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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Govt accepts 5th Pay Comm's recommendations

Pay to be revised notionally from 01 January, 2016 and effectively from 01 January 2017; Arrears to be paid in 3 equal instalments

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:**

The state government has, in principle, accepted the recommendations of the 5th Pay Commission headed by former

Chief Secretary, Rinchen Ongmu. The government has accepted the Commission's recommendations on Pay Matrix, Index Rationalisation, Fitman Factor, and general recommendations of the Commission without any changes.

In the resolutions adopted by the Government on 01 June, the resolutions said that the pay shall be revised notionally from 01 January, 2016 and effectively from 01 January 2017 adding that arrears thereof shall be paid in three equal instalments in the subsequent financial years.

It is said that the pay matrix, which replaces

the pay bands and grade pays, is in force immediately prior to the notification of the resolution adopted by the Government. The fixation of pay of the employees in the new pay matrix shall be done by multiplying the existing pay bands and grade pay in the pre-revised structure of 01 January 2016 by a factor of 2.57, the resolution reads.

As per the new recommendations, the government employees are entitled to get annual increments of three percent in two dates i.e. 01 January and 01 July instead of one depending on their date of appoint-

ment, promotion or grant of financial up-gradation.

The recommendation on allowances except Dearness Allowance shall be effective from the date of notification on Allowances. Till such time, all the allowances will continue to be paid at existing rate in existing pay in existing structure as if the pay has not been revised with effect from 01 January 2016, it is said.

The pension is notionally revised from the due date of 01 January 2016 with application of fitment factor of 2.57 and in case it is found feasible to revise the pension by applying the formula

under the first option as recommended by the Committee, pension shall be revised and difference shall be paid subsequently. The government has also decided to pay arrears from 01 January 2017 to 31 March 2018 in three installments in next financial year.

As per the new recommendation of the pay commission, the employees are entitled to get house rent @ 12 % of revised pay scale within the State, Siliguri and Darjeeling and @ of 16 % to those who are posted in New Delhi, Kolkata and Guwahati. The government has accepted the recommendation of

Difficult Area Allowance @ of Rs. 2000 for level 15 and above level 14 @ of Rs. 1600 subject to the review and revision of existing list of Difficult Area as notified by the Home Department. However, the Government has accepted the High Altitude Allowance of Rs. 2400 for Lachen and Lachung and Rs.3000 for above 8000 ft to 12000 ft altitude.

The government has also accepted the recommendations for upgradation of certain posts as specified and modified in the carrier progression schemes for certain category of the posts.

Regularisation of NRHM employees being processed

All should understand criteria and processes: Health Secy

**ARPAN PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:**

"ALL THE STAFF WORKING in various capacities under National Rural Health Mission [NRHM] will be regularized as per the norms framed by Government of Sikkim but all the employees should have a clear picture about the various processes and criteria required to have their services regularized," said Secretary of Department of Health Care, Human Services & Family Welfare, Government of Sikkim, Vishal Chauhan.

The NRHM came into force in the State of Sikkim in 2005 and there are as many as 300 staff members working under the National Project, it is informed.

"We have been directed by the State Government to move forward the process of service regularization of employees under NRHM as per Rule 137 of the Government and various other norms," Mr Chauhan added.

Speaking to SummitTimes, Mr Chauhan said that the employees working under the scheme need to be grateful to the State Government for this opportunity.

"No other State provides such kind of facility. No other Government orders for regularization of services of existing workers without an interview or other formalities. This

is being made possible here in our State because of the positive concern of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling and his Government for regularizing services of employees working on Ad-hoc or Muster Roll basis since a long time," he expressed. Mr Chauhan also made it clear that the regularization process will follow the rules and regulations of the Government and only services of the genuine workers who fit in all the criteria will be considered.

"The department has started working on it. As per rule 137, 50% of the total vacancies are to be reserved for existing employees. The rest will be made open. However, the same rule has been challenged in the High Court of Sikkim so till the matter is cleared through the court, the process of regularization may take time," he added.

Mr Chauhan has urged the employees falling under this category to have patience and wait for the right time.

It may be mentioned here, the Health Department has already created 49 vacancies for doctors and 261 for nurses, open for existing doctors and nurses under NRHM as well. The written examination for doctors has already been conducted through SPSC. Exam for the post of nurses is scheduled to be held on 17 Jul.

As per information, there are more than 300 vacancies that can accommodate existing employees as well. However, there are many workers who have been appointed

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Navy sends ship to Socotra island in Yemen to rescue 38 stranded Indians

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI): Around 38 Indians are stranded in and around Socotra island in Yemen after a cyclone hit the area and the Indian Navy has launched an operation to rescue them.

The Navy has already deployed its ship INS Sunayna as part of the 'operation Nistar' to evacuate the Indians.

A Navy spokesperson said INS Sunayna, which was deployed in Western Arabian Sea, is now heading towards Socotra for the humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR) operation.

"#HADR @indiannavy launches #OpNistar 2 evacuate around 38 stranded Indian nationals in/around Socotra. INS Sunayna mission deployed in W Arabian Sea has been diverted to reach off Socotra tomorrow. Indian seafarers stranded view cyclone Mekunu which hit that area few days back," the spokesperson tweeted.

**REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:**

A hat-trick by Kalimpong footballer, Nadong Bhutia, has scored a win for Real Kashmir Football Club, Srinagar at the I-League 2nd Division on 30 May in New Delhi. Real Kashmir FC has now been promoted to play the 2018-19 season of I-League.

Right winger Nadong scored three goals and made three assists to help the club win the title.

"It is my first title as a professional footballer and I am very happy. I thank God, my family, coaches and supporting staff this moment," expresses Nadong.

"I am not sure if I will play for Real Kashmir FC for the new season. It all depends on my agent who is talking with other clubs including ISL clubs for the new season," he adds.

He expressed his satisfaction on his performance during the 2nd Division and hopes to have attracted prominent I-League and ISL clubs.

Nadong secures I-League 2018-19 berth for Real Kashmir FC



Darj transforms into World Cup town



**SUMMIT REPORT
DARJEELING, 02 JUN:**

World Cup buzz in Darjeeling has commenced with the launch of Darjeeling, The World Cup Town campaign today at Chowrasta in Darjeeling. The campaign is being organised by Dar-

jeeling North Point School Alumni Association [DN-PSAA] with the support of more than a dozen associations and citizen groups along with students and football lovers.

"It is to celebrate World Cup but more importantly, it is to send a message to people out-

side Darjeeling that Darjeeling is peaceful and beautiful. We want to show it to the world that Darjeeling is now peaceful and urge them to come and visit our beautiful Darjeeling. World Cup is also about unity across the world. It is an

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Bermiok poultry hatchery re-opens after 6 yrs

BIKASH CHETTRI
NAMCHI, 02 JUN:

Poultry hatchery of Bermiok in South Sikkim which had remained closed since 2012 was today re-opened in a function attended by Minister for Animal Husbandry, Livestock Fisheries & Veterinary Sciences, Somnath Poudyal. Mr Poudyal also distributed the first batch of boiler chicks for the progressive farmers of South and East district.

The programme was also attended by Panchayats, Secretary, Dr Kumar Bhandari, Principal Director, Dr Ram Tamang, Director [Extension & Training Cell], Dr PK Pradhan, Managing Director [State Hatchery Limited], Dr DK Pradhan,



Joint Direct [South], Dr T Bajgai, Veterinary Officer, Bermiok, Dr Suman Tamang, VO, Namchi, Dr Kinchokla Bhutia, and VO, SHL, Dr Sangyog Rai.

Addressing the function, Mr Poudyal congratulated the departmental

officers and Sikkim Hatchery Limited for successfully reopening the poultry boiler chick hatchery of Bermiok which will benefit all poultry farmers of Sikkim.

He said that agriculture, horticulture and

animal husbandry are important sectors in economic development of the State. All the policies of the Government are always inclined towards the interest of the farmers and it will be successful if farmers cooperate

with the Government, he added.

"State Government's vision of Organic Mission is another big step taken by the Government in the interest of farmers of the State and this mission will be the future profession of coming generation," Mr Poudyal expressed.

He urged progressive farmers of the State to bring a conscious revolution in the pattern of farmers' practices which will also bring collective benefits in line with sustainable development.

Secretary, Dr Bhandari, in his address said, "It is a clear intention of the State Government to make the State self sufficient and a fully organic State. At present, Sikkim has 50,000 capacity in

poultry farming but the requirement is 90,000. Though the production will not meet the requirement, the Government is trying to make progress in every sector but it will be the farmers who will help complete the vision and mission of the State Government."

He also said that the Bermiok hatchery will be a support for poultry growers and urged poultry growers of the State to make proper use and put forward suggestions for the department to make it a fully functional hatchery of the State.

Managing Director, SHL, Dr Pradhan, presented a brief report about Bermiok hatchery and also placed demands for upgradation of the hatchery.



Farmers' ID cards distributed at Kamerey

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:

International Panaacea Limited [IPL] organized a programme on Internal Control System and Organic Certification at Kamerey Ward under Budang Kamerey GPU in East Sikkim on 01 Jun wherein Field Functionary, Usha Dhakal, distributed Farmers' Identification Cards to 50 progressive farmers of the area, a press release informs.

KVK South conducts training for Rabitar farmers



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, South Sikkim, today organized a training programme at Rabitar in Namchi, South Sikkim. Subject Matter Specialist [Agronomy], Dr Nation Chamling, informed the farmers about the Improved Method of System of Rice Intensification while Subject Matter Specialist [Plant Protection], Praveesh Shivakoty, highlighted on major pests and diseases of rice. Likewise, SMS [Horticulture], Yangchenla Bhutia, spoke about the use of Arka Citrus for management of micronutrient in Sikkim Mandarin, a press release informs.

National Centre of Organic Farming officials evaluate PKVY scheme in State

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:

Officials from National Centre of Organic Farming [NCOF], Ghaziabad, Dr Shalini Phadtal [Junior Scientific Officer] and Dr VY Deoghare [Assistant Director, Regional Organic Farming Centre Bangalore], who are on a five-day visit to Sikkim, reached Gangtok on 29 May.

The officials are here for monitoring and evaluation of programmes implemented in the State under Parmparagat Krishi Vikash Yojana [PKVY]



during 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18, a press release informs.

During their visits, the

officers inspected various sites in East and South districts wherein various components of work

were executed. They also interacted with the beneficiaries on the effectiveness of the scheme in the

two districts.

The officers expressed satisfaction on implementation of the programme and the benefits derived by the farmers in the State and further praised the State Government and Food Security & Agriculture Development Department for effective governance and proper delivery systems.

They also expressed satisfaction in terms of marketing policy of organic products adopted by the State of Sikkim and the bold initiative taken to make Sikkim a fully organic State.

The NCOF officials were accompanied by officers and the field staff of FS&ADD headed by Joint Director, East, Bina Rai, Deputy Directors, Sushma Pradhan, Dr Pratap Subba, PD Lama and LN Sharma, and Joint Director, South, PD Rai.

It may be mentioned here, the centrally sponsored scheme PKVY was implemented in the State from the year 2015-16. Across the State, 66 clusters were developed. District wise, 18 clusters for East district, 20 for West, 20 for South and 08 for North district were identified.

DLSA observes World No Tobacco Day in Mangan



WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 02 JUN:

District Legal Services Authority [DLSA], North Sikkim in co-ordination with Legal Literacy Club of Mangan Senior Secondary School conducted a legal awareness

programme at Mangan in North Sikkim to observe World No Tobacco Day on 31 May.

Chairperson of DLSA, North, Prajwal Khatiwada, informed about legal rights and concepts with regard to tobacco use.

A rally was also carried out from Mangan Senior Secondary School to Mangan Bazaar. The DLSA North team distributed pamphlets and brochures with messages on the ill effects of tobacco use.

Beat Plastic Pollution campaign conducted by NYK Namchi



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:

Nehru Yuva Kendra, Namchi in collaboration with Youth Clubs, Self Help Groups [Women] under South Sikkim conducted cleanliness cum plantation drive awareness campaign on "Beat Plastic Pollution" in Namchi, South Sikkim today, a press release informs.

The programme had the participation of Nation Youth Volunteers of NYK Namchi, volunteers from Doing Good Social Organization, UNV- DYC

NYK Namchi, Sangita Dahal, and Coordinator of Doing Good Organization, Kul Prasad Chettri.

On the occasion, a rally was carried out under the banner "Come and Join Us, Cleanliness is next to Generation" with the hashtag [#] of Beat Plastic Pollution.

A cleanliness drive was also conducted from Namchi Hospital to Central Park followed by installation of bamboo dustbin baskets along the road and footpath.

It is informed that a Thematic Debate on Beat Plastic Pollution will also be organized on the oc-

casation of World Environment Day on 05 Jun.

Coordinator of Doing Good Organization, Mr Chettri, also distributed certificates to NYK Namchi volunteers for their completion of three years of voluntary service in the organization.

President of Kanchanjyoti Youth Club, Suyog Pradhan, also released the Annual Progress Report of the club.

In his address, he expressed gratitude to NYK Namchi for their support and urged the youth to share their experiences and knowledge with others.

Meeting discusses World Environment Day celebration at Tashiding

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:

Environment and Soil Conservation Division, West Sikkim held a daylong meeting at Tashiding BAC in West Sikkim today with regard to the upcoming World Environment Day celebration on a district level scheduled to be held on 05 Jun at Tashiding.

The meeting was chaired by Assistant Conservator of Forests, TB Chettri, accompanied by Block Development Officer, Tashiding BAC,



TT Bhutia, Range Officer, Milan Subba, Principal of Tashiding Senior Secondary School, Keshav Gautam, and other officials.

It is informed that more than 15000 sap-

lings will be planted in and around Tashiding SSS and Tashiding PHC. The meeting has also urged all to witness the days' programme.

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Darj transforms into World Cup town



contd from pg01

occasion to come together and celebrate unity," said DNPSAA member, Ajay Edward.

Mr Edward further added, "30-40 years ago, Darjeeling used to host Gold Cup which used to be a major football tournament. Clubs from Kolkata, Nepal and Bhutan used to come and play. We request the Government of West Bengal to revive this tournament as it will be good for local football talents and help promotion of sports in the hills."

It is further informed that Darjeeling, The World Cup Town campaign has also been organized as a fund raiser for a social cause "Clinic on Wheels". Under this, an

ambulance with test laboratory will be plying to remote villages and tea estates to provide medical facilities to the villagers along with various test facilities.

"People in villages have to spend money and time to come to Darjeeling and get their medical tests done. So we thought of providing the Clinic on Wheels project for which we have approached various schools and social organisations. Darjeeling, The World Cup Town will also help us raise funds for the same with the contribution of school students, citizens and associations. Soon our Clinic on Wheels will be on the road," Mr Edward informed.

**Gangtok on
Sunday,
03 June**

Temp: 26°C/15°C
Forecast: Times
of clouds and sun,
a shower or thun-
derstorm around.
Sunrise: 04:40 AM
Sunset: 6:27 PM

Regularisation of NRMH employees being processed

contd from pg01

under various capacities and whose cadre is not there in the State Government. The department is working towards accommodating these employees under similar cadre.

The Health Department has already set up a committee to look into the matter and will soon find a solution to accommodate temporary employees as permanent employees in the department.

"The department has already issued employment notice for 49 doctors and 261 nurses which is equal to the number of employees working under NRMH and hopefully all the doctors and nurses will clear the open interview. Other staff including technicians, lab assistants and others will also be made permanent for which the department is trying its best. It will take time though," said Mr Chauhan.

He further informed that the department will strictly follow the rules and regulations of the State Government and will move the process ahead as per the directives of the CM.

"Although there are no separate rules and directions framed for the Health Department, the department will implement similar rules that are implemented by other departments of the State Government. The department will be following the process in accordance with various authorities," informed Mr Chauhan.

On-the-Job tourism training by TAAS concludes

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:**

The valedictory cum certification ceremony of "On the Job Training on Tourism" for students of Sikkim Government College was held here at Paryatan Bhawan in Tadong today. The training programme was organised by Travel Agents Association of Sikkim [TAAS] as a part of their annual event.

It has been informed that TAAS has been organising three-week practical training for government college students every year.

During the programme, students were given first hand training in tour operation, office management and tour guiding.

The valedictory function was chaired by Tourism & Civil Aviation Department Secretary, CP Dhakal, as chief guest accompanied by TAAS Chairperson, Karma T Bhutia, and Advisor, Satish Bardewa, as guests of



honour. Secretary [TAAS, West], Madan Gurung, been working consistent- human resource in tour-
Secretary [TAAS, mentioned that TAAS has ly towards developing ism sector in the State.

Singtam Nagar Panchayat conducts inspection drive

**YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 02 JUN:**

Under Swachh Bharat Mission, a team of Singtam Nagar Panchayat Councillors today conducted an inspection drive at Ward No. 03 in Singtam, East Sikkim.

The inspection team included Councillors of Ward No. 01 & 03, Bishnu Maya Sherpa and Rajani Singh, Administrative Head Assistant, Rajan Rai, Junior Engineer, Karishma Rizal, and SNP Supervisor, Amar Gurung.

During the inspection, metal drainage covers in the area were found in deplorable condition and needed immediate replacement. One of the residents complained about an open sewer line near his residence and urged for needful action to be taken by the concerned department.

Many hotels, tea shops and lottery shops at Ward No. 03 had been



using buckets and cartons in place of commercial dustbins provided by the Municipal Office. The owners have been directed to visit the Municipal Office in Singtam on 04 Jun to collect proper dustbins.

SSLSA conducts refresher programme for Para-Legal Volunteers

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:**

Sikkim State Legal Services Authority [SSLSA] under the guidance of Judge, High Court of Sikkim, Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, who is also the Executive Chairperson of Sikkim SSLSA organized a sensitization-cum-refresher programme of Para-Legal Volunteers [PLVs] under the Scheme of Para-Legal Volunteers [Revised] Module for Orientation-Induction-Refresher Courses at Chintan Bhawan in Gangtok today, an SSLSA press release informs.

The inaugural session was attended by Chief Justice, High Court of Sikkim, Justice SK Agnihotri, who is also the Patron-in-Chief of Sikkim SSLSA as chief guest accompanied by Judge, High Court of Sikkim, Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan, and Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai as guests of honour.



In his address, Justice Agnihotri said that the foremost qualification of a PLV is that he/she should be a good human being with zeal to help others with discipline, dedication, integrity, commitment, good character, humility and impartiality being the other qualities.

"Every person should know that anything which is against social norm is an offence," he added.

Judge, High Court of Sikkim, Justice Rai, apprised the gathering about the role and functions of PLVs and added that they have to render services to the society sincerely. She also high-

lighted offences under the POCSO Act 2012 and its adverse impact on the society.

The programme had the participation of 350 PLVs from across the State comprising of teachers, PLVs, student PLVs and faculty members from the Law Colleges/Universities.

Resource persons included Senior Advocate, High Court of Sikkim, N Rai, Sikkim SSLSA Panel Advocates, TR Barfungpa, UP Sharma, Zangpo Sherpa and Zola Megi, and Founder of Serenity Home, Lower Burtuk, Udai Chandra Rai.

The topics covered were NALSA [Legal Services to Senior Citizens] Scheme 2016, NALSA [Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation] Schemes 2015, NALSA [Legal Services to the Victims of Drug Abuse and the Eradication of the Drug Menace] Scheme 2015 with special emphasis on SADA 2006, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences [POCSO] Act 2012 and Sikkim Compensation to Victims of His Dependents Scheme 2016.

An interactive session between the participants and the resource persons was also conducted during the programme.

Riverfront cleanup drive at Forest Colony



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 JUN:**

The 16th day riverfront cleanup of Rani Chu and its adjoining tributaries, jhoras and nallahs was conducted at Forest Colony area. The cleanliness drive was actively participated by officials and staff of the Forest Environment & Wildlife Managements Department, nursery staff and local residents.

A press release informs that this event was coordinated by DFO (Territorial East Division)

and team with support from ENVIS Cell of the Forest Department. The road stretches along Forest Colony along with the Jhoras on the way were cleaned up actively by the students. An awareness program was also conducted to sensitize the local people.

The riverfront cleanup drive is a part of World Environment Day activity on the theme "Beat Plastic Pollution" and is supported by the MoEFCC.

KUTSHE SHEGU



The 49th Day Kutshe Shegu of our beloved father **late Kaching Bhutia (Dorjee Lobbay of Kabi Gumpa)** who left for his heavenly abode on 18th April 2018 falls on **6th June 2018**. All friends, well wishers and relatives are requested to join us in offering prayer for the departed soul at our resident at **Kabi near BAC in North Sikkim**. We would also like to thank all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement and regret our inability to thank them individually.

Mr. Pintso Tashi Dzoepa (son) 7550801904, Mrs. Namgay Bhutia (wife), Mrs. Ongmu Tongden Lepcha (Daughter) 9434870338, Mrs. Hissay Bhutia (Daughter-in-law) 7076335196, Mrs. Loden Bhutia (Daughter) 8967035867, Mrs. Dechen Dolkar Lachungpa (Daughter) 8768926989

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Remember Tiananmen

It was after all a defining moment for an entire generation

It is twenty-nine years to the day since news broadcasts late night on 03 June, 1989, were filled with images of tanks, blood and death on the streets of Beijing. As night fell on 03 June, 40,000 soldiers of the 27th Peoples Liberation Army moved into Tiananmen Square with orders to crush the six-week-old demonstration and protests by China's students and workers, and snuff out their demands for political change. The people crushed as their aspirations were booted out were collateral damage. In the preceding weeks, China, and Beijing in particular, had witnessed extraordinary events. A student "occupation" of Tiananmen Square became the focus of a rising working class movement. From 20 May onwards, the movement continued in defiance of martial law and in the face of popular sentiment, the Chinese government was as divided as it was paralysed (for a while). Zhao Ziyang, the Chinese premier at the time, opposed use of military force against the student protestors and advised dialogue. He was ignored. The administrative paralysis in China lasted only so long. Accounts by witnesses testify to the calculated terror unleashed by the Chinese military as it reclaimed the Tiananmen Square. Tiananmen was crushed, but three decades since, it cannot be dismissed as a freak incident. It was the culmination of a decade of simmering discontent which exploded in the hands of students and workers.

Countless were killed in the crackdown, some 40,000 arrested and dozens were later sentenced to public executions. The uprising was quelled, but Tiananmen continues to inspire movements across the world. Who can forget that compelling image of the heroic Power of One – that lone man blocking a PLA armoured car. The unanimity with which a generation came together in an oppressive China is a remarkable tribute to the courage and commitment of the young. Remember, this was in the days before internet or mobile phones and in an environment which had no precedence of such strong public expressions. It was a historic moment because similar public displays even in more free societies came only two decades later – in our neighbourhood some years ago in Nepal, then in Bangladesh, across the country with the IAC rallying and of course also the whole Arab Spring experience. The Tiananmen movement might have failed in achieving its demands and apart from the few who escaped to foreign shores, most activists were arrested, sentenced, and repeatedly interrogated; but what the event succeeded in proving was that authority can be challenged and held to account. In fact, it needs to. And that has to be lesson that every child learns and celebrates on this day.

Tiananmen was about courage and conviction. Since it was spearheaded by the young, it is something that every youth, everywhere in the world should learn and take inspiration from. The Tiananmen episode is not just about taking on the establishment [that was just the medium of expression]; it is about harbouring convictions so strong that no adversary appears invincible.

What the movement also proved is that when it comes to people's movements, only the people can be relied upon, priorities for the rest of the world are dictated by concerns which are rarely humanitarian. There are those who believe that Tiananmen boosted investments into China, but for the wrong reasons. Tiananmen Square was like a message staged for investors - in China, no opposition to exploitation and oppression is tolerated. From 1990 on, investments flowed into China at exponential levels. In 1994, more investment entered the country than in the entire decade from 1979- 1989. Of course, preparations which pre-dated Tiananmen had a role to play in this, but Tiananmen could have played the decisive argument by conveying that the State was the only authority in China. Unnervingly, there are parallels in how the GoI and its State Governments has conducted themselves as well. The Naxal situation, for instance, was flagged officially as a "threat" for the country only after MNCs and their land-grabbing development were challenged by the sidelined and under-privileged. People's protests are often dismissed as "politically motivated" stonewalling by "reactionary forces". Crackdowns have been severe and strong with people's movements receiving more State-sponsored violence than is dispensed on violent criminals. It was no secret that the GoI was inspired by the Chinese model of development, but detached development and governance delivered India its own Tahrir in the Anna Hazare wave in the not so distant past. That wave has since crashed, but managed to deliver a strong message and hint at what was possible in India as well. For all the dreariness and dejection that might be more noticeable, it is hope that rises above all else, and that is the spirit one hopes to find in the young.

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Abandoned by the British, Afghan interpreters explain how they wait for years seeking safety

SARA DE JONG
theconversation.com

When the British began to withdraw their forces from Afghanistan in 2012, the Afghan civilians they employed as interpreters, cooks and security guards, became even more exposed to threats, losing the limited protection that military bases granted them.

In recognition of their work and its risks, the UK government put two schemes in place. The first, an ex-gratia (redundancy) scheme, was meant exclusively for locally engaged civilians who had been in employment for a minimum of 12 months, and were made redundant on or after December 19, 2012. The second scheme, the so-called Intimidation Scheme, was open to all Afghan civilians whose safety was threatened because of their employment with the UK.

Now a new report published by the House of Commons Defence Select Committee has denounced the government's failure to protect these local Afghans under the Intimidation Scheme. It was based on written and oral evidence by former locally engaged civilians, veterans, journalists, politicians and me, as a researcher.

Based on the fact that none of the 401 applicants to the Intimidation Scheme had been relocated to the UK by February 2017 and only 35 were granted a financial reward for relocation within Afghanistan, the committee characterised the scheme as "hitherto useless". It also called upon the government – not without a sense of irony – to:

"Abandon its policy of leaving former interpreters and other loyal personnel dangerously exposed in a country deemed too dangerous for those charged with assessing their claims to venture out from their bases in order to do so."

HISTORICAL PARALLELS

In the past, other Western states have relied on local staff for auxiliary and military services, and faced embarrassment about their protection after withdrawal. While the Americans airlifted some of their local employees out of Saigon in 1975, Frank Sennep, the CIA's chief strategy analyst in Vietnam, stated two years later in his book *Decent Interval* that the way "agents, friends and collaborators" were betrayed was "an institutional disgrace".

During his campaign for the French presidency,

Emmanuel Macron compared the situation faced by Afghan interpreters with the historical betrayal of the Harkis, Algerian employees of the French army in combat functions. An estimated 75,000 to 150,000 Harkis were killed following the French withdrawal at the end of the Algerian War of Independence in the early 1960s.

Highlighting these parallels adds further weight to the committee's recommendations. The many young Afghan interpreters and other locally employed civilians who I met as part of my research

ger, who lost their legs, the British knew that. But they didn't care. So why would they bring me? As an intact person?"

Hamid had actually spent four years living as an asylum seeker when he was still a minor. In 2010, his then temporary status was not extended and he was deported back to Afghanistan. Needing a job, he applied to work for the British military. The next day the young man with his perfect mix of Afghan and British culture, was sent to work in Helmand. But when he arrived back to the UK in 2012 for the second time, he had his claim for asylum initially rejected because he had already been deported once before.

I met Mohammed, another former civilian employed by the British, in the flat in a northern English city where some friends had given him a sofa to sleep on. He didn't have a room for himself as he became homeless after his asylum case was refused by the Home Office and state support stopped. Keeping me warm with a heater and Afghan tea, he told me about his nightmares about the Taliban and about his journey to the UK on the back of a lorry.

A few days before I met him, he had finally been granted refugee status following an appeal. When I asked him if he regretted working for the British in Afghanistan, he told me:

"No, I have no regrets about

that. The regret are these four years (of waiting for a positive decision on my asylum claim). Why did I spend four years between death and life? No one can give me those four years back. That's gone."

For those locally employed civilians still in danger in Afghanistan and those facing deportation from the UK because of rejected asylum claims, time is even more of essence.

History shows us that changes in policy and formal apologies do not always come quickly. In this case, however, there is clear evidence of the scheme's failure. The committee recommended that the government "adopt a more needs-based approach", which takes seriously the recurrent insecurity faced by former locally employed civilians and looks to apply the existing conditions of the Intimidation Scheme in "a looser and more sympathetic way". International relocation shouldn't be a last resort, out of reach for all – and there is no excuse for further lives being wasted away.

[the writer is Research Fellow in Citizenship & Governance, The Open University]



The last British troops leave Camp Bastion in Helmand province, Afghanistan in October 2014.

in the UK, however, already have a large enough burden to carry without history on their shoulders.

FEW OPTIONS BUT TO FLEE

Some 1,150 locally engaged civilians and their dependants who qualified under the Redundancy Scheme were resettled in the UK. Others, such as Hamid and Mohammed – not their real names – left Afghanistan independently in the hope of reaching the UK to claim asylum. Their employment dates did not match the criteria of the Redundancy Scheme, and they recognised that the Intimidation Scheme only existed on paper.

Hamid, a former Afghan civilian employed by the British in his twenties, who I met in southern England in the shop where he worked, told me that he quickly realised that the only way he could get himself to safety was to take a treacherous route to Europe via Iran, Turkey and Greece. He described the route as a three-month struggle with no food, no drink and no money:

"Listen, there were a lot of interpreters who worked there for longer, who stayed there for lon-

It's less than 2cm long, but this 400 million year old fossil fish changes our view of vertebrate evolution

ALICE CLEMENT & JOHN LONG
theconversation.com

Published on 29 May, our new paper describes a spectacular 400 million-year-old 3D-preserved fossil fish, *Ligulalepis*.

The 3D anatomy of the fossilised *Ligulalepis* skull reveals previously unknown details of the pattern of dermal skull bones, the shape of the brain cavity, and other soft tissue features (such as nerves and blood vessels) in this species.

Why are we so excited about discovering the structure of an ancient fish skull? Because *Ligulalepis* sits in a very important position in the vertebrate evolutionary tree.

BONEY FISHES - AND US

Fishes are the most diverse group of backboned animals (vertebrates) on the planet, with roughly 30,000 known species.

The vast majority of these (around 98%) are bony fishes or osteichthyans. This includes most of fishes we like to eat, such as salmon, tuna and trout, as well as fishes we keep as pets, like goldfishes and guppies. These are called ray-finned fishes (actinopterygians) as their fins are supported by bony rods called fin-rays.

The other major group of bony fishes have robust lobe-fins (sarcopterygians), a group that contains the living lungfishes and coelacanths, as well as several extinct groups.

Sarcopterygians are an important group because the first four-legged land animals, the tetrapods, evolved from them. Today we can regard all living tetrapods (amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals) as a subgroup within the bony fishes.

AN EXCITING NEW FIND

The first discovery of the fish called *Ligulalepis* was a tiny fossil fish skull found in limestone near Wee Jasper in

New South Wales about 20 years ago.

It has fuelled debate around early osteichthyan evolution ever since, without any clear resolution as to where this enigmatic fish sits in the family tree.

Then, about two years ago, a second skull of this fish was discovered by a Flinders University student, Benedict King. The specimen was found in the same limestone outcrops near Wee

of these fish. Some features, like the shape of the inner ear canals, seemed to belong to cartilaginous fishes such as sharks. Other features, like the overall shape of the brain case, were clearly osteichthyan (bony fish) characters.

The pattern of bones that form the skull roof was an unexpectedly primitive feature also seen in an extinct group of jawed fishes called placoderms.



An artist's reconstruction of the ancient fish *Ligulalepis*.

Jasper. It was also preserved in 3D, but was even more complete than the original specimen.

Earlier work by us recognised electrosensory pits in this skull of *Ligulalepis*.

SECRETS OF THE SKULL

Both the old and new skulls were the focus of our new paper. Our team first prepared the tiny more recent specimen (less than 2cm in length) out of the rock using using weak acetic acid to expose the bone, as the carbonate rock dissolved.

Then we used micro computed tomography (CT) scanning to visualise the skeletal anatomy of the two known *Ligulalepis* specimens. Powerful X-rays pass through the bones to reveal many hidden features inside the skulls.

The scans revealed a perplexing mixture of characters in the skulls

The CT technique enabled us to reconstruct what the brain cavity of this 400 million year old fish looked like, allowing us to digitally restore the brain shape for the first time.

A COMPLICATED FAMILY TREE

Prior to our detailed analysis of this skull, some scientists considered *Ligulalepis* to be closely related to the ray-finned fishes. Others placed it alongside lobe-finned fishes.

A third school of thought envisaged it even lower down on the fish family tree – and this is close to where we have now placed it, on the "stem" of the tree leading to the true osteichthyans.

Its unique position on the tree of life means that *Ligulalepis* provides great insight into what the ancestor of the two major radiations of bony fishes looked like. Furthermore, the detailed analysis of its newly revealed charac-

ters helps to clarify the early evolutionary radiation of all animals with a bony skeleton - including us humans.

MISSING FOSSILS

Most modern fish are ray-finned fish (actinopterygians), with around 29,000 living species. Their origins can be confidently dated back to the Middle Devonian, around 390 million years ago with fishes like *Cheirolepis* from Scotland.

However the existence of the related group "lobe-fins" (sarcopterygians) is much older, with early representatives of that group such as *Guiyu*, from China, dated at about 430 million years ago. This suggests there are some parts of the early fish fossil record that are poorly understood.

Our fossil and the new analyses we have performed helps to resolve the big question about what the ancestor of all modern bony fishes looked like. It also illustrates the sequence of changes these early fish went through to achieve their modern "body plan".

Also, our analyses show that *Ligulalepis* was the closest known species to a peculiar group of early lobe-finned fish called "psarolepids" known only from China. It supports the hypothesis that the first early bony fish originated and radiated in China, then migrated out via East Gondwana (Australia and Antarctica), the part of the southern supercontinent closest to the ancient Chinese territories.

Our findings highlight that the evolutionary family tree of the first bony fishes is much more complicated than we had thought, demonstrating the importance of palaeontology to help us more accurately understand our distant origins.

[Alice Clement is Research Associate in the School of Biological Sciences, Flinders University; John Long is Strategic Professor in Palaeontology, Flinders University]

Lessons from #ShimlaWaterCrisis



CK LEPCHA

Although I have spent most of my life in hill stations, I had never actually experienced water shortage per say. This week was a wakeup call. After a weekend out of town, I was back in Shimla and there was no water in my tap the following morning. I thought

there was a problem with our water tank so I knocked in my neighbor's door who then mentioned the water crisis in this queen of the hills. Since I had stored water in the 50 liter barrel that was provided when I moved in, I had water but I skipped my morning shower and took a towel bath instead. At the institute, everyone shared their water woes and an employee mentioned how there had been no water in his area for the last seven days. One professor and his wife had been using mineral water to cook, wash and take care of their basic needs. But the vast majority of people cannot afford mineral water bottles, and in no time people took it to the streets. They managed to block the national highway and sat on the streets chanting slogans, while some "thirsty residents" managed to gherao the Chief Minister's house at 1:00am. "Shimla water crisis can quickly turn into law and order situation if not handled quickly," somebody

tweeted. Indeed, there was lathi charge as protestors' even got into a scuffle with the cops. So, the beefed up security was clearly visible when I went to Mall Road later in the day. Shimla water crisis was real. It was creating news across social media. Instagram accounts warned tourists against traveling to Shimla and images of locals lining up with empty buckets behind water tanks were making rounds. My friends even teased me to come back since there was no water in Shimla. Shimla water crisis is the talk of the town and it will remain in the memory of the people for a long while. The prestigious Shimla Summer Festival scheduled for June 1-5, 2018 has been indefinitely postponed and while water is being distributed to different parts of Shimla, there is no way of telling how long it will last. One thing is for sure –people who have gone through this experience will be more careful with



exist before. While it has been difficult times for people in Shimla, perhaps it was the much needed intervention to remind us that our rivers are drying up and the regular winter snowfalls have been canceled. This a wakeup call and if we do not pay heed to it, most of our hill stations face a very similar future. [C.K. Lepcha is Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla]

Army holds flag march in restive Shillong; Cop injured in clash

SHILLONG, JUN 2 (PTI): Curfew continued in parts of Shillong for the second day today as the Army conducted flag marches in disturbed areas and rescued several people following night-long violence and arson during which a mob torched a shop, a house and damaged at least five vehicles here, besides injuring a senior police officer, officials said today. The Army was requisitioned by the state government to conduct flag march in the affected areas. Army troops conducted the flag march and rescued about 500 people, including 200 women and children, Defence spokesperson Ratnakar Singh said. He added that the rescued civilians were given

food and water and have been sheltered at the Army cantonment here. General Officer Commanding 101 Area Lt Gen D S Ahuja visited the Army cantonment. Superintendent of Police (City) Stephan Rynjah sustained injuries last night after he was hit by a rod. He has been admitted to the Shillong Civil Hospital, a senior police officer said. At least 10 persons, including policemen, have been injured in the violence, which has triggered demands that the government take action against alleged illegal settlers in the area. State police personnel were attacked by stone pelters in the Motphran area of the city.

Teargas shells were used to disperse rioters but people in other parts of the city mistook them for police firing, the officer said. The clashes had begun after a bus handyman was allegedly assaulted by a group of residents of Them Metor area on Thursday afternoon. Trouble escalated when rumours spread on social media that the handyman had succumbed to injuries, prompting a group of bus drivers to converge at Them Metor. The police had to fire teargas shells to disperse them, officials said. The handyman and three injured persons were taken to a hospital where they were released after being administered first aid.

The East Khasi Hills district authorities had imposed night curfew in the entire city from 10 pm till 5 am to maintain peace and prevent arson, they said. Four persons, accused of being involved in the assault of three local boys, have been arrested, they said. As many as 11 persons have been picked up in connection with the case so far. Meanwhile, suspension of Internet services has been extended by 24 hours till tomorrow afternoon to prevent rumour-mongering. The Home Department will review the overall situation later today. The curfew, which was imposed since 4 am yesterday in at least 14

localities under Lumdingri police station and Cantonment Beat House, continues, District deputy commissioner P S Dkhar told PTI. He said that there was no curfew in Police Bazaar and Iew Duh (Bara Bazaar) areas even as shops, schools and banks in these areas remained closed. Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, who chaired a high-level meeting yesterday, had appealed for calm and urged the people to help bring back normalcy in Shillong. Meanwhile, several groups including the Khasi Students Union (KSU), the Federation of Khasi Jaintia and Garo People (FKJGP) and the Hynniewtrep Youth Council demanded that those in-

volved in the assault of local boys be punished and the illegal settlers at Them Metor evicted. "We demand that the government arrest those involved in the assault of the sons and nephew of the bus driver. The government should also compensate the three victims," KSU president Lambok Marngar told PTI. The KSU leader also said that the government should evict illegal settlers at Them Metor which is adjacent to IewDuh. "Them Metor has become a den for anti-nationals and it is sad that several governments in the past have not taken initiatives to evict them and provide them space somewhere else," said FKJGP president Well-birth Rani.

Students vandalise NSU in Manipur

IMPHAL, JUNE 2 (PTI): A section of students has vandalised the administrative head office of the newly opened National Sports University (NSU) here, police said today. The students smashed furniture, broke computers, tables and chairs of the varsity located at Manipur Olympic House yesterday, K Meghachandra Singh, SP, Imphal East district said. Nobody could be arrested so far as the culprits are absconding, he said and alleged that some members of the

Democratic Students' Alliance of Manipur (DESAM) were involved in the vandalism. DESAM president Salam Akash had said yesterday that his organisation had launched an agitation demanding opening of all the departments of NSU including sports journalism, sports management and performance and analysis courses in the university. DESAM leaders are not available to make any comment on the allegation.

CPI(ML) Red Star leader sent to police custody for 10 days

BARUIPUR (WB), JUN 2 (PTI): CPI(ML) Red Star leader Alik Chakraborty, who was arrested in Bhubaneswar by a West Bengal Police team on charges under the stringent UAPA, was produced before a court here today and sent to police custody for 10 days. Chakraborty, who has been leading an agitation against the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited in Bhangar in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal for the past few years, was brought here by the police on a transit remand from Bhubaneswar. He was produced before the sub divisional magistrate's court at Baruiপুর in the district. The police said he has been charged with instigating and deliberately misinforming villagers of Bhangar, which witnessed violent clashes against the PGCIL's proposed unit on 16 acres. Chakraborty, who is in his mid-40s, was arrested from near a private hospital in Bhubaneswar on Thursday. The West Bengal government has registered cases under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and murder against Chakraborty, who is one of the leaders of 'Jomi Jibika Poribesh o Bastutantra Raksha Samiti' (committee for protection of land, livelihood, environment and ecology).

15 killed in dust storm in Uttar Pradesh

LUCKNOW, JUN 2 (PTI): Uttar Pradesh was hit by another deadly dust storm that claimed 15 lives and left nine persons injured last evening. A UP government spokesperson today said that most of the deaths were caused due to falling of trees and incidents of house collapse. Moradabad bore the brunt of the storm, with as many as seven deaths reported from the district, followed by three deaths from Sambhal, the spokesperson said. Two deaths were reported each from Muzaffarnagar and Meerut, while one death was reported from Amroha. Four persons were injured in Amroha, three in Moradabad and two in Muzaffarnagar, spokesperson said. The state government has directed all district magistrates to distribute relief within 24 hours.

The state was swept by three major dust storms last month that left over 130 people dead. On May 13, 39 people died in various districts including Bareilly, Barabanki, Bulandshahr and Lakhimpur Khiri districts. On May 9, a storm left 18 dead and 27 others injured. Thunderstorms and lightning on May 2-3 left 80 dead in the state, most of them in Agra district in the western part of the state.

TMC indulging in 'targeted killings' of BJP workers: Irani

AHMEDABAD, JUN 2 (PTI): Union minister Smriti Irani today attacked the Trinamool Congress and accused the ruling party in West Bengal of indulging in the "targeted killings" of BJP workers. She said that since the TMC was part of a consolidated opposition against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it was a "consolidated opposition" that was indulging in targeted killings of BJP workers. "I want to point out to those who are silent on the issue that not only is democracy being throttled but they are indulging in targeted killings of BJP workers," Irani told reporters here. "The ruling party in West Bengal is part of a consolidated opposition which is fighting against Narendra Modi. So the consolidated opposition

is indulging in targeted killings of BJP workers," the minister said. "This is not an issue of concern only for BJP workers but the entire nation. The West Bengal government has failed to maintain law and order and is not able to deliver justice to the families of the victims," she said. The BJP has alleged that its worker, Trilochon Mahato (20), who was found hanging from a tree at Balrampur in Purulia district of West Bengal on May 30, was killed by the ruling TMC. However, the TMC has denied the allegation, terming it as "baseless". One more person was found hanging in the same district today. Irani, who was here to list the achievements during four years of the Modi government, however, parried questions

on the issue of hike in fuel prices. To a question on whether the government proposed to reduce taxes on fuel so as to bring down its prices and curb inflation, Irani said, "I am not the petroleum minister nor the finance minister, so I cannot reply to this question." She said, "Under the UPA government, petrol prices rose by Rs 4 per year. Under the NDA rule, we have been able to control that rise to around Rs 1 per year." Irani said that the petroleum minister was of the opinion that fuel should be brought within the ambit of the GST so that its prices can be reduced. She claimed that opposition parties uniting to fight the BJP, in itself, was the "biggest indication" of the popularity

and political prowess of the prime minister. "The coming together of the opposition is the biggest indication of the popularity and political prowess of the prime minister. The opposition is incapable of winning the hearts of the people by their own policies, programmes or leadership," the minister claimed. Asked about parties such as the TDP and the Shiv Sena "deserting" the BJP, Irani said, "Par-

ty president Amit Shah has indicated that we are ready to fight the polls with the Shiv Sena." She said that Gujarat, like all other states, was a beneficiary of the central government schemes such as Mudra and Jan Dhan Yojana. Irani, who is Union textiles minister, claimed that her ministry had worked pro-actively to set the textile sector on the path of growth.

Goa govt working on contract farming law

PANAJI, JUN 2 (PTI): The Goa government is considering bringing a legislation to facilitate contract farming in the state, Agriculture Minister Vijai Sardesai has said. The move will allow corporates, individuals or institutions to tie-up with farmers and cultivate their land, he said. Last month, the Centre unveiled a model law on contract farming and services not only in agriculture crops but also in livestock, dairy and poultry products. The law is aimed at ensuring better price to farmers. The Goa legislation will be on the lines of the Central law, Sardesai said. The process of giving a final shape to the legislation has been initiated in association with the

revenue department, the minister said. "The legislation will provide security of land to farmers, while it will also enable corporates or individuals to invest in farming. The basic idea is to get barren lands in the state under cultivation," Sardesai told PTI. The law will allow farmers to share risks associated with agriculture with other entities or individuals, he said. "Corporate entities will share the risk of farmers because of their strong economic position." The legislation will help bring lands currently lying barren under cultivation, the minister said. "The agriculture and revenue departments will jointly make an effort to bring a contract farming

act in the coming assembly session," he said. "I have directed my department to start consultations with the revenue department to evolve a model contract farming act for Goa." The proposed law envisages corporates, individuals or institutions tying up with farmers to cultivate their land, he said. "The rights of property remain with farmers. They will get a guarantee that their relationship (with corporates) will be secured for a certain amount of time. "The government will only act as a guarantor and ensure agreements signed by the interested parties are honoured," the minister said. Sardesai said the implementation of the pro-

posed law will be an "inter-department work" as the revenue department, too, will come into the picture. The law will make it mandatory for investors to follow the existing cropping pattern, he said. However, Sardesai admitted that contract farming is not the panacea for all the ills plaguing the agriculture sector in the state. "We have disjointed (land) holdings so we have to coalesce contract farming with community farming. The state government will encourage community farming," he said. To bring more land under cultivation in Goa, contract and community farming will have to go hand-in-hand, said the minister.

I don't celebrate outrageously, says Sunil Chhetri

MUMBAI, JUN 2 (PTI): Captain Sunil Chhetri starred in India's 5-0 win over Chinese Taipei by registering his third career-hat-trick but the feat didn't invoke wild celebrations from the striker, who said that he is someone who doesn't like to "celebrate outrageously" on the field.

The match against Chinese Taipei at the Mumbai Football Arena last night also marked 99th cap for Chhetri, who also scored his 59th international goal.

"I am very happy when I score. I do not take it for granted. I am very fortunate to score so many goals for my club and country. I am very happy from inside. It's just that I don't celebrate outrageously like Robin Singh, Chhetri said at the post match press conference.

Hosts India made a positive start to its campaign at the Intercontinental Cup with a rousing victory over Chinese Taipei.

Admitting that he takes his goals very seriously, Chhetri said he would burst into wild celebrations if he could



score against Bahrain in the AFC Asian Cup.

A goal at the Asian Games, at the Asian Cup, a goal that might help us qualify against Bahrain are goals that might rouse a more wild celebration. I will jump and hug and shout and come and hug somebody, Chhetri said.

"Right now though, Udanta (Singh) comes to my mind. I am very fond of him and he scored his

first goal today so I went up and said 'congratulations kid' and he said '58 to go'. So I take my goals very seriously and the day I score against Bahrain and we qualify, trust me, I will jump," added the 33-year-old.

Jeje Lalpekhlua set up Chhetri's first two goals last night and the skipper said he shares excellent rapport with the forward from Mizoram.

"We have played

many games together. He (Jeje) is supremely talented. He is very experienced, knowledgeable and works so hard on his game. He is somebody who I respect a lot and is one of our best players.

"So it is not difficult to combine with him and I have done my best to help him and he does the same," Chhetri said when quizzed about his partnership with Jeje.

Asked how he feels

about the possibility of many youngsters across India and the world looking up to him as a role model, Chhetri was modest in his reply.

"I don't look at my career as someone to follow because I (am) busy worrying about my own stuff right now. I don't think I am at that stature

(where) people, especially from other countries would follow me, if they do, then I am obliged and

privileged," he said.

"We are talking like this because we won 5-0. If we had lost then you would have abused me. Maybe in 20 years when I have retired we can think about this and how many people I have inspired or motivated," Chhetri signed off.

Come Monday at the Andheri Sports Complex, Chhetri would play his 100th international game against Kenya.



Sergio Ramos releases World Cup anthem for Spain

MADRID, JUN 2 (AFP): Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos has released an anthem for Spain's 2018 World Cup campaign which he co-wrote with Spanish flamenco fusion singer Demarco Flamenco.

The 32-year-old Spain captain yesterday uploaded on his Instagram page a short video teaser of the song, which he is seen performing with Flamenco, a former gas canister distributor.

"I always keep my promises. This is what my friend Demarco Flamenco and I have been working on. Warming up for the World Cup," Ramos wrote alongside the video which has been seen nearly four million times.

The mid-tempo ballad called "Otra estrella en tu corazon", or "Another star in your heart" was made available on iTunes and other online

platforms on Friday.

The lyrics include: "Come on, Spain, raise your voice; scream loudly, shout that goal. Thinking big we will achieve the best, fighting together, towards the star with honour. We have to try. May La Roja shine once more." Demarco, whose real name is Marco Jesus Borrego, told Spanish public broadcaster RTVE he wrote the lyrics with Ramos.

"He worked on it from his end, I did it from mine," he said.

The 38-year-old, who like Ramos is from the southwestern region of Andalusia, released his first album last year.

Ramos also sang lead vocals for Spain's Euro 2016 song "La Roja Baila", or "La Roja dances".

Spain won its only World Cup in 2010. It won the European Championship in 1964, 2008 and 2012.

Saha ruled out of Afghan Test, Karthik to replace him

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI): India's wicketkeeper batsman Wriddhiman Saha was today ruled out of the historic one-off Test against Afghanistan after failing to recover from the thumb injury he suffered in this year's Indian Premier League.

The BCCI today named Dinesh Karthik as Saha's replacement for Afghanistan's debut Test match to be held in Bengaluru starting June 14.

"Mr Wriddhiman Saha has been ruled out of the one-off Paytm Test against Afghanistan to be held in Bengaluru from the 14th of June, 2018," BCCI acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary said in a statement.

"He was under observation by the medical staff of the BCCI and the management has decided to give him adequate rest before the start of the England Test series. Saha's recovery period is expected to be around five to six weeks," he added.



The 33-year-old stumper suffered the injury to his right thumb while playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad in Qualifier 2 of the IPL against Kolkata Knight Riders on May 25 at the Eden Gardens.

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee has named Mr Dinesh Karthik as the replacement for injured Saha," the BCCI statement further read.

Saha did not have the best of IPL this year, scoring just 234 runs in 14 games.



Karthik, on the other hand, had a splendid IPL while leading Kolkata Knight Riders. He scored a mammoth 498 runs in 16 matches to guide KKR to a third-place finish.

Karthik will return to the Test side after a hiatus of eight years. He last played a Test for India way back in 2010 against Bangladesh in Chittagong.

In 23 Tests he has played so far for India, Karthik has scored 1000 runs with a hundred and seven half-centuries.

Everything clicked for us against Chinese Taipei: Constantine

MUMBAI, JUN 2 (PTI): India blanked Chinese Taipei 5-0 and chief coach Stephen Constantine said everything clicked for the home team in the Intercontinental Cup opener here.

Skipper Sunil Chhetri scored his third career hat-trick last night as India started their campaign on a rousing note but Constantine cautioned his players not to get carried away with the result as they will play much stronger opponents later in the tournament.

"We have played well in quite a few games in the past three-and-half years. Today (last night) everything clicked and worked for us. The boys gave everything they had," Constantine told reporters at the post match press conference.

"There were some very encouraging performances from the young players and I am very



pleased," he added.

India will next play Kenya on Monday which will be skipper Chhetri's 100th international appearance.

"We had a good game but we cannot get carried away. We have much tougher games coming up against much stronger opponents. I am happy with the result and for the players but for me it is past now," Constantine said.

The coach also praised Chhetri, saying he has the capability to turn the game at any point of time.

"There's no surprise (on the way Chhetri

played) and that is why I play him. He is capable of turning the game at any given time. He is a fantastic player," Constantine said.

The coach also noted that Anirudh Thapa and Subhasish Bose both were impressive.

"It was Anirudh's first full start for India, the same for Subhasish Bose and I thought they both had good games, which is why we need with these kinds of games. The kid (Thapa) has great potential and he works hard. Obviously we need that to continue and he could be in the national team for the next 10 years,"

Constantine added.

Meanwhile, Chinese Taipei coach Gary White said it was an learning experience for his young team.

Everything went right for us in terms of future. We had six U-23 players and two U-19 players on the pitch. In addition, we had four players who made their debut, White said.

"This was a learning experience for us. We will try to fix our grey areas. Unless you try these players you will never know, he added.

White also heaped praise on India captain Chhetri.

He showed my young players how to deal at the senior level. My players will definitely utilise the experience in a positive manner. Congratulations to Sunil for his wonderful career and the goals. The youngsters of my team will certainly look up to him some day," he signed off.

Disappointing for India as Vani, Sharmila miss cut in Evian

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI): It was a disappointing day for Indians at the Jabra Ladies Open as both Vani Kapoor and Sharmila Nicollet missed the cut at the Evian Golf Resort in Evian France.

Vani (74-75) finished tied 67th while Sharmila (75-76) was tied 86th yesterday.

The leader is Finland's Ursula Wilkstrom at six-under with 69-67, while Felicity Johnson (72-66) is second at six-under.

Elsewhere at the Italian Open, India's SSP Chawrasia missed the cut with rounds 73-71, while Martin Kaymer (68-63) is the leader at 11-under.

Rafa Cabrera-Bello (65-67) and Graeme McDowell are among five players in tied second place at 10-under. Robert Rock (63-70) and Li Haotong (68-65) are tied 7th at nine-under.

At JGT Championships in Japan, Rahil Gangjee missed the cut at JGT Championships at Shishido Hills with rounds of 78-74. The leader is Ryuku Tokimatsu (67-67).

Swaraj leaves for SA on 5-day visit; to attend BRICS, IBSA

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI): External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj today left on a five-day visit to South Africa where she will meet top leadership of the country and attend meetings of BRICS and IBSA -- the two major groupings where India has been playing a key role.

Swaraj will also attend a series of events marking the 125th anniversary of the historic incident where a young Mahatma Gandhi was thrown out of a train compartment in Pietermaritzburg railway station, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

The 1893 incident proved to be a turning point in Gandhi's fight against racial discrimination in South Africa.



During her visit to the African nation, Swaraj will participate in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Foreign Ministers' meeting on June 4 which is expected to lay the foundation for the annual summit of the grouping in Johannesburg next month.

She will also chair a meeting of Foreign Ministers of IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa), another bloc working to deepen

coordination among the three countries on major global issues.

"The External Affairs Minister will participate in the BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting on June 4, 2018 and chair the IBSA Foreign Ministers Meeting," the MEA said.

On June 6, Swaraj will visit the Phoenix settlement where Mahatma Gandhi had developed his philosophy of non-violence, the MEA said.

"She would also participate in a series of events on June 6-7, 2018 at Pietermaritzburg. South Africa to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of the historic incident in the train compartment that became a catalyst for Gandhi's Satyagraha movement," the MEA said.

It said the two-day commemorative activities will also include release of joint commemorative stamps on Oliver Tambo and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and a Youth Summit where 20 diaspora youth from Africa and five from India will speak on the relevance of Gandhi's message of peace to the youth of today.

Tambo was a South African anti-apartheid activist and revolution-

ary leader.

"The year 2018 is an important year for India-South Africa relations as it marks the 25 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the 125th anniversary of the Pietermaritzburg railway station incident and the 100th birth centenary of South African iconic leader, Nelson Mandela," the MEA said.

It said India and South Africa enjoy close and friendly relations which are rooted in history and the values of south-south cooperation. "The visit of External Affairs Minister will further strengthen our close and long standing ties with South Africa," the MEA said.

Nifty ends below 10,700, down 40 points

MUMBAI, JUNE 1 (PTI): The NSE Nifty was down 40 points today at 10,696.20 due to emergence of selling mainly in realty, banking, IT and FMCG counters.

In a volatile session, infra, metal and finance service stocks weighed by data showing manufacturing PMI growth has slowed in May.

Investors after digesting better-than-expected Q4 GDP data shifted focus to renewed global trade tensions after the US announced tariffs on steel and aluminium imports. They also closely monitor the movement in crude oil prices and rupee.

In the overseas markets, European shares were trading higher as Italian stocks led the pack after a coalition deal appeared to end three months of political deadlock. Asian stocks were mixed after Trump administration's tariffs on imports from key allies sent US stocks into a tailspin.

Back home, the 50-share NSE Nifty closed at 10,696.20, down 39.95 points or 0.37 per cent. The index hit a high of 10,764.75 and a low of 10,681.50 during the day.

On the sectoral front, realty fell by 1.25 per cent followed by PSU Bank 1.03 per cent, bank 0.98 per cent, private bank 0.89 per cent, IT 0.79 per cent, FMCG 0.70 per cent, metal 0.70 per cent, infra 0.65 per cent, finance service 0.66 per cent, media 0.45 per cent and energy 0.19 per cent.

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Malaysia to penalize owners who don't replace Takata airbags

KUALA LUMPUR, JUN 2 (AP): Malaysia's transport minister said Saturday that owners of more than 71,000 affected Honda cars will be penalized if they fail to replace flawed Takata air bags, in a drastic move to curb fatalities.

The deaths of seven people in Malaysia have been linked to the defective air bags that are subject to one of the world's largest auto recalls. The latest victim was a 23-year old student whose 2004 Honda City crashed in Kuala Lumpur on May 27, the second death this year alone.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke said owners of 71,315 Honda cars have still not responded to the recall replacement and will be barred from renewing their road tax if they don't do so.

"The 71,315 cars are like a time bomb that can kill anytime ... the government has to take such (a) drastic measure because human lives are more important than a little inconvenience," Loke said after visiting the victim's family at their home.

In the latest case, he said a 2-centimeter (0.79-inch) -long shrapnel was found embedded on the left of the victim's neck after his car crashed into a tree.

Loke said Honda has sent 28 recall notices to the victim's family but it didn't reach them because they moved and didn't update their address with the Road Transport Department.

The last letter was dated May 22, five days before the crash, he said.

Pong Yew Loong, the victim's father, told reporters that the family wasn't aware of the recall and didn't receive any letter.

"It is proven that over the last four years, the awareness campaign is not enough, the awareness campaign has not been effective," Loke said.

He said he will meet car manufacturers next week to discuss further measures.

The latest Malaysian death raised the global death toll linked to the defect to 23. The US, with 16 deaths, is the only other country to have reported such fatalities.

All the deaths in Malaysia involved the Honda City, a subcompact made for Asia and Europe. Families of some Malaysian victims have blamed Honda, the leading foreign brand in the country, of not doing enough to warn car owners of potentially deadly risks from the air bags or track down second-hand car owners.

The defective air bags have faulty inflators and propellant devices that may deploy improperly in an accident, shooting out metal fragments that can kill or injure.

Last year, Takata pleaded guilty to fraud in a US court and agreed to pay more than 1 billion in penalties for concealing the defect.

EU joins global battle against Trump tariff onslaught

WHISTLER (CANADA), JUN 2 (AFP): The EU has launched its first counteroffensive against Washington's punishing steel and aluminum tariffs while the US began meetings in Canada with outraged finance ministers from its top trading partners.

Meanwhile in Washington, Trump floated the possibility of scrapping the 24-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement in favour of separate bilateral deals with Canada and Mexico.

Brussels and Ottawa filed legal challenges at the World Trade Organization against Washington's decision. The EU, Canada and Mexico also threatened stiff retaliatory tariffs as they pushed back against President Donald Trump's multi-front trade offensive.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said she was "deeply disappointed" and reiterated a call for Britain and the EU to be "permanently exempted" from the "unjustified" metals tariffs.

As the Group of Seven



ministerial opened in Canada, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin faced stern reaction from his counterparts, who accused Trump of jeopardizing the world economy with steps that would prove job killers for all concerned.

Canada Finance Minister Bill Morneau said the G7 discussions would be "difficult."

"We are sending the message that these measures are not helpful," he told reporters.

And French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said Europe "will not negotiate with

rious responses from Canadian President Justin Trudeau, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron.

The EU is preparing to slap tariffs on US products including bourbon, motorcycles and blue jeans worth up to 2.8 billion euros (3.3 billion).

"If players in the world don't stick to the rule book, the system might collapse. That is why we are challenging the US and China at the WTO," EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom said.

Macron told Trump in a telephone call that the tariffs were "illegal," and Merkel said the measure "risks touching off spirals of escalation that in the end hurt everyone."

Canada unveiled a package of counter-tariffs on US imports valued at Can 16.6 billion (US 12.8 billion).

And Mexico said it would impose retaliatory duties on a variety of US goods, including steel and a host of agricultural goods, including pork, apples and cheese.

The prospect of a global trade war has roiled financial markets this week even if they were back in positive territory on Friday due to upbeat US economic data.

Berenberg Bank economist Holger Schmieding argued that the direct impact of a US-EU trade war on the world economy would actually be rather small.

Nevertheless, "Trump's contempt for international rules can deal a significant blow to business confidence especially in trade-oriented nations," Schmieding said.

The WTO's former chief, Pascal Lamy, also said the damage would likely be limited in concrete terms.

"We have to keep things in proportion," he said on the French radio station France Info. He estimated that the economic impact of the tariffs would amount to "a very small part of trade flows as a whole." But others have estimated the impact as up to a full point off global growth, if the conflict expands and retal-

iation goes into effect.

The German carmakers' federation described the imposition of tariffs as "incomprehensible." "In a connected, global economy, customs barriers don't benefit anyone, including the United States," the VDA federation said.

Germany's carmakers are especially braced for the latest threat from Trump, who earlier this month launched proceedings that could eventually slap 25 percent tariffs on auto imports.

"I know he has a very particular problem with German cars," warned Malmstrom.

US companies too have warned about the negative impact of the tariffs which will raise their costs.

"Plans by US manufacturers to expand will be put on hold indefinitely," said Paul Nathanson, a spokesman for the Coalition of American Metal Manufacturers and Users. "Companies will be forced into difficult choices about technology, investment and jobs."

PM Modi unveils Gandhi's plaque with former Singaporean premier

GURDIP SINGH SINGAPORE, JUN 2 (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Singapore's former premier Goh Chok Tong today jointly unveiled a plaque to pay tribute at the immersion site of Mahatma Gandhi's ashes at the waterfront Clifford pier in the city-state.

Over 250 members of Indian diaspora led by Singapore's Emeritus Minister Goh Chok Tong joined the ceremony at the pier, 70 years after a part of the Mahatma's ashes were immersed in the Singapore water with a plane showering flowers and petals.

Modi, who is here on the last leg of his three-nation tour, unveiled the plaque on the seafront where some of the Mahatma's ashes were immersed in 1948.

"Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong and I unveiled a plaque marking the site where Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were immersed at the Clifford Pier in Singapore," Modi tweeted.

"Bapu's message reverberates globally. His thoughts and ideals motivate us to work for the greater good of humanity," he said.

Beautiful renditions of 'Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye' and 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram', two favourite bhajans of Ma-



hatma Gandhi, were sung on the occasion.

"Beautiful musical presentation by Singaporean artists on local instruments of 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram' - another favourite bhajan of Mahatma at Clifford Pier in the presence of Prime Minister Modi," Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.

After Gandhi's death in 1948, his ashes were sent to various parts of India and the world, including Singapore, for immersion.

Earlier, Modi met Goh, a veteran leader and an advocate of deeper India-Singapore engagement.

"Had a productive meeting with Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong," Modi tweeted.

Modi and Goh unveiled the plaque at the pier, which is now a heritage landmark in the Fullerton Hotel Complex.

"The unveiling of plaque of the Mahatma

UN Chief thanks India for strong, sustained support to peacekeeping

UNITED NATIONS, JUN 2 (PTI): UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has thanked India for its "strong and sustained" support to peacekeeping as he honoured the memory of the 163 Indian peacekeepers who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.



He also referred to the 125-strong women peacekeepers of the Indian Formed Police Unit deployed with the UN mission in Liberia, the first ever such contingent, calling them "an inspiration to all".

"I thank the Government of India for their strong and sustained support to UN peacekeeping. You have indeed given a very strong contribution to global solidarity and to international peace and security," Guterres said while addressing a tea reception hosted by India at the world body's headquarters yesterday on the occasion of the International Day of Peacekeeping.

Guterres said India has always been one of the largest troop contributing country to peacekeeping operations and currently about 7,700 Indian peacekeepers are deployed around the world, a majority in South Sudan and Congo.

He said there was a need to recognise the enormous importance of women soldiers and women police for making a difference in local communities. "This is a pioneer initiative from India that needs to be underlined," he said.

Guterres paid tributes to the 163 peacekeepers from India who sacrificed their lives serving in various peacekeeping missions.

He noted that India has lost the highest number of peacekeepers in UN peacekeeping's 70 year history. Of the 3,737 peacekeepers who have died since 1948, 163 have been from India, which is the highest total from any troop contributing country.

"The total 163 Indian peacekeepers, the highest number of all troop contributing countries, have given their lives for peace. We recognize their service and sacrifice as well as the service and sacrifice of all those from all countries that have fallen in the line of duty," he said.

Guterres said troop contributing countries have made enormous sacrifices and have troops in the "most dangerous locations in the world to protect the lives of citizens of other countries."

Mattis accuses China of "intimidation and coercion" in S. China Sea

SINGAPORE, JUN 2 (AFP): China's military build-up in the South China Sea and its deployment of high-end weapons systems in the disputed waterway is designed to intimidate and coerce neighbours, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said today.

Speaking at a high-profile security summit in Singapore less than two weeks before President Donald Trump is due to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, the Pentagon chief also said the US military continues to support diplomats pushing for the "complete, verifiable and irreversible" denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Mattis said Beijing had deployed a range of

military hardware including anti-ship missiles, surface-to-air missiles and electronic jammers across the South China Sea, where it has built islets and other maritime features into hardened military facilities.

Beijing has also landed heavy bombers on Woody Island in the Paracel Islands.

"Despite China's claims to the contrary, the placement of these weapon systems is tied directly to military use for the purposes of intimidation and coercion," Mattis told the Shangri-La Dialogue.

He also blasted Chinese President Xi Jinping for reneging on a 2015

promise made at the White House that Beijing would not militarise the island features in the South China Sea.

Mattis' address in Singapore was the second time he had attended the summit since becoming Pentagon chief.

He returned to a theme that he and other senior US officials have hammered since Trump took office -- that America is here to stay in the Asia-Pacific region and that allies should stick with Washington instead of aligning with Beijing.

But the message of inclusivity, cooperation and working with allies might be a tougher sell

for Mattis, who is generally popular on the international scene, after his boss this week imposed metals tariffs on some of America's closest allies in the name of "national security."

Washington Post columnist Josh Rogin asked Mattis whether he thought it was unproductive for Trump to pick fights with allies on trade.

"Certainly we have had some unusual approaches, I'll be candid with you," Mattis replied.

"But I'm reminded that so long as nations continue dialogue, so long as they continue to listen to one another and to pay respect to one

another, nothing is over based on one decision."

In a dig at China, which the Pentagon has accused of using "predatory" economics to exploit neighbours, Mattis said the US supports the peaceful resolution of disputes, "free, fair and reciprocal trade and investment" and adherence to international rules and norms.

Despite frequent warnings from Washington about China's rising might and the pitfalls of its "Belt and Road" global infrastructure initiative, Beijing has faced few consequences for its South China Sea build-up and sweeping territorial claims.

One modest excep-

tion came last week when the Pentagon disinvited China from biennial maritime exercises in the Pacific. Mattis characterised this action as an "initial response".

But "there are much larger consequences in the future when nations lose the rapport of their neighbours," he warned.

"They believe that piling mountainous debts on their neighbours and somehow removing the freedom of political action is the way to engage them. Eventually these things do not pay off."

Delegates hoping for clarity on Trump's intentions for a scheduled June 12 summit with

North Korean leader Kim did not get much from Mattis, though he said the issue of the permanent deployment of about 28,500 US troops in South Korea will not be "on the table".

Mattis has tried to avoid weighing in on the summit, deferring questions to the State Department and Trump's national security team.

"On the Korean peninsula, we hold the line with our allies, supporting our diplomats who lead this effort," Mattis said.

"Our objective remains the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula."



SUAVE! Pierce Brosnan, 64, maintained his trademark dapper looks as he sported a sharp white shirt, which was teamed with a pair of grey trousers and smart brown brogues.

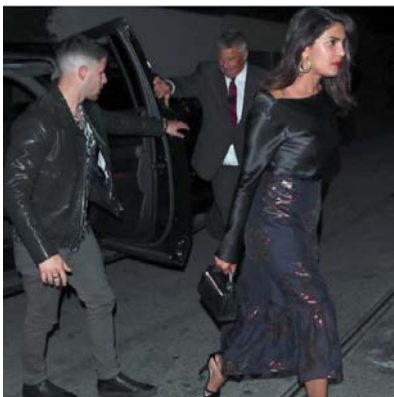
Amid link-up rumours, Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas go on another date!

Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas set tongues wagging when they went on three dates over the Memorial Day weekend. Even as the grapevine is going into a tizzy with rumours of a romance brewing between them, Priyanka and Nick enjoyed a cosy dinner date on Thursday night.

ET Online reports that the two dined at Toca Madera restaurant in West Hollywood, where they "cozied up together at their corner table". Priyanka and Nick walked in together at 8 pm on Thursday night, and went on to enjoy a meal consisting of guacamole, ceviche verde, chicken tacos and the Japanese wagyu beef.

A source is quoted as revealing to the website, "The pair were very affectionate with one another, with Priyanka running her hands through

his hair as they cozied up together at their corner table in the garden patio. They were cute and seemed to be enjoying each other's company, laughing and smiling."



Days ago, reports began doing the rounds that Priyanka and Nick had found love in each other. The rumours were ignited when the two spent the Memorial Day weekend with each other, starting with the Beauty

and the Beast Live concert at the Hollywood Bowl, then catching a Los Angeles Dodgers game together and finally ending the weekend with a cosy yacht ride with their close friends.

Priyanka and Nick made their first public appearance last year on the Met Gala red carpet together, both dressed in Ralph Lauren creations. Nick had revealed in an interview that they met through Priyanka's Quantico co-star Graham Rogers. He went on to describe her as a "lovely person" and expressed his interest in visiting India.

When Priyanka was asked if she was dating Nick on Jimmy Kimmel's show last year, she said, "We were both wearing Ralph Lauren, and we decided to go together, and it was fun."

If you decide to do this, it could transform your life in a profound way. Be prepared for some pretty heavy changes.

GEMINI: The arts might seem especially appealing today, Gemini. Also, you could fall in love. If you're currently involved, expect circumstances to develop that show the exalted side of your partner that you sometimes forget. If you aren't involved, expect someone wonderful to appear. Remember to get to know the person before getting hooked. However perfect the person appears now, he or she is still human.

CANCER: A number of powerful events could increase the level of love and positive energy in your home, Cancer. Visitors with a spiritual or metaphysical focus

could bring some new and exciting information. Good news that you never expected could raise everyone's spirits. A meeting with a humanitarian or spiritual purpose might take place. Whatever it is, expect your home to buzz with great vibes. Enjoy.

LEO: Some new people who appear interesting could move into your neighborhood and excite your curiosity, Leo. Spiritual or metaphysical conversations could take place today over the phone or over coffee. The concepts might be deep, exalted, and inspiring, yet bring up more questions than answers. Books on the subject could prove enlightening. You might even want to write down your thoughts or memorialize them in a drawing or painting.

VIRGO: Experiences you never expected could come your way today, Virgo. A talent that you didn't know you had could come to light. This might involve a combination of arts and technology, such as computer graphics or animation, or it might involve spiritual or humanitarian work. You might also try fundraising for a charity or a social or political cause. Don't hesitate. Go to it.

LIBRA: You usually tend toward rational and scientific ways of thinking, Libra, but today you might be so intuitive that you're more likely to use your psychic abilities. This can be a mixed blessing. Your rational nature protects you from identifying too much with the world's less fortunate. Today this protection is great-

ly lessened, so be prepared to emotionally identify with everybody. **SCORPIO:** You're normally intuitive, Scorpio, but today you might feel more psychic than you ever dreamed you could. Information received from the media could have you picking up psychically on the thoughts and feelings of people you've never met. This can be emotionally overpowering, so protect yourself by keeping the white light around you. Channel your thoughts and feelings into art of some kind. It helps.

SAGITTARIUS: Today you could feel especially intuitive and more sensitive than usual to unacceptable social and political conditions, Sagittarius. Ideas for new goals, perhaps humanitarian, might come to you. You should be

in an especially idealistic mood, so you might come up with wonderful possibilities that aren't workable now. Write your ideas down and consult with someone who shares your interests. Then decide how to proceed.

CAPRICORN: Today you might toy with the idea of making either the arts and humanitarianism or the spread of higher consciousness your life's work. Business and money are going well for you, Capricorn, and you might be thinking in terms of a future in which you can write your own career ticket. Although the time isn't right to actually do it, you should formulate an action plan for the future.

AQUARIUS: Your mind could be focused on exalted spiritual concepts today, Aquarius. You might

decide to make an effort to study spiritual or metaphysical materials, or attend a lecture, workshop, or meditation session with people who share this interest. You might also think about traveling to a country associated with a specific spiritual tradition, such as Israel, Egypt, or India. Write down your insights so you can refer to them later.

PISCES: Though you naturally tend to be sensitive to the feelings of others, Pisces, today you might be so in touch with the needs and desires of those around you that you sense what they want even before they know it. Spiritual, emotional, or psychological insights might come to you throughout the day. You could even have some prophetic dreams. Write down whatever seems particularly significant.

Brian De Palma writing horror film on Harvey Weinstein scandal

LOS ANGELES, JUN 2 (PTI): Horror movie icon Brian De Palma has said that he is currently writing the script for a film based on the Harvey Weinstein sexual abuse and harassment scandal.

The 77-year-old director, who became a force to reckon with after "Carrie" released in 1976, is set to return to the genre after a hiatus of over 40 years.

"I'm writing a film about this scandal, a project I'm talking about with a French producer," De Palma told French publication



Le Parisien.

He added, "My character won't be named Harvey Weinstein but it will be a horror film, with a sexual aggres-

sor, and it will take place in the film industry.

De Palma did not reveal on how soon the script would be completed.

The director also has films such as "Scarface", "Dressed to Kill", "The Untouchables" and the original "Mission: Impossible" to his credit.

He recently wrapped up crime thriller "Domino", starring Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Carice van Houten and Guy Pearce and said working on the film was "a horrible experience" and that the film might not release.

Besides De Palma, playwright David Mamet is also working on a play about Weinstein.

I'm happy with my body: Anne Hathaway to trolls

LOS ANGELES, JUN 2 (PTI): Anne Hathaway has slammed trolls for fat shaming her, saying she is "happy with her body".

The 35-year-old actor, who is currently in the process of putting on pounds for a new part, says she has faced online abuse many times before.

"It sounds kind of sad to say, I just wanted to enjoy my summer and let everyone know that I'm living in my body and I'm happy with my body, and if my body is different than what you're used to, or what you think it should be, that's (your experience). My experience is mine, and I'm loving it," Hathaway told Hoda Kotb on NBC's "Today" show.



The Oscar-winning actor said the trolling has been consistent and "overt" in nature.

"All the time, and in the ways where it's overt and people say things to you

and then there's kind of micro ones," she says.

Hathaway says she is glad that people are "becoming more conscious" about the language they use to engage with others.

"... So maybe someone thought that it wasn't a big deal to say to a 16-year-old - this is what happened to me - 'Congratulations, you got the part, you can't gain any more weight.' Maybe they thought they were giving me some good advice but now, 20 years later, I'm able to say, actually, that could've been done more consciously and lovingly," she says.

JK Rowling starts work on 'Fantastic Beasts 3' film

LONDON, JUN 2 (PTI): "Harry Potter" creator JK Rowling has revealed that she is currently writing the screenplay for the third film in the "Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them" series.

The 52-year-old author took to her official blog to share the news.

"I've just finished the fourth Galbraith novel, 'Lethal White', and I'm now writing the screenplay for 'Fantastic Beasts 3'," Rowling wrote.

The third installment is yet to be titled.

The second part, "Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald", will release on November 16 this year.

Rowling further teased her writing plans, saying she will pen another children's book - which will be a departure from the Harry Potter



universe.

"After that I'll be writing another book for children.

I've been playing with the (non-Harry Potter/wizarding world) story for about six

years, so it's about time I get it down on paper," she wrote.

Veere Di Wedding Beats Pad Man & Raid, becomes Third Highest Opener of 2018



Kareena Kapoor Khan and Sonam Kapoor's Veere Di Wedding has emerged as the third highest opener of 2018, till now. Although we were all predicting a phenomenal start for an-all female squad comedy, it has exceeded all expectations. Earning a whopping Rs 10.70 crore at the box office on Friday itself, the film has beaten Akshay Kumar's Pad Man and Ajay Devgn's crime drama Raid to secure the third spot in the list of biggest openers of 2018.

Trade analyst Taran Adarsh confirmed the opening day business of the film by tweeting box office figures. He posted: "#VeereDiWedding has a WINNING START on Day 1... Makes its way into the TOP 5 OPENERS of 2018... Expected to build up a SOLID TOTAL over the weekend... Fri ₹ 10.70 cr. India biz." (sic)

ARIES: Today you might feel especially idealistic regarding your relationships, Aries. You're likely to see those closest to you in their best light. Romantic partners may seem like characters from a fairy tale. This is a good time to move a love relationship to the next level of commitment, as long as you don't forget your partner's foibles. It's easy to love someone who seems perfect, but more realistic to love their faults as well.

TAURUS: Today you might feel the need to be of service to others. Your humanitarian instincts are high, Taurus, though you might tend to over-idealize the concept a little. It's wonderful to help those less fortunate, but often the process involves a heavy commitment of time and energy.