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IS SCARY: PRABHAS**  
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**KASHMIRIS ARE LIVING  
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**FLOP FILMS DON'T KILL AN  
ACTOR, NOT BEING WANTED  
BY ANYONE DOES: SUDEEP**

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# SummitTIMES

Vol 04 | Issue 225 | Gangtok | Friday | 23 August 2019

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

**Chandrayaan2:  
Scientists to  
take up crucial  
soft landing  
process on  
Sept7**

**CHENNAI, AUG 22 (PTI):** The crucial process of taking up soft landing of the lander 'Vikram' on-board the Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft that is currently in the lunar orbit will be taken up in the early hours of September 7, ISRO Chairman K Sivan said on Thursday.

Scientists at the Indian Space Research Organisation in Bengaluru would be engaged in this process which is expected to be completed by 1.55 am, he told reporters at the airport here.

"It is expected to make a soft landing (on the surface of the moon) at around 1.40 am and completed by 1.55 am. At the global level this is an important mission. It is being keenly watched by everyone," he said.

Elaborating about the complexity involved, he said the speed of the spacecraft needs to be brought down to 'zero'.

In a major milestone for India's second Moon mission, the Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft successfully entered the lunar orbit on Tuesday by performing Lunar Orbit Insertion (LOI) maneuver.

The second Lunar bound orbit manoeuvre for the spacecraft was successfully performed on Wednesday.

There will be three more orbit manoeuvres to make the spacecraft enter into its final orbit passing over the lunar poles at a distance of about 100 km from the Moon's surface.

ISRO has said subsequently the lander will separate from the Orbiter (on September 2) and enter into a 100 km X30 km orbit around the Moon.

Then it will perform a series of complex braking manoeuvres to soft land in the South polar region of the Moon.

Asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be part of the event when 'Vikram' makes the soft landing, he said an invitation has been sent seeking the Prime Minister's participation.

Asked if there was any gender bias at ISRO, he said there was no such discrimination and talented women were always given better roles.

"There is no gender bias at ISRO. Two women got an opportunity during Chandrayaan-2 mission. Similarly, there will be opportunities for women to play lead roles in future projects (of ISRO)," he said.

Two women scientists hogged the limelight when ISRO launched the

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**MANGAN, 22 AUG [IPR]:** Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] today inaugurated a Buddhist Circuit Building, "Karma Tobden Denkhang," at Goenchen Phodong Karma Thubten Tashi Chokorling (Phodong Monastery) in North Sikkim at a function also attended by Drupen Dichen Rinpoche from Rumtek Monastery.

The inaugural ceremony was attended amongst others by the Sikkim Legislative Assembly Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha MP, Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, Secretaries, DM [North], SP [North], officers from various department, monks and local dignitaries.

Upon his arrival, the Chief Minister was welcomed with a ceremonial reception by Udor Chosum at the main Monas-



tery. Thereafter, the Chief Minister offered prayers at the main shrine.

Addressing his maiden visit to North Sikkim as the Chief Minister, Mr Tamang extended his congratulations to the

people of the district and the monks of Phodong Monastery for getting a new Buddhist Circuit Building to cater to the needs of the growing number of pilgrims coming to the monastery.

Responding to the demands placed by the Omjay of Phodong Monastery regarding visit of the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje to Sikkim, the Chief Minister informed that the

Government of India has given its consent to allow the Karmapa to visit Sikkim and also assured that the Karmapa will make his maiden visit to Sikkim in the near future. The Chief Minister

appreciated the sacrifices made by the monks who went on a 707-day relay hunger strike for the same cause and thanked the Government of India for granting the Karmapa permission to

visit the Himalayan state.

The Chief Minister mentioned the importance of bringing the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa to the State for blessing, peace and communal harmony of the state.

Speaking on tourism, the Chief Minister said that a Buddhist Circuit Building like "Karma Topden Denkhang" plays a big role on bringing tourists from far corners of the globe.

He stated that he has seen a very high potential of tourism industry in North Sikkim and believes that the State is yet to capitalize on the full potential of the attracting tourists to the State.

He emphasized developing tourism infrastructure of highest degree to attract high class tourists in the State. A High Class Tourism Corridor will be

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## Chidambaram sent to 4-day CBI custody till Aug 26 by court in INX Media case

**UDAYAN KISHOR AND PAWAN KUMAR SINGH**  
**NEW DELHI, AUG 22 (PTI):** Congress leader P Chidambaram was Thursday sent to four-day CBI custody by a Delhi court which said his custodial interrogation was justified in the INX Media corruption case.

The court said Chidambaram will be in the CBI custody till August 26, during which the agency will get him medically examined regularly as per the rules, and allowed his family members and lawyers to meet him for half an hour every day.

"Considering the facts and circumstances, I am of the view that police custody is justified," Special Judge Ajay Kumar Kuhar said and remanded him to the CBI custody till August 26.

After the pronouncement of the order, 73-year-old Chidambaram was immediately taken out of the court room by the CBI team.

The court heard the arguments of the CBI and his counsel for over one and a half hours during which the agency said there was a need to unearth a larger conspiracy and to go to the root of the case.

Chidambaram's counsel opposed the CBI plea saying that all the other accused, including his son Karti, have already been granted bail in the case.

Chidambaram, who was Union home minister as also finance minister during the UPA rule from 2004 to 2014, was arrested Wednesday night after he failed to get protection from the Supreme Court, which did not list for an urgent hearing his appeal against the Delhi High Court verdict dismissing his anticipatory bail plea on Tuesday.

The CBI had registered an FIR on May 15, 2017, alleging irregularities in the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) clearance granted to the INX Media group for receiving overseas funds of Rs 305 crore in 2007 during Chidambaram's tenure as the finance minister.

Thereafter, the ED lodged a money laundering case in this regard in 2018.

Chidambaram was produced in the court amidst tight security and senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for him, argued that the first arrest in the case was of Bhaskar Raman, chartered accountant of Karti, who is presently out on bail.

Besides that, Peter and Indrani Mukherjea, also accused in the case, are out on default bail as they are in jail in connection with another matter, Sibal said. He said the FIPB approval was given by senior officials, who were not arrested.

He also contended that grant of bail was a rule and the issue before the court was of personal liberty.

However, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said CBI has to interrogate Chidambaram in custody as he was non-cooperative and evasive in replies.

He told the court that the agency was not extorting confession

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## Passang Sherpa gives MHA till Pang Lhabsol to revert opening of Khangchendzonga for climbing

**SAGAR CHETTRI**  
**GANGTOK, 22 AUG:**

Political activist Passang Sherpa, who had contended the recent Lok Sabha elections as an independent candidate, has condemned and registered a strong protest against the decision of the Ministry of Home Affairs to open several peaks and mountains, including Khangchendzonga, in Sikkim for mountaineering and trekking.

He has threatened to launch a strong movement if MHA did not roll back its decision by 13 September, when Pang Lhabsol, the worship of Khangchendzonga, is held in the State.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Sherpa stated that the notification in question was anti-Sikkim and anti-Sikkimese and in abject violation of Article 371F of the Constitution of India.

"We strongly condemn and reject such an anti-Sikkimese notification," he said.

He added that this notification was also contradictory to the Places of Worship Act, 1991 and the notification taken out by the State government in 2001.



These notified sacred peaks and mountains are important to the people of Sikkim and related to their religious sentiments. He added that these notified sacred places should remain untouched.

Mr Sherpa mentioned that the notification was taken out on 13 August and intimated to the State Home Secretary the same day and that the Tourism Department even held a meeting to promote and sell these peaks and mountains on 17 August.

On the same, he stressed that

the State Government has not shown any concern till date on this notification. He added that State government has to consult with the concerned stakeholders.

He alleged that political parties of the State were busy prioritising alliance with BJP and saving their government over the State and its people.

"The people of Sikkim have sent their representatives to speak for them but the representatives are only after power and position," he added.

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## 'Dream Budget' to INX nightmare: Chidambaram faces toughest test of career

**NEW DELHI, AUG 22 (PTI):** He once presented a 'Dream Budget' and helmed the crucial finance as well as home ministries but today 73-year-old lawyer-politician Palaniappan Chidambaram is facing the toughest crisis of his career.

Arrested by the CBI over charges of money laundering and corruption in the INX Media case, Chidambaram might be in for a long battle in courts before the case comes to a closure.

A votary of free enterprise and unbridled economic reforms, Chidambaram started off as a hard-core leftist arguing in favour of the command economy in the late 1960s.



A scion of a prominent industrialist family from Tamil Nadu, Chidambaram -- who has done MBA from Harvard Business School -- chose not to join

the family business. Instead, he ventured into politics by joining the Congress after the party lost power in Tamil Nadu in 1967.

He remained with Indira

Gandhi when the party split in 1969 and in 1984, was inducted as a junior commerce minister in Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi-led government.

Chidambaram was also a junior minister in Prime Minister Narasimha Rao-led government, holding portfolios such as commerce and industry. However, disagreement with the party's decision over political alignments saw him quitting and setting up a new political outfit in 1996.

A year later, as finance minister in the United Front -- an alliance of 13 parties -- government, he presented the 'Dream Budget' that helped broaden India's tax base.

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# Newly inducted BJP MLAs begin membership drive in South and West

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 22 AUG:**

The ten MLAs who recently joined Bharatiya Janata Party have taken the people of their constituencies into confidence and started the party's membership extension program, a BJP press release informs.

Barfung MLA, Tashi Thendup Bhutia held a coordination meeting with local panchayats and general public at Ravangla today.

Rangang-Yangang MLA, Raj Kumari Thapa was also present in the meeting while other activists including Membership In-charge of Bharatiya Janata Party, Dawa Tshering Bhutia, South district, were also present. Meanwhile, MLA, Mr Bhutia has hoisted the BJP flag at his residence.

Locals also welcomed him while people in large numbers have adopted BJP memberships, embracing the party's policies, the release mentions.

## CM inaugurates...

initiated to attract more tourists throughout the region, he added.

Furthermore, Chief Minister informed that his Government plans to transform every village in Sikkim into a Smart Village and informed the gathering of the concept of "Smile Always" a gift of Rs 10 by all the tourists visiting Sikkim which will be an extra impetus to the Tourism Sector of the state.

In this context, he called the people of the state to put collective effort to promote tourism industry in the state.

The Chief Minister assured that his Government is committed to fulfill the rising aspirations of all segments of the state. In doing so, he called for the people's constant support.

He encouraged Government employees to work together for the betterment of the society.

Additionally, he stressed that a better working culture can only be achieved through example set by the heads of department. He instructed the Government employees to duly discharge their duties with utmost sincerity and punctuality in the interest of the public.

Sangha MLA Sonam Lama, who is also the RDD Minister, recalled the struggles faced by the monk communi-

## Chidambaram sent...

from Chidambaram but it had the right to reach the root of the case.

"It is a serious case involving intelligent people and we will fail in our duty if we don't get to the root of the case," the solicitor general said, adding that even Karti underwent custodial interrogation in the case.

Mehta said Chidambaram has tremendous potential of not cooperating in probe since he is highly intelligent and certain facts about the case cannot be narrated in the open court.

Besides Sibal, senior advocate Abhishek M Singhvi, also appeared for Chidambaram, opposed CBI's plea saying that the former Union Minister was not a flight risk.

Singhvi said the entire CBI case was based on the statement of Indrani Mukherjea, who has turned approver in the case.

He said Chidambaram cannot answer what CBI wants to hear and added that the agency cannot seek remand on the ground of evasive replies.

He also argued that there was no allegation of tampering of evidence by CBI.

Singhvi further contended that police remand can only be granted in special circumstances and this was a case where there was no new development.

He said the agency was asking Chidambaram only old questions since his arrest on Wednesday night.

Mehta countered the arguments advanced on behalf of Chidambaram, saying that everybody was equal before the court.

He also opposed the plea that Chidambaram be allowed to argue for himself, saying he has able lawyers representing him. Mehta said during his



Addressing the coordination meeting, Mr Bhutia said that he had joined the party, embracing the policy of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the BJP government led by PM, Narendra Modi at the centre.

He appealed to all the people to accept the membership of the Bharatiya Janata Party, embracing the slogan of nationalism and development. He highlighted the recent bold steps taken by the Central Government and mentioned the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A

from Jammu and Kashmir, the Triple Talaq Anti-Divorce Laws, and the stringent action against terrorism and corruption.

Likewise on Wednesday, Maneymbung Dentam MLA, NK Subba, also hoisted the BJP flag at his residence and has begun extension work of the party in the area. Similarly, MLA of Chujachen Constituency, KB Rai, also held a coordination meeting taking his supporters and general public into confidence.

He further appealed to the supporters and lo-

cals to carry forward the expansion program of the Bharatiya Janata Party by adopting the policy principles of the party in the coming days.

Further, BJP Sikkim is organizing a programme at the Party Office in Singtam on 26 August to welcome all the legislators who have recently joined the party. On this day, the organizational expansion of the party will be promoted by introducing and coordinating with all the leaders and activists of the party, the release mentions.

## WB BJP chief claims foreign terrorists targeting him

**KOLKATA, AUG 22 (PTI):**

West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh on Thursday claimed that he had to shift to a new residence following inputs from central intelligence agencies about possible life threats on him by foreign terrorists.

The police, however, said they have no information in this regard. Ghosh, a Lok Sabha MP who enjoys Y+ category security cover provided by the central government, said he shifted to the new residence on Wednesday night.

"I had inputs from central intelligence agencies that certain foreign terror outfits are planning to attack me. So I shifted to a new residence following their advice," the BJP leader said.

Asked whether or not the Centre would upgrade his security cover to Z or Z+ category, Ghosh said he has no such information.

"Everybody knows that I have been attacked during several political programmes in Kolkata and other parts of the state. So the central government decided to provide me with security. But at times security cover stops you from interacting with the people," he said.

Bidhannagar Police Commissioner L N Meena said Ghosh did not complain to the police about threats on his life, and they also did not have any information about intelligence inputs in this regard.

"If he makes any complaint to us, we will definitely look into it," Meena said.

Ghosh had been staying in an area under the jurisdiction of the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate. He has shifted to another place in the same area.

## Public voices condemn opening of Sikkim's peaks for mountaineering

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 22 AUG:**

A group called Independent Democrats of Sikkim has requested the Ministry of Home Affairs to immediately withdraw its notification opening several peaks and mountains of Sikkim for mountaineering and trekking. The organization has also urged the Sikkim Government to clarify its stand on the opening of holy peaks and mountains for mountaineering and trekking.

A press release issued by Sonam Gyatso Sherpa of Independent Democrats of Sikkim states that on the day when 10 Sikkim Democratic Front legislators were busy joining Bharatiya Janata Party disrespecting people's mandate on 13 August, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India issued a notification opening several peaks and mountains for mountaineering and trekking.

"The Ministry of Home Affairs opening these peaks and mountains without consulting the people of Sikkim has

undermined the sentiment of the Sikkimese people. The silence on the part of the State Government on such a crucial issue has further raised apprehensions in the minds of Sikkimese people," the release states.

The release adds that it is a known fact that Sikkimese revere mountains and peaks as sacred and there are many festivals and rituals worshipping these peaks. Moreover, the Places of Worship Act 1991 has enlisted many of these peaks and mountains as Buddhist places of worship.

Independent Democrats of Sikkim has urged the Ministry of Home Affairs to immediately withdraw the "anti-Sikkimese" notification at the earliest to uphold the sanctity of holy peaks and mountains as already established under the Places of Worship Act.

It has further appealed to the State government to wake up from slumber and clarify their stand regarding the opening of holy peaks and mountains for mountaineering and trekking.

## Awareness on Intellectual Property Rights at Aho



**GANGTOK, 22 AUG (PIB):** ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Pakyong, Sikkim organized "Awareness cum Training Programme on Intellectual Property Rights" at Aho, Aho Yangtam, East Sikkim, Sikkim, on 21 Aug, 2019.

Around 50 farmers participated in the training programme. During the programme, the inaugural session was addressed by Scientist (Economic Botany & PGR), Ravi Kishore Pamarthi with the welcome of participants and given a brief introduction about IPRs in conservation of biodiversity.

Technical, Ajay Bhu-

shal emphasized on the role of farmers rights and importance of biodiversity. Senior Research Fellow (IPR), Deepika Sharma mentioned about geographical indications and indigenous traditional knowledge.

All participants were actively participated in interaction with staff of ICAR-NRCO regarding IPR issues. During the programme, Member, GPU, Tara Devi Sharma, and Scientist (Genetics and Plant Breeding), Dr BP Mallikarjuna attended the programme. Senior Research Fellow, Ms Sharma had given formal vote of thanks in the programme.

## HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

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## Passang Sherpa...

He further alleged that the people's representatives have betrayed the trust of the people on this matter.

Mr Sherpa commented that political leaders have already sold the soil and rivers of the State and now the people will not allow selling of its peaks and mountains.

## Chandrayaan2...

Chandrayaan-2 on July 22 with Ritu Karidhal and M Vanitha being the mission and project directors respectively.

Sivan was on Thursday honoured with the Tamil Nadu government's Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Award by Chief Minister K Palaniswami at the Secretariat here.

Chandrayaan-2, launched on July 22 by India's most powerful rocket GSLV MkIII-M1, had entered the Lunar Transfer Trajectory on August 14, leaving the Earth orbit.

It comprises an Orbiter, Lander (Vikram), named after the father of Indian space research programme Dr Vikram A Sarabhai, and Rover (Pragyan).

The rover is set to make the soft landing on the Moon on September 7 and if successful the mission would make India the fourth country after Russia, the US and China to achieve the feat.

## 'Dream Budget'...

The budget came at a time when economic reforms were seen as anti-poor in the coalition area.

Chidambaram returned to Congress and became finance minister under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. He was at the helm of finance ministry between 2004 and 2008, before becoming home minister from December 2008 to July 2012. He returned to the finance ministry for the rest of the UPA-II term that ended in 2014.

He is widely credited with implementing a series of reforms to stem a slowdown in growth, curb a widening fiscal deficit and attract more foreign investment into Asia's third largest economy.

In 2014, he did not contest election from his traditional Lok Sabha seat of Sivaganga in Tamil Nadu, which he had won seven times.

As BJP came to power, probe agencies started casting their net on him and his family in connection with corruption cases, including INX Media, Aircel Maxis and more recently purchase of aircraft by Air India during his tenure as finance minister in UPA-II.

Chidambaram, also a prominent lawyer, entered Parliament from Sivaganga constituency in Tamil Nadu in 1984 and served as junior commerce minister in the Rajiv Gandhi government.

The big-break in his political career came when he quit Congress and joined Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC), which was part of the coalition government under Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda.

Chidambaram was made the country's finance minister and he presented the proverbial 'Dream Budget' in 1997. However, the government lost power in the following year.

While the BJP-led NDA was in power (1999-2004), Chidambaram quit TMC in 2001 and formed his own party Congress Jananayaka Peravai. However, things did not go as planned and he had to merge his party with the Congress.

After about six years, he again became the finance minister in the Congress-led UPA under the prime ministership of Manmohan Singh in 2004.

Chidambaram, known for his administrative prowess, was moved to the home ministry after the Mumbai terror attack in 2008 as incumbent Shivraj Patil quit under public pressure.

Fortunes continued to favour Chidambaram and he won the Lok Sabha election from Sivaganga in 2009 and continued as the union home minister during the second term of Manmohan Singh.

However, in 2012 when the then finance minister Pranab Mukherjee was elected as the President of India, Chidambaram was once again given the responsibility of the key finance ministry.

With the fall of Congress, Chidambaram's political graph too started moving southwards. He is currently a member of the Rajya Sabha.

The CBI and the ED are probing various decisions taken by him as finance minister. Chidambaram was arrested on Wednesday by the CBI in relation to the INX Media case.

While rejecting his anticipatory bail, the Delhi High Court had said Chidambaram seems to be the "kingpin" and "key conspirator" in the INX media case of money laundering and he needs to be interrogated in custody for the investigation to be effective.

Just before his arrest on Wednesday, Chidambaram made a dramatic appearance at the Congress headquarters, where he read a statement to the press clarifying his position.

## ~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

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**Proprietor**  
**Hotel Parasol Residency,**  
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# West Pendam MLA tours constituency



**RANGPO, 21 AUG (IPR):** Speaker, Sikkim Legislative Assembly (SLA) cum MLA, West Pendam Constituency, LB Das visited several institutions including the Industrial Training Institute, Mining SSS, Rangpo SSS and Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Rangpo under West Pendam constituency to understand the conditions, academic process of the institutions and present status of the PHC.

## SDF accuses SKM of misleading people with its confusing signals on alliance with BJP

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 22 AUG:** Sikkim Democratic Front has accused Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] of keeping the people in the dark about his plans vis a vis Bharatiya Janata Party. An SDF press release issued by its spokesperson, JB Darnal, points out that Sikkim Krantikari

Morcha has been meeting BJP leaders frequently, but has failed to make its stand clear when it comes to its relationship with BJP. The release highlights that a regional party can run an effective government in Sikkim and maintain cordial ties with the Centre as has been proven by the SDF

## BJP clocks 77 lakh membership in Bengal

**KOLKATA, AUG 22 (PTI):** Buoyed by its stupendous performance in the last Lok Sabha polls, the West Bengal BJP has clocked a record membership of 77 lakhs in the state, party leaders claimed Thursday. The Bengal BJP has surpassed the target set by the central leadership to enroll 60 lakhs members when the country-wide membership drive began on July 6, according to the party sources. “As per the latest data, the membership drive has been immensely successful in Bengal. The central leadership initially had set a target of 50 lakhs for Bengal, later it was increased to 60 lakhs. “But we have surpassed that target too and with the membership drive closing on August 20, we have now 77 lakhs members across the state. It is indeed an achievement,” BJP national secretary Rahul Sinha told reporters. It is a massive jump from the membership campaign that was done a few years back when the party had managed

to enroll 42 lakh members in its fold, he said. Sinha said although the membership drive has closed in other parts of the country, but in a few states such as West Bengal, which are priority states for BJP, the exercise will continue till December this year. “The central leadership had set a target of 60 lakhs but the Bengal leadership had decided to get one crore members on board. Now we have reached a little above 77 lakhs. So when this membership drive specifically for states like Bengal in December ends we will have more than one crore members,” a beaming Sinha claimed. Reacting to BJP’s claim, TMC secretary general Partha Chatterjee wondered whether the 77 lakhs members are “real members or a handiwork of BJP’s fake news team.” “Last time they had claimed they have 42 lakh members. Later it was found most of them were fake members. Now they are saying they have 77

lakh members, we have doubts whether it is actually true or just a handiwork for BJP’s fake news team,” Chatterjee said. The countrywide BJP membership drive had started on July 6 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah launching it from Varanasi and Telangana respectively on the party ideologue Syama Prasad Mookerjee’s birth anniversary. The BJP in last few years has made deep inroads in Bengal and has emerged as the main challenger to ruling TMC by pushing Congress and Left Front to distant third and fourth position respectively. The BJP in 2019 Parliamentary elections bagged 18 out of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in the state just four less than the ruling TMC. The TMC’s tally has come down from 34 in 2014 to 22 seats in this election. The saffron party leaders are now asserting that their next target is to unseat Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee from the power in 2021 state election.

## Co-op bank scam: HC orders FIR against Ajit Pawar, others

**MUMBAI, AUG 22 (PTI):** The Bombay High Court directed police to register FIR against NCP leader Ajit Pawar and over 70 others in the Maharashtra State Co-operative Bank scam on Thursday, observing that they seemed to have “complete knowledge” that their actions would cause a huge loss to the bank. The court asked Mumbai police’s Economic Offences Wing to register an FIR against the accused within five days. Prima facie there was “credible evidence” against the accused,

it added. Pawar, PWP leader Jayant Patil and several former directors of the bank are accused of violating banking and RBI regulations while disbursing loans to sugar mills at very low rates and selling off assets of defaulter businesses at throw-away prices. Such sale of assets, disbursement of cheap loans and a failure to ensure repayment resulted in losses of over Rs 1,000 crore to the bank between 2007 and 2011, it is alleged. The accused also forged records and fudged figures to show

the bank was making profits, it is alleged. Pawar, a former deputy chief minister and finance minister, was a director of the bank during the relevant period. Inquiries by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development and a charge sheet filed by a quasi-judicial inquiry commission under the Maharashtra Co-operative Societies Act had blamed Pawar and other accused for the bank’s losses. Surinder Arora, an activist, had filed a complaint against Pawar and

## CBI expands probe against P Chidambaram; FDI clearances to other companies also under scanner

**NEW DELHI, AUG 22 (PTI):** The CBI has expanded the probe against former finance minister P Chidambaram, bringing under its ambit foreign investment clearances given to companies other than INX media during his tenure, officials said Thursday. The CBI suspects that Chidambaram and his son Karti also received kickbacks from other companies to facilitate foreign investment clearances through the FIPB route which necessitates the former minister’s custodial interrogation, they said. Both Chidambaram and Karti have strongly denied allegations of corruption levelled by the CBI. The agency in its FIR related to INX media case has alleged that Karti

Chidambaram helped the company by using his influence in the ministry to get clearance for FDI investment worth Rs 305 crore and for it companies linked to him received payments under the garb of consultancy services. The FIR has not mentioned whether Chidambaram himself received any payments for granting FDI clearances. The CBI investigation is understood to have shown that Karti Chidambaram, through his shell firms, also allegedly received payments from “many other companies” which were granted clearances by FIPB during Chidambaram’s tenure, sources said. Chidambaram was the finance minister in Congress-led UPA government between May



22, 2004 and November 30, 2008 and in the second tenure from July 31, 2012 to May 26, 2014. The CBI is investigating payment trails of several companies abroad and in order to trace such investments, the CBI has issued Letter Rogatory, a judicial request to different countries seeking information about these suspicious transactions, they said. The agency

sources refused to give details of LRs and companies whose FDI clearances are under scanner as it may hamper future course of probe in the cases. After his arrest Wednesday evening, the CBI started to question Chidambaram early Thursday morning. The CBI maintains that he did not cooperate with investigation and

gave evasive replies on many crucial questions placed before him by the investigation officer of the case. The agency sources said positions taken by the former finance minister in his replies are in gross contradiction to other accused and witnesses. After the Delhi High Court dismissed his anticipatory bail application, the CBI made an attempt to locate him at his residence 115-A Jor Bagh, New Delhi. The agency also pasted a notice there seeking his presence before the investigation officer within two hours but when “he did not join investigation”, a non-bailable warrant was issued by Special CBI court on the basis of which he was taken into custody on Wednesday evening, they said.

## Nitish rues poor CD ratio in Bihar, urges banks to fan out in all panchayats

**PATNA, AUG 22 (PTI):** Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday rued the state’s credit deposit (CD) ratio being far less than the national average and urged the banking sector to help bridge the gap. Addressing the quarterly meeting of the state-level bankers’ committee (SLBC) here, the chief minister also urged the banks to open branches in all panchayats of the state and offered of providing them space for the same.

two decades ago to the present level of Rs 2 lakh crore, he said. “Nearly 89 per cent of our state’s population lives in villages. They are engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry and pisciculture. The banks can provide them with valuable assistance. I would urge the banks to open their branches in all panchayats of the state. We will provide you with the necessary space in Panchayat Sarkaar Bhavans,” Kumar said.

“The CD ratio for Bihar is 45 per cent, far less than the national average of 75 per cent. This is despite the fact that the people of the state have always reposed great trust in banks, preferring these for depositing their hard earned money,” Kumar told the meeting. The chief minister said the address of RBI Deputy Governor Mahesh Kumar Jain at the SLBC gave him hope that things might look up for the state, which was making rapid economic progress. “We are a densely populated, landlocked state. Hence we cannot expect investments for a large scale private industries here. But the state has demonstrated tremendous potential for growth in sectors like agriculture, dairy and fisheries. Those engaged in these businesses must be given due financial support,” Kumar said. The state’s gross domestic product has soared from just Rs 25,000 crore less than

Later, interacting with bank officials, Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi who also holds finance portfolio, said the facility of overdraft should be extended to nearly nine million people across 13 districts of north Bihar, who have been hit by flash floods. He expressed dissatisfaction over KCCs (Kisan credit cards) being provided to only 2.19 lakh farmers last year as against a target of 10 lakh. He also urged the banks to extend loans to teachers employed on contractual basis in accordance with their respective salaries. Modi also suggested that names of those defaulting on loans in excess of Rs 25 lakh be made public. He pointed out that the rate of recovery for loans given to self help groups by micro finance companies was as high as 99 per cent and that there was no reason why recovering money should be a problem.

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## “CHALISWA” (PRAYER MEETING)

The Holy Quran recitation (Religious Perform) after forty days of death of late Mrs. NAD-RA KHATOON, who left for heavenly abode on 24th July 2019(Wednesday), falls on 31st August 2019(Saturday) shall be held at Marut Bhawan, Namchi Bazaar, South Sikkim.

### “AMEEN”

Maniul Haque Ansari(Husband), Naseema Bano & Rubina Anjum(Daughters) Mohshin Raza (son).  
Time: 10:00 am onwards

**Contact: 9475077786.  
(Meraaj Complex, Central Park  
Namchi Bazaar, South Sikkim).**



## RURAL MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM GANGTOK

Memo No.548/RM&DD/MGNREGA/19-20

Dated: 20 /08/2019

## NOTICE FOR RE-TENDER

( NIT Reference no.352/RM&DD/MGNREGA/19-20 dated 4/7/2019 )

With reference to above tender notice published in the Sikkim Herald/Sikkim Express and Summit Times dated 6th July 2019 for supply of materials for MGNREGA for the year 2019-20, the date for re-tender for supply of the materials under MGNREGA for the BAC, Mangan,North Sikkim and BAC,Martam,East Sikkim has been fixed on 26/08/2019 and will be opened on same day at 2pm at the respective BDO Offices. All other terms and conditions as mentioned in NIT Memo No.287/RM&DD/MGNREGA dated 21/06/2019 shall remain same.

**R.O. No. 152/IPR/PUB/Classi./19-20**

**Dated: 20.8.2019**

Sr.Accounts Officer-MGNREGA

RM&DD,Gangtok.



## Nothing Sacred

*Sikkim needs to remind Delhi that some things it should leave alone*

Agreed, just opening a peak for mountaineering does not mean that permissions will be granted immediately. That said, if Sikkim does not speak up forcefully enough now, it will have to just swallow its pride and hurt sentiments and hope that the weather gods deliver what they couldn't as a people and thwart expeditions from succeeding.

The recent decision of the Ministry of Home Affairs to open Sikkim's sacred peak, Khangchendzonga, for mountaineering is problematic on several counts. Before it decided, did the Ministry not wonder why the highest peak in the country was not open for mountaineering all these years? That would have been an obvious query, and probably it was, and then the babus appear to have dismissed it to an oversight and decided to explore whether they could make an Everest out of Khangchendzonga. Too speculative? Probably. But then maybe not, because if MHA had paused on the issue a bit, or even Googled it, they would have realized that the State Government of Sikkim had officially banned mountaineering on Khangchendzonga in recognition of the divinity attached by the people here to the mountain. It is possible then that it was ignorance that informed MHA's decision. And while there will be the apologists who will argue that the Centre should be excused since it did not know what the mountain means to Sikkim, the Centre's ignorance is still a major worry. There could be more worrying and directly damaging consequences of such ignorance. For instance, what if Delhi "forgets" that Sikkim enjoys special status within the Indian union and extends something to the state in conflict with its old laws? The Khangchendzonga episode offers Sikkim the opportunity to remind Delhi that it cannot take unilateral decisions when it comes to the State. And don't expect the politicians to do it for you because the local politicians have more than amply displayed that they will not stand up to Delhi. So it will have to be the people and their apolitical organizations which build consensus and convey to Delhi in a clear voice that access to their sacred summit cannot be handed over to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation. If Khangchendzonga is to ever be opened for mountaineering, it will be the people of Sikkim who will decide when and how and not a Ministry which clearly does not know any better. It is important the Sikkim conveys this message to the Centre not only because the State clearly has problems with Khangchendzonga opened for climbing but also because now has arrived a unifying issue to remind Delhi of how special Sikkim is. Do so forcefully enough now and Delhi will remember it for all future interactions with the State. Pay it only lip-service, and Delhi will know it can have its way with Sikkim. Nobody would want that given the current dispensation in office at the Centre.

An entrenched colonial hangover has ensured that Delhi has the final say when it comes to a mountain held special by Sikkim. The problem with this scenario is that local sentiments are lost and obnoxious conditions like having an army liaison tag along, surveillance level checks on what the mountaineers can and cannot do get imposed instead. What the babus at MHA obviously lack is the principled approach of erstwhile mountaineers. Before the successful expedition of 1955 got underway, the leader of the expedition made detour to Sikkim and called on the Chogyal. The expedition was attempting Khangchendzonga from the Nepal side and hence required nothing – neither permission nor personnel – from Sikkim. And yet, when members of the expedition learned that Sikkim attached divinity to the mountain, its leader met the Chogyal and promised him that should the expedition succeed, its climbers would stop six feet short of the summit so that the summit, where Sikkim's guardian deity resides, remains untrodden. As mentioned, there was no need for them to do so. And yet they did. And the expedition succeeded and all photographs of the success show the climbers standing respectfully short of the summit, there are no photographs of mountaineers standing on the summit. And with this, a tradition was started unique to Khangchendzonga in which summiteers stop short of the summit. Unfortunately, MHA is not staffed by such gentlemen which is why things need to be spelled out for them. It will be best if the lay Sikkimese did so.

On a parting note, even though MHA might be full of pencil-pushers ignorant of climbing rituals and stories, the Indian Mountaineering Foundation must surely be aware of the history of climbing on Khangchendzonga. It is inexcusable that it did not brief the Ministry about this aspect and for that reason alone Sikkim should insist that when it comes to mountaineering even on the other lesser peaks in the State, IMF should not be allowed.



## Kashmiris are living a long nightmare of Indian colonialism

**GOLDIE OSURI**  
*theconversation.com*

India's decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in early August, and the repression and communications blackout that followed, is another step in India's long history of colonising Kashmir.

Narendra Modi's administration effectively annexed Kashmir by abrogating Article 370 of the Indian constitution, adopted in 1954 to guarantee Kashmir's semi-autonomous status. But this semi-autonomy has been a hollow shell which has allowed India to engage in torture, extrajudicial killings and mass disappearances.

Scholars of Kashmir have called this process a constitutional occupation, and see the repeal of Article 370 as a "decades-long plan" to annex Kashmir.

Though not unexpected, the annexation was shocking. At midnight on August 4, ten days before the 73rd anniversary of its independence, India intensified its military grip over the people of Kashmir. It deployed thousands of extra troops in Kashmir, in addition to the half a million already present.

Since then, there has been a widespread communications blackout, with internet, mobiles phones, landlines, television and radio cut. Harsh curfews were imposed on Kashmiris, the local police were disarmed and at least 4,000 people were arrested, including Kashmir's political leadership and civil society.

On August 14, a four-person fact-finding mission to Kashmir collated reports of night raids, abduction of young boys, sexual assault of women, torture, and a lack of access to food and medicine. Kavita Krishnan, a rights activist who was part of the team, stated: "Frankly, it looks like occupied Iraq or occupied Palestine."

Some restrictions on movement eased on August 19, but Kashmiris remain in a state of siege.

### PURSUIT OF SELF-DETERMINATION

Kashmiris have been living with widespread and systematic human rights violations for the

past three decades, most recently highlighted in reports by the UN Office of the High Commissioner in 2018 and 2019. These reports address the situation on both sides of the Pakistani and Indian line of control in Kashmir, though India's brutalisation of Kashmiris is striking.

While Kashmir is considered an international territorial dispute between Pakistan and India, for Kashmiris their struggle is one of self-determination.

At the Partition of British India in 1947, Kashmir's independent princely ruler, Maharajah Hari Singh, signed an Instrument of Accession with India. He was under pressure from a Kashmiri rebellion against his unpopular rule, but did not ask his people what they wanted. The accession was based on the promise that Kashmiris would have a plebiscite or referendum to decide their political future.

Between 1948 and 1957, following a war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, UN resolutions reaffirmed the right of Kashmiris for a free and fair referendum. But they have never been granted one. Now India's revocation of Article 370 is an attempt to transform Kashmir's unresolved international status into a domestic issue.

### POST-COLONIAL COLONIALISM

The case of Kashmir is immensely significant for scholars of colonialism in all its forms. In my own research, I've argued that India's colonialism of Kashmir demands a recalibration of one of the central tenets of these studies: the division of the world into the Europe that colonised, and the non-Europe that was colonised.

This doesn't mean ignoring the legacy of European colonialism. Major colonialists such as the British, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch and Belgian powers changed the world forever through conquest of territory, slavery and dispossession of non-European peoples. We continue to inhabit a world whose knowledge, political and legal systems are structured by these colonial legacies.

Post-colonial nation-states such as India continue to use British colonial laws to crush any dissent for rights or justice. Modi's current Hindu nationalist government draws on these laws and

extends them as it undermines the rights of tribal people, religious minorities, Dalits and women. The Hindutva, or Hindu nationalist, ideology which Modi's BJP party espouses was born in the matrix of British colonialism and inspired by European fascism in the early 20th century.

But the case of Kashmir demonstrates India's own long history of colonialism. India's latest move also abolished Article 35a of the Jammu and Kashmir state constitution, meaning non-Kashmiris are now allowed to buy land, hold jobs and further colonise Kashmir's rich resources. As historian Hafsa Kanjwal argues, the influx of Indian settlers is designed to change Kashmir's demography and may lead to ethnic cleansing, inaugurating India as a settler-colonialist state in Kashmir.

India is already part of an unwritten alliance with other settler-colonial states, such as Israel and the US, based on a destructive arms trade. Both states were created through a history of massacres and violent dispossession of Indigenous and Palestinian peoples.

In explaining its decision to revoke Articles 370 and 35a, India has used the language of counter-terrorism that has become so common since 9/11, coupled with the promise of corporate development. These are two classic colonial justifications reframed for a 21st-century lexicon.

Research and resources about India's colonial occupation of Kashmir, and Kashmiri resistance to it, are now available at #TheKashmirSyllabus, while updates about the current military blockade are available from the Kashmir Scholars Consultative and Action Network.

The full consequences of the geopolitical tinderbox created by India's move are still emerging. While the international community urges restraint and bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan, Kashmir's right to self-determination must now take centre stage. Kashmiris continue to experience an unbearably suffocating state of siege, and they speak of resistance, come what may.

*[the writer is Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Warwick]*

## Iceland is mourning a dead glacier – how grieving over ecological destruction can help us face the climate crisis

**RUPERT READ**  
*theconversation.com*

Death certificates and commemorative plaques aren't something you'd normally associate with a glacier. But that is exactly how Iceland recently mourned the loss of 700-year-old Okjökull, the first of its major glaciers to die.

This is just one early example of events we will encounter more and more often as the hot new world we are creating slowly destroys ecosystems and livelihoods. But acknowledging the growing emotional trauma and grief felt at present and future environmental tragedies may yet be the kick we need to limit their reach.

Grief radically differs in its logic from ordinary sadness over a loss. If sadness is the response to the removal of an object from the tablecloth that represents a person's lived world, grief results from loss that tears the very fabric of that cloth. In order to repair this hole and emerge from the resulting pain and outrage, the lived world has to be re-configured.

To grieve though, one must acknowledge the tear in that world. This can take time, and denial is a common part of the process of accepting deep loss. This may at first take the form of a temptation toward out-and-out disbelief, and linger as sporadic thoughts and hopes that what was lost, wasn't.

It may seem an irrational reaction, but it's a completely understandable defence mechanism against life-shattering loss. The world without what's been lost is so radically and qualitatively different that the psyche resists accepting reality.



While much climate denial owes itself to corruption and vested interests, the avoidance of grief may explain why many decent and intelligent people are also tempted to deny the climatic breakdown humans are causing.

It is, in a certain sense, unimaginable, even absurd, to think of us destabilising our very climate, or the scale and speed of change required to stop the slide. It isn't surprising that so many people have been desperately hoping that the science must somehow be wrong, or that so many more act as if we can still hope for the

continuation of our same old world, rather than the fundamental shift in the way we operate and organise that's required.

### FROM GRIEF TO ACTION

It requires sustained strength and attention to gradually turn denial

grief in cases such as this is particularly potent and often laden with anger, akin to that of someone close to a murder victim. This glacier ecosystem wasn't "lost" - to speak of loss here is euphemistic. It was killed on our watch.

Grief over climate breakdown and the degradation of our natural world is also notably different from grief at the death of a loved one, because it never lessens, let alone goes away. The anthropogenic climate emergency will define our entire lifetime, and deeply impact on all of us soon enough. Because of time-lags in the climate system, things will get worse for a long time to come, whatever we do.

Thus, while a healthy reaction to the death of a loved one is to grieve deeply and then gradually to recover, the only recovery from ecological grief that is possible at all is for us to change the world such that our actions no longer deteriorate it.

This is how ecological grief – at the tearing from us of the natural systems we are neither willing nor able to do without – leads to the radical action necessary to bring about a new world.

Given how late the hour is, that means not accepting inaction any longer – and that's up to us. In the words of Iceland's commemorative plaque, laid at the base of the dead glacier as a message to the future: "We know what is happening and what needs to be done. Only you know if we did it."

*[the writer is Reader in Philosophy, University of East Anglia]*



## BJP to launch “Cha Chakra” to counter TMC’s “Didi ke Bolo” mass outreach initiative

**KOLKATA, AUG 22 (PTI):** In a bid to counter TMC’s “Didi Ke Bolo” (Tell Didi) mass outreach programme, the West Bengal BJP unit is all set to launch “Cha Chakra” - get together over a cup of tea- to reach out to the people and spread party’s message with an eye on the next assembly polls.

Although West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh denied that the initiative, that would begin from coming September, was meant to outsmart TMC’s digital platform for masses, but said it is aimed at reaching out to the people in a more effective manner.

“We believe in reaching out to the masses. So from September this year we would launch this Cha Chakra” - get together over a cup of tea- as our mass outreach programme.

Earlier, only I used to do it now other leaders will also do it,” Ghosh told reporters.

When asked if the proposed programme was meant to counter TMC’s mass outreach project launched on advise of poll strategist Prashant Kishor, Ghosh replied in negative.

“A cadre based party like BJP doesn’t need help of hired professionals to reach out to the

masses,” he said.

“Generally every morning I go for a morning walk and while returning I have tea at a local shop and speak to the locals.

I have been doing this everyday for last several years. I may be at Cooch-behar in North Bengal or Kakdwip in South Bengal.

But my routine remains the same. So now the party has decided to make it a programme and launch it officially,” he said.

While reacting to the development, TMC secretary general Partha Chatterjee, mocked the saffron party for trying to copy Trinamool Con-

gress new initiative for a better connect with the people.

“They are trying to copy us. Let them do that. We are not bothered. But it won’t bear any fruitful results for them as they don’t have a mass leader like Mamata Banerjee in Bengal,” Chatterjee said.

As advised by poll strategist Prashant Kishor and his firm ‘Indian Political Action Committee’ - appointed by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) after its Lok Sabha poll reverses - Banerjee had on July 29 launched a helpline number 9137091370 and a website www.didikebolo.com as a part of “DidiKeBolo”

to enable people to have a direct interface with the party functionaries.

She had also unveiled the massive public outreach programme under which over 1,000 party leaders will visit 10,000 villages over the next 100 days to understand people’s problems and redress their grievances.

The BJP which staged a stupendous show in the recently concluded general election by winning 18 out of a total of 42 Lok Sabha seats in Bengal, only four less than the TMC’s tally of 22, is leaving no stone unturned to unseat Banerjee from power in the 2021 assembly polls.

## EESL to replace 4 lakh street lights with LEDs in Bengal

**KOLKATA, AUG 22 (PTI):** Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) on Thursday said it would replace nearly four lakh street lights in West Bengal with LEDs.

State Urban Development and Municipal Affairs Minister Firhad Hakim dedicated 56,000 LED street lights, as part of the Green City Mission of the state.

“Out of approximately 7.5 lakh street lights in West Bengal, 3.5 lakhs have been converted to

LEDs. The state government has roped in EESL to convert the remaining street lights to LEDs,” the company said in a statement. EESL, a joint venture of PSUs under the Union Ministry of Power, will make the entire upfront capital investment for the project.

The state government will initially pay only 50 per cent of the actual cost and rest will be paid in the next seven years on annuity basis, the company added.

## ITI Bhubaneswar introduces four smart trades with IoT-based curriculum



**BHUBANESWAR, AUG 22 (PTI):** The state-run Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Bhubaneswar has introduced four smart trades with Internet of Things (IoT) based curriculum, an official said.

The objective is to help students tap the latest career opportunities in job sector with IoT, the official said.

IoT is a system of interrelated computing devices, mechanical and digital machines, objects, animals or people that are provided with unique identifiers (UIDs) and the ability to transfer data over a network without requiring human-to-human or human-to-computer interactions.

The smart trades introduced by ITI Bhubaneswar are: IoT Technician Smart Agriculture, IoT Technician Smart City, IoT Technician Smart Healthcare and Smart Phone Technician-cum-Application Tester.

Each trade has got 24 seats. The course fee is free for girls, SC and ST and physically challenged students,

the official said.

Principal ITI Bhubaneswar Jitmitra Satpathy said: “To get entry to any industry-ready course at any ITI the minimum educational qualification is a pass certificate in Class 10 Board examination, these smart trades will also help graduate students a lot in having rewarding careers and also towards building their own ventures successfully.”

Leading electric manufacturing firm Schneider Electric has given a proposal to the Principal of ITI Bhubaneswar to sponsor a “Train the trainer programme” by giving training to some faculty members.

The IoT Technician Smart Agriculture trade at the ITI will enable students to understand emerging concept of smart farming/agriculture by managing farms using technologies like IoT, robotics, drones and artificial intelligence to increase the quantity and quality of products while optimising the human labour required by production, the official said.

IoT Technician Smart City trade will have applications related to smart city functioning like smart traffic management with data analysis from various sources and using IoT tools in monitoring and managing efficient water supply.

Similarly, IoT Technician Smart Healthcare trade will include chronic disease management and preventive care through use of IoT-based devices that come handy for the people which are all wearable ones to monitor body parameters and tracking health conditions.

IoT Technician Smart Healthcare trade will also help the student to know the preventive measures acquired through use of IoT devices and sharing data with medical professionals.

Smart Phone Technician-cum-Application Tester trade will have analytic approach on the applicability of various application software (App) and monitoring of personal data through use of Smart phones, the principal said.

## Meghalaya minister seeks Nishank’s intervention in edu matters

**SHILLONG, AUG 22 (PTI):** Meghalaya Education Minister Lahkmen Rymbui has called on Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank in Delhi to seek his intervention in matters pertaining to school curriculum and pedagogy, an official statement said here on Thursday.

According to the statement issued by the Chief Minister’s Office, Nishank has assured Rymbui that issues raised by him would be taken up for discussion and necessary interventions be made.

Rymbui, who was accompanied by Chief

Minister Conrad K Sangma to the meeting on Wednesday, insisted that a special scheme should be rolled out for recruitment of language teachers in schools.

He also said that streamlining education facilities, in tune with the draft National Education Policy, would add to the financial burden of Meghalaya schools, half of which are run by minority organisations.

The education minister urged the Centre to allow managing committees in minority institutes to operate everyday affairs through their sponsors. Restructuring

school curriculum and pedagogy would entail additional manpower, he said. Besides, introducing classical and foreign languages could also overburden the coffers of schools, Rymbui told the Union Human Resource Development (HRD) minister.

Due to shortage of central funds, the state has been facing difficulties for implementation of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, the CMO statement maintained.

Nishank, on his part, said he would ask his department to examine Rymbui’s requests and demands, it added.

## Britannia to increase prices “marginally” to beat slowdown



**KOLKATA, AUG 22 (PTI):** FMCG major Britannia Industries plans to increase prices of its products marginally in the third quarter of the current fiscal to tackle the slowdown which has taken a toll on the growth of its sales in value terms, a company official said on Thursday.

He said that the slowdown had been witnessed in the last five to six months and the period till January would “not be easy”.

“In the third quarter, slight increase in prices will happen”, Vinay Subramanyam, Head (marketing) of

Britannia Industries told reporters here.

Biscuit as a food product is price elastic and has a huge market penetration across the country, he said adding that the growth in sales of the company had halved in terms of value as a result of slowdown.

“We have started seeing the slowdown five to six months back. The next five to six months are not going to be easy and there is lack of optimism”, Subramanyam said.

He said the company is “watching the situation very closely and expecting a positive impact of

the monsoon”.

Besides marginal price increase, the company would also go for cost optimisation, he said.

“We have to be more efficient in operations including reduction in logistics expenses. Despite the slowdown, the company had been gaining market share and will continue to focus on major brands,” he said.

Subramanyam said Britannia’s market share across the country was 33 per cent, putting it in the leadership position and the eastern India is “an important market for the company”.

## Improved toilets in NFR trains for better passenger experience

**GUWAHATI, AUG 22 (PTI):** The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has added more amenities in train toilets to provide the passengers with a better experience during a train journey, an official said on Thursday.

The NFR also installed aesthetically designed fittings and panel works in coaches for a better ambience.

Dustbins have been provided in the lavatories of all AC and Non-AC coaches maintained by the railway zone and plans are afoot to provide similar facility near the doors in a phased manner, NFR Chief Public Relations Officer PJ Sharma said here.

Stainless steel mugs with anti-theft chain have been provided in



the lavatories of all AC and Non AC coaches as passengers often faces problem due to theft of mugs there, Sharma said.

All toilets of AC coaches and Western style toilets of all Non-AC coaches have also been provided with health faucets to reduce the stink, he said.

For the assistance of visually impaired passengers, signage superimposed with Braille scripts is being provided

in all coaches, while new model coaches come with Braille signage fitted in them. On Board House-Keeping Service (OBHS) has been provided in all the 62 pairs of mail/express trains run by the NFR, the CPRO said.

Apart from the scheduled cleaning of coaches twice a day, a passenger can obtain an unscheduled cleaning from the OBHS by sending an SMS “CLEAN.”



**NEW DELHI, AUG 22 (PTI):** Taking cognisance of media reports, the National Commission for Women (NCW) has sought the West Bengal DGP’s intervention in a case of alleged gang rape of a woman, in which a panchayat member of the TMC and three of his accomplices have been named as accused.

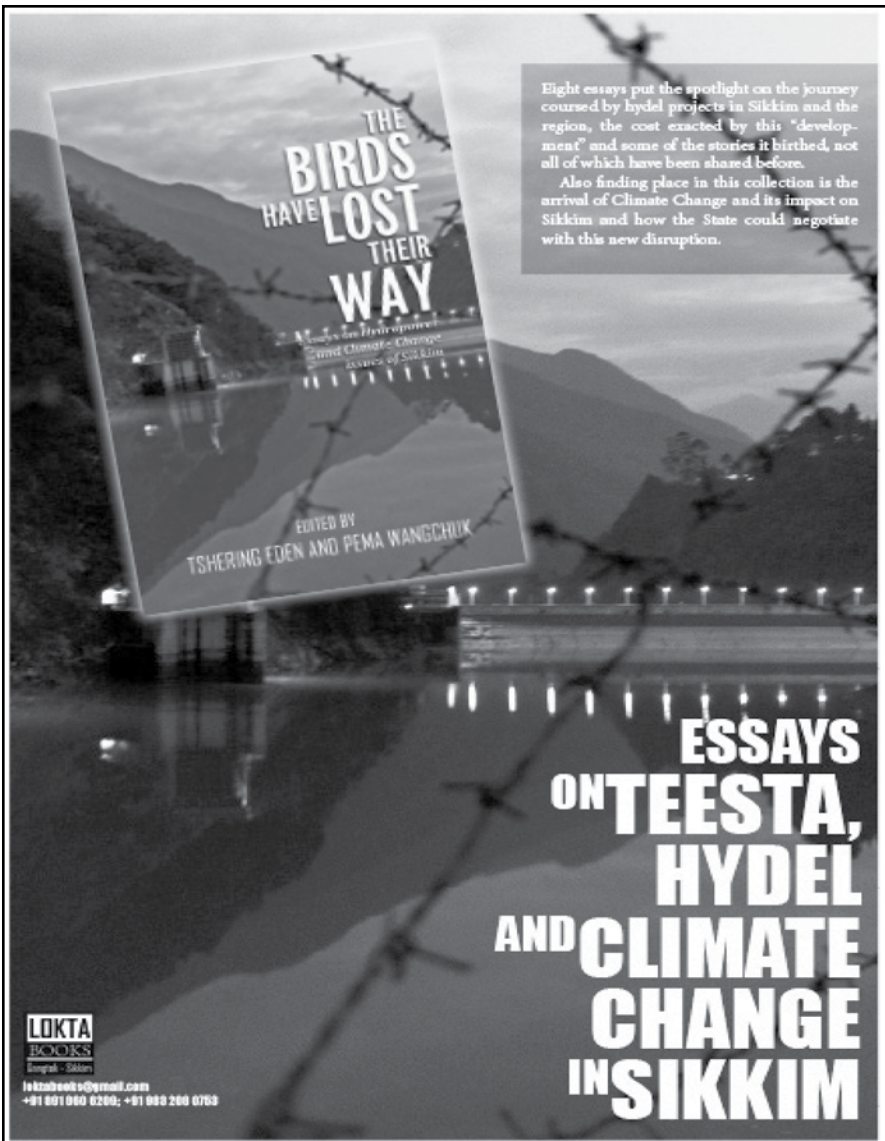
According to media reports, the woman was allegedly raped by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) panchayat member and three of his accomplices in West Bengal’s Jalpaiguri district, when she demanded that he return the “cut money” she had paid in return for making her a beneficiary in a housing scheme.

Reacting to the media reports, the NCW said it was anguished by the

incident and condemned the crime allegedly committed by a person holding a responsible position in the society.

“The accused is an elected representative supposed to safeguard the interest of his people and on the contrary, he has committed two crimes, one he has taken bribe from people to get them benefits of a social scheme, wherein he is the custodian to ensure that the benefits reach deserving people, and secondly, he has disrespected her and raped her with his accomplices,” the NCW said in a statement.

The women’s body also said it had served a notice to the Director General of Police (DGP), West Bengal, urging him to immediately intervene in the matter and send a detailed action-taken report.





# It’s better to get hit early and hard: Kohli on bouncers

**NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA), AUG 22 (PTI):** India skipper Virat Kohli doesn’t mind getting hit and that too hard immediately after he takes guard as he feels it fires him up to have a go at the bowler.

The world’s number one Test batsman gave his views on the ‘chin music’ that batsmen are often subjected to by fast bowlers, something that became quite a topic of discussion after Steve Smith was felled by a Jofra Archer bouncer during the second Ashes Test in London.

“I always feel it’s better to get hit early on and know the feeling rather than always feeling you might get hit. I prefer getting early on and hard, it motivates me to not allow that to happen again,” said Kohli on the Indian cricket board’s official website ‘bccitv’.

“Just that pain to go through your body and be like ‘Ok enough it’s not happening again,” he added.

Kohli, for once, was an interviewer rather than the interviewee as he chatted with Viv-



ian Richards, the West Indies icon he is often compared to for his fearless approach to batting. Richards also had his say on the matter, although his statement was nowhere close to being as flamboyant as Kohli’s.

“It’s all part of the game. It depends on how well you come back from these knocks. Before we had little guards around your ribs, you would take a hit and that’s where you would feel and take a count but that’s all part

and parcel of the sport,” he said. Kohli spoke of his admiration for Richards, whose temperament, like the Indian, was considered aggressive.

“...the greatest inspiration to all of us batsmen,” Sir Vivian Richards,” said Kohli as he asked Richards about his journey.

The Caribbean legend highlighted the similarity between the two.

“I always felt I was good enough to be competing. I wanted to ex-

press myself in the best way that I can, I see that little similarity, that passion. There are times when folks would look at us in different ways and say ‘wow, why so angry?’” he quipped.

In what is the first part of a two-part interaction, Kohli asked Richards why he avoided the helmet despite the quality of fast bowling in that era. “I believed that I’m the man. It may sound arrogant but I always felt that I was involved in the

game that I knew. I backed myself every time. You even back yourself to get hurt, to take the knocks,” responded Richards.

“The helmet I tried felt a little uncomfortable. I felt the maroon cap given to me, I was so proud to have that. My mindset was that I’m good enough to be here, if I get hurt it’s god’s will, I will survive,” he added.

Kohli and the Indian team are currently touring the West Indies for a full series.

## Thomas eyes FedEx Cup jackpot at Tour Championship



**LOS ANGELES, AUG 22 (AFP):** Justin Thomas will start with a two-shot cushion as he aims to crown his season with victory at the Tour Championship and a 15 million FedEx Cup payday on Thursday.

Under a revamped “staggered start” format to the PGA Tour’s lucrative season finale, Thomas will automatically tee off on 10 under at East Lake Golf Club outside Atlanta.

The “Starting Strokes” format introduced this week is designed to eliminate the confusion of past FedEx playoffs, when the winner of the final tournament was often different from the series champion.

Instead, the 30-man field at East Lake have been given starting totals which reflect their performances this season.

Put simply, the player who finishes on top of the leaderboard this week will also pocket the 15 million prize on offer to the FedEx Cup champion. Thomas, who captured his 10th career title with a win at the BMW Championship on Sunday, is now in pole position at the top of the leaderboard. Patrick Cantlay will start in second on eight under, while Brooks Koepka will tee off in third place on seven under.

Patrick Reed starts on six under with Northern Ireland’s Rory McIlroy fifth on five under.

Despite the unusual

position of starting the tournament with a lead, Thomas insists he will not be thinking about defending his advantage at the top of the leaderboard when this week’s event gets under way.

“It’s going to be tough,” said Thomas, who could join Tiger Woods as the only man to win two FedEx Cup Championships after his victory in 2017.

“I’m just going to have to try to play another golf tournament and act like everyone’s staring at zero and try to shoot the lowest 72 holes,” added Thomas.

McIlroy, the 2016 FedEx champion, who will start five shots off the lead this week, believes Thomas can take a conservative approach into the tournament on the 7,346-yard par 70 layout.

- WOODS, LOWRY MISSING -

“If I was in JT’s position, it would be, ‘OK, I’m going to go out and shoot 67 every day. No one should beat me if I do that,’” McIlroy said.

“I think you have to just control what you can.” Thomas meanwhile admits he will be grappling with the unknown.

“There isn’t a person on the planet that’s experienced this before, for the stakes it’s for,” Thomas said. “I’m just going to try to deal with it the best I can.”

The format for the FedEx Cup finale has not been universally popular, with many critics

taking aim at a qualifying system that has no mechanism for allowing the inclusion of 2019 Masters champion Tiger Woods and British Open winner Shane Lowry, two high-profile absentees this week.

PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan defended the format, emphasising that the final 30-man field was designed to reward consistency over a whole season. “We are in the Playoffs, and Playoffs inherently bring forward a lot of volatility,” Monahan said.

“I think what it says is that, one, it’s really hard to get to Atlanta and the Tour Championship. You’ve got to play exceedingly well over the course of an entire season, and with volatility, there’s risk.

“And if you don’t play well over the course of the season or you don’t get off to the start that you envision at the start of the playoffs, you take the risk that you’re not going to be here.

“I want to emphasize the fact that what Tiger and Shane did this year, those are two of the greatest stories of the year. So would you want them here? 1,000%.

“But you look at every other sport and their playoff format, and you’ll have top teams that fall out early. You’ll have some things that you may not have predicted, particularly at the moment when they won those two big events.

## US seeking balancing act in South Asia over Kashmir: Report

**BY LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON, AUG 22 (PTI):** The US is seeking a balancing act in South Asia after India revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and divided it into two Union Territories, according to a congressional report which said President Donald Trump’s offer to “mediate” on the issue may have contributed to the timing of New Delhi’s moves.

According to the latest Congressional Research Service (CRS) report which runs into over 15 pages the longstanding US position on Kashmir is that the territory’s status should be settled through negotiations between India and Pakistan while taking into consideration the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

“The United States seeks to balance pursuit of a broad US-India partnership while upholding human rights protections, as well as maintaining cooperative relations with Pakistan,” the report said.

The Trump administration has called for peace and respect for human rights in the region. With key US diplomatic posts vacant, some observers worry that the US capacity is thin, and the US president Trump’s July offer to “mediate” on Kashmir may have contributed to the timing of New Delhi’s moves, it said.

The CRS reports are not considered as an official position of the US Congress. Notably the CRS has come out with a report on Kashmir after 17 years, reflecting the interest among lawmakers about the issue after the recent development.

“India’s August actions sparked international controversy as ‘unilateral’ changes of J&K’s status that could harm regional stability,” CRS said.

A copy of the report Kashmir: Background, Recent Developments, and US Policy dated August 16 was obtained by PTI on Wednesday.

“Increased separatist militancy on Kashmir may also undermine the ongoing Afghan peace negotiations, which the Pakistani government facilitates, the CRS said, adding that New Delhi’s process also raised serious constitutional questions and given heavy-handed security measures in J&K elicited more intense criticisms of India on human rights grounds.

Observing that there are international concerns about potential for increased civil unrest and violence in the Kashmir Valley, and the cascade effect this could have on regional stability, the report said that the Trump Administration has limited its public statements to calls for maintaining peace and stability, and respecting human rights.

The UN Security Council likewise calls for restraint by all parties; an informal August UNSC 16 meeting resulted in no ensuing official UN statement, it said.

The CRS said that New Delhi’s August moves have enraged Pakistan’s leaders and elicited concerns about further escalation between South Asia’s two nuclear-armed powers, which nearly came to war after a February 2019 suicide bombing in the Kashmir Valley and retaliatory Indian airstrikes.

The CRS said developments in Kashmir in 2019 raise five possible questions for the Congress like “Do India’s actions changing the status of its J&K state negatively affect regional stability? If so, what leverage does the United States have and what US policies might best address potential instability?

## Brazil-born history-maker vows to take China to World Cup

**SHANGHAI, AUG 22 (AFP):** Brazilian-born striker Elkeson said he wants to fire China to the World Cup after he became the first footballer without Chinese ancestry to be named in the national squad.

The recently naturalised 30-year-old will make more history when -- as widely expected -- he lines up for Marcello Lippi’s side in a 2022 World Cup qualifier away at the Maldives on September 10.

Lippi has long complained about a dearth of attackers and on Wednesday moved to plug the gap with Elkeson, who will use the Chinese name Ai Kesen and take up a Chinese passport.

The move, which could start a trend of Brazilians playing for China, has divided football fans in the world’s

most populous country.

But the Guangzhou Evergrande striker vowed to win over the doubters, saying in an open letter: “Having Chinese nationality allows me to contribute to the national team once again playing in the World Cup.

“I want to tell the world: I have officially begun a new journey, I am Chinese, I want to return all the love and care you have given me over the years.

“I hope to get your support, as always.”

China similarly gave a passport to London-born midfielder Nico Yennaris earlier this year, although unlike Elkeson the former Arsenal reserve is half-Chinese.

Although many other nations, notably 2022 hosts Qatar, call up players born in other countries, China had resisted doing so until now.

Elkeson, who has scored more than 100 goals in about 150 games in the Chinese Super League, qualifies for China because he has played in the country since 2013.

Calling it “a gamble”, the forward nevertheless said that he wants to “leave my mark” on Chinese football.

“I want a new challenge, I want to see where my limits are,” he wrote.

“I want to repay the love of the Chinese people in these seven years.

“I accepted this challenge without hesitation,” he added.

China, currently ranked a lowly 71st in the FIFA rankings, have reached the World Cup only once.

In 2002 they exited football’s biggest stage without scoring a goal or earning a point.

## Challenges facing Cong formidable, ideological fight against divisive forces must go on: Sonia

**NEW DELHI, AUG 22 (PTI):** Asserting that electoral ups and downs are inevitable, Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday said challenges facing the party are formidable but it must continue its ideological struggle against forces of divisiveness.

Addressing an event marking Rajiv Gandhi’s 75th birth anniversary, Sonia Gandhi said in 1984 her husband got a

massive poll mandate, but did not use it to create an atmosphere of fear or to threaten people.

As prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi gave the message that unity can be maintained by celebrating India’s diversity, she said.

Sonia Gandhi said the former prime minister’s 75th birth anniversary is not a ritual being marked by the Congress, but an occasion to reaffirm its

resolve to uphold the values that inspired him.

Rajiv Gandhi’s birth anniversary is an occasion to resolve to stand up and confront forces determined to destroy the values that inspired him, she said.

Challenges facing the Congress are formidable, but it must continue with its ideological struggle against divisive forces, she asserted.

## Messi ‘made me better player’, says Ronaldo



**LISBON, AUG 22 (AFP):** Cristiano Ronaldo admitted on Wednesday his long-time rivalry with Lionel Messi has made him “a better player” and that he enjoys a “healthy” rivalry with the Argentine great.

However, Portuguese star Ronaldo, whose influence at Real Madrid mirrored that of Messi at Barcelona before he left for Juventus, admitted that the pair have never socialised together.

“I really admire the career he has had and

from his side, he has already talked of the disappointment when I left Spain because it was a rivalry that he appreciated,” Ronaldo told TVI in Portugal.

“It’s a good rivalry but it’s not unique -- Michael Jordan had rivalries in basketball, there was Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost in Formula 1. The thing they all had in common is that they were healthy rivalries.”

Ronaldo and Messi have won the coveted Ballon d’Or five times each, a

factor that helps each player flourish.

“I have no doubt that Messi has made me a better player and vice-versa. When I am winning trophies it must sting him and it’s the same for me when he wins,” he said.

“I have an excellent professional relationship because we have been sharing the same moments for 15 years.

He added: “We’ve never had dinner together but I don’t see why we can’t in the future. I don’t see a problem with that.

## Maharashtra’s Jadhav wins 3 medals at World Police Games

**BULDHANA, AUG 22 (PTI):** Constable Monali Jadhav from Maharashtra won three medals, including two golds, at the recently concluded World Police and Fire Games International Championship held in China.

Jadhav is attached to the Jalamb police station in Buldhana district of Maharashtra.

Representing the Indian police force, Jadhav secured 716 out of 720 points (a new record) and won the gold in target and field archery, while she won a bronze medal in the ‘3D Archery’

case. Jadhav, who trains under coaches Chandrakant Elag and Suresh Shinde, was recruited in the police force in 2013.

She had previously secured ninth position at the World Championships in Shanghai held in May.

Jadhav told PTI that her aim is to represent India at the world-level events and win medals for the country.

Maharashtra Director General of Police Subodh Jaiswal and Buldhana district superintendent of police Dilip Bhujbal Patil congratulated Jadhav on her achievement.

“DGP & all ranks of Maharashtra Police are proud of @buldhanapolice1’s WPC Monali Jadhav, who bagged the Gold Medal in Target Archery at World Police & Fire Games 2019 at Chengdu, China.

“She also made a new record with a score of 716/720 in the game! #AchieversMaharashtraPolice,” the Maharashtra police said in a tweet.

Senior Inspector Gautam Ingle of the Jalamb police station also showered praise on Jadhav, calling her pride of the police force.



# Hong Kong students to boycott new term as protests continue



**HONG KONG, AUG 22 (AFP):** Hong Kong student leaders on Thursday announced a two-week boycott of lectures from the upcoming start of term, as they seek to keep protesters on the streets and pressure on the government.

The financial hub has been rocked by three months of unrest, with students making up

a large number of the pro-democracy protesters taking to the streets almost daily. Student leaders representing most of the city's major universities said students will miss lectures between September 2 -- the planned start of the new term -- and September 13.

They threatened further action if the government does not adequately

ly respond to the protesters' five demands, which include spiking a controversial extradition bill, universal suffrage and an independent inquiry into alleged police abuses during the protests.

"Two weeks should be enough for the government to really think through how to respond," said Davin Wong, acting president of the Hong

Kong University Students' Union. "As the situation has gotten more intense, we believe the social situation will bring more students into the boycott." Wong said students will be encouraged to take time to "understand what happened in our society.. what we can do for our city's future."

Students have featured prominently in the weeks

of protests that have rocked Hong Kong. The demonstrations were sparked by an attempt by the city's government to bring in a bill that would have allowed for extradition to China.

But they quickly morphed into a wider pro-democracy campaign, in a city where young people are boxed in by the soaring cost of living and worsening job prospects.

## N Korea dismisses nuclear talks if US 'hostile military moves' continue

**SEOUL, AUG 22 (AFP):** North Korea said Thursday it has "no interest" in dialogue unless Washington stops "escalating hostile military moves", as a senior US envoy visited Seoul with an eye on reviving nuclear talks with Pyongyang. Talks between Pyongyang and Washington have stalled since a second summit between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Hanoi in February collapsed without an agreement.

The pair met again in June in the Demilitarised Zone and agreed to restart working-level dialogue, but those talks have yet to begin.

Meanwhile, North Korea has carried out several short-range missile tests in recent weeks in protest against annual US-South Korea joint military drills that it sees as a rehearsal for invasion.

Stephen Biegun, the US special envoy for North Korea who leads the working-level talks, arrived in Seoul late Tuesday for a three-day trip, and said Washington was "prepared to engage" as soon as it hears from Pyongyang. But a spokesman for the North's foreign ministry dashed hopes for renewed dialogue on Thursday, attacking a recent mid-range cruise missile test by the US and plans to deploy F-35 fighter jets in the region as "dangerous" moves that can "trigger a new cold war".

"This compels us to weigh a realistic way of turning our attention more to strengthening the physical deterrence," he said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

# Macron, Johnson set for bruising Brexit talks in Paris

**PARIS, AUG 22 (AFP):** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson heads to Paris on Thursday for talks with French President Emmanuel Macron who is expected to rebuff his last-ditch efforts to renegotiate the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

Macron, who has said previously he is happy to be the "bad guy" on Brexit, roundly rejected Johnson's calls to scrap a key plank of a deal negotiated between the EU and former British premier Theresa May.

"Renegotiation on the terms currently proposed by the British is not an option that exists, and that has always been made clear by (EU) President Tusk," Macron told reporters on Wednesday evening. At stake is the so-called "backstop", an arrangement guaranteeing that border checks will not return between EU member Ireland and Northern Ireland which is part of Britain.

Johnson considers the backstop to be "anti-democratic" and an affront to British sovereignty because it will require London to keep its regulations aligned with the EU during a transition exit period.

The EU argues this is necessary to avoid the re-emergence of border checkpoints which could lead to a return of fighting on the divided island where anti-British violence has claimed thousands of lives.

More evidence of deadlock on Thursday would raise the chances of a "no deal" Brexit, which France now sees as the most likely scenario despite the expectation that it will wreak economic damage on Britain and the EU.

"The EU and member states need to take the possibility of a 'no deal' outcome much more seriously than before," a senior EU official told reporters in Brussels on Thursday on condition of anonymity.

The Paris visit is the second leg of Johnson's first foreign trip since he became prime minister a month ago.

On Wednesday, he told German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin that the backstop has "grave defects for a sovereign, democratic country like the UK" and insisted



the provision "has to go".

Merkel appeared to offer a glimmer of hope by saying Britain should try to find a breakthrough to the issue over the next month.

In the search for a solution, "maybe we can do it in the next 30 days, why not? Then we are one step further in the right direction," she said.

Johnson said he welcomed her "very blistering timetable".

Britain's eurosceptic press interpreted the exchange positively, with The Daily Mail saying "Boris Johnson received a Brexit boost last night".

"Can we do it? Ja, we can!" read its front page.

But the remarks fit a pattern in which Merkel has often been more conciliatory in public about Brexit than Macron, whose abrasive remarks have sometimes caused anger in London.

"There is not the width of cigarette paper between Paris and Berlin on these issues," a senior aide to Macron said on Wednesday on condition of anonymity.

The EU official in Brussels added that the EU was "a little concerned based on what we heard yesterday (in Berlin)."

"We are waiting for new facts, workable ideas," the official added.

Macron risked further irritating Johnson, whom he described in 2017 as having "no strategic vision", with a series of bruising remarks during his lengthy press conference on Wednesday evening.

He said the 2016 Brexit referendum had posed a question to the British people about EU membership "perhaps in a simplistic

fashion" and without telling voters how the withdrawal would be achieved.

"Many lied about how it would be done," he added in another attack on Brexit campaigners, of which Johnson was the most high profile.

Johnson, who has deployed his French language skills to charm diplomats in Paris before, has staked his leadership on withdrawing Britain from the EU by the current deadline of October 31 -- "do or die".

Some analysts see a risk of relations between Macron and Johnson becoming stormy in public, which could lead to a blame game about a "no deal" Brexit.

Johnson reportedly once called the French "turds" over their stance on Brexit during his time as foreign secretary -- remarks he later said he could not recall.

But Macron pre-empted any attempt to deflect blame onto the European side.

"It will be the responsibility of the British government, always, because firstly it was the British people that decided Brexit, and the British government has the possibility up to the last second to revoke Article 50," he said.

Article 50 is the legal mechanism used by EU member states to withdraw from the bloc which was triggered by Britain in March 2017.

At the weekend, Macron, Merkel and Johnson will meet US President Donald Trump, a vocal supporter of both Brexit and Johnson, and the leaders of Canada, Italy and Japan at a G7 summit in the French seaside resort of Biarritz.

# Pro-growth RBI minutes to cap yields; revives expectations for further policy easing

**BY GURDIP SINGH**

**SINGAPORE, AUG 22 (PTI):** Minutes from the Reserve Bank of India's August meeting has revived expectations for further policy easing as headline inflation is likely to remain within target over the next one year, says a DBS report. According to the report, pro-growth Reserve Bank of India (RBI) minutes are expected to cap bond yields.

"INR 10Y (generic) government bond yields are likely to stay below 6.7 per cent after RBI minutes revived expectations for further policy easing," Radhika Rao, Economist, and Eugene Leow, Rates Strategist at DBS Group Research said in the report. Weakening growth was a dominant

worry for policy makers amid weaker global activity, they noted.

"With RBI projecting inflation at below target over the next four quarters, the door for cuts remains open. We suspect further downward growth revisions might trigger further rate response," the DBS report said.

The report however cautioned that "the debate over remaining policy space is beginning to surface" after 110 bps cuts already undertaken and another likely in the fourth quarter (4Q).

In an unusual move, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on August 7 had reduced the benchmark lending rate by 35 basis points to 5.40 per cent amid concerns over

slowdown in economy. Before this, the RBI had reduced the rate thrice, each time by 25 basis points. "Transmission will be accorded the highest priority, as the RBI's moral suasion attempts, surplus liquidity and consideration of an external benchmarks nudged banks to act," the DBS report noted.

While the RBI has lowered the repo rate by 1.1 percentage points in 2019, the banks are yet to pass on the entire benefit of lower interest rate to borrowers.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das recently asked all banks to link their interest rate with repo for faster transmission of the central bank's policy actions.

# Second day of Italy crisis talks after PM resigns

**ROME, AUG 22 (AFP):** Italy's president will hold a second day of talks aimed at solving the political crisis shaking the country on Thursday after the disintegration of the populist government.

President Sergio Mattarella will meet the main parties, including the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) and far-right League, after the breakdown of their dysfunctional coalition. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte resigned on Tuesday after months of alliance sniping and a bid by League leader and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini to force a snap election, just 14 months since coming to power.

The nationalist, populist government's demonisation of migrants, promoted by Salvini in particular, and attempts to flout EU budget rules had angered many European leaders. Mattarella met the leaders of both houses of parliament on Wednesday and has been trying to find a way forward.

The formation of a new coalition, a short-term technocratic government or an early election -- more than three years ahead of schedule -- are the main options.

A proposed alliance between M5S and opposition centre-left Democratic Party (PD) -- previously almost unthinkable -- appears to be gaining traction, with PD leader Nicola Zingaretti say-

ing he is ready to make a deal. The PD and M5S have been at each other's throats for years -- but an alliance would see Salvini kicked out of government, a powerful motive for compromise.

Zingaretti has said the party would back an M5S coalition dependent on five conditions, including a radical shift in Italy's zero-tolerance policy on migrants crossing the Mediterranean.

He later told "La 7" television he was also against the idea of Conte staying on as prime minister. M5S would like Conte to remain in place but did not give much away, saying it would "wait for the end of consultations".

In a bid to get a PD-M5S alliance off the ground, former PD premier Matteo Renzi has said he will not participate. Many in the anti-establishment party view him as elitist. Salvini, who is also deputy prime minister, on Wednesday mocked his former coalition allies, saying: "In a week they have gone from the League to Renzi." He added: "No matter which government emerges, its goals will be against the League."

The end of the unstable coalition government in the eurozone's third-largest economy has so far been welcomed by the markets, with a sharp rise in the Milan stock market on Wednes-

day. The country's debt ratio -- 132 percent of gross domestic product -- is the second-biggest in the eurozone after Greece, and youth unemployment is currently above 30 percent.

Governments have consistently struggled to bring down debt levels and unemployment.

"Italy's disharmonious political backdrop and the country's budgetary challenges extend well before the sovereign debt crisis," said Rabobank analyst Jane Foley.

Rome needs to approve a budget in the next few months or potentially face an automatic rise in value-added tax that would hit the least well-off Italian families the hardest and likely plunge the country into recession. "The crisis" arrives at a critical juncture for Europe amid the risk of recession in Germany and the formation of the new European Commission, and could contribute to deteriorate significantly the confidence on the eurozone," said Andrea Montanino, chief economist at the General Confederation of Italian Industry.

After last year's election it took months of wrangling before a government was formed.

Mattarella has made it clear he wants talks to conclude quickly but splits within the PD and M5S, as well as sharp policy differences, could complicate coalition efforts.

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**A POP OF PINK!** The Bachelorette star and newly named Dancing with the Stars contestant, Hannah Brown waves to fans while out in New York City.

## Demi Lovato joins Will Ferrell's 'Eurovision'



**LOS ANGELES, AUG 22 (PTI):** Singer Demi Lovato has boarded the cast of Will Ferrell's Netflix feature "Eurovision". The project is based around the long-running global singing competition of the same name. Besides starring in the project, Ferrell has also penned the script along with Andrew Steele.

Lovato joins Ferrell, Rachel McAdams, Peirce Brosnan and Dan Stevens in the project, the streaming giant said in a statement.

The contest, first held in 1956, pits each participating nation from the European Broadcasting Union against one another, challenging them to write and perform an original

song for a live TV and radio performance.

Ferrell and McAdams are set to play an Icelandic songwriting duo, Lars Erickssong and Sigrit Ericksdottir. Brosnan will essay the role of Erick Erickssong, Lars' father and "the most handsome man in Iceland".

Lovato will portray Katiana, one of the best and most angelic singers in all of Iceland.

David Dobkin of "Wedding Crashers" and "The Judge" fame is directing the film, which recently started production in the UK.

Ferrell and Jessica Elbaum will be producing the project for Gary Sanchez Productions, with Adam McKay as executive producer.

thoughts that are floating around in your monkey mind. This will help you decipher the subconscious patterns that are keeping you from experiencing love in its fullest form. Tip: Break up with your demons.

**CANCER:** There's a term for people who prefer blaming circumstances for what's wrong, rather than taking responsibility for their lives. Don't play victim, Cancer. You know what exactly how to break free from the vicious cycle you have found yourself in. First things first, speak up. Let your side of the story be known. In this case, nothing can be achieved by maintaining silence. Tip: Speak up for yourself.

**LEO:** Let's get down to business, Leo. What are the rules of this engagement? What is the kind of commitment you desire from your beloved? Don't be afraid of straight talk, especially if you want to take things to the next level. On the upside, today could bring joyous tidings with itself. You or somebody close to your heart is getting ready to tie the knot soon.

Tip: It's time to be truthful with the other.

**VIRGO:** This phase of your togetherness

requires a greater degree of commitment.

Move beyond the textbook definition of the word, and see how you can support each other in every single way. Sometimes, this means saying 'I've got your back' as they fulfil their dreams in the material reality. They may or may not be able to communicate with you in a manner that you're used to through the course of the day. What matters is that they still want to come back home to you.

Tip: Support each other's dreams.

**LIBRA:** 'Where is everybody going to and what's the rush anyway?' You find yourself wondering as you sip on that cup of seneritea. Embrace the joy of being in the present—a place of harmony and love. If you've gone through hell and back as far as your relationships are concerned, trust that hope and healing are on their way to you.

Tip: Everything is exactly how it should be.

**SCORPIO:** Ask yourself this as you sit in silence: do they really want to be a part of your life, and what are they doing to consciously align themselves themselves with this intention? If their actions don't match their words, you know you've got a prob-

# Pressure post 'Baahubali' is scary: Prabhas

**MUMBAI, AUG 22 (PTI):** Headlining the country's biggest blockbuster "Baahubali" had its effects on Prabhas, who now feels the pressure to deliver again riding on him. With the "Baahubali" series, Prabhas became a pan-India star, with his popularity even reaching international regions. Prabhas says the SS Rajamouli-directed franchise will never be forgotten, "whatever happens", but he has to move on and is ready with his latest action-thriller "Saaho".

In an interview with PTI, Prabhas says "Saaho" was "mentally stressing" not because of the director or the script "but because of the baggage which Rajamouli gave me." "There is now a lot of audience, you don't even know which part loved you more. My friend told me how kids in Gujarat are singing Baahubali songs. So the pressure is also more. It is scary. I have had so many sleepless nights for 'Saaho.' I couldn't sleep for many days because of the stress. Suddenly it gets on to you," he says.

The actor adds he still feels like he is living a dream every time he steps out and gets recognised in cities where he earlier walked with anonymity, courtesy the success of the epic drama. "There are people who know me around the country and in some parts of the world also. It's like a dream. I came

to Mumbai so many times when no one would recognise me and now they know me, my face and come to me.

"You lose that freedom to go anywhere anytime without being recognised. As a Telugu actor, I could go anywhere. But this is a beautiful thing though." For the upcoming action thriller, the actor gave two years to complete the film. Earlier

wants to make something, he will and I wanted to be a part of it.

"For 'Saaho' we thought we will plan everything and finish it in one year. But we didn't have a reference for a lot of things in 'Saaho' when it comes to action, sets among others. So that took time." The actor, however, says he now wants to increase the frequency of doing films. "I



for "Baahubali", Prabhas had invested five years. The 39-year-old actor says once he is in love with a script, investing time isn't a problem for him. "It was important for me to give that time to Rajamouli for we were making something new, bigger. I knew Rajamouli is so passionate, if he

want to do more films now. I've been kind of slow for the last six years now, though it has been so rewarding. I want to do at least one film a year, at least."

"Saaho", directed by Sujeeth and also featuring Shraddha Kapoor, is scheduled to be released on August 30.

## Flop films don't kill an actor, not being wanted by anyone does: Sudeep



**MUMBAI, AUG 22 (PTI):** South star Kichcha Sudeep says an actor's career does not end with flops but with no one wanting to work with them.

Sudeep, who has worked across industries and languages, said when writers stop creating parts for an actor then it is a scary space to be in.

When asked if he is in his best phase as he is starring multi-lingual projects like "Pehlwaaan", "SyeRaa Narasimha Reddy" and "Dabangg 3", the actor told reporters, "It's wonderful. As an actor what more do you want? It's not about the releases, or the numbers of languages.

"The fact that many people across need you, want you. The day an actor is not required, the day no one is writing for you, is when you're actually dead... That's a very scary moment." Sudeep said he is happy that so many filmmakers across languages want to team up with him.

"Today, when so many people are writing for me, need me, I think there cannot be a

better thing for an actor than this, that you're required, they call you, they want you. All you want to do is take a flight, go there and do what they want. It's beautiful."

He was speaking at the trailer launch of his next, "Pehlwaaan". The film, also starring Suniel Shetty, features Sudeep as a wrestler. Sudeep said the exchange of talent which is happening between several film industries is beautiful.

"For me, it all started with 'Phoonk' around 2008 and then I landed a couple of more films and then came 'Makhi'. But the phase cinema is going through right now is much bigger, brighter than my personal things.

"Too many interactions, give and take, export and import is happening. I guess I'm lucky. The transition that's happening within fraternities is beautiful and I am lucky that I am here right now."

Presented by Zee Studios, "Pehlwaaan" is scheduled to release on September 12.

## Priyanka Chopra is representing India very well, says Ayushmann Khurrana

**MUMBAI, AUG 22 (PTI):** Ayushmann Khurrana has come out in support of Priyanka Chopra, who has been at the receiving end of the Pakistan human rights ministry demanding to remove her as the UN Goodwill Ambassador for Peace. Ayushmann said the actor represents India "really well" on global platforms. "Priyanka Chopra is representing our country very well. She is not an Indian icon but a global icon. Being a daughter of an army officer she is a good representative of India," he told reporters here at the "Aandhadhun" celebration. On Wednesday, in a letter addressed to UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta H. Fore, Pakistan's Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari said the Bollywood actor supports the Indian government's policies on Kashmir. She further alleged that Chopra is in favour of a "nuclear war" between India and Pakistan.

Mazari's letter came days after Chopra was verbally attacked at an event in the US by a Pakistani woman who had also accused the actor of encouraging nuclear war against her country. Meanwhile, Ayushmann said he is happy for the love and recognition pouring in for his 2018 crime-thriller, directed by Sriram Raghavan. At the 66th National Film Awards, the film won three awards - Best Hindi Film, Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Actor (Ayushmann).

"The celebration is happening for all the win including National award among other things for our film. Every actor does have a bucket list of what they want, like every actor I did aspire to win a National Award as an actor I am glad I won that for 'Aandhadhun'. "The film is a case study, it is a genre-defying film as it a dark film with elements of humour. The best part is our film did exceptionally well globally as well." Talking about the work pressure Ayushmann said, "More than the pressure you get encouragement to do something different and entertaining."

The cast and crew of "Aandhadhun" including Raghavan, actors Tabu, Manav Vij, Zakir Hussain, Ajit Andhare from Viacom18 Motion Pictures were present at the party.

"The success of 'Aandhadhun' still continues. It (National Award) is a big moment for the entire team. Awards doesn't mean a lot, but National Award does hold a significance. It is a prestigious thing," Tabu said.

**ARIES:** "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me," said American singer, B B King. When that toxic ex shows up at your doorstep with the intention of reclaiming their place in your life, you know exactly what you need to do, Aries. Don't feel bad about being twice as assertive this time around. If you're the one struggling with letting go, watch your need for codependency. The time to kiss goodbye to your demons is now.

Tip: Let go.

**TAURUS:** The ebb and flow of the emotional world could get the better of you today. Clear your head, Taurus. Make a conscious effort to come back to yourself. This will help you understand whether you are operating from a space of paranoia or inner knowledge. Remember, somebody who loves you will be happy to hold your hand and put your fears to rest.

Tip: Watch your fears.

**GEMINI:** One step forward, two steps backwards. Aren't you getting tired of your little dance? Gemini, light a candle, connect with your spirit guides, and journal the

thoughts that are floating around in your monkey mind. This will help you decipher the subconscious patterns that are keeping you from experiencing love in its fullest form. Tip: Break up with your demons.

**CANCER:** There's a term for people who prefer blaming circumstances for what's wrong, rather than taking responsibility for their lives. Don't play victim, Cancer. You know what exactly how to break free from the vicious cycle you have found yourself in. First things first, speak up. Let your side of the story be known. In this case, nothing can be achieved by maintaining silence. Tip: Speak up for yourself.

**LEO:** Let's get down to business, Leo. What are the rules of this engagement? What is the kind of commitment you desire from your beloved? Don't be afraid of straight talk, especially if you want to take things to the next level. On the upside, today could bring joyous tidings with itself. You or somebody close to your heart is getting ready to tie the knot soon.

Tip: It's time to be truthful with the other.

**VIRGO:** This phase of your togetherness

requires a greater degree of commitment.

Move beyond the textbook definition of the word, and see how you can support each other in every single way. Sometimes, this means saying 'I've got your back' as they fulfil their dreams in the material reality. They may or may not be able to communicate with you in a manner that you're used to through the course of the day. What matters is that they still want to come back home to you.

Tip: Support each other's dreams.

**LIBRA:** 'Where is everybody going to and what's the rush anyway?' You find yourself wondering as you sip on that cup of seneritea. Embrace the joy of being in the present—a place of harmony and love. If you've gone through hell and back as far as your relationships are concerned, trust that hope and healing are on their way to you.

Tip: Everything is exactly how it should be.

**SCORPIO:** Ask yourself this as you sit in silence: do they really want to be a part of your life, and what are they doing to consciously align themselves themselves with this intention? If their actions don't match their words, you know you've got a prob-

lem, Scorpio. What the cards are warning you about: pushing against the flow. Redirect your energy towards self-growth instead.

Tip: Beware of pushing against the flow.

**SAGITTARIUS:** It's okay to put your phone on flight mode and forget about the rest of the world. It's okay to disengage from conversations because you need to focus on your own growth. It's okay to allow yourself to just 'be' in a world that's constantly asking you to run. Let silence and solitude be your operative words, Sagittarius. Spend some time meditating (preferably in nature) to take the Zen levels up a notch. Tip: Sometimes you just have to allow yourself to 'be'.

**CAPRICORN:** Life is too short to be in 'may be' and 'let's see' territory. If you like it, you want to put a ring on it, and scream from the rooftops about how much in love you are. What's life without a little bit of drama, anyway? Feeling the feels but not ready to commit yet? Let things progress organically. Take your time to get to know each other. What the Universe wants you to keep in mind: there are good people in this world.

Tip: Love with all your heart.

**AQUARIUS:** How deep is your love? Aquarius, look for actions, not words. This will give you a clear insight into their willingness to commit for the long haul. Could you be fighting off a 10/10 lover because of somebody who let you down in the past? Kiss your demons goodbye. Be aware of how you're sabotaging your own growth. "It's not the sensation of joy that we fear, of course, it's actually the fear of losing it or the fear of never feeling it again." A Brene Brown quote to help you stay woke on your soulmate journey.

Tip: This could be for the long haul.

**PISCES:** Now here's some internet wisdom to open your heart: "Grant me the serenity to accept the things you cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Pisces, watch the anger and resentment until it dissolves. Come back to that space of purity within you, that place or unconditional love. It is here that you will find the wisdom you need to forgive your past.

Tip: Love and only love.