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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Exit polls predict easy win for AAP

NEW DELHI, FEB 8 (PTI): Exit polls for the Delhi assembly election on Saturday forecast a comfortable victory for the ruling Aam Aadmi Party despite a likely rise in tally for the BJP in the 70-member House.

The Times Now-Ipsos exit polls predicted that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will retain his chair with the AAP winning 44 seats against 26 for the BJP.

The Republic-Jan ki Baat survey gave the AAP 48-61 seats and the BJP 9-21 seats. The TV9 Bharatvarsh-Cicero predicted 54 seats for the AAP, 15 for the BJP and one for the Congress.

The exit polls predicted little improvement in the fortunes of the Congress which could not bag any seat in the 2015 polls. The AAP had scored an overwhelming victory in the 2015 polls, winning 67 seats and reducing the BJP to three.

Moderate earthquake jolts Assam, north Bengal

GUWAHATI, FEB 8 (PTI): A magnitude-5 earthquake struck Assam and its neighbouring areas on Saturday evening, but there was no immediate report of any casualty or damage to property, police said. The epicentre of the quake was 16 km east of Abhayapuri in Bongaigaon district, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) said.

The quake also jolted a few districts of north Bengal, including Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and Alipurduar, sources said. The tremors were felt around 6 pm.

Torchlight procession against CAA in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, FEB 8 (PTI): A torchlight procession was taken out here on Saturday by All Assam Students Union, the Asam Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad, 30 ethnic communities, Silpi Samaj and others to protest against the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act. Several groups and a number of citizens joined the procession as it moved from the office of AASU in Uzan Bazar area of the city to Chandmari.

AASU chief advisor Samujjal Bhattacharya told newsmen that protests against the BJP government for imposing the amended citizenship act on Assam by bringing in people from Bangladesh and “threatening the existence, language and culture of the indigenous people”.

AJYCP general secretary Palash Changmai asserted that the agitation will continue till CAA is withdrawn.

Gujarat co wins Arunachal greenfield airport project

ITANAGAR, FEB 8 (PTI): The Airports Authority of India (AAI) on Saturday said the greenfield airport project at Hollongi in Arunachal Pradesh has been awarded to a Gujarat-based construction company, paving the way for its completion within 30 months.

The AAI, in a letter to the state government, said that work for the project has been awarded to Dineshchandra R Agrawal Infracon Pvt Ltd of Ahmedabad, through tender process.

The work, once awarded, has to be completed within a period of 30 months, it said. After physical completion of the work, the firm shall enter into supplementary agreements with the AAI for operation and maintenance for a period of seven years, an official communique said.

The tender for the terminal building is also in the pipeline, it said. The foundation stone of the project was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 9, 2019.

42 being monitored in Nagaland for coronavirus

KOHIMA, FEB 8 (PTI): Altogether 42 persons arriving in Nagaland from China and other countries, affected by the outbreak of novel coronavirus, are being monitored while seven of them have been kept in isolation at their homes, state health minister Pangnyu Phom said on Saturday.

Allaying concern raised by opposition leader T R Zeliang in the Assembly, the minister said no confirmed case of coronavirus infection has been found in Nagaland so far.

“Altogether 42 persons are being monitored twice a day as per

standard protocol and review meetings are held regularly,” he said.

The minister said a public health emergency operations centre has been operationalised since January 28 and the daily monitoring reports are being dispatched to the health and family welfare ministry.

District surveillance units and rapid response teams are on high alert, he said.

Zeliang also urged the health minister to take all preventive measures as Nagaland is “vulnerable to outbreak of the novel coronavirus”.

GMC LAUNCHES TATKAL BLUEPRINT SERVICE

Get blueprints cleared from GMC in 10 days

**ARPAN PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 08 FEB:**

To serve the public better, Gangtok Municipal Corporation (GMC) has started Tatkal Blueprint Service. The new service was launched today by the Urban Development and Housing Minister, Arun Upreti during a programme held at the conference hall of GMC in Deorali.

Tatkal Blueprint Sewa assures to clear Blueprints of any construction being carried out by any individual within 10 days of receipt of application at GMC office. Normally this process takes more than 90 days but the Tatkal Blueprint Service reduces the time from 90 days to 10 days.

“The Tatkal Blueprint Service aims to provide Fast Track service to people to save their valuable time and solve problems being faced by people due to delay in issue of Blue Prints,” said Mr Upreti.



Initially the service will start as a pilot project from Gangtok and will be later extended to other districts of the state, it is informed.

The normal service of clearing blueprints will also continue alongside the Tatkal Blueprint Service.

For Tatkal Blueprint Service, people will have to pay a nominal additional charge of Rs. 5 per square feet along with the normal charges.

The Department believes that the fast track Tatkal Blueprint Service will also help people to get housing loan

RJD MLA charge sheeted for rape of minor girl

ARA (BIHAR), FEB 8 (PTI): The charge sheet has been filed by the police before the special POCSCO court here against absconding RJD MLA Arun Yadav, who is accused of raping a minor girl at his residence in Patna.

Special public prosecutor Saroj Kumari said the charge sheet has been filed against Yadav, who represents Sandesh assembly seat, under IPC sections relating to human trafficking and sexual assault besides those of Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, POCSCO Act and the Juvenile Justice Act.

Special POCSCO judge R K Singh has posted the matter for further hearing on February 10 and issued notices to the Speaker Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and the secretary of the state assembly.

bly to ensure that the legislator appears on that date, she said.

Deposing before the court, the police said that movable and immovable property belonging to Yadav was being attached.

The RJD MLA has been on the run ever since his name cropped up in a sex racket which was busted in September last year.

Poor girls from the districts were lured by some locals, including a woman, with the promise of getting them a job and pushed into flesh trade. The matter had come to light after a girl, who was rescued from the clutches of her captors in Patna by her family, gave a statement before the police that she was sent among other places to the Patna residence of the MLA where she was raped.

National Lok Adalat settles 11 cases

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 FEB:**

Sikkim State Legal Service Authority organised National Lok Adalat here on Saturday.

Lok Adalat benches were constituted in all four districts. Earlier, pre-Lok Adalat sittings had been held to identify cases to be taken up during the National Lok Adalat.

Today, of the 19 cases taken up, 11 were settled and a sum of around Rs 8.40 lakh awarded, an official press communique informs.

Cases taken up on Saturday ranged from criminal compoundable offences, bank recovery cases, money suit and other civil cases, it is informed.

The next Lok Adalat sitting in Sikkim is scheduled for 11 April, 2020.

KJM VARMA

BEIJING, FEB 8 (PTI): The death toll in China's novel coronavirus outbreak has sharply risen to 722 with 86 new mortalities in a single day, mostly in the worst-affected Hubei province, while the total number of confirmed cases jumped to 34,546, Chinese health officials said on Saturday.

Eighty-six deaths were reported in mainland China with 3,399 fresh cases from 31 provincial-level regions, the country's National Health Commission said. Among the deaths, 81 are in Hubei province and its provincial capital Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus, two in Heilongjiang, as well as one in Beijing, Henan and Gansu, the commission said.

By the end of Friday, 26 confirmed cases, including one death, have been reported in Hong Kong. Macao reported

Death toll rises to 722 in China coronavirus; 86 died in single day

10 cases, while Taiwan reported 16 cases, it said.

A total of 4,214 new suspected cases were reported and 1,280 patients became seriously ill, and 510 people were discharged from hospital after recovery, according to the commission.

It added that 6,101 patients remained in severe condition, and 27,657 people were suspected of being infected with the virus. As many as 2,050 people have been discharged from hospital after recovery.

The commission said 3.45 lakh ‘close contacts’ have been traced, adding that among them, 26,702 were discharged from medical observation on Friday. Over 1.89 lakh others are still under medical observation.

The death toll of the coronavirus cases overseas went up 220 with Japan reporting 86 followed by 33 in Singa-



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 FEB:**

A new book, “Nepali Lok Parampara,” by respected litterateur, Prakash Bhattarai, was released here at Nepali Sahitya Parishad Bhawan on Saturday. The release function was chaired by NSP president, Rudra Poudyal.

In his presidential address, the NSP president congratulated the writer for his new book while Dr Gopal Dahal presented a review of the book on the occasion.

While speaking about the book, Mr Bhattarai mentioned that Nepali folk tradition has been disappearing and that this book was an attempt to document the folk traditions of the community and

record them for posterity.

“I have delivered on my duty as a writer by putting this book together. It is now the responsibility of the readers to evaluate the work,” he said while inviting readers to go through the book and

carry forward the heritage of the community to the coming generations.

The release function was also addressed by NSP vice-president, Hari Dhungel and also featured a cultural presentation.

The release function

was also attended by Sikkim Akademi president, SR Subba, Dr Sobha Kanti Thegim Smriti Puraskar president, Dup Tshering Lepcha, Sikkim University lecturer, Dr Pushpa Sharma, NSP general secretary, Neelam Neopaney and other litterateurs and dignitaries.

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BJP Sikkim discusses NH10 issues with Darjeeling MP MP to provide vehicle for rescue operations

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 FEB:**

A delegation of Bhartiya Janata Party, Sikkim Pradesh, called on Darjeeling Lok Sabha MP, Raju Bista at his residence in New Delhi to discuss various issues regarding National Highway 10.

The delegation, which was led by BJP state president DB Chauhan, includes Gangtok MLA, YT Lepcha, state coordinator, Sudeep Pradhan, BJYM vice president, Sancho Lepcha and other functionaries.

A press release from BJP state coordinator, Sudeep Pradhan informs that the meeting with Darjeeling MP saw discussions on addressing the increasing number of road accidents along the NH10 from Sevoke to Rangpo, which comes



under Darjeeling Parliamentary Constituency.

"Right from the poor maintenance of road to facilitate the rescue team who are selflessly working towards helping the accident victim, various issues were discussed with the Sikkim state BJP representatives," the release adds.

In this context, Mr

Bista has announced that a vehicle will be provided from the MP fund immediately to the team of volunteers who are working in rescue of accident victims. He also said that he will take initiative to provide necessary equipment for rescue work.

"MP has assured to raise the issue of prop-

er maintenance of the national highway and identification of Black Spot Accident Zones with the Ministry of Roads and Transport for proper arrangement for preventing accidents in the future," the release informs.

He mentioned that there is a provision of up to Rs 200 crore the

Ministry of Roads and Transport for identifying accident prone zones and assured to BJP Sikkim's delegation that he will raise the issue with the Ministry immediately.

The release informs that the rescue team may be given necessary equipments and a Shanti Puja in memory of accident victims along the NH 10 will be organized soon as suggested by MP. The meeting also discussed an alternate over bridge at Sevoke Rail Gate which has been an age-old irritant to the people travelling on NH 10.

"Lastly, on behalf of the people of Sikkim we extended our gratitude towards the young and visionary MP for his proactive approach on the above issues," the release informs.

4th phase of NISHTHA programme held for Soreng



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 FEB:**

The fourth phase of NISHTHA programme for school heads and teachers of Soreng sub division concluded at Government Senior Secondary School Chakung on Saturday.

The programme which started on 04 Feb 2020 had the participation of 130 teachers of elementary level including 04 Heads of Primary and Junior High School from Soreng, Chumbong and Daramdin BAC, a press release informs.

In the introductory session, Principal Chakung SSS, Mamta

Rani Rai was present as guest along with Assistant Directors from three BACs. She urged the participants to take full benefit of the training programme and implement it in their schools.

Key resource persons, Prashant Mani Karki, Surman Singh and Dhana-pati Sharma conducted sessions on School Based Assessment, Initiatives in School Education and Art Integrated Learning respectively whereas KRPs, Deepika Subba and Chandrani Chhetri undertook sessions on School Safety and Personal Social Qualities respectively besides

taking sessions on pedagogy of different subjects of elementary classes.

State Resource Person, Suraj Kumar Sharma conducted two days programme on leadership for heads of primary and junior high schools. NISHTHA is a flagship programme of Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India that aims to train 42 lakhs teachers including school heads and system level functionaries and is implemented through Samagra Shiksha of State Education Department.

The last and final phase of the programme is scheduled to start from 10 Feb 2020.

National workshop on Research Methodology at Rhenock

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 FEB:**

A two-week national level workshop on Research Methodology is being organised for the faculty and Research Scholars by the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of Government College Rhenock in collaboration with RUSA, Ministry of Human Resources and Development Department, Government of India and Department of Education, Government of Sikkim.

The inaugural session was attended by Education Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha as chief guest while area MLA and Chairman STDC, B K Khatiwara, was the guest of honour. ACS Education Department, G P Upadhyaya was also present.

The programme was also attended by Professor Suresh C Rai [Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University] and Professor Nawal K Paswan [Department of



Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Sikkim University] as resource persons.

The programme kicked off with the welcome speech by the Principal, Dr Iyatta M Uprety who welcomed the guests and highlighted the achievements of the college over the years in terms of both infrastructure and quality of

teaching and learning in the institution. The Principal also placed some demands before the Minister and Additional Chief Secretary on behalf of the college. The Student Representative Council also placed demands regarding courses on Physical Education, Tourism, and conventional science subjects like Physics, Chemistry and Biology in

the college.

The SRC also demanded the Minister and ACS to look into the problem of erratic water supply in the college.

The Minister in his speech lauded the achievements of the college and motivated the student community and faculty to take advantage of such workshops and focus on doing research

that would contribute to knowledge in the society.

The Minister and ACS also assured the college and student fraternity that the issues and demands raised by them would be solved on priority basis. Intellectuals from diverse backgrounds and areas of specialization from all over the country are invited as resource persons by the college.

Oldest woman voter in Delhi gets inked at 111

KUNAL DUTT

NEW DELHI, FEB 8 (PTI): Centenarian Kalitara Mandal, the oldest voter in Delhi, on Saturday cast her vote and urged people to take part in the democratic exercise.

Aged 111, she came to a polling station in CR Park along with her son, grandson and other family members. She flashed her inked wrinkled finger to photographers after voting.

"I am happy to vote in this election. I don't remember how many elections I have taken part in, but as a responsible citizen, we must vote. I urge other citizens to also come out and vote,"

Mandal told PTI.

Born in undivided India in Barisal (now in Bangladesh) in 1908, Mandal has seen the subcontinent go through turbulent phases many times, including two partitions, and lived "twice as a refugee" in India along with her family before finding a home in the national capital.

There are a total of 132 centenarian voters in Delhi -- 68 males and 64 females.

Mandal, who has seen and participated in nearly all elections in India in the last century, fondly recalled the time when ballot boxes were used to cast votes.

"Yes, I remember, they (polling officials) would take my thumb impression and then the ballot paper would be folded and put into boxes. I have voted with big machines (EVMs) too," she said.

She is the eldest of four generations of Mandals who live in CR Park area, a famous Bengali enclave set up in the national capital after the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War that led to the creation of Bangladesh.

The assistant returning officer who escorted Mandal from her home in K-Block, Harish Kumar, said, "I feel blessed



to have been given this job".

"In this age, she came out and voted, it should be an inspiration for all of us Indians, to use our democratic right of voting," he said.

Kumar said, there is another centenarian in

the Greater Kailash constituency.

Mandal has lost all her teeth but definitely not her appetite for fish and the will to participate in the election.

Voting for the 70-member Delhi Assembly is underway.

T'gana: Test results of eight awaited for coronavirus

HYDERABAD, FEB 8 (PTI): Test results of eight people for novel Coronavirus were awaited in Telangana, officials said on Saturday, even as no positive case of the virus has been reported in the state so far.

Samples of 62 people tested negative, they said.

The tests for determination of the virus are now being con-

ducted at the state-run Gandhi hospital here.

The samples were earlier used to be sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) at Pune. State Health Minister E Rajender said there is a worldwide alert over the virus.

He expressed hope that coronavirus would not have its impact in Telangana.

NDA govt incompetent in managing the economy: Chidambaram

HYDERABAD, FEB 8 (PTI):

The BJP-led NDA government has proved to be incompetent and helpless in managing the economy, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram alleged on Saturday.

Hitting out at the Centre, Chidambaram, who spoke on the Union Budget at a programme organised by the party here, alleged the Modi government was like a helpless doctor who failed to diagnose the illness of a patient and treat him effectively.

"Altogether, the bottomline is we have a patient who is extremely ill. Doctor has proved himself incompetent.

Diagnosis of the doctor is hopelessly wrong," the former union finance minister said. People who diagnosed the illness correctly like Dr Arvind Subramanian, former Chief Economic Adviser, were allowed to go from the government, he said.

"Not having diagnosed the illness of the patient, the doctor is helpless. The least the doctor can do is to say...I am sorry. We made mistake, will Dr Manmohan Singh come and advise us," he said.

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Dorje Park inaugurated in Gangtok



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 08 FEB:

Dorje Park was inaugurated here at Deorali on Saturday. Situated near the Guru Lhakhang on NH10, opposite Ganju Lama Dwar, the park has been remodelled and developed by the Gangtok Municipal Corporation and was

inaugurated by UD&HD Minister, Arun Upreti.

Developed on a 1,600 sq ft patch, the park will centre-stage a 'Rdo-rje' statue and include a walk way and maple trees.

The park has been developed at a project cost of Rs 13.5 lakh.

The park will be maintained by the man-

agement committee of the Guru Lhakhang and the keys of the park were officially handed over to the management committee today.

This had been a long-neglected corner of town, and now, with the remodelling, has become a bright corner, so much so that it

also has a Selfie-Point which is sure to be a hit with locals and tourists.

The inauguration was also attended by Gangtok Mayor, Shakti Singh Chaudhari, Deputy Mayor Lashi Doma Bhutia, GMC Commissioner HK Chettri and other officials of the municipality.

Coronavirus: 15 Kerala students stranded in China's Hubei reach Kochi

KOCHI, FEB 8 (PTI): Fifteen students from the state who were stranded in Hubei province of China following the outbreak of the deadly coronavirus have landed at the Cochin Interna-

tional Airport Limited and undergone a thermal screening for the infection, airport officials said on Saturday.

The students travelled to Bangkok from Kunming Airport and then took an Air Asia

flight to reach here, they said.

When the flight reached Kochi at 11 pm on Friday, they were directly taken to the Kalamassery Medical College Hospital in five sterilised am-

bulances.

The students have been admitted to an isolation ward of the hospital, the officials said.

Relatives of the students had reached the airport but they were not allowed to meet them.

Karnataka Cabinet expansion "imbalanced", no representation to 13 districts: Siddaramaiah

BENGALURU, FEB 8 (PTI): Senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah on Saturday claimed that the recent cabinet expansion was "imbalanced" as there was no representation to 13 districts in it. The discontentment among a section of BJP MLAs would "aggravate" due to this, he said.

Siddaramaiah also slammed Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa for displaying "inefficiency" by depending on the party high command for every decision.

The former chief

Chirag announces 'Bihar First' yatra as LJP readies for assembly polls

PATNA, FEB 8 (PTI): The Lok Janshakti Party unveiled on Saturday its strategy for the assembly elections in Bihar, scheduled later this year, wherein it hopes to play a significant role despite the shadow of mightier alliance partners -- the JD(U) and the BJP.

The party's national president Chirag Paswan, who recently took the mantle from his father and LJP founder Ram Vilas Paswan, announced at a press conference here that he would embark on a state-wide 'Bihar First' yatra - with the promise of pulling the state out of its long history of backwardness.

He also sought to clear speculations in a section of the media that the party, which has six members in the Lok Sabha, may insist on more than 40 seats in the assembly where its tally is a measly two.

"It would be irresponsible on my part to disclose to the media the number of seats my party would like to contest, before discussing the same with my alliance partners. We have identified 119 seats in the 243-strong assembly which are held neither by the JD(U) nor the BJP where our party will devote itself to strengthen the NDA's prospects," Paswan added.

minister's remarks comes two days after Yediyurappa had rewarded with Cabinet berth 10 defectors, who helped the BJP bring down the Congress-JD(S) coalition and come to power.

"There is imbalance in the cabinet. There is no representation to 13 districts. It is (representation to all the districts in the cabinet) essential for the social justice.

This imbalance will aggravate the discontentment," Siddaramaiah told reporters at

Kalaburagi.

He was reacting to a query on the lack of representation from Kalaburagi in the cabinet.

Hitting out at the Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah said, "He (Yediyurappa) does not have independence. He cannot even assign portfolios on his own... He is showing his inefficiency."

The six-month-old BJP government led by Yediyurappa carried out its second expansion on Thursday.

The first expansion

had taken place on August 20, 2019.

In terms of representation to the districts, there are seven ministers from Bengaluru, followed by four from Belagavi.

There is two ministers each from Bagalkot and Shivamogga including Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa; one minister each from Chitradurga, Chikkaballapura, Uttara Kannada, Haveri, Mandya, Bagalkot, Hubballi-Dharwad, Ballari, Udipi, Tumakuru, Kolar and Bidar.

Brazilian plane evacuates Indian from Wuhan

New Delhi, Feb 8 (PTI): A Brazilian air force plane has evacuated an Indian from the novel coronavirus-hit Wuhan in China along with a group of Brazilian citizens, diplomatic sources said on Saturday.

The Indian has disembarked from the plane in Poland, they said.

Brazil has said that two of its military

planes flew to Wuhan, epicentre of the outbreak, to rescue its citizens stuck in the city.

No other detail is available so far about the evacuated Indian citizen. India has evacuated more than 640 of its citizens from Wuhan.

The death toll in China from the deadly virus has jumped to 723 with the confirmed cases soaring to 34,598.

Debt repayment can strain Goa's future budgets: CAG

PANAJI, FEB 8 (PTI): The CAG has expressed apprehension that debt repayment can strain the Goa government's budgets in future, and suggested that it work out a strategy to avoid a debt trap.

Much of the fresh debt was being used to repay earlier liabilities, it observed.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant tabled the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) report for 2017-18 in the Legislative Assembly on Fri-

day.

As per the report, the state was liable to repay Rs 888 crore in 2018-19, Rs 1,676 crore in 2019-2020 and Rs 2,126 in 2021-22.

This may put a strain on the state's future budgets, it said.

The CAG also said that Rs 7,093.41 crore, which is 52.11 per cent of the total public debt, would be repayable within the next seven years.

"The state government would have to work out a well-thought out

borrowing-repayment strategy to avoid falling into a debt trap," the CAG report stated.

It recommended that the state government consider developing a "debt sustainability framework".

From 2013 to 2018, 78 per cent to 92 per cent of public debt receipts were used for debt servicing, it noted.

"In 2017-18, the debt servicing out of public debt receipts was 89 per cent as against 92 per cent in

2016-17.

Average expenditure on debt servicing during 2013-18 was Rs 1,321 crore, which accounted for 83 per cent of the average public debt receipts during the same period, implying that a larger percentage of debt was being used for debt servicing," it said.

An insignificant portion of the debt was available for meeting developmental expenditure to promote growth, it noted.

Several delegations call on Lt Guv Murmu in Jammu

JAMMU, FEB 8 (PTI): Several delegations and individuals on Saturday called on Lt Governor G C Murmu here and raised their issues for early redressal, an official spokesman said.

A delegation led by BJP leader and former legislator Jewan Lal Lalhal apprised the Lt governor about various issues related to the welfare of Koli-Sippi and Gaddi communities, the spokesman said.

Lalhal, who was accompanied by president All J and K Gaddi-Sippi ST Association Parveen Zerial and president J and K Sippi-Koli Association Hukum Chand,

also raised various development issues of Bani Constituency including construction of tourist huts at various religious places, commencing of helicopter services for pilgrims of Jodian Mata and Doullah Mata shrines during Navratri festivals and construction of a bus stand at Bani, he said.

Lalhal also demanded strengthening of the road network and the education sector in the constituency, the spokesman said.

A delegation of Kashmiri Pandit Sabha (KPS) led by its president K K Khosa submitted a memorandum of demands to the Lt governor related to

various welfare issues of the community including implementation of the Prime Minister's employment package and other employment issues, protection of shrines and encroachment of properties belonging to the migrant Pandits, he said.

The spokesman said a delegation of pharmaceutical manufacturers also called on Murmu and projected the issues pertaining to the growth and strengthening of the pharmaceutical industry in the union territory.

The Lt governor interacted with the members of the delegations and assured them to re-

view the genuine issues and demands raised by them for their early redressal, he said.

National chief coach, wushu, Kuldeep Hon-doo, along with national chief coach, water sports, Bilquis Mir, apprised the Lt governor about the issues related to development of sports in Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesman said.

While interacting with them, the Lt governor said the government is working towards the development of sports in Jammu and Kashmir and also assured them to address the genuine issues projected by them, he said.

Kejriwal, Irani trade barbs

NEW DELHI, FEB 8 (PTI): Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Union minister Smriti Irani traded barbs on Twitter on Saturday after the AAP leader issued a "special appeal" to woman voters and asked them to discuss with men as to who could be the right choice for votes.

Irani, a BJP leader and Lok Sabha MP, took a swipe at Kejriwal, asking if he does not consider women capable enough to decide for themselves who to vote for.

"Must go to vote. A special appeal to all women. As you take care of your family, there is another responsibility



on your shoulder which is of the country as well as Delhi. All women must vote and also take men of their family for it. You also must discuss with men who will be the right choice (for votes)," Kejriwal tweeted minutes before the

polling for electing the Delhi assembly began.

Irani retorted, "Don't you consider women so capable that they could decide themselves who to vote for?" She also used a hashtag, projecting him as anti-women.

Kejriwal soon hit back at her, saying the women of Delhi have decided who to vote for.

"And this time in Delhi, women have decided their family's choice for votes. After all they have to run their household," he added.

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What is Novel Coronavirus - nCoV?

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

<p>Symptoms of nCoV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fever ● Difficulty in breathing ● Dry Cough ● Severe acute respiratory syndrome ● Pneumonia - like symptoms 	<p>Precautions to Prevent nCoV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wash your hands often with soap. ● Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer ● Observe good personal hygiene. ● Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands. ● Avoid contact with people with possible symptoms. ● Avoid contact with animals and consumption of undercooked meats. ● Avoid travel to nCoV affected places. ● Wear a mask if you have respiratory syndrome and cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.
<p>Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Treatment is symptomatic and supportive, based on the patient's clinical condition. ● No vaccinations available as of now. ● Visit Doctor in case symptoms detected. 	<p>If you seek help, you may call :</p> <p>-Toll free no. 104</p> <p>District surveillance Officer</p> <p>EAST : 7029372100</p> <p>WEST : 9593297809</p> <p>NORTH : 9641957468</p> <p>SOUTH : 7407691463</p> <p>New STNM</p> <p>AMS : 9434711402</p>

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

Bring Home the Hivre Bazaar Experience

Invest social capital and the results will be good

A remote village in Maharastra easily outshines the more celebrated civil societies of the country's metros. And they do so not because of the brilliance of one man alone, although that helped, but because the residents were willing to push their realities towards a brighter tomorrow. The village experienced mass exodus during the severe drought in 1972. Even as the village folk abandoned agriculture and moved out, those who could not move, stayed back and fell into despondency and alcohol. And that is how things remained there for slightly over a decade and a half until, in 1989, Popatrao Baguji Pawar, the only postgraduate in the village contested for the post of gram panchayat sarpanch and won. He started by getting the around 22 illicit liquor shops in the village closed. That is a lot of liquor shops for a village with a population of less than 1,000 people! But it was clearly about more than shutting down these outlets, because he had to also reform the alcoholics, realizing early that for any plan to resuscitate the village, the people will have to participate. Alcohol, as Sikkim will know well, does not lend itself very well to collaborations, well, at least collaborations that help build something. This task achieved, Popatrao managed to secure bank loans for farmers and started rainwater harvesting, water conservation and management programs, which involved building 52 earthen bunds, percolation tanks, 32 stone bunds and nine check dams. This was a huge undertaking and partly inspired by what Anna Hazare had pulled off at Ralegan Siddhi, barely 35 km away from Hivre Bazaar. Before his first term as Sarpanch was over, reverse migration started as families started returning home. Today, the village, with its 235 families and an overall population of 1,250, has a monthly per capita income of Rs 30,000, up from Rs. 830 in 1995, plus it has 60 families with an annual income of over 10 Lakh rupees. What Popatrao did right was that he learned from other examples, was willing to invest in the people, trust them and work with them. What the villagers of Hivre Bazaar provided was a willingness to contribute, persevere and share.

They traded well in social capital.

Social Capital is counted in one's relationship with others in a community in which citizens have a tendency to engage in civic affairs, band together in voluntary groups, come together for collective action. Social Capital buys better futures because it engages the present in collaborative undertakings for a shared aspiration for a better future, encourages sharing of ideas, fosters debate and resolution. When people collaborate, they do not just clean jhoras and undertake plantation drives, they talk, they discuss, they disagree and while they respect discordant ideologies, believe in the community. In the present times of multiple sources of information, it becomes difficult to sift the rumour from the news and judge inspired intent from ulterior motives. A society that can keep up lucid lines of communication becomes the best informed because it keeps the doors open to all points of views and un-layers developments and issues more intelligently. In doing so, the society discovers common intent, and intent modulated in unanimity can only be good. This Social Capital, once it has matured into an instinctive assembly of concerned citizens, becomes what we know as a Civil Society. Social Capital charts the course for collective development and a Civil Society keeps the journey on the right path.

The Hivre Bazaar experience needs to be attempted more widely; it might be in Maharastra, but the model can be replicated anywhere in the world, and surely in Sikkim as well.

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This is How Ancient Rome's Republic Died – a classicist sees troubling parallels at Trump's impeachment trial



TIMOTHY JOSEPH
THECONVERSATION.COM

The U.S. Senate has made its judgment in the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump, acquitting the president. Fifty two of 53 senators in the Republican majority voted to acquit the president on the abuse of power charge and all 53 Republican senators voted to acquit on the obstruction of Congress charge.

All 47 Democratic senators voted to convict the president on both charges. Senator Mitt Romney of Utah was the only Republican voting to convict for abuse of power.

The Republican senators' speedy exoneration of Trump marks perhaps the most dramatic step in their capitulation to the president over the past three years.

That process, as I wrote in The Conversation last fall, recalls the ancient Roman senate's compliance with the autocratic rule of the emperors and its transformation into a body largely reliant on the emperors' whims.

Along with the senatorial fealty that was again on display, there was another development that links the era of the Roman Republic's transformation into an autocratic state with the ongoing political developments in the United States. It's a development that may point to where the country is headed.

LEADER IS THE STATE

Trump's lawyers argued that the president's personal position is inseparable from that of the nation itself. This is similar to the notion that took

hold during the ascendancy of the man known as Rome's first emperor, Augustus, who was in power from 31 B.C. to A.D. 14.

Trump defense attorney Alan Dershowitz asserted that "abuse of power" by the president is not an impeachable offense. A central part of Dershowitz's argument was that "every public official that I know believes that his election is in the public interest" and that "if a president does something which he believes will help him get elected in the public interest, that cannot be the kind of quid pro quo that results in impeachment."

This inability to separate the personal interests of a leader from the interests of the country he or she leads has powerful echoes in ancient Rome.

There, no formal change from a republican system to an autocratic system ever occurred. Rather, there was an erosion of the republican institutions, a steady creep over decades of authoritarian decision-making, and the consolidation of power within one individual – all with the name "Republic" preserved.

OVERSIGHT BECOMES HARASSMENT

Much of Rome's decline into one-man rule can be observed in a series of developments during the time of Augustus, who held no formal monarchical title but only the vague designation "princeps," or "first among equals."

But in fact the senate had ceded him both power ("imperium" in Latin) over Rome's military and the traditional tribune's power to veto legislation. Each of these powers also granted him immunity from prosecution. He was above the law.

Augustus' position thus gave him exactly the freedom from oversight – or what Trump calls "presidential harassment" – that the president demands. Such immunity is also the sort that Richard Nixon seemed to long for, most famously in his post-presidency declaration that "when the president does it, that means that it is not illegal."

In Augustus' time the idea also emerged that the "princeps" and the Roman state were to a great extent one and the same. The identity of the one was growing to become inseparable from the identity of the other.

So, for example, under Augustus and then his successor Tiberius, insults against the emperor could be considered acts of treason against the state, or, more officially, against "the majesty of the Roman people."

A critic of the "princeps" – be it in unflattering words or in the improper treatment of his image – was subject to prosecution as an "enemy of the people."

A physical demonstration of the emerging union of the "princeps" and the state came in the construction of a Temple of Roma and Augustus in cities across the Mediterranean region.

Here the personification of the state as a goddess, Roma, and the "princeps" Augustus were closely aligned and, what is more, deified together. The message communicated by such a pairing was clear: If not quite one and the same, the "princeps" and the state were intimately identified, possessing a special, abiding authority through their union.

Many higher-ups in the Trump administration, from Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to former Secretary of Energy Rick Perry to former Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, have spoken publicly of Trump as a divinely chosen figure. And Trump himself declared earlier this year, "I do really believe we have God on our side."

To this point, however, a Temple of Lady Liberty and Trump along the lines of the Temple of Roma and Augustus has not yet been constructed.

But the Senate impeachment trial has shown us how far along the identification of leader and state has moved in the Trump era. A central part of the president's impeachment defense is, as we have seen, that the personal will of the president is indistinguishable from the will of the state and the good of the people.

Will the GOP-led Senate's endorsement of this defense clear a path for more of the manifestations – and consequences – of authoritarianism? The case of the Roman Republic's rapid slippage into an autocratic regime masquerading as a republic shows how easily that transformation can occur.

[the writer is Associate Professor of Classics, College of the Holy Cross]

What the discovery of a new HIV strain means for the pandemic

LINDA-GAIL BEKKER
THECONVERSATION.COM

The discovery of a rare new strain of HIV for the first time in nearly 20 years recently made headlines around the world.

The big question is what the discovery means for the overall response to the HIV epidemic.

A team of US researchers from Abbott, an American medical devices and health care company, led by Mary Rodgers and co-authors at the University of Missouri, announced the discovery in a study published in the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The new subtype is the first strain to be identified since guidelines for classifying new HIV strains were first established in 2000.

HIV has a multitude of different subtypes and, like other viruses, it changes (mutates) over time. This new strain is an important discovery, but it does not signify a new public health threat. It occurs rarely and can be effectively treated with existing antiretrovirals. Because antiretrovirals target characteristics of HIV that are common across all different subtypes, this new finding will not affect treatment and antiretroviral agents will still be effective as long as drug resistant mutations have not occurred.

The essence of the discovery is that it enhances scientists' understanding of the complexity of the human immunodeficiency virus and its evolution and adds detail to the already comprehensive viral picture.

Having a thorough understanding of HIV is crucial in ensuring that HIV tests are effectively detecting the virus. Deeper insights could also have a bearing on vaccine development.



VIRAL STRAINS

There are two main types of HIV. HIV-1 is the most common. HIV-2 is less common and accounts for fewer infections. The strains of HIV-1 can be classified into four groups – M, N, O and P. While N, O and P are quite uncommon, group M is responsible for most of the global HIV epidemic, accounting for roughly 95% of all infections worldwide. The newly discovered strain (also known as a clade) is part of group M and has been labelled as "subtype L".

The prevalent strain found in South Africa is known as a subtype of clade C.

One of the candidate HIV vaccine regimens currently under investigation in South Africa is designed to be effective against subtype C. It is not yet known whether, if found to be effective in this region, it will be as effective in a region with a different prevalent strain. For example, in the US the predominant strain is subtype B.

The process of confirming a new strain of any virus can be long. Three separate cases need to be identified before a new subtype can be announced. The first two cases of this new strain were found in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1983 and 1990 and the third case in 2001. So while the strain has been known to scientists for 18 years, the entire genome needed to be tested for confirmation. The technology to do this did not exist at the time.

The genome sequencing technology available today allows scientists and researchers to build entire genomes at a faster rate and lower cost than ever before. To use this next-generation technology successfully, the responsible scientists had to apply new techniques that focus on the virus portion of the collected sample in order to fully sequence the genome.

From a scientific point of view, the discovery helps us stay one step ahead of a virus. Further-

more, the role that new technology played in identifying the strain serves as an important reminder of how far we have come. The innovation and advancements in technology and molecular virology should be celebrated.

The fight against HIV has made some formidable gains in treatment and treatment outcomes with remarkable gains in longevity.

UNAIDS estimates that new infections have decreased by 16% from 2.1 million in 2010 to 1.7 million in 2017. Undoubtedly one of the most promising achievements is the reduction in mother-to-child transmissions around the world. But the HIV response does not favour complacency.

EMERGENCY PERSISTS

The notion that HIV is no longer an emergent threat is one that jeopardises the work of scientists and communities who continue to drive prevention of HIV and fight against the pervading stigma. The HIV emergency is not over. The epidemic still needs vigilant attention, especially as reduction rates stall.

The ultimate solution is a working cure and preventative vaccine. The HVTN studies in South Africa are currently conducting HIV preventative vaccine trials in the hope that one day there will be an effective vaccine to prevent HIV. But until then, we need to refocus our energy on scaling up the effective treatment and prevention tools we have in hand to all those who need them.

[the writer is Professor of medicine and deputy director of the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre at the Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine, University of Cape Town]

BJP MLA felicitates cab driver who took poet-activist to police station

MUMBAI, FEB 8 (PTI): Mumbai BJP chief Mangal Prabhat Lodha on Saturday felicitated a cab driver who took a passenger to police station after overhearing a phone chat about the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests.

The BJP MLA conferred "Alert Citizen Award" on cab driver Rohit Gaur at the Santacruz police station.

Lodha also accused the passenger, poet-activist Bappaditya Sarkar, of hatching an "anti-national conspiracy" against the CAA.

"Rohit Gaur...who handed over the Uber taxi passenger devising anti-national conspiracy against the citizenship amendment act. Felicitated Rohit Gaur on behalf of the people of Mumbai calling him at the Santa

Cruz Police Station and gave alert citizen award," Lodha tweeted.

He also shared pictures showing him felicitating Gaur.

On Wednesday night, Sarkar was taken to police station by the driver of his Uber cab.

Sarkar, a resident of Jaipur who arrived in Mumbai on February 3 for a poetry reading session at the Kala Ghoda Festival, also took part in the ongoing anti-CAA-NRC protest at Nagpada in Mumbai.

On Wednesday night, while traveling by an Uber cab, he was discussing protests against the CAA with a friend on phone.

Overhearing the chat, the cab driver summoned policemen and urged them to arrest Sarkar. Sarkar was taken



to a police station and allowed to leave after an inquiry.

The driver allegedly told Sarkar that he should be thankful that he took him to police sta-

tion and not somewhere else. Sarkar later commented that the driver's aggressive behaviour and violent language reflected the atmosphere in the country.

The 23-year-old poet also said that despite the ordeal he faced, he was not going to lodge a complaint against the driver as it might ruin his career and life.

Lone Muslim corporator of BJP in Indore civic body quits



INDORE, FEB 8 (PTI): The lone Muslim corporator of the BJP in the party-ruled Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday announced that he was resigning

from the "changed" BJP, which he said is doing the "politics of hate" over the new citizenship law.

In a letter to the district BJP unit, Usman Patel, the corporator from the municipal ward no.

38, wrote that he was resigning from all posts in the party with which he has been associated for the last 40 years.

Patel has posted a video of the announcement on social media.

"I had joined the BJP 40 years ago after getting inspired by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The BJP has changed now. It is now doing the politics of hate," he said in the video clip.

The passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Parliament in December, 2019, has triggered protests in many parts of the country.

Patel stated that the CAA was against the Constitution and Muslims.

"I and my friends are resigning from the primary membership of the party," he stated.

Patel also added that he would lend his support to the ongoing protests against the CAA at different places.

In January, at least 80 Muslim leaders of the BJP in Madhya Pradesh had resigned from its primary membership in protest against the CAA, calling it a "divisive" measure.

The CAA provides Indian citizenship to non-Muslim refugees who had migrated to India before December 31, 2014 owing to religious persecution in Muslim-dominated Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Rampaging Mohun Bagan aim to build lead vs Punjab FC

KALYANI, (WEST BENGAL), FEB 8 (PTI): Mohun Bagan will look to consolidate their position atop the points standings in their bid for a second title when they face Punjab FC in a top-of-the-table I-League clash here on Sunday.

Mohun Bagan, the 2014-15 champions, who will play as a merged team with ATK in Indian Super League from 2020-21, have a healthy six-point lead over Punjab at the halfway stage.

Unbeaten in eight matches, the Kolkata giants can retain their six-point lead by simply avoiding a defeat, but it is Punjab who cannot afford to lose and fall nine points behind.

"This is a nine-point game for us," Punjab FC head coach Yan Law said on the eve of the match.

"We need to win and bring the gap to three points. A draw will also not satisfy us."

The Punjab outfit have bolstered their squad with the likes of



former India defender Nirmal Chhetri, attacking midfielder Alwyn George and former Mohun Bagan captain Eze Kingsley in their ranks.

"We've worked hard, signed some new players and stabilized the team even more. So we are going all out and make sure we take all three points from this fixture, and make us sure title contenders," Law added.

At the Mariners' camp, it has been sunny days as with every match, they have put up strong performances.

The league leaders were without the services of defender Daniel Cyrus in their 3-2 win over Chennai City in their last match.

His absence coincided with the team conceding two goals for the first time in eight games, since their last

defeat (2-4) to Churchill Brothers in December last year.

Mohun Bagan head coach Kibu Vicuna provided an injury update on Cyrus and said, "He is feeling better with each passing day but we will reassess and he will play against Punjab only if he is at 100 per cent."

Speaking about their Sunday's challengers, he added, "Punjab is a

very good team. They are playing some very good football and have some great individuals. It's going to be a tough match but we are ready for the challenge."

The stats make very good reading for Mohun Bagan.

In seven I-League encounters between the two sides, Mohun Bagan have won four and drawn two, losing just once.

17 IP address-owners booked for uploading child porn clips

PALGHAR, FEB 8 (PTI): A case has been registered against owners of 17 Internet Protocol (IP) addresses from where child pornographic videos were allegedly uploaded on a popular social media platform in Maharashtra's Palghar district between April 23 and May 8 last year, police said on Saturday.

Virar police registered the case under the section 67B of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, on the complaint forwarded by Facebook- the American social media and technology company- said Palghar Police PRO Hemant Katkar.

"Child pornographic videos were posted on Facebook accounts

of 17 IP addresses from the Vasai-Virar belt in Palghar district during April 23 and May 8, 2019. The case under IT Act was registered on the complaint of Facebook," he said.

The Internet Protocol (IP) is the method or protocol by which data is sent from one computer to another on the Internet.

The IP Address ownership typically tells the name of the original organisation or individual in whose name the IP is registered.

Katkar said all the IP account-holders are found to be in the age group of 20-35 years.

No arrest is made so far and the crime branch is investigating the case, he added.

SP leader murder case: Court orders salary of SI to be stopped for non-appearance

MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP), FEB 8 (PTI): A special court in Meerut has ordered police to stop disbursing the salary of a sub-inspector for not appearing in court in connection with Samajwadi Party leader Muzaffar Rana's murder case.

Sub-inspector Deepak Malik is the investigating officer in the case and has not appeared in court to record his

statement till now despite repeated issuing of warrants.

Apart from halting salary payment, special court judge Pankej Mishra on Friday also issued another arrest warrant against Malik asking him to be produced before it on February 19.

According to public prosecutor Sirajuddin Alvi, former Bahujan Samaj Party MP Kadir

Rana, his brother ex-MLA Noor Saleem Rana among others are facing trial in the murder case.

SP leader Muzaffar Rana was shot dead during local body elections at a polling station here on October 28, 2006.

Later, the case was shifted to the Meerut court from Muzaffarnagar by the Allahabad High Court in 2007 after a plea by the victim's family.

Thai soldier 'kills many' in shooting rampage



Bangkok, 08 Feb [AP]: A soldier has killed at least 10 people in a shooting rampage in Nakhon Ratchasima in the north-east of Thailand and remains at large, police have said.

The soldier opened fire at different locations in the city, which is more than 155 miles (250km) from Bangkok, the police spokesman Kis-

sana Phathanacharoen said in a message to reporters.

The gunman remained close to a shopping mall and had not yet been apprehended, the police said.

Local media showed footage of the soldier getting out of a car in front of a shopping mall and firing a series of shots, sending people running.

Women's Triangular T20 series: India beat Australia by seven wickets in 5th match

MELBOURNE, FEB 8 (PTI): Smriti Mandhana slammed a superb half-century as India produced an improved batting show to notch up a seven-wicket win over Australia in the fifth T20, keeping themselves in the hunt for the finals at the women's triangular series here on Saturday.

Put in to bat, Australia posted 173 for 5, riding on a 57-ball 93 by Ashleigh Gardner and Meg Lanning's 22-ball 37 after India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur won the toss and elected to field at Junction Oval.

India then returned to overhaul the target, scoring 177 for three in 19.4 overs.

Sixteen-year-old Shafali Verma finally came good, blasting a 28-ball 49 to give India a flying start. Her innings contained eight fours and a six.

Smriti Mandhana (55) also smashed seven



boundaries in her 48-ball innings to anchor the tricky chase.

Jemimah Rodrigues also came out all cylinders blazing, making a quickfire 19-ball 30 with five fours.

In the end, skipper Harmanpreet (20 off 20 balls) and Deepti Sharma (11 off 4 balls) took the team home.

Earlier, Gardner sent the ball across the fence 11 times and blasted three sixes in her 57-ball innings to emerge as the top-scorer for Australia.

For India, Deepti Sharma (2/27) was the most outstanding bowler, snapping two wickets, while Rajeshwari Gayakwad (1/34), Radha Yadav (1/34) and Harleen Deol (1/21) took one wicket each.

Ellyse Perry (1/33), Megan Schutt (1/26) and Nicola Carey (1/27) accounted for one wicket each for Australia.

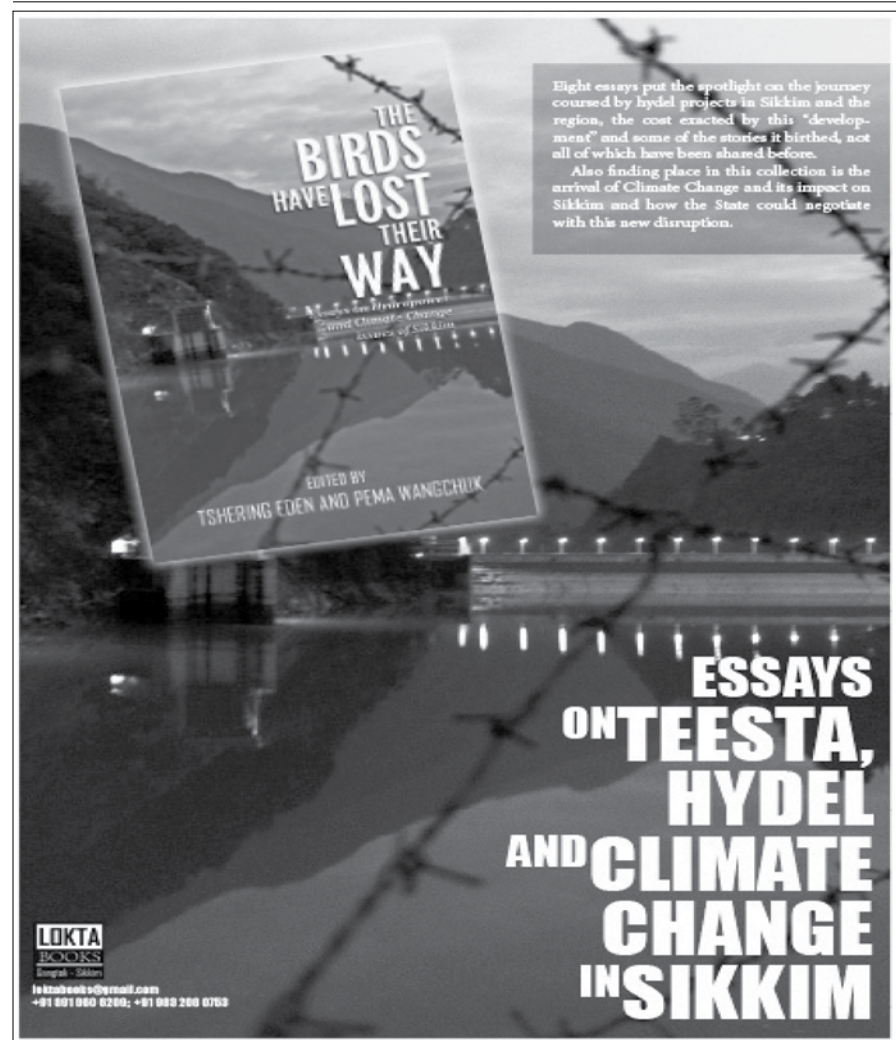
With this win, India moved to the second position in the points table, behind England.

India had lost to Australia and England by an identical four-wicket margin in their last two matches in the series.

Australia will take on England in the final league match of the series on Sunday.

Brief Score: Australia women: 173 for five in 20 overs (Ashleigh Gardner 93; Deepti Sharma 2/27).

India women: 177 for three in 19.4 overs (Smriti Mandhana 55, Shafali Verma 49; Megan Schutt 1/26).



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One day cricket in this calendar year is not as relevant as T20s and Tests: Kohli

AUCKLAND, FEB 8 (PTI): The high-flying Indians have been brought down by the Kiwis in the ODIs but an unperturbed Virat Kohli says this format is not much relevant this year, referring to the fast-approaching T20 World Cup and the en-grossing fight for World Test championship.

After the high of T20 series whitewash, the Indians lost the ODI series after conceding an unassailable 0-2 lead following a 22-run defeat in the second match here on Saturday.

"These were two pretty good games, great for the fans. I am particularly impressed with how we finished the game. First half we let things slip away. I think Saini and Jadeja showed great character but as I said one-day cricket in this calendar year is not as relevant like T20Is and Tests," Kohli said at the post match presentation.

The T20 World Cup will be held in Australia from October and the Indian team is not playing

many ODIs this year.

After the ongoing series against New Zealand, India will compete against South Africa in a three-match ODI series, which will be its last in 2020.

The international teams are also fighting hard to earn points for the World Test Championship, which will be decided by June 2021.

The India skipper said despite defeat, they have got some positives too from the lost series and they can make changes to the playing XI for the third match.

"This was a game where we could have taken chances and capitalised. We didn't know Saini can be as good with the bat. We want guys to figure out situations themselves. We could definitely consider changes, we have nothing to lose now."

Man-of-the-match Kyle Jamieson, who scored crucial 25 runs while batting at number 11 and took two wickets, was overwhelmed by the

win.

"Bit of a high at the moment. Still kind of sinking it. The game kind of ebbed and flowed. It was pretty simple: we were just trying to get it through 50 overs. Just trying and stick with Ross (Taylor)," he said.

"Relief was the feeling to get the first wicket out of the way and not give too many runs. International cricket is quite high intensity, but it was pretty cool."

New Zealand opener wicket-keeper batsman Tom Latham hailed it as a "great victory".

"Last game the batters won the game, today the bowlers did the job. I think that total was okay, it was a funny wicket. We managed to take wickets upfront and the bowlers kept taking wickets. We've had some close games with India, delighted to get the win," he said.

"Kyle on debut was fantastic. Delighted for him. It'll be great to win 3-nil from here. Fingers crossed, and hopefully we keep learning.

Pep Guardiola keen for Lionel Messi to finish career at Barcelona

JAMIE JACKSON MANCHESTER, 08 FEB [THEGUARDIAN]: Pep Guardiola has said he hopes Lionel Messi will finish his career at Barcelona amid suggestions Manchester City want to sign the Argentinian on a free transfer in the summer.

Messi's future has been questioned this week after he criticised Eric Abidal following the sporting director's claim the squad's form was behind Ernesto Valverde's sacking as head coach in January. The 32-year-old told Abidal "to name names" and the fallout caused speculation that Messi may leave Barça in the summer.

Guardiola, who managed Messi at Barcelona, was asked on Friday if he might be a target for City. "He is a player from Barcelona and he will stay there, that's my wish for him to stay there," he said. "I'm not going to talk about players playing for other clubs. I think he will finish his career there, that's my wish."

As for his forwards, the manager said Raheem Sterling's hamstring injury is a "problem" and may cause him to miss the Champions League last-16 tie with Real Madrid. The first leg

is on 26 February.

"It's a hamstring injury and we will see, of course it takes weeks but we'll see before Leicester [in a fortnight], Madrid and the rest of the games. I don't know right now," he said. "It's a problem, but it's a problem we had with [Ilkay] Gündogan out for six months in the first year [2016-17], and [Aymeric] Laporte this season for four or five months. It's always a problem. But it is what it is. During the season these kind of things happen unfortunately."

City, who play West Ham on Sunday, are 22 points behind the Premier League leaders, Liverpool, but Guardiola pointed to City's recent successes. "One year ago they said we were unstoppable for four or five years," said Guardiola. "Then after two seasons of incredible success [it changes]. I don't know what will happen in the future, we'll prepare as best we can and try to reduce the gap. "When we had 100 points they were 25 points behind, then one point [last season] and now look at them. But there are other teams too [who can contend]." City have scored 105 goals in all competitions yet failed to score in their last two matches – a 1-0 loss to

Manchester United and Sunday's 2-0 defeat at Tottenham.

Guardiola said: "I don't know why – I would like to find the explanation. I don't have any [reason] to say there was something wrong with my players. I know they want to score goals and score the penalties. Honestly, we concede few against the big clubs and create a lot. We miss a lot of chances. They [the opponents] arrive once or twice and score – we have to improve on that. We can do more. Putting the ball in the net is the most difficult thing in football and we are going to try to improve."

Leroy Sané's recovery from a serious knee injury, meanwhile, may take "weeks" despite him being back in training with the squad.

"When you have an injury, especially this one for six months, you need to recover tempo and rhythm," said Guardiola. "He needs time, it's not a case of him training and he will then immediately be there, it's not like an ankle or muscular injury. He needs weeks. What's important is that the surgery was perfect and he's recovering incredibly well. He'll come back stronger than before but now he needs a little bit of time."

Surreal to get man-of-the-match on debut: Kyle Jamieson

AUCKLAND, FEB 8 (PTI): New Zealand's debutant pacer Kyle Jamieson has called his maiden international game surreal after he won the 'man-of-the-match' in their 22-run win over India on Saturday. The Black Caps took a 2-0 lead in the three-match series as Jamieson scored a vital partnership with Ross Taylor and then took 2-42 to seal the victory.

"Pretty surreal. You kind of grow up dreaming of these moments. Get your first cap and hope to make an impact and to play some sort of role in helping us first to get to a total and then restrict a pretty good batting lineup is very pleasing. And to have a series win tops

it all," he said on Saturday. Talking about his 76-run partnership off 51 balls with Taylor, Jamieson said,"Firstly, we were just trying to get to the 50 overs. We had plenty of time and that made it pretty simple.

"It was just about getting through that 50 overs and then my role became about how do I get Ross on strike and what end do we attack and what total do we need to get to and we ended up getting a little bit more because we kind of extended a wee bit, which was good. Pretty simple from Ross!"

He then took a brace including Prithvi Shaw as his first wicket. Later he bowled Navdeep Saini who was playing the res-

cue act with Ravindra Jadeja late in the Indian innings.

"The debut wicket (was more special than the runs). I think hitting the six was a bit of a bonus. My role is to bowl and take wickets and restrict runs. To get that first one under the belt is quite special. But I think being able to perform that role, my core role, is special to me."

When asked if he is more comfortable batting or bowling, Jamieson said:"That's a great question old man. On these small grounds, maybe bowling. I don't know, I am not probably the guy to ask. I don't bat enough to have a fair representation but look I enjoy the challenges of both.

Return of Taarabt: how Adel reinvented himself at Benfica

MICHAEL BUTLER THEGUARDIAN

Adel Taarabt has been called many things. Martin Jol, his manager at Tottenham, labelled him "a wizard". A few years later at QPR, Harry Redknapp described him "three stone overweight." Both are probably close to being true. But nobody ever dared to call the Moroccan a defensive midfielder, even Taarabt himself: when asked to respond to Redknapp's criticism, the then 24-year-old simply replied "maybe he expects me to make more tackles. I am not this type of player."

Except, this season for Benfica, that is exactly the type of player Taarabt has become and at the age of 30, he is playing the best football of his life – an all-action combative menace at the base of midfield: snapping into challenges, shouting and ordering his team-mates this way and that, and yes, occasionally still nutmegging people.

Some old tricks remain, but Taarabt's transformation is a remarkable one. It has not happened overnight: signed by Benfica in 2015, it took him nearly four years to make a first-team appearance for the Portuguese giants. During the first year of his five-year contract, grainy videos circulated of him turning out for the reserves, punt-ing corner kicks straight into the side netting. An 18-month loan to Genoa followed, during which



Taarabt admitted he had lost 11kg of weight. Another season in Benfica's reserves came and went before he finally managed to break into the first team in 2019.

There is not one single reason why Taarabt has fallen back in love with football, and why football has fallen back in love with him, but his loan spell at Genoa in 2017-18, and his relationship with Ivan Juric, his manager there, is one of the most important. "When I first arrived at Genoa, I was out of shape and there were problems" said Taarabt. "I am coming back now, not quite what I was before, but I'm getting there. With Ivan, you always have to go full pelt. He's fair, though. If you prove that you understood what went wrong, he'll press the reset button and start again. I don't know if we can call each other friends, but he cer-

tainly changed my life – and my body."

The Moroccan's relationships with his various managers have defined the peaks and troughs of his career. Neil Warnock was the first to fully nurture his extraordinary talent. Taarabt went from Spurs cast-off to QPR captain in a few months at just 21 years old, was made to feel what he is – a star – and spent most of 2010-11 waltzing around the Championship like he owned the place, which he did.

Those at Loftus Road would simply sing "Taarabt's too good for you", which he was. At the end of one performance – a 4-0 win over promotion rivals Swansea – Warnock can be seen with his hands on his head in disbelief at Taarabt's performance, not unlike the manager's comical centre-circle stare-off with referee Craig Pawson last

year. A solo strike against Preston was probably the goal of the season, while one outside-of-the-boot pass to set up the winner against Coventry, was surely the best pass Loftus Road had seen since Stan Bowles's sublime pass against Leicester in 1977. QPR were promoted as champions in May 2011, with Taarabt finishing with 19 goals and 16 assists from 44 league appearances.

The clips for Benfica these days are perhaps not as extraterrestrial, but arguably more impressive given that Taarabt is now playing in Champions League, not the Championship. Domestically, Benfica are currently top of the table, having won 18 of their 19 games, and face their only conquerors this season, Porto, on Saturday at the Estádio do Dragão. It is a monumental match between the two biggest rivals

in Portugal, and even at this stage, probably represents Porto's last chance to deny Benfica a sixth title in seven seasons.

Taarabt's contribution will likely be crucial to Benfica's chances. He scored and was man-of-the-match in their last league game against Be-lenenses, a narrow 3-2 win, and has formed an excellent understanding alongside Julian Weigl, the £18m January recruit from Borussia Dortmund.

Just as Warnock nurtured at QPR, and Clarence Seedorf supported Taarabt during his successful loan spell at Milan in 2014, the encouragement from Bruno Lage at Benfica has been pivotal to Taarabt re-establishing himself. "We tried to place him as second striker, but we felt that we could take more advantage of him in the double pivot," the head coach said recently. "He gives us defensive balance and also quality in attack."

Few have known the ups and downs that Taarabt has experienced: lurching from cult hero to Karl Henry's back-up at QPR, keeping Robinho out of the side at Milan before weight gain, obscurity and now redemption at Benfica. There will always be the nagging feeling that Taarabt could have achieved more, but with the arrival of Saturday night's O Clássico, we should just enjoy him for what he is: a street footballer trying to fit in on the big stage.

Christine Sinclair, the canny hunter, scores her way into history books



Canadian's achievement – a record across women's and men's football – is deserving of praise. Yet she ducks it. "For me it has nothing to do with the record, it's to have young girls be able to dream of playing professionally or represent their country, win Olympic medals," she said. "To inspire young girls to pursue their crazy, wild dreams ... it's pretty cool."

She scored against Mexico on Tuesday too and 186 goals, and counting, in 291 appearances is phenomenal. If Wambach's record seemed unbeatable, Sinclair's seems even more so.

The game is changing. As professionalism increases, as the talent pool grows, as players are thrown into competitive environments from younger ages and there is a constant stream of talent ready to replace those coming towards the end of their careers, the longevity of players shrinks.

Canada has the second-highest number of women playing organised football in the world, with 290,087 players, behind the 9.5 million in the US (according to the 2019 Women's Football Survey) and Sinclair has been the jewel in the crown of the Canada women's team for 20 years, from the moment she stepped in at 16 in 2000. Their narrow semi-final defeat by the USA at the London Olympics in 2012 was perhaps the defining game of her career; the unplayable forward became one of only three players to have scored a hat-trick against their opponents, before Canada were knocked out by an Alex Morgan strike in extra time.

She has an ability to find space where there is none. Her goals to games ratio, one in close to 1.5 matches, is testament to her determination to wait for an opening. She lurks like a hunter, waiting in de-

fenders' blind spots before pouncing. Her goals may not be worldies – though there are a few of those – but they are calculated.

The Portland Thorns player has shaped and managed her career around the national team. In the run-up to the 2015 World Cup in Canada she played nine club games; in 2016 she played 12 times for the Thorns.

But Canadian Soccer has done little to help her to her record. It could be argued that, with better commitment from the governing body, Sinclair would have passed Wambach's record much sooner. It has hosted only nine home friendlies since that World Cup in Canada, including one in 2019 and two in 2018.

It will take someone special to topple this record. Vivianne Miedema, a very different player to Sinclair but with a similar attitude to the limelight, is on

69 Netherlands goals at 23 years old. At that rate she could catch the veteran's number, but the game is getting tougher, opponents are getting better and Miedema is playing a huge number of club matches for Arsenal.

The seemingly impossible, though, is possible, as Sinclair's dethroning of Wambach shows. The American forward said as much in a moving tribute to Sinclair on Instagram.

"I've tried to live and play in a way honoring that legacy and privilege, so that little girls coming up after us will accomplish things we've only dreamed of," she wrote. "So, as a girl who grew up dreaming of winning Olympic gold for my country before women's soccer was even an Olympic sport, tonight I am celebrating.

"Tonight, I am celebrating the honor of passing that record, that legacy of our beautiful game, to the great Christine Sinclair: world-record holder for most international goals man or woman in history. Christine: History is made. Your victory is our victory. We celebrate with you.

"To every girl coming up in the pack with a dream to do something that doesn't yet even exist: We believe in you to accomplish that we can't even yet imagine. Your Pack is with you. And history awaits you."

China doing good job on coronavirus: Trump



LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, FEB 08 (PTI): China is doing a good job on its fight against the deadly coronavirus that has taken the lives of large number of people, President Donald Trump has said, adding that the US was helping them out.

"China is working very hard. Late last night, I had a very good talk with President Xi and we talked mostly about the coronavirus," Trump told reporters at the White House on Friday. "I think they are doing a very professional job."

The death toll in China due to coronavirus continues to go up as it jumped to 722 on Friday, while the number of confirmed cases rose to 34,546, Chinese health authorities announced on Saturday.

The Chinese, Trump said, were in touch with the World Health Organization and also the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We're working together," he said. "I had a great conversation last night with President Xi. It's a tough situation. I think they're doing a very good job."

Asked if he is concerned about its potential impact on global economy, Trump said: "I think that China will do a very good job."

According to US Health Secretary Alex Azar, there have been 12 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus in the United States, including two cases of transmission to people who had not recently been in China.

The US has offered to send world-class experts to China to assist them, Azhar said.

Trump ousts 2 key impeachment witnesses

WASHINGTON, FEB 8 (PTI): US President Donald Trump has fired two officials who had testified before the Congressional committee during the impeachment process by the House of Representatives, three days after he was acquitted by the Senate of all charges.

The two officers are the Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the European Union, and Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Vindman, a Ukraine expert on the National Security Council of the White House.

Both Vindman and Sondland were key witnesses during the impeachment hearings by the Democrats-controlled House of Representatives.

"I was advised today that the president intends to recall me effective immediately as (the) United States Ambassador to the European Union," Sondland said in a statement on Friday. Hours before Vindman was escorted out of the White House security officials, his attorney said: "LTC Vindman was asked to leave for telling the truth."

Anil Ambani to pay USD 100 mn in conditional order for Chinese banks: UK court

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, FEB 7 (PTI): A UK court on Friday directed Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani to pay USD 100 million towards a conditional order granted to three Chinese banks pursuing the recovery of over USD 680 million owed to them as part of a loan agreement.

In what is in effect a deposit to be paid into court pending a full trial in the case, Judge David Waksman has set a six-week timeline for such a payment to be made as he concluded that he did not accept Ambani's defence that his net worth was nearly zero or that his family would not step in to assist him when push came to shove.

In my overall conclusion, Mr Ambani has not satisfied me that he can't make any payment at all, said Judge Waksman, as he expressed particular criticism of a lack of candour and transparency on the part of Ambani's defence in reference to his financial means.

The Reliance Group indicated that it plans to appeal against the ruling, which will involve a process of seeking permission to appeal.

Mr Ambani is reviewing the order of the UK Court and will take legal advice as to further remedies in appeal, a spokesperson for Anil Ambani said.

The order pertains to an alleged personal liability of Mr Ambani and will have no bearing on the operations of the Reliance Infrastructure Limited, Reliance Power Limited and Reliance Capital Limited, the



spokesperson said.

The banks Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd Mumbai Branch, on behalf of itself, China Development Bank and Exim Bank of China welcomed the order and said they remain confident of their claim succeeding at trial.

This is a straightforward debt claim to recover outstanding loans made to RCom (Reliance Communications) in good faith and secured by a binding personal guarantee given by Mr Ambani, which he has refused to honour, a statement on behalf of the banks said.

We remain very confident in our claim. We hope that Mr Ambani will comply with the court's order and look forward to the swift resolution of the case at trial, the statement said.

Another senior Reliance Group official added that based on the legal advice, the RCom chief intends to seek further remedies in appeal and is confident that he will have the opportunity to establish that the Chinese claim is without any merit.

Earlier, during a half-

day hearing, the court was told that Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani was a wealthy businessman and now he is not as a result of a "disastrous turn of events" in the telecom market in India.

The Chinese banks had sought summary judgment against Ambani over an alleged breach of a personal guarantee on a debt refinancing loan of around USD 925 million in February 2012.

Ambani, 60, denies providing authority for any such guarantee, resulting in the High Court action in the UK the jurisdiction agreed to as part of the terms of the loan agreement.

At the hearing at the Commercial Division of the High Court of England and Wales in London to set the terms for the "conditional order" granted to three Chinese banks last year against the Reliance Communications (RCom) boss, his legal team sought to establish that his net worth was zero once his liabilities were taken into account.

"The value of Mr Ambani's investments has

vency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) only recently coming into play.

"The evidence overall is that Mr Ambani could not come close to paying a sum of USD 700 million into court," said Howe.

The banks, represented in court by barrister Bankim Thanki, sought to establish that Ambani had been "at best economical with the truth" in his evidence statements to the court in relation to his financial means.

They also pointed to a series of instances where Ambani family members had stepped in to bail him out, even as Ambani's defence sought to establish that their client had no access to the assets and shares under the name of his mother Kokila, wife Tina Ambani and sons Anmol and Anshul in the form of loans.

"Are we seriously to believe that his own mother, wife, and sons can't help him in his hour of need for the purpose of complying with a conditional order," said Thanki, who claimed Ambani's evidence was akin to the proverbial "glossy lipstick on the pig" in terms of some "blatant" lies despite the burden of proof lying with him in the case.

"ADA's (Anil Dhirajlal Ambani) brother Mukesh is widely regarded as the wealthiest man in Asia and is ranked by Forbes as the 13th richest person in the world and by Bloomberg as the 14th richest person in the world. He has an estimated net worth of USD 55 to 57 billion," notes the banks in court.

Germany's Merkel fires official following far-right fiasco

BERLIN, FEB 8 (AP): German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Saturday fired a government official whose congratulating of a state governor elected with a far-right party's help angered Merkel's coalition partners.

Christian Hirte, a member of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union who was the government's commissioner for the formerly communist east and a deputy economy minister, tweeted that he resigned after Merkel told him he could no longer do the job. Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert, confirmed his dismissal.

Hirte's departure is the latest fallout from the shock election Wednesday of pro-business politician Thomas Kemmerich as governor

of the eastern state of Thuringia.

The far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, enabled it by supporting him in a vote in the state legislature as did the regional branch of Merkel's CDU, against the wishes of its national leadership.

Kemmerich's acceptance of AfD's votes appalled left-leaning parties and many in his own center-right camp. Merkel called his election "inexcusable." The politician from the small Free Democrats announced the day after he was elected that he planned to step down, though it isn't yet clear when that will happen or whether the state will hold a new election.

Hirte, a deputy leader of the CDU's Thuringia branch who sits in the



national parliament, had congratulated Kemmerich on his election as a candidate of the center, tweeting that it showed the state had voted out its previous left-wing government, and making no mention of AfD's role.

The center-left So-

cial Democrats, Merkel's junior partners in her often-tense national governing coalition, said Hirte couldn't stay in his job.

Coalition leaders were meeting Saturday to discuss the Thuringia mess,

which has prompted new criticism of the leadership of Merkel's successor as CDU chairwoman, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer.

PM Modi pitches for implementation of Tamil reconciliation process by Colombo

NEW DELHI, FEB 8 (PTI): India on Saturday sought devolution of powers by the Sri Lankan government to the minority Tamils in the island nation and hoped that their aspirations for equality, justice and respect will be fulfilled as per provisions of the country's Constitution.

After wide-ranging talks with his Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the issue was discussed with an "open mind" and hoped that the Tamil reconciliation process would be taken forward by Colombo.

The two leaders also deliberated on a raft of key issues like bolstering anti-terror cooperation, expansion of trade and investment ties, implementation of joint projects in Sri Lanka and resolving the long-festering fishermen issue with a "humane approach".

In his comments, Rajapaksa thanked Modi for his government's 'neighbourhood first policy' and the priority he attaches to ties with Sri Lanka.

Rajapaksa's five-day visit to India assumes significance as his tenure as Sri Lanka's president from 2005 to 2016 saw expansion of China's footprints in the Indian Ocean island nation, triggering concerns in India.

Noting that India has been a "trusted partner" in Sri Lanka's development, Modi said stability, security and prosperity in the island nation is important for India as well as for the entire Indian Ocean region. On the long-pending Tamil issue, Modi said it will be necessary to implement the 13th amendment of the Sri Lankan Constitution.

The 13th amendment provides for devolution of power to Tamil community in the neighbouring country.

"We held a discussion with an open mind on issues relating to reconciliation in Sri Lanka. I am confident that the government of Sri Lanka will fulfil the expectations of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace, and respect within a United Sri Lanka," Modi said.

"It will be necessary to implement the 13th amendment of (Sri Lankan) Constitution and take forward the reconciliation process at the same time," he said.

India has been press-

ing Sri Lanka to implement the 13th amendment which was brought in after the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement of 1987 which envisaged devolution of powers to the Tamils.

Calling terrorism a major threat facing the region, Modi mentioned about the 'Easter Day terror attacks' in Sri Lanka last year and asserted that both countries will expand cooperation to deal with the challenge.

"We both countries have fought this problem firmly. There were painful and barbaric terrorist attacks on Easter Day in Sri Lanka in April last year.

"These attacks were not only a blow to Sri Lanka, but also to humanity. In our talks, we discussed furthering our anti-terror cooperation," Modi said.

Rajapaksa said a part of the discussions centred around ensuring security for both the countries, and expressed gratitude to India for helping his country in countering terrorism.

"India is our closest neighbour and long-standing friend. The close historical links have provided solid foundation to our ties," Rajapaksa said.

Referring to the fishermen issue, Modi said both sides have decided to adopt a humanitarian approach in dealing with it. "We also discussed the fishermen issue. It directly affects the livelihood of the people of both countries. Therefore, we agreed to continue to adopt a constructive and humanitarian approach in dealing with the issue," he said. The prime minister said the history of Indo-Lanka relationship has been woven with countless threads like culture, religion, art and language.

"Whether it is security or economy or social progress, our past and our future in every field are interlinked."

India had announced a financial assistance of USD 450 million to Sri Lanka, including USD 50 million to fight terrorism, during the visit of the country's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in November.

"We deliberated on joint economic projects in Sri Lanka as well as to enhance trade and investment relations. We also discussed ways to deepen people-to-people contact, promote tourism and improving connectivity," Modi said.

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US citizen dies of coronavirus in Wuhan: embassy

BEIJING, FEB 8 (AFP): A US citizen has died from the new coronavirus at the epicentre of the epidemic in China, the US embassy said Saturday, in what appeared to be the first confirmed foreign death from the outbreak.

"We can confirm that a 60-year-old US citizen diagnosed with coronavirus died at a hospital in Wuhan, China, on February 6," an embassy spokesman told AFP, without specifying the person's gender.

"We offer the sincerest condolences to the



family for their loss," the spokesman said, adding that no further comment would be made out of respect for the family's privacy.

At least 722 people have died from the virus in China while more than 34,000 have been infected, according to the latest official figures.

Two people have died

from the virus outside the mainland: a man from Wuhan in the Philippines and a 39-year-old man in Hong Kong.

The Chinese foreign ministry said on Thursday that 19 foreigners have been infected in China, and two of them have recovered. The ministry refused to disclose their nationalities.

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Museum of Modern Art to offer film series tribute to Daniel Craig film

LOS ANGELES, FEB 8 (PTI): Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, is set to host screenings of British star Daniel Craig's films as the actor bids adieu to the iconic character of James Bond.

The program will start on March 3, a month before the release of Craig's final appearance as the fictional British spy in "No Time to Die".

The film series, which will trace Craig's evolution from European arthouse regular to A-list superstar, will conclude on March 22.

"I couldn't ever imagine being put in a museum, but what an honour and a thrill to be shown at MoMA," Craig said in a statement.

The 51-year-old star's initial films like John Maybury's *Love Is the Devil: Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon* (1998), Roger Mitchell's *The Mother* (2003) and *Enduring Love* (2004), and Matthew Vaughn's *Layer Cake*, will be screened during the program.

Craig will be in attendance for the series' opening night-screening of "Casino Royale".



Other films to be screened are Sam Mendes's *Skyfall* and *Road to Perdition*, Steven Spielberg's *Munich*, David Fincher's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* and Rian Johnson's *Knives Out*.

'Joker' broke through the stigma that seems to be against superhero films at Oscars: Joe Russo

LOS ANGELES, FEB 8 (PTI): "Avengers: Endgame" co-director Joe Russo says he is happy that Todd Phillips-directed "Joker" could make it to the top categories at the 2020 Oscars, rising above the "stigma" attached with the superhero genre.

"Joker", starring Joaquin Phoenix as the titular DC supervillain, is leading Academy Awards nominations with 11 nods, while "Endgame" is nominated for a visual effects Oscars.

Calling "Joker" a "beautiful piece of filmmaking", Joe said the movie is dark and disturbing but has an important message at its core.

"'Joker' was a very tragic, very modern story and really representative of existential isolation and the crisis a lot of people are feeling. The moment in it when he's on the talk show, where it's the idea of everyone in the world right now grabbing their megaphones and trying to shout each other down, and he's reacting against that.

"It's certainly a dark movie and a disturbing movie with a very important message to it. We're ecstatic that it's being recognized. It broke through the stigma that seems to be against these films, certainly at the Academy," the director said in an



interview with The Hollywood Reporter.

Joe and his brother Anthony Russo have just wrapped the principal photography on the Tom Holland-starrer crime drama "Cherry".

Kayla Ewell to play vampiric DC villain Nocturna in 'Batwoman'

LOS ANGELES, FEB 8 (PTI): "Vampire Diaries" star Kayla Ewell will once again play a vampire on screen in The CW's "Batwoman" series.

According to Entertainment Weekly, Ewell will essay the role of vampiric DC Comics villain Nocturna in the superhero drama's 13th episode titled "Drink Me".

Nocturna made its debut in the DC comics in the '80s as a thief who had a pale skin and light sensitivity after an accident, and eventually became one of Bruce Wayne's (Batman) love interests.

The character was introduced in the DC Comics in 2011 as a vampire and one of Batwoman's villains.

"Batwoman" features Ruby Rose as the titular superhero.



Maggie Gyllenhaal to play Elvis Presley's mom Gladys in biopic



LOS ANGELES, FEB 8 (PTI): Filmmaker Baz Luhrmann has roped in actor Maggie Gyllenhaal to essay the role of Elvis Presley's mother Gladys Presley in his upcoming musical drama on the life of the king of rock and roll.

Austin Butler plays the titular role in the film which also features Tom Hanks as Presley's manager, Colonel Tom Parker. Luhrmann has co-written the Warner Bros project with Craig Pearce, reported Variety.

The movie revolves around Parker and Presley who came from nowhere and conquered the music industry.

The film marks Luhrmann's first after 2013's "The Great Gatsby".

Summit Times in Nepali



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POWER PLAY: The Real host Jeannie Mai rocks a striped blouse with tasseled shoulder pads, black shirt, fishnets, and black ankle boots at the Rag & Bone show during New York Fashion Week.

Taapsee shuts down troll targeting her for casting vote in Delhi elections



NEW DELHI, FEB 8 (PTI): Bollywood actor Taapsee Pannu on Saturday blasted a social media user who targeted her for casting vote in Delhi Assembly elections even after shifting to Mumbai for work.

Taapsee, who is looking forward to the release of her film "Thappad", posted a picture with her family on Twitter after casting the vote and urging her fans to do the same.

One of the social media users criticised the actor for not getting her name transferred to the voting list in Mumbai, where she works as an actor.

"Why are people who live in Mumbai deciding for us, it's been quite a long time since @taapsee shifted to Mumbai. She should get her vote shifted too," the comment read.

In a lengthy reply, Taapsee said no one has the right to question her citizenship as she is "more of a Delhite than a lot of others who might just be living here but probably don't contribute".

"I am living in Delhi as much if not more than Mumbai. My income is taxed through Delhi... Kindly don't question my citizenship, worry about yours n your contribution to it.

"And also to add, you can take a girl out of Delhi but you can not take Delhi out of this girl. And you are no one to tell me what I should do and what I should not. I guess this response will be enough to tell u how much of a Delhiite I am," she tweeted.

Voting is underway for the Delhi Assembly elections.

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

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

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

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

GEMINI: How we perceive ourselves de-

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

Tip: Claim your independence.

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

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

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

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

Tip: Choose assertiveness over aggression.

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

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

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

joy and awakens that spirit of playfulness.

Tip: Live a little.

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

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

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

Tip: Reinvent your style.

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

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

Tip: Embrace the in-between.

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

Tip: Storytelling is a form of medicine, Aquarius.

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

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