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SummitTIMES

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O N T O P O F T H E N E W S

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Incessant rain wreaks havoc in North, roads blocked in several areas

SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT TO REMAIN CLOSED TODAY

WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 13 SEPT:

Incessant rain for the last three days has caused havoc in North Sikkim especially in Dzongu and Lachen-Mangan constituency. Traffic at several spots has been disrupted and several landslides have been triggered.

Owing to the road and weather condition, schools in North Sikkim will also remain closed on Friday.

Mangan received 150 mm rainfall on 12 Sept while today the precipitation was recorded at 170 mm.

Meanwhile, the DC-North has called an emergency meeting for 10 AM on Friday to take stock of the situation and refine preparedness plans. All HoDs in the district have been directed to attend the meeting.

River Teesta is reportedly in spate crossing the danger level and inhabitants along the



riverside have been alerted.

The NHPC Teesta Stage V

dam has recorded highest cumec of flow in the last three

days forcing them to open some portion of sluice gates.

Roads to North Sikkim

were blocked at Ambithang

near Mangan while traffic to

Chungthang was blocked at

Raphong Khola near Mangan

where the RCC bridge has

been damaged.

Official sources inform

that the situation of the

houses near Raphong Khola

is very grim as the landslips

in the areas have become

active. The residents of the

houses which are in danger

have been directed to shift to

safer location.

Likewise, traffic was also

blocked at Mayong Chu near

Naga and Wang Khola near

Toong where the newly constructed

Bailey Bridge was washed away

few days ago. Traffic was also

blocked at Reil Khola near Toong.

Similarly, landslides have

been reported from several

areas of Dzongu and Upper

Dzongu was cut off after a

conductor electricity post

along with the retaining wall

collapsed above Police Check

Post Sangakalang.

Owing to multiple landslides

on the way to Mangzing-Kashel

Kotong Ward, villagers have

been totally cut off. After the wall

collapsed, the CC footpath of

Sonam

Choda Lepcha Memorial

School was also damaged.

As per information received

from Sub Divisional Magistrate,

Dzongu, the wall formation

above Sangkalang Check Post

on the Mangan side has been

damaged and a protective wall

needs to be immediately constructed.

The 107 GREF have been

informed accordingly with a

photograph of the damaged

road.

The Sub Divisional Office,

Dzongu informed all the taxi

drivers and vehicle owners to

take precaution while driving

along the stretch and urged

people to avoid travelling at

night.

The road from Passingdang

to Mantam and above managed

by Roads & Bridges Department

is damaged at different locations

and one cannot cross Syok Bhir as

the road has been severely

damaged with the culvert being

washed away.

Ward Panchayat of Leek

ward has been requested to

inform the public to avoid

using the new bridge and use

the other FSB at CWC instead

turn to pg02

WB govt declares half holiday for Vishwakarma puja

KOLKATA, SEP 13 (PTI):

The West Bengal government Thursday declared half-day holiday on Monday on the occasion of the Vishwakarma puja that day, an order issued by the finance department said.

All state government offices, urban and rural bodies, corporations, undertakings and educational institutions and other institutions under the control of the state government, shall be closed at 2pm on Monday, the order said.

However, the offices of the registrar of assurances, the collector of stamp revenue and the state beverages corporation Ltd would not come under the purview of the order.

Viswakarma puja is generally held on September 17 every year.

Govt-e-Marketplace National Mission launched in Sikkim

GANGTOK, 13 SEPT [IPR]: Govt-e-Marketplace [GeM] National Mission was launched in the State today in the presence of Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava, at Chintan Bhawan in Gangtok.

The launch programme also had the presence of Principal Secretary, Commerce & Industries, Thomas Chandy, Principal Secretary, Social Welfare Department, K Sreenivasulu, Director, GeM, Sanjay Joseph, Nodal Officer, GeM, Dinesh Asrani, and officers from various departments.

The CS, in his address, said that GeM is a National Public Procurement Portal which provides the facility of an online Marketplace for Central and State Government Ministries and Departments, Central & State Public Sector Undertakings, Autonomous Institutions and local bodies for procurement of commonly used goods & services. The main objective of the National Mission



of GeM is to expedite its adoption and use by Central Government Ministries, State Govt departments and their agencies.

He stated that the main aim for adoption of GeM is for an efficient, transparent system which aims to cut down on the time and expenditure involved in procurement of goods and services. It is a major transformational initiative to change the mechanism of procurement from lengthy documentary procedures as is hitherto being practiced in government to quick online transactions, he added.

The CS also enlight-

ened that GeM will provide an opportunity for various categories of small entrepreneurs, enterprises and service providers [such as MSEs, Start-ups, domestic manufacturing, women entrepreneurs, Self Help Groups] to come on board the GeM platform with their products and enter the level playing field shoulder to shoulder with the bigger entrepreneurs and enterprises.

The welcome address was given by Principal Secretary, Commerce & Industries, Mr Chandy, wherein he said that the concept of GeM is in line

turn to pg02

NH 10 blocked at 29 Mile, passengers stranded



SUMMIT REPORT

KALIMPONG, 13 SEPT:

Approximately 20 metres of road formation on NH 10 was washed away by River Teesta at 29th Mile today around 11 a.m. Incessant rainfall in Sikkim had raised the water level of River Teesta last night which was flowing above danger levels along Melli and Teesta Bridge.

Cracks had earlier developed in

the area and this morning, one side of the road sank following which PWD workers had surrounded the area. At around 11 a.m, the surrounded area sank into the river damaging 80% of the road. Vehicles were seen plying on the narrow patch of road left.

In the meantime, one loaded truck that was trying to pass through the area got stuck owing to the closure of the highway.

Later, two JCBs and earth cutter machine were deployed to cut the wall side. Assistant Engineer, PWD, Uttam Pradhan, said about 80% of the road has been damaged.

"We are working with the wall side and hoping to get traffic back to normal in few areas. Many vehicles and tourists with trains or flights to catch were stranded. Many vehicles took the Lopchu route to Siliguri," said Mr Pradhan.

Go Organic open marathon on West Sikkim on 26 Sept



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 13 SEPT:

As a part of the state-level World Tourism Day 2018 celebrations, an open marathon on the theme, 'Go Organic,' will be held on 26 September at Pelling in West Sikkim. This 10 kilometres Low Altitude Monsoon Marathon will follow a nature trail to provide an opportunity to runners to enjoy the heritage and natural beauty of the State.

Addressing a press conference here today, chief coordinator

of the open marathon, Amar Subba, informed that the marathon is open for all and will also have runners from outside the State.

The marathon will be flagged off at 9 AM on 26 September from Pelling Senior Secondary School playground and will cover the route through Sanga Choeling Monastery, Gaddi Dara, Rani Dhunga and Darap and back to the starting point.

Mr Subba informed that some sections of the route falls along a natural trail, it will provide an opportunity to runners

to see the rich flora and fauna of the area. He added that the event has also been planned to promote the rich natural resource of the area worldwide.

Registration of the participants will remain open till 8 AM on 26 September and the top-three winners in men's and women's category will be awarded with cash prize and certificates.

West Sikkim is also hosting the World Tourism Day 2018 on the theme 'Tourism and the Digital Transformation' with a

series of workshops, adventure tourism and other activities this September. Although the World Tourism Day falls on 27 September, the series of activities have already begun in the different parts of the district, it is informed.

The celebration is being organised jointly by Tourism & Civil Aviation Department, West District Administration and West District Tourism Society [WDTs] with the support of tourism stakeholders of West Sikkim.

SKM's statements on arrears irresponsible says SDF

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 13 SEPT:

Sikkim Democratic Front has strongly criticised and condemned the "irresponsible, politically motivated and frustrated" statement of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha. The ruling party has also extended its full support to the decisions taken by the State's administration.

An SDF press release issued by its publicity secretary, Krishna Kharel has alleged that SKM is a party without any vision or administrative knowledge and is crossing all limits just to get votes.

The party has stated that the decision to provide arrears to the government employees from 2016 in instalments is an administrative decision. The decision was taken in the interest of government employees, it adds.

SDF goes on to mention that budget from the Centre to the State has not been sufficient to match the rate of development in the State and

various infrastructures in the State are being built from the revenue collected by the State and non-plan budget of the Centre.

On the question of SKM spokesperson, Jacob Khaling, about the revenue collected by different departments, the SDF has asked him to file an RTI on the matter since he is adept at doing so.

The party has further called it "amusing" that the "politically motivated" Mr Khaling is pointing fingers at the economic policies of the SDF government.

On loans taken by the state government, the release mentions that the government has taken it to construct houses for the poor people.

Mr Khaling should study the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act before talking on this issues, the party has said. Maybe SKM does not want houses to be built for the poor and is anti-poor, the release further alleges.

SJE&WD distributes grants to beneficiaries from all four districts

GANGTOK, 13 SEPT [IPR]: In a bid to improve the socio economic standards of the people living with several disabilities, Social Justice, Empowerment & Welfare Department today distributed Grant of Awards to beneficiaries of various schemes like Marriage of Persons with Differently Abled, Inter Caste Marriage, under Protection of Civil Right and prevention of Atrocities Act and National Family Benefit Scheme under National Social Assistance Programme in a function held at the conference hall of the department in Lumsey today.

Chairperson of Central Social Welfare Advisory Board [CSWAB], Phurmit Lepcha, and Chairperson of Sikkim Commission for Protection of Child Rights [SCPCR], Dikila Bhutia, attended the said occasion.

The programme was also attended by Secretary, Social Justice, Empowerment & Welfare Department, Sarala Rai, Additional Secretary, KB Pradhan, officials and beneficiaries from all four districts of the State.

Congratulating the beneficiaries, Chairperson, CSWAB, Ms Lepcha, said that earlier, physically challenged people were not integrated into the mainstream society and marriage is the institution where the stigma of being differently abled was starkly highlighted. Now with the said scheme of 'Marriage with Persons with Differently Abled', marriage with a differently-abled person in the society has been acknowledged, she added.

She further said that the State Government is people centric and Sikkimese people must take advantage of various social welfare schemes like widow re-marriage, unmarried pension, scholarships, transgender pen-



sion, etc.

"In many places especially in rural areas people are not aware and thus we have to create awareness about such social welfare schemes and ensure proper utilization of welfare schemes," said Ms Lepcha.

Chairperson, SCPCR, Ms Bhutia, urged people to avail maximum utilization of social welfare schemes and asked people to spread awareness in their respective places.

Earlier, Secretary, Ms Rai, said that such initiatives are made by the State Government to help people get accept-

ed in mainstream society and enable them to lead a life of happiness, dignity and to stimulate and sustain economic growth.

During the function, 18 couples were honoured under Marriage with Persons with Differently Abled Scheme and received cheque worth Rs 2 lakh.

Nineteen couples from all four districts received cheques of Rs 30,000 each under Inter Caste Marriage Scheme under Protection of Civil Rights and prevention of Atrocities Act.

Under National Family Benefit Scheme, 70 beneficiaries received

cheques of Rs 30,000 each under National Social Assistance Programme.

The department also distributed pressure cookers to 12 senior citizens under BPL category.

Additional Secretary, Mr Pradhan, informed about various social welfare schemes while adding that the department has received very few applications for Widow-Remarriage Scheme and urged people to spread the message in their respective areas as well so that the aim of social upliftment is achieved.

Govt-e-Marketplace National Mission launched in Sikkim

contd from pg01

with the Digital India initiative of the Government of India. The objective of GeM is to ensure that the procurement process is completely transparent, efficient and inclusive.

He stated that the GeM was conceived one and a half years ago and as per statistics available the marketplace has grown with now more than 27,000 buyers and 1,38,000 sellers having been registered on the portal and more than 4,77,000 products available to government departments ranging from vehicles and high-end electronic goods to ordinary stationery that one can procure through this facility.

The keynote address was presented by Director, GeM, Mr Joseph, who explained about the GeM

National Mission and said that it uses technology to make the system of procurement by government agencies contactless and cashless to bring greater accountability in public procurement across the country.

A PowerPoint presentation was also shown where the system was explained in detail.

It may be mentioned here, the National Mission for GeM was launched in New Delhi on 05 Sept at Hotel Ashok in New Delhi by Minister of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, Suresh Prabhu.

The two-day State Mission will include training cum registration drive to be held at the Accounts and Administrative Training Institute [AATI] for potential 'buyers' and 'sellers'.



Golay begins 3-day tour of Yuksom-Tashiding constituency

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 13 SEPT:

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president, PS Tamang [Golay] started his three-day tour of Yuksom-Tashiding constituency on Thursday. On the first day of the tour, Mr Tamang received a grand welcome at Rimbi Bridge from party workers and people of the area, informs an SKM press release. The release states that during the tour, Mr Tamang vis-

ited and interacted with the people of Rimbi, Topong, Timrang, Thingling, Lyathang, Tingting and Yuksom.

During the interaction, the SKM president urged people to come forward and support change. He also lashed out against the state government on its failure in different areas and also made announcements to work for the people after forming the government in 2019.

Gogoi appointed new CJI

NEW DELHI, SEP 13 (PTI): Justice Ranjan Gogoi was Thursday appointed as the 46th Chief Justice of India, a Law Ministry notification said.

He will take oath on October 3 after incumbent Dipak Misra retires.

Gogoi's tenure will last till November 2019.

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Incessant rain wreaks havoc in North, roads blocked...

contd from pg01

to be safe.

The public of 20th Mile, Chandey, Dzongu has been facing several problems due to negligence of GREF as the culvert and drains have been blocked near Srinath Prasad hardware store building.

The public have demanded early clearance of culverts and drains to avert landslides and disaster. They informed that they have requested the GREF several times to work towards controlling future disaster but their grievances weren't paid any heed.

The electricity and network connectivity to several places have also been snapped along with damages to drinking water supplies at several areas.

The landslide also damaged the RCC building of Magraj Limboo of Ralak village under Mangshila-Tibuk GPU of North Sikkim but no casualties have been reported.

District Collector,

Karma R.Bonpo, along with the Sub Divisional Magistrates Mangan and Dzongu Subdivision, DPO DDMA and Police personnel along with SNT Chairperson Pintso Namgyal carried out a survey of the affected areas in Mangan, Mangshila and Dzongu today to assess the situation and are continually keeping a vigil. Tarpaulins have been provided to cover the slip areas and residents have been asked to vacate to safer location.

The District Administration is continually monitoring the situation to provide relief and rescue measures, it is informed.

The administration is also coordinating with the hydel project developers and monitoring the situation round the clock, an IPR press communiqué informs. The Border Roads Organization is working on restoration of the road network in the district. Relief and ex gratia as per norms will be released to the affected people, the release adds.



Gangtok on Friday, 14 Sept

Temp: 25°C/16°C
Forecast: Not as warm; a morning thundershower in parts of the area, then a couple of thundershowers.
Sunrise: 05:20 AM
Sunset: 5:42 PM

Over 6 lakh fake ration cards identified in Tripura

AGARTALA, SEPT 13 (PTI): Tripura government has identified over 60000 counterfeit ration cards and 2,90,776 fake PDS consumers in a digitization drive by the state government, its Law Minister Ratan Lal Nath has said. The government is focussed on digitization and e-government services as part of its move to end corruption and bring accountability in public services, he said here on Wednesday.

BCCI experts conduct anti-doping & anti-corruption workshop

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 13 SEPT: Two experts from Board of Control for Cricket in India [BCCI], Dr Abhijit Salve and Anshuman Upadhay, conducted an anti-doping and anti-corruption workshop for men and women players and support staff of Sikkim Cricket Association [SCA] in Gangtok on 12 Sept, a press release informs.

In the first phase of the workshop, Dr Salve enlightened the players and support staff about the BCCI Anti-Doping Code and the substances they can and cannot take. He explained that the players are ultimately responsible for what they consume and that they cannot claim ignorance if they test positive.

“It is the player’s duty to inform the concerned person of every medication that they are consuming. The concerned person, in turn, will contact the BCCI Anti-Doping Cell to check the substances/medications that the



players are consuming and will guide the players accordingly. The players can also directly contact the Anti-Doping Cell to check the substances/medications that the players are consuming or have been advised to consume.

The BCCI Anti-Doping Helpline is available 24x7 to answer all drug-related queries from players and the support staffs,” said Dr Salve.

In the second phase, Mr Upadhay explained

different consequences involved in seeking, accepting, offering or agreeing to accept any bribe or other reward to fix or to contrive in any way to influence the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect of any match or event.

“Entering into any bet with any other party [whether individual, company or otherwise] in relation to the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect of any match or event. Disclos-

ing inside information to any person [with or without reward] before or during any match or event where the participant might reasonably be expected to know that disclosure of such information in such cir-

cumstances could be used in relation to betting,” added Mr Upadhay.

General Secretary, SCA, Sonam Palden Bhutia, said that the workshop was held to enlighten players on these important aspects of the game.

“This educational workshop, which is an annual feature, is taken up by BCCI to educate players on banned substance and how to protect from dubious people,” said Mr Bhutia.

Addressing the players SCA president, Lobzang G Tenzing, said, “Many cricketers are unaware of several banned substances, and they consume it without knowledge while working out in training. This workshop will throw light on such performance enhancing drugs which are banned.”

During the workshop, the players and team support staff were provided with a pocket guide on prohibited substance list.



Governor calls on Union Agriculture Minister in New Delhi

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 13 SEPT: Governor Ganga Prasad today met Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Radha Mohan Singh, at his office in New Delhi. A press communiqué received from Raj Bhavan informs that it was a courtesy meeting where in the Governor and the Union Minister had extensive deliberations on

the issues related with organic farming in Sikkim. The Union Minister assured to provide all required assistance from the Ministry for appropriate logistics and promotion of organic farming in Sikkim.

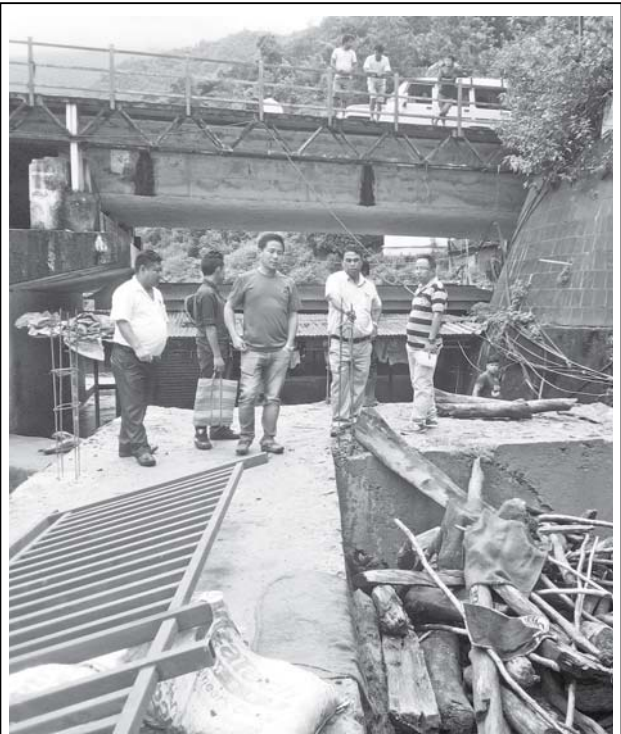
Also, Governor of Haryana, Satyadev Narayan Arya, gave a courtesy call to Governor Ganga Prasad at Sikkim House in New Delhi.



SHEGU

The 21st Day Shegu of Late Norbu Sherpa son of Late Pemba Sherpa resident of Bhanu Gram near Paljor Stadium who left for his heavenly abode on 27/08/2018 falls on 16/09/2018 [Sunday]. All the family members, relatives and well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at Limbu Bhawan, DPH Road. We would also like take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all those who stood by us during our time of bereavement.

Doma Sherpa (Mother),
Passang Sherpa (Sister),
Ongyal Sherpa, Lakpa Sherpa and
Mingyur Sherpa (Brother).



MEO CONDUCTS SURPRISE INSPECTION OF SINGTAM BAZAAR

SINGTAM, 13 SEPT: A team led by Municipal Executive Officer, Singtam, Himmat Rai, and accompanied by Municipal Inspector, Birendra Rai, and Singtam Bazaar supervisor, Raju Bardewa, undertook an inspection visit of Singtam Bazaar here in East Sikkim today. During the inspection, an unauthorized butcher house was traced by the team in the area. The MEO has given a week’s deadline to the owner to clear all official formalities failing which stringent legal action will be taken.

[Yogen Thatal]

SSB Inspector General visits Sector Headquarters at Marchak

GANGTOK, 13 SEPT [PIB]: SS Chaturvedi, who has recently been appointed as Inspector General at Sashastra Seema Bal is currently touring various places in the State to get an idea about the deployment of SSB and to understand the working of the force on Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan border.

On his familiarization tour, Mr Chaturvedi arrived at 69th Battalion Headquarters of SSB in Rhenock on 11 Sept wherein he was welcomed by Commandant, 69th Battalion and staff officer, Gangtok Sector.

Mr Chaturvedi arrived at Sector Head-



quarters, Gangtok at Marchak on 12 Sept after visiting the border out posts on Indo-Bhutan border. During his tour, he interacted with jawans and assessed the difficulties and vulnerability of the area. Deputy Inspector General, SSB Gangtok Sector, BK Pal, accompanied him during his tour.

On the arrival of Mr Chaturvedi, DIG, Mr Pal, briefed him about the area, terrain and deployment through a Power-Point presentation. Mr Chaturvedi appreciated the discipline and professionalism of SSB troops, their work for public welfare and the dedication in the State of Sikkim.



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
FOOD SECURITY & AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
KRISHI BHAWAN, TADONG, GANGTOK- 737102
Ref. No. 922/FSADD Dated: 11/09/2018

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from local candidates for the posts as detailed below under the NeGP-A-Project at FS&AD Department, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok.

Sl. No.	Post	Number of Posts	Qualification	Age	Consolidated pay/month	Mode of appointment
1	Computer Operator	1	Minimum of one year Diploma in Computer Science. Candidate with work experience to similar field will be preferred	18-35	Rs. 15000/-	Contract for a period of six month

- The post is purely temporary. The initial appointment will be for six months only w.e.f. date of joining to be extended subject to continuation of the fund under the scheme by Govt. of India and work performance of the candidate.
- The candidates will be selected through walk-in-interview. Eligible candidates may apply with attested copies of the following documents:
i) Educational Qualification Certificate from class x onwards including one year computer diploma certificate.
ii) Valid Employment Card.
iii) Age Certificate
iv) Experience Certificate
v) C.O.I.
vi) Resume (with contact No. and e-mail ID)
- Interested candidate may apply to Deputy Director (IT), Food Security & Agriculture Development Department, Government of Sikkim, Krishi Bhawan, Tadong, Gangtok, Sikkim within a period of ten (10) days from the date of advertisement.

NOTE: No TA/DA will be paid for attending the interview.
Sd/- UNDER SECRETARY (ADM.)
F.S. & AGRI. DEV. DEPARTMENT
R.O. No: 341/IPR/PUB/ClassII/18-19 Date: 12/09/2018

SIKKIM STATE LOTTERIES

DEAR ENERGY EVENING

Draw No:5 DrawDate on:13/09/18

1st Prize Rs.26.03 Lakhs/- 77E 73790
Cons. Prize Rs.9500/- 73790 (REMAINING ALL SERIALS)
2nd Prize Rs.9000/-
05324 33110 36409 39091 40038
48817 56993 58805 60309 85571
3rd Prize Rs.500/- 1700 1822 3162 6866 7341 7512 7738 9368 9690 9729
4th Prize Rs.250/- 0306 1597 3543 4345 4545 5893 6167 7094 8261 9587
5th Prize Rs.120/-
0060 0223 0247 0264 0373 0524 0576 0769 0772 0782
0929 1523 1668 1712 1817 1970 2101 2250 2342 2442
2494 2678 2800 2845 2956 3008 3073 3078 3330 3352
3397 3429 3468 3469 3498 3627 3821 3972 3973 3997
4350 4385 4592 4719 4744 4914 5162 5218 5234 5251
5353 5380 5459 5475 5554 5618 5669 5786 5851 5889
5998 6208 6268 6274 6335 6365 6803 6877 7028 7212
7279 7521 7538 7570 7639 7656 7728 7831 8246 8470
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SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Battle the Bottle

Booze is a problem that the society ignores at its own peril

The festive season is upon us; a march of weeks and months which will be as much about piety as they will be about excesses, making it perhaps the right time to speak about alcoholism. And no, cops at play with breathalyzers, stopping vehicles and inviting drivers to blow into the equipment is not the solution. It penalizes and keeps the roads and passengers safer, yes, but it does not address the core problem. One could argue about the many levels at which such random stopping [without any apparent reason] for random checks is wrong [inconvenient in the least], but that line of argument will not find many backers in light of the fact that Gangtok roads are dangerous after dark with too many inebriated hands behind the wheels. While checking by cops might lead to some challans and avert some accidents, what remains unaddressed is the root problem – alcoholism, a condition which does not surface only on weekends or only at night and is a 24x7 worry for too many families.

The problem of alcoholism is not talked about enough probably because it is substance abuse and HIV/ AIDS which receive funding, leading unfortunately to a situation where this condition is not as widely discussed as the scale of the problem requires. Many people tend to identify alcoholism as a traditional dispensation of the Hill People. This is an ill-informed preconception since alcoholism [as a widespread problem] could not have debuted in the hills more than half a century back or six decades at the most. Alcoholism really becomes possible with the arrival of the IMFLs [India Made Foreign Liquors] since the local brews required too much work and time to be manufactured in enough quantities to feed alcoholism on a scale that cause the kind of health and social complications which are now possible and common. It is hence wrong to begin any discussion on alcoholism by suggesting that it is a traditional weakness of the Hill People. The communities here might have allowed 'drinking', but that cannot be construed as addictive levels of drinking. The prejudice, however, because it serves so many businesses so well, has been allowed to set in and after it was ignored in the initial years [of IMFLs and other mass distilling units arriving], spread rapidly to ingrain itself in the society.

The damage wreaked by alcoholism cannot be stressed enough and media here should carry forward its success with getting the problem of substance abuse addressed and report more effectively and widely on the abuse of alcohol which is just as impairing. But the local media, when it overlooks the problem of alcoholism in the society, ends up reflecting the social acceptance of this malaise. Sikkim's indifference towards this problem will weigh heavy on its collective conscience some day. Many excuse alcoholism with the argument that the person is earning enough to indulge himself/ herself. Substance abuse, because it usually starts at a much younger age, is more scandalous also because of the petty crimes that the addicts invariably resort to finance their addictions. While there is no denying that substance abuse is a serious concern, alcoholism, because not enough seem to be taking it seriously, is even more worrying. Even if one were to keep the emotions aside, the impact alcoholism has on the economy should attract corrective action. Most people turn alcoholic in what should be the most productive years of their lives, both professionally as well as part of a family. When their faculties are compromised, as alcoholism is wont to do, their work suffers as do their families. Indifference towards this problem puts too much at risk because like with all social problems, alcoholism does not affect only the individual but has the entire family suffering. While the younger 'addict' makes the elders of the family suffer guilt pangs, an alcoholic, because in most cases they are working members of the family, end up abusing the family [because they have more 'power' but less control]. This is a social problem and requires the community to step forward and engage proactively in its battle against the bottle. Sadly, in Sikkim, even the war-cry has not been sounded yet...

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. Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

FRANCIS VERGUNST,
HELEN LOUISE BERRY &
MASSIMILIANO ORRI
theconversation.com

Extreme heat has gripped the northern hemisphere in recent months, and the year 2018 is on track to be among the hottest ever recorded. Higher global temperatures are expected to have detrimental effects on our natural environments and our physical health, but what will they do to our mental health?

New research from an international team of scientists suggests that one of the most tangible impacts may be an increase in suicide rates.

Suicide is already among the leading causes of death worldwide. For people aged 15-55 years, it is among the top five causes of death. Worldwide nearly one million people die by suicide each year — more than all deaths from war and murder combined.

Using historical temperature records from the United States and Mexico, the researchers showed that suicide rates increased by 0.7 per cent in the U.S. and by 2.1 per cent in Mexico when the average monthly temperatures rose by 1 C.

The researchers calculated that if global temperatures continue to rise at these rates, between now and 2050 there could be 9,000 to 40,000 additional suicides in the U.S. and Mexico alone. This is roughly equivalent to the number of additional suicides that follow an economic recession.

SPIKES DURING HEAT WAVES

It has been known for a long time that suicide rates spike during heat waves. Hotter weather has been linked with higher rates of hospital admissions for self-harm, suicide and violent suicides, as well as increases in population-level psychological distress, particularly in combination with high humidity.

Another recent study, which combined the results of previous research on heat and suicide, concluded there is "a significant and positive association between temperature rises and incidence of suicide."

Why this is remains unclear. There is a well-documented link between rising temperatures and interpersonal violence and suicide could be understood as an act of violence directed at oneself. Lisa Page, a researcher in psychology at King's College London, notes:

"While speculative, perhaps the most promis-

ing mechanism to link suicide with high temperatures is a psychological one. High temperatures have been found to lead individuals to behave in a more disinhibited, aggressive and violent manner, which might in turn result in an increased propensity for suicidal acts."

Hotter temperatures are taxing on the body. They cause an increase in the stress hormone cortisol, reduce sleep quality and disrupt people's physical activity routines. These changes can reduce well-being and increase psychological distress.

DISEASE, WATER SHORTAGES, CONFLICT AND WAR

The effects of hotter temperatures on suicides are symptomatic of a much broader and more expansive problem: the impact of climate change on mental health.

Climate change will increase the frequency and severity of heat waves, droughts, storms, floods and wildfires. It will extend the range of infectious diseases such as Zika virus, malaria and Lyme disease. It will contribute to food and water shortages and fuel forced migration, conflict and war.

These events can have devastating effects on people's health, homes and livelihoods and directly impact psychological health and well-being.

But effects are not limited to people who suffer direct losses — for example, it has been estimated that up to half of Hurricane Katrina survivors developed post-traumatic stress disorder even when they had suffered no direct physical losses.

The feelings of loss that follow catastrophic events, including a sense of loss of safety, can erode community well-being and further undermine mental health resilience.

BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH COMMUNITY Scientists caution that there are no quick fixes.



Vigorous greenhouse gas reduction strategies will reduce the chance of dangerous runaway climate change and help mitigate the worst effects of climate change on mental health, but these efforts may not be sufficient.

Installing more air conditioning units, for instance, may not significantly reduce suicide rates or mitigate the effects of extreme heat on health and well-being. Adaptation, including substantial investment in mental health services, will be essential.

Unfortunately mental health services remain woefully underfunded and over-burdened in most parts of the world. While government budgets are stretched to cope with front-line disaster relief, communities will bear the burden of responding to these challenges.

Building resilience through increased social connectedness within and between communities will be vital.

RESEARCH IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH Mental health problems have diverse manifestations that vary across contexts and throughout a lifetime. They are the result of long and intricate causal pathways. Climate change is not an isolated cause of suicide, but one of several factors.

Integrating these pathways into a conceptual framework — for example using systems thinking — is a crucial step toward developing public policy, practice and research that will equip us to respond to climate change.

Climate change is a daunting global public health challenge without ready solutions and we have been far too slow to take the risks seriously. We have also missed promising opportunities to use climate change as a mechanism to promote improved mental health.

There is an urgent need for research that informs our understanding of the mental health consequences of climate change so that we can prepare for the challenges ahead.

For some, it really is a matter of life or death. [Francis Vergunst is Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Developmental Public Health, Université de Montréal; Helen Louise Berry is Professor of Climate Change and Mental Health, University of Sydney; Massimiliano Orri is Marie-Curie and CIHR Postdoctoral Fellow, McGill University]

Why al-Qaida is still strong 17 years after 9/11

TRICIA BACON
theconversation.com

Seventeen years ago, on Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaida conducted the most destructive terrorist attack in history.

An unprecedented onslaught from the U.S. followed. One-third of al-Qaida's leadership was killed or captured in the following year. The group lost its safe haven in Afghanistan, including its extensive training infrastructure there. Its surviving members were on the run or in hiding. Though it took nearly 10 years, the U.S. succeeded in killing al-Qaida's founding leader, Osama bin Laden. Since 2014, al-Qaida has been overshadowed by its former ally al-Qaida in Iraq, now calling itself the Islamic State.

In other words, al-Qaida should not have survived the 17 years since 9/11.

But it has. Why?

THE TIES THAT BIND

Much of the credit goes to al-Qaida's extraordinary ability to form alliances and sustain them over time and under pressure.

In my book "Why Terrorist Groups Form International Alliances," I examine why a small number of groups, such as al-Qaida and IS, emerge as desirable partners and succeed at developing alliance networks.

Understanding terrorist alliances is critical because terrorist organizations with allies are more lethal, survive longer and are more apt to seek weapons of mass destruction. Though terrorist partnerships face numerous hurdles and severing al-Qaida's alliances has been a U.S. objective for over a decade, the fact is that these counterterrorism efforts

have failed.

It was allies that enabled al-Qaida to survive the immediate aftermath of 9/11. The Afghan Taliban stood by al-Qaida after the attack, refusing to surrender bin Laden and thereby precipitating the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Fleeing, al-Qaida was able to turn to allies in Pakistan to hide its operatives and punish the Pakistani government for capitulating to U.S. pressure to crackdown on the group.

It was alliances that helped al-Qaida continue to terrorize. In October 2002, for example, al-Qaida's ally in Southeast Asia, Jemaah Islamiyah brutally commemorated the first anniversary of 9/11 by bombing a bar and a nightclub in Bali, killing more than 200 people and injuring an additional 200.

And it was alliances that allowed al-Qaida to project viability. With the "prestige" that came with conducting 9/11, al-Qaida was able to forge affiliate alliances in which partners adopted its name and pledged allegiance to bin Laden.

Al-Qaida's first and most notorious affiliate alliance, al-Qaida in Iraq, was formed in 2004 with Jordanian jihadist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Using

the standing he accrued through his role in the insurgency in Iraq, Zarqawi then helped al-Qaida acquire its second affiliate in 2006, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb. Then, in 2009, al-Qaida designated its branch in Yemen and Saudi Arabia as al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. Its alliances spanned the Middle East and helped it to project power, despite the U.S. war on terrorism.

A LOWER PROFILE

While al-Qaida still sought affiliates, by 2010, it changed some aspects of the relationships.

Al-Qaida forged an alliance with al-Shabaab in Somalia, but did not initially publicly announce it or ask al-Shabaab to change its name. Bin Laden justified the shift to a less visible form of alliance as a way to prevent an increase in counterterrorism pressure or a loss of funds from the Arabian Peninsula. He privately expressed concerns that al-Qaida's name "reduces the feeling of Muslims that we belong to them, and allows the enemies to claim deceptively that they are not at war with Islam." Bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, saw the move as bin Laden capitulating to members of al-Qaida who wor-

ried about "inflating the size and the growth of al-Qaida." After bin Laden's death, Zawahiri publicly announced al-Qaida's alliance with al-Shabaab, though al-Shabaab still did not adopt al-Qaida's name.

The "staying power" of Al-Qaida's allies has helped it remain a threat despite the loss of its founding leader in 2011 and the ascent of a far less capable leader. Zawahiri's rise to the helm of the group was itself the consequence of an alliance between his original Egyptian group, al-Jihad, and al-Qaida. The alliance culminated in a merger in 2001, with Zawahiri becoming bin Laden's deputy and successor.

Zawahiri lacks bin Laden's cachet or diplomatic savvy, and his shortfalls are evident in al-Qaida's alliances. His poor handling of the strife between jihadist group al-Nusra in Syria and its parent organization, the Islamic State in Iraq — previously al-Qaida in Iraq and now known as the Islamic State — led to the alliance rupture between al-Qaida and its affiliate in Iraq.

Zawahiri has also struggled to manage the relationship with al-Qaida's ally in Syria, the very group that spurred the conflict between IS and

al-Qaida. Al-Nusra changed its name, an effort to gain more legitimacy within the conflict in Syria by publicly distancing itself from al-Qaida, which left a smaller faction still allied with al-Qaida.

Al-Qaida organized a new branch, al-Qaida in the Indian subcontinent, in 2014. The branch in South Asia reflected al-Qaida's success at expanding beyond its predominantly Arab base, particularly in Pakistan, and has allowed

turn to 05



Kathmandu-Bodh Gaya bus service launched

KATHMANDU, SEP 13 (PTI): A direct bus service was launched between Kathmandu and Buddhist pilgrimage town of Bodh Gaya in Bihar on Thursday with a view to promoting religious tourism between India and Nepal.

Nepal's Transport Minister Raghurir Mahaseth and Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri jointly flagged off the bus service launched in collaboration with the Bihar transport department from Swoyambhu, a famous Buddhist stupa in Kathmandu.

This is the fifth direct bus service launched between Nepal and India since the signing of the Motor Vehicles Agreement between the two countries in 2014 during the first official visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Nepal.

The first bus carried 10 passengers to Bodh Gaya via Patna. Tickets for the service can also be booked online and the bus service also has Wi-Fi facilities.

The sixth Nepal-India direct bus service will be launched between Janakpur and Patna on Sunday.

Four direct bus services between, Nepal and India have been in operation, on the Kathmandu Delhi, Kathmandu-Benaras, Pokhara-Delhi and Mahendranagar-Delhi routes.

The operation of these services will not only promote tourism in the two countries but also contribute towards strengthening people-to-people relations, Mahaseth and Puri said on the occasion.

Why al-Qaida is still strong 17 years after 9/11

contd from pg04

the group to expand its activities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

Most of al-Qaida's alliances have proven resilient over time. This is true despite ample reasons for its partners to abandon ties, such as the heightened counter-terrorism pressure that comes with affiliation to al-Qaida; the death of its charismatic leader; and the Islamic State's efforts to court al-Qaida allies. Even the Afghan Taliban has not severed ties, even though doing so would eliminate one of the major reasons that the United States will not withdraw from the "forever war" in Afghanistan.

There is still a window for the U.S. to damage al-Qaida's alliances: It has a weak leader and major rival. But that window may be closing as the Islamic State adapts to its losses and al-Qaida appears poised for a resurgence with bin Laden's son as its future, more inspiring leader.

[the writer is Assistant Professor of Justice, Law & Criminology, American University School of Public Affairs]

TMC slams BJP-RSS for ‘putting pressure on organisers’ to cancel Mamata’s US programme

KOLKATA, SEP 13 (PTI): Targeting the BJP-RSS, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Thursday alleged that "pressure was mounted" on the organisers to cancel a programme in Chicago in the US on the occasion of 125 years of the historic address by Swami Vivekananda, where West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was invited.

The TMC alleged that the BJP-RSS wanted only one major programme to be held in Chicago on that occasion. "Vivekananda Vedanta



Society of Chicago, on the occasion of 125 years of the historic address by Swami Vivekananda, had invited

Mamata Banerjee to attend a programme in Chicago. The Chief Minister of West Bengal confirmed her participation

to them," TMC's chief national spokesperson Derek O'Brien said in a statement.

"Subsequently, it is learnt, that under 'tremendous pressure', the organisers were prevailed upon to cancel the programme. It is common knowledge that the BJP-RSS wanted only one major programme to be held in Chicago and that would be under the banner of the Global Hindu Congress (World Hindu Foundation) and this programme would be attended by Mohan Bhagwat," the statement added.

It further stated: "To ensure this happened, intense pressure was mounted on Vivekananda Vedanta Mission in Chicago to cancel the programme."

O'Brien also termed the External Affairs Ministry's statement on the issue as "low-on-fact argument".

Banerjee had on Tuesday said, "I wanted to go to Chicago.... I could not go there because of an unholy conspiracy hatched by certain people. This incident has given me a lot of pain."

The External Affairs Minis-

try on Wednesday dismissed the reports that Banerjee was denied permission to visit Chicago to attend the World Hindu Conference.

Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said the government did not receive any request for clearance for her visit.

"We did not receive any request for clearance regarding the visit of Mamata Banerjee to Chicago for the event. The reports about the denial of permission are, therefore, not true," he said in response to a question.



Indo-Bhutan border centre opened in Assam

GUWAHATI, SEP 12 (PTI): Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Wednesday inaugurated the Indo-Bhutan Border Centre at Darranga in Assam's Baksa district to strengthen bilateral trade with the neighbouring country.

The inauguration of the trade centre is a spontaneous response of the people of Assam, specially the people residing in the four BTAD districts of Baksa, Udalguri, Chirang and Kokrajhar, to the prevailing peaceful situation in the state, Sonowal said on the occasion.

The Centre has decided to construct 264 km of border roads touching four

BTAD districts of the state, he said. The chief minister expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for unleashing a new era of development in Northeast by enunciating Act East Policy.

He vowed to strengthen bilateral relation of India with ASEAN and BBIN countries.

Sonowal thanked both Bhutan and Bangladesh for opening their consulates at Guwahati which has given renewed thrust to the relations with the neighbouring countries with Assam.

Referring to Indo-Bhutan relations, Sonowal said the recently introduced Druk

Air flight connecting Paro-Guwahati-Singapore would take Indias relation with ASEAN countries to new heights.

He also said that the state government with the active support of the Central government would revive the Rupsi Airport in Dhubri and revival work would start from next month.

Assam Industries and Commerce Minister, Chandra Mohan Patowary said on the occasion that the trade centre at Darranga besides strengthening the bilateral trade will help to economically empower the people on both sides of border.

ITANAGAR, SEP 13 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Thursday said the security situation in the North East has improved considerably due to development initiatives by the Centre.

Khandu, who was addressing the 25th annual conference of DGP, IGP and heads of central police organizations of North East region here, applauded the role of the Centre in increasing the number of people from the region in the central paramilitary forces and in Delhi police.

He encouraged youths of the region to join the central paramilitary forces and urged the police organisations to carry out awareness programme in this regard.



Development packages for the region, including police modernisation, have improved the security situation in the area, he said adding the North East must be looked on as one entity when dealing with the security aspect, Khandu said.

"Though Arunachal has no home grown insurgency but the three eastern districts of the state are affected by it," he said and expressed confidence that the po-

lice, para military forces and the Army would efficiently tackle the situation.

Khandu said that the Assam Police have a pivotal role to play in the security of the state since it shares borders with almost all the states in the North East.

Peace and order are the 'prerequisite' for development and economic growth of the state and security and development have to go together. Without the state police

being efficient such goals cannot be achieved, he said.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju said police officers must be calm and conduct themselves in a decent way.

People expect a lot from the police and so tend to be demanding and even abusive at times towards the force, he said.

"Police can play a positive role in promoting tourism by conducting themselves in decent and helpful way," Rijiju added.

The two-day convention would deliberate on improving law and order situation in the region and formulating strategies to deal with new challenges.

SIKKIM

GOVERNMENT

GAZETTE

EXTRAORDINARY
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

Gangtok

Monday 9th July, 2018

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
HOME DEPARTMENT
GANGTOK

No. 35/2018

Dated: 20/06/2018

NOTIFICATION

In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (4) of section 3 of the Sikkim Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993 (Act No. 8 of 1993), Shri. T.N. Sharma is hereby deemed to have been appointed as Chairperson, Sikkim Commission for Backward with effect from 29/05/2018.
By order and in the name of the Governor.

Alok K. Shrivastava, IAS
Chief Secretary
Government of Sikkim
File No. Home/Confid./202/2013/02

SIKKIM

GOVERNMENT

GAZETTE

EXTRAORDINARY
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

Gangtok

Monday 9th July, 2018

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
HOME DEPARTMENT
GANGTOK

No. GOS/SJE&WD/L/18-19/6

Dated: 27/06/2018

NOTIFICATION

In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of section 3 of the Sikkim Commission for Backward Classes Act 1993, the State Government is hereby pleased to appoint the following persons as members of the Sikkim Commission for Backward Classes to exercise the powers conferred on and to perform the functions assigned to it under the Act from the date of their assumption of Office, namely:

1. Shri Mohan Dungmali, Lingdum Ranka, East Sikkim

-

Member

2. Shri Dev Gurung, Sichey, Gangtok, East Sikkim

-

Member

3. Shri Chandra Khaling, Namchi, South Sikkim

-

Member

4. Shri K.B. Thapa, Sudunglakha, East Sikkim

-

Member

By order and in the name of the Governor of Sikkim.

Sarala Rai, IAS
Secretary to the Government
Social Justice, Empowerment and
Welfare Department

R.O. No: 343/IPR/PUB/Classi/18-19 Date: 13.09.18

PRINTING & STATIONARY DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
TADONG, GANGTOK, SIKKIM
PHONE NO.: 03592-231283, FAX NO. 03592-231283
EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from eligible local candidates for filling up of 05 (five) posts of Production Assistant under Printing and Stationary Department purely on Adhoc Basis.

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	Number of Posts	Nature of Appointment	Eligibility Criteria	Consolidated Pay
1	Production Assistant	05 [five]	Adhoc Basis	<div>1. Sikkim subject / COI holder</div> <div>2. Required Qualifications: i) Educational: Class VII/X passed. ii) Technical: i. Diploma in Printing Technology, or ii. Minimum 2/3 yrs experience as Professional Graphic Designer, or iii. Two years vocational training in Printing Technology. 3. Age: Should not cross 33 years as on 31/12/2018</div>	<div>(i) Rs. 18000/- pm for Diploma in Printing Technology (ii) Rs. 10,500/- pm for those having Minimum 2/3 yrs experience as Professional Graphic Designer, Or Two (02) yrs vocation training in Printing Technology.</div>

The interested candidates are required to submit their application along with all the requisite documents / experience certificate etc. to the undersigned on or before 22/09/2018 between 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. No applications shall be accepted hereafter. Incomplete applications shall be summarily rejected.

Date and the venue of viva voce interview will be intimated in due course through local newspaper and the same shall be displayed on the notice board of the department.
No TA/DA is admissible for attending the interview.

UNDER SECRETARY
PRINTING & STATIONARY DEPARTMENT
R.O. No: 342/IPR/PUB/Classi/18-19 Date: 13/09/2018

Over 150 engineers join Punjab Police as constables

KAPURTHALA, SEP 13 (PTI): Over 150 candidates with M Tech and B Tech degrees have opted for the post of constable in the Punjab Police, a senior officer said Thursday.

These engineering graduates were recruited as constables in the IT and intelligence wing of the Punjab Police, and they completed their nine-month training on Thursday, Commandant (training centre) Rajpal Singh Sandhu said here.

IG (intelligence) Ram Singh participated in the passing out parade of these trainees and took the salute at march past from contingents of 257 trainees.

Ram Singh advised the constables to discharge their duties honestly and uphold the dignity of the Punjab Police.

He said the training centre has imparted training in physical exercises, drills, weapon handling and shooting, besides teaching subjects like law, IT and intelligence to over 60,000 constables since its inception in 1993.

Sindhu, Prannoy lose; Srikanth sails into quarters at Japan Open

TOKYO, SEPT 13 (PTI): Fatigue caught up with India's premier shuttler P V Sindhu as she was upstaged in straight games but Kidambi Srikanth entered quarterfinals of the USD 700,000 Japan Open here Thursday.

Sindhu was beaten by China's Gao Fangjie in the women's singles second round, her first preliminary exit in almost a year. The Indian went down fighting 18-21 19-21 in 55 minutes to the world no 14 Chinese. She had lost in the opening round at the Denmark Open last October.

Former world no.1 Srikanth, however, didn't break a sweat as he avenged his Asian Games loss to Hong Kong's Wong Wing Ki Vincent with a clinical 21-15 21-14 victory to enter the men's singles quarterfinals.

The seventh-seeded Indian, who won a silver at the Commonwealth Games, will face Korea's Lee Dong Keun next.

However, it was curtains for the other Indian in the men's draw, HS Prannoy, as he went down to giant-killer Anthony Sinisuka Ginting.

The world no.10 Indonesian defeated formidable Japanese Kento Momota and Olympic champion Chen Long at the Asian Games.

Sindhu, who has endured a hectic BWF season reaching five finals including three majors at CWG, World Championship and Asian Games, seemed mentally drained as errors crept into her game.

The Indian put up a decent fight as she recovered from 2-8 down

GANGTOK, 13 SEPT [IPR]: The 29th Sikkim State Badminton Championship 2018 organized by Badminton Association of Sikkim [BAS] got underway today in the Indoor Gymnasium of Paljor Stadium here.

The programme was attended by Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Ugen Gyatso Bhutia, Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, SD Dhakal, and members of BAS.

Tourism Minister, Mr Bhutia, while addressing the participants said that their contribution to sports is commendable and their focus and hard work has helped in bringing laurels and recognition to the State.

He congratulated the participants on behalf of the State Government

Japan's Sapporo mulls shifting Winter Olympic bid to 2030

TOKYO, SEPT 13 (AFP): Japan's northern city of Sapporo is considering changing its bid to host the 2026 Winter Olympics to 2030 when transport links will have improved, a city official said Thursday.

The majority of Olym-

pic and local officials, as well as business leaders, believe "the 2030 option will be a better environment to host the Games", city official Akihiro Okumura told AFP.

The comment came after Japanese reports said the city would "soon" tell International Olympic Committee (IOC) chief Thomas Bach

in Lausanne they wanted to shelve their 2026 bid.

While Sapporo's vice-mayor Takatoshi Machida and Japanese Olympic Committee boss Tsunekazu Takeda will visit Bach, they will discuss the recent earthquake near Sapporo that killed 41 people, Okumura said.

"I can't predict whether they would discuss"

the possible change of plan to 2030, he added.

But he noted that the city, on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido, will have better transport links by 2030 when the country's shinkansen bullet train will be extended to the city.

There is also a feeling that the 2026 Olympics may go elsewhere after

a period dominated by Asia. This year's Winter Olympics were held in South Korea, the 2022 edition is fixed for Beijing and the 2020 Summer Games are in Tokyo.

Competing to host the Games in 2026 are Calgary in Canada, Stockholm and Graz in Austria, with Italy also putting in a multi-city bid.

Two more junior gold medals for India at shooting world c'ships

CHANGWON, SEP 13 (PTI): Udhayveer Singh, all of 16, shone bright with an individual gold in the junior men's 25m pistol event after spearheading India to the team gold in the World Shooting Championships here Thursday.

Singh shot a score of 587 (291 in precision and 296 in rapid) in the individual competition to grab the gold ahead of American Henry Leverett (584) and Korean Lee Jaekyoon (582).

Compatriot Vijayveer Sidhu finished fourth with a score of 581, while Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu took the 20th spot with a score of 568.

The trio's combined score of 1736 fetched the team gold for India followed by China, which totalled 1730. The bronze medal went to Team Korea, which shot a score of 1721.

In the senior competition, Sheeraz Sheikh was the best-placed Indian at eighth after day one of the men's skeet qualification with a score of 49.

Angad Vir Singh was 69th after shooting 47, while Mairaj Ahmed

(41) was further down at 79th.

The Indian team, comprising the trio, was 16th in the overall standings with a score of 137.

There were no medals for India in the 25m centre fire pistol event with Gurpreet Singh managing the 10th spot with a score of 581, followed by London Olympics silver-medallist Vijay Kumar.

Kumar tallied 576 to end a disappointing 24th. A spot behind him was Commonwealth Games gold-medallist Anish Bhanwala, who shot the same score but had lesser inner-10s to his credit.

The team signed off fourth with a score of 1733.

India are placed fourth in the medals tally with nine gold, eight silver and seven bronze medals for a total of 24, making this their best performance in the International Shooting Sport Federation's showpiece.

The country has managed to clinch two Olympic quota places from the first qualifying event for Tokyo 2020 Games.

Government of India
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)
5th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities is implementing umbrella scheme "Scholarships for Students with Disabilities" for their empowerment through education w.e.f. 1st April, 2018. There are six components of this scheme i.e. Pre-matric, Post-matric, Top Class Education, National Overseas, National Fellowship and Free Coaching. The brief details of umbrella scheme are given below:

S.No	Component s	Courses covered	No. of Scholar ships per year	Parental income ceiling per annum (Rs.)	Rate of scholarship	How to apply
1.	Pre-matric Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	Class IX and X	20000	2.50 lakh	Scholarship of Rs.500 per month for day scholars and Rs.800 per month for hostellers plus book grant of Rs.1,000/- per annum and disability allowance ranging from Rs.2000/- to Rs.4000/- per annum.	These three scholarship schemes are being implemented through National Scholarship Portal. Apply on-line on National Scholarship Portal (www.scholarships.gov.in).
2.	Post-matric Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	Class XI to Master's Degree/ Diploma	17000	2.50 lakh	There are different rates of maintenance allowance for Post-Graduate, Graduate, Diploma, professional courses leading to degree, diploma etc. in different disciplines. It ranges from Rs.900-1600 p.m. for hosteller and Rs.550-750 p.m. for day scholars plus Tuition fee (maximum ceiling Rs.1.50 lakh per annum), book allowance of Rs.1500/- per annum and disability allowance ranging from Rs.2000/- to Rs.4000/- per annum	The portal has been opened for Registration from 23 rd July, 2018. The last date for submission of online application is:
3.	Scholarship for Top Class Education for Students with Disabilities	Graduate/ Post Graduate Degree or Diploma in 240 notified institutions of excellence	300	6.00 lakh	Monthly maintenance allowance of Rs.3000/- for hostellers, Rs.1500/- for day scholars, Rs.2000/- per month disability allowance, book grant Rs.5000/-per annum and tuition fee upto Rs.2 lakh per annum.	1.Pre-matric: 30 th September, 2018 2.Post-matric: 31 st October,2018 3.Top Class Education: 31 st October , 2018
4.	National Overseas Scholarships for Students with Disabilities	Master's degree and Doctorate degree in foreign universities abroad	20	6.00 lakh	Maintenance allowance of Pound (Great Britain) 9,900 per annum for UK and US \$15,400 for other countries, plus tuition fees, annual contingency allowance, cost of air passage, etc.	The proforma for submission of application is given in the website of this Department i.e. www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in . Application may be submitted in the prescribed proforma to Under Secretary (Scholarships), Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Room No.516, 5 th Floor, Pt. Deendaval Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi - 110003 throughout the year.
5.	National Fellowship for Persons with Disabilities	M.Phil/Ph.D in Indian Universities.	200	No income ceiling	Monthly Rs.25,000/- for JRF (first two years) and Rs.28,000/- for SRF (3 rd year onwards upto complete duration of the course) and contingency grant, escort allowance/ reader allowance and House Rent Allowance (at applicable rates).	Selection is done by the University Grants Commission. The candidates may like to apply online as and when applications are invited by UGC. No application is required to be sent to Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
6.	Free Coaching	For appearing in competitive examinations for jobs in Government/Public Sector and admission to technical and professional courses	2000	6.00 lakh	Coaching fee shall be payable to empanelled Institute by this Department. Stipend and Special Allowance for Disability@ Rs.7,000/- per month for outstation candidates and Rs.4,500/- per month for local candidates shall be payable.	Students may contact empanelled coaching institutes. The list of empanelled Institutes is available in the website of this Department.

All the above scholarships are applicable to students with disabilities with more than 40% disability and having a proper disability certificate to this effect issued by a competent medical authority. Disability is as defined in Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

For further details about the scholarship scheme, please visit: www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in.

davp/38117/13/0089/1819



US House bans eating of dogs and cats

LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, SEP 13

(PTI): A resolution has been passed in the US House of Representatives asking countries like China, South Korea, Vietnam and India to end the slaughter of dogs and cats for human consumption, saying there is no place for such practises in a compassionate society.

In a non-controversial voice vote, the US House also passed a bill to ban American people from slaughtering dogs and cats for human consumption.

The Dog and Cat Meat Trade Prohibition Act, 2018, imposes a fine of USD 5,000 (over Rs 3,50,000) for each violation.

In another resolution, the house has urged all countries including China, South Korea and India to end the dog and cat meat trade.

"Dogs and cats are meant for companionship and recreation. Tragically, more than 10 million dogs are killed for human consumption every year in China," said Congresswoman Claudia Tenney.

"There is no place in our compassionate society for these practices. This bill is a reflection of America's values, and sends a strong message to all nations that we will not stand for this inhumane and cruel treatment," she said.

The act was sponsored by Republican Vern Buchanan and Democratic Alcee Hastings, both of Florida.

"Dogs and cats provide love and companionship to millions of people and should not be slaughtered and sold as food," Buchanan said.

The resolution urges the governments of China, South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, India, and all other nations to adopt and enforce laws

banning the dog and cat meat trade.

Consumption of dog meat is common in some parts of the Northeast India mostly Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur.

It also urges these countries to increase their efforts to prevent any leather or fur by-products of such trade from entering international markets and use their food safety laws to crack down on the sale of dog and cat's meat.

The bill amends the Animal Welfare Act. It affirms the US commitment to the protection of animals and to advancing the progress of animal protection around the world, she said.

In addition, the bill prohibits people from knowingly transporting, possessing, buying, selling, or donating: a dog or cat to be slaughtered for human consumption, or dog or cat parts for human consumption, setting a maximum fine of USD 5,000 for violations.

"More than half the households in America have a dog or cat as part of their family. We should send a clear message that slaughtering these beloved animals for food is unacceptable and will be punished," Congressman Vern Buchanan said.

The animal welfare organisation, the Animal Wellness Action (AWC) also welcomed the passage of the two legislations.

"The dog meat trade claiming 30 million lives a year is the world's largest form of dog exploitation, said Marty Irby, AWC executive director at Animal Wellness Action.

The dog meat trade is widespread in South Korea, where meat traders slaughter and kill millions of dogs for the table after they are raised on thousands of "farms." In China, dog meat butchers gather up street dogs and and kill them.

HANOI, SEP 13 (AP): In the face of global condemnation, Myanmar's leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi on Thursday said that the handling of Rohingya Muslims, 700,000 of whom have fled to Bangladesh amid a brutal military campaign, could have been better, but still defended security forces from charges of civilian atrocities.

Myanmar's army is accused of mass rape, killings and setting fire to thousands of homes in the aftermath of an August 2017 attack by Rohingya militants on security outposts.

A report issued two weeks ago by a specially appointed UN human rights team recommended prosecuting senior Myanmar commanders for genocide and other crimes.

"There are of course ways in which with hindsight I think the situation could have been handled better," Suu Kyi said, responding to questions during a one-on-one discussion at the World Economic Forum's regional meeting in Hanoi.

She still defended Myanmar security forces, saying that all groups in western Rakhine state had to be protected.

"We have to be fair to all sides," Suu Kyi said. "The rule of law must apply to everyone. We cannot choose and pick."

Suu Kyi said the situation was complicated by the myriad ethnic minorities in the area, some of which are at risk of disappearing entirely and which include not just the Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists.

Although the violence in Rakhine state has eased, Myanmar has to deal with its aftermath, especially the repatriation of the Muslim Rohingya who fled and the underlying causes of tension that makes them targets of discrimination and repression in overwhelmingly Buddhist Myanmar.

Suu Kyi said that Myanmar is prepared to take those who fled back, but



their return has been complicated by the fact that two governments are involved.

Aid workers say conditions for a safe and orderly return of the refugees have not been met.

Suu Kyi also rejected criticism over the show-trial conviction last week of two Reuters news agency reporters who helped expose extrajudicial killings of 10 Rohingya men and boys.

The reporters were both sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on charges of possessing state secrets.

US Vice President Mike Pence is among those who have condemned the verdicts and called for the journalists' release.

"The case has been held in open

court," Suu Kyi said.

"If anyone feels there has been a miscarriage of justice I would like them to point it out."

"They were not jailed because they were journalists. They were jailed because... the court has decided they have broken the Official Secrets Act," she said.

Suu Kyi noted that the two can appeal their sentences.

The lawyers for the journalists have said they will do whatever they can to get their clients freed.

The two men testified that they had been framed by the police. The case has drawn worldwide attention as an example of how democratic reforms

in long-isolated Myanmar have stalled under Suu Kyi's civilian government, which took power in 2016.

Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director for Human Rights Watch, said that Suu Kyi was mistaken in saying the case was handled in accordance with the "rule of law."

"She fails to understand that real 'rule of law' means respect for evidence presented in court, actions brought based on clearly defined and proportionate laws, and independence of the judiciary from influence by the government or security forces," he said in a statement.

"On all these counts, the trial of the Reuters journalists failed the test."

'Spiderman' migrant hero becomes French citizen

PARIS, SEP 13 (AFP): The migrant hero nicknamed "Spiderman" for saving a child hanging off a balcony by scaling a Paris apartment block with his bare hands has become a French citizen, according to a government decree.

Nimble 22-year-old Mamoudou Gassama from Mali was granted a fast-track to French nationality and a job in the fire service after the daring rescue in May.

"This act of great bravery exemplifies the values which help unite our national community, such as courage, selflessness, altruism and taking care of the most vulnerable," said the official document published Wednesday.

Gassama, who had been in France illegally, was catapulted to global fame by the extraordinary feat captured in footage seen by millions on social media.

The video showed the former construction worker jumping from one floor to the next, hauling himself up with impressive athleticism towards the four-year-old boy dangling above.

He was congratulated in per-



son by President Emmanuel Macron two days later and also met Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in the capital of the West African country.

Gassama arrived in France in September 2017 after travelling the perilous Mediterranean migrant route and found a job in the construction industry despite not having the right to work.

He has received international acclaim for his bravery but activists

have accused the French government of "hypocrisy", pointing to its treatment of other migrants.

In August a controversial asylum and immigration bill was signed into French law, designed to accelerate asylum procedures by cutting the maximum processing time. The new law was passed despite opposition on the left which decried an effort to limit arrivals while the far right saw the measure as not going far enough.

Final farewell to UN's Kofi Annan at Ghana state funeral

ACCRA, SEP 13 (AFP): World leaders past and present, traditional rulers and global royalty on Thursday joined the family of Kofi Annan, as the former UN secretary general's state funeral took place in his native Ghana.

Hundreds of dignitaries, most of them dressed in black mourning clothes, gathered at the Accra International Conference Centre, to mark the end of three days of national mourning for the respected diplomat.

Annan's casket was centre stage at the religious service and surrounded by flowers and candles.

The current UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, led mourners from the diplomatic corps, while there were representatives of the African Union, the West African bloc ECOWAS, and presidents from across Africa and beyond.



Royalty included Princess Beatrix, the former queen of the Netherlands, and her daughter-in-law Princess Mabel, who were close friends of Annan.

Annan led the UN from 1997 to 2006 and was the first from sub-Saharan Africa to do so. He died on August 18 aged 80 at his home in Switzerland after a short illness.

The funeral will be followed by a private burial at the capital's military ceremony and a 17-gun salute.

The Anglican bishop of Annan's home city of Kumasi in southern Ghana, the Most Reverend Daniel Sarfo, said: "Today history is being made in Ghana. One of our illustrious sons is lying here."

"But we are grateful that

God used him over the years to work for humanity, for peace. Today, as he lies here, he has finished his work.

"We pray that all of us will emulate the service that your son has rendered to mankind. No matter what we are we will also die," he told the congregation.

Ordinary Ghanaians and dignitaries have paid their respects to Annan since his coffin was returned from Geneva and received with full honours on Monday.

Thousands of people have filed past the coffin, which was draped in the red, green and gold national flag and guarded by the military in ceremonial uniform.

One mourner, Fritz Kitcher, who spent his career working in human rights for the UN in Geneva, said he had seen Annan rise through the ranks.

Annan had taught him "the benefit of humility, the benefit of honesty, the benefit of decisiveness, and diplomacy from the grassroots," he told AFP.

Others described Annan as a father-figure and a source of national pride.

Annan devoted four decades of his working life to the UN, and was known for bringing quiet charisma to the role.

He was widely credited for raising the world body's profile in global politics during his two terms in office, facing challenges including wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Annan was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001, as the world was reeling from the September 11 terror attacks in the United States, jointly with the UN "for their work for a better organised and more peaceful world".

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KINDLY CHECK THE RESULT WITH THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE



SMITTEN! Priyanka Chopra, 36, beams in a bright fuchsia ensemble as she enjoys date night with fiancé Nick Jonas, 25, at Nobu in Malibu.

Shweta Bachchan to launch debut novel on Big B's birthday eve

Shweta Bachchan-Nanda's debut novel, which talks about everyday lives and is set in a Mumbai apartment, will be launched on the eve of her father's birthday on October 10.

Published by HarperCollins India, "Paradise Towers" is billed as a "quirky, intimate debut that explores the intertwined lives in the building - a forbidden romance, an elopement, the undercurrents of tension in corridor interactions and an explosive Diwali celebration".

Speaking about how she came to write "Paradise Towers", Shweta says, "I grew up with my grandfather who was a poet and a writer. Writing and reading was always a very important part of our lives. I've been writing a diary ever since I was a little girl, and wrote stories that I never shared with anyone."

"Then, one day I just said, I am going to take this plunge. I started writing a column for a newspaper in Mumbai and it gave me a lot of confidence to go ahead and do this full time, and that's where 'Paradise Towers' comes from."

In the book, Dinesh opens the door to the Kapoor flat one day to find Lata, the enchantress who works at Mrs Aly Khan's, carrying a hot case with freshly made gaajar ka halwa.



On the first floor, the inquisitive Mrs Mody wipes the dust off her precious binoculars to spy on the building's security guard.

The Singhs open the doors of their SUV, their four boys creating a ruckus - they are the newcomers, the outsiders. Through the peephole, the ever-watchful Mrs Ranganekar observes their arrival.

At the Paradise Towers in central Mumbai, everyone has a story to tell or maybe stories to hide.

Filmmaker Karan Johar finds the book "observant, moving, hilarious and exceptionally astute".

"Paradise Towers" is no slice of life", it's an entire loaf, he says, adding Shweta "builds" her debut novel with the ease of a literary veteran.

According to Shreya Punj, Assistant Editor at HarperCollins India, "Paradise Towers" is fresh, insightful and a story that will resonate with everyone.

"I fell in love with the story when I first read it. Now, 'Paradise Towers' is ready to meet its readers, and I cannot wait for people to fall in love with this quirky, intimate world Shweta has created," she says.

Bohemian Rhapsody star Rami Malek hits back at critics who claimed biopic erased Freddie Mercury's bisexuality

He is set to transform into music icon Freddie Mercury in the forthcoming Queen biopic *Bohemian Rhapsody*. And Rami Malek has hit back at those that criticised the film for not portraying the singer's identity as a bisexual man, as well as claims it avoided portraying his battle with AIDS.

The actor, 37, spoke in an interview with *Attitude* magazine, released on Thursday, about the response, saying: "It's a shame that people are making remarks after a minute teaser where you just wanna see the music. It's difficult. First, let me say that I don't think the film shies away from his sexuality or his all-consuming disease, which is obviously AIDS."

I don't know how you could avoid any of that, or if anyone would ever want to. It's a bit absurd that anyone's judging this from a minute trailer."

The first trailer for the film received a lot of criticism for its seemingly overt erasure of Mercury's identity, as it contained scenes where he flirted with a woman, while making no reference to his same-sex relationships.

Writer Bryan Fuller was one of many who vocalised his frustrations on Twitter, and said: "ANYONE ELSE MILDLY ANNOYED (enough to tweet about it) THAT THE



#BohemianRhapsody TRAILER FEATURES GAY/BISUPERSTAR FREDDIE MERCURY FLIRTING WITH A WOMAN BUT NO INDICATION OF HIS LOVE OF MEN? (sic)"

Hitting out at 'marketing people at Fox', the American Gods developer added: "FM is a queer artist. Showing him only romantic with a woman is erasing a huge facet of what made him a queer artist. You may know FM was bisexual, but most of America doesn't. They see a man

romantic with a woman. That does not say 'bi'."

Freddie was shown meeting his lifelong companion Mary Austin (Lucy Boynton), and it was only in the final trailer, released in July, that hinted at his relationships with men, as the band navigated their rise to fame.

Rami also addressed claims that the film doesn't show Mercury's illness, which led to his tragic death on 24th November 1991 at the age of just 45.

He said: "The film needed to approach it in a delicate manner. You can't shy away from it. It was an important moment to have in the film, one that ultimately is very sad but also empowering in a way. It shows you just how resilient human beings can be and how much we rely on the strength of our friends and family to get us through tough times."

This pandemic is still very much a horrific threat to so many people in the world. It exists as a reality for so many that I think it would be a shame not to address it."

The *Mr Robot* star also admitted that there was a lot of pressure portraying such an icon: "I was very self-aware from the onset that I was never going to portray Freddie Mercury as he was, with all of his idiosyncrasies, charisma."

I will never exactly be this man. All I could do was make as strong of an attempt as possible to capture his essence. I just had to remove myself from that kind of 'monkey on your back' that you have to be Freddie Mercury. No one will ever be Freddie Mercury, there will only ever be one. I just wanted to possibly open up a window to what his story was all about."

Bohemian Rhapsody will be released in the UK on October 24 and in the US on November 2.

Lady Gaga's former manager Troy Carter sued by Scooter Braun after he 'tried to hide' \$10million loan

He was Lady Gaga's manager throughout her meteoric rise from nobody to superstar.

But now Troy Carter is being sued by Justin Bieber's manager Scooter Braun for failing to repay a \$10million loan, according to TMZ.

The 45-year-old music mogul instead 'tried to hide the money' he owed, according to the gossip site on Wednesday.

Carter, who managed Gaga's career from 2007-2013, was apparently loaned the money in 2016 to tide his company over during a legal dispute, to be paid back at its conclusion. The website's sources claim 'Carter was arbitrating a dispute with his ex-client, Gaga.'



However once the case was settled, Troy 'tried to hide the money, instead of paying off the loan,' claims Justin Bieber's longtime manager.

Carter fired back at Braun's claims, saying he 'never borrowed money from Scooter,' according to TMZ, but instead was purchasing his old management company back from Braun, who offered him a discount. Carter also claimed Scooter had essentially extorted him when he 'threatened to sue him for fraud if he didn't pay'.

"There are only a handful of African-American executives left in our business and yet he's okay with attempting to falsely ruin my reputation," concluded Gaga's former manager.

Gaga -whose real name is Stefani Germanotta-split from Carter in 2013 citing 'creative differences' according to *Us Weekly*.

"It's sad but also liberating at the same time," a source told the magazine at the time.



HENRY CAVILL RESPONDS TO RUMOURS OF HIS EXIT FROM DCEU

Actor Henry Cavill responded to the reports on Thursday that he might be exiting DC Extended Universe as Superman.

According to a report by *The Hollywood Reporter* on Wednesday, Cavill, 35, who first appeared as the superhero in 2013's "Man of Steel", and later reprised his role in "Superman V Batman" and last year's "Justice League", might be parting ways with Warner Bros.

According to insiders, the development comes after talks of the actor's cameo in "Shazam!" did not come to fruition due to scheduling conflicts.

Cavill took to Instagram to post a funny video with a caption "Today was exciting #Superman".

In the video, the actor, wearing a Krypton Lifting Team T-shirt, is seen slowly showcasing a Superman figurine with "The Blue Danube" by Johann Strauss II playing in the background.

Cavill's manager Dany Garcia on Wednesday had quashed the reports, saying the "cape is still in his closet".

"Be peaceful, the cape is still in his closet. @wbpictures has been and continues to be our partners as they evolve the DC Universe. Anticipate a WB statement later today," she tweeted.

Warner Bros also released a statement and said they share a "great relationship" with Cavill.

"We have a great relationship and great respect for Henry Cavill that continues to remain unchanged. Additionally we have made no current decisions regarding any upcoming Superman films," read the WB statement.

The report also stated that actor Ben Affleck is also being said to depart his DCEU role as Batman, as a new, probably younger actor expected to take on the mantle in Matt Reeves' stand-alone film on the Caped Crusader.

ARIES: New beginnings and promising new opportunities may appear from a distant state or foreign country. Aries. Your adventurous side is excited and enthusiastic, but the side of you that wants to stay settled could put up some resistance. Don't feel you have to jump into anything. Get all the facts and assess the situation objectively. Think seriously about it all. What do you most want?

TAURUS: A financial windfall might open new doors for you, Taurus, and you could consider making some major changes in your life. You might think about moving to a nicer home. Romance is definitely on your mind. If you aren't already involved in a domestic situation, you might consider it seriously right now. Change can be frightening, but these changes are good. Don't hesitate.

GEMINI: Expect some positive changes in a current partnership, Gemini. If this is a business partnership, a new agreement between you shows promise of success and good fortune. If this is a romance, you might be so perfectly compatible that you're considering moving to the next level of commitment. Any new partnership begun today should be promising and bring you whatever you hope to gain.

CANCER: Have you been working out, following a new dietary program, or both, Cancer? If so, today you could look in the mirror and for the first time see some tangible and positive results. You're probably looking and feeling great. Don't abandon your efforts. You'll want to continue the progress. Keep the energy flowing by going for a run or other workout, then treat yourself to a small indulgence.

LEO: Have you been thinking about relocating, Leo? The siren song of distant states or exotic lands may play constantly in your ears. Foreign cultures could inspire you artistically, spiritually, and personally. This is actually a time when few things are out of your reach. If you're serious about this, look into it. You can decide once you have all the facts.

VIRGO: Expect something new to take place regarding your home today, Virgo. Someone could come for a visit or even move in. You could be redecorating, landscaping, or buying new furniture. There is always the possibility that you're moving. Whatever the changes, they're likely to be positive despite the messy and disruptive process of making them. You've got a lot to look forward to!

LIBRA: Some wonderful news could

come to you, Libra, possibly from a sibling or neighbor. It might involve money or a new opportunity that's opening up nearby. A group event concerning a subject you're very interested in could also take place. You might feel you have a lot of phone calls to make and plans to think about. The future looks bright. Enjoy!

SCORPIO: An opportunity to bring in extra income might arrive today, Scorpio, possibly through a female friend. Another Scorpio might be involved. This probably involves a special, temporary project, but it could prove enjoyable and profitable. A love partner might want to participate, too. Think about it before committing. Talk to people who have done this before. It's worth a try, anyway.

SAGITTARIUS: This is a day of fresh beginnings for you, Sagittarius.

Accomplishments in the past foster a new sense of self-confidence, along with optimism and enthusiasm for the future. Travel lies ahead, and possibly advancing your education in some way. Romance also looks promising. Go for a facial or massage today, or buy some new clothes. Start the new cycle by making your appearance match what you feel inside.

CAPRICORN: If you've never tried your hand at the arts, Capricorn, this is the day to do it. Your imagination and ingenuity are flying high, and your aesthetic sense is acute right now. If you aren't already involved with such activities, look online or in the paper and see what classes or workshops are offered in your area. Get a friend to go with you. You'll probably have a great time!

AQUARIUS: You could encounter

a potential romantic partner today, Aquarius. You'll probably meet this person at a group event and hit it off immediately. This person is likely to be bright, physically attractive, kind-hearted, and sensitive. If you're single and available, don't pass up this opportunity. Take advantage of the event to get to know each other. Who knows where this might lead?

PISCES: A lot of changes could be taking place in your life now, Pisces. Even though most of them are positive, the upheaval can be unsettling right now. Don't give in to panic. Nothing needs to be done that you can't handle. Take each task one step at a time. As you vault each hurdle, the road ahead seems that much smoother. When you arrive, all will be well. Keep going!