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Summit TIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Parliament approves amendment to UAPA bill

NEW DELHI, AUG 2 (PTI): In a big boost to the Government, Parliament on Friday approved a crucial amendment to an anti-terror law allowing the Centre to also designate individuals as terrorists and seize their properties. Home Minister Amit Shah said the law, that will be used only to tackle terror, will help agencies remain four steps ahead of terrorists. He accused the Congress of giving colour to the law by linking terrorism to religion for political gains.

Shah alleged that the Congress misused it to frame people linked to a particular religion, in the context of Samjhauta and Mecca Masjid cases, where the accused have been acquitted by court.

He also accused the Congress of misusing laws to target the opposition and cited the example of 'Emergency' in this regard when opposition leaders were put behind bars and restrictions on media were imposed. The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill that seeks to amend the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, was passed by Rajya Sabha with 147 votes in favour and 42 against. The Congress and BSP supported the bill.

The House earlier rejected the opposition-sponsored motion to send the amendment to a select committee with 104 votes against as compared to 85 in favour. The Congress had also voted in favour of this motion. The Lok Sabha had passed the bill on July 24. This is the third legislation in this session that has cleared the Rajya Sabha hurdle where the ruling party does not have a majority. Earlier, the government got the RTI Amendment Bill and the Triple Talaq Bill passed in the House after it outstrategised the opposition. While replying to the debate, Shah also alleged that the Congress said it is important to identify terrorists and not just organisations.

So far the government only had powers to designate groups or organisations as terrorists. Attacking the opposition party, he said it should not talk about misuse and it should look into its past. He cited the example of Emergency, when opposition leaders were jailed after the court struck down the election of the then Prime Minister. "What happened during the Emergency? All the media was banned, all opposition leaders were jailed. There was no democracy for 19 months, and you

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CM dedicates Budget 2019-20 to people of Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 AUG:

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] has dedicated the General Budget 2019-20 to the people of Sikkim. He expressed that the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha government has been able to pass a successful budget in the interest of every section of society.

In his vote of thanks on the last day of the assembly session on Friday, the CM stated that the maiden budget of SKM government covers poverty alleviation, public health, social welfare, qualitative education, pure drinking water, power and other areas.

He further added that welfare measures in the interest of government employees, qualitative rural development, building a healthy society and other targets have also been included in this budget.

CM mentioned that the budget has also targeted to make Sikkim loan-free and to improve the financial condition of the State.

He thanked the Ministers and MLAs for their active participation in the



discussion and passing of the budget. He thanked the opposition Members, GT Dhungel and Em Prasad Sharma for delivering their responsibility by participating in this constitutional process in the interest of the people. The CM also thanked the Speaker and every individual involved for the successful completion of the Budget Session.

Earlier, in his vote of

thanks, Member of the House, Aditya Golay expressed his gratitude to the Governor on behalf of the people of Chakung-Soreng. He thanked the CM for the pro-people budget and the people of Sikkim for giving the mandate to SKM party to run the government.

Likewise, Minister LN Sharma stated that it was a historic budget passed by the SKM government

in the interest of the people of Sikkim.

In his valedictory remarks, the Speaker stated that in a democracy, the will of the people and their mandate is supreme and hence the service of the people is the prime duty of a public representative. He said that the Budget passed by the House is dedicated to the service of the people of Sikkim.

He summed up the key proceedings of the Budget Session and expressed his gratitude to everyone for their valuable contribution. He thanked the Governor for his presence on the opening day and for his valuable address to the House.

He also thanked CM for presenting the Annual General Budget of the Government for 2019-20, and other important documents on the floor of the House. The Speaker thanked the Ministers and MLAs for their participation during the proceedings, their questions and deliberations, and for their participation in passing the annual budget. He also thanked and congratulated the Members for the passing of three important Bills in the House.

Govt reverts Departments to original names

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 AUG:

The State Government has changed the names of several Departments reverting to names that were used earlier. Food Security and Agriculture Development is now just Agriculture Department while Animal Husbandry, Livestock, Fisheries and Veterinary Services is now Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department.

Human Resource Development Department is now Education Department. Cultural Affairs and Heritage Department is now Culture Department while Department of Personnel, Administrative Reforms, Training and Public Grievance is now just Department of Personnel.

Finance, Revenue and Expenditure Department has been changed to Finance Department while Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department is now Food and Civil Supplies Department.

Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department is renamed Forest and Environment Department. Health Care, Human Service and Family Welfare Department has been renamed Health and Family Welfare Department.

Horticulture and Cash Crops Development Department is now just Horticulture Department.

East Bengal felicitates Bhaichung as "biggest find of the century"



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 AUG:

Former Indian football captain Bhaichung Bhutia was felicitated by the East Bengal Club during the club's centenary year celebrations on Thursday at Netaji Indoor Stadium, Kolkata. Bhaichung was feted as the Club's "biggest find of the century."

"I attribute all that I have achieved in football to East Bengal. This is the club that recognised my abilities as a 16-year-old and introduced me to top-level football," a

clearly touched Bhaichung was quoted as saying in media reports.

The current Indian national team captain, Sunil Chhetri, who represented East Bengal in 2008, was also felicitated by the club yesterday.

The biggest congregation of legends happened after this as Shyam Thapa, Surajit Sen-gupta, Mohammad Habib and Subhash Bhowmick joined at the podium to honour PK Banerjee who was named the coach of the century.

He also made it clear that there will be no interference on part of the centre or the Central Water Commission officials.

The centre has formulated emergency action plan for 180 dams.

Referring to Polavaram project in Andhra Pradesh, he said as the state government has cancelled the tender,

the cost of the project is likely to go up over the years. He said Parliament has the legislative competence to draft laws which relate to public security and safety.

Water is a state subject.

Shekhwat said that in 2016, states were consulted on the bill and most agreed that it is better than the 2010 draft. The Minister as-

serted that through the proposed law the centre does not want to take control of the dams, water or power generated by it.

He also made it clear that there will be no interference on part of the centre or the Central Water Commission officials.

The centre has formulated emergency action plan for 180 dams.

Referring to Polavaram project in Andhra Pradesh, he said as the state government has cancelled the tender, the cost of the project is likely to go up over the years. He said Parliament has the legislative competence to draft laws which relate to public security and safety.

The bill envisages a two-tier structure at

national as well state level to ensure safety of

dams in the country, said Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat while moving the bill. Observing that safety of dam is extremely important as it concerns lives of people, property and flora and fauna, the Minister said "there is a need to have a common protocol for safety of dams in the country."

There are 5,745 reservoirs in the country of

which 293 are more than 100 years old. The age of 25 per cent of dams is between 50 to 100 years and 80 per cent are over 25 years old, he said.

Among other things, the bill also seeks to resolve the inter-state issues concerning maintenance and safety of dams, he said, adding as many as 92 per cent of dams in the country are on inter-state river basins.

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Taxi stand issue partially resolved

REBYNA RANA

GANGTOK, 02 AUG:

The problem of taxi stands in the capital was partially resolved today following an inspection carried out by a team of Sikkim Krantikari Chalak Morcha and DSP Traffic. Except the taxi stand near Star Hall, other taxi stands in the capital will continue to function like before.

Only the taxi stand near Star Hall, MG Marg is still in question. Sikkim Krantikari Chalak Morcha

vice president, Chung Chung Bhutia informed that they could not meet SP Traffic today so the matter could not be discussed.

He added that the Chalak Morcha team will be going to meet SP Traffic on Saturday to discuss the matter.

"We are hopeful that the issue will be resolved tomorrow," he said.

BUDGET SESSION CONCLUDES

CAG and other audit reports tabled; Assembly Committees formalised



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 AUG:

The five-day long budget session of Sikkim Legislative Assembly ended today with Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay], who also holds the Finance portfolio, tabling a stack of audit reports. Also today, the several committees of the Legislative Assembly were constituted with the two rebel SDF MLAs finding a berth in several committees.

chayati Raj Institutions & Municipalities audited during the year ended 31 March, 2019.

The CM also presented reports under FRBM Act, 2010 in the house like the Review of Compliance to Sikkim Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act for the year 2016-17, Half Yearly Review Report: 2018-19, Review of the Trends in Receipt and Expenditure in relation to Budget 2018-19 and Medium Term Fiscal Plan for Sikkim 2019-20 to 2021-22.

Speaker, Sikkim Legislative Assembly, LB Das, in turn presented the Annual Reports of the Commission, Government Departments and Sikkim Legislative Assembly Secretariat.

The last day of the assembly session also elected and nominated members of different Assembly Committees for the financial year 2019-20.

MLAs Aditya Golay Tamang, Sunita Gajmer and Em Prasad Sharma were selected as Members of the Committee on Public Accounts at a Glance

and Accounts at the Committee on Rules and Regulations. The Deputy Speaker of the House is the ex-officio Chairman of the Committee.

Members GT Dhungel, Bishnu Kumar Sharma and Em Prasad Sharma were nominated by the Speaker as Members of Committee on Library. The Deputy Speaker of the House is the ex-officio Chairman of the Committee.

Members GT Dhungel, Bishnu Kumar Sharma and Em Prasad Sharma were nominated by the Speaker as Members of Committee on House with Mr Dhungel as the Chairman.

turn to pg02

LS passes bill on dam safety

NEW DELHI, AUG 2 (PTI): A bill seeking to set up an institutional mechanism for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of specified dams across the country was

passed by Lok Sabha on Friday with the centre asserting it has no intention of taking over power of the states

The provisions of the bill is proposed to be applied to all specified dams in the country which have height of more than 15 metres, or between 10 metres to 15 metres.

Responding to the debate on the Dam Safety Bill, 2019, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhwat said the centre has no intention of taking over the powers of state through the draft law.

Water is a state subject.

Shekhwat said that in 2016, states were consulted on the bill and most agreed that it is better than the 2010 draft. The Minister as-

serted that through the proposed law the centre does not want to take control of the dams, water or power generated by it.

He also made it clear that there will be no interference on part of the centre or the Central Water Commission officials.

The centre has formulated emergency action plan for 180 dams.

Referring to Polavaram project in Andhra Pradesh, he said as the state government has cancelled the tender, the cost of the project is likely to go up over the years. He said Parliament has the legislative competence to draft laws which relate to public security and safety.

The bill envisages a two-tier structure at



dams in the country, said Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhwat while moving the bill. Observing that safety of dam is extremely important as it concerns lives of people, property and flora and fauna, the Minister said "there is a need to have a common protocol for safety of dams in the country."

There are 5,745 reservoirs in the country of

turn to pg02

Parliament approves...

are accusing us of misusing laws? Kindly look at your own past," he said. Speaking about the Samjhauta Express blast case, he said those accused during the UPA regime were let go as the court did not find anything against them and the Congress had registered "false" cases against them, keeping elections in mind. Shah alleged that the accused belonged to a certain religion and people of one religion were targeted during Congress rule. Responding to opposition concerns over the law being misused, he assured no one's human rights will be violated as a four-stage scrutiny with provision for appeals has been prescribed when individuals are declared terrorists.

Terrorism has no religion, terrorists are against humanity, he said seeking support of all parties to support stringent laws against terrorism.

The Home Minister appealed to the House to pass the bill unanimously to send a unanimous and strong message to the world that terrorists are the enemies of humanity and India is committed to finish terror from its soil.

Individuals can be declared terrorists if they commit or participate in acts of terrorism, prepare or promote terror, he said. The amendment will expedite prosecution in terror cases, he said. Attacking critics of the law, Shah said those opposing this bill must remember that the original law was not brought by the current Government. "We have always supported a strong law against terrorism and have been committed to any amendment in the past also. A tough law is required to uproot terrorism from India and we would always support that," he said. Shah said terrorism has no religion and individuals of one religion must not be victimised. He further assured the House that Government is committed to protect the fundamental rights of all citizens.

He said declaring an organisation as a terrorist organization will not stop individuals behind it. Not designating individuals as terrorists would give them an opportunity to circumvent the law and they would continue to regroup under different names and continue to indulge in terrorist activities, he noted.

"Till the time a person is not declared a terrorist, there cannot be a

LS passes bill...

He further said that 40 dams have collapsed in India since Independence and worst such disaster occurred in Gujarat in 1979 leading to loss of thousands of lives of people.

The dam collapse always becomes an international issue, he said, adding it would be a matter of national shame if it is found the collapse was on account of poor maintenance.

The present bill is based on the earlier draft bill which could not be pushed in the previous Lok Sabha, he said. It includes various suggestions of the Standing Committee which had scrutinised the earlier bill.

The bill, he added, envisages constitution of a National Committee on Dam Safety headed by the Chairman, Central Water Commission.

While supporting the bill, Tajasvi Surya (BJP), however, said the legislation does not fix accountability if there is failure of a particular dam.

GS Damor (BJP) said that India should build big dams taking into consideration demand for large quantity of water.

The panel will formulate policies and regulations regarding dam safety standards and prevention of dam failures, and analyse causes of major dam failures and suggest changes in dam safety practices.

The legislation also envisages setting up of a National Dam Safety Authority to be headed by an officer not below the rank of an Additional Secretary, to be appointed by the central government.

The main task of the National Dam Safety Authority includes implementing the policies formulated by the National Committee on Dam Safety, resolving issues between State Dam Safety Organisations (SDSOs), or between a SDSO and any dam owner in that state, specifying regulations for inspection and investigation of dams.

The NDSA will also provide accreditation to agencies working on construction, design and alteration of dams.

The proposed legislation also envisages constituting a State Dam Safety Organisation whose functions will be to keep perpetual surveillance, inspection, monitoring the operation and maintenance of dams, keeping a database of all dams, and recommending

check on such person's terror activities," he said. The Minister said only those individuals who participate in terrorist activities, those indulging in such activities, propagate the ideology of terrorism and members of known terrorist organisations will be declared as terrorists after this amendment. Terrorism, he said is a global problem and the UN besides several other countries have provisions in their laws to designate individuals as terrorists.

He said all countries have laws to designate individuals as terrorists, noting that United States, European Union and the United Nations, besides countries like China, Pakistan and Israel also have such a law. Elaborating on the track record of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), he said out of 278 terror cases registered by the agency, charge sheet has been filed in 204 cases. Of the 54 cases where judgements have come, conviction has been there in 48. Track record of NIA in conviction in terror cases is outstanding, he said.

Shah said there has been a 91 per cent conviction rate of cases for NIA, which is the highest for any investigative agency across the world. He said 221 persons who have been convicted, 92 have been freed of charges by the courts. A total of 131 charge-sheets have been filed from June 1, 2014 to July 2019. Of the total cases, 109 are against Jihadi cases, 27 against left wing terrorists, 47 cases in north east, 14 against Khalistani groups, 45 against those involved in Hawala trade and foreign currency violations, and another 36 in other cases.

"All charge sheets are as per law and no one has been freed due to lack of charge-sheet filing," he said. Earlier Congress leader, P Chidambaram said his party was not against the law but was opposed to some amendments. He said the issue was that of a liberty of an individual and if the law was passed, it would be struck down by courts. "An individual who commits terrorist act is punishable. But there is no clear differentiation driven out between punishing an unlawful association and punishing the member of unlawful organisation. Why have you brought this amendment? What is the purpose of this amendment?" he asked.

safety measures to owners of dams.

The bill provides for two types of offences --- obstructing a person in the discharge of his functions, and refusing to comply with directions issued under the proposed law.

As per the provisions of the bill, offenders will be punishable with imprisonment of up to one year, or a fine, or both. If the offence leads to loss of lives, the term of imprisonment may be extended up to two years.

Offences will be cognisable only when the complaint is made by the government, or any authority constituted under the bill.

Participating in the debate, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said there are still issues to be resolved and urged the Centre not to encroach upon the rights of state governments.

NK Premachandran (RSP) raised concerns about an additional secretary rank official to be chairman of the Dam Safety Authority and absence of an appellate authority, saying the latter issue is against principles of natural justice.

DMK's A Raja said the bill is an onslaught on the federal structure.

Mahua Moitra (TMC) said the bill impinges on the powers of states and the federal structure.

She urged the government not to bring pieces of legislations that ride roughshod over the states' rights.

BJP member P P Chaudhary emphasised that Parliament has full legislative power to enact the law on dam safety, amid questions raised by some Opposition members on whether Parliament has the legislative competence to introduce the bill.

Shirang Barne (Shiv Sena) through the Bill the government should ensure that there is no encroachment on the rights of the states.

Sunil Tatkare (NCP) stated that there were some lacunae in the bill and added that it does not talk about the recovery of minor and medium dam projects.

B Mahtab (BJD) was of the view though the bill was good and a lot of steps were taken to make it better, still there were many incongruities in the bill. He said the state should be empowered so that they can take care of themselves.

Barfung Jarrong is now a child-friendly GPU

Namchi, 02 Aug [IPR]: Barfung Jarrong GPU today officially became a Child-Friendly GPU following a function held here at the Chandramani Rai Secondary School auditorium here at Jarrong today.

A first of its kind initiative in Sikkim, this is an innovative initiative of the District Child Protection Unit (South) under ICPS, SJE&WD.

The initiative has been taken up with the objective of establishing child protection mechanisms at the grassroots level in order to promote a child friendly environment and community which in turn would be instrumental in turning the entire state into a Child Friendly State.

The Child Friendly GPU would entail series of activities and programmes to educate and sensitize the communities about child rights and child protection issues.

It will also help build a platform to empower and engage the children in the decision making



process through Bal Panchayats and Bal Sabhas through which children can voice their opinions, raise issues concerning them, build human resource of the community by identifying community volunteers and building capacities in subjects like child counseling, child rights, legislations related to children so that they can provide emergency relief and rehabilitation services to the children in difficult circumstances.

The formation of such an establishment will also facilitate convergence of different departments to bring child

related programmes and services under one roof and make them accessible to children of the community. It may be mentioned that two more GPUs have been identified in South District by District Child Protection Unit (South) ICPS, SJE&WD.

Speaking on the launch programme, DCPO (South), Roshni Gurung, who has conceptualized the initiative of Child Friendly GPU stated that considering the rising crimes and abuses against children, she felt the urgent need to address, aware and sensitize the communities to

address such jarring and significant issues.

She also made the gathering aware that today Sikkim stands as the third highest north-eastern state in crimes against children after Assam and Mizoram as per the NCRB report. She further stated that through the creation and establishment of a child friendly GPU, a strong support system within the community for reporting of cases, providing emergency assistance, medical, financial, legal, psychological and rehabilitation help is possible.

She strongly ex-

pressed and emphasized that by empowering and engaging the children by providing them a platform where they can voice out their opinions, solutions to the various problems that concern them can be facilitated through Bal panchayats and Bal sabhas.

Similarly, she also urged the public to reach out to every family and children in difficult circumstances through the child protection mechanism established within the GPU so that no child is left behind and that help is provided whenever needed. In addition, she stressed upon the aspects of empowerment of the families and children of the GPU so that every child of the village can grow and develop to their full potential.

The program saw the attendance of officials of DCPO, ICPS (SJE&WD), officials of Health Department, Child Line workforce, members of NGOs, Senior Citizens, Panchayats, School staff, teachers and children and public of the area.

CM meets Shivraj Singh Chauhan in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, 02 AUG [IPR]:

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] met former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and National Vice President, Shivraj Singh Chauhan, at Guwahati today. The Chief Minister is on a two-day visit to Assam. The Chief Minister as-

sured the BJP leader that they would work collectively for the development of the state and the nation.

Mr Shivraj Singh conveyed his good wishes to the people of Sikkim and congratulated the Chief Minister on his electoral victory and stated that they were ready to help

in the all round development of the State, for which he was willing to speak to the central leadership about extending support for the development of the state.

The Chief Minister also met the BJP in-charge of the North East, Ajay Jambal.

Press Advisor to CM interacts with media personnel**SUMMIT REPORT**

GANGTOK, 02 AUG:

In a special initiative, Press Advisor to the Chief Minister, CP Sharma, held an interaction with press and media personnel here at Samman Bhawan on Friday. The programme saw a huge presence of senior and young working journalists and representatives from different print and electronic and social media of the State.

During the programme, Press Club of

Sikkim president, Joseph Lepcha and other journalists presented various issues and suggestions to the Press Advisor.

In his address, Mr Sharma congratulated all journalists for working for the betterment of the society and welfare of the people. He also expressed his happiness on interacting with media personnel.

Regarding issues and suggestions placed by journalists, he assured to take all issues and

suggestions to the State government and to do his best to address all issues and problems.

Mr Sharma also encouraged young journalists to take this profession seriously and responsibly. He stated that journalists are the mirror of the society and urged them to lead the society towards the right path. He also urged journalists to deliver their responsibilities sensibly towards the society.

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KUTSE SHEGU

The Kutse Shegu 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.

Pema Doma Bhutia (Khamdong Anyola)

Sonam Wangdi, Tashi Chhopel, K.P.Tshering, Karma Lodai, Karma Thendup, Karma Yenten (sons), Karma Doma (daughter), N.T.Bhutia (son-in-law) 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

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GENERAL INFORMATION

This is for general information of all concerned that Hotel Parasol Residency, Panighouse, 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, Panighouse, Deorali, East Sikkim.

Mr. Subash Lama

Proprietor

Hotel Parasol Residency,

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Neutral journalism unlikely to survive as media dependent on corporate finances: Ravish Kumar

New Delhi, Aug 2 (PTI): Senior journalist Ravish Kumar, who is named as the winner of this year's Ramon Magsaysay Award, on Friday claimed that journalists are working in an atmosphere of fear, and neutral journalism is unlikely to survive as media is dependent on corporate finances in India. A well-known journalist, Kumar (44), a senior executive editor with NDTV India, is among five winners of the Asia's prestigious award.

The award citation said, "In a media environment threatened by an interventionist state, toxic with jingoist partisans, trolls and purveyors of 'fake news,' and where the competition for market ratings has put the premium on 'media personalities,' 'tabloidisation,' and audience-pandering sensationalism, Ravish has been most vocal on insisting that the professional values of sober, balanced, fact-based reporting be upheld in practice."

After the announcement of the award, Kumar participated in a live chat and while responding to a question alleged that a majority of the media is fuelling communalism and divide.

He also said it is "very difficult" for real and neutral media to survive because media needs corporate finances and therefore, it is difficult for it to remain neutral.

"Efforts are being made to raise funds and create a neutral base for the media but at the end of the day mainstream media has to be made professional. Till mainstream media will not be neutral and professional, and will not leave propaganda, communalism, we will not be able to do it (make media neutral)," he said.

"There is more control on the media now. That is why this fight is being fought only by a few institutions and journalists. But this should not be the case, it should also be a fight of big institutions. So, it is not easy for neutral journalism will survive," said Kumar, who has been critical of the government over various issues and has also been threatened and targeted by right-wing trolls. To another question about how the media can help overcome hate and discrimination, Kumar said the media will not do it because it is the media that is propagating Hindu-Muslim hate.

"One should keep in mind that due to this communalism which is being presented in the garb of nationalism, the biggest loss will be suffered by the majority community because when the process of communalisation will move forward, then their progress will be hampered," he argued.

"By keeping a lot of hatred and biases inside you, you cannot be creative. When you are not creative you cannot do good business, create business opportunities, you cannot do good work," he asserted.

Sikkim Dancing Icon Season 3

**YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 02 AUG:**

After the successful completion of two dancing events, Creative Illusion Dance (CID) is looking forward to organising the third Sikkim Dancing Icon Season 3 for which the online application and registration has already started online and on social media.

CID Studio and Dancing Institute is based in Ranipool and has been

working to provide a platform to dancing talent of the state.

The institute had earlier organised an event at Ranipool where about 62 candidates took part which, both boys and girls between the age group of 15 to 30 years.

The program was sponsored by the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with Sikkim Manila Kalyan Sangh of Ranipool. The said pro-

gram was held from 05 to 26 July.

"The participants for the upcoming Dancing Icon Season 3 can register their name online. Girls and boys aged between 06 to 30 years and the process has already started," informed Shristy Pariyar who is the founder of CID and the event organizer.

Further, she also mentioned that to participate in the event there are

certain criteria and fees. For solo performance the registration fee is Rs 500 and for Duo/Trio and Groups it is Rs 1000.

The last date for filling up the forms or applying is 25 Aug, 2019 and the audition will be held in all four districts, informed Ms Pariya.

It was also informed that for Dancing Icon season 3 the jury will have renowned choreographer, Remo D'Souza.

Meeting discusses I-Day celebration at Lingi Payong School



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 02 AUG:**

A meeting regarding the celebration of 73rd Independence Day at Lingi Payong was held at Lingi Paiyong school premises on Friday, a press release informs. The meeting was chaired by Panchayat president, Lingmoo Payong GPU, Yogesh Bhandari and attended by Headmaster, teachers, SMC members, parents and guardians.

The meeting unanimously agreed to celebrate Independence Day in a befitting manner under the banner of 73rd

Independence Day Celebration Committee. Laxman Rai was appointed as president of the celebration committee.

Various committees and sub committees are formed for successful celebration of the programme. A GPU level Open Volleyball Tournament and School level Badminton Championship for teachers are main attractions of the celebration.

Besides these, literary, sports and cultural activities for students will be also held during the programme, the release mentions.

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Women journalists denied fair share in Indian media: UN report

NEW DELHI, AUG 2 (PTI): Female journalists "continue to be denied their fair share" at major media organisations in India, a new report by UN Women has claimed.

The report, titled "Gender Inequality in Indian Media", found that women were better represented online than in newspaper and TV.

While 26.3 per cent top jobs were held by women at online portals, TV channels employed 20.9 per cent and magazines 13.6 per cent women in leadership positions -- defined as someone designated editor-in-chief, managing editor, executive editor, bureau chief, or input/output editor. None of the sampled newspapers, seven Hindi and six English, had a female boss. The 13 newspapers were selected on the basis of their position in the Indian Readership Survey 2018, according to the report.

The UN body could not avail data from Navbharat Times and Dainik Bhaskar.

The media today is largely male-dominated in India and across the world. Women are often assigned to cover 'soft beats' such as Lifestyle and Fashion while men predominate in the 'hard beats' of politics, economy, and sports.

"Men also occupy the majority of the leadership positions. By thus

marginalising women's voices and perspectives, the Indian media essentially denies nearly a half of the population a chance to influence public opinion," the report said.

Unveiled at The Media Rumble by online news portal NewsLaundry, the study analysed six Hindi and as many English news channels, 11 websites, five radio stations, and four magazines besides the 13 newspapers. Of the 2,963 writers in six English newspaper, only a quarter were women, while of the articles published, only 20 per cent were by women. The report found that out of 17,312 articles, only 457 or less than 3 per cent were on gender issues, 39.6 per cent of which were written by women.

The scenario was worse in Hindi newspapers with only 17 per cent women of a total of 2,084 writers, with about 11 per cent of them getting bylines.

Digital media showed a ray of hope as women comprised of over 35 per cent of the writers who received bylines for 39.8 per cent of all articles.

It found that women in digital media contributed more articles than men on state and policy (58.4 per cent), crime and accident (53.5 per cent), culture and entertainment (51.3 per cent), and public life (50.3 per cent).

Secretary for Printing & Stationary Deptt retires



GANGTOK, 02 AUG (IPR):

A farewell programme for Secretary, Printing and Stationary Department, KP Sharma, on his retirement from service was held in the office of the Chief Secretary at Tashiling Secretariat today.

Additional Secretary, DoP, Tashi Chophel, delivered a short address outlining the career and contributions of Mr

Sharma to the state government.

Mr Sharma also spoke about his journey in government service and stated that it was a huge honour for him to have been a part of the state government.

Chief Secretary AK Shrivastava wished him the best for all his future endeavours and wished him a meaningful post retirement life.

people in the administration who turned from friends into family.

At the end he expressed his thankfulness for all the support that was extended to him throughout his career.

Chief Secretary AK Shrivastava wished him the best for all his future endeavours and wished him a meaningful post retirement life.

Six Sikkimese in 1st Thailand Paragliding Accuracy Open 2019

REBYNA RANA

GANGTOK, 02 AUG:

Six paragliding pilots from Sikkim are participating in the "1st Thailand Paragliding Accuracy Open 2019", [FAI CAT II] Ratchaburi, Airports Federation of Asia (AFA) Asian Cup-Series 1, being held at Khao Son, Ratchaburi, Thailand. The championship started on 31 July, and will conclude

on 04 Aug, 2019.

The pilots participating from Sikkim are Arjun Kumar Rai, Raju Rai, Tashi Lachungpa, Landup Tsheten Sherpa, Nima Tamang and Rupa Karki, while there is also one pilot from Himachal Pradesh, Veer.

These seven pilots will be representing India in the event which is being organized for the first time in Thailand.

The championship has been organized for a long time now but this is the first time that it is being held in Thailand, informed certified pilot from Sikkim, Arjun Kumar Rai, while talking to SummitTIMES.

So far the team has been performing well and we will try our best to make the nation and our state proud, said Mr Rai.

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Thank You

Garnier Men Mega Mr NE and Sunsilk Mega Miss NE

GUWAHATI, 02 AUG: Mega Entertainment, north east's largest fashion and pageant event organizer, announced the dates of the grand finale of 17th edition of Sunsilk Mega Miss North East and 10th edition of Garnier Men Mega Mister North East in a press conference held at the Guwahati Press Club today.

The Grand Finale of the 10th Garnier Men Mega Mister North East, supported by Title Sponsor Garnier Men- India's no. 1 men's face wash brand, Hospitality Partner Radisson Blu, Telecom Partner Vodafone SuperNet 4G, Photo Partner Sony Alpha and Cosmetic Partner Eyetex Dazller.

SPONSORED

to Partner Sony Alpha and Styling Partner Sin Denim will be held at ITA Cultural Complex, Machkhowa, on 08 August.

On 09 August, 7.00pm onwards, ITA Cultural Complex will host the Grand Finale of 17th Sunsilk Mega Miss North East, which has been supported by Title Sponsor Sunsilk Thick and Long, Hospitality Partner Radisson Blu, Telecom Partner Vodafone SuperNet 4G, Photo Partner Sony Alpha and Cosmetic Partner Eyetex Dazller.

The finalists were chosen through a series of auditions held in Itanagar, Tezpur, Kokrajhar, Agartala, Shillong, Imphal and Guwahati. Through these auditions, the pageant organizers shortlisted 50 women, who will vie for the coveted title of Sunsilk Mega Miss North East; and 50 men will compete to become the most desirable man of the region, to win the title of Garnier Men Mega Mister North East.

The contestants will undergo a strict pre-judging process during their training and grooming sessions, where the female contestants will be judged on their poise, carriage, intelligence and beauty and the male contestants



tants will be judged on their intelligence, fitness, personality and confidence. The events are conceptualized by fashion entrepreneur Abhijit Singha and have been produced by Mega Entertainment.

Celebrating Mega Mister North East's glorious decade-long journey, Mega Entertainment has a grand award in store for the winner of Garnier Men Mega Mister North East 2019.

Speaking to the media regarding this, Abhijit Singha, Founder of Mega Entertainment, said, "We have often felt that while our female winners get numerous opportunities to expand their horizons through reputed national pageants like Miss India, the male winners get very few opportunities on a national level. This year, we have decided to offer an unparalleled opportunity that models from northeast have

rarely received. The winner of Garnier Men Mega Mister North East 2019 will get a direct entry into Mister International pageant, which is one of the most reputed global manhunts." Singha added that the said opportunity for the winning candidate will be entirely managed by Mega Entertainment.

Speaking on the growing quality of the contestants over the years, Singha added, "It is heartening to see that our winners are making a mark in the national fashion scenario as well. Since the past three editions of the Miss India pageant, our previous winners have posed a strong competition in the same. This year as well, Mega Miss North East 2018 Jyotishmita Baruah made it to the Top 6 of the Miss India pageant. We feel really privileged to have been a part of her journey."

Also present on the occasion were Mega Miss North East 2018 Jyotishmita Baruah and Mega Mister North East 2018 Hirok Jyoti Kalita.

Speaking of her experience with Mega Entertainment, Jyotishmita Baruah said, "I am eager to meet the contestants of this year. I remember how excited I was on being a part of Mega Miss North East last year. Prior to my stint at Mega Miss North East, I believed that a beauty pageant is all about competing and coming first, but winning this title changed my perspective about beauty pageants. After winning this pageant, I realized that beauty pageant is all about accepting yourself the way you are and supporting your co-contestants. The things I learnt at Mega Miss North East helped me immensely during my stint at Miss India pageant as well, and in achieving the top-6 spot in the reputed pageant."

Hirok Jyoti Kalita, who won the title of Mega Mister North East 2018, said, "Mega Mister North East helped me build my confidence and gave me an identity that I never had. This stage means a lot to me. I achieved one of my biggest dreams by winning this title. Mega Mister North East is not just another contest. It is an institution which taught me the importance of grooming, discipline, and most importantly punctuality, without which one cannot survive in any industry. What I learnt during my tenure as Mega Mister North East will continue to guide me throughout my life, and hopefully will help me guide other aspirants in this industry as well."

Disgustingly Compromised. Inadequately Incensed

We should not stop talking about sexual abuse of children

There was an incident not very long ago, could not have been more than five or six years back when a septuagenarian was beaten up by his nephew. When news of the incident first arrived, most people clucked at the degeneration of our times and of how age no longer commanded respect. As more details unraveled, while the sense of degeneration was reinforced, the sympathies had shifted. Apparently, the septuagenarian was a pedophile, and among the victims he had preyed upon was his nephew's child. The incident had come to light when parents of other victims had come to know of the pedophile among them and had lodged a police complaint. But that was still not when he was roughed up. Apparently, the matter was settled out of court when the extended family negotiated a "settlement" and a "punishment". The pervert was to be socially ostracized by the village and the family. The nephew eventually "lost it" when the predator was allowed back into the village within a few months on the justification that he was of advanced age and "repentant"!

It is worrying that most people still not see the depravity of what had been engineered in this case until the High Court took notice. While the cops were all fine with the "compromise" arranged in the child molestation case, they did their job and picked up the nephew on assault charges. When the High Court was hearing an appeal on the assault case, it learned of the obnoxious negotiations which had gone sour and resulted in the assault. The Court then ordered the cops to investigate the original case. One does not know what happened of that investigation, but this one episode which got "outed", should have opened the can of worms that the society at large does very well to keep packed in Sikkim. After all, this cannot be the only POCSO Act case that has been compromised.

The horrors that visit victims of child abuse are too inadequately handled by the society and its systems. Imagine the anger, frustration and hate that a victim will grow up into when s/he realizes that the perpetrator, even after being exposed and caught, was allowed to walk free without being held to account. It should worry Sikkim that the kind of subversion carried out in the case mentioned above although shocking and disturbing for some, are not necessarily rare. Criminal acts, especially offences against women and children, are more pervasive than accepted and unfortunately less prosecuted than is necessary for women and children to be made safe in this off-balance society. The criminally-inclined will continue to commit excesses because that is a tendency they have been allowed to nurture and get away with, and every time they are 'saved' from punishment, and victims refused the justice that the society owes them, the perpetrators are emboldened and the victims further smothered.

Institutions in our country are geared to instinctively circle the wagons around their own even when though it should be the victims who command all the sympathy. This attitude makes for a dangerous mix with the patriarchal instincts in which genuine sensitivity towards women and children becomes a still-born pursuit. The incident shared here fleshes out all that is wrong with the tokenisms being paid to women and child welfare and amplify the societal failures and failure of organizations and committees specifically tasked with looking out for them. And let's accept it, even the commissions tasked with looking after the welfare and interests of women and children were not born out of the society's realization to have specialist organizations for the job. These organizations are there because a central rule mandates them and because there are funds to sustain them. While this is not to suggest that such organizations are useless, but it also needs to be accepted that they not very motivated either. Otherwise, "compromise" of any offence against women or children should attract immediate condemnation from such organizations. But why blame the organizations when the society itself conspires against its young so often?

Given the nexus of connections which most institutions and organizations and even the society at large have become, priorities are always misplaced and reprehensive responses unleashed often. These problems cannot be corrected with more rules and more laws - what is required is wider sensitivity and a clear checklist of due processes. Since individuals are routinely failing in what is expected of them, the institution should be made such that there is a prescribed code and a transparent process which needs to be followed whenever a complaint is lodged or an incident comes to light. Personal prejudices, and we are a nation which is deeply prejudiced on all issues, need to be snuffed out, and this will happen only when guidelines are detailed and digressions severely penalized. Until that happens tokenism will rule.

Pseudoscience is taking over social media – and putting us all at risk

SANTOSH VIJAYKUMAR
theconversation.com

Search for "climate change" on YouTube and before long you'll likely find a video that denies it exists. In fact, when it comes to shaping the online conversation around climate change, a new study suggests that deniers and conspiracy theorists might hold an edge over those believing in science. Researchers found evidence that most YouTube videos relating to climate change oppose the scientific consensus that it's primarily caused by human activities.

The study highlights the key role of social media use in the spread of scientific misinformation. And it suggests scientists and those who support them need to be more active in developing creative and compelling ways to communicate their findings. But more importantly, we need to be worried about the effects that maliciously manipulated scientific information can have on our behaviour, individually and as a society.

The recent study by Joachim Allgaier of RWTH Aachen University in Germany analysed the content of a randomised sample of 200 YouTube videos related to climate change. He found that a majority (107) of the videos either denied that climate change was caused by humans or claimed that climate change was a conspiracy.

The videos peddling the conspiracy theories received the highest number of views. And those spreading these conspiracy theories used terms like "geoengineering" to make it seem like their claims had a scientific basis when, in fact, they did not.

HEALTH MISINFORMATION

Climate change is far from the only area where we see a trend for online misinformation about science triumphing over scientifically valid facts. Take an issue like infectious diseases, and perhaps the most well-known example of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. Despite large amounts of online information about the vaccine's safety, false claims that it has harmful effects have spread widely and resulted in plummeting levels of vaccination in many countries around the world.

But it's not just well-known conspiracy theories that are causing a problem. In May 2018, one troublemaker came into his own at the height of the Nipah virus outbreak that eventually claimed 17 lives in the southern Indian state of Kerala. He duplicated the letterhead of the District Medical Officer and spread a message claiming that Nipah was spreading through chicken meat.

In reality, the scientifically established view is that the fruit bat is the host for the virus. As the un-

founded rumour went viral on WhatsApp in Kerala and neighbouring states like Tamil Nadu, consumers became wary of consuming chicken, which sent the incomes of local chicken traders into a tailspin.

The effects of misinformation surrounding the MMR vaccine and Nipah virus on human behaviour should not be surprising given we know that our memory is malleable. Our recollection of original facts can be replaced with new, false ones. We also know conspiracy theories have a powerful appeal as they can help people make sense of events or issues they feel they have no control over.

This problem is complicated further by the personalisation algorithms underlying social media. These tend to feed us content consistent with our



beliefs and clicking patterns, helping to strengthen the acceptance of misinformation. Someone who is sceptical about climate change might be given an increasing stream of content denying it is caused by humans, making them less likely to take personal action or vote to tackle the issue.

Further rapid advances in digital technologies will also ensure that misinformation arrives in unexpected formats and with varying levels of sophistication. Duplicating an official's letterhead or strategically using key words to manipulate online search engines is the tip of the iceberg. The emergence of artificial intelligence-related developments such as DeepFakes – highly realistic doctored videos – is likely to make it a lot harder to spot misinformation.

So how do we tackle this problem? The challenge is made greater by the fact that simply providing corrective scientific information can reinforce people's awareness of the falsehoods. We also have to overcome resistance from people's ideological beliefs and biases.

Social media companies are trying to develop institutional mechanisms to contain the

spread of misinformation. Responding to the new research, a YouTube spokesperson said: "Since this study was conducted in 2018, we've made hundreds of changes to our platform and the results of this study do not accurately reflect the way that YouTube works today ... These changes have already reduced views from recommendations of this type of content by 50% in the US."

Other companies have recruited fact checkers in large numbers, awarded research grants to study misinformation to academics (including myself), and search terms for topics where misinformation could have harmful health effects have been blocked.

But the continuing prominence of scientific misinformation on social media suggests these measures are not enough. As a result, governments around the world are taking action, ranging from passing legislation to internet shutdowns, much to the ire of freedom-of-speech activists.

SCIENTISTS NEED TO GET INVOLVED

Another possible solution may be to hone people's ability to think critically so they can tell the difference between actual scientific information and conspiracy theories. For example, a district in Kerala has launched a data literacy initiative across nearly 150 public schools trying to empower children with the skills to differentiate between authentic and fake information. It's early days but there is already anecdotal evidence that this can make a difference.

Scientists also need to get more involved in the fight to make sure their work isn't dismissed or misused, as in the case of terms like "geoengineering" being hijacked by YouTube climate deniers. Conspiracy theories ride on the appeal of certainties – however fake – whereas uncertainty is inherent to the scientific process. But in the case of the scientific consensus on climate change, which sees up to 99% of climate scientists agreeing that humans are responsible, we have something as close to certainty as science comes.

Scientists need to leverage this agreement to its maximum and communicate to the public using innovative and persuasive strategies. This includes creating social media content of their own to not only shift beliefs but also influence behaviours. Otherwise, their voices, however highly trusted, will continue to be drowned out by the frequency and ferocity of content produced by those with no concrete evidence.

[the writer is Vice Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow in Digital Health, Northumbria University, Newcastle]

Finding signs of happiness in chickens could help us understand their lives in captivity

MARY BAXTER
theconversation.com

When animal welfare campaigner Ruth Harrison published a book in 1964 called Animal Machines, there was a public outcry. Her vivid descriptions of post-war intensive farming started a discussion about animal welfare that led to new guidelines for safeguarding animals in human care. From this, the "Five Freedoms" were born. They stated that animals should have:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease
4. Freedom to express normal behaviours
5. Freedom from fear and distress

The Five Freedoms are used as a way to assess animal welfare around the world, but they've been criticised for their focus on limiting suffering rather than giving animals a good environment to live in. The Farm Animal Welfare Council revisited these standards in 2009 and asked a new question that has shifted the way we think about animal welfare. Does this animal have a "life worth living?"

It's no longer enough to know if an animal is suffering, we also need to know if it's happy. But in the absence of a big toothy grin or a wagging tail, how do we do that for a chicken?

Those studying long-domesticated animals with expressive features are at an advantage. We know that dogs are happier when they wag

their tail towards the right. We know that rats laugh when they are tickled, and we know which facial expressions mice, rats, rabbits, horses and sheep pull when they're pain free. But we don't yet have a positive behaviour marker for chickens – and we need one.

PLAY AND HAPPINESS

There are actually two types of chickens used in farming today – broiler chickens, which are raised for meat, and laying hens, which produce eggs. There is a huge demand for chicken meat and it will soon top the list as the most consumed meat in the world. In the UK alone, there were over a billion broilers slaughtered in 2018.

There are many ways of telling if a chicken is suffering. But to create truly positive environments for farmed broiler chickens, researchers must find ways of measuring their contentedness.

Identifying play behaviours in farm animals is one useful way for monitoring their welfare, although it's a frustrating exercise for scientists. Animal play varies wildly between species. Most of the time, play wastes valuable energy and it has yet to be conclusively linked to any future benefits. It does seem that animals don't play when food is scarce, or they're injured or scared.

Play also appears to be self-rewarding – animals play because it feels good, which is why we believe that play is linked to positive emotions. In children, an absence of play is one of the core symptoms of depression.

Play-like behaviours in poultry were first described in the 1950s and 60s, with researchers writing detailed accounts of "sparring", "frolicking" and "food-running" in young birds. In the following years, they were renamed as "aggression" or "running-with-flapping". This is probably because of the general reluctance among scientists to attribute emotion or awareness to birds. But these behaviours fit within well-established definitions of animal play and their presence in modern broilers might just be the happiness marker we're looking for.

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF LIVESTOCK

Both sparring and frolicking are easy to spot when you're walking down a chicken shed. A rush of white bodies moves to fill the empty space you've made behind you. They run wildly, flapping their wings and rapidly changing direction. It's contagious and once one starts they all bomb about in a flurry of nonsensical movements.

Sometimes they bump into each other and take a step back, rearing up and facing off with their neck feathers raised and their beaks almost touching. They don't actually land any blows, it's all bluff and they're distracted easily by other birds or by the sight of the feeders.

Frolicking has all the hallmarks of locomotory-rotational play, which is another word for when animals jump or run about for no reason. There are accounts of this type of play in numerous animals including pigs, seals, monkeys, calves and wolves. Sparring also appears to be a juvenile form of

adult fighting, or the chicken version of rough and tumble.

Food-running is an odd behaviour that resembles social object play, which is when play with another animal involves an object, like tug of war. It's called "food-running" because chicks will pick up an object that's usually shaped like a rod or a worm, sometimes a pen lid I was too slow to rescue, and run around with it making cooing noises until other birds give chase. The object moves between the group until the last one loses interest.

It was initially thought to just be chickens trying to stop another bird from eating whatever it had found, but chicks will food-run even when they've been raised in total isolation. They also make distinctive noises when they get the object, which is not a good way of hiding something tasty.

Hunger doesn't seem to be related to food-running and they do it even with constant access to food and when they are given obvious non-food items. If broilers are doing this, it may be a good sign that all their other needs have been met and they're using energy to play.

Broiler behaviour patterns have changed a lot since they were domesticated and bred for meat production. Although it's not a chicken version of a wagging tail, these play behaviours may tell us a lot about their emotional state and could help researchers design environments that give them a life worth living.

[the writer is Research Fellow in Animal Welfare, Queen's University Belfast]

More indigenous people dropped from NRC than those living on B'desh border: Assam govt

GUWAHATI, AUG 2 (PTI): The Assam government has claimed that the percentage of people excluded from the draft National Register of Citizens was lower in districts bordering Bangladesh having a sizeable Muslim population than those where Hindus were in majority. The government placed a list in the state assembly on Thursday which contained district-wise figures of people left out of the hugely contentious NRC, which is being updated under the supervision of the Supreme Court.

The development came despite an apex court directive to the state coordinator of NRC to submit before it the details in a sealed cover as the matter was "a human problem with great magnitude".

PTI had erroneously reported on Thursday that the percentage of people excluded from the draft NRC was higher in districts along the Indo-Bangladesh border.

Assam Accord Implementation and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary laid the district-wise list of inclusion, rejection and non-inclusion of applicants' names in the NRC.

The list showed the total number of applicants was 3,29,91,385 out of which 40,07,717 names, which is 12.15 per cent, were not included.

According to the list, the percentage of non-inclusion of names in dis-



tricts bordering Bangladesh like South Salmara was 7.22, Dhubri 8.26 and Karimganj 7.67.

Non-border districts Hojai and Darrang have the highest non-inclusion rate at 32.99 per cent and 30.90 per cent respectively.

It is a matter of concern that the percentage of names excluded from the draft NRC is lower in the Bangladesh border districts compared to the rest of the state," Patowary said.

The NRC coordinator came under fire from ruling BJP members who expressed doubt whether a correct NRC will ever be published.

They claimed that the rate of exclusion of NRC applicants in the districts bordering Bangladesh was less than the state average - 12.15 per cent.

This is a proof that a

section of people residing in border districts of Assam has wrongly been included in the NRC, they said, slamming the coordinator.

They alleged there was gross misuse of the legacy data in various districts, particularly in those bordering Bangladesh.

"Due to this misuse, comparatively fewer people were left out of the draft NRC in those districts", the minister said.

BJP MLAs Debananda Hazarika, Shiladitya Deb and Numal Momin and AIUDF member Nurul Amin raised the issue during the Zero Hour.

Only seven per cent of the applicants from the Bangladesh border districts have been excluded from the NRC draft list,

Hazarika said and asked why the sample verifica-

tion, as ordered by the Supreme court, was not done. Deb claimed that only eight per cent people were dropped from the draft NRC in the border district of Dhubri and neighbouring Barpeta, while 14 per cent names were left out in Karbi Anglong, which is not a border district.

Momin said while 5-7 per cent of the names from the border districts were excluded from the draft NRC, 18 per cent indigenous people were dropped from the list.

Under the Supreme Court's directions, the first draft of the NRC was published on December 31, 2017, and the final draft on July 30 last year, where 40 lakh odd people were left out.

The Supreme Court had on July 23 extended the deadline for publication of the final NRC by a

month to August 31.

"We want an error-free NRC that will include the names of Indian citizens and exclude the names of foreigners," Patowary said.

The Centre and the Assam government had in July sought 20 per cent sample re-verification to find out wrong inclusions and exclusions of people in the NRC, but the pleas were rejected by the Supreme Court.

Both governments had on July 19 told the top court that "India cannot be the refugee capital of the world" and sought extension of its deadline of July 31 to complete the update of the NRC.

Assam, which had faced influx of people from Bangladesh since the early 20th century, is the only state having an NRC which was first prepared in 1951.

Tea industry's appeal to government to revive tea industry

GUWAHATI, AUG 2 (PTI): The Indian Tea Association (ITA) has appealed to the government seeking its intervention for revival of the tea industry. Among the interventions sought from the government, the ITA on Thursday urged it to take over PF contributions for workers for three years.

The association also sought a ban on expansion of tea areas, to contain oversupply for five years.

The ITA made the appeal through an advertisement published in newspapers on Thursday.

The ITA also asked the government to consider substantial fund for generic promotion of tea the country and fix a Minimum Reserve Price for tea in auction, based on cost of production".

Mizoram police arrest 1098, push back 92 for not having valid ILP

AIZAWL, AUG 2 (PTI): Mizoram police have arrested 1098 non-tribals from the state for living in the state without valid inner line permit(ILP) and have pushed back 92 of them to Assam, senior police official said Friday.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Northern Range) Lalbiakthanga Khangte said that the arrests were made since Thursday and the push back to Assam took

place on Friday. He said that 81 people arrested by Bairabi police and 11 by Vairengte police in Kolasib district on the Mizoram-Assam border were pushed back.

The rest would be produced before the respective district courts, Khangte said.

He said that 865 people were arrested in Aizawl district, 111 in Kolasib district, 52 in Mamit district on the border with Tripura,

43 in central Mizoram's Serchhip district and 27 in Champhai district.

"The fates of these non-tribal people would be decided by the district courts soon," Khangte said.

ILP is required to enter some tribal states, including Mizoram and Nagaland under the provisions of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873, and those who violate the law are liable to be arrested.

Serial killer arrested by police



footpath of the Ranihat Canal Bridge", Singh said adding if required, Sahu will undergo lie-detection test and other scientific tests.

The family members of Sahu claimed that he was innocent and mentally disturbed.

Refuting the claims made by Sahu's family, the DCP said the arrest was made on the basis of "confessional statements" made by the accused person and the circumstantial evidences.

Police also displayed a blunt but newly pur-

chased axe and two clean and fresh towels claiming that the axe was the weapon of offence, which was retrieved from near the crime spot after eight days and the towels, the only appurtenances used by Sahu during the past three months while staying in a make-shift shanty in these rainy days.

Three murders were reported in the city in a span of 24 hours last week. The victims, all men, were aged over 40 years and found on the roadside.

Aizawl Municipal Corporation bans plastic

AIZAWL, AUG 2 (PTI): The Aizawl Municipal Corporation has banned single use plastic articles and plastic carry bags less than 50 micron thickness in the city, an official said Friday.

Aizawl municipal area was declared a "No plastic city" from August one, AMC Commissioner D H Lalthlangiana said.

ana told PTI.

The AMC commissioner said carrying, use and storage of any plastic carry bags less than 50-micron thickness or any plastic articles having single use such as disposable plastic bottles, cups, plates, spoons and forks within the AMC area have been banned

from August one.

"Defaulters are liable to be punished under the Aizawl Municipal Corporation Plastic Waste Management By-Laws, 2019," Lalthlangiana said.

He said AMC officials will conduct searches at the Aizawl city entry points to prevent transportation of plastics into the city municipal area.

Buoyed by Tripura local polls victory, BJP says will come to power in Bengal, Kerala



NEW DELHI, AUG 2 (PTI): Buoyed by its big win in local polls in Tripura, the BJP on Friday exuded confidence that it will come to power in West Bengal, once a Left bastion, and the Left-ruled Kerala in the same way it has in Tripura.

Senior party leader Ravi Shankar Prasad hailed the party's overwhelming win in the Tripura polls and noted that the state was ruled by the Left for over 25 years before the BJP threw it out of power in the 2018 assembly polls with a big win.

West Bengal was a Left bastion for decades and now the BJP is a major player in the state and will come to

power there, he said, asserting the party will also rule Kerala.

The BJP fared poorly in Kerala in the recent Lok Sabha polls when it could not win a single seat. It, however, put up an impressive show in West Bengal, winning 18 of the 42 seats.

Prasad, also a Union minister, said the people of Tripura have shown their faith in the party's and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

The BJP won 5,916 of the state's 6,111 'gram panchayat' seats, 411 of 419 'panchayat samiti' seats and 114 of 116 'zila parishad' seats in the local polls.

3.54 crore tourists visited Jharkhand in last four and half years: Minister

RANCHI, AUG 2 (PTI): A total of 3.54 crore tourists have visited Jharkhand in the last four and a half years, state Tourism Minister Amar Bauri has said.

He said under the "Swadesh Darshan Scheme" of the Central government Rs 52.72 crore will be spent for development of Dalmia-Chandil-Geratala-Sud-Betla, Mirchainia, Netarhat eco tourism circuit in the state.

"The number of tourists coming to Jharkhand has doubled in the last four and a half years.

This number has increased to 3.54 crore. It has approximately 1.76 lakh foreign tourists. Basic amenities have been made available in the state's major tourist destinations and it has also provided employment to 74,16 thousand people of the state," the minister said on Thursday.

He said 132 tourist sites of the state are being developed by classifying them in international, national, state-level and local-level categories, adding eight tourist and cultural sports festivals are being organised by

according them the status of state festivals.

The eight festivals are - Itkhori Festival, Chhau Festival, Baidyanath Dham Festival, Lumbur Festival, Maghi Mela, Hijala Mela, Mudma Mela and Basukinamth Festival.

The minister said the efforts made by the government enabled the month-long "Shravani Mela" in Deoghar getting international recognition.

He said work to preserve terracotta temples located in Maluti in Dumka is in progress.

Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey caused by hydel projects in Sikkim and the region, the cost exacted by this "development" and some of the stories it birthed, not all of which have been shared before.

Also finding place in this collection is the arrival of Climate Change and its impact on Sikkim and how the State could negotiate with this new disruption.

**ESSAYS
ON TEESTA,
HYDEL
AND CLIMATE
CHANGE
IN SIKKIM**

Smith savours Ashes century after fearing scandal would end career

BIRMINGHAM, AUG 2 (AFP): Australia's Steve Smith said he had contemplated the end of his career after marking his first Test since a year-long ball-tampering ban with a superb century on the opening day of the 2019 Ashes.

The tourists were struggling at 17-2 at Edgbaston on Thursday when former Australia captain Smith walked out to bat and they later collapsed to 122-8.

But Smith, ignoring the repeated boos of the crowd, made 144 in a total of 284 after current Australia skipper Tim Paine won the toss before England closed on 10-0.

Smith's 24th Test century was the star batsman's first international hundred since he returned to Australia duty during a World Cup where he made 85 in last month's Edgbaston semi-final defeat by eventual champions England.

"There were times throughout the last 15 months where I didn't know if I was ever going to play cricket again," Smith, renowned for his obsessive devotion to the sport, told reporters after stumps.

"I lost a bit of love for it at one point, particularly when I had my elbow operation."

"It was really bizarre that it was the day I got the brace off my elbow, I found a love for it again."

"I don't know what it was, it was like a trigger that just said 'right I'm ready to go again, I want to play and I want to go out and play for Australia and make people proud and just do what I love doing'."

There were many familiar Smith traits on show in Birmingham, including the repeated fidgeting in his stance, while the crowd could scarcely have been tougher on the 30-year-old than he was when berating himself for the occasional loose shot.

Also on display was Smith's ability to bat well alongside tailenders, with Australia's last two wickets more than doubling their score.

Smith's near six-hour innings was a chanceless affair until he was last man out, with his biggest scare coming when given out lbw for 34 to Stuart Broad not playing a shot only to overturn the decision on review.

- SHIVERS DOWN MY SPINE -

Then skipper Smith and Warner, his deputy, were both given 12-month bans for their roles in the scandal in South Africa, while Cameron Bancroft -- the man who brazenly applied sandpaper to the ball during a Test in Cape Town -- was suspended from international duty for nine months by Cricket Australia.

All three batsmen were dismissed by Broad on Thursday, with openers Bancroft and Warner managing just 10 between them for the Ashes-holders.

Bayern renew battle with Dortmund amid Sane chase

BERLIN, AUG 2 (AFP): Bayern Munich resume their power struggle with Borussia Dortmund on Saturday for the German Super Cup with the Bavarians chasing Manchester City star Leroy Sane to reinforce their squad.

The blockbuster Bundesliga curtain-raiser in Dortmund once more pits Germany's top clubs together after Bayern held off a spirited Dortmund challenge to land a seventh straight league title on the final day of last season.

"This is the first title that is important to us," said Bayern star Thomas Mueller a fortnight before the new Bundesliga season starts.

"The game has a certain explosiveness. We want to show that we are ready -- we'll put our all into it." As defender Niklas Sule put it, Bayern "want to give a sign" they remain the team to beat in Germany.

Dortmund have recruited hard, signing wingers Thorgan Hazard and Julian Brandt -- the latter currently sidelined by injury -- and luring Mats Hummels back from Bayern to beef up the defence.

And while Bayern added French world champions Lucas Hernandez and Benjamin Pavard, City winger Sane is the marquee player they crave.



POTENTIAL CLUB RE-CORD -

According to reports, Bayern have tabled a bid of around 90 million euros (85 million) -- which would be a club record.

They have even reportedly pushed taking the official team photo back to September in the hope the 23-year-old will have joined by then.

Head coach Niko Kovac initially declared "I assume we'll get him" last weekend, but Bayern have dramatically

dialled back.

Kovac phoned his City counterpart Pep Guardiola to apologise for recruiting Sane aggressively following criticism from Bayern's senior figures.

"We're all well advised to not talk about players still under contract," said sports director Hasan Salihamidzic while chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge also criticised Kovac's bold statement.

On Wednesday, Kovac insisted "what I said was true" as he still believes in the deal with the transfer window to close in a month's time.

Exactly who will line up for Bayern at Dortmund is unclear.

Bayern fielded mainly reserve team players in Wednesday's defeat to Tottenham Hotspur in the final of their pre-season tournament.

- COMAN, GNABRY DOUBTFUL -

Frenchman Kingsley Coman, who suffered a

recurrence of a serious ankle injury last season, "only" bruised his knee against Spurs, Bayern confirmed.

Fellow winger Serge Gnabry is also doubtful with a leg knock, but Kovac indicated both players "will be back soon".

It will be interesting to see if Jerome Boateng features after coming off the bench against Spurs and missing the crucial penalty in the shoot-out.

Bayern are keen to sell the 2014 World Cup winner, but the club's desire to move the 30-year-old on has irritated the squad.

"We've been going round in circles for weeks," moaned Mueller. "This guy Jerome Boateng does us good," he added in his teammate's defence.

This will be Dortmund's first key test after winning six pre-season friendlies -- including a 3-2 victory over Champions League holders Liverpool last month on their US tour.

They posted a 4-1 win over St Gallen on Tuesday in their Swiss training camp with captain Marco Reus scoring their fourth.

"The Super Cup is very important for us all - to start the season well and show fans what we have planned," said Reus.

"However, it's clear neither us nor Bayern are at 100 percent yet."

LAUDERHILL (USA), AUG 2 (PTI): Back on the road following their unfulfilled World Cup campaign, India will begin their preparations for the T20 showpiece event next year with a three-match series against the West Indies beginning here on Saturday.

Rohit was top-scorer in the World Cup, with a record five hundreds, and would be keen to carry that form amid the off-field drama of a speculated rift with Kohli, who has categorically denied any differences with his deputy.

As captain Virat Kohli pointed out before leaving for the Caribbean tour, the main objective of the T20s and the subsequent ODI series against the West Indies is to try out the fringe players who are on selectors' mind.

Kohli was expected to be rested for the limited-overs leg of the tour but a full strength squad has been picked barring the absence of star pacer Jasprit Bumrah who will join the side ahead of the Test series beginning August 22. All-rounder Hardik Pandya has been rested for the entire tour.

It will be a crucial couple of weeks for Shreyas Iyer and Manish Pandey, who are back in the mix after being sidelined from India's 50-over World Cup plans.

Pandey last played for India in November 2018 and Iyer in February 2018.

"The team is young, and we like to mix the experienced players with the youth. We have a very good blend. We are looking forward to the matches here in Florida. It should be a very exciting weekend, we lots of entertainment for the fans," Reifer said ahead of the series.

Squads:

West Indies: John Campbell, Evin Lewis, Shimron Hetmyer, Nicholas Pooran, Kieron Pollard, Rovman Powell, Carlos Brathwaite (c), Keemo Paul, Sunil Narine, Sheldon Cottrell, Oshane Thomas, Anthony Bramble, Andre Russell, Khary Pierre.

India: Virat Kohli (captain), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant, Krunal Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Rahul Chahar, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Khaleel Ahmed, Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini.

Match starts 8 IST.

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Benitez beware as Chinese clubs go on trademark sacking spree



SHANGHAI, AUG 2 (AFP):

Rafael Benitez's arrival grabbed the headlines but Chinese Super League teams have sent the managerial merry-go-round into hyper-speed with five of the 16 clubs making changes in one month.

CSL clubs appear to have lost their nerve as they enter the final third of the season with the championship and relegation fights too close to call.

The biggest shock came on Wednesday when Beijing Guoan axed the German Roger Schmidt and named Bruno Genesio as his replacement.

The 52-year-old Schmidt can feel particularly aggrieved with Guoan third in the CSL, just four points off leaders Guangzhou Evergrande.

The former Bayer Leverkusen coach inspired Guoan to FA Cup glory last season and the capital club began the

season with a record 10 CSL victories in a row.

But Guoan moved ruthlessly to replace him with former Lyon manager Genesio following a third defeat in a row in all competitions.

"Professional football is so cruel," correspondent Yuan Fang wrote in the respected Oriental Sports Daily on Friday.

"High income is accompanied by high risks and high pressure." Yuan and other Chinese media said there had been murmurs of discontent with Schmidt's intense training methods, and a feeling that some players were underperforming.

Summing up the thinking at Guoan, Yuan wrote: "Changing coaches means a chance of winning the title, but if you don't change, the championship is gone."

Genesio was given a contract until the end of the season, giving him 10 matches to reignite Beijing's title charge -- or likely follow Schmidt out

of the door.

Schmidt's surprise dismissal is a reminder to Champions League winner Benitez that Chinese clubs will not hesitate to bring down the axe.

The Spaniard has, however, made a good start at Dalian Yifang, winning four of his six matches and taking them into mid-table safety.

Benitez's predecessor Choi Kang-hee replaced Quique Sanchez Flores at Shanghai Shenhua, who under the former Watford manager found themselves in a relegation fight.

Other changes last month saw former AC Milan midfielder Roberto Donadoni arrive at Shenzhen FC, who are fighting to avoid relegation.

Rock-bottom Beijing Renhe, who are four points from safety, also switched coaches, swapping out Aleksandar Stanojevic from Serbia for the Spaniard Luis Garcia.

Of the 16 CSL teams, 11 have foreign coaches.

800 asylum seekers returned to wait in Mexican border city

MATAMOROS (MEXICO), AUG 2 (AP): The United States government has sent about 800 mostly Central American and Cuban migrants back to this northern Mexico border city since expanding its controversial "remain in Mexico" program to the easternmost point on the shared border two weeks ago, Mexican authorities say.

They are among nearly 3,000 people with pending U.S. immigration proceedings who have been sent back to wait in Mexico's Tamaulipas state, where the U.S. State Department warns Americans to avoid all travel due to high levels of violence and kidnapping.

Under the program, migrants who turn themselves over to U.S. authorities and, in most cases, request asylum, are returned to Mexico after being given a court date. To pursue their asylum cases they have to wait in Mexico, crossing only for court dates in what is a months-long process.

The program began in January at Tijuana, across from San Diego, and the U.S. government has been expanding it eastward along the border, seeing it as an effective deterrent to the flood of migrants.

U.S. authorities began returning migrants at the Tamaulipas city of Nuevo Laredo, on the border with Laredo, Texas, in early July and a few days later added Matamoros, across from Brownsville.

So far more than 20,000 migrants have been returned all along



the border to wait in Mexico, Mexican officials say.

On Thursday, some 70 migrants walked suddenly with their heads down across the international bridge into Matamoros.

They carried their documents in transparent plastic bags and expressed concerns about how they would wait out the process in a state known for powerful organized crime gangs.

"Donald Trump is just returning everyone," said Emilio Cceres, a 25-year-old Honduran farmer who said he planned go home rather than wait.

Cceres said he previously was deported from the U.S. and therefore did not envisage a successful asylum application even though he was given a hearing date.

A day earlier, Luis Raxic of Guatemala was returned to Matamoros with his wife and 1-year-old daughter. He had similar thoughts of giving up and going home because

Sensing the dan-

ger or already knowing Tamaulipas' reputation, some migrants quickly disperse upon reaching Matamoros in search of lodging and are not seen in the streets.

Others choose to stay near the downtown bridge where police and National Guard are present. Some have yet to cross over to the U.S. to file asylum applications and are waiting to be called from a list of more than 1,000 names. Others have recently been returned and are awaiting court dates.

A dozen tents are pitched in the bridge's shadow. Some people simply curl up on blankets in the sweltering heat. In addition to Central Americans, there are migrants from Cameroon, Cuba and Peru.

Mexico has said it will provide more shelter space and job opportunities for migrants sent back to Mexico. On Thursday, the government opened a new shelter in Ciudad Juarez.

It wasn't clear who had told her that, but many migrants repeated the same information.

Walter Enamorado, from El Salvador, has been sleeping outside the state immigration office near the bridge with his 7-year-old son.

"We're abandoned here, but they haven't even told us if there's a shelter or how to get there," he said.

across from El Paso, Texas, where the U.S. is also returning asylum seekers. Two Matamoros shelters visited by The Associated Press on Thursday were at less than half their capacity, even though some of the migrants camped near the bridge had heard otherwise.

Daisy Maldonado of Honduras sat on the ground playing with her 2-year-old daughter. She and her husband were afraid to move far from the bridge to look for housing or work. "Since they've told us there is no space in the shelters, why risk it?" she said.

He met US Secretary of State Pompeo on the sidelines of the second day of 9th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers meet in Bangkok.

Any discussion on Kashmir, will only be with Pakistan, bilaterally: Jaishankar

BANGKOK, AUG 2 (PTI):

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday made it clear to his American counterpart Mike Pompeo that any discussion on Kashmir, if at all warranted, will only be with Pakistan and only bilaterally, days after US President Donald Trump offered to mediate on the vexed issue.

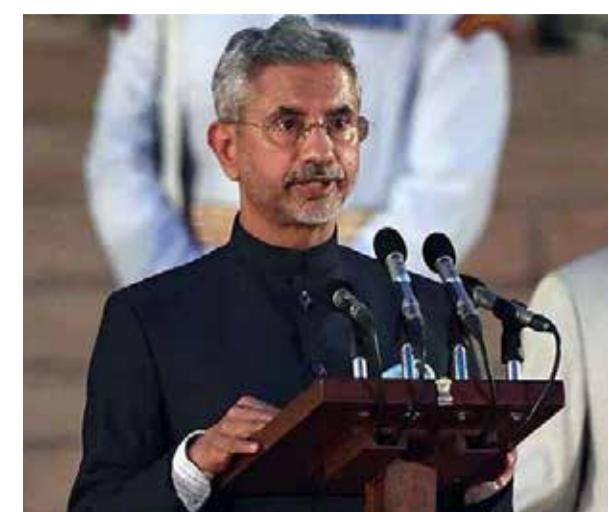
Jaishankar is in the Thailand capital to attend a number of conferences, including the ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting, the 9th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the 26th ASEAN Regional Forum and the 10th Mekong Ganga Cooperation Ministerial Meeting.

"Held wide ranging discussions with @ SecPompeo on regional issues," Jaishankar tweeted.

"Have conveyed to American counterpart @ SecPompeo this morning in clear terms that any discussion on Kashmir, if at all warranted, will only be with Pakistan and only bilaterally," he tweeted.

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He met US Secretary of State Pompeo on the sidelines of the second day of 9th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers meet in Bangkok.



This was the first official meeting between the two top officials after President Trump's controversial comments on him offering to mediate between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue.

Trump claimed that Modi and he discussed the issue of Kashmir in Osaka, Japan on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in June, where the Indian prime minister made an offer of a third-party arbitration on Kashmir.

In Parliament, EAM Jaishankar had said that all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan can be discussed only bilaterally and Prime Minister Modi made no request to President Trump to mediate on the Kashmir issue with Pakistan.

"Any engagement with Pakistan will require end to cross border terrorism," he had said, adding Simla and Lahore accords provide the basis for resolution of all issues bilaterally.

UN chief: Data shows July equaled or surpassed hottest month

UNITED NATIONS, AUG 2 (AP):

The latest data from the World Meteorological Organization shows the month of July "at least equaled if not surpassed the hottest month in recorded history" and it followed the hottest June ever, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Thursday.

He warned that if all nations don't take immediate action to tackle climate change, extreme weather events happening now "are just the tip of the iceberg."

"And the iceberg is also rapidly melting," Guterres said.

Arctic Sea ice is already near record low levels, he said, and the European heat wave last month has raised temperatures in the Arctic and Greenland by 10 to 15 degrees Celsius. "Preventing irreversible climate disruption is the race of our lives and for our lives," Guterres said. "It is a race we can and must win."

Guterres said the latest weather data, including temperature-shat-

tering records from New Delhi and Anchorage to Paris, Santiago, Adelaide, Australia and the Arctic Circle, means the world is on track for the period from 2015 to 2019 "to be the five hottest years on record."

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In his efforts to keep climate change at the top of the global agenda,

Bombs rattle Bangkok during ASEAN summit, wounding three



were reported.

"I received a report that they are ping pong bombs' hidden in bushes by the road." Two further explosions shattered glass near a well-known downtown skyscraper, emergency police added.

Bomb disposal experts were deployed around the Mahanakorn Tower -- owned by the King Power group that counts Leicester City football club among its assets. At least three other blasts hit the area around a government complex, authorities said.

The bombings took place just before a keynote speech by Pompeo, who has joined the Southeast Asian Foreign Ministers meeting, in which he praised Thailand for rejoining the "democratic fold".

Three people received slight injuries from shrapnel," said Renu Suesattaya, director of Suanluang district where the first bombs

"We do not know yet how many people are involved," deputy prime minister Prawit Wong-suwon told reporters, adding that "people who do it want to stir the situation". The blasts come weeks after former junta leader Prayut was inaugurated as a civilian prime minister, sparking outcry among many pro-democracy supporters in a kingdom scored by divisions.

The junta manoeuvred itself back into power with the help of a fully appointed senate stacked with army loyalists and an electoral system its critics say was designed to limit the success of the pro-democracy parties. A slew of court cases since then targeting an emergent anti-military group popular have rambled government critics, especially younger voters. The older "Red Shirt"

pro-democracy group has also reacted with outrage to the election, but has so far remained off the streets with the army seemingly in an unassailable position.

Mass protests, coups and short-lived governments have defined Thailand's recent history, which is peppered with deadly bombings and shootings linked to politics. Thailand's last hosting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2009 was also overshadowed by unrest. Then, protesters from the pro-democracy "red shirt" faction smashed their way into the summit venue in the resort city of Pattaya demanding elections.

Pandemonium ensued, with a number of leaders having to be rescued from a hotel roof by Thai army helicopters while others fled by boat.

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People get defensive when presented with hard facts: Sonakshi Sinha

BY RAVI BANSAL

NEW DELHI, AUG 2 (PTI): There is something wrong with the population explosion in India and "Khandani Shafakhana" tries to raise awareness about it, says actor Sonakshi Sinha.

The actor believes that films hold a mirror to the society but mere facts are not enough to convince people.

"The human nature is such that if you attack someone with facts head on, and show them what is wrong, they always get defensive. But when you say it in a light hearted way, and lace it with humour, I think they are more receptive."

"They will understand what you're trying to say and this is what we've done with this film as well. I think the kind of topic that it touches upon, it required a certain humour to it for people to kind of understand and start thinking about what we're trying to say," she told PTI in an interview.

Lack of sex education among the general masses is the issue that "Khandani Shafakhana", which hits the theatres on Friday, tries to highlight.

Sonakshi plays a young woman, named Baby Bedi, who inherits a sex clinic run by her uncle. She decides to use this opportunity to bring about a change in the society.

She says the film is a step in the right direction.

"It is something that will get people to think for sure because we are stating facts about what is happening in society. Nobody's asking the right questions like why is it (population burst) happening?"

"We live in a country of over 130 crore people. Where did all these people come from? And so there are a lot

of relevant and important topics that we are talking about in this film," the actor adds.

Though she considers the part of Baby Bedi one of her "best roles" till date, the actor admits that her first reaction when the makers approached her was one of disbelief.

"My first reaction when they ap-

handled it beautifully."

Post "Khandani Shafakhana", Sonakshi will be seen in "Mission Mangal" where she is a part of an ensemble cast that includes Vidya Balan, Taapsee Pannu, Kirti Kulhari, Nithya Menen and Akshay Kumar.

The film's poster, which released last month, was criticised for giv-



LOOKIN' GOOD! The Queer Eye star, Antoni Porowski stays hydrated as he walks around New York City.

Netflix renews '13 Reasons Why' for fourth and final season



LOS ANGELES, AUG 2 (PTI): Streaming giant Netflix has renewed one of its most controversial shows "13 Reasons Why" for a fourth and final season.

The news comes after the platform released the first trailer of the third season, which premieres on August 23. The third installment will pick up eight months after the events of the previous season.

According to Variety, the fourth season is currently filming and will feature the core cast's graduation from Liberty High.

The upcoming third season will revolve around Clay (Dylan Minnette), Tony (Christian Navarro), Jessica (Alisha Boe), Alex (Miles Heizer), Justin (Justin Foley), and Zach

(Ross Butler) trying to help Tyler (Devin Druid) move towards recovery. However, disappearance of one of the main characters makes Clay come under the police scrutiny. Creator Brian Yorkey serves as showrunner and executive producer alongside Mandy Teefey, Kristel Laiblin, Selena Gomez and Joy Gorman.

The first season was based on the novel of the same name by Jay Asher, while subsequent seasons have been original stories. It was criticised for graphic depiction of teen suicide and the way it was dealt.

According to a source there will be no suicide in season three.

The series is produced by Paramount Television and Anonymous Content for Netflix.

ARIES: You're never too old to join the 'dear diary' bandwagon. If you think this is a mundane exercise to complain about your boss or whine about your ex, think again. As Dr James Pennebaker explains, "When we translate an experience into language we essentially make the experience graspable." Aries, the Universe is providing you with the wonderful opportunity to free yourself from the mental traumas that have been weighing you down. Your keywords for today: emotional release, healing and catharsis.

Tip: Consider the art of journaling to heal yourself.

TAURUS: Mission World Domination looks good on you, Taurus. But don't forget that you can only be the most invincible version of yourself when you put self-care above everything else. It's time to find that elusive work-life balance. How do you nurture your inner garden? What are the activities that makes you feel uplifted? Allow yourself to do a few things that entail no goals today.

Tip: Find the elusive work-life balance.

GEMINI: Two is going to be your magic number today. Get ready to find the yin to yang. Gemini. Somebody who complements you perfectly and possesses the uncanny ability to complete your sentences. What is this creative chemistry going to lead to? Make time for a brainstorming session. Give yourself room to experiment. This could be the start of something brand new on your journey to greatness.

Tip: Find the yin to your yang.

CANCER: Have you been dancing with your demons yet again, Cancer? What the Universe wants you to remember: your mind is the most powerful tool at your disposal.

Use it to create a beautiful reality for yourself, to set intentions that will support your soul's journey. Remember, the words we use when in conversation with ourselves are just as important. Be kind.

Tip: This is your chance to create a beautiful life for yourself.

LEO: It's never easy firing an incompetent employee or calling out a co-worker for employing unethical practices, but you have no way out of this. You're going to have to be the bearer of bad news today. When it comes to business decisions, tap into your logical

side. There's a lot you bring to the table, Leo. Keeping this in mind will help you demand what you truly deserve.

Tip: Stand up for the truth even if it makes you the bad guy.

VIRGO: If you believe in the law of attraction, you want to try this at home. Hold a pure thought in your mind's eye for 17 seconds in order to set manifestation in motion. The desire will become stronger and stronger as it reaches 68 seconds. If what you asked for is in alignment with your highest good, it will find a way into your existence.

Tip: Tap into the power of manifestation.

LIBRA: A Bukowski classic to inspire you: "The way to create art is to burn and destroy ordinary concepts and to substitute them with new truths that run down from the top of the head and out of the heart." Consider this as your wake-up call to challenge the status quo, to push the boundaries, and trigger those around you to look beyond what they perceive to be the truth. Therein lies your growth, Libra. Embrace the crazy ideas that are coming through. The gift of authenticity will make you invincible in this cookie-cutter world.

Tip: The Universe is encouraging you to plant seeds that are in alignment with your highest good.

CAPRICORN: Think of yourself as the CEO of your life, manifesting that larger-than-life vision into your reality. We create as we speak, Capricorn. So

Tip: The art of creative rebellion.

SCORPIO: Here's a productivity hack to consider: create a to-do list of five realistic goals. Yes, five. The simpler you keep things for yourself, the easier it will be to achieve your target. This way you will be able to get more done and give the task at hand your undivided attention. Creating a clutter-free environment will help you keep the distractions at bay.

Tip: A concise to-do list could be the secret to increasing your productivity.

SAGITTARIUS: The new moon is a magickal time, Sagittarius. A time of sowing your seeds with love. As the moon waxes, it gives our dreams and desires the power to grow manifold. Use this energy for the highest good. Reflect upon what you want to birth—a creative project, for instance. Consider the steps that will take you closer to your goal and get into action mode.

Tip: The Universe is encouraging you to plant seeds that are in alignment with your highest good.

CAPRICORN: Think of yourself as the CEO of your life, manifesting that larger-than-life vision into your reality. We create as we speak, Capricorn. So

Tip: Shine your light on the world.

AQUARIUS: If you wake up feeling like a cat lady, you've only got your stars to blame. What this day calls for: a tall cup of cocoa and your favourite book. Swap Kafka with Osho or Eckhart Tolle though. Given your reflective mood, you'll need something that helps escape your 3D reality—if only for a hot minute.

Tip: Make a tall cup of cocoa and sit down with a book on mindfulness.

PISCES: You are a healer, a witch, a light worker and a medicine woman. You are a ray of hope in a world of dark clouds. Tap into your inherent power, Pisces. See how you can use your gifts for the highest good. You possess the strength to hold space for others, despite what you may be going through on the personal front. Remember, you can't always alleviate their problems, but you can make them feel seen and heard. Today, let kindness, compassion and empathy be your power words.

Tip: Shine your light on the world.