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SummitTIMES

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

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Sikkim gets IoT based real-time landslide warning system

KOLKATA, AUG 1 (PTI): Internet of Things (IoT) based real-time landslide warning system has been installed in Sikkim, the first of its kind in the Himalayan region by Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (AVV) University, a AVV director said here today.

The system has been installed under the aegis of the Ministry of Earth Sciences at a cost of Rs 5 crore, director of the Centre of Wireless Networks and Application of the

institute, Maneesha Sudheer said.

"The data has started flowing in from the project site to the control room. There are 200 sensors that goes as deep as 13 metres underground and reading of the various data for analysis getting transmitted. It is almost three years since we started the journey," she said.

To improve the systems reliability and enhance the early warning duration a

three-level Landslide Early Warning Model has been developed, she said.

The project was given to AVV University after it successfully deployed and managed similar IoT based landslide warning system in the western ghats region of Munnar in Kerala since 2009 that continues to protect lives with successful warnings, Sudheer said.

The Sikkim project, which is the second one, is being implemented in collaboration

with Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority, AVV vice-chancellor Venkat Rangan said.

It will monitor a densely populated area spanning 150 acres around Chandmari village in Gangtok district and be a life saving system for at least 5,000 people, Sudheer said.

This area has seen several landslides in the past with the first one reported in 1997, she said.

She said AVV has been se-

lected as the only Indian institution as the world centre of excellence in landslides and risk reduction till 2020.

Sudheer said Sikkim was selected after scanning 17 landslide prone zones in some north east states and Uttarakhand. The project was delayed due to difficult terrains and work conditions but the major challenge was vandalism of critical sensors and equipment at least twice causing time and monetary

loss of about Rs 40 lakh to Rs 50 lakh.

A report by Indian Roads Congress estimates that 15 per cent of India's landmass is prone to landslide hazard, including areas like Western Ghats and Konkan Hills, Eastern Ghats, North East Himalayas, and North West Himalayas.

In North East Himalayas, the Sikkim-Darjeeling belt is at the most risk of landslides, it said.

Cabinet nod to bill overturning apex court order on Dalit atrocities law

NEW DELHI, AUG 1 (PTI): The Union Cabinet today approved a bill to restore original provisions of a law on prevention of atrocities against people of scheduled castes and tribes, a move seen as a reach-out by the BJP-led NDA government to Dalits days ahead of their proposed August 9 nationwide protest with this key demand.

The bill rules out any provision for an anticipatory bail for a person accused of atrocities against SC/STs, notwithstanding any court order, while it also provides that no preliminary enquiry will be required for registering a criminal case and an arrest under this law would not be subject to any approval.

Dalit groups have been asking the government to overturn a Supreme Court ruling of March 20, saying it had "diluted" and rendered "toothless" the law against atrocities faced by the weakest sections of the society by putting additional safeguards against arrest of the accused.

Their nationwide protest on April 20 had turned violent in several states, leaving at least 12 dead, while call has been given for another 'Bharat Bandh' on August 19 with several opposition parties also offering their support this time.



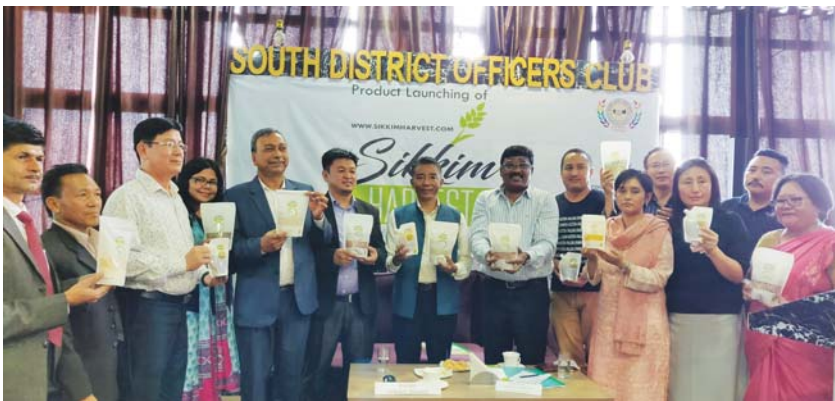
Salghari MPCs launches its organic brand 'Sikkim Harvest'

**DEEPSHIKA THEGIM
SUBBA**

NAMCHI, 01 AUG:

Sikkim Harvest, an organic brand introduced by Salghari Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society [MPCS], South Sikkim, was officially launched today at South District Officers Club in Namchi in the presence of Speaker, SLA, KN Rai, as chief guest and Director, Horticulture Department, DK Bhandari, and Principal Secretary, Cooperation Department, K Srinivasulu, as guests of honour.

President of Salghari MPCs, HB Rai, in his introductory note cited in detail the background of Sikkim Harvest.



Director, Horticulture Department, Mr Bhandari, appreciated the initiative of Salghari MPCs and urged the society to spread awareness about

their venture in the entire State in days to come.

He also advised Salghari MPCs to avail subsidy based schemes from State's Horticulture De-

partment to set up additional plants in the society. He informed that the department has installed roof water harvesting in Salghari to solve the wa-

ter crisis.

On the sidelines, Mr Bhandari also applauded the works of Temi Tea Estate in the organic sector in Sikkim. He assured

extension of all possible support to Salghari MPCs from the department.

Speaker, SLA, Mr Rai, while appreciating the venture of Salghari MPCs, said that among 178 Multipurpose Cooperative Societies of the State, Salghari MPCs has earned good name and has excelled in becoming a well-known MPCs.

He mentioned that this initiative of Salghari MPCs will fetch appreciation in the national and international market as the market for organic products is huge both nationally and internationally.

"The products of Salghari MPCs will not be sufficient as people have become aware of the val-

ue of organic products which has led to increase in its demand," said Mr Rai while urging other Cooperative Societies of the State to draw inspiration from Salghari MPCs's venture.

He further suggested Salghari MPCs opening an outlet in Gangtok as the packaged organic products of Salghari MPCs can be used as gift packages.

During the programme, Salghari MPCs was presented with grant of Rs 10 lakh and a refrigerator van by Horticulture Department while the Agriculture Department presented one Bolero pick-up for the so-

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RBI hikes interest rate by 0.25% on inflationary concerns

MUMBAI, AUG 1 (PTI): Reserve Bank of India for the second time in two-month raised interest rate by 0.25 per cent on inflationary concerns.

The central bank in its third bi-monthly policy of the current fiscal raised benchmark repo, or the short term rate at which it lends to other banks, by 0.25 per cent to 6.5 per cent.

The 6-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by RBI Governor Urjit Patel kept its stance at neutral.

For July-September, it pegged CPI-based retail inflation at 4.2 per cent which it saw firming up to 4.8 per cent in the second half of the current fiscal.

ECOSS awareness programme on Namcheybong watershed projects

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 01 AUG:

An awareness programme on "Springshed-based Watershed Development Project at 25-Namcheybong GPU" was held at Gram Prashashan Kendra in Pakyong on 31 July.

A press release from Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim [ECOSS] informs that the Pre Project Implementation Phase [PPIP] of the project is being executed in four wards of Namcheybong, East Sikkim viz Raigaon, Naibutar, Basilakha and Pricklakha. The project is being executed by ECOSS and supported by National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development [NABARD].

These projects seek to address two major water related problems experienced in the NE Region namely heavy/intense rainfall and surface run-off



during monsoons leading to soil erosion/siltation/ pollution of water bodies downstream and drought situation in the months of Feb-Apr leading to acute scarcity of water for spring season crops.

These two extreme eventualities need to be managed to enhance agricultural productivity, augmenting income and preventing degradation of soil and water, which can be best addressed by watershed programmes modelled

around the "Dhaara Vikas" programme of Sikkim.

The meeting, which was chaired by former Chairperson Agriculture/Horticulture Development Board, DN Sapkota, was attended by 60 participants.

Chief Executive Officer, ECOSS, Rajendra P Gurung, gave a brief background of the project components highlighting the importance of water security and water management in the village.

Project Coordinator/Researcher ECOSS, Uden Lhamu Bhutia, presented a report on the baseline survey and community discussion that had been conducted during the preliminary phase of the project and also shared the progress of the project.

The first intervention of the project included site visits to various springs and water sources in the region fol-

turn to pg02

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* HEIGHT 5'4 AND ABOVE

* UNMARRIED , SINGLE

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SUGGESTIONS INVITED

Sikkim State University invites inputs for development of the official logo of the University. Ideas and opinions may kindly be forwarded to the mail address given below till the 3rd of August, 2018
sikkimstateuniversity@gmail.com

SKM conducts block level meet in Changey



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 01 AUG: A block-level meeting of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party was held at Changey party office under Maneybong-Dentam constituency in West Sikkim today which was chaired by Durga Bahadur Chhetri, Santabir Chhetri and Dhan Bahadur Gurung.

An SKM press release informs that speakers in the meeting mentioned that SKM has been working for the mission of a new Sikkim and to provide corruption free and transparent administration to the people of Sikkim.

It is informed that nine SDF families from Gitang-Karmatar officially joined SKM during the meeting.

2nd day of HPV vaccination programme at Singtam

YOGEN THATAL

SINGTAM, 01 AUG: Human Papilloma Virus [HPV] vaccination programme was held today at Government Senior Secondary School Singtam and Tintek School, including all nearby schools, in East Sikkim yesterday. The programme was launched across the State on Monday.

Since Monday, at Singtam Sr Sec School, 286 girl children have been vaccinated while at Tintek School today, 63 girls were vaccinated.

Salghari MPCs...

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ciety's convenience.

The official website for Sikkim Harvest was also launched by the chief guest and guests of honour. Nodal Officer of the project, Ajay Rai, presented brief background on Sikkim Harvest which was followed by presentation of felicitations and mementos.



SAATHI unit of Lingi Paiyong SS conducts school impact prog

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 01 AUG: Sikkim against Addiction towards Healthy India [SAATHI] Unit of Lingi Paiyong Secondary School, South Sikkim organised school impact

programme at its school premises today. The programme was conducted by coordinator, Bhola Adhikari, and peer educator students from the school, a press release informs.

Mr Adhikari highlighted the objective of SAATHI while the peer educators stressed on prevalence of substance abuse among adolescents and discussed strategies to deal with it.

A quiz competition was also held on the occasion which was followed by pledge taking ceremony administered by the peer educator, Bijaya Adhikari.



Gyalshing I-Day Football kicks off in Kyongsha

GYALSHING, 01 AUG [IPR]: The 72nd Gyalshing Independence Day Football Tournament was inaugurated by Area MLA, Chandra Maya Subba, who also happens to be the chief patron, in the presence of District Collector, West, Dr AB Karki, who is also the president of the Independence Day Celebration Committee, at Kyongsha playground in West Sikkim today.

The opening match was played between Pelling Senior Secondary

School and Local Taxi Driver Association [LTDA], Gyalshing wherein LTDA scored victory in a penalty shootout with 16-15 score line.

The second match was played between Jan Kalyan Samaj [JKS], Nayabasti and Maneybong Dentam and had JKS score a 07-01 win. The event also featured a marching band presentation by students of Girls Senior Secondary School, Kyongsha.

Rangpo I-Day Football Tourney

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 01 AUG: In the first match of the Independence Day Open Football Tournament played today at Rangpo Bazaar playground in East Sikkim, Sevoke FC thrashed Pandam Football Academy by 2-0 goals. Subroto Soren of Sevoke FC was adjudged man of the match, a press release informs.

Likewise, the second match of the day had Renzong FC land a victory against Sporting Club Kalimpong 1-0. Ganga



Basnet of Renzong FC was awarded with man of the match title. Municipality Executive Officer, Rangpo Nagar Panchayat, Himmat Rai, attended the first match of the tourney as chief guest while president of Sikkim Bihari Jagran Manch, Swaminath

Prasad, attended the second match as chief guest.

On 02 Aug, Emporium FC will take on Himalayan Sporting, Darjeeling in the first match with 8th Assam Regiment playing against Himalayan Sporting Club, Gangtok in the second match.

Coordination meeting held on I-Day celebration in South

NAMCHI, 01 JUL [IPR]: A co-ordination meeting on the upcoming 72nd Independence Day celebration at South District headquarters was held at the conference hall of Zilla Bhawan, Namchi on 31 July.

The meeting was chaired by DC (South), Prabhakar Verma and attended by Sr. SP (South), Shammi Rai, ADC (South), Satyen Pradhan, SDM (Hq), Hemant Rai, ADC (Dev), Milan Subba alongside HODs and officials from various line departments.

Addressing the meeting, DC (South) outlined in detail the significance of observing Independence Day. He also allocated various roles and responsibilities to respective departments for the I-Day celebrations and issued directives for effective partaking from all line departments.

Additionally, he also spelled out the line of events scheduled for the 2018 Independence Day celebration. The meeting discussed distribution of various awards to be conferred to employees from concerned departments and District exam toppers.

During the latter half of the meeting, suggestions and proposals were sought from the department representatives and office heads to ensure a qualitative and a befitting Independence Day celebration 2018.

SDF North holds co-ordination meet with business community of district



WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 01 AUG:

Sikkim Democratic Front's North Sikkim unit today convened a co-ordination and interaction meet between the All Sikkim Democratic Traders' Front [ASDTF] and business community of Mangan at the SDF party office here.

The meeting was chaired by Forest Minister, Tshering Wangdi Lepcha, who also happens to be the area MLA, accompanied by District President, SDF North, Pintso Namgyal Lepcha, Cheli Morcha Convenor, Zangmoo Bhutia [Mangan Nagar Panchayat President], ASDTF members, Santosh Lohia and Sachin Agarwal, along with the business community of Mangan.

District President [SDF North], Mr Lepcha, in his address informed that SDF, under the leadership of party president

Pawan Chamling, has been providing protection to every business households in the district along with grants equal to other locals.

"The party has not been partial to anyone which is why everyone needs to work in cooperation in order to provide positive strength to the party," said Mr Lepcha.

Area MLA, TW Lepcha, stated that he had come to interact with business households and communities of the district and as per SDF party's directions while welcoming public opinions, suggestion and solutions from the public.

In an open interaction session, several members of business community raised issues with regard to Residential Certificates.

"So many candidates have applied for Residential Certificates 15 months back but till now

they have not been issued the certificate," informed one of the members.

Another member, a vegetable vendor, said "There is a ban on subletting of shops in rural areas in Lachen-Mangan constituency. However, in a week, we receive organic green veggies supply only twice. It has resulted in failure to fulfill public demand."

Addressing their issues, Mr Lepcha assured every possible support in resolving their issues.

"We will try to solve the Residential Certificate issuance delay problems at the earliest. With regard to the ban on subletting of shops, all non local businessmen forum will be allowed to operate their business as it was earlier. We will talk personally with Mr Chamling for more beneficial works for constituency," added Mr Lepcha.

SIC holds sensitization programme on RTI at Rhenock College

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 01 AUG: Sikkim Information Commission [SIC] conducted sensitization programme on RTI Act and Rules of 2005 at Rhenock Government College in East Sikkim on 31 Jul in the presence of SIC Deputy Secretary, Abinash Rai, Principal, Rhenock Government College, Dr Iyatta M Uprety, along with SIC staff and students of Rhenock Government College, a press release informs.

Deputy Secretary, SIC, Mr Rai, gave detailed insight on the provisions of RTI Act and it's Rules. He informed that for an organization to fall under the definition of Public



Authority, the Government should own or have substantial control over the management and affairs of the organization or should be substantially financed. Private educational institutes receiving 95% of funding may fall under the definition of Public Authority, he added.

Mr Rai stressed that repetitive RTI applications cannot be entertained and the information seeker needs to seek the information at one go only.

Rhenock College extended gratitude to SIC for providing in-depth analysis on RTI Act and Rule of 2005.

Rabongla NGO accuses State Govt of deceiving public

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 01 AUG: Rabongla-based NGO, Gram Sewa Samaj [GSS] of South Sikkim has alleged that the SDF Government has failed in all areas and only makes empty promises.

Addressing a press conference here

today, GSS working president, Pema Chultim Bhutia, mentioned that a team of GSS toured different villages of Barfung constituency from 19-31 Jul take stock of the condition of education, road, power supply, housing and other issues.

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ECOSS awareness programme on Namcheybong...

contd from pg01

lowed by a discussion with community members.

The release adds that the Pre-Project Implementation Phase is almost over which included formation of a Village Watershed Committee and an Entry Point Activity consisting of the construction of Waste Collection Centres within the four wards to improve the sanitation and waste management situation in the GPU.

General Secretary [Haikholha Watershed Management Committee], Ashok Subba, spoke on the increasing water scarcity being faced by the villagers of the four

wards during winter and spring. He also highlighted the growing issue of random water tapping from the main source Hail Khola and emphasized on the aspect of community participation and ownership and water management.

Sub Divisional Magistrate, Pakyong, Tenzing D Denzongpa, highlighted on the role of the community to make the programme a success. Citing the example of Dhara Vikas, he held that similar sustainable measures need to be sought to alleviate the issue of water scarcity.

District Forest Officer, East [Territorial], Nischal Gautam, shared his ear-

lier experience of Dhara Vikas initiatives in Kaluk-Rinchenpong.

He further pointed out the importance of protecting the crowns of hills by growing water conserving species like oaks and the role of traditional knowledge for water conservation. He stated that the demand of the community for removal of pine trees in the upper regions of the GPU and replacement by appropriate species was under consideration and could be done in a phased manner.

Field Facilitator, Dhara Vikas, KB Chettri, gave a presentation on the concept and practice of Dhara Vikas. The

aquifer characteristics, dip direction and bedding in the rocks and the type of springs, he added.

SIRD faculty, CB Manager, highlighted on Village Water Security Plan of the Government and requested the villagers to avail for the water testing facility being provided by SIRD.

Chairperson, Mr Sapkota, exhorted the community members to seize the opportunity being provided and come forward to participate fully for the successive implementation of the project.

Shiva Hang to debut at 12 Hours Stadium Run in Bangalore



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 01 AUG:

Long distance runner from Sikkim, Shiva Hang Subba, will be leaving for his debut participation in the 12 Hours Stadium Run to be held on 04-05 Aug at Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bangalore. This 12 Hours Run is scheduled to start at 5 p.m. on 04 Aug and will continue till 5 a.m. of 05 Aug.

22-year-old Shiva Hang Subba hails from Timbrong village in West Sikkim. He is a self-employed youth working in the tourism sector in West Sikkim. A student of Marathon Man of Sikkim, Amar Subba, he started running last year and has already participated in two major marathon events of Sikkim, Sikkim Run and Kanchen-

junga Marathon.

"Being my first ever national competition, I am excited and nervous too. This is a tough competition and different from other marathons so my first challenge is to complete this 12 Hours Run. I have targeted to complete at least 100 KMs in 12 hours," Shiva Hang expressed.

Apart from his regular training, he has undergone tough training for a month under his coach, Amar Subba, for this competition. As a part of training, he has covered a distance of 85 KMs in 12 hours on an uphill route in West Sikkim.

"I had given a routine to Shiva Hang Subba for training and he convinced me by sincerely and

turn to pg03

Gangtok on Thursday, 01 Aug

Temp: 25°C/17°C
Forecast: Cloudy, showers and thunderstorms becoming more widespread.
Sunrise: 04:59 AM
Sunset: 6:24 PM

HSP making up issues: SDF

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 01 AUG:

Sikkim Democratic Front has said today that Hamro Sikkim Party is finding it difficult to accept the successful governance and good works of SDF government and therefore, is making up issues. The ruling party has strongly criticised and condemned the recent statements of Hamro Sikkim Party.

On Tuesday HSP had said that instead of announcing government job for every family, the SDF government should regularize casual employees, provide house for every family, etc. It had further termed the recent announcement on government jobs by the Chief Minister as an eyewash.

Today, SDF in a press release, has countered HSP's statements detailing the party's achievements in the past 25 years in power.

The party has said that all announcements made by the CM during the Panchayat Sammelan are pro-people and opposition parties are being foolish by criticizing the announcements.

On houses for every family, SDF has said that people are being provided houses under the CM-RHM scheme.

Regularisation of MR employees is also underway and being done in a phase-wise manner, the release adds.

HSP is making random statements without understanding the issues of the State, the ruling party has said.

Shiva Hang...

contd from pg02

dedicatedly working on that routine. So seeing his potential and dedication, I requested the organisers to give him an opportunity in this 12 Hours Run," said Marathon Man, Mr Subba.

Shiva Hang has also thanked the organiser, Bangalore-based NEB Sports Entertainment, for giving him a chance.

He also thanked Yuksum-Tashiding MLA, Sonam Dadul Bhutia, for his support and also thanked all his well wishers and supporters for their constant support and encouragement to local runners.

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Mitho now delivers at Majitar, Rangpo and Singtam

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 01 AUG:

Mitho Delivery has expanded its services to three more circles in East Sikkim with the announcement of its launch at Majitar, Rangpo and Singtam today.

Mitho Delivery partners with local entrepreneurs, restaurants, bakeries and kitchens to deliver varied cuisine to homes and offices.

The start-up has exclusive partnerships



with over 50 restaurants in Gangtok and over 20 restaurants in the new delivery circles.

Several speciality kitchens are also being set up in partnership with well known brands

in the hospitality sector to cater to residents here in the capital, the release adds.

With Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT) and other well populated institutions located at Majitar including several Pharmaceutical companies, Mitho has expressed hopes to replicate the success it has had in the capital in the new circles as well.

It may be mentioned

here that Mitho, Sikkim's first food delivery start-up, has enjoyed support and love from all since its launch last Oct. The company has created jobs for more than 50 youth and is looking to hire more as it continues to expand its services to other delivery circles.

Mitho Delivery's next launch will be at Namchi in South Sikkim followed by Pakyong in East and Mangan in North Sikkim, it is informed.

Leadership development training for women in Singtam

GANGTOK, 01 AUG [PIB]:

Six-day Leadership Development Training & Preservation of Cultural Heritage of Himalayan Region being organized by Bhavishya Educational Charitable Society, West Bengal in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) Sikkim State office, ICFAI University Sikkim & State Youth Development Board commenced today in the presence of District Collector, East, Kapil Meena, as chief guest in Singtam, East Sikkim.

Funded by Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India, the Leadership Development Training will be conducted at Nepali Dharamsala in Singtam for 175 women belonging to minority communities. Resource persons from different departments will be conducting the training.

The programme is being coordinated by Head of Department of Economics, ICFAI University, Subhojyoti Ghose, and Data Operator, NYKS Sikkim, Tashi Chopel Bhutia.

Awareness prog on SVEEP and ELC for PwDs

NAMCHI, 31ST JULY [IPR]:

As part of the SVEEP and ELC program, an awareness and interactive session was organised on 30 July at the Blind School here for PwDs. The gathering comprised of BLOs Shova Tamang and C P Rai from Namchi, Principal Jeewan Rai, students and staff of Blind School, students from Model ELC School, Asst Nodal Officer, elderly citizens of the area and PwDs from in and around the area.

At the beginning, US, Election Department, briefed the gathering about the various forms, EVMS, VVPATs, NOTA and NVSP.

She also informed the gathering about the various kinds of assistance available to PwDs on the day of the polls.

This was followed by filling up of various forms via NVSP by the BLOs and the Election staff. A total of 38 entries were made using NVSP. Students of Model ELC were familiarized with NVSP. They also helped the Election staff to collect various documents of the electors present.

Local students have more than 50% seats: Sikkim University

GANGTOK, 01 AUG [PIB]: Sikkim University has refuted the criticism reported in different media outlets alleging that the university has made a provision of reserving only 10-15% seats for local students.

Issuing a press release today, the university refuted news items published between 27-29 Jul in various local English, Hindi and Nepali newspapers highlighting the reservation of seats for Sikkimese students for admission to various undergraduate, post-graduate, MPhil and PhD courses offered by Sikkim University in 2018.

"The University has been criticized for having provided only 10-15% seats for Sikkimese students. This is not correct," the release reads.

Sikkim University conducts courses at undergraduate level in a few departments, post-graduate and research programmes in all 32 departments. Students from Sikkim have got more than 50 percent seats overall. In post-graduate and research programmes, students from Sikkim have got more than 55 percent seats.

Second-last batch of Mansarovar Yatris to arrive on 03 Aug

ARPAN PRADHAN

GANGTOK, 31 JUL:

The ninth batch of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2018 via Nathula is scheduled to arrive here on 03 August. This will be the penultimate batch for this year as scheduled by the Ministry of External Affairs.

The ninth batch completed the official formalities, visa applications and health check-ups in Delhi today, it is informed.

A total of 44 yatris

have applied and reported for medical check-up for the Yatra, of whom four yatris failed the medical test and were found unfit for the KMY.

There will hence be 40 yatris and two liaisoning officers in the ninth batch, it is informed.

They are scheduled to proceed from Delhi on 02 August and will be reaching Gangtok the same evening. They will leave for their first acclimatization Point from Gangtok on 03 August.



4th edition of Mr Ultimate and 1st Miss Ultimate 2018 next month

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 01 AUG:

Gangtok-based Ultimate Fitness Gym is gearing up for the 4th edition of Mr Ultimate and 1st Miss Ultimate 2018 on 08 Sept here at Nar Bahadur Bhandari Government College in Tadong. The event will have body building competition and Men & Women Physique competitions.

Addressing a press conference here today, Ultimate Fitness Gym [UFG] chief instructor, Rupen Mukhia, stated that the main objective of the event was to encourage youth towards healthy living and to stay away from substance abuse.

Likewise, Norbu Bhutia informed that body-building competition will be purely for local body-builders of Sikkim while Men Physique and Women Physique will be an open competition which will even have participants from outside the State. He informed that winners in the competitions will be awarded cash prizes and one year free training at UFG for a year.

It is informed that organisers have also arranged accommodation for participants from outside the capital.

Likewise, Suresh Chettri informed that interested participants can also register their name on the day of the event.

Rabongla NGO accuses...

contd from pg02

He alleged that the 13-day tour of GSS revealed that the State Government has totally failed in all areas and its announcements have gone in vain.

Mr Bhutia mentioned that many people in the constituency of Energy & Power Minister have been living without electricity since many decades. He informed that four houses in Sada village still have no power connection. He alleged that the SDF Government has been deceiving people by claiming that ev-

ery house in Sikkim has power connection.

Mr Bhutia informed that seven houses in Chujachen are still without toilets. On the same, he stated that despite such a situation, the State had received the first Nirmal Rajya Puraskar. He also alleged of corruption in the construction of REDRH houses in the constituency and stressed upon the need of roads in many villages of the constituency.

GSS will continue to tour different villages to know the ground reality, he added.

Series of farmer training progs conducted at Khop

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 01 AUG:

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Namthang, South Sikkim in collaboration with ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Pakyong, East Sikkim conducted a series of programmes for farmers on 27 Jul at Khop Village in South Sikkim, a press release informs.

Head In-Charge, KVK South, IP Shivakoti, Subject Matter Specialists from KVK South, Dr CN Bhutia, Pravesh Shivakoti, Yangchenla Bhutia, Dr Nation Chamling, Meena Pradhan, Wilson Rai and Tulasha Sharma, Principal Scientist, Dr LC De, along with staff of ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Pakyong, and 55 farmers of Khop village attended the programmes.

Two important exten-



sion activities viz. 'Training cum Awareness on Insurance of Milch Cows' and 'Input Distribution Program for Doubling of Farmer's Income' were organized for the benefit of farmers of Khop

village under the leadership of KVK I/C, Mr Shivakoti, and supported by SMSs from KVK South.

Another important extension activity on 'Launching of Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav Pro-

gramme' was carried out under the leadership of Principal Scientist, Dr De, and supported by technical and project staff from ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Pakyong.



Walkover fetches 3 points for SAI Namchi

SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 01 AUG:

SAI Namchi was granted a walkover after Pakyong United Football Club failed to turn up for the match in the ongoing Sikkim Football Association Premier Division Sikkim-League 2018 here at Paljor Stadium today. SAI Namchi received full three points and three goals from this walkover.

On 02 Aug, United Sikkim Football Club will take on Unicorn Football Club in its next match in the league.

After playing three matches each, the defending champion, United Sikkim Football Club is leading the points tally with 09 points from three wins while Sikkim Aakraman Football Club and State Sports Academy have 07

points each from 02 wins and 01 draw.

Likewise, SAI Namchi has 06 points from 02 wins and 01 loss and Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club and Boys Club Gangtok have 03 points each from 01 win. Unicorn Football Club and Pakyong United Football Club are yet to register their first victory in the league.

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Pending Issues

Difficult Delhi or poor follow-up?

Any time the Chief Minister or other leaders, whether from the government or outside of it, visit Delhi and call on Union Ministers and Central leaders, they submit memorandums which reiterate a substantial list of “pending issues” with the Centre. The list of demands has remained unchanged for a while, and this not because Sikkim is unimaginative, but because the demands have remained pending and hence continue to be petitioned for. Delhi has acquiesced to Sikkim’s demands/ requests in too piecemeal a fashion – IT exemption for the Sikkimese and ST status for Limboos and Tamangs – are the only major demands that have been granted in a long while now, and these too after too many years of dithering and delaying and both, in their own ways, incompletely see through. The list of demands and its follow-up has been so static that one does not even need to await an official communiqué any more before putting out a report on what Delhi was reminded about and received a patient hearing against.

That is how routine the pending nature of Sikkim’s demands has become!

One understands that the wheels turn slow in Delhi, and now that the current dispensation in office there is trying to reinvent the wheel itself, Sikkim will need to learn afresh how to get things moving in the Capital. But even as Sikkim and its representatives try and find their way around the new Delhi, a question that still needs to be asked is why Sikkim needs to keep returning to Delhi with “pending issues”. At one level, the reason is simple - because Delhi needs to be constantly reminded about them since concerns of a State that sends only one MP each to the two Houses of Parliament are rarely priority. There is nothing that Sikkim can do about that “tyranny” of slim representation. But there must be more reasons behind Delhi’s easy amnesia on Sikkim’s pending issues, for one the possible fact that Sikkim still does not have officers diligent enough to follow up on proposals which have even the PMO’s backing. Once the politicians raise a demand with Central leaders and the same gets forwarded to the respective ministries, the bureaucracy comes into play and the files start moving. Files don’t however move if there is no one pursuing them, and experience bears out that Sikkim officials rarely do so. What is worse, sometimes, they don’t even respond to queries from the Centre. There have been enough instances even in the recent past when recalcitrance has defined follow-up from Sikkim’s departments.

Sikkim should have figured out by now that Delhi lacks the capacity and the time to figure out Sikkim’s “issues”. Most of the pending issues, however, need to be resolved by Delhi which lobs the ball back into Sikkim’s court and expects a neatly packed and formatted solution to be recommended by Sikkim for enforcement by Delhi. In complicated matters, the State also needs to provide the supporting arguments and watertight justifications and a ready reckoner on Sikkim’s special status and the leeway it allows. For more routine issues, sometimes it is as simple as placing the right proposal on the right table. Since this is clearly not happening as fluidly and as professionally as is required for new demands to be framed (since too many of the old have not yet been granted), what else can the elected representatives do but keep trooping down to Delhi to raise issues that are still pending even after everyone has cleared them in principle? Sikkim needs a bureaucratic machinery at home to troop through the doors that its leaders open in Delhi. Till that happens, an annual Delhi pilgrimage with a dusty list of pending demands will remain and constant feature.

WRITE US:

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

Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

The Laos disaster reminds us that local people are too often victims of dam development

JASON VON MEDING,
GIUSEPPE FORINO &
TIEN LE THUY DU
theconversation.com

On July 22, the Xe Pian-Xe Nam Noy hydropower dam under construction in Laos’ Attapeu Province collapsed. Flash flooding inundated eight villages, killing at least 29 people and leaving 131 officially reported missing. The final number of casualties could be much higher.

Disaster response activities are ongoing. The deputy secretary of the province claimed that more than 1,100 people were still unaccounted for, as of July 27. Laotian authorities are investigating whether the collapse was caused by heavy rainfall, inadequate construction standards, or a combination of the two.

The dam is part of a larger joint venture between Laotian, Thai and South Korean companies, which are reportedly helping with the rescue and restoration effort. The companies are also sending experts to assess the damage and investigate the cause of the disaster.

This is not the first time that a hydropower project in Southeast Asia has been in the spotlight. It again raises questions about the benefits of such projects for local communities, considering the risks to which local people are exposed.

Not only do large developments interfere with ecosystems, but they often affect local communities even in the absence of catastrophe. This was indeed the case for the Xe Pian-Xe Nam Noy project, which had already cost many villagers their land and livelihoods before disaster struck.

As much as we tend to focus on the “natural” triggers for disaster – in this case heavy rain – the reality is more nuanced. These incidents are often also the result of flawed development, and as such they are social and political disasters too.

So, was this disaster just a terrible accident? Or is it emblematic of a development agenda that is out of sync with the needs of a healthy environment and local community?

THE IMPACTS OF HYDROPOWER

Hydropower projects in Southeast Asia, and particularly in the Mekong catchment, have long exposed vulnerable communities to risk while developers reap the rewards. Millions of people depend on the Mekong river for water, fish, transport and irrigation.

Dam developers promise that their projects will deliver a wide array of benefits: renewable energy,

bountiful reservoir fishing, profitable reforestation, harmonised water allocation, and better flood control. But these controversial projects often dramatically change local livelihoods for the worse.

We have seen this before, both in Laos and in its neighbouring countries. The Nam Song Diversion Dam, completed in 1996, affected more than 1,000 Laotian families – first by removing their access to productive agricultural land and causing a severe decline in fish stocks. Since then, deliberate water surges – for electricity generation – have been blamed for three deaths and widespread loss of boats and fishing equipment.

The Nam Theun 2 Hydropower Project boasted rigorous social and environmental safeguards – but these soon became broken promises. This project also followed a disturbing trend relating to hydropower development in Southeast Asia: the dispossession of already marginalised ethnic minorities.

In neighbouring Cambodia, the Kamchay Dam displaced thousands of people, jeopardised their livelihoods, and caused irreparable damage to the environment. The Pak Chom Dam in Thailand similarly put local livelihoods at risk.

So despite providing clean renewable energy, many hydropower projects in Southeast Asia have also deepened inequality and marginalisation.

PEOPLE VS PROFIT

This latest disaster should therefore be seen in the context of broader criticism concerning damming the Mekong and its tributaries.

Some analysts have argued that local communities in the Mekong delta are being caught in the middle of a cross-border water grab. Private and state-backed actors from China, Thailand, and Laos profit handsomely from hydropower projects, but critics argue that all too often the negative impacts of dams are ignored.

Local protests against development projects are often suppressed, and governments regularly

align with private interests to maximise profit and protect developers from any repercussions. In recent years, affected communities have made some gains, but displacement and disempowerment are still rife.

The exploitation of the Mekong river is only likely to increase. China has a clear energy agenda and Laos aspires to be the “battery of Southeast Asia”. But while exporting much of its hydroelectric power to Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia, the Laotian

government imports the same power back at increased cost from Thailand. Local people feel that something is amiss.

Communities from the Mekong villages of Mo Phu and Pak Paew villages have been told to prepare for resettlement due to the planned construction of the Phou Ngoy Dam. They face uncertainty as to the living conditions at their new location.

DEVELOPMENT ISN’T ALWAYS POSITIVE

The World Bank ranked Laos as the 13th fastest growing economy of 2016, and the Asian Development Bank predicts that its economy will grow at 7% a year for the remainder of this decade.

Hydropower is a major contributor to this economic growth. But hydropower projects promote displacement, put livelihoods and food security at risk, and destroy biodiversity and ecosystems. Without considering both international and local social and environmental costs, hydropower development exacerbates everyday struggles for many people in Southeast Asia.

Many of the destructive projects on the Mekong are supported by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. These powerful international stakeholders should not be above criticism.

The kind of development that is primarily concerned with profits for corporations always occurs at the expense of the most marginalised communities and individuals. All too often their voices are silenced and political accountability is absent.

The evidence indicates that it may not be so simple to decouple economic growth from environmental harm.

[Jason von Meding is Senior Lecturer in Disaster Risk Reduction, University of Newcastle; Giuseppe Forino is PhD Candidate in Disaster Management, University of Newcastle; Tien Le Thuy Du is PhD Candidate in Geosensing and water management, University of Houston]

Imran Khan: from cricket pitch to politics, Pakistan’s next prime minister has played the long game

PARVEEN AKHTAR
theconversation.com

Being cavalier about death is a prerequisite in Pakistani politics. The country’s first prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, was assassinated – and a number of subsequent leaders have shared the same fate, variously being executed by order of the state, blown up on planes and at political rallies. In the aftermath of 9/11, Time magazine described governing Pakistan as one of the world’s toughest jobs. Nevertheless, the man elected to be the country’s next prime minister, Imran Khan, has spent more than two decades seeking the office. On death and politics, Khan is casual, indeed. “You’ve got to go sometime” is his response – and he’d rather go for a cause.

Born in Lahore in 1952, Khan was educated at the prestigious Aitchison College – a relic of Empire nestled in the pleasant green land of the Punjab – before going on to study PPE at Oxford. An Oxbridge education has, of course, begun the political career of many a world leader, including the founding father of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and a number of successors.

Khan has played the part of leader before. He was captain of Pakistan’s cricket team when it won the World Cup in 1992. After cricketing success, he turned his hand to politics, founding his Party for Justice, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in 1996. His political journey has been a long one.



But his perseverance has now paid off – he will now take the helm of a country which he claims has been left on the brink of failure after years of corruption.

DYNASTY BREAKER

Electoral choice has been scant in the Pakistan’s short history. In its 70 years, it has been ruled intermittently by political dynasties and the military. Khan is disparaging about this legacy: “Never has a country’s ruling elite, for personal benefit ... betrayed their people as much as in Pakistan”. He billed himself as the “anti-status quo” candidate – anti-corruption, anti-nepotism.

Khan, of course, has many critics. Some argue that in his quest for political power he has made alliances with conservative hardliners, including the Taliban and others who see his victory as a triumph for Pakistan’s

all-important military. On a more personal level, his second wife, to whom he was married for less than a year has written a tell-all book. Khan does not come out of it well at all. “I have never claimed to be an angel,” he said of his playboy past. It’s doubtful if an angel would make it Pakistani politics. But his first wife, the British heiress Jemima Goldsmith, the mother of his two sons – to whom he was married for nearly a decade – publicly congratulated Khan on his victory.

Khan served as the chancellor of Bradford University between 2005-2014, in the British city which has one of the highest concentrations of citizens of Pakistani ancestry. Described by Bradford’s vice chancellor as “a wonderful role model for our students”, Khan has been a hero for diaspora Pakistanis since his cricketing heyday in the 1980s. This was the decade which saw Pakistanis in

Britain hit the headlines as a “problem community”. Controversial headteacher Ray Honeyford fuelled division with comments about the damaging affects of multiculturalism. Then, later, author Salman Rushdie was the subject of a fatwa for his book, The Satanic Verses. What became known as the “Rushdie Affair” led to Britain’s Pakistani community being commonly seen as a Muslim community unable and unwilling to integrate into British life.

In Pakistan, Khan first appealed to a small but loyal, educated middle class which saw in him the chance to change the perpetually negative narrative of their country. In 2011, broadcaster Andrew Marr described Pakistan as “overcrowded, nuclear armed, Taliban touched and in some senses paranoid” – hardly an endorsement for a holiday destination. And, yet, tourism is part of the vision Khan has for a new Pakistan.

Khan proclaims himself to be Pakistan’s only political leader to make their money outside Pakistan, while keeping it all in Pakistan. He sold his London flat to buy a jungle on the outskirts of Islamabad, with cows for milk and yoghurt, a vegetable patch and even his own wheat – a picture of idyllic self-sufficiency. Now he just has to recreate at least something of that vision for the country which he has been elected to govern.

[the writer is Lecturer in Political Science, Aston Centre for Europe, Aston University]

Doklam dispute resolved through “diplomatic maturity”: Sushma

NEW DELHI, AUG 1 (PTI): The India-China face-off over Doklam was resolved through “diplomatic maturity without losing any ground” and status quo has been maintained, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said today.

Swaraj told the Lok Sabha that the main objective of the informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping at Wuhan was to ensure mutual comfort, mutual understanding and mutual trust between the two leaders and all the three objectives have been achieved.

“We have resolved the Doklam issue with diplomatic maturity without losing any ground. There is no change in the status quo (on the ground). There is not an iota of change.

The face off at sight has been resolved on August 28, 2017,” she said during Question Hour.

The External Affairs Minister said the Wuhan informal summit was held without any agenda and without having any objective to discuss any specific issue.

Before the summit, the foreign ministers of the two countries decided that the leaders should not be restricted to any specific issue, she said.



“The decision to host Wuhan was taken not to resolve any issue but to create a conducive environment. Three main objectives were to ensure mutual comfort, mutual understanding and mutual trust. In all the three objectives, we have achieved success,” she said.

Swaraj said as a follow up to the Wuhan summit, the Chinese Defence Minister is coming to enhance military cooperation while the Foreign Minister will arrive later this year as part of efforts to enhance the people-to-people contact.

The first informal summit between Modi and Jinping was held at the Chinese city of Wuhan on April 27-28.

India and China were locked in a face-off in the Doklam area of the Sikkim sector for over 50 days after Indian troops stopped the Chinese Army from building a road in the area.

China claimed it was constructing the road within their territory which India had objected saying the territory does not belong to China.

To another query, Swaraj also made it clear that the boundary dispute between Bhutan and China was continuing and it was a matter between those two countries.

“Our concern was related only to the tri-junction area (India-Bhutan-China),” she said. Trinamool Congress mem-

ber Sugata Bose said that since the external affairs minister was not present in Wuhan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was present in the House, he should make an intervention and disclose what had happened in his informal summit with the Chinese leader.

Swaraj dismissed the suggestion, saying she was capable of answering all questions relating to the Wuhan summit as she was fully abreast of it.

“I am capable to answer all the questions, irrespective of whether I was present there or not. I am fully aware of what was happening there,” she said.

Replying to a question regarding the South-China sea

dispute, Swaraj said India believed that the international sea route should be free for navigation.

“There should be freedom of navigation. Our stand on South China sea is clear that there should be freedom of navigation and all international laws should be adhered to,” she said.

Regarding the Wuhan summit, Swaraj said as an innovative format for leadership-level diplomatic engagement, it enabled the two leaders to hold direct, free and candid exchange of views on issues of over-arching, long-term and strategic significance, without the constraints of protocol and pre-agenda.

She said it was not meant to discuss specific topics but to strengthen mutual trust and understanding between the two leaders in order to forge a common understanding on future direction of India-China relations and to create the appropriate conditions for the two sides to deal with their differences constructively.

President Jinping has accepted the Prime Minister's invitation for visiting India for the second informal summit at a mutually convenient time in 2019, Swaraj said.

Kolkata police grants permission to Amit Shah's rally

KOLKATA, AUG 1 (PTI): The Kolkata Police today granted permission for BJP president Amit Shah's proposed rally here on August 11, police said.

The development came hours after the BJP Yuva Morcha alleged that they are yet to receive any communication from the Kolkata Police regarding permission for Shah's rally.

The ruling Trinamool Congress took a swipe at the BJP and Shah, claiming that they had become nervous and wished them “happy journey to the land of peace and harmony”.

“Some unwarranted speculation in social media about denial of permission to a political party on 11 August has come to our notice. It is to clarify that on request permission for meeting has already been granted,” the Kolkata Police said in a tweet.

State BJP Yuva Morcha chief Debjit Sarkar said he has been informed by the police that the permission has been given to hold the rally at Mayo Road in the heart of the city.

Sarkar had earlier told PTI that the organisation has submitted a formal application to the police, seeking permis-



sion for Shah's rally.

The Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress and the BJP have been locked in a bitter war of words amid attempts by the saffron party to make inroads in the TMC stronghold.

The latest flashpoint has been the issues of National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam and illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. Shah is aiming to win 22 of its 42 Lok Sabha seats in the next elections. It had won two in 2014. The TMC had bagged 34.

“BJP & its national President have become nervous, tense. Their programme for Aug 3 in Kolkata was promptly granted permission. For their Aug 11 program, they only just sent a letter & permission granted” (sic), TMC chief national spokesperson Derek O'Brien said in a statement.

“Happy journey to the land of peace and harmony #Bangla Love Your Neighbour”, he said in a tweet.

Human trafficking: 39 Nepali girls rescued from Delhi hotel

NEW DELHI, AUG 1 (PTI): At least 39 Nepali girls were rescued from a hotel in Paharganj by a joint team of the Delhi Commission For Women (DCW) and the city police in the early hours today, the women's panel said.

According to the DCW, the anti-trafficking operation started at 1 am and continued till 6 am.

The women panel's chairperson, Swati Malwal, took to Twitter to provide details about the operation.

“DCW received tip off and rescued 39 Nepali girls from Hotel Hriday Inn, Paharganj. Raid lasted the entire night and assistance was provided by Delhi Police. Entire hotel had only trafficked Nepali girls who were being sent to Gulf countries. Huge trafficking racket busted!” she tweeted.

This was the third such operation since July 25.

With the help of police, the DCW had rescued 16 women, who were allegedly trafficked from Nepal and were about to be taken to Gulf countries, from southwest Delhi's Munirka area on July 25.

On July 30, the Delhi and Varanasi Police had rescued 18 women, including 16 from Nepal, from the clutches of an international prostitution racket in Vasant Vihar.

NRC will ‘destroy’ India's relations with Bangladesh: Mamata



NEW DELHI, AUG 1 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today said the publication of draft National Register of Citizens in Assam will destroy India's relationship with neighbouring Bangladesh.

Out of 40 lakh people, who don't find themselves in the final draft of the NRC published on July 30, only one per cent could be infiltrators, but the BJP is trying to project as if all of them are infiltrators.

“NRC will destroy India's relationship with Bangladesh,” she told reporters outside Parliament.

She also said that 833 people from

her state, mainly from Murshidabad district, are in Assam jails.

“The BJP is playing vote bank politics. The NRC will affect the whole world. Managing borders is a responsibility of the Centre. Central forces see how many infiltrators are crossing into the country. But in the name of infiltrators, they are harassing people,” she alleged.

She also said she has appealed to all opposition parties to send their delegation to Assam.

“I have also urged Yashwant Sinha (former BJP leader and a Union minister) to go to Assam,” she said.

UCWSS executive body tenure extended to 5 years



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 01 AUG:

An urgent meeting of the central executive committee of the United Christian Welfare Society of Sikkim [UCWSS] was held at its office under the chairmanship of its president, Elder Patrus Gurung.

A UCWSS press release informs that former Secretary to the Government of Sikkim and UCWSS chief advisor, CP Dewan, who is also the head of the drafting committee of the constitution of the society, has introduced the copy of the amendment of the constitution during the meeting.

The meeting unanimously approved the proposal placed by CP Dewan which was seconded by Advisor UCWSS, Pastor Renzino Lepcha.

“Regarding the amendment of the

constitution of the Society, some of the very important articles of the society were amended with one of the amendments being the tenure of the term of the office bearers of the society. From the previous three-year tenure of the UCWSS office bearer, the house has unanimously passed the extension of tenure to five years for the welfare of the Christian Churches in Sikkim,” the release reads.

It is informed that the progress report of the Land for Christian Community Centre was also introduced in the meeting. The meeting has also decided to observe the second Sunday of April as the annual UCWSS Prayer Day.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the West, South and East district branches of the society.

World Breastfeeding Day observed in Singtam

SUMMIT REPORT
SINGTAM, 01 AUG:

On the occasion of World Breast Feeding Day, a special pro-

gram was observed here at the ICDS center today. The program was led by HM Sharma, supervisor from Social Justice De-

partment. 22 mothers from Mandi bazaar, Dara Gaon, Lal Bazaar and Goskhan Dara attended the programme.



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Sindhu, Srikanth, Praneeth win; Prannoy ousted in World Championship

NANJING (CHINA), AUG 1 (PTI): PV Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth notched up contrasting wins to progress to the pre-quarterfinals but world no 11 H S Prannoy suffered a shock defeat to unheralded Brazilian Ygor Coelho to bow out of the World Championship here today.

Olympic silver medallist Sindhu, who had got a bye in the first round, opened her campaign with an easy 21-14 21-9 win over Indonesia's Fitriani.

The 23-year-old Indian, who won the silver medal last year, will face Korean Sung Ji Hyun, a 2015 World Championship bronze medallist, in the next round.

Srikanth, seeded fifth, recovered from a slump during the hard-fought contest to see off Spain's Pablo Abian 21-15 12-21 21-14 in a second-round match that lasted 62 minutes.

Srikanth, who had clinched



four titles last year, will lock horns with Malaysia's Daren Liew, a former world no 10, who had won the 2012 French Open Super Series.

B Sai Praneeth also entered the next round after dumping Spain's Lu s Enrique Penalver 21-18 21-11 to set up a meeting with Denmark's Hans-Kristian Solberg Vittinghus.

Prannoy, seeded 11th, couldn't hold on to the momentum after breezing through the opening game to eventually lose 21-8 16-21 15-21 to Coelho, ranked 39th

in the world.

It turned out to be a disastrous day for the Indian doubles pairs as all of them lost their respective matches to crash out of the prestigious tournament.

Commonwealth Games silver medallists Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty did all the hard work but couldn't go the full distance, losing narrowly 18-21 21-15 16-21 to world no 8 Denmark pair of Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen.

Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy were not match



for second seeded Japanese combination of Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota, going down 14-21 15-21 in the second round.

National champions Manu Attri and B Sumeeth Reddy waged a gallant battle before losing 24-22 13-21 16-21 to seventh seed Takuto Inoue and Yuki Kaneko of Japan in men's doubles.

Sindhu dished out a dominating game and was always in control of the match. Her superior court coverage and accuracy in strokes made life difficult for the Indonesian.

In the opening game, Sindhu lead 11-7 at the break, before moving to 17-7 with six straight points. She eventually comfortably pocketed the opening game when Fitriani sent the shuttle long.

In the second game, Sindhu continued to surge ahead, moving from 4-5 behind to 8-3 before entering the interval with a 11-5 advantage.

The Indian didn't give Fitriani any chance to make a comeback and quickly wrapped the match when the Indonesia found the net.

Srikanth erased a 2-4 and

6-8 deficit in the opening game before gaining upper-hand with a 16-13 lead. He then reeled off four points to reach game points. Pablo tried to recover but the Indian quickly pocketed the opening game.

In the second game, Srikanth had opened up a 6-3 lead but Pablo rode on a six-point burst to move ahead.

The Indian made it 10-12 but the Spaniard registered seven straight points to enjoy a healthy lead to eventually roar back into contest.

In the decider, Pablo managed a slender 11-9 advantage at the break but Srikanth turned the tables and then surged ahead to shut the door on the Spaniard.

"I started off well but made too many mistakes in the second. I was trying too many things and couldn't get going. May be the strategy I tried, I tried too many things and it didn't come off

and I have to talk to my coach about it," Srikanth said.

"I should have avoided doing mistakes in the second game and I am concerned about that. The last 10 points, I got everything right. So hope to get things right in the next match," he added.

After a forgettable outing, Prannoy admitted his mistakes and said he needed to bounce back quickly from this defeat ahead of the Asian Games.

"I was trying to do something in the second and third game but it wasn't working. He was retrieving everything and my defence was bad today. I gave him a lot of chances for a free dribble and hit and that made him comfortable," he said.

"I felt I was playing good in the first. The problem was the start of the second game was crucial and I gave him a lead. The lead gave him confidence and that was a big mistake."



Tributes flow as Aussie golfer Lyle halts cancer treatment

SYDNEY, AUG 1 (AFP): Australian golfer Jarrod Lyle has moved into palliative care and is bracing for the worst after ceasing treatment for cancer, sparking an outpouring of sadness Wednesday from fellow players.

The 36-year-old former US PGA Tour stalwart said his body could take no more after a third battle with acute myeloid leukaemia, which returned last year.

"My heart breaks as I type this message," his wife Briony said in updating Lyle's social media pages on Tuesday evening.

"Earlier today Jarrod made the decision to stop active treatment and begin palliative care. He has given everything that he's got to give, and his poor body cannot take anymore. We'll be taking him closer to home in the next couple of days so he can finally leave the hospital."

Lyle, who has two young children, overcame acute myeloid leukaemia as a 17-year-old before suffering a recurrence in 2012.

That diagnosis was delivered when he sought treatment from his local doctor for an infection from an insect bite he sustained in Mexico after a tournament.

He won that battle and made his return to professional golf at the Australian Masters in November 2013.

But his health deteriorated again in

recent months, with the latest diagnosis seeing emotional tributes from fellow players.

"We all love Jarrod. He's such a good bloke. It's not fair he's going through this," said former world number one and fellow Australian Jason Day.

Another Australian, Adam Scott, told reporters ahead of the World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational in Ohio that Lyle had been a personal inspiration.

"He is one of the best blokes there is. Given all the difficulties he's had since his late teens, he has lived the best life he could with the tough cards he has been dealt," he said.

"His positivity and general demeanor has been so good and so infectious on others. It's a good way to think of how I should live my life."

Major winner Ernie Els added in a tweet that "we are thinking and praying for you and your family now more than ever", while British star Tommy Fleetwood said: "Thank you for being an inspiration."

Movie superstar Dwayne Johnson was also touched by Lyle's fate, tweeting: "Man this is a tough one. Sending so much love, light and strength to Jarrod and the Lyle family."

Lyle joined the PGA Tour in 2007 and managed a handful of top 10 finishes.

Revenge, semis spot on India's mind in quarterfinal clash against Ireland in WC

LONDON, AUG 1 (PTI):

Their erratic campaign back on track, the Indian women's hockey team would now be aiming to secure its first World Cup semifinal spot in 44 years by extracting revenge from giant-killers Ireland in the last-eight stage here tomorrow.

India registered their first win of the tournament by sailing past Italy in a quarterfinal play-off last night and if If they manage to beat Ireland, it would ensure them only their second appearance in the World Cup last-four.

The only time India had managed to enter the semi-finals of the showpiece event was back in 1974 in Mandelieu, France where they eventually finished fourth.

In the last edition of the tournament in Rosario, Argentina India had finished a disappointing eighth.

Having come second best in their last two meetings, it would be quite a task for the Indians to beat Ireland. The Irish have been in ominous form having topped Pool B ahead of higher-ranked USA and India.

World No.16 Ireland



have already scripted history of sorts by outclassing USA 3-1 and India 1-0 before slumping to a 0-1 defeat against hosts England. But they still managed to secure their maiden World Cup quarterfinal berth.

India, on the other hand, had to slog it out to make it to the quarterfinals, having drawn 1-1 against England and USA respectively and losing 0-1 to Ireland.

The Indians would take heart from the 3-0 win over lower-ranked Italy in the cross-over match.

The Rani Rampal-led side re-discovered its scoring prowess to finally end Italy's World

Cup adventure through a field strike from Lalremchiam (20th minute) and two penalty corner goals from Neha Goyal (45th) and Vandana Katariya (55th) to register an emphatic win.

The Indians were brilliant with their first touch control and finishing last night and come tomorrow the side would look for an encore to outwit the gutsy Irish.

But it won't be easy as it is the same Irish side which beat them in the last two meetings -- 2-1 in the Hockey World League Semi-finals in Johannesburg last year and then here in the pool stages.

The Irish would defi-

nately come out as a confident unit but India would be banking on their new-found confidence.

The Indian defence led by talismanic Savita under the bar has produced a stellar performance throughout the tournament.

It was the forward-line which was lacking the sting but last night's performance would do a world of good for the strikers' confidence.

Skipper Rani feels India have gained confidence as the tournament has progressed and they would look to carry that forward going into the business-end of the

event.

"Early in the tournament we didn't do the one thing we needed to do score goals. But we have found the net now and we can definitely push on with our journey. We do not see that journey ending tomorrow," she said.

It promises to be an exciting encounter as Ireland have already proved that they are no pushovers and the outcome of the match will eventually depend on controlling the nerves at crucial stages.

Meanwhile, in the other quarterfinal of the day, the mighty Netherlands will take on hosts England.

US Open champ Stephens makes triumphant hardcourt start



WASHINGTON, AUG 1 (AFP): Reigning US Open champion Sloane Stephens began the summer hardcourt campaign ahead of defending her Flushing Meadows crown by beating Bethanie Mattek-Sands 7-5, 6-4 Tuesday at the WTA and ATP Washington Open.

Third-ranked Stephens, who captured her first Grand Slam title last year in New York, booked a second-round match against Germany's Andrea Petkovic.

"I'm super excited about the hardcourt season again," 25-year-old Stephens said.

"I'm still young and still have so much more to go and look forward to."

Stephens, who won her first WTA title at Washington in 2015, fired her sixth ace on her first match-point chance to advance after one hour and 53 minutes.

"I knew I was in for a real test from the very beginning," Stephens said. "I knew I had to stay patient and be within myself."

Stephens became the top-rated player in the draw when world number two Caroline Wozniacki, the reigning Australian Open champion, withdrew due to a right leg injury.

Denmark's Wozniacki, who won her 29th career WTA title in June at Eastbourne, was ousted from Wimbledon in the second round and had a right leg issue in a Monday practice session.

"It's just something that has been nagging for a little while," Wozniacki said.

"Hopefully it will be fine." On the men's side, top-seeded defending champion Alexander Zverev of Germany was scheduled to open later against Malek Jaziri.

Third-ranked Zverev beat Jaziri in last year's third round at Washington but split two clay meetings with the 34-year-old Tunisian, who reached his first ATP final in May at Istanbul.

Zverev has never faced his brother Mis-

cha, the 15th seed, in an ATP event but they could meet in a third-round match, with Mischa set to face US wildcard Tim Smyczek.

Three-time Grand Slam winner Stan Wawrinka, coming back after a left knee injury, was to face US qualifier Donald Young. The 198th-ranked Swiss waited through rain until 1 a.m. Tuesday to play Young but was rained out.

"There's rain in the forecast the next four days. Everyone has played late matches here," said US second seed John Isner.

"Whoever deals with that the best, whoever doesn't mind playing at two in the morning, is liable to win the event."

The only remaining women's top-five seed other than Stephens is Japan's 17th-ranked Naomi Osaka, the reigning Indian Wells champion who won her Washington debut match 6-2, 7-6 (7/4) over American Bernarda Pera.

Trump could raise tariffs further on Chinese goods: reports

WASHINGTON, AUG 1 (AFP): US President Donald Trump is now considering a 25 per cent tariff on USD 200 billion in Chinese imports, rather than the 10 per cent previously touted, reports have said.

The US imposed tariffs of 25 per cent on USD 34 billion of Chinese products earlier this month, with plans to add another USD 16 billion of imports yesterday.

Trump initially threatened to levy 10 per cent on an additional USD 200 billion but that figure may now rise to 25 per cent, sources told the Washington Post and Bloomberg.

It would represent a ramping up of pressure over Washington's trade standoff with Beijing.

In Beijing Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said Wednesday that "black-mail and pressure from the US side will never work on China".

"If the US takes measures to further escalate this situation, we will surely take counter-measures to firmly uphold our legitimate rights and interests," he told a regular briefing.

In 2017 the United States had a USD 376 billion trade deficit with China, which it is keen to reduce.

Trump recently threatened to slap punitive tariffs on all Chinese exports to the US, which amounted to more than USD 500 billion last year.

US designates three Pakistanis as global terrorists

WASHINGTON, AUG 1 (PTI): The US has designated three Pakistanis linked to the LeT, the outfit responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack, as global terrorists to shut down the militant group's financial network and curtail its ability to raise funds to carry out violent terrorist attacks.

LeT commander Abdul Rehman al-Dakhil was named as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) by the Department of State.

Separately, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) took action yesterday to disrupt the LeT's fundraising and support networks by designating two of the group's financial facilitators, Hameed ul Hassan and Abdul Jabbar, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs).

A longtime member of the US designated Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) and Lashkar e-Taiba (LeT), Dakhil was an operational leader for LeT's attacks in India between 1997 and 2001.

In 2004, Dakhil was cap-



tured in Iraq by British forces, then held in US custody in Iraq and Afghanistan until his transfer to Pakistan in 2014.

After his release from Pakistani custody, Dakhil returned to work for the LeT. In 2016, Dakhil was the LeT divisional commander for the Jammu region.

As of early 2018, Dakhil remained a senior commander in the LeT.

The designation seek to deny Dakhil the resources to plan and carry out terrorist attacks, the State Department said in a statement.

Among other consequences, all of his property and interests subject to US jurisdiction are blocked, and US persons are generally prohibited from engaging in any transactions with him.

"Today's action notifies the US public and the international community that Abdul Rehman al-Dakhil has committed, or poses a significant risk of committing, acts of terrorism," the State Department said.

Designations of terrorist individuals and groups expose and isolate organisations and individuals, and deny them access to the US financial system, it added.

Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Sigal Mandelker said Hassan and Jabbar were responsible for collecting, transporting and distributing funds to support the terror group and provide salaries to extremists.

"Treasury's designations not only aim to expose and

shut down Lashkar-e-Taiba's financial network, but also to curtail its ability to raise funds to carry out violent terrorist attacks," he said.

As a result of the designation, all property and interests in property of Hassan and Jabbar subject to US jurisdiction are now blocked. US persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with them.

As of late 2016, Hassan worked with Falah-e Insaniat Foundation, a front for the LeT, to collect and send funds to Syria. Further, as of early 2016, Hassan worked with his brother, Muhammad Ijaz Safarash, and Khalid Walid to transport funds to Pakistan on behalf of the LeT.

The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) previously designated Safarash and Walid as Specially Designated Global Terrorists for their association with the LeT in March 2016 and September 2012, respectively.

Additionally, Hassan has an active Twitter account, which identifies him as the leader of the 2008 Mumbai

terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed-led Jamat-ud Dawah in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

According to the Treasury, Jabbar is a financial facilitator for the LeT and distributes salaries for the terrorist group. He has worked in the LeT's finance department since around 2000. Additionally, as of mid-2016, Jabbar distributed funds on behalf of the Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation.

In December 2001, the Department of State designated the LeT as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation. The LeT was also added to the UN Security Council's Sanctions List in May 2005.

Jamaat-ud Dawa was designated as an alias of LeT pursuant in April 2006 and was added to the UN Security Council's Sanctions List in December 2008. In November 2010, the Department of State amended its designations of LeT to include the alias Falah-e Insaniat Foundation. In March 2012, the UN amended its Sanctions List to recognise the Falah-e Insaniat Foundation as a front for LeT.

97 injured as Mexican plane crashes at airport in hail storm

DURANGO, AUG 1 (AFP): An Aeromexico flight crashed on takeoff during a heavy hail storm in northern Mexico, engulfing the plane in flames and injuring 97 people, officials said.

The Embraer 190 aircraft, which was operating between Durango and Mexico City and crashed around 3:00 pm local time (20:00 GMT), was carrying "88 adults, nine minors, two infants, two pilots and two flight attendants," the airline's director general Andres Conesa told a news con-



ference yesterday.

"It is confirmed that there have been no deaths from the flight #AM2431 accident," tweeted Jose Rosas, the governor of Durango state where the crash occurred.

A total of 97 people

were admitted for treatment following the crash, most of them for "very light" injuries, according to Durango civil defense spokesman Alejandro Cardoza. Cardoza said the plane was caught in a heavy hailstorm and the pilots tried to make an emergency landing, after which the fire broke out.

Conesa thanked the crew "for their professionalism" and said that the aircraft "was perfectly maintained", but did not provide details on the circumstances of the accident.

Brazilian aircraft

manufacturer Embraer announced the dispatch of a team to investigate the crash.

Dozens of lightly injured passengers were seen leaving the plane, which was engulfed in gray smoke in a field.

An image taken using a drone and obtained by AFP shows the aircraft immobilised in a field at the end of the runway. "We were on the runway when the visibility grew worse," 47-year-old Jacqueline Flores, who was traveling with her 16-year-old daughter, told AFP.

"When we were already aloft, up high, it felt like the plane was going to level out but just then is when it plunged to the ground. I think we fell back on the runway because it was a hard surface, then we skidded on the ground until it stopped," added the Durango native, a housewife who was on a journey back to Colombia where she lives.

With the plane on the ground amid some bushes and brush, Flores said luggage began sliding down the aisle and she started to smell smoke.

"I undid my seat-belt and saw flames, and realized we had to jump. There was a hole right next to us and the plane had broken up, I told my girl 'We have to jump over here' and we jumped," she added.

According to Rosas, the passengers helped each other quickly evacuate the aircraft through the openings in the cabin caused by the accident.

In July 1981, an Aeromexico flight crashed on landing in northern Chihuahua due to bad weather, killing 32.

Fb removes accounts involved in political influence campaign ahead of US mid-term polls

WASHINGTON, AUG 1 (PTI): Facebook has removed 32 fake accounts and pages that it says were involved in "coordinated inauthentic behaviour" and political influence campaign to manipulate voters ahead of the November mid-term elections in the US.

Though the world's biggest social media network has not yet attributed the accounts to any group, it says the campaign does bear some resemblance to the propaganda campaign allegedly run by Russia's Internet Research Agency (IRA) in the run-up to the 2016 US presidential election.

Facebook has been grappling with continuing public backlash for being slow to recognise Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election, along with widespread concerns over its past data-sharing practices. The company's stock has plunged more than 20 per cent since last week, after it reported slower user growth and rising costs for security and safety programs to crack down on abuse of its platform.

"This kind of behaviour is not allowed on Facebook because we don't want people or organisations creating networks of accounts to mislead others about who they are, or what they're doing," it said.

Noting that Facebook is still in the very early stages of its investigation and does not have all the facts - including who may be behind this, the company executives warned that they were dealing with increasingly sophisticated political operatives, who are finding new ways to abuse Facebook's platforms.

"We've made it harder for inauthentic actors to operate on Facebook," said Facebook chief operating

officer Sheryl Sandberg. "Yet we face determined, well-funded adversaries who won't give up and who are constantly changing tactics."

"At this point in our investigation, we do not have enough technical evidence to state definitively who is behind this," said Nathaniel Gleicher, Facebook's head of cybersecurity policy.

However, Senator Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the US Senate Intelligence Committee, issued a statement tying the latest Facebook activity directly to Russia.

After its latest discovery, Facebook said it had removed 17 profiles and eight pages, along with seven accounts on Instagram, the Facebook-owned photo-sharing app. The earliest was created in March of last year, while the most recent was created this May.

More than 290,000 accounts followed at least one of the suspect pages, which had names like Aztlan Warriors, Black Elevation, Mindful Being and Resisters, the company said.

The organisers behind the accounts went to great lengths to conceal their identities including using virtual private networks software that masks the geographic location of computers and Internet-based phone numbers, company officials said.

They also used third parties to publish paid advertisements on Facebook, in violation of the social-media firm's policies banning foreign entities from buying US political ads.

The accounts spent USD 11,000 to run 150 ads on both Facebook and Instagram between April 2017 and June of this year. Facebook previously said roughly 470 fake

accounts had spent USD 100,000 on more than 3,500 ads surrounding the 2016 election.

Facebook said it all started two weeks ago when it identified the first of eight pages and 17 profiles.

The pages created about 30 events since May 2017. About half had fewer than 100 accounts interested in attending. The largest had approximately 4,700 accounts interested in attending, and 1,400 users said that they would attend, it said.

One fake page called 'Resisters' was involved in co-ordinating a protest in Washington between August 10-12. The 'No Unite the Right 2 DC' event was meant to be a counter-protest to a rally planned by right-wing groups as a follow-up to last year's deadly 'Unite the Right' protests in Charlottesville.

Fake accounts contacted administrators of five other legitimate Facebook groups to help plan the counterprotest, including offering support for transportation and logistics, and posting ads to hire an event co-ordinator. Facebook said it had disabled the event and was in the process of contacting nearly 2,600 people who had said they were interested in attending.

"These bad actors have been more careful to cover their tracks, in part due to the actions we've taken to prevent abuse over the past year," Facebook said.

For example, they used virtual private networks (VPNs) and internet phone services, and paid third parties to run ads on their behalf.

"We have found evidence of some connections between these accounts and IRA accounts we disabled last year, which is covered below. But there are differences, too. For example, while IP addresses are easy to spoof, the IRA accounts we disabled last year sometimes used Russian IP addresses. We haven't seen those here," it said.

Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey coursed 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.

THE BIRDS HAVE LOST THEIR WAY

Edited by TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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LOVE BIRDS! Sophie Turner, 22, and Joe Jonas, 28, looked as loved up as ever as they enjoyed a romantic lunch date in NYC.

Mel Gibson teams up with Colin Farrell for action flick 'War Pigs'!

Mel Gibson has joined forces with Colin Farrell. The 62-year-old Australian and 42-year-old Irishman have signed on to lead World War II action flick War Pigs, according to Deadline.

Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters director Tommy Wirkola will helm the Nick Ball & John Niven penned feature.

War Pigs will follow a group of disillusioned ex-marines as they set out to get revenge on a cartel who murder one of their own and stole their drug money.

Gibson is set to play The Pastor, while Farrell will star as Drex. This will mark the first time the two actors have worked together.

Following the project, Gibson will turn his focus



back to directing, diving into another World War II action film, Destroyer, which will star Mark Wahlberg.

It seems the Lethal Weapon star has had the Second World War on his mind for some time, as he last helmed the Pacific Theater-set, biographical drama Hacksaw Ridge.

Last year, Gibson starred in Daddy's Home 2 alongside Wahlberg and Will Farrell.

Farrell recently wrapped Steve McQueen-directed Widows and the Tim Burton-directed Dumbo.

War Pigs is a move in a different direction for the In Bruges actor who has recently spent time working on smaller films with storied auteurs.

In 2017, he worked with Sofia Coppola and Yorgos Lanthimos for a second time.

Salman Khan's new still from Bharat makes a revelation!

If there is one movie that is making us look forward to 2019 already, it has to be Salman Khan's Bharat. Despite, last minute changes in the principal cast, the shoot of the film is going on in full throttle. The first still from the movie was shared a few days ago by Ali Abbas Zafar. In it, we saw a silhouette of Salman riding a bike in a 'ring of fire'.

Today, the filmmaker shared another still from the film. Once again we have a silhouette of the actor, but taking the story forward. Ali wrote, "Gear up for Thunder@BeingSalmanKhan@Bharat.TheFilm ...yeh khamoshi toofan se phele ki hai..."

In the new still, we see Salman from the front. He is sitting on a bike, ready to approach the above mentioned 'ring of fire'. Hundreds of light bulbs are illuminating the cylindrical area around him. And then there is the name of the place Salman's character is at - The Great Russian Circus. Yes, through this still the revelation has been made that while the movie might be called Bharat, the plot will revolve around a Russian circus. Anyway, we know that the story spans over decades and

various continents. So this new look only intrigues us more to learn what's in store.

Earlier in an interaction, Ali had revealed how they have created a circus-like set and what character does Salman really play in the film. He had said, "The idea is to create an Indian-Russian circus-like Raj Kapoor's Mera Naam Joker. Performers from all over the world are flying down for the circus tricks that will be a mix of trapeze hoops and rope stunts. This is Salman and Disha's introduction in the movie. He plays a daredevil stunt motorcyclist while she's a trapeze artist."

During the initial stage of production, speculations were rife that the jodi of Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif will be repeated in Bharat. However, the role, for a brief period, went to Hollywood return, Priyanka Chopra. But the actress dropped out of the film a few days prior to the shooting. The reason being her decision to take the plunge and get married to American beau Nick Jonas.

Well, it was confirmed soon enough that Katrina will be playing the role she was destined to play and came on board for Bharat.



Supreme Court refuses to put a stay on Fannee Khan, to release on 03 Aug

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to stay the release of upcoming Bollywood film 'Fannee Khan'.

Film producer Vashu Bhagnani had moved to the apex court against the film's release over the movie's distribution rights. The film, therefore, will hit the big screens on its scheduled release date, i.e. August 3. 'Fannee Khan' will see Anil Kapoor playing the role of an orchestra singer, who worships Mohammad Rafi and Shammi Kapoor as his Gods and sings their songs.

The one of its kind musical comedy revolves around a father, played by Anil Kapoor, who wishes to fulfill his daughter's dream of becoming a singer. Helmed by Atul Manjrekar, the film also stars Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Rajkumar Rao.

Veteran star Anil Kapoor



He wrote alongside,

on Tuesday paid a tribute to Bollywood's legendary singer Mohammad Rafi by releasing the recreated version of his iconic song 'Badan Pe Sitare'. On the occasion of the singer's 38th death anniversary, the 61-year-old took to Twitter to unveil the track from his upcoming film 'Fannee Khan'. #SonuNigam @saregamaglobal @T-Series @ItsAmitTrivedi"

DEPP ACCUSES EX-WIFE AMBER HEARD OF 'PUNCHING HIM TWICE IN THE FACE' IN LEGAL LAWSUIT

Johnny Depp accused his ex-wife Amber Heard in court papers of 'punching him twice in the face' for being late to her birthday party in April 2016. The 55-year-old Hollywood legend made the allegations as part of a libel lawsuit against the Sun newspaper in the High Court, according to an article on Tuesday by the Mirror.

Depp sued after an April 2018 report branded him as a wife beater and criticized his casting in the Harry Potter spin-off Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes Of Grindelwald.

Court papers filed by Depp's lawyers in the Queen's Bench Division claimed he arrived two hours late for his wife's birthday dinner in April 2016. Heard, 32, allegedly 'began criticising the claimant for being late,' according to court papers.

The documents added that Depp was 'not drunk or high on drugs' and was in bed when 'Ms Heard, who had been drinking, became aggressive and violent... punching him twice in the face'.

The Edward Scissorhands star 'defended himself by grabbing Ms Heard's arms to stop her punching again and told her to stop,' according to the court filing.

'He pushed her away on to the bed and told her he was leaving and that she should not follow him,' the papers added.

Depp's team also referenced a May 2016 argument that Heard cited in her request for a restraining order against her estranged husband after filing for divorce.

Heard in her restraining order request alleged that Depp 'violently attacked' her in their Los Angeles penthouse apartment and threw a cellphone that struck her in the face with 'extreme force'.

Photos later emerged of Heard with bruises on her face.

Depp in his recent court filing submitted depositions from



two police officers who said they saw no marks on Heard when they arrived on the scene.

'When one of the officers asked Ms Heard what had happened she responded "nothing", the documents added.

The court filing also alleged that Depp's security team rushed to the penthouse upon hearing Heard yelling.

The security observed [Depp] standing in the kitchen, far away from Ms Heard. At that moment, Ms Heard yelled, "Stop hitting me, Johnny" into the phone. The claimant was not hitting Ms Heard. Ms Heard was about 25 feet away,' the court documents claimed.

An attorney for Heard strongly challenged the claims made in Depp's court filing.

'These allegations are totally false. One needs only read the recent Rolling Stone article about Mr Depp and the lawsuit filed against him by a location manager, among many other recent news stories and lawsuits, to understand his state of mind,' the attorney told the Mirror.

Depp and Heard met in 2011 while filming The Rum Diary together. They were married at their Los Angeles home in 2015 and she filed for divorce in May 2016. Their divorce was finalized in January 2017 after they reached an out-of-court divorce settlement.

ARIES: Whether you acknowledge it or not, Aries, creation is the central theme of your life. If you aren't an artist or writer, you should be. There are plenty of creative ideas in your head clamoring to be expressed. Why not give it a try? You have nothing to lose, and you may be astonished by what you're able to produce. Your brain does have two sides. It's time to use both.

TAURUS: You seem to be filled with questions, Taurus. Some of them are big, some trivial. All you know is that they preoccupy you, and the answers aren't readily apparent. Don't fret. All that will change by day's end. The planetary configurations are such that all the confusing events of recent days will begin to make sense. Your world will once again seem calm and orderly. Enjoy it.

GEMINI: You're an individual, Gemini, but sometimes it's hard for you to suppress your uniqueness in order to get the job done. It may not be you. The problem may be your job. If you're feeling like you don't have enough fun in your life or you aren't using the full potential of your creativity, this might be a good time to make a change - a big change. You're ready to take on new challenges.

CANCER: Your ego may be bruised by events from a few days back. Has it occurred to you that it's within your power to right the wrong you feel was done to you? It isn't a matter of confrontation but of conversation. The person in question is probably unaware of what they did or said. An expression of your dismay might elicit an apology. You'll both feel

better for having cleared the air.

LEO: Today's planetary configurations are pushing you to get some perspective on your life and the lives of people closest to you. Leo, You must admit that you've been rather selfish lately. You aren't the center of the universe, so why do you sometimes act like you are? This is a day to make amends with friends and loved ones. They'll welcome you back with open arms.

VIRGO: This is a day to be up front with your partner, Virgo. It's possible that your relationship has reached some sort of stalemate. It's up to you to get that fire burning brightly once again. How? You know the drill - romantic time alone is all it takes. A nice outfit, a reservation at the best restaurant, and you and your mate are back in business.

LIBRA: This is a day of untold opportunity, Libra. If you've been concerned that you haven't been using your full creative potential, you can put that concern to rest today. Your creativity is boundless and you'll finally realize it. Be on the lookout for any unusual opportunities. Someone or something you encounter could have meaningful ripple effects on you.

SCORPIO: There's tension in the air today, Scorpio. Even though it isn't your doing, you may want to keep a low profile, especially if you need to work. Try to avoid any discussions. Just because someone is confrontational doesn't mean you have to rise to the bait. It would be better if you didn't. Keep to yourself and all of this will blow over by tomorrow when it will be safe to mingle again.

SAGITTARIUS: Think before you act today, Sagittarius. Rash moves are likely to get you into trouble. An annoying interruption in your daily routine could throw you off guard. Sit down and think about the situation before you act too hastily. Bumps in the road are often messages from the Universe that you're moving too quickly and carelessly. It's time to slow down.

CAPRICORN: Today is a great day to act on things that have been brewing in your brain for quite some time, Capricorn. Perhaps you've been feeling unsure of yourself. It's OK to surrender and admit that you just don't have all the answers. Use this as an opportunity to restructure and rebuild. Embrace the unknown rather than fear or resist it. This is a great time to move toward it.

AQUARIUS: Be a bit more sensitive with your words today, Aquarius. Your mind is apt to be especially active and even a bit restless. This is more than likely a signal to get more of your opinions out into the world. As you do, make sure you take into account the feelings of others. People might have quite a different reaction to the same situation. Respect opposing viewpoints.

PISCES: Your mind is clear and your sensitivity focused, Pisces. Now is a good time to make a move. Don't let insecurity or fear keep you from pursuing your dreams. Realize that action you take today doesn't need to be a bold outward movement in order to be effective. In truth, quite the contrary is true. You can accomplish a great deal by turning thought and energy inward.