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SummitTIMES

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SKM Govt committed to public welfare despite financial burden, says Golay

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 01 AUG:**

Chief Minister, PS Tamang [Golay] today said that the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha government is committed to continue welfare programmes despite having huge financial burden and liabilities incurred under the previous government. He assured that the government has been taking all possible austerity measures to spend more on welfare of the people of Sikkim.

He was responding to queries of Members Aditya Golay Tamang and Em Prasad Sharma placed during the discussion on Demands for Grants for different departments under the charge of the CM on the fourth day of the Budget Session of Sikkim Legislative Assembly here on Thursday.

The CM further mentioned that SKM took the



charge of the government on 27 May this year and inherited huge loans, liabilities and financial burden from the SDF government.

He informed that the first cabinet meeting decided not to use expensive vehicles for the CM, Ministers and legislators and the meeting also decided to auction all lux-

ury vehicles used by the previous government and put money back to the State exchequer.

He added that the government has stopped using police escorts for the Ministers of the State and has further decided to use STNM hospital for the treatment of the CM, Ministers and MLAs to prevent spending huge

sums in hospitals in and outside the country.

The CM mentioned that there was the practice of making political appointments of lots of advisors and chairpersons in the earlier government.

On the same, he added that except for few Advisors the present government has not ap-

pointed any other advisor and chairperson. He mentioned that fund has been allocated in this budget to provide arrears and pension to government employees in a single instalment.

Responding to a query on Teesta Urja HEP, the CM mentioned that because of the carelessness of the earlier government the State has suffered huge losses in the hydel projects. Instead of making the State self-reliant through hydel projects as promised by the previous government, the State has incurred financial losses, he added.

He informed that the earlier government had constituted a committee headed by the then Chief Secretary and decided to build 13 hydel projects but only Teesta Stage III was executed by Teesta Urja. He added that despite having 60.8% share

in the project, the State sustained huge losses.

The previous government had announced to execute 31 hydel projects but was able to implement only 7 projects, said the CM.

He mentioned that the earlier government had appointed officials by providing very high salaries in crores. On the same, he informed that the State government has negotiated with top officials in the project and managed to save around Rs 3.45 crore in salaries per annum.

CM also welcomed suggestions of the Member Aditya Golay and Em Prasad Sharma and assured to work on providing district status to Pakyong and Soreng. He also assured to work on the issue placed by Aditya Golay to increase the salaries and facilities for home guards in the State.

Taxi drivers upset over high-handed removal of taxi stands

**REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 01 AUG:**

Just days after the celebration of Chalak Diwas [Drivers' Day], upset taxi drivers gathered at MG Marg today following the removal of various taxi stands from in and around the capital by the Traffic police. According to them, the traffic police has been removing taxi stands from various places since the past few days and fining drivers who are found plying from these stands.

Vice president, SKM Chalak Morcha, Chungchung Bhutia said that numerous taxi driver associations have been coming to the Morcha with complaints of taxi stands being removed by the traffic police.

"On Wednesday traffic police had removed the taxi stand near Titanic Park and we requested the authorities to let the taxi stand function like before. Even the

taxi stand at Nam Nang was being removed so we requested the police to find a solution and we thought the problem would be resolved. However, today we learnt that the police are continuing to remove taxi stands and the one at Daragaon was also being removed," said Mr Bhutia.

He added that they are not going to make any further requests and if by Friday the problem is not resolved they will go on strike.

According to the taxi drivers, stands at Lingding, Deorali, MG Marg and many others are being removed. They are also upset that all this is happening all of a sudden without any warning and about the way the taxi drivers are being treated by the police.

Convoy ground taxi driver association, president, Bikash Thapa said that the police suddenly started fining taxis at

turn to pg02

STOP-PRESS

Govt undertakes major administrative reshuffle

**EAST AND NORTH
GET NEW DCS**

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 01 AUG:**

In major administrative reshuffle effected today, the State Government moved around nearly 31 Secretary-rank officials, reorganizing HODs at several key departments.

East Sikkim has a new DC in Raj Yadav who exchanges places with the incumbent DC, Kapil Meena, who is now the new Additional Secretary, Finance Department.

DC, North, RC Bhutia, has been posted as Secretary, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Department.

Additional Secretary, Directorate of Lotteries, Tenzing T Kaleon, is now the new DC-North.

Secretary IPR Department, Sherap Shenga, moves to Information Technology Department and her responsibilities at IPR go to Namrata Thapa coming in from Tourism Department.

Meanwhile, Secretary, Mines & Geology, TT Bhutia, moves as Secretary, Tourism.

Secretary, IT Deptt, Shital Pradhan, meanwhile moves as Principal Chief Engineer and Secretary, Water Resources & River Development Department.

SECRS Secretary, Karma Tenzing Bhutia, has been repatriated

turn to pg02

Indian Army joins PLA foundation day celebrations at Nathu La and Kongra La

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 01 AUG:**

A Special Border Personnel Meeting between India and China was held at Nathu La today to celebrate the 92nd anniversary of foundation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

An Indian Army delegation comprising of officers and soldiers took part in the celebration on the invitation of the PLA.

The PLA troops interacted with the visiting Indian delegation and presented a cultural programme as a gesture of goodwill and the Indian side also reciprocated with a traditional cultural feature to mark the occasion, an official press communiqué informs.

Delegations from the two sides also met at Kongra La in North Sikkim.

The ceremonial meeting was headed by Brig-



adier ranking officials from both sides.

Celebrations took place in an atmosphere marked by warmth and

cordiality and provided an opportunity to both sides to display their rich culture.

Such interactions go

a long way in ensuring better understanding between both armies and have contributed towards achieving com-

mon goals of peace and tranquility along the borders, the release states.

OFOJ implemented without any legislation: CM

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 01 AUG:**

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] today argued that no rules have been framed or Act passed by the earlier government for the implementation of One Family One Job scheme. He stated that Sikkim Legislative Assembly was not taken into confidence while implementing the scheme. He stated that the Budget Speech of

2018-19 did not cover OFOJ scheme since the concept had not been generated then.

Replying to questions by Member Aditya Golay Tamang regarding OFOJ schemes in the assembly session today, Mr Tamang, who is also the Minister in-charge of Department of Personnel, Administrative Reforms and Training, informed that an intensive drive was conducted by the then Members of the

Cabinet throughout the State during the month of March to July in 2018, where many applications were received requesting for jobs which were forwarded to DoPART for redressal. Many means and ways were thought out and conceived to address the grievances.

"Pressure was mounting high in the department, hence the then CM Office directed to consider only those applicants who do not

have any family members in government service which led to the idea of One Family One Job scheme," he replied.

The CM mentioned that no socio economic survey was conducted by the department and however the list of beneficiaries was received from the Chief Minister's Office which was verified and recommended by the concerned area MLAs, Panchayats and Special Branch Personnel based

on which the office orders were issued. He informed that 17,306 candidates were given Office Order under the Scheme as per the records.

"In total 17,306 office orders have been issued and we do not have records on total number of candidates who have actually joined the service. This department does not have the exact figure. However, all departments have been directed to submit the list. All those

who joined are being paid wages. Since this department has already transferred funds to all departments therefore all those who joined are being paid wages," he said.

The CM also informed the house that tentative figures for payment of salary to 17,306 candidates per month comes to around Rs 185,585,126 and its annual expenditure per annum was expected to be Rs 2,227,021,512.

CONTACT

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Assembly passes General Budget 2019-20

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 01 Aug:

Sikkim Legislative Assembly passed the General Budget for the year 2019-20 on the fourth day of the on-going Budget Session 2019-20 today. Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] had placed his maiden budget on the first day of the assembly session on 29 July.

The fourth day of Budget Session 2019-20 of Sikkim Legislative Assembly began with the Question Hour. Replying to question raised by the Member, Sunita Gajmer, the Chief Minister, PS Tamang, who is also the Minister in-charge of Home Department, informed that the Regional Administrative Centre was constructed at Karfectar, South Sikkim and the cabinet meeting held on 17 November 2009 had approved the establishment of the State Level Capacity Building Institute at the Regional Administrative Centre at Karfectar. He added that the Regional Administrative Centre [Mini Secretariat] is being utilized as the State Level Capacity Building Institute.

Replying to the question raised by the Member Bishnu Kumar Sharma, the Minister Samdup Lepcha stated that the Roads and Bridges Department since 2010 has not received any Contingency fund so no expenditure has been made from the fund so far.

Further, he stated that if the question raised by the MLA was about Contingency provision for various projects



of the department of expenditure or balance, the written reply will be submitted within a period of one month. The work is now undergoing scrutiny and preparation.

On the query of the Member, Sunita Gajmer, the Minister Bhim Hang Subba stated that Mabung Singeng was not in the notified markets and various projects and schemes have been pending on drinking water system in Jorethang and neighboring areas for which the demand and the estimated cost for the maintenance has been submitted.

Likewise, replying to a query of the Member Aditya

Golay, the CM informed that the requirement of funds would be of the order of Rs 222.70 crore per annum for 17,306 appointees under OFOJ. He added that a sum of Rs 4.50 crore was provided in the year 2018-19 for this purpose.

As per the assessment made by the Pay Committee, the total financial liability on account of payment of arrears of revised pay and pension from 01.01.2016 to 31.03.2018 would be approximately Rs.797.00 crore and other details of current revenues, the annual own tax revenue figures and percentage of total revenue and GSDP of the

State from 2009-10 to 2019-20 has been placed before the august house, he added.

During Legislative Business, the Lokayukta (Amendment) Bill, 2019, placed by the Minister for Law Legal, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Department, KN Lepcha on 29 July in the house, was passed by the House.

The Financial Business has witnessed the discussion, voting and subsequent passing of Separate Demands for Grants of various government departments.

Voting on Demands for Grants under the charge of Minister of Rural Management & Development, Pan-

chayati Raj & Cooperation and Ecclesiastical Affairs Departments was placed and passed by the House.

During the discussion on the voting on Demands for Grants under the charge of Minister of PWD (Buildings & Housing) and Transport Departments, the Member, Aditya Golay placed a suggestion to the concerned Minister about the relief to be provided for ticket fees of SNT buses to the students and senior citizens so as to give an impetus to the public transport system in the state to which the Minister gave a positive reply and said that it would be taken into consideration.

The Demands for Grants was then passed by the House.

During the voting on Demands for Grants under the charge of Minister of PWD (Roads & Bridges) and Cultural Affairs and Heritage Departments, the Member Em Prasad talked about the problem of highway and roads in the Namcheybong area and another Member Aditya Golay also put forward his concern regarding the fair-weather roads and the problem of protective walls specially faced during monsoon season due to the ill implementation of schemes.

In his response, Minister Samdup Lepcha agreed to all the points placed by the MLAs and said proper implementation of schemes and policies under the previous government has not been undertaken. Proper estimation, planning and execution is required which has been taken into consideration by the present government, he added. The Demands for Grants was then passed by the House.

During the discussion on the voting on Demands for Grants under the charge of the Minister of Water Security & Public Health Engineering and Water Resources & River Development Departments, the Member GT Dhungel placed his concern about depleting drinking water resources in the state and asked if the department had thought of any alternative water sources in case of any crisis in the future.

The concerned Minister Bhim Hang Subba stated that

the department had thought of alternate sources of water and sewerage treatment plant proposal was also in the pipeline, the DPR for which has already been submitted to the concerned Ministries. The Demands for Grants was then passed by the House.

Member Aditya Golay welcomed the General Budget 2019-20 and said that this budget has brought new hopes and aspirations to the Sikkimese people. He suggested that more youth centric schemes be implemented by the government with new avenues for education and job creation. The Chief Minister accepted all the suggestions placed forward by Aditya Golay.

The Financial Business Budget (Third Stage) saw the voting on General Budget 2019-20 presented to the House by the Chief Minister also the Minister-in-charge of Finance, Revenue and Expenditure Department, Government of Sikkim on 29th July, which was passed by the House, today.

Chief Minister also the Minister-in-Charge of Finance, Revenue and Expenditure Department, Government of Sikkim introduced the Sikkim Appropriation Bill, Bill No.6 of 2019 for Annual General Budget 2019-20. The Sikkim Appropriation Bill, Bill No.6 of 2019 was considered and passed by the House.

Meghalaya guv's remarks about East Bengal disrespectful: Mamata

KOLKATA, AUG 1 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee hit out at Meghalaya Governor Tathagatha Roy on Thursday, saying his remarks about the East Bengal football club were "disrespectful".

Roy had kicked up a controversy on Tuesday when he asked East Bengal supporters if they had ever wondered why they were with that club while being in West Bengal.

"East Bengal Athletic

Club (basically soccer) is celebrating its centenary. Has it struck its office-bearers or any of its supporters why they are supporting East Bengal while sitting in West Bengal?" he had asked.

Banerjee, who was the chief patron at the club's centenary celebrations here, took the occasion to give it back to the Meghalaya governor, a former president of the state Bharatiya Janata Party.

"After listening to this,

I have felt very ashamed," Banerjee said.

"We are proud of East Bengal, Mohun Bagan and Mohammedan Sporting and their supporters," she said, adding that the people support the clubs with their lives and they do not tolerate the club being disrespected.

Roy had clarified that what he meant was people were driven out of East Bengal (now Bangladesh) "because of our religion".

"Some people feel people from East Bengal can only support the club. There is difference between people of West Bengal and East Bengal," Banerjee said.

She said these relationships were beyond all geographic boundaries.

"Just because I was born in this part of Bengal, it does not mean that I am not East Bengal. Or I cannot love East Bengal. This is disrespecting East Bengal," the chief minister said.

ter said.

Describing the occasion as "historic", Banerjee said the centenary year programmes would continue for a year.

The foundation day event on Thursday saw a galaxy of stars, with India's two iconic former cricket captains, Kapil Dev and Sourav Ganguly, sharing the dais with football legends Bhaichung Bhutia and Sunil Chhetri.

Kapil Dev, India's

first World Cup-winning captain, received East Bengal's highest honour, 'Bharat Gaurav'.

The centenary celebrations began on Sunday with a big torch rally from their origin Kumartuli Park to the club lawns, and it will continue till next year.

Banerjee said the West Bengal government had plans to felicitate the club separately during the course of the celebrations.

Taxi drivers upset over high-handed removal of taxi stands

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Convoy ground, Lingding and Aadhaar office.

"The way we are being treated, do we belong to the lowest rung of the society?" he said.

Taxi drivers asked the SKM Chalak Morcha to intervene in the matter and a group of taxi drivers later met DIG Range, it is informed. They have been told that a joint inspection will be carried out under SP Traffic and DSP Traffic on 02 Aug after the Assembly session to find a solution.

Govt undertakes major administrative reshuffle

Contd from pg1

and posted as Secretary, Ecclesiastical Affairs Department. CC Bhutia, Secretary, Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Department has been posted as Secretary, SECRC.

MT Sherpa, Super-time Grade-1 posted at UD&HD is the new Secretary, HRDD. The transfer orders also detail that Additional Chief Secretary, HRDD, GP Upadhyaya, shall continue to function as ACS, HRDD.

Secretary, Sikkim Information Commission, Jigme Dorjee Bhutia, has been transferred and posted as Commissioner,

Commercial Taxes Division under FRED.

Special Secretary, ARC, Dadul Tshering, has been transferred as Secretary, Sikkim Information Commission, on deputation.

Balaram Subba, Director HRDD, has been transferred and posted as Secretary, Printing & Stationery Department.

Secretary, Transport Deptt, SB Subba, has been transferred and posted as Secretary, Animal Husbandry, and will continue to hold additional charge of Labour Department. PCE, Roads & Bridges, Raju Basnet, is the new Secretary at

Transport Deptt and has also been given additional charge of Mines & Geology Department.

The list also informs that Additional Secretary, RM&DD, Sarika Pradhan, who had been recently transferred as Director, DHH, will continue as Addl Secy at RMDD. Similarly, Additional Secretary, Department of Planning, Norzing Tshering Shenga, who had been transferred to RMDD will also continue serving at Department of Planning.

Jyotsna Mary Karthak, presently posted as Director, DHH, who had been posted as Additional Secy, Department

of Planning, will instead move to HRDD as Director.

The new Director at DHH is Binita Thapa who was serving as Additional Director, HRDD, in South Sikkim.

The new transfer order also informs that Additional Secretary, Skill Development, Sumita Pradhan, who had been transferred to RMDD will now move instead to Health Department as Additional Secretary replacing Yishey Doma Yongda, who has been transferred as Director [Technical], HRDD.

Another transfer that has rescinded is that of

Under Secretary, Forest Department, Hema Devis Sharma, who had been posted to Human Rights Commission on 25 July will now continue serving at Forest Department.

Similarly, Deputy Commissioner, Excise, Binita Sharma, who had been transferred as Deputy Director, Ecclesiastical Affairs Department, will also now continue to serve at Excise Department.

Transfers have also been ordered at the joint secretary level.

Quantum of outstanding loans and advances from SBS - Rs 1,693.22 ce

Contd from pg1

en by the SBS to the Government of Sikkim and Public Sector Undertakings was Rs 386.40 crore.

Meanwhile, a total amount of demonetized

Rs 1000 and Rs 500 currency notes deposited with SBS by account holders, including government revenue and tax payers, during the period of demonetization was

Rs 70.73 crore, he informed.

He also informed that total amount of demonetized Rs 1000 and Rs 500 exchanged at SBS was nil.

Responding to a sup-

plementary question posed by MLA Aditya Golay Tamang regarding the recovery of outstanding loans of the bank, the CM informed that the government has appointed

a senior police officer as the Recovery Officer to recover outstanding loans and advances.

He further informed that the government will also constitute a commit-

tee to recover these loans from the individuals and organisations.

KUTSE SHEGU

The Kutse Shedu of late Norbu Tshering Bhutia (Khamdong Norbu) who passed away on 19th of June 2019, falls on the

6th of August 2019. Family members, friends and well wishers are most welcome in joining us in offering prayers for his departed soul at our residence at Khamdong, East Sikkim. We wish to thank all of you who supported us during the time of our grief with your condolences and apologise in case we weren't able to do so personally.

Pempa Doma Bhutia (Khamdong Anyola)
Sonam Wangdi, Tashi Chopel, K.P.Tshering, Karma Loday, Karma Thendup, Karma Yenten (sons), Karma Doma (daughter) and Family Members Khamdong.



~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

URGENTLY REQUIRED:

Urgent Recruitment for a waiter with atleast 3 years experience and one kitchen helper. Contact: Hotel Paramount, Dentam, West Sikkim- 9735909625 / 8348285444

WANTED

HOUSEKEEPER/BABYSITTER . Contact: 9933443442/9800500696.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This is for general information of all concerned that Hotel Parasol Residency, Panihouse, Deorali East Sikkim shall remain closed for a period of six months for carrying out necessary repairs. All concerned tour operators and clients are requested to refrain from booking or deal with any sort with regard to Hotel Parasol Residency, Panihouse, Deorali, East Sikkim.

Mr. Subash Lama
Proprietor
Hotel Parasol Residency,
Panihouse, Deorali, East Sikkim

Four & half Storied building on SALE, behind Hotel Agarwal at Pani House, Gangtok, East Sikkim. Interested parties may also buy flats - 2 flats - 1650 sq.ft, 1 Flat - 1186 sq.ft & 1 Flat on top (1 & half)- 3000 sq.ft. Contact: -9434751150

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White Paper exposes SDF Govt's hollow claims: RMDD Minister

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 01 AUG:**

RMDD Minister Sonam Lama today contended that the White Paper tabled by the State government presented evidence that works and achievements claimed by the SDF government were limited to speeches and files.

He further alleged that the ground reality at different parts of the State was dramatically different from what is claimed in project files.

He was speaking after the presentation and discussions on Demand of Grants for departments under his charge.

Speaking on the White Paper, the Minister said that people will now understand how the previous government damaged



aged the State over the past 25 years that it was in office.

He commented that Sikkim received several awards in different areas on the basis of wrong reports and figures submitted by the earlier SDF

government and went on to state that all government departments were now burdened with huge debts and financial liabilities as a result.

The Minister went on to claim that the SKM government was committed to work in the interest of the people of Sikkim and added that the government has already initiated the process.

He also stated that the State government was working to introduce fully digitized systems for the convenience of the people so that their work can get done in their respective areas itself.

ly digitized systems for the convenience of the people so that their work can get done in their respective areas itself.

He also mentioned that SDF MLAs had accused him of being an anti-national in 2014 and questioned how a legislator could become anti-national if working in the interest of Sikkim and its people.

"I met Union Ministers in Delhi in the interest of people of Sikkim and I had no any personal agenda," he said.

Replying to questions placed by MLAs Aditya Golay, Bishnu Kumar Sharma and Em Prasad Sharma, he assured that the department would take these issues positively and work for an early solution.



STNM docs remove tumour from patient's cheek

GANGTOK, 01 AUG (IPR): In a complex and difficult operation which lasted close to seven hours a team of doctors at STNM hospital removed a cancerous tumour from the cheek of a patient on Wednesday.

The surgical team had Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon, Dr Choden Norbu, Head and Neck Oncosurgeon, Dr Tsewang Yougyal and Oncosurgeon, Dr Tshering Bhutia which was supported by the Anesthesia team led by Dr Neelima Pradhan.

The surgery involved cutting away the tumour and surrounding skin, bone and teeth. The local lymph nodes also had to be removed. Following the removal of these structures, the operated cheek had to be reconstructed by using a muscle

cle flap from the patient's chest wall which had to be mobilised by creating a tunnel below the patient's skin and repositioned at the site where the tumour was removed and thereby filling up the defect that was formed.

This was a painstakingly delicate and an intricate surgery. It was the first time such a difficult procedure was conducted in the new hospital. The patient is doing well currently and should be discharged soon.

Carrying out such a difficult operation has boosted the confidence of doctors. They intend to continue tackling such skilful operations with the aim of benefiting the entire population of Sikkim and the surrounding areas.

This complex surgery is relevant to our region

not only because it has been performed for the first time in the new hospital but also for the fact that such type of cancers constitute 30% of all tumours in India.

In addition the traditional custom of betel nut chewing adds to the burden of such types of cancers being very prevalent in our region. Until recent times such patients had to be referred to tertiary cancer centers of Mumbai, Vellore, Kolkata, but now with the appointment of trained Oncosurgeons, Reconstructive Surgeons and Medical Oncologists, such patients will be provided with optimum cancer care in the new STNM hospital, thereby obviating such referrals to higher centres outside the state.

Sikkim SC Welfare Association preps for silver jubilee

**SUMMIT REPORT
Gangtok, 01 Aug:**

Scheduled Castes Welfare Association has announced plans to organize a day-long event at Manan Kendra on 05 August to mark the silver jubilee of the organization.

SSCWA president, Shekhar Sewa, along with treasurer Bhupen Lamichaney informed a press conference here today that they were grateful to the people who contributed towards the formation and constant development of the organization.

The celebrations will be divided into two sections, the first half dedicated to reminiscing over the association's journey thus far and the screening of a documentary on SSCWA.

The second phase of the event will feature cultural programmes by prominent singers like Babu Bogati, Sunanda Diyal, Nikita Cintury [Voice of India Contestant], Priyam Acharya [Saregama-pa Runner Up] and other local artists.

Awareness workshop on substance abuse held for Panchayati Raj functionaries

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 01 JUL:**

A three-day capacity building programme on drug abuse prevention for Panchayati Raj functionaries was conducted at the Sumbuk Block Administrative Centre in South Sikkim by the State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in collaboration with the National Institute of Social Defense from 29 to 31 July.

The training was attended by the Panchayati Raj functionaries from different Gram Panchayat Units under Sumbuk Block viz. Sumbuk-Kartik, Lungchok-Kamery,

Sadam-Suntoley, Turuk Ramabong and Mellidara-Paiyoung.

The training was inaugurated on 29 July by Assistant Director, RM&DD, BAC Sumbuk, Ganga Chhetri who urged participants to take the training seriously since social defence was the only check against the social challenge of substance abuse.

During the technical sessions, topics like the issues, needs, mandate, vision and mission and strategies of National Institute of Social Defense were taken in the first session followed by sessions on the drug abuse

scenario in North Eastern States and Sikkim, drug classification and identification.

Substance Abuse Disorder, Myths and Misconceptions about Drug Abuse, Drug Abuse and After care: Rehabilitation, Deaddiction, Sikkim Anti Drugs Act, Role of PRIs in controlling drug demand, role of community on drug demand reduction were covered.

Master Trainers/Field Facilitators, SIRD-PR, Suren Mohra, Roshan Kaushik, Karna Bdr Chhetri, SHO Milan Chhetri, Amar Rai, Sumbuk, OP, Nodal Teacher, Shiva Pradhan, SAATHI, Sumbuk Sr Sec School, Counselor, Sarita Basnett, Meli PHC, Panchayat President, Deoraj Rai, Lungchok-Kamery Gram Panchayat Unit and Kiran Thatal, BDO, RMDD, Sumbuk were present as resource persons.

During the valedictory function, Zilla Panchayat member of Sumbuk-Lungchok, Jamunna Rai was present as chief guest.

Three Sikkim artists selected for Lalit Kala Akademi national workshop

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 01 AUG:**

Three artists from Sikkim have been selected for the Lalit Kala Akademi National Workshop on "Interactive Camp of Tribal, Folk and Contemporary Artists Camp" scheduled to be held at Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba, Himachal Pradesh.

The artists are Sisir

Thapa [Sculpture] and Deepa Rai and Sewon Rai [painting].

The workshop is being organised by the Lalit Kala Akademi in association with Arts Glacierhi and Sanskar Bharati, supported by DC, Chamba, Government of Himachal Pradesh.

The workshop got underway on 28 July.

A total of 30 artists from all over the North

Eastern Region are attending the workshop.

While speaking to SummitTimes, president, Ovia Art Circle, Sikkim, Deepa Rai, said that it was an honour to be selected for the workshop and the opportunities it presented.

The works created at the workshop will be exhibited at Bhuri Singh Museum, Chambi, HP, on 04 August.

Assam earns excise revenue of Rs 824.92 cr in Jan-June this yr

GUWAHATI, AUG 1 (PTI):

Assam has earned an excise revenue of Rs 824.92 crore in the first six months of 2019, Excise Minister Parimal Suklabaidhya said on Thursday.

In a written reply to a question raised by AGP MLA Ramendra Narayan

Kalita in the House, Suklabaidhya said that the excise revenue was Rs 118.94 crore, 116.64 crore, Rs 194.24 crore, Rs 141.93 crore, 123.71 crore and Rs 129.46 crore respectively between January and June this year.

To another query, he said, Guwahati has 313 Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL) shops, 178 IMFL bars, 38 country liquor shops, and revenue earned from annual renewal of their licence amounted to Rs 10,50,65,00.

Mentioning that the government is aware of liquor being smuggled into Assam from neighbouring states, the minister said, preventive measures were undertaken to prevent this.

Assam has 17 lakh educated unemployed

GUWAHATI, AUG 1 (PTI):

Assam has a total of 16,99,977 educated unemployed people as per record available up to December 31 last year, the Assembly was informed on Thursday.

Records in Employment Exchanges across

the state also show that there are 20,24,886 registered employed persons till last year, Industry Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said.

He was replying to a question by Pabindra Deka of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP).

On the steps taken to provide jobs to the unemployed, the minister said their names are forwarded by the Employment Exchanges to various employers who are legally bound to send their requirements to the exchanges.

The exchanges also provide career counseling and vocational guidance to the registered persons to find alternate means of employment, he added.




NEXA DEALER IN

SIKKIM NOW HIRING



SHOWROOM MANAGER

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Profit center head
- Overall in-charge of sales operations
- Responsible for:
 - Sales target achievement
 - Promotion of value added services
 - Customer satisfaction
 - Co-ordination with principal

PROFILE

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Time to Find New VIPs

Not everything should be about politics, always

Commenting on the content of newspapers, particularly this one, a reader who wants to like the paper but cannot, complained that politics was not covered enough. In fact, politics is rarely front-paged here, she complained. Relax, what follows is not a soliloquy on the editorial policy of the paper; but, for now, let's continue with the premise that this piece opened with.

Sure, political parties and politicians say something every day, but that is not politics because there are rarely any real ideologies at play or even political commentary. There is a lot of name-calling, endless allegations and many a times, mind-bafflingly philosophical gobbledygook in response to even the most pedantic of allegations. And there are claims. Coming mostly by way of press releases, this is a one-way communication in which clarifications and details are controlled. So, while it is necessary for people to know what their parties are saying, just because they said it does not mean it is important. At the end of the day, none of this is really politics, because none of this is of any long-term significance or even of sustaining interest. At best, it is a lot of politicking in its purest, dictionary-definition of "activity directed towards acquiring power and influence, achieving one's own goals".

But we are nation obsessed with politicians and politicking – switch on TV news or open any newspaper or news-magazine and you will receive affirmation of this. But why are we so obsessed with politicians. Some years ago, a senior TV news anchor who spends more time anchoring stories about politicians exchanging barbs than deliberating on politics, explained that in the absence of any other heroes [the definition probably limited to 'celebrities'], journalists had no option but to zero in on the politicians, who were easily recognizable, always in the public domain and always willing to offer quotes and interviews. He was not wrong. Who does India have apart from politicians when it comes to celebrities who can feed news cycles on a regular basis? Some cricketers, Bollywood stars, erratic flickers in other sports, tennis for a while, and now wrestling and badminton as well. Because of our culture which does not allow our "famous people" to speak their minds or take a stand, the non-political celebrities make for boring copy because they clam up the moment they are invited to speak of anything beyond their individual performance. And let's also accept it. We are not a very sporty population and our "passion" for sports is in fact just media-managed hyperbole. How else does one explain the fact that we suddenly discovered Deepa Karmakar on the eve of the Olympics. Rio was when she peaked. If we had been a sports-loving people, we would have seen her grow as a gymnast. In fact, if the media had not played up her Olympian feat, being media-fed spectators, we would probably not have bothered with feting her either. Ditto for the stars who dazzled in the recent Asian Games.

With news channels running on 24x7 cycles, and newspapers adding more pages hoping to win more readers, politicking ends up gaining primacy because it offers ready masala. But politicians can be extremely fickle, changing their stands often or being too predictable. As a result, what the media feeds the audience when it plays up "politics" ends up being too superficial. And that delivers us the chicken-and-egg quandary: Will people pursue real role models or will media seek them out? People need to patronise real heroes who are consistent in their pursuits and reliable as icons. The media will scent the mood the people and start giving these personalities more media-time and that will hopefully leave the politicians with the time and space to debate at an ideological level and comment on policy initiatives rather than remain obsessed with corny jingoism which makes for sensational headlines but does nothing for to deliver better governance or more responsible opposition.

Even Sikkim needs to find role-models outside the political and bureaucratic domain. Apart from the fact that such personalities are available but under-appreciated, there is also the need to introduce the young to more versions of what being successful means. Such exposure will also cushion some of the contradictions the young grow up with when they seek out inspiration. Sikkim seems to keep forgetting that it takes more than politicians to make a society and more than political gossip to make a conversation. Every society and every generation needs heroes and role models and it would be unfair to suggest that Sikkim has not produced enough variety. What is unfortunate is that the people don't seem to recognize these achievers beyond the occasional expressions of drummed up celebration.

WRITE US:

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

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WhatsApp played a big role in the Nigerian election. Not all of it was bad

NIC CHEESEMAN
theconversation.com

There is growing concern about the potential for the message and media sharing platform WhatsApp to undermine democracy in a number of countries across the world including Brazil and India.

Because WhatsApp is encrypted – and so offers users far greater protection from prosecution than Twitter or Facebook – it has become particularly notorious for spreading "fake news".

This is a major concern in Africa, where WhatsApp is the most popular messaging app in 40 countries. This is due to its low cost and the ability to easily share messages with both individuals and groups.

But is this really how WhatsApp is used? And if it is, to what extent does this compromise the quality of elections?

A joint team from the Centre for Democracy and Development (Nigeria) and the University of Birmingham (UK) has spent the last few months researching the impact of WhatsApp on the 2019 Nigerian elections held in May.

Their report comes to conclusions that are both troubling, as well as encouraging.

The research reveals that the platform was used to mislead voters in increasingly sophisticated ways. But it also shows that WhatsApp strengthened democracy in other areas.

MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION

The term "fake news" has become widely used over the past few years. However, it is problematic because it lumps together very different kinds of information and behaviour. For example, we need to separate out deliberate attempts to mislead others by creating false stories (disinformation) from the innocent sharing of made up stories by people who believe it to be true (misinformation).

The 2019 Nigerian elections saw both disinformation and misinformation. We studied this by conducting 46 interviews in the states of Abuja, Oyo and Kano, as well as seven focus groups and a survey of 1,005 people.

During the course of conducting the research candidates consistently told us that they predominantly used WhatsApp to share information about their qualities and campaign pledges. But many WhatsApp users said that at a high proportion of the messages they received were designed to undermine a rival leader's reputation – to "decampaign" them.

There were some high profile examples of disinformation. The most notorious story circulated

on social media was that the president had died while undergoing medical treatment outside of the country, and had been replaced by a clone from Sudan.

Other fabricated communications were less outlandish but no less significant. Many ordinary citizens shared these messages, in some cases because they knew they were false and wanted to amplify their impact, but in many cases because they thought they were true.

The most effective decampaigning strategies were those that shared messages that resonated with individuals because they contained an element of the truth, or played on recent experiences.

WhatsApp TAKES OVER

The political influence of WhatsApp has expanded rapidly in line with its growing penetration. As a result, it has become part of the fabric of election campaigns and is now a key mechanism through which political leaders seek to communicate with their campaign teams and supporters.

Fully 91% of the people we interviewed were



active WhatsApp users; as one person put it:

"I use WhatsApp more than I use the toilet."

In Nigeria, election candidates were already using the platform to push messages in 2015. But the people we interviewed agreed that the 2019 elections saw a significant step up in terms of how the leading parties organised their social media strategy.

Politically, WhatsApp was used in an increasingly sophisticated way at the presidential level. In 2019, the two main presidential candidates – President Muhammadu Buhari and opposition leader Atiku Abubakar – both had dedicated teams pushing out messages over social media: the Buhari New Media Centre and Atikulated Youth Force. By forming hundreds of WhatsApp groups of 256 members, these organisations could send messages to tens of thousands of people at the touch of a button.

Buhari's effort was better funded and particularly impressive. It established a network of local and regional representatives connected to a "cen-

tral command" in Abuja. This enabled the campaign to rapidly send messages from the national to the local level, while also responding to hostile messages and rumours shared by its rivals.

While those in power typically had more money to invest in their campaigns, many opposition leaders pointed out that in important ways WhatsApp had created a more level political playing field. Those who had been involved in politics for some time explained that "fake news" was nothing new in Nigeria, but that in the past it was sometimes impossible to counteract these messages because there was no way to get airtime on government aligned radio.

WhatsApp had changed this situation. Opposition leaders now have a cheap way of fighting back. It has also been used to coordinate anti-corruption campaigns and election observation, strengthening democracy.

EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION?

It's also important not to overstate the significance of WhatsApp. Things look very different below the national level, for example, where campaign structures were less developed and a significant proportion of activity remained informal.

We found that while candidates for Governor and Member of Parliament did set up WhatsApp groups, they were much less organised. In many cases, candidates relied on existing networks and social influencers to get the message out.

Candidates were also keen to stress that while they used WhatsApp during their campaigns, they did not rely on it. Voters expect to see their leaders on the ground, and expected them to provide a range of

services for the community. Advertising good deeds over WhatsApp could help a leader get credit, but only if they had fulfilled their responsibilities in the first place.

In other words, WhatsApp can amplify and complement a candidate's ground campaign. But it cannot replace it.

THROWING OUT THE WATER BUT KEEPING THE BABY

These findings suggest that solutions to the power of social media platforms like WhatsApp isn't to ban them, or to allow governments to censor them. This would merely exaggerate the vast advantages of incumbency that ruling parties already enjoy.

A better solution would be to promote digital literacy, develop social media codes of conduct around elections, and empower WhatsApp users to control which groups they are added to, and what information they receive.

[the writer is Professor of Democracy, University of Birmingham]

Climate denial: Donald Trump mimics criminal behaviour when justifying his stance

RUTH MCKIE
theconversation.com

While much of the world now recognises the need for immediate action, there are still those who question the scientific consensus on climate change and deter efforts to tackle it. As might be expected, they have the attention of US President Donald Trump and his Republican administration.

The Heartland Institute's International Conference on Climate Change was held at the Trump International Hotel in Washington DC on July 25 2019. The Heartland Institute considers itself one of "the world's leading free market think-tanks", which "promotes free market solutions to social and economic problems". It's perhaps best known for its climate scepticism.

Discussions at the annual event include disputing scientific observations on climate change, criticising "climate alarmists" and promoting fossil fuels. As the choice of venue might suggest, the arguments made here seem to overlap with what the president and the ruling Republican Party has previously said on climate change.

From my background studying criminal behaviour, I found something striking about the way Trump justifies inaction on climate change. Through his own words, the president's arguments mimic patterns in criminal behaviour that criminologists call "techniques of neutralisation".

Criminologists contend that criminals use techniques of neutralisation to help deny or justify a crime they have committed. These five techniques were first defined in 1964 from the types of arguments given by young people in the criminal justice system



when justifying their actions.

1. Denial of responsibility – it is not the offender's fault.
 2. Denial of injury of harm – the crime does not cause significant harm or may have positive results.
 3. Denial of victim – there is no clear victim.
 4. Condemnation of the condemner – the offender criticises the criminal justice system to avoid criticism of the offender.
 5. Appeal to higher loyalties – deviant behaviour was in aid of a greater good or to benefit someone else.
- When we flip the context from petty criminals to powerful politicians and lobbyists, it's not hard to see the same pattern emerging.
1. Denial of responsibility – climate change is happening, but humans aren't the cause.
 2. Denial of injury or harm – there's no significant harm caused by human action and there may even be some benefits.
 3. Denial of victim – there's no cli-

mate change and so no victims, but if such victims of climate change victims existed, they'd deserve to be victimised.

4. Condemnation of the condemner – climate change research is misrepresented by scientists, and manipulated by the media, politicians and environmentalists.

5. Appeal to higher loyalties – economic progress and development are more important than preventing climate change. This will help protect us from energy poverty and allow developing nations to prosper.

DECEPTION TRUMPS CLIMATE ACTION

How can a criminologist's perspective help us understand how President Trump and climate deniers obscure the scientific consensus on climate change? I believe it helps us see their statements in a new light. Rather than being ill-informed interventions on the topic, Trump's words reflect a deliberate attempt to shift blame, erase the plight of those already suffering from climate change and turn the fire on climate scientists who study the problem.

In tweets, speeches, and in conversations with journalists, these patterns appear to play out. When denying responsibility for tackling the climate problem, external competitors like China make for a useful scapegoat.

Trump's comments on climate change often deflect blame, but they may just as often question if it's happening at all. This ambivalence helps to undermine concerns that climate change will cause a great deal of harm to people in the US and worldwide.

"I believe that there's a change in weather and I think it changes both ways"

There's no credible possibility that

climate change isn't happening, but by engineering a false sense of uncertainty about the science, Trump can condemn those condemning him for inaction – the climate scientists themselves.

"Don't forget, it used to be called global warming, that wasn't working, then it was called climate change, now it's actually called extreme weather because with extreme weather you can't miss."

The poorest are predicted to suffer the worst consequences of climate change in the US, but by withdrawing the world's largest economy from the Paris Climate Accords, Trump argues he is standing up for these people by acting in their best interest.

"The Paris climate accord is simply the latest example of Washington entering into an agreement that disadvantages the United States to the exclusive benefit of other countries, leaving American workers – who I love – and taxpayers to absorb the cost in terms of lost jobs, lower wages, shuttered factories, and vastly diminished economic production."

Given the grave consequences of the US doing nothing on climate change, should deflecting blame, sowing uncertainty and condemning experts on such a scale be labelled criminal? I believe that these perceived similarities – between how offenders justify their behaviour to the criminal justice system and how Trump justifies his position on climate change to the world – are no coincidence. We shouldn't always read ignorance in what Trump says – it might suit him and climate deniers more than we think.

[the writer is Lecturer in Criminology, De Montfort University]

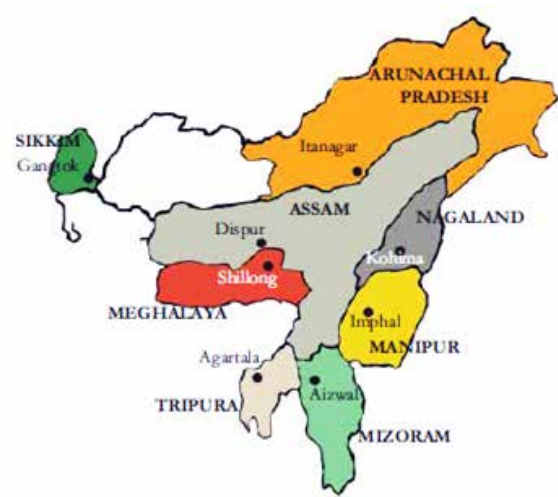
Govt approved 49 development projects worth Rs 1,232 cr for NE in first 50 days

NEW DELHI, AUG 1 (PTI): The Centre has sanctioned 49 development projects worth Rs 1,232 crore for the Northeastern region in the first 50 days of the Modi government, DoNER Minister Jitendra Singh said on Thursday.

The projects include construction and renovation of roads, bridges and upgrading of tourist spots.

“The Ministry of Development of North-East Region (DoNER) has sanctioned 49 projects worth Rs 1,232 crore in the first 50 days of our government,” Singh said here.

The Narendra Modi government’s second



term began on May 30.

The projects include sanctioning of eight new projects for Rs 586.3 crore under the North East Road Sector Development Scheme (NERSDS) and the North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS).

Some of the projects

are: To upgrade the AT Road from Tsusangra to Input Junction (26.335 km) with three bridges, the Tenning to Lekie Road (37.5km) in Nagaland for Rs 136.96 crore, the road connecting Dikhou Bridge to Amguri (17.155 km) in Nagaland’s Mokochung district for Rs 59.77 crore.

Rehabilitation and upgrading of a road from Tuensang to Longleng in Nagaland for Rs 188.61 crore, construction of Mukroh-Umspar linking Jrikyndeng Road (15.517 km) in Meghalaya for Rs 58.01 crore, improvement of a eco-tourism centre connectivity from

Amarpur (Fatiksagar) to Chabimura in Tripura, improvement of a road from Gandacherra to Raishyabari for easy access for the tourists from Dhalai to Narikel Kunja Island in Tripura were also part of the projects.

In addition, 36 on-going projects under various schemes like the Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) scheme, special packages and schemes of the North Eastern Council were completed at an approved cost of Rs 529.18 crore.

Works of two projects for Rs 89.63 crore has started and three projects for Rs 26.83 crore

Man thrashed on suspicion of being child-lifter in Jalpaiguri

JALPAIGURI (WEST BENGAL), AUG 1 (PTI): A middle-aged man was beaten up by local people in Jalpaiguri district on the suspicion of being a child-lifter, police said.

He was admitted to a hospital and his condition is stable, doctors said on Thursday.

Locals mistook him for being a child-lifter after he was spotted wandering near Jaipur tea garden, 10 km from here, over the past two days.

The man was overpowered by the mob, when he started running after a chase on Wednesday, an officer at Kotwali

Normal monsoon likely in Aug, Sept: IMD

NEW DELHI, AUG 1 (PTI): The monsoon is expected to be normal in August and September, the India Meteorological Department said on Thursday in its forecast for the second half of the four-month rainfall season.

Quantitatively, the rainfall across the country as a whole during the two-month period is likely to be 100 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA) with a model error of plus or minus 8 per cent, the IMD said.

The rainfall in August is likely to be 99 per cent of the LPA with an error margin of plus or minus 9 per cent, it said.

The LPA of the rainfall over the country as a whole for the second half of the monsoon season (August to September) based on the 1961-2010 period is 42.83 cm.



“The probabilistic forecast suggests that the rainfall across the country during second half of Southwest Monsoon season is most likely to be normal (94-106 per cent of LPA) with a probability of 45 per cent,” the IMD said.

In April, the IMD had made the forecast of a normal monsoon.

Mritunjay Mohapatra, Director General of IMD, said the next two weeks are expected to bring good rainfall due to formation of a low pressure area in the north Bay of Bengal.

The official rainfall season in India starts from June to September.

The overall rainfall deficiency in the country until July 31 was minus 9 per cent. The deficiency on June 30 was 33 per cent.

The coming two months are expected to be good as El Nino has entered a neutral phase and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is also positive.

“Currently, the sea

surface temperatures (SSTs) as well as the atmospheric conditions over equatorial Pacific Ocean indicate El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral to borderline El Nino conditions,” according to the forecast.

“In addition to ENSO conditions over the Pacific Ocean, other factors such as the Indian Ocean SSTs (sea surface temperatures) have also some influence on Indian monsoon. Currently, positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions are prevailing over equatorial Indian Ocean,” it said.

El Nino is associated with heating of the Pacific waters while a positive IOD is linked to cooling of the Indian Ocean waters. Both are believed to impact the monsoon.

Mizoram govt urged to ask guv for giving nod on Registers bill

AIZAWL, AUG 1 (PTI): The umbrella organisation of all the major civil societies and student associations of Mizoram on Thursday urged the state government to impress upon Governor Prof Jagdish Mukhi to give assent to a bill that seeks to detect foreigners illegally residing in the state.

The Mizoram Maintenance of Household Registers Bill, 2019, was passed by the state Assembly on March 19.

In a statement, the NGO Coordination Committee expressed regret that the governor was yet to give assent to the bill after four months of being passed in the Assembly.

Chief Minister Zoramthanga had earlier said the influx of foreigners into the state that shares over 700-km border with Bangladesh and Myanmar has remained a

serious concern for several decades.

The Committee also expressed unhappiness over Mizoram being without a regular governor for a long period of time.

Mukhi, who is also governor of Assam, has been given additional charge of Mizoram in March after resignation of Kummanam Rajasekharan from the post.

Centre assures Arunachal to help in setting up mithun, yak rearing centres

ITANAGAR, AUG 1 (PTI): The Centre has assured Arunachal Pradesh government to provide assistance to strengthen the livestock and fishery sectors including setting up of mithun and yak rearing centres, official sources said on Thursday.

The assurance came from Union Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries Minister Giriraj Singh during a meeting with the state’s minister Tage Taki recently in New Delhi.

Singh asked the state’s



Centre of Nagaland in Arunachal Pradesh.

Mithun is a large domestic cattle found in Northeast India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and China.

The union minister also assured him to take care of the research requirements of mithun in the state.

The Union minister agreed to provide assistance to the hilly state to boost the livestock and fishery sectors.

One month extension for NRC enumeration

NEW DELHI, AUG 1 (PTI): The Centre has given a one-month extension to complete the enumeration process for updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam by August 31, when the

final list of the state’s residents will be published.

In a notification, the Registrar General of India said the decision was taken as the exercise to enumerate citizens in the NRC, a list of Assam’s residents, could not be completed within the specified date of July 31.

“And whereas, the said enumeration in the state of Assam could not be completed within the period specified in the

said notifications; And whereas, the central government has considered it necessary and expedient in the public interest to complete the said enumeration in connection with the updation of the

National Register of Citizens, 1951 by the 31st day of August, 2019,” the notification issued by Registrar General of India Vivek Joshi said.

Parliament approves changes in IBC

NEW DELHI, AUG 1 (PTI): Parliament on Thursday approved changes in the three-year old Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) providing greater clarity over distribution of proceeds of auction of loan defaulting companies, with the Lok Sabha passing the Bill with voice vote.

Piloted by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill 2019 gives committee of creditors of a loan defaulting company explicit authority over the distribution of proceeds in the resolution process and fixes a firm timeline of 330 days for resolving cases referred to the IBC.

The amendments, she added, would also bring in more clarity on various provisions, including time-bound disposal

of home buyers raised by some opposition members, the Minister said the provisions of the bill strengthen the hands of homebuyers and the government would endeavour to do full justice to them.

The government, she added, was also looking at ways to resolve the issue concerning buyers of flat from JP Group companies.

On issues concerning Jet Airways, the Minister said that the stakeholders were free to work out resolution plan and they were not obliged to use the IBC which is optional.

She further added that the issue of inclusion of cross-border insolvency under the IBC is under examination and the government will take a view after consulting the stakeholders.

The bill was passed by Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Earlier, participating in the debate, Gaurav Gogoi (Congress) said the performance of the Insolvency Bankruptcy Code has been a mixed bag.

Gogoi also raised concern about liquidation of companies, especially the ones in the real estate sector that also puts

home buyers’ life savings at risk.

Sanjay Jaiswal (BJP) said the IBC has improved the Ease of Doing Business.

M Srinivasulu Reddy (YSR Congress) referred to the death of Cafe Coffee Day founder V G Sidhartha and said industries are sick because of business failures.

He said while the government is working towards ‘Ease of Doing Business’, there is an increase in ‘Difficulties in Doing Business’.

There is a fear psychosis in the minds of businesses which has to be addressed, Reddy said.

“Asses and horses are in the same stable,” Reddy said, noting that the government is looking at honest and dishonest business through the same prism.

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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I’ll not comeback to prove anything, results in second innings will be bonus: Sania

AMANPREET SINGH
NEW DELHI, AUG 1 (PTI): Star Indian tennis player Sania Mirza says she has achieved everything in her path-breaking career and has “nothing to prove” in her second innings, which is likely to begin by January 2020.

In her quest to make a comeback to competitive tennis after more than two years after becoming a mother, the 32-year-old Sania is training vigorously for about four hours a day and has shed 26 kilos in the process.

Before taking leave from the circuit to start a family, Sania won six doubles Grand Slam titles -- including three mixed -- achieved the number one rank, won medals at multi-disciplinary events apart from laying hands on a year-end WTA Fina- le title with Swiss great Martina Hingis.

“In my career, I have achieved every- thing which I could have dreamt of. And whatever happens next will be a bonus for me. I thought I



will be able to comeback by August but probably by January, it looks like a possibility,” Sania told PTI in an interview.

“Having (son) Izhan is the biggest blessing I could have. If I am able to come back, it will be amazing. He’s (son) my inspiration to get back to being fit. If I do comeback, it will not be to prove anything. The only reason to comeback would be that I love playing and competing.”

Byt why the “if”? has she still not made up her mind?

“I say so because I still have to see how my body reacts. The picture will be clear in the next two months. I don’t want to compete when I am not ready. There is no point in coming back and get- ting injured.”

Not many tennis play- ers have enjoyed success after motherhood. Only Margaret Court, Evonne Goolagong and Kim Cli- jsters have won a singles major after giving birth to their children.

In the current gener- ation, only a few figure in top-50 after becoming

mothers. But American great Serena Williams remains a fierce competi- tor at number nine in the world after becoming a mother.

Then there is Victoria Azarenka, who figures in top-50 in both singles and doubles, after giving birth to baby boy Leo.

German player Tatja- na Maria, ranked 100, is also a mother and won a doubles title last year with Britain’s Heather Watson.

“There is enough self motivation to come back but it’s nice to see people

like Serena competing at Grand Slams after having a baby. It’s obviously very inspiring,” Sania said.

Elaborating on the time she has taken for planning her comeback, Sania said a past knee is- sue is still bothering her and she needs more time to compete in the physical- ly demanding pro circuit.

“I have been able to get back to being as strong as I was before, which is great. But I still have a bit of knee issue. It has not gone away completely. I had this knee injury even when before I got pregnant that’s why I had stopped playing at the end of 2017. It’s not bad but still there, lingering.”

However, she did not divulge what exactly is the injury.

“I don’t want to get into what problems I have with my knee but I had surgery on the knee before.”

Talking about her training and results, Sa- nia said, “I train about three-four hours a day in two sessions with fitness and with tennis it’s more

than that. Initially the fo- cus was on losing weight but now it’s back to same rigorous sessions I was having before,” she said.

“I did not know how the body was going to react. You can’t actually anticipate after giving birth to a baby. I put on 23 kilos, I lost 26 kilos now. I am trying to be- come strong and to play at international level, I still need time.”

Sania, who worked with her Australian train- er Robert for a few months in Dubai, further said she won’t set any result-ori- ented goals for herself.

“There is no goal. Whatever happens in life hereon, regrading tennis, it will be just a plus. Once I make that comeback, I will see where I stand as an athlete. Right now I just want to make a comeback.”

“Expectations are high as usual but I have not played tennis in the last two years. If I can make a comeback, Tokyo (Olympics) is something I am looking at.

4 Indian women boxers enter semis of Russian tourney

NEW DELHI, AUG 1 (PTI): Asian gold-med- allist Pooja Rani (75kg) and world bronze-win- ner Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), along with two others Indians, entered the semi-finals of the Ma- gomed Salam Umakhan- ov Memorial Internation- al Boxing Tournament in Kaspiysk, Russia.

India Open gold medallist Neeraj (57kg) and former world youth bronze-medallist Jony (60kg) were the other two to make the semi-fi- nals on Wednesday night.

A bronze-medallist from the Strandja Memo- rial Cup earlier this year, Lovlina defeated Russia’s Anastasiya Sigaeva 5-0 to be assured of a med- al. She will next take on Belarus’ Alina Veber for a place in the final.

Pooja rebounded from a shock loss at the India Open in May with a 4-1 victory over Russia’s Laura Mamedkulova.

Neeraj also secured a 4-1 win over Russian

Sayana Sagataeva.

Jony clinched a 5-0 win over Belarus’ Anas- tasiya Obushenkova.

Former Com- monwealth Games bronze-medallist Pinki Jangra (51kg) was the only one among the In- dian women to bow out in the quarterfinal stage. The 2018 India Open champion suffered a 0-5 loss to Belarus’ Yuliya Apanasovich.

Among the men, Ash- ish Insha (52kg) beat Azerbaijan’s Salman Al- izade 4-1 to enter the quarter-finals.

He joined 2018 Com- monwealth Games gold medallist Gaurav Solanki (56kg), GeeBee Boxing silver-medallist Govind Sahani (49kg) and 2018 India Open gold medal- list Sanjeet (91kg) in the last-eight stage.

Six Indian men and five women were in fray at the 21st edition of this tournament that features over 200 boxers from 21 countries.

Lochte targets Tokyo after comeback swim



SAN FRANCISCO, AUG 1 (AFP): A rejuvenated Ryan Lochte returned to competitive swimming for the first time in more than a year on Wednes- day, insisting he was a changed man as he tar- gets a medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Lochte, who turns 35 on Saturday, booked his place at the US Olympic trials after clocking 1min 57.88sec in the 200 medley at the US National Champi- onships in Palo Alto.

Although the time was nearly four seconds slower than his world record, five-time Olympic gold medalist Lochte was happy with his perfor- mance as he sets out on the comeback trail after a turbulent three years.

Lochte was suspend- ed from swimming for 10 months after the scandal at the 2016 Olympics, when he was found to have fabricated a story about a robbery during a drunken late-night epi- sode in Rio de Janeiro.

He was given a fur- ther 14-month ban last year by the US Anti-Dop- ing Agency for taking a banned intravenous infu- sion of what he said were vitamins in May 2018.

Lochte, who under- went treatment for alco- hol abuse in Florida last year, said Wednesday he could understand why

fans might not have faith in him as he embarks on his comeback.

“That’s understand- able, especially through the roller coaster I’ve been on,” Lochte told a press conference. “But right now I’m not trying to prove anything to anyone.

“I’m doing this for me and my family. I want to go to the 2020 Olympics, my fifth Olympics, and hopefully get on the po- dium there.

“Everything I do from here in the pool and out- side the pool is for my family.”

Lochte said he had sought treatment for alcohol abuse after de- ciding his life “needed a change”, adding that the birth of his son Caiden in 2017 and daughter Liv last month had given him a new outlook on life.

“I checked myself into rehab. I did the classes, I got out, I did everything,” he said. “Since Caiden and my new daughter have been born I have a new perspective on life.

“And I’m definitely not the same person I was three years ago. I’m a different person. I’m just trying to be a different person.

“I’ve had a lot of ups and downs. I’m just here to race and have my goals set for 2020.

Felix shines as Atletico Madrid blanks MLS All-Stars

ORLANDO, AUG 1 (AFP): Portuguese teen sensa- tion Joao Felix came off the bench to score a su- perb goal Wednesday as Atletico Madrid blanked the Major League Soc- cer All-Stars 3-0 at rain- soaked Exploria Stadium.

Marcos Llorente, signed from city rivals Real this summer for 42 million, had put the Spanish side ahead in the first half before 19 year- old, 134 million striker Felix scored a brilliant second to decide a match that failed to spark into action, a swathe of changes on both teams contributing to a decid- edly low-tempo affair.

Diego Costa’s late third was no more than the visitors deserved.

Los Angeles Galaxy star Zlatan Ibrahimovich was withdrawn after just 30 minutes and despite Wayne Rooney’s best ef- forts in the first half, it was the La Liga side that was far superior.

“I haven’t seen too much of Joao Felix but... he looks like he has good technique,” Rooney told



AFP. “I’m sure he will be a good player for Atletico in the near future.”

The Spanish side spent plenty of money betting Rooney is right.

“Of course it’s a big price to pay for such a young player but that’s the way the market is going now,” Rooney told AFP. “Everyone is spend- ing a lot of money.

“I remember a few years ago, Zinedine Zidane went for over 60 million and everyone was saying ‘What’s going

on?’ But that’s the price you have to pay now.”

Madrid manager Di- ego Simeone refused to single out any of his new players, including Felix.

“I’ve been pleased with all the new signings and the path we are going on during this pre-sea- son,” Simeone said.

Inclement weather in the Orlando area delayed kickoff before a sellout crowd for 40 minutes but the rain failed to dampen an excellent atmosphere for the North American

league’s annual exhibi- tion match.

The MLS All-Stars, captained by leading scorer Carlos Vela of LAFC, boasted the likes of DC United’s Rooney, Ibrahimovich and home favorite Nani in their starting line-up.

Rooney, the former Manchester United and England forward, was operating in a deep ly- ing midfield role and saw plenty of the ball in the opening stages without being able to penetrate the

Spanish team’s defense.

Atletico created the first real opportunity, Rodrigo Riquelme fir- ing high and wide on 17 minutes following good work from Vitolo, while Rooney saw a brilliant- ly struck effort from 30 yards whistle just over the bar.

Ibrahimovich, who had barely touched the ball, was withdrawn on 30 minutes, much to the disappointment of the 25,527 spectators who hoped to see the mercu-

rial Swedish superstar in the action.

Atletico’s opening goal on 43 minutes was a su- perb team effort, Riquelme brilliantly back flicking the ball to Llorente, who drove the ball past Phila- delphia Union goalkeeper Andre Blake.

James O’Connor, the Orlando City coach in charge of the All-Stars, completely changed his team at half-time, includ- ing withdrawing Rooney and Nani.

It was one of the sub- stitutes, Diego Rossi, who almost equalized when his close-range effort hit the side netting before Nicolas Lodeiro was de- nied by Atleti keeper An- tonio Adan.

On 55 minutes, Si- meone shuffled his pack by making seven chang- es of his own including introducing Felix, who was signed from Benfica this summer, and his su- perb long range effort in the 84th minute sealed a comprehensive victory.

Costa made it three at the death from close range.

We have to respect Kohli’s opinion on coach selection: Kapil

Saina crashes out in second round of Thailand Open

BANGKOK, AUG 1 (PTI): Ace Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal’s return to the court was shortlived as she crashed out in the second round of Thailand Open after being stunned by unseeded Sayaka Taka- hashi of Japan in the wom- en’s singles event here on Thursday.

Seventh seed Saina, who returned to action after nearly two months, squandered a game ad- vantage to lose 21-16 11- 21 14-21 against Taka- hashi in second round duel that lasted 48 min- utes.

In the absence of PV Sindhu, who withdrew in the last minute from the event, Saina’s ouster marks the end of India’s campaign in the women’s singles.

Saina had earlier made last-minute withdrawals from Indonesia Open and last week’s Japan Open because of injuries.

KOLKATA, AUG 1 (PTI): The legendary Kapil Dev, head of the three-mem- ber Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) that will appoint the next head coach agreed with his colleague Shantha Rangaswamy that skip- per Virat Kohli’s opinion “needs to be respected”.

The World Cup win- ning former skipper however assured that his panel will do their job to the best of their ability.

Kohli during his pre-departure press conference didn’t hide that he would love to see current head coach Ravi Shastri get another term.

“That’s his (Kohli) opinion we have to re- spect everybody’s opin- ion,” Kapil told report- ers before receiving the ‘Bharat Gaurav’, East



Bengal’s highest honour during their foundation day celebrations at the Netaji Indoor Stadium.

Before leaving for the West Indies tour, the In- dian skipper has already made it clear that they share a great camaraderie with incumbent coach Ravi Shastri as he backed him to continue till the 2021 Twenty20 World Cup.

This time the CAC comprising Kapil, Anushuman Gaekwad

and Shantha Rangas- wamy will select the head coach with appli- cation deadline already ending on Tuesday. The incumbent Shastri gets an automatic entry in the selection process.

Before the CAC meets to interview the appli- cants there are also re- ports that Shastri is set for an extension as all eyes would be on the Ka- pil Dev-led committee.

“It’s not tough. You just

do your job to the best of your ability,” he said.

Despite a boycott campaign by a section of fans in the social media, India’s first World Cup winning captain kept his promise and received the honour from the club where he played an exhibi- tion derby against Mo- hun Bagan.

Kapil received the honour as East Bengal kick-started their cente- nary year celebrations with an array of pro- grammes.

“Tradition is every- thing. If tradition was not there we would not have been recognised as a Bengali, Punjabi, South Indian, Tamilian... So we have a tradition that’s why we are here,” Kapil said, flanked by present and former India football

Pak summons Indian diplomat over ‘ceasefire violations’

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, AUG 1 (PTI): Pakistan on Thursday summoned India’s Deputy High Commissioner Gaurav Ahluwalia for the third time this week and condemned the alleged ceasefire violations by Indian troops along the Line of Control (LoC) that killed two persons, including a woman.

Earlier, Ahluwalia was summoned by the Foreign Office on Monday and Wednesday for the firing along the LoC.

Director General (South Asia and SAARC) Mohammad Faisal, who is also the foreign ministry spokesperson, summoned Ahluwalia again on Thursday and “condemned the unprovoked ceasefire violations by the Indian forces on July 30,” the FO said in a statement.

Two persons, including a woman, were killed and 15 others injured in the firing at Nauseri sector along the LoC, it said.

Faisal claimed the Indian forces along the LoC and Working Boundary have been “continuously targeting civilian populated areas with artillery fire, heavy-caliber mortars, and automatic weapons.”

“The ceasefire violations by India are a threat to regional peace and security and may lead to a strategic miscalculation,” he said.

Trump, Putin discuss Russian wildfires: White House

WASHINGTON, AUG 1 (AFP): US President Donald Trump spoke on Wednesday with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin about wildfires in Siberia and trade, the White House said.

Trump “expressed concern over the vast wildfires afflicting Siberia. The leaders also discussed trade between the two countries,” according to a brief statement from Trump’s press office.

Earlier, the Russian state-run news agency Ria reported that Washington initiated the call to the Kremlin, and that Trump offered US help with the fires.

Around three million hectares (7.4 million acres) of land in the center and east of Russia were burning as of Wednesday, authorities said.

The smoke has affected not only small settlements but also major cities in Western Siberia and the Altai region, as well as cities in the Urals such as Chelyabinsk and Yekaterinburg. Air travel has also been disrupted.

According to the Ria report, Putin praised the offer of help as a good sign for improvement in US-Russian relations.

Ties between Washington and Moscow have been strained by differences over Syria and Ukraine.

Relations are also complicated by controversy swirling around Trump’s former business interests in Russia, and US intelligence agencies’ conclusion that the Kremlin meddled in the 2016 election.

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Al-Qaeda heir Hamza bin Laden killed in air strike: US media

WASHINGTON, AUG 1 (PTI): Slain al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden’s son Hamza, the potential heir of the global terror group, has been killed in an air strike, US media reported, citing intelligence officials.

The US has obtained intelligence that Hamza bin Laden, is dead, NBC News quoted three unnamed American officials as saying.

The officials would not provide details of where or when Hamza died or if the US played a role in his death, the report said on Wednesday. Asked by reporters



whether the US had intelligence that Hamza is dead, President Donald Trump said, “I don’t want to comment on that.”

Hamza’s last known public statement was released by al Qaeda’s media arm in 2018. In that message, he threatened

Saudi Arabia and called on the people of the Arabian peninsula to revolt. Saudi Arabia stripped him of his citizenship in

March this year.

A US official told CNN that the government recently received evidence to corroborate Hamza’s death.

The New York Times reported that Hamza was killed in an operation within the last two years.

Earlier this year the US State Department called Hamza bin Laden, who is believed to be in his early 30s, an “emerging” leader in the terror group al Qaeda, offering a million-dollar reward for information leading to his capture.

The State Department said items seized

from the elder bin Laden’s hiding place in the Pakistani garrison city of Abbottabad during the Navy SEAL raid that resulted in his death in May 2011 indicated he was grooming Hamza to replace him as al Qaeda’s leader.

He married the daughter of a senior al Qaeda leader who was charged by a federal grand jury for his role in the August 7, 1998, bombings of the US embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya.

He was believed to have been under house

arrest in Iran, although other reports suggest he may have been based near the Afghan-Pakistani border, the BBC reported.

He is thought to have been born in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia before spending years with his mother in Iran.

There was no confirmation from al-Qaeda about the reports on Hamza’s death. Supporters of the Islamist militant group have urged caution over the reports and are awaiting an official announcement from its leaders, according to analysts at BBC Monitoring.

US poised to formally abandon INF missile treaty

WASHINGTON, AUG 1 (AFP): The United States will officially withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty on Friday, clearing the way for a new arms race with Russia -- and throwing China into the mix.

The treaty -- concluded by then US president Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987 -- limited the Cold War powers’ medium-range missiles, both conventional and nuclear.

Earlier this year, US President Donald Trump’s administration announced its intention to ditch the agreement, accusing Moscow of repeatedly violating its terms -- a charge Russia

denied.

“I think the INF Treaty has served us well, but it only works if both parties comply,” new US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said recently.

“The United States will remain in compliance with all of our obligations until August 2nd -- and after that point in time, we will continue to pursue what is in our best interest,” he told lawmakers.

Washington formally launched the procedure of leaving the treaty on February 1 -- a six-month process.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed into law a bill suspending Moscow’s participation on July 3.

Unless something

changes in the coming days, the mutual withdrawal will spell the end of the deal, which eliminated a range of missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometers (310-3,420 miles).

That paved the way for the mothballing of Russian SS-20 missiles and American Pershing missiles deployed in Europe.

Even if European nations have expressed concerns about the consequence of a new arms race, NATO endorsed the US position, saying Russia’s 9M729 missile had violated the INF agreement.

Moscow insists the new projectile has a maximum range of 480 kilometers -- within INF

parameters.

In the end, the death of the INF Treaty suits Washington just fine, as former defense secretary Ash Carter said in early July.

“From the military point of view, not the political point of view, it’s not so bad,” Carter said at a conference at the Council on Foreign Relations.

“We can make good use of what we call conventional prompt strike.”

The Pentagon is thrilled that it will now be able to modernize its arsenal to counter the mounting might of China, which is looking to assert its military supremacy in Asia.

“Most of China’s inventory is of intermediate range missiles and

so we need to make sure we have the capability as well to respond should we -- God forbid -- get in a fight with them one day,” Esper said.

The United States has pledged not to deploy new nuclear-armed missiles in Europe, but made no such promise on the deployment of conventional weapons.

Advances in technology have allowed for the development of mid-range missiles that are much more precise than those made 30 years ago, explained career diplomat William Courtney, who is now a senior fellow at the nonprofit, nonpartisan Rand Corporation.

“The technology has changed so much that is

makes it militarily attractive,” said Courtney, an arms control expert.

For Thomas Mahnken, a professor of strategic studies at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies, the US must now deploy medium-range conventional weapons on its islands in the Pacific and other territory controlled by its allies.

Such a move would help counter China’s rise, especially in the South China Sea, where the People’s Liberation Army has effectively commandeered several disputed islands.

“It is time to turn the tables,” Mahnken said in a commentary published on the specialist website

War on the Rocks.

“Such weapons, capable of denying China the use of littoral waters, would be a powerful deterrent to Chinese aggression.”

Such a move seems to have the support of the next chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, General Mark Milley.

When asked by US senators about the imminent demise of the INF Treaty, he said he supported the deployment of conventional ground-based medium-range missiles in the Indo-Pacific region.

“Do you think those would be helpful?” one senator asked.

“I do,” Milley replied.

US fighter jet crashes in Death Valley, 7 park visitors hurt

LOS ANGELES, AUG 1 (AP): A U.S. Navy fighter jet crashed Wednesday in Death Valley National Park, injuring seven people who were at a scenic overlook where aviation enthusiasts routinely watch military pilots speeding low through a chasm dubbed Star Wars Canyon, officials said.

The crash sent dark smoke billowing in the air, said Aaron Cassell, who was working at his family’s Panamint Springs Resort about 10 miles (16 kilometers) away and was the first to report the crash to park dispatch.

“I just saw a black mushroom cloud go up,” Cassell told The Associated Press. “Typically you don’t see a mushroom cloud in the desert.”

A search was underway for the pilot of the single-seat F/A-18 Super Hornet that was on a

routine training mission, said Lt. Cmdr. Lydia Bock, spokeswoman for Naval Air Station Lemoore in California’s Central Valley.

“The status of the pilot is unknown at this time,” Bock said about four hours after the crash.

A military helicopter searched for the pilot.

Ambulances were sent to the crash site near Father Crowley Overlook, but it wasn’t clear if anyone was transported for further medical treatment, said park spokesman Patrick Taylor.

He said initial reports were that seven park visitors had minor injuries.

The lookout point about 160 miles (257 kilometers) north of Los Angeles is popular with photographers and aviation buffs who gawk at jets flying in the steep, narrow canyon.

U.S. and foreign mili-

taries train pilots and test jets in the gorge officially called Rainbow Canyon near the park’s western entrance. Military flights there date back to World War II.

The chasm got its nickname because mineral-rich soil and red, gray and pink walls bring to mind the home planet of “Star Wars” character Luke Skywalker.

Training flights are almost a daily feature with jets thundering below the rim of the canyon and passing so close viewers can see the pilots’ facial expressions.

Cassell said he heard jets roaring through the area and then saw the cloud of smoke.

“It looked like a bomb,” Cassell said. “To me that speaks of a very violent impact.” A jet that was following the downed craft pulled up

and began circling, Cassell said. He didn’t see any parachute.

His father drove up to the area after the crash and saw a large black scorch mark and shattered parts of the jet scattered throughout the area between the parking lot and lookout, Cassell said.

A nose cone from the jet was the size of a bowling ball and the rest of the debris was no larger than a ball cap.

The jet was from strike fighter squadron VFA-151 stationed at Lemoore. The squadron is part of an air group attached to the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis.

The Super Hornet is a twin-engine warplane designed to fly from either aircraft carriers or ground bases on both air-superiority and ground-attack missions.

Maryam Nawaz questioned by Pak anti-corruption watchdog

LAHORE, AUG 1 (PTI): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz vice president Maryam Nawaz was questioned by the country’s anti-corruption agency officials in connection with the alleged money laundering and income beyond means charges against her and her family, a media report said on Thursday.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) questioned 45-year-old Maryam on Wednesday about her “dubious” transactions in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills (CSM), where she is a ma-

jor stakeholder, the Dawn newspaper reported.

In her 45-minute statement, Maryam, daughter of jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, said all details are available in the report of the Joint Investigation Team formed to probe the Panama Papers, a source told the newspaper.

The NAB has asked Maryam to again appear on August 8, with details of her holding in CSM and financial relations with UK citizen Sheikh Zakauddin, Saudi national Hani Ahmad Jamjoon and UAE nationals Saeed

Said bin Jabar al Suweidi and Naseer Abdullah Lootah, the report said.

In January 2018, the government’s financial monitoring unit reported a suspicious transaction involving billions of Pakistani rupees in Chaudhry Sugar Mills Ltd, the report stated.

“The NAB inquiry started in October 2018 detected that Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz, Shahbaz Sharif and the family of the late Abbas Sharif are shareholders in the company along with some foreigners of the UAE and the UK,” the

source was quoted as saying in the report.

After returning from the NAB office, Nawaz tweeted, “Back from NAB. Told them the questions about family business have been asked & answered a zillion times & nothing found even by agenda-driven JIT. But since the aim is to use NAB as a tool to harass & victimise, the theatre of the absurd continues.”

“NAB has nothing substantive to ask. No allegation or even remote mention of any corruption,” she said in another tweet.

Argentine ex-boxing champ jailed for child abuse

BUENOS AIRES, AUG 1 (AFP): Argentine former welterweight world boxing champion Carlos Baldomir was sentenced to 18 years in prison Wednesday for the repeated sexual abuse of a child, a court announced.

The 48-year-old, who was World Boxing Council champion for 10 months in 2006, was arrested in 2016 following allegations that he had abused the girl over two years, starting when she was just seven in 2012.

He was unanimously convicted of “repeated

sexual abuse” of a minor.

When the trial began on Thursday, Baldomir showed his middle finger to those present, a provocative gesture recorded by television cameras.

Baldomir’s greatest career highlight came in January 2006 when he shocked the unified welterweight champion Zab Judah.

After a successful defense of his WBC crown against the late Arturo Gatti, Baldomir lost his title to Floyd Mayweather in a November 2006

unification bout.

He retired in 2014 with a record of 49 wins, 15 by knock-out, 16 defeats and six draws.

He started his career as a trainer and in 2016 was given an award by the Argentine congress for achievement in sport.

Baldomir had been held in pre-trial detention since his arrest but before that was living with his wife and four-year-old son. He has three daughters from his first marriage.

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ROCK ON! The singer, Becky G is pumped promoting her new song “Dollar” in front of a mural painted by Marlon Pruz in Miami, Florida.

Shilpa Shetty returns to acting with ‘Nikamma’



MUMBAI, AUG 1 (PTI): Actor Shilpa Shetty is making a comeback to movies with action entertainer “Nikamma”. The actor’s last full-fledged screen outing was 2007’s “Apne”. She has also made appearances in films such as “Om Shanti Om”, “Dostana” and “Dishkiyaoon”.

In “Nikamma”, to be directed by Sabbir Khan, Shilpa will star alongside “Mard Ko Dard Nahin Hota” actor Abhimanyu Dassani and social media sen-

sation Shirley Setia.

“It feels great, I am ready to take that plunge again and looking forward to be back on the big screen. It’s a refreshingly unique project and am looking forward to working with Sabbir. I loved my role, and it’s something I’ve never down before... I can’t wait for my audiences to see me in a new avatar,” Shilpa said in a statement.

Sabbir Khan, best known for making films such as “Heropanti” and “Baaghi”, said,

“Shilpa is a much loved name in every household and she was very clear right at the onset that her comeback would have to be with a worthy role. It’s a dynamic part and I am glad to be working with Shilpa and bringing her back for the fans that miss her”

“Nikamma”, produced by Sony Pictures International Productions and Sabbir Khan Films, is scheduled to be released in 2020.

WWE star Big Show to topline Netflix live-action family comedy series

LOS ANGELES, AUG 1 (PTI): WWE star Big Show is heading to Netflix with a family comedy show.

Titled “The Big Show Show”, the series will feature the popular professional wrestler, whose real name is Paul Wight, reported Deadline.

The plot will see Wight, a former renowned WWE star, being outnumbered when his teenage daughter comes to live with him, his wife and two other daughters.

Allison Munn, Reylynn Caster, Juliet Donenfeld and Lily Brooks O’Briant are also a part of the half-hour multi-camera show.

The 10-episode live-action series comes from WWE Studios and scribes Josh By-



cel and Jason Berger.

The writer duo will also serve as executive producers and showrunners.

Susan Levison and Richard Lowell will executive pro-

duce for WWE Studios.

The Netflix show is Wight’s biggest role till date.

His previous credits include Syfy’s “Happy!”, “Van Helsing” and a film with

WWE alum-actor Dwayne Johnson in “Fighting With My Family”.

Shooting is slated to begin on August 9.

Zach Galifianakis’ ‘Baskets’ to end after season four finale

LOS ANGELES, AUG 1 (PTI): FX has announced that Zach Galifianakis-starrer “Baskets” will conclude after the finale of its fourth season.

The show, created by the 49-year-old actor and Jonathan Krisel, takes a dig at the world constrained by corporate interests and the homogenisation of society where one man in Bakersfield, California dares to follow his dream of becoming a professional clown.

But after an unsuccessful enrollment at a prestigious clowning school in Paris, the only job he can find is with the local rodeo.



The series also features Louie Anderson, Martha Kelly and Alex Morris.

The fourth season currently airs on FX and its August 22 finale will now double as a series finale, ac-

cording to The Hollywood Reporter.

“Over four seasons, ‘Baskets’ has taken its place among the great FX comedies as an endearing and hilarious look at the dreams and ambi-

tion of Chip Baskets and his extended, loving family,” said FX Entertainment president Eric Schrier in a statement.

“This show has been a joy for everyone at FX and we are grateful to Jonathan Krisel, Zach Galifianakis, Louie Anderson, Martha Kelly and the rest of the cast and crew for giving us the gem that is ‘Baskets,’” he added.

Embattled comedian Louise CK was once credited as co-creator of the show but his name was removed in the wake of sexual misconduct scandal.

Joss Whedon’s ‘The Nevers’ announces main cast

LOS ANGELES, AUG 1 (PTI): The main cast of filmmaker Joss Whedon’s HBO series, “The Nevers”, has been announced and the show will feature Olivia Williams, James Norton, Tom Riley and Ann Skelly.

According to Variety, Ben Chaplin, Pip Torrens, Zackary Momoh, Amy Manson, Nick Frost, Rochelle Neil, Eleanor Tomlinson, and Denis O’Hare are also a part of the ensemble. Laura Donnelly is already



on board the show.

“The Nevers” is billed as

an epic sci-fi drama which revolves around a gang of

Victorian women who find themselves with unusual abilities, relentless enemies, and a mission that might change the world.

The project received straight-to-series order last July.

Whedon is attached to write, direct, executive produce, and showrun.

Jane Espenson and Doug Petrie will write and executive produce, with Bernie Caulfield also executive producing.

Actor Dia Mirza, husband Sahil Sangha announce separation

MUMBAI, AUG 1 (PTI): Actor Dia Mirza on Thursday announced that she and husband Sahil Sangha were separating after being together for 11 years.

In a joint statement that Mirza and Sangha shared on their social media accounts, the former couple said they “remain friends” and will

continue to be there for each other.

Mirza, 37, and Sangha, 39, dated for a while before tying the knot in 2014.

“After 11 years of sharing our lives and being together, we have mutually decided to separate. We remain friends and will continue to be there for each other with love and re-

spect. While our journeys may lead us down different paths, we are forever grateful for the bond that we share with each other,” the statement read.

The actor, known for her roles in “Rehna Hai Tere Dil Mein”, “Dum” and “Sanju”, co-owns a production house with Sangha, producing films such as “Love Breakups Zind-

agi” and “Bobby Jasoos”.

“We thank our family and our friends for all their love and understanding and members of the media for their continued support and request everyone to respect our need for privacy at this time. We will not be commenting any further on this matter,” it further read.

ARIES: Aren’t you getting a little tired of your own secrets? The people in your life are more compassionate than you are willing to give them credit for. Open up, Aries. This is your chance to start over with a clean slate. If you’re the one being deceived, it’s time you have a chat with your partner/loved one. Create a safe space for them to be seen and heard. Tip: Come clean.

TAURUS: This week, you’re that strange and beautiful mix of mother and crone. A wise woman who knows her place in this world, but has also perfected the art of looking beyond the veil, connecting with her spirit guides, and moving energy for the highest good of humanity. Continue to be a conduit of ancient wisdom. Continue to be a torchbearer of light in these dark times. What if awakening your co-passengers is a part of your sacred journey? Tip: You are a conduit for ancient wisdom.

GEMINI: It’s a ‘do no harm, but take no BS’ kind of week, Gemini. Keep your conscience clear. Disengage from conversations that take away from you rather than make you feel replenished. As for those who are being shady with you, trust that they will have to pay pen-

ance in the Universal Court of Justice. Creative blocks may be a constant for some of you. A good way to clear the mental clutter: an afternoon of free writing.

Tip: Focus on keeping your conscience clear.

CANCER: Their lack of interaction has little do with you and everything to do with them. Don’t take things personally, Cancer, lest you want to get your heart broken. This phase of your life requires you to understand your own boundaries. You are not obliged to be there for them at the risk of affecting your own mental health. Take a deep breath and come back to that space of love in your heart. If you don’t learn to be there for yourself, nobody else will. Tip: Know when you need to draw boundaries.

LEO: This is a time of integrating the two sides of you. Move inwards, Leo. Have a rendezvous with your shadows. Your newfound courage will help you confront the darkness you have been shying away from. Yes, this process of release will require a certain degree of detachment. Don’t be afraid to take that time out for yourself or prioritise self-care. Is there a spiritual practice that helps you stay grounded? Let your inner sorceress guide the way.

Tip: Confront the darkness within.

VIRGO: If you wake up feeling like sumac in a salt and pepper world, you’ve got your stars to blame. On the cards for you this week: both sexual awakening and exploration, depending on where you are in your journey. What’s that one thing you’ve always wanted to try but shied away from? It’s time to express your weird and wonderful side.

Tip: Sexual awakening in on the cards.

LIBRA: Everything is taking place divinely and in the perfect order. Let go of the need to compare your life or your relationship to that of someone else. Remember, you are only able to perceive a part of their story. What this phase of your life calls for: a greater degree of commitment to your career and mission. You’ll find that creating quality work is the source of joy and fulfilment for you.

Tip: Focus on building your empire. Your relationships will take care of themselves.

SCORPIO: Have you ever walked through a forest on a dark moon night or set off on a path that was unilluminated by the light? When your eyes fail to guide you, you have no option but to rely on your inner voice. What this

phase of your life is teaching: the importance of trusting yourself completely. Your intuition is stronger than you think.

Tip: Reconnect with the wild woman within.

SAGITTARIUS: Let’s talk about love, Sagittarius. How much of your sense of self is derived from romantic connections? How does the absence of a special someone affect your mental and emotional health? This week, you’re being asked to perfect the art of self-nurture. Can you imagine how deeply you’d transform once you start giving yourself what you seek from external sources? Tip: This phase of your life calls for a greater degree of self-nurture.

CAPRICORN: Pay attention to the recurring dreams and nightmares. The signs and symbols you see here will help you understand the mysterious workings of your subconscious mind. Is there something that needs to be healed? Let your intuition be your guiding light, Capricorn. Working with a therapist, a soul coach, a regression therapist or a dream interpreter could help you find the answers you are looking for in this moment.

Tip: Bring your attention to the root of your

trauma and work on releasing it.

AQUARIUS: An Elin Per classic to awaken you: “Strong women intimidate boys and excite men.” Examine the quality of men in your life. Do you they make you feel revered or have you questioning your own power and potential? Word for the wise: stop crying over people who do not recognise the divinity within. This phase of your life is helping you understand the importance of being your own pillar of strength. Remember, you’ll always be too much for some people. That’s never a good enough reason to dull your own sparkle. Tip: You want to be with somebody who makes magic, not excuses.

PISCES: “Sometimes, the one who is running from the life/death/life nature insists on thinking of love as a boon only. Yet love in its fullest form is a series of deaths and rebirths.” A Clarissa Pinkola Estes classic to awaken you to the power of transformation. What you perceive as the end of a cycle could be the beginning of a brand new chapter for the two of you. Be patient and allow things to unfold at the right time.

Tip: Allow yourself to be transformed by this storm.