



**PATANJALI YOGPITH  
CONDUCTS YOGA  
SESSIONS ACROSS SIKKIM**  
pg02

**MAMATA CANCELS CHINA  
VISIT AS 'POLITICAL  
MEETINGS AT APPROPRIATE  
LEVEL' NOT CONFIRMED** pg03



**SKM HOLDS MEET TO  
STRENGTHEN ITS  
YOUTH WING** pg02

# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Pages 8 | ₹ 5

## China, Nepal to build Tibet- Kathmandu railway link

**BEIJING/KATHMANDU, JUN 22 (PTI):** China and Nepal have agreed to build a strategic railway link connecting Tibet with Kathmandu, which Nepalese Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli sees as an alternative trade route for supply of commodities to the landlocked Himalayan nation.

Oli, who is here on a five-day visit, held talks with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang, following which a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed to build the railway link through the arduous Himalayan terrain yesterday, along with 14 cooperative documents.

This is the second significant initiative by Oli, after he signed a transit trade treaty with China during his brief previous tenure in 2016 to reduce dependence on India for transportation of goods to Nepal.

Oli has said the road and rail links through Tibet could be alternative trade routes for supply of commodities to Nepal.

The new railway line will connect the Gyirong trading port in the city of Xigaze in Tibet with the Nepali capital Kathmandu, Vice-Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou was quoted to pg02



## We are not against opposition but against their ideologies: Chamling

**NITESH R PRADHAN**

**GANGTOK, 22 JUN:**

**"EXTREMIST ACTIONS** like stone pelting, using PIL/RTI to extort money, character assassination, instilling fear psychosis, damaging property, talking irresponsibly and abusing me and my government cannot be called Krantikari actions, it is a misinterpretation of the word Kranti," said Chief Minister Pawan Chamling while addressing the rank and file of the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front [SDF] on the occasion of the party's Sampurna Kranti Diwas at its headquarters in the Capital today.

Adding further, Mr Cham-

ling said that his government is bringing about a revolution to take Sikkim "from better to best" and "happy to blissful" and such a revolution "neither should nor will ever die".

He added that his mission is to see that the Sikkimese people get justice, peace and happiness in this lifetime.

"In a democracy, people's mandate is supreme," he said asking leaders to speak the truth and to avoid hiding under the face of falsehood.

Mr Chamling also elucidated about the rights of various sections of Sikkimese population including women, BL, SC,

ST, OBC [Central and State] and added that social justice has been one of the key objectives of the SDF government with peace, justice, development and empowerment for all Sikkimese being the priority.

He held that there is a need to democratise the party and systematise the administration and leaders who resist such moves should be opposed by the members.

Mr Chamling said that it is the people who don't understand democracy who look at him and his party as communal adding that SDF is the only party which has given equal rights and

justice to all the sections of the Sikkimese population.

"A government reflects the ruling party's ideology. As the Home Minister, it is my duty to protect all Sikkimese including the opposition," he said.

He said that it is only ideologically that the SDF opposes the opposition parties and that politics entails intellectual debate.

He also appealed to all the party members to work as a single unit in the interest of Sikkim discarding individual interest and groupism which may damage the party.

"Ideological loyalty to the party is a must," he said.

## BRTF welcomes 2nd batch of Kailash Mansarovar Yatris



**ARPAN PRADHAN**

**GANGTOK, 22 JUN:**

The 758 Border Roads Task Force [BRTF] under Project Swastik organised a special programme in honour of Kailash Mansarovar Yatris and accorded a warm welcome to 45 yatris of the second batch of KMY at 8th Mile, JN Road in East Sikkim on 21 Jun.

The event had the presence of Commander, 758 BRTF, Colonel Inder Mohan Singh, Officer Commander, 129 RCC, Ramashray Sah, Officer Commanding, 1066 FW, Lieutenant Colonel PD Bhutia, and other officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Col Singh congratulated the yatris and welcomed them to Sikkim

by offering traditional khadas. He also interacted with the yatris and assured all possible help and assistance till Nathula and wished all the yatris a successful journey ahead.

Physical health check-up of the yatris was also conducted during the programme.

On behalf of all the yatris, 64-year-old Lasriya Ratan Sharma from Shimla in Himachal Pradesh extended gratitude to the 758 BRTF for the grand welcome and hospitality.

"This is an unforgettable moment for all of us. We would love to visit Sikkim again and be a part of KMY via Nathula in the future as well," Mr Sharma added.

## Negligence charge against Namchi District Hospital on death of newborn



### SUMMIT REPORT

**NAMCHI, 22 JUN:**

Namchi District Hospital in South Sikkim has been accused of causing the death of a newborn due to negligence.

A newborn died an hour after birth at Namchi Hospital on 21 Jun and the family alleged negligence on part of the hospital.

Eden Bhutia from Ravangla, South Sikkim was admitted to the hospital with delivery case at around 7 p.m on 21 Jun. She gave birth to a baby at around 3:30 a.m this morning. The family members were informed by the hospital staff that the delivery was successful. However, after an hour of the baby's birth at around 4:30 a.m, they were told that the newborn had died.

After lodging an FIR against the doctor and staff of Gynaecology Department of Namchi District Hospital, the family members, relatives and general public of Ravangla gheraoed the hospital premises for more than 5 hours today.

Accusing the hospital staff of carelessness, the family members and relatives protested against the hospital administration and demanded immediate arrest of the Gynaecologist and staff on duty. They refused to receive the body of the newborn stating that they will do so only after the police takes appropriate action against the accused.

A case has been registered u/s 304 'A' of IPC against the doctor and staff of Gynaecology Department of Namchi District Hospital.

In order to maintain law and order at the hospital and its surroundings, a team of police comprising of Assistant Superintendent of Police, South, Linda Palmu, along with police personnel from Namchi PS reached the hospital premises while the family members demanded justice from authorities.

Father of the deceased baby, Tenzing Bhutia, said, "My baby was born healthy and we were told that the baby's weight is about 4.30 kgs. But later at around 4:30 a.m, they said our baby had died. There were no doc-

tors when my wife was delivering the baby. The nurses were in charge of it. Emergency call was made to the doctor on duty but the doctor arrived one hour after the delivery."

Mr Bhutia further alleged, "Our baby was born healthy. It is due to the negligence of the doctor and the staff that our baby is no more. We are innocent people from a village and we did what we were asked to do by the hospital. Strict action should be taken against the doctor and the staff on duty for their negligence. We will not receive the body till the accused doctor and staff are arrested."

District Medical Superintendent, Namchi District Hospital, Dr DC Sharma, informed that an enquiry committee has been formed to enquire about the incident. He added that hospital administration has issued an immediate order prohibiting the accused doctor and staff from taking up any case till further notice.

Police sources informed that the accused doctor was later summoned for her statement regarding the case.

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## Chelameswar laments non-elevation of Justice Joseph as SC judge

**NEW DELHI, JUN 22 (PTI):** Justice J Chelameswar, who demitted office today, has disapproved the Centre's decision not to elevate Justice K M Joseph to the Supreme Court, terming the action as "not sustainable".

Justice Chelameswar, who had held an unprecedented presser along with three other senior Supreme Court judges to highlight the alleged discrimination in allocation of cases to benches, said that the credibility of the highest judiciary was "occasionally" in danger.

"I wish and pray that he (Joseph) becomes a judge of the Supreme Court. I have not stalled it. I have been repeatedly asking for it. The collegium has unanimously reiterated its recommendation," Chelameswar told news outlets.

He termed Justice Joseph as an "outstanding judge" and said he should have been elevated to the apex court and the collegium must reiterate his name to the Centre.

He told NDTV that Justice Joseph did not belong to his religion, community or language, but yet he fought for him.

He said "the government should not process the recommendations (for elevation of judges) for months together. That will lead to a situation where appointments are not made, vacancies are not filled. All this will result in more and more pendency."

On the issue of his virtual revolt against Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, the judge said he did not regret holding the press conference on January 12.

Justice Chelameswar rued the fact that though many former judges had hailed him for his decision to highlight the deficiencies in the functioning of the apex court but right-thinking persons were not coming forward.

He said that one of the former judges had wished him "strength" but had expressed inability to speak out.

Replying to questions by 'The Print', Chelameswar said he did not think the judiciary was in danger and recalled his time as a law student during the Emergency to drive home the point.



## Training cum demonstration on oyster mushroom cultivation

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 22 JUN:**

One day training cum demonstration on Oyster mushroom cultivation under Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan was organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, West Sikkim in the village of Rumbuk, the Aspirational District of West Sikkim today. The programme was attended by 56 progressive

farmers along with the panchayat member, Horticulture Development Officer, KVK, field officer (Sikkim Organic Mission), BTM of ATMA, a press release informs.

In the training programme, details of package and practices on oyster mushroom cultivation, post harvest technology, pest and disease management

were highlighted by SMS (Agri. Extension), Bhison Pradhan of KVK West Sikkim followed by demonstration of cylinder preparation.

HDO, Ongdi Sherpa gave an overview of Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan and farmers' pension scheme. BTM, Dawa Tsh. Sherpa focused on various ongoing activities of ATMA and also in-

formed the participants about various schemes of the department. Field Officer cum Master Trainer (SOM), Kamal Sharma encouraged the farmers towards more area expansion on organic vegetable production in the village. The programme concluded with the distribution of spawn of oyster mushroom to the participants.



## Series of trainings on pest management in West

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 22 JUN:**

Mevedir conducted training on pest management in organic village clusters of Lower Lungchok and Lower Salangdang in Sombaria, West Sikkim and in Lower Sapong, under Bongten Sapong GPU, Gyalshing.

A press release informs that these series of trainings are being conducted as part of the annual training programmes as mandated by the Certification Body in order

to maintain the organic integrity of the ICS cluster villages.

The farmers who had assembled for the programmes were briefed about the various herbal sprays that can be prepared using local available materials to control many of the pests.

The preparation of ant controlling herbal spray and its application, timing and frequency were also explained.

Besides these, other simple organic technology of reducing pests

were also highlighted during the trainings.

The farmers were also informed about the ICS norms & procedures and about the organic standards which the certified farms have to adhere to.

Master trainer, Kumar Gurung, coordinated the training in Gyalshing circle while Ghanendra Sharma along with co-trainer, Subash Chandra, facilitated the farmers' training in Sombaria circle.

## State Govt hospitals lack proper health facilities: BJP

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 22 JUN:**

Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim Pradesh has accused the State Health Department of carelessness in delivering health related services to the people of Sikkim.

A BJP press release states that the recent death of one new born baby at Namchi District Hospital within one hour of being born reveals the real situation of the Health Department. On the same, the party has asked the State Government to responsibly work towards the health sector which is directly related to the lives of people.

Due to poor health facilities, manpower and services in State Government hospitals, people have been approaching hospitals outside the State for treatment, the party has alleged.

BJP has expressed hope that the State Government will take immediate measures to provide better health care services in the State.

## Patanjali Yogpith conducts yoga sessions across Sikkim



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 22 JUN:**

Patanjali Yogpith, Sikkim has organised yoga programmes in various places in Sikkim to commemorate International Yoga Day on 21 Jun. The Yogpith members have covered areas like Rongli, Pacheykhani, Pasting, Padamchey,

Singtam, Rhenock, Rangpo, Tumin, Gangtok and Aadarshgaon in East Sikkim, Gyalshing and Tumburbung in West Sikkim and Mangan in North Sikkim. In South Sikkim, a team of Yogpith members conducted yoga sessions in Namchi, Temi and Yangang, a press release informs.



## SKM holds meet to strengthen its youth wing

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 22 JUN:**

A meeting of the youth wing of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party was held at Som Ward under Maneybong-Dentam constituency in West Sikkim today. The meeting was chaired by SKM working president, MP Subba,

and attended by senior leaders, workers and members, an SKM press release informs.

The meeting discussed the role and responsibilities of youth towards the party and

the society and further strengthening of the youth wing.

During the meet, seven families of Sikkim Democratic Front led by Radu-Khandu Ward independent Panchayat, Ganga Ram Poudyal, joined SKM, it is informed.

The working president has urged the youth to take the party's policies, principles and programmes to the people at the grassroot level in order to provide justice and bring "parivartan" in the State.

# China, Nepal to build Tibet-Kathmandu railway link

### contd from pg1

ed as saying by the China Daily, after the two meetings.

China has been building rail, road and air links in the remote Tibet spending billions of dollars. A railway line was put in operation in 2014, linking Tibet's provincial capital Lhasa with Xigaze.

Xigaze which is also known Shegatse, is the closest Tibetan city to Nepal. Earlier, there were reports in the Chinese official media that the railway line was to be extended till India.

During his talks with Oli, Xi assured him that he is keen to see the Nepal-China cross-border connectivity come to fruition.

"The train from Shigatse (Tibet) will arrive in Kath-

mandu," Xi was quoted as telling Oli in the Nepali media.

The two sides underscored the railway line as the most significant initiative in the history of bilateral cooperation and believed that it would herald a new era of cross-border connectivity between the two countries, according to a joint statement issued by the two nations.

China has also agreed to provide support in technology and personnel training.

"The two sides agreed to intensify implementation of the MoU on Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to enhance connectivity, encompassing such vital components as ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications within the

overarching framework of trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network," the statement said.

While the details of the agreement of the specially funding were not revealed, the statement, which was released at the end of Oli's visit to Beijing said, "both sides expressed happiness over the signing of the MOU on Cooperation for Railway Connectivity".

The two countries also agreed to make good use of the long-term communication mechanism on railway cooperation between government departments and promote railway cooperation.

For its part, Nepal has agreed to intensify the implementation of MoU on Chi-

na's BRI. India has expressed strong reservations over the BRI as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) traversing through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is its flagship project.

"The two sides agreed to intensify implementation of the MoU on Cooperation under the BRI to enhance connectivity, encompassing such vital components as ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications within the overarching framework of trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network," the joint statement said.

The both sides expressed happiness over the conclusion of agreements on the Reconstruction of Friendship Bridge and Resuo (Rasuwa)

Bridge; protocol on the utilisation of highways in Tibet Autonomous Region by Nepal for cargo transport.

MoUs on investment and cooperation on production capacity, establishment of mechanism for facilitation on the implementation of China-Nepal Cooperation Programmes and Projects in Nepal between the two foreign ministries, strengthening cooperation between the two foreign ministries, energy cooperation, agreement on economic and technical cooperation and MoU on human resource development cooperation, the joint statement said.

Besides, both sides also agreed to study through different ways on the possibility

of building oil storage facilities in the sites identified by Nepal. The Chinese side will support the feasibility study on oil and gas resources research in Nepal, it said.

They also agreed to encourage Chinese and Nepali airlines to launch and operate more direct flights between the two countries. The two countries will coordinate closely to speed up the construction of the Pokhara international airport so that it starts operation at an early date, the statement said.

The two neighbours also expressed satisfaction over the successful commercial operation of China-Nepal cross-border optical fibre cable. They also agreed to enhance cooperation on border

security and management, and negotiate the Agreement on Boundary Management System.

"The Nepali side expressed its willingness to speed up the development of three North-South Economic Corridors in Nepal, namely Koshi Economic Corridor, Gandaki Economic Corridor and Karnali Economic Corridor," it said.

Beijing agreed to take positive measures to facilitate Nepal's export to China.

Nepal and China reiterated their firm commitment to respect each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and respect and accommodate each other's concerns and interests, the statement said.



**Gangtok on  
Saturday,  
23 June**

**Temp:** 25°C/17°C

**Forecast:** Cloudy,  
a thundershowers;  
not as warm.

**Sunrise:** 04:41 AM

**Sunset:** 6:34 PM

## Deadlock between bureaucrats and Kejriwal broken: Delhi HC observes

**NEW DELHI, JUN 22 (PTI):** The Delhi High Court today said there is no urgency in the pleas against the recent sit-in dharna by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the alleged strike by IAS officers as the "deadlock" between them has been broken.

"Deadlock is broken. There is no urgency," a bench of justices A K Chawla and Navin Chawla said and asked the petitioners whether they wanted to withdraw their respective petitions.

The petitioners, also including Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta, said they wanted to pursue the respective issues raised by them and the court, thereafter, listed all the matters for hearing on August 3.

There are two petitions, one of them by the BJP leader, against the recent sit-in hunger strike by Kejriwal and his cabinet colleagues -- Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and Health Minister Satyender Jain -- at the office of Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal.

The other plea against Kejriwal's strike was moved by a lawyer, Hari Nath Ram, who also moved the Supreme Court after the Delhi High Court declined to pass an interim order on June 18. The apex court is likely to hear the matter in July.

Kejriwal and his ministers had been on hunger strike since June 11 evening to press for their demands, including a direction to IAS officers to end their "strike" and action against those who have struck work.

It was called off a day after the high court on June 18 had virtually disapproved of the protest by questioning who had authorised it.

The court had also observed that strikes or dharnas are held outside and not inside someone's workplace or residence.

Apart from the pleas against Kejriwal's protest, two separate petitions have been moved by lawyers Umesh Gupta and Prashant Manchanda against the non-attending of meetings by IAS officers of Delhi government.

Manchanda, whose plea was filed two days ago, has alleged "breakdown of the administrative machinery" due to non-attending of meetings by bureaucrats.

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# Mamata cancels China visit as 'political meetings at appropriate level' not confirmed

**KOLKATA, JUN 22 (PTI):** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee cancelled her China visit today as "political meetings at the appropriate level" were not confirmed by the Chinese government, state Finance Minister Amit Mitra said.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief was slated to leave for China tonight.

She was scheduled to lead a delegation to China under the exchange programme of the Government of India with the International Department of the Communist Party of China.

Mitra said External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, who is presently out of the country, and Foreign Secretary V K Gokhale were informed about the cancellation of Banerjee's visit to China.

In a Facebook post, the chief minister said, "In March this year, the Union Minister of External Affairs had recommended to me to kindly consider leading a delegation to China in the coming months under the Exchange



Programme of the Government of India with the International Department of the Communist Party of China."

Stating that she had agreed to

the proposal, Banerjee said, "I mentioned to her that since the interest of my country is involved, I wish to visit China sometime during last

week of June, 2018."

She added that pursuant to letters from the state chief secretary and the ambassador of India in Chi-

na, a programme was chalked out and the visit was planned.

Till yesterday, everything was "going well", the chief minister said, adding that unfortunately, "the political meetings at the appropriate level" could not be confirmed.

"It has now been intimated by our Ambassador in China that the political meetings at the appropriate level under the Exchange Programme could not be confirmed. Therefore, the purpose of my visit with a delegation to China under the Exchange Programme is of no use," she said.

Banerjee said although the Indian Ambassador in China tried his best to make her visit a success, the non-confirmation of the political meetings "at the last moment", had "unfortunately compelled us to cancel the visit".

"However, I wish the continuation of the friendship of India and China in the days to come and it should strengthen further in the interest of both the countries," she added.

## River rafting ban: Debate rages between adventure sports cos, environmentalists

**NEW DELHI, JUN 22 (PTI):** When we think of river rafting, Rishikesh strikes our mind instantly as it is the perfect weekend getaway far from the maddening crowd, with rafting being one of the popular activities.

River rafting generates adrenaline rush to adventure enthusiasts as they ride down the thundering rapids of the Ganges with inflatable boats, carbon paddles and helmets.

The Uttarakhand High Court's order imposing a ban on river rafting and paragliding across the state has come as a shocker to adventure sports companies and adventure tourists who say a blanket ban is not the solution.

The order has, however, been welcomed by the environmentalists who said the high court order was in interest of the environment and ecology. Arvind Bhardwaj of Red Chilli Adventure said the high court order will hit the rafting business very hard as it would render the people jobless.

"I am involved in adventure activities in Rishikesh for the last 24 years. I am surprised to hear of this order. The state government had

already issued guidelines for rafting.

"To put a ban on white river rafting and paragliding across the state is very harsh direction. Our business has come to a standstill. This is the peak season for tourists. Now we will have to cancel all the bookings. Huge loss would be suffered by us. Putting a blanket ban is not the solution. A proper monitoring has to be put in place for effective implementation of laws," Bhardwaj told PTI.

When contacted, environment activist Vikrant Tongad, who had also filed a petition in National Green Tribunal against camping along the river, welcomed the high court decision, saying it was a very good order which would go a long way in protection of the environment and ecology.

"The NGT has already ordered a ban on camping activities within 100 metres of the Ganga from Kaudiyala to Rishikesh. The high court order will go a long way in saving the pristine nature of the river. This is a very good order. Now it is for the Uttarakhand government to properly implement the ban," Tongad said.

Kiran Todaria, president of the Indian Association of Professional Rafting Outfitters (IAPRO), said the livelihood of many families will be affected by this order.

"I have not seen the high court order yet. But going by the media report, it looks very absurd. I cannot understand how rafting can cause pollution in river. Banning any activity is not the solution. It is an industry that provides jobs to almost 10,000 families," he said.

Gurgaon resident Pradyumna Sisodia, who was planning to go to Rishikesh this weekend for rafting, said he had already booked a camp site but got a cancellation call from the tour operator last night who told him about the high court order.

"Our family was too excited for this trip but our bookings were cancelled at the last minute. I don't have any idea about the high court order but I don't understand how rafting would cause pollution to the river," he said.

Rishi Sachdeva of Cradle of Life, who runs camps on the banks of Ganges in Shivpuri, also told PTI that the order will have a very negative impact on the business.

"This order will hit local markets as well. Mostly, the youth come to Rishikesh for camping and rafting. In their absence the local livelihood will be affected to a great extent. Since last night we have cancelled 70-80 per cent bookings. Our major income comes in the weekends but due to this order all reservations have been cancelled," Sachdeva said.

Water rafting business in Uttarakhand is estimated to be generating a turnover of Rs 75-80 crore annually and employs nearly 10,000 people including guides, cooks, instructors and drivers.

Underlining the need to regulate adventure sports like white river rafting and paragliding, the Uttarakhand High Court's division bench of justices Rajiv Sharma and Lokpal Singh in a recent order directed the state government to prepare a transparent policy on adventure sports in the state within two weeks.

Till such a policy is framed, no paragliding, white river rafting and other water sports shall be permitted in the state of Uttarakhand, the court said.



## EC registers Haasan's party MNM

**NEW DELHI, JUN 22 (PTI):** Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM), floated by actor Kamal Haasan, was today registered as a political party by the Election Commission and it would receive the registration documents early next week.

Sources in the EC said here that the documents filed by Haasan have been processed and the registration granted.

"The party will get the relevant documents early next week. The formal letter was sent today," a senior functionary said.

Haasan had in February launched his political party Makkal Needhi Maiam (people justice centre) in the presence of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and others.

The party's flag, in white background, has six hands joined together, with shades of red over three hands and the rest in white. A star can be seen in the centre, surrounded by a star-like background in black.

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## Improve Public Transport to Solve Traffic Problems

*There will after all never be enough parking spaces or roads*

For a brief while some years ago, Gangtok flirted with the idea of a ring road to decongest the capital's roads. Before congestion on the roads took over the hill, at the time when some planning could have been done, the slopes of Gangtok were congested with constructions, and buildings are now so densely packed that new roads, even ring roads of any practical use, will need engineering miracles to come through. But the fact that the planners were considering even improbable options to make getting around Gangtok quicker and less frustrating proves that the traffic situation needs immediate addressing. Anyone who has travelled up to the main town area from any place further than 6th Mile, Taddong, has suffered traffic snarls which start jamming nowadays since as early as 9 a.m. The traffic cops are an increasingly hassled tribe in Gangtok, spending more energy directing traffic than checking traffic violations. Fact remains that traffic is now a problem for Gangtok. Maybe the quickly accepted as obsolete traffic lights at Hospital Dara should be boosted back into service and more traffic lights installed at junctions which have become too heavily populated to be regulated by traffic cops alone.

Of course, it did not require this write up to bring home the point that traffic congestion is a serious problem; anyone who has fumed away irritating minutes stuck in what are now routine traffic jams, praying for parking space in town all the while, has lived the problem many times over.

Okay, so Gangtok has a problem. What are the possible solutions then? The obvious option is more roads. This, however, is not really an option because there is no place left to carve out new arteries or bypasses in the capital. Wider roads then? Unlikely, for the same reason as the one that has shot down the chance of more arterial roads. The parking lots already in place and the more which are coming up would release some dead space from the roads, but the number of vehicles is growing at a much faster clip than parking is being created, so roads will remain cramped. Also, parking lots do not anyway do much to ease the problem of [stagnant] traffic on the roads. There is another option, controlling the number of vehicles. To restrict the numbers by law would be unfair, even repressive, so an alternative approach to discouraging impulsive buyers has to be worked in.

Given the fact that more vehicles [or even the existing numbers for that matter] will require more traffic personnel on the streets and since this will cost money, why shouldn't those who create this requirement be made to pay. Since vehicles also pollute, and more vehicles means more pollution, and since polluting vehicles cannot be banned, it would only be fair that they pay a higher premium for the damage. Of course, this contribution cannot go directly into the required "heads" and could be collected at the time of registration. But even this Singaporean model of 'demand management' can be sidestepped by vehicle owners by making the purchases and registrations across the border.

The only effective traffic management option available to Gangtok for the present and eventually for all of Sikkim, is an efficient public transport system. For all the city-runner services, Gangtok does not have a public transport that even deserves mention. What the planners will also need to do is stop pampering vehicle owners by creating more parking spaces. If the political will can be found to give Gangtok a reliable public transport service, the next thing to do would be to make parking very expensive in Gangtok and penalties for unauthorized parking high enough to pinch. And then, the parking lots should be converted into public spaces for the young. Most of the parking lots were once parks used by kids, and these should be given back to them to open youth clubs, reading rooms, coaching centres or whatever use these blocks of concrete can be used for. This is more than just wishful thinking or impractical day-dreaming.

Just think about the amount of space that can be released and the congestion that can be ended if a truly efficient public transport system was given to Gangtok simultaneously with the policy initiative which makes parking vehicles in Gangtok extremely expensive and shrinks the places where visiting vehicles can be parked...

**WRITE US:** Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence.

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# Women's unpaid work must be included in GDP calculations: lessons from history

LUKE MESSAC, MD, PHD  
*theconversation.com*

It's been nearly 80 years since British economists James Meade and Richard Stone devised a method of national income accounting that would become the global standard. Today, we call it a country's gross domestic product (GDP).

Their method was intended to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of an entire national economy, by estimating the monetary value of all "economic" production that took place in a country in a given year. Like most economic statisticians of the day, Meade and Stone focused almost entirely on measuring the value of goods and services that were actually bought and sold.

But a problem quickly emerged, thanks to the experiences and observations of a 23-year-old woman named Phyllis Deane. She was hired by Meade and Stone in 1941 to apply their method in a few British colonies. In present-day Malawi and Zambia, Deane realised that it was an error to exclude unpaid household labour from GDP.

In a research paper I published recently on the history of the GDP, I write that Deane believed this convention excluded a great share of productive activity – especially in rural Africa. She argued that it was "illogical" to exclude the economic value of preparing and cooking food and collecting firewood. She contended that such kinds of labour had historically been excluded because they were commonly viewed as women's work.

To decide which activities to include in her GDP calculations, Deane spent months conducting village surveys in order to measure, and include in GDP estimates, particularly burdensome activities like the collection of firewood.

She concluded that if governments wanted to formulate policies that increased aggregate national income and ensured an equitable distribution of that aggregate, the contributions of all producers – including rural women – had to be counted.

Over the next seven decades, GDP calculations would not generally include unpaid (and mostly female) labour. But Deane's work shows us this was not the only way to measure economic production. As GDP calculations come under increasing criticism, we should look to her research for a way forward.

## INVISIBILITY OF FEMALE LABOUR

Richard Stone paid little attention to Deane's recommendations. In 1953, he oversaw the publication of the United Nations' first System of National



Accounts. This report provided detailed standards for calculating GDP.

The system ignored Deane's call to include unpaid household labour. And because UN technical assistance programmes sought to ensure that low and middle-income countries followed the system's standards, Stone's method had global consequences. Activities which were central to every day life in low-income African countries – like fetching water, grinding corn, and weaving mats – were not included in national accounts.

This invisibility of female labour in national income accounting eventually provoked a backlash. While pushing for female domestic labour to be economically quantified, scholar-activists like the Italian-born philosopher Silvia Federici, who taught for many years in Nigeria, argued that male "economic" production was impossible without women's uncompensated "non-economic" labour.

For instance, without a wife to tend to the children and the home, how would a male factory labourer have the time or the energy to fulfil his stereotypical role as the breadwinner?

## TIME RATHER THAN MONEY

Some feminist economists held a different view. In 1999 the New Zealand-born economist Marilyn Waring articulated concerns about including unpaid labour in national accounts. Rather than using economic activity to measure the value of labour, Waring called for a different indicator: time.

Time, she explained, was "the one investment we all have to make". Drawing on research she conducted in rural Kenya, she argued that time-use surveys would demonstrate "which sex gets the menial, boring, low-status, and unpaid invisible work".

Such surveys would show how targeted interventions, like access to clean water and efficient cooking stoves, could alleviate the drudgery of do-

mestic labour and allow billions of women to gain greater freedom in how they spend their days.

In 2008, the authors of the newly updated System of National Accounts responded to their feminist critics by way of a compromise. They agreed to include the production of all goods – whether these were sold or not – in GDP calculations, so activities like weaving mats or brewing beer would be included.

However, they continued to exclude most unpaid household services, like cooking and cleaning. And the revised system ignored both Deane's and Waring's calls for more data on the distribution of time-use by gender. This has caused

ever more criticism to be levelled at the system.

In recent decades, the work of feminist economics has shown how the methods of calculating GDP render much of women's labour invisible. Meanwhile, surveys and time-use studies show the toll this has taken on women's lives, particularly in the Global South. One recent report found that hundreds of millions of women worldwide have to walk more than a 30-minute round-trip to reach clean water for their families.

## FUTURE OF THE GDP

A 2009 report commissioned by then French President Nicolas Sarkozy stated that because GDP is "treated as a measure of economic well-being" it "can lead to misleading indicators about how well-off people are and entail the wrong policy decisions".

More recently, the World Bank pointed out that GDP only measures flows of income but doesn't tell us whether health care, education, and the wealth of the natural world are being built up or plundered. The Economist called for a "new metric" of economic progress that included "unpaid work in the home, such as caring for relatives".

None of these insights are new. But they do mark a renewed appreciation for the economic indices and policies that feminist scholars have long favoured. For instance, Silvia Federici's insistence that household labour should be paid has been at least partially realised in the spread of cash transfer programmes across Africa.

If we want to really bring women's work out of the shadows and overturn the stereotypical gender roles that relegate women to more than their fair share of household labour, we must first take the blinders off the GDP.

*[the writer is with University of Pennsylvania]*

# In praise of the midges pestering footballers in the World Cup

MIKE JEFFRIES  
*theconversation.com*

England's opening match in World Cup 2018 was a dramatic clash between Gareth Southgate's Young Lions and several million gnats, not to mention Tunisia's wrestling footballers. England pulled a win out of the bag at the last minute – but only after a gruelling fight with some determined insects. Those plucky gnats also had to fight off the insecticide treatments of near-by swamps and insect repellent sprays deployed by the team and the media.

I suppose this could open up new possibilities for product endorsement – in addition to the usual shampoo and shaving adverts – if you need to shave your chest and remove any unsightly insect life that might have got stuck to you during a game.

But, despite the bad press, these swarms of midges are a very heartening sight. The last year has seen a series of reports spotlighting the grim decline of insect abundance in Europe (notably long-term data from Germany) which has provoked headlines of ecological Armageddon and a fond nostalgia for the days of bug-filled countryside jaunts.

The trouble is that while bees and butterflies readily gain our sympathy, other vital groups that do much of the pollinating and other crucial work that helps keep the planet turning have a dodgier reputation. Of all the bugs, it is flies that may be the hardest to like. The ones that generally attract our attention sit around on poo,



England stars do battle with midges before the opener against Tunisia in World Cup 2018.

vomit on our food or bite us for blood.

Flies can take little solace from their place in high culture. Shakespeare points out their appetite for public casual sex (King Lear, Act 4), while the Old Testament threatens plagues on multiple occasion in Exodus, or the Book of Isaiah where they are summoned from the furthest rivers (which at least shows an appreciation of the powers of gnat dispersal).

But we dismiss flying "pests" at our peril – and the Volgograd pitch invaders may be a particularly important group for our welfare – if we can work out what they are.

The precise identification of the pesky Volgograd Diptera (fly) is uncertain: are they mosquitoes, midges or gnats? The general abundance and behaviour suggests midges – but midges come in many forms. In much of the northern temperate world the biting midges of the family Ceratopogonidae are notorious. The UK version – the Highland Midge – is

credited with scaring away tourists from Scotland. They are tiny but determined females in search of a blood meal. They get in ears, eyes and noses and make them a tickling mess.

However the Volgograd midges seem bigger, almost beautiful as they sparkled in the setting sun, much more like Chironomidae – so called non-biting midges. Lacking the bloodthirsty reputation of their biting cousins, it is easy to take the Chironomidae for granted – but they deserve our thanks.

## FIGHTING POLLUTION

In countries with sewage treatment works it is Chironomidae larvae that do much of the sewage processing, preventing the gross pollution of waterways. Sewage treatment commonly involves filtering out the larger debris we flush away, then dribbling the resulting liquid slowly through large gravel beds. In these gravel beds, billions of midge larvae feast on the organic soup, turning much of

our waste in midge biomass. This is why sewage plants are often prized by bird watchers as the sheer quantity of flies that eventually emerge make a great food source, attracting all sorts of avian visitors.

The midge's larvae are tough. Some species hang on in severely degraded rivers, familiar as "blood worms" – vivid red because of haemoglobin in their bodies to glean the limited oxygen from the mud. Each midge may be tiny but hatching numbers are colossal. East African rift valley lakes may seem to smoke as rising clouds of Chironomidae emerge.

The massive swarms can be harvested, squished into midge-balls and eaten by lakeside villagers. Midge swarms seem to show remarkable collective manoeuvres, individual midges adjusting velocity and direction response to their immediate neighbours, detecting shifts up to at least a centimetre away (although studies do not account for the impact of footballers waving their hands about).

Evening is prime time for swarms as males dance in the hope of attracting a mate, so the Volgograd kick-off was perfectly timed to attract midge trouble as millions of males, newly emerged and looking their best, hit the town. Let's not be too down on midges. The 2-1 scoreline will encourage England fans. For those who appreciate flies, the dancing swarms will also gladden the heart.

*[the writer is Associate Professor, Ecology, Northumbria University, Newcastle]*



# Cong MLA resigns; party loses 'single largest party' tag in Meghalaya

**SHILLONG, JUN 22 (PTI):** The opposition Congress lost the status of the single largest party in Meghalaya Legislative Assembly after one of its MLAs, Martin M Danggo, quit his membership in the House.

It has effectively left the Congress strength to 20, equal to that of the ruling National People's Party (NPP), which is running a coalition government in the north-eastern state with the BJP and some regional parties.

The election for the 60-member Meghalaya Assembly was held in February last. Danggo submitted his resignation to Deputy Speaker Timothy D Shira in the absence of Speaker Donkpar Roy late last night.

"I hereby tender my resignation of my seat in the assembly from Ranikor (ST) constituency with effect



from June 21, 2018," he said in his resignation letter.

He also intimated state Congress president of his decision to resign as the MLA as well from the primary membership of the party.

"As per the desire of my people, I have tendered my resignation as MLA with effect from June 21, 2018," Danggo said in his letter to PCC president.

"Therefore, with deep sorrow and regret in my heart, I

am also resigning from the primary membership of Congress along with all positions that I am holding in the party with effect from June 21," he said.

Danggo, the five-time Congress MLA from Ranikor in South West Khasi Hills district, is likely to join the ruling National People's Party (NPP), sources close to him said.

The Congress MLA had announced his decision to join the NPP in a public meeting attended by Chief Minister Conrad Sangma in his constituency recently, after Sangma accepted the long-pending demand to upgrade Ranikor as a civil sub-division.

Home Minister James K Sangma confirmed the resignation of Danggo, saying it has been accordingly accepted.

After announcing on June 12 that he would quit, Danggo

had put on hold his resignation following the cancellation of a cabinet meeting that was supposed to clear a proposal to set up a subdivision at Ranikor. The meeting was postponed as the chief minister was not keeping well.

Danggo submitted his resignation late last night.

With the latest development, the Congress strength in the House has been reduced to 20, same as the ruling NPP.

The ruling Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA) comprises 20 MLAs of NPP, 7 of United Democratic Party (UDP), four of newly-formed Peoples Democratic Front (PDF), and two each of BJP and Hill State Peoples Democratic Party (HSPDP).

The NCP, with one MLA, and two independents are also supporting the government.



## Arunachal bags Skoch award for vaccination campaign

**ITANAGAR, JUN 22 (PTI):** Arunachal Pradesh

bagged the 'SKOCH Order of Merit' Award for the Measles-Rubella Vaccination campaign and also for the Chief Ministers Free Cancer Chemotherapy Scheme being implemented in the state.

The award was conferred to the state at the 52nd SKOCH Summit held at New Delhi on

Thursday, an official release said here today.

The award conferred by Skoch Group in recognition of the services provided to the people was received by Special Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Dr Tapasya Raghav, it said.

Skoch Group is a think-tank dealing with socio-economic issues with a focus on inclusive growth since 1997.

## BJP trying to disturb peace and stability of Bengal: TMC

**KOLKATA, JUNE 22 (PTI):** The ruling Trinamool Congress today accused the state BJP of trying to disturb the peace and stability of West Bengal by making provocative statements against its cadre.

TMC secretary general Partha Chatterjee said the BJP for the last few years have been trying to disturb peace and stability in the state.

"They have been doing such things just to gain political foothold in Bengal. But the people of Bengal will never accept a party which propagates communal division," he said.

Chatterjee said, "First they (BJP) tried their hand in creating communal tensions and now they are making provocative statements. But they won't succeed in their intentions."

Chatterjee's comment comes in the backdrop of



West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh recent utterance that his party would not take it lying down if its workers were attacked by the TMC.

Threatening "direct encounters," he had said "We are counting the bullets which killed our workers."

"We have seen many goondas. There is a limit to tolerance (to such attacks). We have not given any bond that we will offer them (TMC) rasogolla (sweet) even if they at-

tack us. There will be retaliation," Ghosh had said at a public meeting in north Bengal on June 19. Hitting back, Chat-

terjee said the BJP is "miles away" from the seat of power in West Bengal and is threatening to launch encounters.

"From such statements the people of Bengal can understand the kind of intolerant outfit BJP is," he added.

Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee had yesterday called BJP a "militant organisation," and alleged that it is engaged in dividing the people along religious lines while daring it to attack her party.

"We are not a militant organisation like the BJP. They are arrogant and intolerant. They are religiously biased. They don't like Muslims,

Christians, Sikhs - they are even differentiating between the upper caste and the lower caste Hindus," Banerjee, a known critic of the saffron party, had said at the extended core committee meeting of the TMC.

Lashing out at the BJP, she had said, "They (BJP) are threatening to carry out encounters. Just because they are in power in Delhi, they are talking about hurling bombs. I dare them to come and touch us. We will show them their place."

## NF Railway introduces Train Captain in Rajdhani Express

**GUWAHATI, JUN 22 (PTI):** Babul Dey of Tinsukia Division created history yesterday when he stepped into the 12423 Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani Express as the first Train Captain of the Northeast Frontier Railway.

To improve onboard services and redress passengers' grievances, NF Railway has introduced 'Train Captain' in premium trains from yesterday.

NF Railway Chief Public Relations Officer

Pranav Jyoti Sharma said: "The Train Captain will be overall in-charge of the train and will be responsible for ensuring all amenities provided by railways to the passenger."

The Train Captain will look into various amenities such as cleanliness of coaches and toilets, availability of water and working of electrical fittings like lights, fans, charging points, he added.

"The Railway Board has decided to intro-

duce the concept of a single person as leader -- Train Captain, who will be responsible for coordinating with all onboard teams dealing with housekeeping, catering, electrical, mechanical and RPF/GRP squad during the complete journey of the train," Sharma said.

The Train Captain will be provided a badge and all onboard personnel from either railways or outsourced agencies will have to report to him.



## 3 more dead; overall flood situation improves in Assam

**GUWAHATI, JUN 22 (PTI):** The flood situation in Assam continued to improve today, although three more persons lost their lives, taking the death toll in flood-related incidents in the state to 24, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said.

Over 3.67 lakh people in five districts were still reeling under the deluge, it added.

According to the ASDMA, three persons died in flood-related incidents in the last 24 hours.

Of the three, two died at Sadar and Katigorah in Cachar district respectively, while the third person died at Nilambazar in Karimganj district.

With this, the death toll had gone up to 24, including three persons

losing their lives due to landslides, in the first wave of floods this year, the ASDMA said.

It added that over 3.67 lakh people were affected in Dhemaji, Hojai, Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts.

According to the ASDMA report issued today, Karimganj is the worst hit with more than 1.62 lakh people affected, followed by Cachar with over 1.51 lakh affected people.

As many as 449 villages were under water and 1,898 hectares of crop area was damaged, the report said.

It added that the authorities had set up 211 relief camps and distribution centres in four districts, where 39,760 people had taken shelter.



### Cooperation Department Government of Sikkim Sahakari Bhawan Tadong – 737102

No....

Dated: / 06/2018

#### REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Cooperation Department, Government of Sikkim, invites eligible consultancy firms to prepare Detailed Project Report to implement Integrated Cooperation Development Projects (ICDP) in four (04) Districts of Sikkim.

Detailed Project Report to be prepared in consultation with Regional Office, National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), Kolkata.

Expression of Interest in three (3) copies must be delivered to the address below within twenty one (21) days from the date of this publication.

Further, information can be obtained at the address below during office hours, 10:00 to 16:00 hours on working days.

Sd/-

The Joint Registrar  
Cooperation Department  
Government of Sikkim  
Sahakari Bhawan, Tadong.  
dt. 21.6.2018

R.O. No. 153/ipr/pub/Classi./18-19



### GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM HOME DEPARTMENT

MANAN BHAWAN, GANGTOK, SIKKIM 737101

PRESS RELEASE FOR NEXT RIMC ADMISSION TEST IN DEC 2018.

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (DEFENCE WING) GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

- The Rashtriya Indian Military college is an Inter-Services Institution and a Category 'A' establishment of the Ministry of Defence. The College was established in 1922 with the primary aim of preparing the boys for entry into Defence Services and to provide quality all round education to young boys.
- Applications are invited for boys only for admission to Class VIII in the Rashtriya Military College (RIMC), Dehradun (UK) for Jul 2019 Term which will be conducted at selected centres on 01(Sat) and 02 (Sun) Dec 2018.
- Entry Age. Candidates (boys only) appearing for the above test should not be less than 11 1/2 years in age but should not have attained the age of 13 years as on 01 Jul 2019, i.e., they should have been born not earlier than 02 Jul 2006 and not later than 01 Jan 2008.
- Educational Qualifications. Candidates should either be studying in Class VII or passed Class VII from any recognized school at the time of admission to the RIMC, i.e on 01 Jul 2019.
- Scheme of Examination. The examination comprises of:-
  - Written Examination. The written part of the examination will consist of three papers, namely English (1000-1200 hrs) and Mathematics (1400-1530 hrs) shall be conducted on 01 (Sat) Dec 2018 and General Knowledge paper (1000-1100 hrs) on 02 (Sun) Dec 2018. Minimum pass marks in each paper is 50%.
  - Viva Voce. The interview date shall be 04(Thu) Apr 2019, and interview will be held for only those candidates who qualify in the written exam. Minimum pass marks in the interview is 50% and the date, venue for interview will be intimated to them by respective States by first week of Mar 2019. Intelligence and personality of the candidates will be tested in the interview.
  - Medical Examination. All the candidates qualified after interview will undergo a medical examination at selected Military hospitals and only those candidates found medically fit will be considered for selection and admission to the RIMC. The medical examination of the candidates forms only a part of the system of selection and does not imply the final selection.

Note:

- As per the Government of India, Ministry of Defence letter No A/36105/GS/MT-6/D(GS-II) dated 03 Sep 2014, the wards of Central Government employees can undertake their exam and viva-voce at the place of posting of employee/ domicile state. However, their domicile will be as per original domicile state and accordingly, their candidature will also be considered as per the state of domicile.
- The Interviews will be held for only those candidates who pass the written exam; their list will be sent to the respective State Governments by RIMC after approval of MT Directorate.
- It is mandatory for all the selected candidates (including candidates from all India Reserve Merit List, if selected) to join RIMC within 10 days of commencement of term as per the joining instructions, if the selected candidate fails to join within 10 days, his candidature will be cancelled and next reserve candidate will be called to join.
- Vacancies for Jul Term 2019, in all respect will be filled by 30 Jul 2019. No candidate will be allowed to join RIMC after 30 Jul 2019 under any circumstances (incl. medical).
- Results and joining instructions will be regularly updated on RIMC website. It is candidate's responsibility to check the status regularly.
- Examination Centres. Examination centres are generally located in the state capitals or in cities/towns as advertised.
- Fee. Fees at RIMC is heavily subsidized by the Central Govt. The fee is presently Rs. 42,400/-per year. It may increase from time to time. At the time of entry a Security Deposit of Rs 20,000/- is to be made. This is refunded when the boy passes out.
- Scholarships. Scholarships are granted by various state Govts to meritorious students. The amount of scholarships varies from state to state and is in between Rs. 10,000/- to Rs 20,000/- per annum. Continuation of Scholarship once granted by the state is subject to merit, income and discipline of the cadet and his performance during the year.
- The Application Forms. The prospectus-cum-application form and booklet of old question papers can be obtained from The Rashtriya Indian Military College, Garhi Cantt, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, Pin- 248003 through speed post by forwarding self addressed slip and an account payee bank demand draft of Rs.600/- for General Candidates Rs.555/- for SC/ST candidates along with Caste Certificate. The demand draft will be made in favour of 'THE COMMANDANT RIMC DEHRADUN', DRAWEE BRANCH, STATE BANK OF INDIA, TEL BHAVAN, DEHRADUN, (BANK CODE-01576), UTTARAKHAND. The address should be TYPED / WRITTEN clearly in CAPITAL LETTERS with pin code and contact number. The delay on part of postal department is not the responsibility of this institution.

Note:

- The application forms issued by RIMC only shall be valid. Locally printed / Photocopied and without RIMC hologram (Seal) forms shall not be accepted.
- No refund of the application fee on any condition.
- Last Date. Applications in duplicate on prescribed form accompanied by documents to be attached with application form two passport size photographs, Domicile Certificate of the candidate, Birth Certificate (issued by Municipal Corporation / Gram Panchayat, SC, ST Certificate and Certificate from principal of the School in original with photograph on it attested stating date of birth and in which Class studying. Application forms should reach the respective State Governments (as specified in the press note) of which their parents/guardians are domicile of, by 30 Sep 2018. The wards of Central Government employees, in order to verify the antecedents of such candidates, the State (where such candidates intend taking the written test) are free to ask for service certificates over and above the routine documentation. The States where the candidates appear must also satisfy themselves with respect to place of duty of the parent/guardian. Other than the above, states are to ensure that no other candidate must be allowed to appear for the written examination in a state other than which the candidate is domicile of. Kindly note the application forms must be sent to the State Govts and not to the Rashtriya India Military College, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

Ro.No. 152/ipr/pub/classi./18-19

dt. 20.6.2018



## Ker soccer fan leaves home on suicide mission upset over Argentina's defeat

**KOTTAYAM (KER), JUNE 22 (PTI):** Upset over Argentina's poor showing in the ongoing football world cup, a 30-year-old ardent fan of the South American team has left his home here, saying in a note he was going to end his life, police said today.

A search was on for Dinu Alex, missing since he left his home at nearby Arumanoor village last night after Argentina suffered a 0-3 rout against Croatia. In a suicide note, found in his room, Alex has said he was upset with Argentina's defeat and was going to end his life, police said. Police said they along with Fire and Rescue service personnel were also searching in a nearby river as a sniffer dog ran up to the river bank and stopped there.

Father of Alex said his son was a great fan of Lionel Messi, captain of Argentina, which has just one point from two games in so far in the world cup in Russia.

This means Argentina will probably have to beat Nigeria in their last game and hope other results go their way to avoid elimination.

# India aim for maiden CT title; play Pakistan in opener

**BREDA (NETHERLANDS), JUN 22 (PTI):** The Indian hockey team would be aiming for a fresh start, putting behind the disappointment of a poor Commonwealth Games campaign, when it begins its pursuit of a maiden Champions Trophy title, taking on arch-rivals Pakistan in the opening clash, here tomorrow.

Asian champions India have never won the Champions Trophy in its last 36 editions but will be hoping to claim the feat in the tournament's last edition here.

The best India has fared in the tournament was the runners-up finish at the 2016 event in London, losing to Australia in a shoot-out.

Claiming the title would be easier said than done for the eight-time Olympic champions as they come into the tournament on the back of a disastrous campaign at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, where they finished fourth.

The disappointing finish triggered a change in head coach's position with Harendra Singh taking charge from Dutchman Sjoerd Marjine, who moved back to his old position as coach of the Indian women's team.

World's best six teams compete in the Champions Trophy and this year's line-up include reigning Olympic champions Argentina, world no.1 Australia, Belgium, hosts Netherlands, Pakistan besides India.

India will open against Pakistan before taking on Argentina (on June 24), Australia (June 27), Belgium (June 28) and Netherlands (June 30).

Even though India (6th) are way ahead of Pakistan (13th) in the world rankings, but there is hardly any gap between the two teams when it comes to the head-to-head contests.

India-Pakistan encounters on the hockey turf have always been full of drama and controversies with adren-



aline running high on both the sides.

And come tomorrow it won't be any different as both the neighbours would be eager to prove the other wrong.

Going by ranking and results of late, India will start favourites.

Over the past year, India had enjoyed convincing victories over Pakistan right from the final of Asian Champions Trophy in 2016 followed by a dominant double victory in the Hockey World League Semi-Final in London 2017 and the Asia Cup in Dhaka where India lifted the title after 10 years.

But under former India coach and High Performance Manager, Roelant Oltmans, Pakistan surprised India by scoring a late equaliser to earn a draw in the Commonwealth Games this year.

Incidentally, it was the first match of the tournament and penalty corners will be Pakistan's preferred weapon yet again.

For Harendra, who took over coaching of the senior team for a third time following his last stint in 2009, it will be his first real test ahead of important tournaments like the Asian Games and the season-end-

ing World Cup in Bhubaneswar later this year.

"Getting off to a winning start is vital because it sets the momentum for the rest of the tournament. There will be no room for emotions when we take on Pakistan. The team will play against them like any other team where we go for three points," a strict Harendra said on the eve of the match.

"We have prepared well for this tournament and are confident of a good performance. Our focus will be on playing according to our structure and executing our strategies

against each opponent without making any errors."

In Gold Coast, India fielded a lot of youngsters dropping a senior like Sardar Singh, but Harendra is in no mood to continue with the experimentation and has selected a strong squad purely on the basis of form in the recent national camp.

Goalkeeper PR Sreejesh has got the captaincy from Manpreet Singh, while SV Sunil and Sardar, who is just two games away from reaching 300 international caps, has been recalled to the side.

The 2014 Champions Trophy silver medallists Pakistan may have finished seventh at the CWG, but that result hides the fact that they went through the event completely unbeaten.

Four draws in the pool phase -- against Wales, India, England and Malaysia respectively -- saw Pakistan finish fourth in their five-team pool, putting them in the 7-8 classification match where they defeated Canada 3-1.

But the founding nation of the Champions Trophy, Pakistan will be determined to add to the titles that they claimed in 1978, 1980 and 1994 -- victories that all came on home soil, in Lahore (1978 / 1994) and Karachi (1980) respectively.

Pakistan's squad selected by Oltmans is a blend of experience and youth, with captain Muhammad Rizwan Sr being one of eight players to have surpassed the 100 international appearances milestone.

Shafqat Rasool is the most capped player in the group with 190 senior international appearances.

In other matches of the opening day, home favourites and European champions Netherlands will play Olympic and Pan American champions Argentina, while reigning champions Australia will take on Olympic silver-medallists Belgium.

## You pass YoYo test, you play for India, says Shastri, Kohli endorses

**NEW DELHI, JUN 22 (PTI):** Former chairman of selectors Sandeep Patil may have been scathing in his criticism for YoYo test being a benchmark for getting into the Indian team but head coach Ravi Shastri and skipper Virat Kohli made their stand clear -- you pass the test, you play for India.

While Shastri in his inimitable manner was clear that YoYo test is here to stay, Kohli said that one should look at it as a "hard call" that benefits the team rather than being emotional.

Recently, one of IPL's top scorers Ambati Rayudu failed to clear the 16.1 mark despite scoring 600 plus runs in IPL. This sparked a debate with former selection committee chairman Patil openly questioning the policy decision.

When Shastri was asked at the team's pre-departure media interaction ahead of the UK tour, he was straight forward in his response.

"You have a certain ability but if you are fit then you can enhance it. That's why we emphasise on YoYo test. If anyone thinks that this is a one-off thing, he is sadly mistaken. He can take a walk," Shastri said in his typical no-nonsense style.

"Philosophy is simple -- you pass you play, you fail, you fail. This is not going to go anywhere. The captain leads from the front, selectors are on same page, entire team management is on the same page and boys have responded tremendously well," the former India captain made it clear as to where he



stood on the issue.

Speaking in the same vein, Kohli cited an example as to how the YoYo test parameter has been a proof of stamina and endurance for a fast bowler like Jasprit Bumrah.

"People might not be able to see a small thing that happens when you play a particular Test match but I think that makes a massive differ-

ence," Kohli said.

"We are a team that wants to travel well. Jasprit Bumrah was bowling 144 kmph in his last spell during the final Test. That's when one's fitness comes in. When you have people who are fit, hungry and ready, then you are not only competing but also winning matches," the skipper added.

"Either you get emo-

tional and let go (chuck) a policy or taking hard calls and moving ahead with the system. All those things have come together nicely and we are looking forward towards playing some real hard cricket. We are looking forward towards playing difficult cricket as that's the only way we will be able to test ourselves as a team," Kohli signed off.

## Two new balls in ODIs is recipe for disaster: Tendulkar

**NEW DELHI, JUN 22 (PTI):** Concerned by a spate of run fests recently, Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar has criticised the use of two new balls in ODIs, saying it is "a perfect recipe for disaster".

Mostly a reticent commentator, Tendulkar shared his point of view after watching England batsmen go on a rampage against Australia in the last two ODIs.

"Having 2 new balls in one day cricket is a perfect recipe for disaster as each ball is not given the time to get old enough to reverse. We haven't seen reverse swing, an integral part of the death overs, for a long time," Tendulkar tweeted from his official handle.

England posted a world record 481 for 6 against Australia in the third ODI, bettering their



own record of 444 vs Pakistan. In the next ODI, England chased down a target of 312 inside 45 overs.

Tendulkar's view was endorsed by Pakistan's legendary master of reverse swing Waqar Younis.

"Reason why we don't produce many attacking fast bowlers. They all very defensive in their approach...always looking for change ups. totally agree with you @sachin\_rt reverse swing is almost

vanished," Younis tweeted in response Tendulkar.

The ICC had introduced two new balls from two ends after amending it's playing rules back in October 2011.

Interestingly, BCCI was one board that protested the move questioning the diminishing role of spinners due to this new rule tweak.

However, ICC has stuck to it in its efforts to make the game batsman-friendly.

The logic given was the discolouration of the white ball during the end of the innings and batsmen not being able to sight it properly especially in the dusty sub-continental conditions under lights.

The current rule means that the white kookaburra is bowled for only 25 overs from one end.

Therefore when the spinners, who are introduced in the middle overs, are handed the ball, they effectively bowl with a ball that is hardly 8 to 9 overs old.

Even by the time, a spinner finishes his spell, the ball is still only 20 overs old.

Therefore, unlike earlier era, the ball doesn't get soft, which would make it difficult for the batsmen to hit through the line like they do nowadays at the back-end of the innings.

# Australia's Mennie first player 'subbed out' of English county game

**LONDON, JUN 22 (AFP):** Australia paceman Joe Mennie became the first player to be substituted out of a match in English cricket's County Championship under new concussion guidelines after suffering a blow to the head.

The 29-year-old Mennie was withdrawn after bowling for Lancashire away to Worcestershire in a First Division match when a drive from opposing overseas player Martin Guptill, the New Zealand batsman, hit him on the bounce as he followed through.

Mennie, whose lone Test appearance for Australia was against South Africa at Hobart in November 2016, received prolonged on-field treatment before walking off at New Road during the second day of a scheduled four.

Lancashire subsequently informed the match cricket liaison officer, Richard Ellison, of their intention to withdraw Mennie from the



remainder of the fixture.

Former Kent and England swing bowler Ellison approved Lancashire's request to replace Mennie with Danny Lamb, who was travelling down from Manchester on Thursday.

Traditionally, substitutes in cricket have only been allowed to field, rather than bat or bowl.

But this season, the England and Wales Cricket Board has introduced a new concussion substitute rule which allows teams to name a like-for-like replacement, following medical examination and subject to the approval of the CLO.

Lancashire's concerns over Mennie, who has also played two one-day internationals for Australia,

were particularly acute given he suffered a fractured skull while with the Sydney Sixers when hit on the head in the nets by a shot from Michael Lumb.

"Joe has taken quite a nasty impact on the side of the head just above the temple, quite a heavy blow," said Lancashire assistant coach Mark Chilton.

"That causes an immediate concern for everyone.

"At some point tonight (Thursday) he will undergo his concussion tests but at this minute it is just being considered as a head injury," Chilton added.

"He was conscious all the time but clearly not very well and pretty dazed by it and his head is sore. He is much better now and has shown signs of significant improvement.

"We took an early view because of the severity of the impact that we have to withdraw Joe from the game. There is very clear protocol to fol-

low."

Mennie's injury capped a desperate day for Lancashire, who suffered a first-innings collapse before Worcestershire captain Daryl Mitchell made his second century of the match.

Meanwhile Guptill made 111 -- the first time a Worcestershire player had scored a Championship century on their debut since Phil Jaques against Surrey at The Oval in 2006.

Guptill hit 10 fours and four sixes in a blistering century before he was trapped lbw to Tom Bailey, with Mitchell going on to make 163 following his first-innings 118.

Earlier, Worcestershire seamer Ed Barnard managed the extraordinary feat of dismissing five batsmen for ducks during a return of five for 34 in 16 overs.

At stumps, Worcestershire led by a commanding 478 runs with six wickets standing.



Nearly 100 Indians held at 2 detention centres in US, India establishes contact

**WASHINGTON, JUN 22 (PTI):** The Indian mission in the US has established contact with two immigration detention centres where nearly 100 Indians, mostly from Punjab, are detained for illegally entering the country through its southern border.

According to officials, around 40-45 Indians are at a federal detention centre in the Southern American State of New Mexico while 52 Indians, mostly Sikhs and Christians, are held in Oregon.

The Indian Embassy in a statement said it has established contacts with both the detention facilities.

"A consular official has visited the detention facility in Oregon and another one is scheduled to visit the detention facility in New Mexico. We are monitoring the situation," the the statement said.

More than a dozen of them are being held at the New



Mexico centre for months. And the rest of the Indians were brought to this detention centre about a week ago.

Most of the detainees at the federal facilities are asking for asylum claiming that they "experienced violence or persecution" in their home country.

Satnam Singh Chahal, of the North American Punjabi Association (NAPA), believes that thousands of Indians, with overwhelming majority of them being from Punjab, are languishing in jails in the US.

According to information obtained by NAPA through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) between three years of 2013, 2014 and 2015, more than 27,000 Indians were apprehended at the US border. Of these, over 4,000 were women and 350 were children.

Many of them, it is reported, are still languishing in jails.

According to a FOIA request in 2015, more than 900

Indians were in various federal prisons on charges of illegally staying in the country.

Chahal alleged that there is a nexus of human traffickers, officials and politicians in Punjab, who encourage young Punjabis to leave their homes to illegally enter the US and charge Rs 35-50 lakhs from each individual.

"Human trafficking is a criminal act which affects the global community and consequently Punjabis are too victims of this episode. The Punjabis enthusiasm to migrate to affluent countries in search of greener pastures has given the traffickers to exploit them," he said.

"Using different modus operandi, people of different back grounds involved in human trafficking and often put the lives of their clients in considerable danger. Failure to reach their promised destination leads to deportation, exploitation, indebtedness, imprisonment and even death," he rued.

He urged the Punjab government to strictly enforce human trafficking laws that have been passed by the State Assembly in recent years.

According to immigration attorney Akansha Kalra the largest number of Indians who enter the US illegally are from Punjab and Gujarat.

Sharing her experience from her practice at an event organised by the Hindu American Foundation early this week, Kalra said that young Indians in 20s are crossing the border.

"They pay around Rs 35-40 lakhs to human smugglers just to help them cross the border. With this kind of administration's policy, hopefully they would get deterred by it. But so far they keep on coming," she said during fourth annual HAF Policy Conference at the US Capitol.

"They (Punjabi boys) use the same script that was used in the 80s," she said, narrating the experience of her visits to one of these detention centres in Pennsylvania, which has several of illegal Indians being detained.

Most of these Indians get nabbed at the Mexico border, get processed in Texas and then shipped out to the Pennsylvania detention centre, which is one of the largest of such detention facilities in the US.

President Donald Trump yesterday reversed his controversial decision on immigration by signing an executive order to end the separation of immigrant families on the US-Mexico border, following widespread protests against the move of his administration to separate children from their parents who illegally enter the country.

Melania Trump visits border, Congress flails on family separations

**MCALLEN, JUNE 22 (AFP):** Melania Trump made a surprise trip to the US-Mexican border today as her husband's administration seeks to quell a firestorm over migrant family separations, while Republican lawmakers were forced to delay a high-stakes vote on the crisis.

While President Donald Trump's administration struggled to formulate next steps, the Pentagon signalled officials were bracing for a lengthy ordeal. The military said it will prepare to house up to 20,000 unaccompanied migrant children on its bases.

The first lady's unannounced visit came a day after the president -- in a stunning about-face -- moved to end the practice of splitting migrant families, which had prompted outrage at home and abroad.

There was, however, no immediate plan in place to reunite the more than 2,300 children already separated from their families -- igniting a fresh controversy over the conditions in which the children are living.

In McAllen, Texas, Melania Trump visited the Upbring New Hope Children's Shelter, a federally-funded facility that houses about 55 children from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador,



ages five to 17.

"I'm glad I'm here and I'm looking forward to seeing the children," Melania said at a roundtable discussion with social workers and government officials.

"I would also like to ask you how I can help these children to reunite with their families as quickly as possible." Images and recordings of wailing youngsters detained in processing centers with chain-link cage-like enclosures has ignited global outrage.

The first lady herself had called for a political compromise to end the separations -- the result of the administration's "zero tolerance" policy launched in early May, under which illegal border crossers were systematically prosecuted and their children separated from them as a result.

Melania spent an hour-plus at the shelter, talking directly to children who spoke to her either in English or in Spanish, through a translator.



An Afghan official says Taliban fighters killed 16 militia loyal to the government in an early morning ambush in northern Badghis province.

Abdul Aziz Beg, head of the Badghis Provincial Council, says the militia force came under attack early today as they arrived to help local police, who had been attacked by Taliban insurgents in the Ab Kamari district. In southern Kandahar province, Taliban fighters attacked a private Afghan construction company kidnapping 13 employees and 20 security personnel, said Zia Durrani, provincial police spokesman.

Four border police were killed and one wounded in the fighting in Spin Boldak, near the border with Pakistan. The Taliban have stepped up attacks since ending a three-day cease fire last weekend and have rejected President Ashraf Ghani's offer to extend the truce.

Indian-origin woman in Singapore faces jail term in biggest US Navy bribe case

**SINGAPORE, JUN 22 (PTI):** A 57-year-old Indian-origin Singaporean woman, accused of being involved in the largest bribery case in the history of the US Navy, may face a jail term of more than three years, a media report said today.

Sharon Rachael Gursharan Kaur, who was a lead contract specialist for the US Navy, was allegedly involved in the USD 35-million 'Fat Leonard' scandal, which resulted in the arrest and conviction of several senior officers of the US Navy, including a rear admiral, The Straits Times reported.

Kaur was based at the US Na-

vy's Supply Systems Command Fleet Logistics Centre in Singapore. The court heard yesterday that she received more than SGD 130,000 in bribes from Leonard Glenn Francis, the Malaysian chief executive of Glenn Defense Marine Asia (GDMA) -- a subsidiary of Singapore-based Glenn Marine Group -- which provides goods and services for American ships in at least a dozen countries in Asia.

Francis, also known to several US Navy personnel as "Fat Leonard", had allegedly paid Kaur bribes between 2006 and 2011 as a reward

for giving him information about the US Navy that was not available to the public. She would disclose procurement-sensitive data and price information of his firm's competitors. As a result, he was able to prepare more competitive bids to secure lucrative contracts with the US Navy.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Jiang Ke-Yue told the court that the information she leaked was linked to 16 US Navy contracts. GDMA submitted bids for 14 of them and was awarded 11 contracts worth some USD 48 million in total.

The prosecution made its sub-

missions to the court and asked for Kaur to be handed over a jail term of at least three years and seven months, the paper said.

Kaur had pleaded guilty to three corruption charges and one count of dealing with the benefits of her criminal activities on June 30 last year. She is now out on bail of SGD 50,000 and is expected to be sentenced on July 6.

Defence counsel Suresh Damodara told District Judge Shaiffudin Saruwan that Kaur was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and went through total hysterectomy in late 2016.

Pleading for the imposition of minimal sentences, Damodara argued that incarceration could "exacerbate" Kaur's medical condition and lead to a relapse, which would be life-threatening, the Singapore daily reported.

DPP Jiang said more than 10 US Navy officials have since pleaded guilty in the US to their roles in the scandal. They include US Navy commander Bobby Pitts, who was in charge of the Fleet Industrial Supply Command in Singapore, and retired Rear Admiral Robert Gilbeau. Both men were sentenced to one-and-a-half years' jail last year.

Airbus warns could leave UK if no Brexit deal

**LONDON, JUN 22 (AFP):** Aviation giant Airbus has warned it could pull out of Britain if it leaves the European Union without a deal, upping the pressure today on Prime Minister Theresa May to make progress in negotiations with Brussels.

The European group, which directly employs nearly 15,000 people in Britain, warned that crashing out of the bloc would be "catastrophic" and force it to consider its investments.

"Put simply, a 'no deal' scenario directly threatens Airbus' future in the UK," said chief operating officer Tom Williams, almost two years since Britain voted to leave the EU.

May's government insists it must hold out the possibility of walking away as a negotiating tactic, but says it expects to get a deal before it exits the bloc on March 29, 2019.



"We have made significant progress towards agreeing a deep and special partnership with the EU to ensure trade remains as free and frictionless as possible, including in the aerospace sector," a spokeswoman said.

However, talks are stalled on the issue of the Irish bor-

der and Britain's indecision over the deal it wants.

EU leaders, who will meet May at a Brussels summit next week, have warned that time is running out.

"While Airbus understands that the political process must go on, as a responsible business we require

immediate details on the pragmatic steps that should be taken to operate competitively," Williams said.

In a Brexit risk assessment, Airbus said leaving the EU's single market and customs union immediately with no agreed transition deal "would lead to severe disruption and interruption of UK production".

Delays and disruptions to its production could cost it up to one billion euros ( 1.2 billion) a week in lost turnover and would be "catastrophic".

"This scenario would force Airbus to reconsider its investments in the UK, and its long-term footprint in the country," the report published late Thursday said.

Airbus builds wings and landing gear for commercial aircraft at 25 centres in Britain and also has a space technology centre.

It directly employs nearly 15,000 people and also supports more than 100,000 further jobs in the supply chain. The prospect of losing so many jobs has sparked widespread alarm.

In Wales, where Airbus supports around 11,700 jobs, the devolved government run by the UK opposition Labour party said its report was "ex-

tremely worrying".

"We have repeatedly warned that the UK cannot take the huge economic risk of cutting ourselves adrift from the single market and the customs union," a spokesman said.

A string of airlines, banks and other corporate household names have already activated their contingency plans to move jobs or restructure because of Brexit.

The government has agreed a post-Brexit transition period that will last until December 2020, to allow time for a new economic partnership to be struck with the EU.

But Airbus said this was "too short" for a new agreement to be made and "too short for Airbus to implement the required changes with its extensive supply chain".

"In this scenario, Airbus would carefully monitor any

new investments in the UK and refrain from extending the UK suppliers/partners base," it said.

Williams admitted that "in any scenario, Brexit has severe negative consequences for the UK aerospace industry and Airbus in particular".

He called for more clarity on the situation, adding: "We have sought to highlight our concerns over the past 12 months, without success." The government spokesman said it was "working closely with companies to understand their concerns".

"Alongside industry (it) will invest almost 74 billion by 2026 to ensure the UK remains a world leader in civil aerospace," he said.

Parliament finally approved the government's flagship EU (Withdrawal) Bill this week, ensuring that Britain can now legally leave the bloc, deal or no deal.





**BRUSHING OFF THE DRAMA!** Rumoured to have been replaced by Ayda Field on this year's X Factor panel yet Nicole Scherzinger didn't appear to have a care in the world as she headed on a night out at celebrity hotspot Craig's in West Hollywood.

## Anurag Kashyap: Not looking to make another sports film!

From Black Friday to Gangs of Wasseypur to Uda Punjab to Lust Stories, Anurag Kashyap wants to start a conversation on several social issues with his cinema. He says he makes films to evoke and provoke.

"I always [want my cinema to strike a conversation]. I make films to evoke and provoke. And that usually leads to a conversation," Kashyap told IANS over an email.

His project Lust Stories shows stories on love and lust, and has garnered a positive response. The director says it is time to have "conversations around the subject of sex".

"It's high time and only natural," he added.



He says his sports film Mukka-baaz — which deals with the struggle of a boxer and with social issues like caste system, youth politics and the power play of people — holds a special place in his heart. The film will air on Saturday on &pictures.

Will he make more films around sports?

"Sports was the canvas for me to tell a story about people. I didn't set out to make a sports film. I'm not looking to make another

sports film because I'm bored of its predictable heroic/underdog trajectory. Having said that, if any other story deserves the backdrop of sports, I am more than willing to consider it," he said.

## MICHAEL JACKSON DIDN'T IDENTIFY AS ONE GENDER, SAYS PERSONAL PHOTOGRAPHER HARRISON FUNK

Michael Jackson's personal photographer Harrison Funk has claimed the singer was "gender fluid".

Funk, who worked with the pop legend from the 1970s until his death in June 2009, said that Jackson's make-up routine was a sign that he did not solely identify with one gender.

"Him and Jermaine [Jackson] loved putting on their own makeup.... It wasn't so much femininity on Michael's part as androgyny he was fluid around gender. Michael had no interest in assigning a gender to anybody. He didn't overtly identify as one particular gender," Funk told the Guardian.

However, when Jackson had kids --Prince, Paris and Blanket-- his image changed to that "of father".

"He became a strong man in that sense," Funk added.

The photographer also revealed the "Beat It" hitmaker became prone to dramatic outbursts during his Victory Tour of the US and Canada in 1984.

"Michael had very demanding moments. If he didn't like something, he let you know. Michael was never ridiculing to me ever, but if someone messed up the design of his stage, then he would



yell at them. He expected perfection."

During the 1990s, Jackson's music became more socially conscious, with hits such as "Earth Song" and "Black or White". However, he also attracted controversy when he struck a Jesus-like pose in one of Funk's most famous photographs.

"People say Michael had a Jesus complex, but that p\*\*\*es me off, as it just

wasn't true. There was a practical reason for me taking that photo.

Michael had huge hands and I wanted to make the most of them as they were expressive - and a good way for him to embrace the world. At that stage, his whole existence was geared towards healing the world, so having big, expressive hands was a very important way to speak to the people," Funk said.

## Paramount working on third 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' film



Paramount is developing third "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" movie. The studio has started the work on the project, two years after "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows" disappointed at the box office.

Andrew Dodge has been roped in to write the script. Michael Bay, Andrew Form, and Brad Fuller are producing the film through their Platinum Dunes production company.

According to Variety, the studio is aiming to reboot the

franchise with the third "Ninja Turtles" project.

The films are based on the comic by Kevin Eastman and Kevin Laird about wisecracking turtle superheroes named after the Renaissance artists Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo and Donatello, using ninja skills acquired from a radioactive New York City rat.

The previous two movies starred Pete Ploszek as Leonardo, Alan Ritchson as Raphael, Noel Fisher as Michelangelo and Jeremy Howard as Donatello.



## Kim Kardashian West returns to Paris for first time since robbery

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian West is back in Paris for the first time since her traumatizing 2016 robbery there.

Kim and husband Kanye West were surrounded by their body guards on their way to the Louis Vuitton Menswear Spring/Summer show.

They are there to attend the Paris Fashion Week, reports tmz.com.

In the Oct, 2016 robbery Kim feared rape when masked men stormed into her two-storey apartment and zip tied her hands with plastic handcuffs. The robbers also made off with more than \$10 million in jewellery.

On the other hand, Kanye broke down in tears meeting up with a longtime friend, Virgil Abloh -- Louis Vuitton's new artistic director of menswear.



## Akon is building 'real-life Wakanda' cryptocurrency empire!

Lonely hitmaker Akon has unveiled plans to build a "real-life Wakanda" city in his native Senegal which would deal in his own cryptocurrency AKoin.

The Lonely hitmaker-turned-businessman is looking to create a "real-life Wakanda" - referencing the city featured in 'Black Panther' in his native country of Senegal.

In the Akon Crypto City proposal revealed on Thursday, the musician's plans were detailed: "In parallel to AKoin being established as stable currency alternative throughout Africa - and fueling entrepreneurship - Akon Crypto City is now in development.

"The first 100% crypto-based city with AKoin at the center of transactional life, Akon Crypto City is built on 2,000 acres of land gifted to Akon from the President of Senegal.

"It's within 5 minutes of the new international airport, close to the coast and a short drive from Dakar, the

capital city of Senegal."

In an ambitious statement, it's said that the city and currency is being developed "with the goal of inventing a radical new way of existence".

The 2,000-acre city will feature colleges, schools, an airport and sports stadium.

The proposal added: "This mixed use, master-planned city, contains everything from residential to retail, parks, stadium, light manufacturing, universities, and schools."

It's thought that there should be a timeline for the futuristic city's completion soon.

Back in 2014, the 45-year-old star took a big step away from his music career with the Akon Lighting Africa project, which brought electricity to 15 countries in Africa.

Meanwhile, his charitable work also includes the Konfidence Foundation, which aims to provide support to underprivileged youth.

**ARIES:** Don't be surprised if you run into a few emotional roadblocks today, Aries. People could be quite stubborn and difficult to deal with. You may exacerbate the situation by trying to get a rise out of someone with your boisterous attitude and dramatic flair. If your efforts don't yield positive results, back off. Keep your energy to yourself and share it another time when people are more in the mood to play.

**TAURUS:** The planets align to make this a great day for you, Taurus. You should find that your mood is excellent and your mind focused. Romance will thrive in the nice, stabilizing atmosphere, and you should feel free to take center stage. If you've been suffering from any doubts lately, now is the time to take control of the situation and go for it.

**GEMINI:** Try to bring things down to reality today, Gemini. This is a good day to consolidate and organize. When it comes to matters of love and romance, try not to be so fickle. You may be giving someone the runaround just to test his or her devotion. This is an important time for you. You should probably work to ground and solidify instead of keeping things so light and ambiguous.

**CANCER:** Your sensitivity will be greatly appreciated today, Cancer, and you'll find that there is a great grounding force that will help balance your extreme emotions. Try not to be too stubborn, especially with things having to do with love and beauty. A fixed attitude will most likely run into a great deal of opposition. If a certain someone gets uptight, you'll have a difficult time getting your point across.

**LEO:** The general atmosphere of the day may seem too slow and stodgy for your tastes, Leo. Try not to get bogged down in details. Try not to worry too much. You may find that it's difficult to get any enthusiasm out of people today. You might just want to sit back and take it easy. This is a good day to plan and reorganize. Honor your recent achievements and consolidate all that you've worked for.

**VIRGO:** This is a terrific day for you, Virgo. You'll notice a sense of well-being that makes you feel secure that all your hard work is finally starting to pay off. It's as if you've reached a comfortable ledge in your trek up the mountain. This is a good resting spot that will let you catch your breath for a moment. Take this opportunity to relax and regroup.

**LIBRA:** Try not to be too fixed in

your attitude today, Libra. Realize that you may have to give a little in order to work comfortably with the people around you. It's important that you be slow and reserved in your moves, especially in matters of the heart. Be open and receptive. Try not to scare anyone away with abrasive words or insisting that you're always right.

**SCORPIO:** There's a loving tenderness in the air that you'll find very comforting, Scorpio. Ground your sensitive emotions and make room for love to enter the picture. It could be that you're feeling indecisive when it comes to matters of love and romance. The best thing for you to do is stabilize your emotions and then make the effort to connect intimately with another. The decisions will flow naturally from there.

**SAGITTARIUS:** You may need to

slow down a bit after the hectic pace of the last couple of days, Sagittarius. It's essential that you take a more reserved and sensitive approach, especially with matters having to do with the heart. Try to ground and center yourself. Instead of thinking about conquering someone, try simply sitting back and receiving their appreciation and affection.

**CAPRICORN:** You should notice a boost of energy today, Capricorn, and your self-confidence should be revitalized. In matters of love and romance, everything is running smoothly. Your emotions are stable and grounded. Love and harmony are in the air. Take this opportunity to move toward the object of your desire with certainty and affection. Romance is in the cards for you tonight.

**AQUARIUS:** Take it easy today,

Aquarius, and work to digest some of the input you've received over the past couple days. This is a day to contemplate and plan. With matters of the heart, you may find that a sensitive, grounded approach works best. This isn't always your favorite mode of operation, but it's one that will provide you with the balance to counteract your usual frenzied pace.

**PISCES:** Anything having to do with love and romance is likely to go well today if you play your cards right, Pisces. See what you can do to ground your fluctuating emotions. Try your best to bring them into balance. Take a practical approach and slow down. Joining with groups of people will be extremely rewarding. Come out of your shell and show your sensitive side to the world. It will be greatly appreciated.