed a fans’ sofa for the supporters with the best dance moves; and, of course, they released fake footage of people “having sex” in their ground to inform fans that their pitch was available for hire.

Duchâtelet’s destruction of the club was the catalyst for a wave of fan mobilisation. Charlton supporters have a track record of defending their club. When they were exiled from their stadium in the 1990s, fans set up a political party to run in the local election and fight for their return. With Duchâtelet ruining the club, they decided to

mobilise again.

Various pockets of supporters were united under the Coalition Against Roland Duchâtelet (CARD), resulting in a series of tactical protests, marches and demonstrations. The group coordinated opposition at matches to amplify their message and further project their discontent into the mainstream media.

These protests were as creative as they were determined. Whether it be the coffin with “RIP Charlton Athletic” inscribed on it, the thousands of plastic pigs that were thrown on to the pitch, or a “Taxi For Roland” that was driven all the way to Belgium. In their most ambitious

protest, hundreds of Charlton fans marched through Duchâtelet’s hometown of Sint-Truiden, delivering a message in person to a man who had not even visited the club he owned for several years.

The sustained pressure worked. The message sunk in eventually and the club was put up for sale. Duchâtelet sold the club at the end of the year to East Street Investments, a consortium comprised of two English businessmen backed by Abu Dhabi money. There is relief among fans as they wave goodbye to Duchâtelet, although it is mixed with both apprehension and excitement. Having been hurt before, it’s hard for them not to be nervous.

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# UN sounds alarm over unprecedented levels of hunger in southern Africa

KAREN MCVEIGH

NEW YORK, 16 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: Southern Africa is in the throes of a climate emergency, with hunger levels in the region on a previously unseen scale, the UN has warned.

Years of drought, widespread flooding and economic disarray have left 45 million people facing severe food shortages, with women and children bearing the brunt of the crisis, said the World Food Programme (WFP).

Zimbabwe is already facing its worst hunger emergency in a decade, with 7.7 million people – half the population – acutely food insecure. But there is evidence the situation has “deteriorated significantly” over the past few months.

About 20% of people in Zambia – a regional breadbasket – and Lesotho face acute food insecurity, as does 10% of the population of Namibia, WFP said. The crisis has been aggravated by surging food prices, large-scale livestock losses and rising joblessness.

The 16 nations in the Southern African Development Community, a region identified as a climate “hotspot” by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, have experienced only one normal growing season in the past five years. Seasonal rains have been



late in many countries and UN experts predict, with 60% certainty, that another bad harvest is due in the coming months.

Central and western areas have been hit by the worst drought in 35 years during the growing season.

“The hunger crisis is on a scale we’ve never seen before and the evidence shows it’s going to get worse,” said Lola Castro, WFP’s regional director for southern Africa. “The annual cyclone season has begun and we simply cannot afford a repeat of the devastation caused by last year’s unprecedented storms.”

Last March, Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, leaving 900 people dead, thousands displaced and more than 1 million short of food. Cyclone Kenneth hit

Mozambique six weeks later.

“While our most pressing priority is the millions in need of immediate support, building the resilience of the many more threatened by increasingly frequent and destructive droughts and storms is absolutely essential,” Castro said.

WFP plans to provide lean season assistance to 8.3 million people struggling with “crisis” or “emergency” levels of hunger in eight of the hardest-hit countries: Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Madagascar, Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) and Malawi.

Eddie Rowe, WFP’s country director for Zimbabwe, said the agency had carried out its own, unofficial assessment of the food security situation in the past week.

Commodity prices have risen sharply, and

a network of “transporters” have sprung up on the borders, with relatives sending food parcels from bordering countries into Zimbabwe, Rowe said. Kiosks for money transfers have also popped up in rural areas, suggesting people are increasingly reliant on remittances from abroad, which in 2018 were worth about £980m, he added.

“The remittances are cushioning the effects of climate, the drought and the economic situation,” Rowe said. But he warned: “There are clear indications that the situation has deteriorated significantly.”

The number of districts assessed by the WFP as food insecure has doubled, from nine in August to 19 now. An additional 1.1 million people are believed to be facing acute malnutrition. “Our assessment is

not officially recognised,” said Rowe. “But it looks bad. We have told the government we need to present this unofficial data to donors. Our concern is there is a 60% chance we are going to see another failed harvest this year.”

The climate emergency has altered the way WFP operates in Zimbabwe. Over the past three years, after the 2015–16 El Niño drought, almost half of the country’s strategic plan is aimed at building resilience and mitigation of the impact of the climate crisis.

One pioneering insurance programme gets people to build boreholes and irrigation schemes in return for insurance coverage. It has reached 1,650 households, of mostly women. About 100,000 people are covered by a £6m national insurance policy, purchased by the Zimbabwe government and WFP, to protect the most vulnerable.

To date, the WFP has secured just \$205m (£157m) of the \$489m needed for southern Africa. If the organisation fails to get the full amount it will face “assisting fewer of those most in need with less”, said Castro, who added that without the funding it would not be possible to expand activities to combat the climate emergency long-term.

## Russia ruling party backs Putin’s PM pick after shock overhaul

Russia’s ruling party backed President Vladimir Putin’s nomination of a little-known tax chief as the new prime minister on Thursday, after Putin’s announcement of a constitutional shake-up fuelled speculation about his plans.

The lower house of Russia’s parliament is due to formally approve Mikhail Mishustin for the role, a day after the shock resignation of the government after Putin’s call for reforms to reshape Russia’s political system. The series of bombshell announcements made during and after Putin’s state of the nation speech triggered speculation about his role past 2024, when his current presidential term expires.

Some suggested 67-year-old Putin, who is two years into his fourth presidential term and has steered the country

since 1999, could be laying the groundwork to assume a new position or remain in a powerful behind-the-scenes role.

It is unclear whether Mishustin, a technocrat whose recent career revolved around the tax service, is a temporary placeholder or could be groomed as Putin’s successor. But his approval was imminent after the United Russia party -- which holds 75 per cent of seats in the lower house -- gave its backing on Thursday morning.

“We decided to unanimously support the candidature suggested by our national leader for the post of the head of government,” the head of United Russia’s parliamentary faction, Sergei Neverov, told journalists.

Lawmakers are due to discuss and vote on Mishustin’s nomination at a plenary session at 2:00 pm (1100 GMT).

# China reports first death from mystery pneumonia outbreak

A 61-year-old man has become the first person to die in China from a respiratory illness believed caused by a new virus from the same family as SARS, which claimed hundreds of lives more than a decade ago, authorities said.

Forty-one people with pneumonia-like symptoms have so far been diagnosed with the new virus in Wuhan, with one of the victims dying on Thursday, the central Chinese city’s health commission said on its website on Saturday.

Seven others remained in serious condition, two were discharged from treatment, and the rest were stable, it added.

The episode has caused alarm due to the spectre of SARS, or Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, which in 2002-2003 killed 349 people in mainland China and another 299 in Hong Kong, whose economy was hit hard by the epidemic’s devastating impact on tourism.

The Wuhan health commission said the man who died had purchased goods from a seafood market in the city identified by authorities as the centre of the outbreak. It was closed on January 1.

The man, who also had underlying health issues including chronic liver disease, died in hospital on Thursday of “respiratory failure and severe pneumonia”, the commission added.

No new cases have been detected since January 3 nor any “clear evidence of human-to-human transmission”, it said.

People in white hazmat suits were seen spraying liquid on the market floor late Saturday, while a number of guards sat outside the perimeter of the facility.

ty’s two sections without masks on.

Chinese scientists investigating the outbreak said last week they believe the pathogen is a previously unknown type of coronavirus, a broad family ranging from the common cold to more serious illnesses like SARS.

Scientists in Hong Kong’s Department of Health said Saturday that genetic sequencing of the virus found in one of the Wuhan patients and published online by a Chinese expert indicated it was 80 percent similar to SARS found in bats.

Speaking at a news conference in Hong Kong, they said it was too early to conclude definitively that it was a SARS strain, adding that the city needed to stay vigilant.

“We will remain alert as we believe the epidemic will continue to develop,” said Wong Kahing, director of the department’s Health Protection Centre.

Hong Kong authorities have taken a range of precautions including stepping up the disinfection of trains and planes, and checks of passengers.

- Travel rush looms - On Saturday evening, there was little sign of alarm in Wuhan outside of the seafood market, which had been cordoned off.

Few people at the city’s airport wore masks, and no extra monitoring measures were visible at the airport’s terminals.

A restaurant on the outside of the building housing the seafood market was still open for business.

One man, a dry goods seller at the market named Dai, attempted to enter the market around midnight but was turned away by the

guards.

He told AFP he was not worried about getting infected.

“I haven’t heard that this disease is contagious,” Dai said, adding that he believed the illness was caused by a fire at the market in mid-November where items including plastic materials and chili peppers were burnt.

The WHO said Thursday it was not recommending any specific measures for travellers or restrictions on trade with China, and expressed confidence in the ability of Chinese authorities to contain the virus.

China has entered its annual Lunar New Year holiday travel rush, raising concerns about the mass movement of people serving as a vector for the pathogen.

In the world’s largest annual human migration, hundreds of millions will pack into trains, buses and planes to travel for the festival in late January.

China has not announced any travel restrictions.

Hong Kong authorities said on Saturday that the number of people hospitalised with flu-like symptoms in recent days after travelling to Wuhan had grown to 60, including seven new cases since Friday.

Forty-six of that total, however, have already been discharged. None have yet been diagnosed with the new coronavirus.

City residents worried about the outbreak have rushed to buy face masks from local pharmacies, with many selling out earlier this week, while officials in Taiwan have urged the island’s health and welfare ministry to strengthen quarantine controls.

# Japan confirms first case of new China coronavirus strain



TOKYO, 16 JAN [THEGUARDIAN]: Japan has confirmed its first case of infection from the new China coronavirus that has killed one person and prompted a travel alert from the US state department.

A man in his 30s from Kanagawa prefecture, next to Tokyo, tested positive after being treated for pneumonia, Japan’s health ministry said in a statement on Thursday.

The man had been to Wuhan, in central China, where there has been an outbreak of pneumonia believed to be caused by the new coronavirus strain, it said.

Officials in Wuhan said last weekend that 41 people had pneumonia caused by the virus and a 61-year-old man had died.

The US state depart-

ment issued a health alert update on Wednesday about travel to the Wuhan region, urging citizens travelling in the region to avoid contact with animals and animal markets or products, among other precautions.

On Wednesday Thai health authorities said they were stepping up monitoring passengers arriving at airports ahead of the lunar new year holiday, when 800,000 Chinese tourists are expected to visit.

But officials said the virus was not considered highly contagious and just passing by or talking to patients would not be a concern.

However, the World Health Organisation has said the new virus could spread and has warned hospitals around the

world.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause infections ranging from the common cold to severe acute respiratory syndrome, Sars. Some of the virus types cause less serious disease, while some – such as the one that causes Middle East respiratory syndrome, Mers – are far more severe.

The Japanese patient returned from Wuhan this month with a fever and was hospitalised. He was released yesterday after the symptoms subsided, the health ministry said.

Common symptoms include a runny nose, headache, cough and fever. Shortness of breath, chills and body aches are associated with more dangerous kinds of coronaviruses.

# Prince Harry to resurface after royal bombshell



Britain’s Prince Harry was to make his first public appearance on Thursday since he and his wife Meghan’s bombshell decision to quit as full-time royals.

The Duke of Sussex was to host the 2021 Rugby League World Cup draw at Buckingham Palace, with all eyes on whether he will address the still-unresolved royal crisis.

Harry, 35, is patron of the Rugby Football League, the 13-player

sport’s governing body in England, and his participation in the draw was long planned before the shock announcement last week.

The couple said they wanted to step back as senior royals, split their time between Britain and Canada, become financially independent from official royal funding and pull out of the palace’s media arrangements.

They made the announcement unilateral-

ly on a flashy new website -- without agreeing their wish-list first with Queen Elizabeth II.

The prince was summoned on Monday to a family meeting with his grandmother, father Prince Charles and brother Prince William to thrash out a way forward. The final outcome is yet to be determined.

Harry will now face the tricky decision of whether to address the crisis or not as he hosts the rugby draw from 1200 GMT.

The 16-team tournament is being hosted in England next year.

The sport’s three giants -- New Zealand, Australia and England -- will compete in the tournament along with Pacific islands and minnows such as Greece, Jamaica and the Cook Islands.

# Taliban say they handed cease-fire offer to US peace envoy

ISLAMABAD, JAN 16 (AP): The Taliban have given the US envoy a document outlining their offer for a temporary cease-fire in Afghanistan that would last between seven and 10 days, Taliban officials familiar with the negotiations said Thursday.

The offer is seen as an opportunity to open a window to an eventual peace deal for Afghanistan that would allow the United States to bring home its troops and end the 18-year war, America’s longest conflict.

The cease-fire offer was handed to Zalmay Khalilzad, Washington’s envoy for talks with the insurgents, late on Wednesday in Qatar, a Gulf Arab country where

the Taliban maintain a political office.

Khalilzad has been pressing for a cease-fire but it wasn’t immediately clear whether the Taliban proposal would be enough to allow for the on-again off-again talks between the Taliban and the US to restart, with the aim of eventually signing a peace deal.

Previously, Khalilzad said a US-Taliban deal would also include the start of negotiations among Afghans on both sides of the conflict to hammer out a so-called road map to a post-war Afghanistan.

That road map would tackle thorny issues such as a permanent cease-fire, women’s and mi-

nority rights, and the fate of thousands of Taliban fighters and also militias loyal to Kabul’s warlords.

But the Taliban have been refusing to talk with the Kabul government of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah.

The two are currently fighting over who won last year’s presidential elections.

The initial vote count gave Ghani the win but Abdullah, who came in second, is contesting the count. A final outcome has yet to be announced by Afghanistan’s election commission.

Last September, the Taliban and the U.S. appeared close to signing a deal when an upsurge in

Taliban attacks, including the killing of another US soldier, prompted President Donald Trump to scrap the talks.

On Thanksgiving, during his first visit to US troops in Afghanistan, Trump softened his stance, saying the Taliban were ready to make a deal, though both Kabul and Washington insisted the Taliban would have to show a sign of good faith by reducing their attacks.

In December, the Taliban leadership headquartered in Pakistan agreed to put forth a temporary cease-fire offer.

A Taliban official said that mistrust has long characterized the US-Taliban talks and that the





ALL SMILES! The actress, Nathalie Emmanuel looks super chic in a warm jacket paired with matching leather skirt and boots while out in London.

## Netflix’s Aaron Hernandez Documentary Finally Talks About His Sexuality

The new series Killer Inside explores the role that queerness and denial might have played in Hernandez’s life, death, and crimes.

The most compelling true crime stories aren’t just forensic conundrums — they’re mysteries about people. And since the death of former New England Patriot Aaron Hernandez in 2017, his story has only gotten more mysterious and multilayered.

Hernandez was convicted of first-degree murder in 2015 and then found not guilty two years later of a double murder in a drive-by shooting outside a nightclub. Yet despite two lengthy trials, the question of motive was always elusive. Hernandez’s crimes appeared to have no clear impetus beyond a dangerous mixture of paranoia and toxic masculinity. And the Hernandez saga might have been forgotten by now if the mystery of his identity — more specifically, his sexuality — hadn’t become central to the story right before his death. He was outed as gay on a radio show soon after the 2017 “not guilty” verdict; two days after that, he killed himself in prison, taking his secrets to the grave.

Since then, the story of Hernandez’s downfall has become big business for the true crime industrial complex as the subject of memoirs, books, podcasts, documentaries, and investigative series. Now comes a three-part Netflix doc, Killer Inside: The Mind of Aaron Hernandez, which premieres Jan. 15.

Killer Inside is supposed to be an “objective” unspooling of the entire Hernandez story as it played out in the media. But it provides surprisingly intimate stories and insight into his relationship to his sexuality, which was completely ignored in other

accounts. Killer Inside adds important (and not sensationalist) context to the role his queerness and denial might have played in his now-well-documented life, death, and crimes.

Killer Inside is part of a big wave of bingeable true crime content produced by Netflix. One of the limitations of these documentaries is that it’s hard to provide new information or interpretations when they focus on already famous stories. And, in fact, there are no original interviews with most of the major players in the Hernandez story, like his brother, mother, fiancé, or coaches.

But thanks to the filmmakers’ access to Hernandez’s recorded conversations while in prison, interviews with some of his lovers and teammates, and a willingness to grapple frankly with his sexuality, the episodes offer new insight into the kind of trauma and denial that permeated his life.

Hernandez’s father, Dennis, was originally positioned as a defining figure in his trajectory, credited with instilling the discipline and drive that turned his son into a promising Connecticut high school football prodigy. Killer Inside presents a different angle on Hernandez’s boyhood, showing that his father wasn’t just providing structure but taught him a model of masculinity built on anti-gay prejudice.

Hernandez’s brother, D.J., points out (in clips from a Dr. Oz interview) that the would-be-NFL player had wanted to be a cheerleader — inspired by his cousins — and their father, who felt there was a “feminine way” about Aaron, put a stop to it right away. Dennis SanSoucie, a classmate and football teammate, said he was the kind of dad who “would slap the fag-got out of you.”

This fantastical adventure does very little to stoke the imagination, refashioning a literary classic about a veterinarian who can speak with animals into a frenetic, crass kids’ flick.

**Director:** Stephen Gaghan

**With:** Robert Downey Jr., Antonio Banderas, Michael Sheen, Jim Broadbent

**Release Date:** Jan 17, 2020

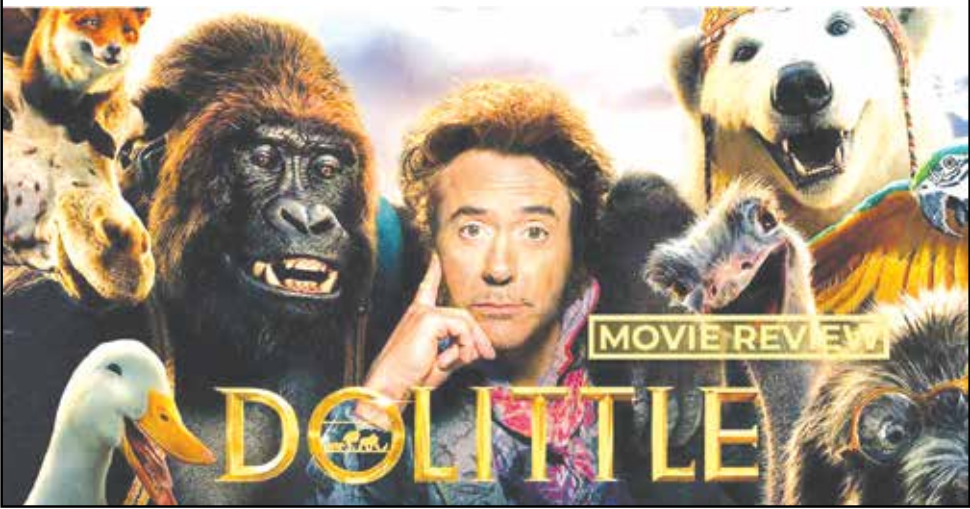
It’s been more than half a century since Rex Harrison spoke (and sang!) to animals as author Hugh Lofting’s eloquent veterinarian (Richard Fleischer’s 1967 musical film was nominated for nine Oscars, including best picture), and just over two decades since Eddie Murphy gave his own goofy modern portrayal. That’s enough time for Dr. Dolittle to fade from kid audiences’ collective consciousness, and just the right amount for Lofting’s first two books to enter the public domain, which explains why a new studio — Universal, where the two earlier incarnations hailed from Fox — has opted to revive the character yet again, this time enlisting the intensely charismatic actor Robert Downey Jr. to play the title role.

Trouble is, this latest “Dolittle” is downright sloppy. Director Stephen Gaghan’s period-set overhaul of the literary classic proves to be as predictable as it is obnoxious. In its defense, the film evokes an arm’s-length connection with its cute CG creature coterie and delivers heartening messages about psychological trauma, and yet, the charm-starved adaptation simultaneously tests audiences’ patience with overly complicated, noisy scenarios. What should have been an awe-filled adventure quickly curdles into an awful one, thanks to a pedestrian formula and the filmmakers’ fixation on fart jokes.

Dr. John Dolittle (Downey) has been squirreled away in his British countryside manor since the death of his wife years earlier. His lush, palatial estate has fallen into disrepair, overgrown with vines and greenery (a metaphor!) that provide a protective layer to shut out human company. Though he’s cloaked in tattered clothing and sports an overgrown, ZZ Top-style sadness beard, we spot a hint of the fantastical genius who once embraced the joys of living through his interactions with the furry, feathered, and seemingly ferocious animal companions rehabilitating on the property.

Dolittle’s chosen life of solitude is interrupted one day by both Tommy Stubbins (Harry Collett), a young man compelled to become an apprentice, and Lady Rose (Carmel Laniado), the Queen’s (Jessie Buckley) intrepid young daughter, who’s been sent to enlist the eccentric doctor’s aid. The Queen is on her deathbed and Lady Rose needs help not only to solve the mysterious circumstances surrounding her poisoning, but also to locate a potential antidote. The stakes are high for Dolittle since, if the queen perishes before the upcoming solar eclipse, he’ll lose control of his animal sanctuary. Luckily, the doctor knows where to find a journal that tells the location of a cure. The treacherous journey will have Dolittle and company fending off a rogues’ gallery of ne’er-do-wells, including the sniveling palace doctor and former Dolittle antagonist Dr. Blair Muddfly (Michael Sheen), crooked Lord Thomas Badgley (Jim Broadbent), and conniving King Rassouli (Antonio Banderas), who has ties to Dolittle’s past.

Screenwriters Dan Gregor, Doug Mand, and Gaghan, work-



ing from a story by Thomas Shepherd, frequently go off-book in order to sketch their refurbished tale, borrowing only a waft of inspiration from the novels’ versions of Dolittle and Stubbins. It’s a shame that same level of evolving design wasn’t applied to the new characters. The women in Dolittle’s world demonstrate tenacity of spirit, but only to a limited degree: One of them is dead for the exclusive purpose of aiding two male characters’ arcs, and the other gumption-fueled gal is left at home while the men adventure, satisfying traditionally feminine domestic constructs (nursing her ailing mother). Such faintly sexist leanings are slightly forgivable when the narrative is peppered with healthy sentiments about how to handle grief, anxiety, and disability, as well as the values of being vulnerable with each other and kind to animals. Still, those messages are garbled in execution and lack the proper breathing room to make them impactful on the character

s for more than a few seconds when conveniently utilized. Despite the good the picture attempts to put into the universe, there’s much more that drags it down. The sheer volume of crass flatulence jokes and routines involving animal

nether regions should get youngsters in the audience laughing, but will just as assuredly make the grownups groan. Once the film wears out jokes with dog Jip (voiced by Tom Holland), discussing butts and scooting on the floor, you’d think the film would’ve reached its capacity. But no, there’s

still more in store, as the film stoops to include a disgruntled tiger (Ralph Fiennes) getting kicked in the crotch and a dragon (Frances de la Tour) getting an enema.

The movie’s elaborate — and, ultimately, repetitive — Rube Goldberg-inspired action sequences might have been more effective if streamlined, while the absurdist humor to be found in these moments is frequently undercut in favor of garish, pratfall-adjacent shenanigans. Editor Craig Alpert cuts away too quickly from a bit between rebellious fox Tutu (Marion Cotillard) and brave giraffe Betsy (Selena Gomez) about how they’ll cover up Stubbins’ death if he doesn’t make it onto Dolittle’s ship, one of many moments drowned out by Danny Elfman’s overbearing score. Plus, the anachronistic dialogue from polar bear Yoshi (John Cena, who says “bro” a bunch) and an octopus who spews “snitches get stitches” clash with the immersive Victorian-era world the filmmakers have crafted.

All these misfired attempts at humor serve to dampen Downey’s innate magnetism — so strikingly evident in his revival of the “Sherlock Holmes” franchise — which is completely lost in this back-to-the-book reboot. The compelling nuance of Dolittle facing his crippling sorrow yields little emotional wallop. And while one can make excuses for the non-uniformity of all those voiceover accents, seeing as how the animals hail from all over the globe, it’s a puzzle trying to figure out Downey’s mush-mouthed Welsh accent. Considering that Dolittle’s signature is the fact he can talk to animals, it’s a puzzle why Downey’s performance sounds as if it were entirely looped in ADR. Now that the rights to Lofting’s novels have lapsed, this surely won’t be Hollywood’s last Dolittle adaptation. Let’s just hope whoever follows can write the right prescription, balancing between humor and heart to deliver a doctor worth celebrating.

## Tim Allen Told Keanu Reeves How He’d Kill John Wick... It Didn’t Go Well

Keanu Reeves has the reputation of being one of the nicest guys in Hollywood. He’s made headlines for giving up his seat on a subway, donating money to children’s hospitals, taking pay cuts on films and calling an entire audience “breathhtaking” at E3. But when it comes to his famed John Wick role, he’s known as a badass assassin, and he’ll defend it.

His Toy Story 4 costar, Tim Allen, recalled seeing Pixar’s summer hit with Keanu Reeves after he’d just seen John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum. When the Last Man Standing actor played around with Reeves about the action flick, here’s what happened:

“I go into this whole thing, ‘Hey, Kea-

nu. Here’s what I would do if I was in the movie, if I was one of the villains. I’d say, ‘Hey, look. Let’s keep him out of enclosed spaces. What I would do is I’d wait until you come out of your house, because you have a little dog that you walk. I’d be across the street with a big rifle and I’d just pick you off coming out of the house.’ He doesn’t even blink. He goes, ‘Wick would know you were there.’”

Incredible! On Jimmy Kimmel Live, Tim Allen talked about this hilarious exchange between him and Keanu Reeves that ended with the John Wick actor perfectly shutting down Allen’s idea about how to theoretically take Wick down. Allen thinks Wick’s strengths lie

in places such as bars or factories, so he shared his idea to Keanu Reeves. But he ended the conversation feeling a little awkward about the whole thing! Reeves confidently knew Allen’s plan would not get past John Wick.

There seems to be a friendly rivalry of sorts between Tim Allen and Keanu Reeves. It all started because Duke Caboom can strike some comparison to Buzz Lightyear. But Reeves purposely made an effort to not imitate Allen in any way, adding a gruffness to “Canada’s favorite stuntman.” Duke Caboom may be smaller than Buzz Lightyear, but he was a big hit in Toy Story 4!

**ARIES:** We often associate love with romantic affairs, but it is so much more than that. It’s a state of being. It’s the highest of vibrations. Today, you’re being asked to rise above your mundane reality and look at everybody you come into contact with through the eyes of love. Let’s start a love revolution, shall we, Aries? Your relationship with your friends and siblings will take centre stage this week. Don’t shy away from letting them know just how special they are.

**TAURUS:** Not every story ends in a happily ever after. But it doesn’t have to be a tragic tale either. Be grateful for the moments you have shared, Taurus. Give thanks for the good memories you have created together. Just don’t try to make this romance anything more than what it is, which will ultimately lead to pain and heartache. Taureans who have been in a limbo, it’s time to make a decision. Sometimes, love alone isn’t enough.

**GEMINI:** This is an exciting time for those who are on the road. Be your most spontaneous self. Who knows? You may just attract a holiday romance worth writing home about. Some of you may

be connecting with a suitor who is in town for a short duration. Figure out the terms and conditions from the beginning so nobody goes home with a broken heart.

**CANCER:** What if the love you seek has been in front of you all along? Thankfully, we’re not referring to the ‘be-loved within’, Cancer. We are, however, propagating that Cupid’s arrow rarely misses its mark. You don’t have to take the commitment route or even go on a date if you are not ready yet. But you can certainly woo them with your wit and charm—as long as you both are on the same page, of course! PS: The time to experience the fluttering of the butterflies is now.

**LEO:** What do you do when the people around you seem to be possessed by the green-eyed monster? Take a sip of your flat white as you throw your head back and laugh, of course! You’ve worked hard to be where you are, Leo. You’ve earned your place in the sun. So, don’t let the petty politics or the actions and words of the naysayers bring you down. Remember, we are responsible

for our vibrations. Drawing boundaries is a good way to protect your heart.

**VIRGO:** Expect an energetic shift on the home front, in the best possible way, of course! For some this could mean movement of some sort. For others, it could imply a healthy change brought about by new occupants. Have you and your boo been thinking about putting your money on the perfect house? The time is now, Virgo. Like your address but feel inspired to move things around? Turn to your Pinterest board—pronto.

**LIBRA:** “This is a good sign, having a broken heart. It means we have tried something new,” wrote Elizabeth Gilbert in her bestseller Eat Pray Love. What are these words awakening within you, Libra? Instead of mourning lost love, give thanks for the joyous moments you shared and the spark that once brought you together. As you do, understand the cycle of life and death; the transient nature of everything in this world.

**SCORPIO:** Too blessed to be stressed? Your mood exactly.

How fortunate you are to be with somebody who loves all of you and not just the parts you perceive as ‘acceptable’. This phase of your life calls for a greater degree of commitment, Scorpio. Broach the subject if you haven’t already and trust that the other will be on board. If the lack of financial stability has been a hindrance in your relationship, trust that the Universe will bless you with the gift of abundance soon.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Keep the words of Miuccia Prada in mind as you reinvent your sartorial game: “What you wear is how you present yourself to the world, especially today, when human contacts are so quick. Fashion is an instant language.” It’s officially a jewels and fur kinda day, Sagittarius. You’re in the mood to put your money where you can see it—hanging in your closet! But instead of splurging mindlessly, invest in timeless pieces that will help you make a statement.

**CAPRICORN:** Do people really change like they claim to? You’ll just have to wait and watch, Capricorn. Avoid making any hasty decisions, lest you end up repeating old patterns. Taking things slow is

the best way forward. Meditation and mindfulness are also taking centre stage this week. Revelation, revelation: nothing helps you cancel out the noise like raising your vibrations.

**AQUARIUS:** You’ve gone through your share of ups and downs, but you’ve also discovered a way to power through. Remember why you got together in the first place, Aquarius. This will help you return to a place of peace, harmony, and love. Spirituality is also taking centre-stage for you. But is practicing 20 minutes of silence enough? Instead of thinking of meditation as something you ‘do’, think of it as something you are.

**PISCES:** Yes, you did everything you could, and yet it wasn’t enough. Don’t give yourself grief about this, Pisces. Sometimes, it really is about the other person. Instead of mourning the so-called loss, understand what this experience is teaching you. In your darkest moments, know that the Universe stepped in to protect you from harm. Some of you may find that your anxiety is particularly triggered at this point. Approach a healer or therapist you trust to help you deal with the trauma.