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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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Uttarakhand Tourism Minister calls on CM, says other States learn from Sikkim

**ARPAN PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

Minister for Tourism, Irrigation, Indo Nepal Uttarakhand River Projects, Government of Uttarakhand, Satpalji Maharaj, called on Chief Minister Pawan Chamling this morning at his official residence in Mintokgang. The delegation led by Satpalji Maharaj included senior officials of the Government of Uttarakhand who are on an official study tour to Sikkim.

Mr Maharaj appreciated the various flagship projects and initiatives undertaken by the State Government and said that Sikkim as a State is a perfect example for other States to learn from. He added that Mr



Chamling is the ambassador of organic farming and

congratulated him for all his achievements.

The delegation also raised various queries to the CM on

organic farming and his various achievements.

Mr Chamling, in his address, welcomed all the delegates and thanked them for visiting the State.

Addressing their queries, Mr Chamling said that the government should work for the benefit of the public and it should be the only objective of any government.

"Government should be able to involve general public in all its initiatives as public participation is most important and without it, no government initiative will be successful," said Mr Chamling.

He further informed the delegates about various other initiatives of the State Government and highlighted on organic farming and also in-

formed that the government has banned animal grazing, cutting of trees and has given emphasis on eco-friendly tourism.

He suggested the visiting officers work on how the government can utilise available natural resources which can be used to create ample opportunities for the people of the State.

Mr Maharaj also offered some mementos and books to the CM.

It may be mentioned here, Mr Maharaj and his team are on a six-day visit to Sikkim and will be in the State till 08 Sept. During his stay in Sikkim, the delegation will be visiting various places in the State as part of their study tour.

AR Rahman, Priyanka Chopra, Sanjay Dutt to be the spark of Red Panda Winter Carnival

**REBYNA RANA
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

This year's Red Panda Winter Carnival Tourism Festival is set to go glamorous with Bollywood stars AR Rahman, Priyanka Chopra and Sanjay Dutt scheduled to make an appearance in the festival.

This was informed by Tourism Minister, Ugen T Gyatso, while speaking to SummitTimes today.

"AR Rahman will be performing on 17-18 Nov. His main concert is on 17 Nov," said Mr Gyatso.

It was clarified that the celebrities are bearing most of the expenses of their visit on their own and the State Government will only be contributing around 20%.

"We are doing the carnival as an international carnival and it will be participated by British Council and top tourism stakeholders from Nepal and Bhutan, GTA and NE



region along with local participation from Sikkim," added Mr Gyatso.

He informed that Priyanka Chopra will be arriving in the capital on 05 Dec for the premiere of the movie 'Pahuna' produced by her which will be screened on 06 Dec.

"Sanjay Dutt is also coming and we are working on the dates. He will provide counseling to people especially youth against drug abuse and suicides. Many other celebrities are also interested in coming to Sikkim during the carnival," said Mr Gyatso.

CM launches official website of Sikkim Cricket Association

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

All district bodies and the central executive body of Sikkim Cricket Association [SCA] called on to Chief Minister Pawan Chamling at Mintokgang in Gangtok today. President of SCA apprised the CM of the works done by SCA since Jan 2016. The important aspects were forming district associations, organizing camp before BCCI, school tournaments, talent hunt programmes, ensuring transparency and conducting regular meetings of SCA, a press release informs.

During the meet, the CM also launched the official website of Sikkim Cricket Association www.sikkimcricket.com.

The SCA president thanked the CM for granting lease of Mining Cricket Ground in Rangpo, East Sikkim since 2002 where Indian cricketers like Mahin-



der Singh Dhoni, Laxmi Ratan Sukla and Manoj Tewari have played U-19 matches in the past.

In Aug 2018, SCA became full member of BCCI and due to that now Sikkim will be playing in 14 different BCCI premium tournaments at National level. BCCI has recently sanctioned funds for developing Mining Cricket Ground, the release adds.

The CM was apprised of the players and support staff getting opportunities. Players and support staff will be get pro-

fessional fee amounting to approximately around Rs 6.5 crore in total this coming season and BCCI will be spending over Rs 5 crore for their travel and logistics, it was informed.

The release further states that Mining Cricket Ground lease will now be extended for another 40 years.

The CM has assured to extend all support for developing cricket in Sikkim as he expressed satisfaction over the activities of SCA in developing cricket in Sikkim.



Minerva Punjab FC conducts football trials at NPS

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

I-League 2017-18 Champions, Minerva Punjab Football Club, in collaboration with South District Football Association and Namchi Public School [NPS] conducted trials for budding footballers in Under 11, Under 13, Under 15 and Under 18 categories at the football field of NPS in South Sikkim on 02-03 Sep, a press release informs.

More than 1000 footballers from across Sikkim, Darjeeling and Kalimpong came for the trials along with their coaches and parents. The budding footballers showcased their skills in friendly matches in the presence of head coach of Minerva Punjab FC, Harpreet Singh, and his assistant, S Pradhan.

The two coaches also presented tips to the players to improve their skills

and assured to visit next year again for more trials.

The coaches selected many footballers under all four categories. The selected players will be travelling to Chandigarh for the final trials and from there on will join their football academy.

Eight players among the selected ones were from NPS football team.

Principal of NPS, Rev Fr George A D'Souza, congratulated the selected players and their coach, Alen Tshering Bhutia.

Earlier, NPS' 'CD' Division Boys' football team had won the ARCEIS Inter-School 'CD' Division Football Tournament 2018 held in St Joseph's School in Rhenock, East Sikkim. Team NPS defeated St Xavier's School, Pakyong by 2-1 goals in the finals. Both the goals were scored by Birash Rai, the release adds.



PNG students excel at ROBOZEST 2018

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

Students of Atal Tinkering Lab of Paljor Namgyal Girls' School, Gangtok delivered an impressive performance at the International Level Robotics Competition, ROBOZEST 2018, a part of the annual Tech-Fest, 'Techniche', held in Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati on 01 Sept, a press release informs.

Two teams from PNG School made it to the grand finale with their made-from-scratch robots which were expected to follow a challenge track autonomously on an open challenge mat.

The robot designed by one of the PNG-ATL teams was declared the win-

ner on the basis of circuit-transparency and elegance in line following.

The team A members included Class XII Science students of PNG School namely Supriya Sharma, Shristi Tamang, Bhumika Sharma and Melody Sunwar.

Likewise, team B members who were the finalists included Class XII Science students, Sulochana Lamichaney, Darshana Chettri, Arati Lohar and Baby Subba.

The students were accompanied by mentor and ATL in charge, Ivan Dorjee Lepcha. He has expressed happiness and satisfaction over the results and the hard work of the girls being rewarded.

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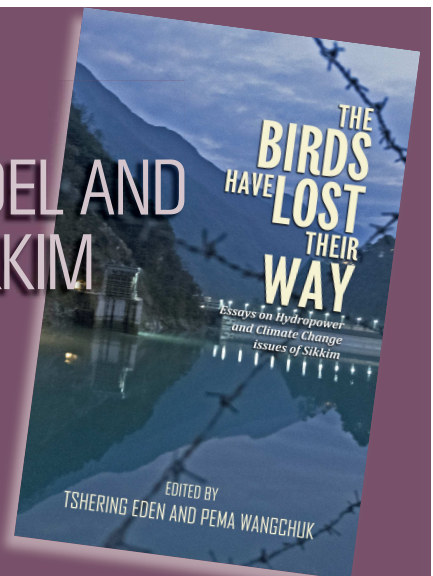
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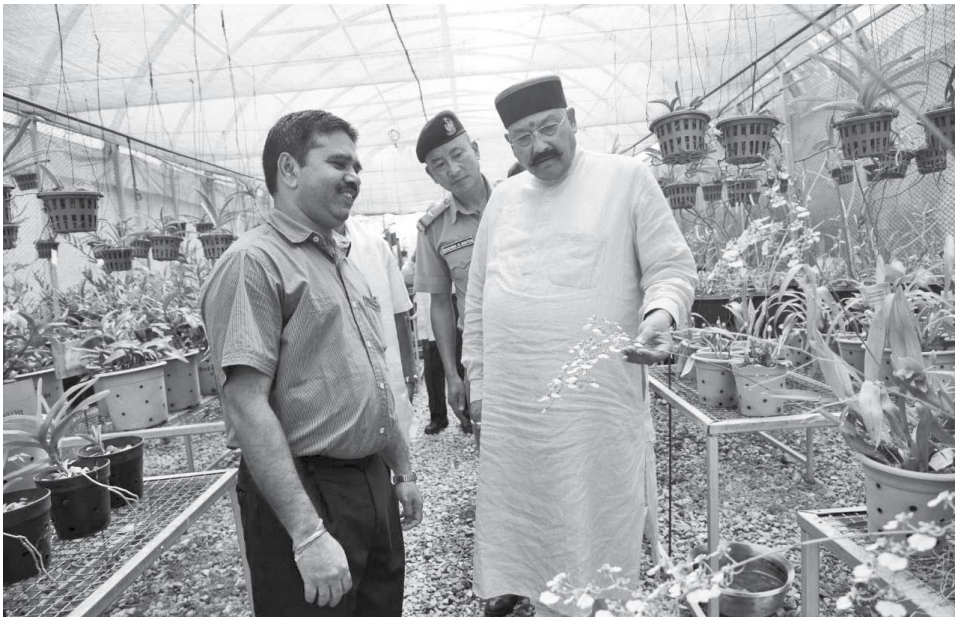
Satpalji Maharaj visits NRC for Orchids in Pakyong

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT [IPR]: Minister for Tourism, Irrigation, India-Nepal River Development Project, Government of Uttarakhand, Satpalji Maharaj, along with nine other officials from the Government of Uttarakhand visited the National Research Centre for Orchids at Pakyong in East Sikkim today.

Mr Maharaj and other officials were welcomed by Principal Scientist of NRC, Pakyong, Dr LC De, Sub Divisional Magistrate, Pakyong, Tenzing Denzongpa, and other officials of the centre.

During the visit, the Minister and his team examined the different processes of Orchid farming, species house, orchid herbarium and experimental farming of orchid in NRC premises.

Later, a PowerPoint presentation was shown where facts, figures and other aspects of orchid cultivation were discussed in detail. He also discussed issues related to techniques of orchid farming and how to help farmers to take up commercial orchid



growing skills and implement it.

Mr Maharaj stated that the climatic conditions, topography of both Sikkim and

Uttarakhand are quite similar and Sikkim is emerging as one of the most advanced orchid growing States in the country.

"More and more people are getting attracted to this cash crop and thus this culture of orchid farming needs to be implemented in Uttara-

khand as well. The income of farmers will also go up by producing orchids along with other kinds of mixed farming and value addition in orchid

farming can increase income generation," he added.

He applauded the organic movement initiated by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling in making Sikkim the first organic State in the country. He further added that being a small Himalayan state, Sikkim has set examples in various fields and the policies implemented towards environmental protection needs to be emulated by the rest of the States as well.

Mr Maharaj strongly advocated "Green Bonus" for Sikkim and other hill States of India. He said that Sikkim has been in the forefront in conserving environment and Green Bonus will give further impetus.

Talking about the mode of connectivity in hilly regions, Mr Maharaj pitched for a network of ropeways across the state and said that this would benefit mode of communication and boost tourism as well. He said that Sikkim is one of the cleanest States and other States of the country have a lot to learn from it.

Earlier, Principal Scien-

tist, Dr De, briefed about the various tools and techniques adopted by NRC laboratory in producing orchid seed and tissue culture for the purpose of orchid growing.

After Pakyong, Mr Maharaj reached Martam and inaugurated Lingtam as the cleanest village in order to promote rural tourism. MLA Martam, Mechung Bhutia, showed organic fields and explained the process of organic farming and how the State has banned the use of harmful chemicals. He also inspected the Gram Vikas Kendra at Martam and met his devotees there.

The team will be making a series of field visits in South and West districts of Sikkim like DharaVikas site at Damthang, organic field visits, homestay visits, tourist attraction places, etc during their stay in Sikkim over the next few days.

Mr Maharaj and his team are on a study tour to Sikkim to learn about the implementation of organic agriculture and village tourism.

NIT students to begin hunger strike today

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

Students of National Institute of Technology [NIT] Ravangla will be sitting on a hunger strike on 05 Sept from 10.30 a.m. Students of the institute have been protesting against the lack of proper infrastructure and have been demanding a permanent campus for the past month.

Earlier on 31 Aug, over 800 students had carried out a peaceful rally from NIT Sikkim campus to Ralong Road in South Sikkim to express dissatisfaction over the recent meeting held between State Human Resource Development Department and Ministry of HRD, Government of India.

SKM

constituency-level meet held at Soldung

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

A constituency-level meeting of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party was held at Soldung under Rinchenpong constituency in West Sikkim on Tuesday, which was chaired by the party president, PS Tamang [Golay].

An SKM press release informs that retired BDO, Sonam Paljor Bhutia and sitting independent Panchayat, Prem Kumari Tamang and 263 families of the ruling party joined SKM during the meeting. The release informs that the party president accused the SDF government of not carrying out developmental works in the area. Mr Tamang also congratulated teachers on the occasion of Teacher's Day.



Bamboo product training organized in Sumbuk

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

Community Business Development Programme, Assam [Government of India] in collaboration with Indrani Pariwar, Sumbuk is organizing month long Basic Bamboo Product Training at Sumbuk in South Sikkim from 04 Sept to 04 Oct, a press release informs.

The inaugural programme was attended by Zilla Panchayat, Jamuna Rai, Block Development Officer, Sumbuk, Dinesh Pradhan, Pancha-

yat member, Parlad Rai, Sanjay Rai & Dr Shiva Kumar Sharma, Nehru Yuva Volunteer, Suyog Pradhan, and others.

During the training, Anwar Hussain from Cane & Bamboo Technology Center, Assam will be training 25 people of Sumbuk Kartikey GPU and Lungchok Kamerey GPU of South Sikkim.

Resource person for the event, Pramod Mandal from Community Business Development Programme, Assam, in his address said

that the National Bamboo Mission of the Government and the Cluster Programme was implemented by the government in two places in the State Sikkim namely Sumbuk and Bermiok for the development and economic growth of the villagers. He also highlighted the benefits and assured all possible help for the implementation of the programme. Block Development Officer, Mr Pradhan, highlighted details of the skill development programme implemented by the BAC, Sumbuk.



MATRU VANDANA SAPTHA OBSERVED IN RALAK

MANGAN, 04 SEPT: Matru Vandana Saptha and National Nutrition Week were observed at Ralak ICDS in North Sikkim today. Child Development Project Officer [Mangan], L Donka, highlighted the schemes of ICDS. A quiz competition was also conducted for pregnant and nursing mothers. [Wangchuk Bhutia]

ICS & organic certification awareness at Taza



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

International Panaacea Limited [IPL] organised Ward level programme on Internal Control Systems and Organic Certification at Ruchal Gaon in Taza GPU, East Sikkim today, a press release informs.

Area MLA, Hemendra Adhikari, suggested that the farmers continue with organic farming as it has already been implemented by the State Government for the benefit of farmers. He urged the farmers to grow more vegetables to fulfill the demand of consumers.

Field Executive, IPL, Mon Prasad Luitel, explained about various methods of disease and pest management. He also highlighted the documentation process, standard of Organic Certification and ICS mandates to be recorded in the documentation.

CJI Dipak Misra ends speculation, recommends Gogoi as his successor

NEW DELHI, SEP 4 (PTI): Putting to rest all speculation, Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra Tuesday recommended to the Centre that Justice Ranjan Gogoi be his successor, eight months after he was part of a revolt against the country's top judge.

Despite the differences, Misra stuck to convention and recommended Gogoi, the senior-most judge in the Supreme Court after the CJI. If confirmed by the Centre, considered a formality, Gogoi will be sworn in on October 3, a day after Misra retires.

Highly placed sources said the letter by Misra has been sent by the office of the CJI to the Ministry of Law and Justice for necessary action.

Gogoi will have a tenure of little over a year. His term is due to end on November 17 next year when he attains the age of 65.

Misra's recommendation is in line with the tradition that the senior-most apex court judge succeeds the incumbent CJI on his retirement.

Speculation over Misra's recommendation on the next CJI arose after the court's four most senior judges--Justices J Chelameswar (since retired), Gogoi, Madan B Lokur and Kurian Joseph, had called an unprecedented press conference in Delhi on January 12 this year and criticised him on several issues, especially the manner of allocation of cases to certain benches.

The recommendation came after Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad re-

cently asked Misra to recommend his successor, setting in motion the process of a change of guard at the apex court.

Gogoi, who is set to become the 46th CJI, was elevated to the apex court on April 23, 2012. He has been part of several key verdicts and is presently seized of sensitive cases including the finalisation of National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam and the PIL seeking appointment of a search committee members to select Lokpal.

According to the Memorandum of Procedure, which governs the appointment of members of the higher judiciary, "appointment to the office of the Chief Justice of India should be of the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court considered fit to hold the office".

Under this process, after receiving the CJI's recommendation, the law minister puts it before the prime minister who advises the President on the matter.

"Whenever there is any doubt about the fitness of the senior-most Judge to hold the office of the Chief Justice of India, consultation with other Judges... would be made for appointment of the next Chief Justice of India," the document states.

The law minister recently said the government's intention on the appointment of the next chief justice of India should not be questioned. He had also said the Executive will take a call when the incumbent names the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court as his successor as per convention.

**Gangtok on
Wednesday,
05 Sept**

Temp: 28°C/17°C
Forecast: Mostly
cloudy, a show-
er or thunder-
storm around.
Sunrise: 05:16 AM
Sunset: 5:52 PM



Teacher's Day greetings from Governor

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

On the occasion of Teacher's Day, Governor Ganga Prasad has extended warm greetings and good wishes to the people of Sikkim and teaching fraternity in particular.

In a press communiqué received from Raj Bhawan, the Governor has said, "The word teacher reflects immense significance and reverence in our culture and civilization where we place teachers alongside our deities whom we worship. The teachers are indeed the backbone of any progressive nation ever committed in the task of transforming raw and ignorant minds into enlightened and skilful humans who are capable and responsible to take the nation forward in the path of progress and prosperity. Teaching is not merely a profession but a lifelong responsibility towards nation. No wonder, it is the most noble and respectable among one's duty assigned to shape the destiny of a nation igniting the minds of future generation, regarded as the most valuable resource on earth.

As we remember the great deeds of teachers of the past and present, it is time for us to recognize and celebrate the contribution of teachers in our own lives. While the nation remains ever indebted, let's pay our sincere homage and respect to all those great souls who led us on the path of progress with the light of knowledge and wisdom and transformed ours into a vibrant and enlightened society."

Sikkim girl wins Miss Teen Himalaya International & Miss Teen Bharat

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:**

Miss Teen Himalaya International & Miss Teen Bharat 2018 title winner, Drishya Chettri from Sikkim has expressed her desire to bring the crown of Miss World to Sikkim. Inspired by Miss World 2017, Manushi Chhillar in the field of modelling, she also plans to enter the world of modelling and acting.

A very confident Drishya has recently returned home after winning the title of Miss Teen Himalaya International & Miss Teen Bharat 2018 held at Delhi on 31 Aug. She has now been selected to represent India in the upcoming Miss Teen International to be held in Thailand next year. She has also been offered a role in a Bollywood movie, it is informed.

The beauty pageant was organised by Aman Gandhi Film Productions and she was the only participant from Sikkim in the contest.

14-year-old Drishya is



a class VIII student of Bahai School, Tadong. She is the eldest daughter of BK

Chettri and Kunta Chettri of Samlick-Marchhak in East Sikkim and pres-

ently residing at Daragaon, Tadong. Being a very good dancer, she was also a finalist of North East Got Talent in 2015.

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, Drishya expressed her happiness on winning the title Miss Teen Himalaya International & Miss Teen Bharat 2018.

"I was crying with happiness when I was crowned with the title," she said. She also expressed her immense happiness on getting the golden opportunity to represent the country in Miss Teen International.

"The contest was really tough among sixteen finalist teens from different parts of the country and the whole event was a learning experience for me. I am now more confident to face future contests," she stated.

Drishya expressed gratitude to her parents, Bahai School Tadong and its Principal and all others who have been supporting her.



AICC in Sikkim to expose Rafale scam

SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 04 SEPT:

All India Congress Committee [AICC] national spokesperson, Jaiveer Shergill, lashed out against the Bharatiya Janata Party government at the Centre while addressing a press conference here in Gangtok today. AICC has been holding 100 press conferences in 10 days across the country to expose the Rafale scam.

Mr Shergill alleged that the BJP government has been involved in huge corruption in this deal and is not answering queries of the Congress party and the people of

Sikkim on this.

The BJP government has failed transparency, Make in India initiative and technology transformation through this deal, he stated further adding that it has provided benefits to its corporate friend [Anil Ambani] by paying much higher price from the taxpayer's money in this deal. He also questioned the rationale behind giving the deal to Mr Ambani's company and not to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited [HAL] which has previous experience in building aircrafts.

The Congress party has been tagged as an-

ti-national by BJP for asking questions on this deal, said Mr Shergill.

He further stated that corruption and price rise are the torchbearers for the downfall of BJP in 2019. Terming the BJP as an investigation free party rather than a corruption free party, he demanded that BJP conduct investigations on the matter.

The press conference was also addressed by East India in-charge of All India Professional Congress & National Media Panelist, Szarita Laithphang, and Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee president, Bharat Basnet.

Khandu draws attention of MHA to situation in Siang river basin



ITANAGAR, SEPT 4 (PTI): Concerned over the unprecedented simultaneous drought and flood situations in different areas of the Siang river basin, Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Tuesday drew the attention of the union home ministry to it.

In a letter to Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, he sought an assesment of the situation by an inter-ministerial team for further action and precautionary measures.

The Chinese government had in a August 29 report, its first river water data share this year, cautioned that Tsangpo river, as Siang is called in that country, was in spate following heaviest rains in

150 years and the various gauge and discharge stations on it had seen a discharge of 9,020 cumec (cubic metre per second) water.

This had prompted the East Siang district administration to requisition IAF for helicopter to evacuate people and high waters of the river had affected over 1,000 families living along it at Mebo.

The chief minister informed Singh about the reports of Siang River flowing above the danger level and said that many houses have been eroded and washed out under the impact of gushing flood water.

The sudden rise in the water level and the muddy water flow-

ing in the river is causing concern amongst the locals, Khandu said in the letter.

The situation is now normal following improvement in weather condition, officials said.

In contrast to it many areas of Namsing circle also in Mebo sub-division of East Siang district, areas of Siang, Upper Siang and parts of Lower Dibang Valley districts are facing drought-like situation, the letter said.

He requested the ministry to depute an inter-ministerial team to visit the flood and drought affected areas of the state for a clearer picture for immediate remedial measures, it added.



KYI DE KHANG SCHOOL HOLDS ITS ANNUAL FLIGHT TO FANTASY EVENT

Gangtok, 04 Sept: Interact Club of Kyi De Khang Secondary School conducted its annual 'Flight to Fantasy' event at the school premises in Gangtok on 03 Sept with the participation of 13 schools from East district. The programme included painting competitions, quiz competition, group singing and spell bee competitions. The club has extended gratitude to the sponsors, Mangla Mansion and Rotary Club of Gangtok, for their extensive support in making the event a success. [Sandeep Prasad]

To contact

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GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM CULTURAL AFFAIRS & HERITAGE DEPARTMENT GANGTOK - 737101, SIKKIM

ENTRIES INVITED FOR KAVI SAMMELAN

In commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department is organizing a Kavi-Sammelan on 29th September at Manan Kendra. Entries are invited from poets, students and interested individuals in all local languages on the theme "Mahatma Gandhi - His life, work & philosophy".

Interested individuals may kindly send in their entries to OSD (Song & Drama Unit), Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department by 15th September 2018.

Sd/-

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SummitTIMES

Crime is Never Petty

Social bankruptcy feeds antisocial tendencies

Speak to the old-timers, or leaf through a vintage edition of the Guinness Book of World Records, and chances are that you will learn that Sikkim, at one time, figured in the book under the enviable entry of a state with “zero crime rate.” The data that earned Sikkim this status is obviously suspect, since not reporting or documenting crimes is not the same as not having any, but no one can deny that Sikkim has been a safe place for a long time. Of course there have always been crimes committed; that, after all, is something every society has to live with. Of late, however, the nature of crimes has been showing a disturbing trend. Not only is violence entering the crime roll in higher numbers, but an increasing number of petty-burglaries with big hauls have become common, again, not all of them get reported to the police. News-reports arrive often about the nature of crimes now becoming increasingly common in the State – a planned burglary in which specific items are lifted, then a drug bust which occurs too routinely only because addiction rates are climbing, and then the rare murder which occurred over a minor issue. The other worrying statistic is the involvement of juveniles and the very young in too many crimes. One needs to only look at the criminal graph of the notorious “spiderman” of Sikkim to realize how minds and hearts, once inured to minor crimes can graduate to the more dangerous crimes. “Spiderman” started off as a petty burglar who climbed into hotel rooms and stole from tourists. He has since be involved in murders and violent jail-breaks. There have been other instances when masked gangs have carried out dacoities in villages and attempted heists, although that trend has thankfully subsided.

What continues to occur too often, and what should worry everyone, are the opportunist crimes. Ask anyone who lives in the urban sprawls of Gangtok and Namchi, and they will know of a neighbor who had stepped out for a brief errand only to return to find the house burgled. This has happened often and have rarely been solved. It was obviously someone who has noticed habits and patterns and is familiar with the place, perhaps even the target persons, to pull off a quick job like that.

For a state already grappling with a host of social challenges ranging from runaway substance abuse to growing number suicides to a high school drop-out rate, crime has clearly become the latest cause for distress. Although each of these challenges will require individual attention, they should not be seen in isolation because they are essentially interconnected in that they result from the socio-cultural and socioeconomic changes that have visited the State as part of ‘development’, modernity and mainstreaming. None of these are essentially negative influences but have collaborated to change lifestyles in Sikkim and while this change could have been eased with a more responsive society, fact remains that people at large were left to their own devices to ‘adjust’. The spurt in crimes and the involvement of kids too young to be held responsible for their deeds is possibly a product of imitative consumption which is too disquietingly common, especially among the younger generation. The obvious income inequality does not help matters and this situation, when catalysed by a largely absent civil society, eases the path leading to crime.

The inference made above is admittedly speculative, and it should be a worrying sign when journalists end up speculating on social trends when these are better handled by professionals trained in making sense of such issues. But that is not happening in Sikkim, is it? And that is where the main problem lies. For all the profusion of NGOs in the State, there is none of any consistent commitment to issues of the youth. It is important that the people and their representative organisations notice the trend and arrest the slide by first understanding what it is that drives some of its young to such easy delinquency and then setting the aberrations right. The situation demands a collective response, which, if not addressed soon, will snowball into a presence that cannot be erased as easily later. The cops will obviously do their job of rounding up suspects and finding the culprits, but until the root cause is not corrected, the problem will persist. What is worse, disinterest will from a hardened crop of anti-socials, because juveniles in obvious need of compassionate counseling would have received only ‘police action’ and derision. Antisocial tendencies are not fed by economic poverty, it is social bankruptcy that cements it.

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Google at 20: how a search engine became a literal extension of our mind

BENJAMIN CURTIS
theconversation.com

We are losing our minds to Google. After 20 years, Google’s products have become integrated into our everyday lives, altering the very structure of our cognitive architecture, and our minds have expanded out into cyberspace as a consequence. This is not science fiction, but an implication of what’s known as the “extended mind thesis”, a widely accepted view in philosophy, psychology and neuroscience.

Make no mistake about it, this is a seismic shift in human psychology, probably the biggest we have ever had to cope with, and one that is occurring with breathtaking rapidity – Google, after all, is just 20 years old, this month. But although this shift has some good consequences, there are some deeply troubling issues we urgently need to address.

Much of my research spans issues to do with personal identity, mind, neuroscience, and ethics. And in my view, as we gobble up Google’s AI driven “personalised” features, we cede ever more of our personal cognitive space to Google, and so both mental privacy and the ability to think freely are eroded. What’s more, evidence is starting to emerge that there may be a link between technology use and mental health problems. In other words, it is not clear that our minds can take the strain of the virtual stretch. Perhaps we are even close to the snapping point.

“Where does the mind stop and the rest of the world begin?”

This was the question posed in 1998 (coincidentally the same year



Google was launched) by two philosophers and cognitive scientists, Andy Clark and David Chalmers, in a now famous journal article, The Extended Mind. Before their work, the standard answer among scientists was to say that the mind stopped at the boundaries of skin and skull (roughly, the boundaries of the brain and nervous system).

But Clark and Chalmers proposed a more radical answer. They argued that when we integrate things from the external environment into our thinking processes, those external things play the same cognitive role as our brains do. As a result, they are just as much a part of our minds as neurons and synapses. Clark and Chalmers’ argument produced debate, but many other experts on the mind have since agreed.

OUR MINDS ARE LINKED WITH GOOGLE

Clark and Chalmers were writing before the advent of smartphones and 4G internet, and their illustrative examples were somewhat fanciful. They involved, for instance, a man who integrated a notebook into his everyday life that served as an exter-

nal memory. But as recent work has made clear, the extended mind thesis bears directly on our obsession with smartphones and other devices connected to the web.

Growing numbers of us are now locked into our smartphones from morning until night. Using Google’s services (search engine, calendar, maps, documents, photo assistant and so on) has become second nature. Our cognitive integration with Google is a reality. Our minds literally lie partly on Google’s servers.

But does this matter? It does, for two major reasons.

First, Google is not a mere passive cognitive tool. Google’s latest upgrades, powered by AI and machine learning, are all about suggestions. Google Maps not only tells us how to get where we want to go (on foot, by car or by public transport), but now gives us personalised location suggestions that it thinks will interest us.

Google Assistant, always just two words away (“Hey Google”), now not only provides us with quick information, but can even book appointments for us and make restaurant reservations.

Email now makes suggestions

about what we want to type. And Google News now pushes stories that it thinks are relevant to us, personally. But all of this removes the very need to think and make decisions for ourselves. Google – again I stress, literally – fills gaps in our cognitive processes, and so fills gaps in our minds. And so mental privacy and the ability to think freely are both eroded.

ADDICTION OR INTEGRATION?

Second, it doesn’t seem to be good for our minds to be spread across the internet. A growing cause for concern is so-called “smartphone addiction”, no longer an uncommon problem. According to recent reports, the average UK smartphone user checks his phone every 12 minutes. There are a whole host of bad psychological effects this could have that we are only just beginning to appreciate, depression and anxiety being the two most prominent.

But the word “addiction” here, in my view, is just another word for the integration I mentioned above. The reason why so many of us find it so hard to put our smartphones down, it seems to me, is that we have integrated their use into our everyday cognitive processes. We literally think by using them, and so it is no wonder it is hard to stop using them. To have one’s smartphone suddenly taken away is akin to having a lobotomy. Instead, to break the addiction/integration and regain our mental health, we must learn to think differently, and to reclaim our minds.

[the writer is Lecturer in Philosophy and Ethics, Nottingham Trent University]

Idris Elba: isn’t it time for a black James Bond?

EDWARD ADEMOLU
theconversation.com

A black Bond? It’s an apparently unproblematic and straightforward question, right? Well, not quite. When suggested quite quizzically by a colleague, it sparked a series of reactionary positions in the staff room, especially from the 007 traditionalists.

In fact, whispers that the very suave – and yet indisputably black – actor Idris Elba could potentially play Bond have ignited social commentaries about race, filmic representation and literary integrity around the world.

The issue was shaken and stirred (sorry, I couldn’t help myself) by a recent report in the Daily Star, in which director Antoine Fuqua recalled a discussion with Bond producer Barbara Broccoli, who allegedly said “it is time” for a black actor to star as 007 and that she is confident “it will happen eventually”.

Interestingly, this little nugget sat at the top of a story about Fuqua launching his latest business venture – an app that allows people to listen to movies online with surround sound. But reporters know how to sell stories to their editors and so the headline, main picture and the first half dozen paragraphs were devoted to Elba’s Bond prospects.

Despite the fact that Fuqua’s management subsequently insisted that the conversation was “made-up stuff”, the question of Elba as the new Bond dominated the comments below the story, which included one reader asking: “What would be the outcry if Martin Luther King was played by a white bloke?” What indeed?

Elba himself is keeping us guessing: “My name’s Elba, Idris Elba” he tweeted at 9am on August 12, followed three hours later with: “Don’t believe the hype”.

Elba’s no mug. He knows how to fan the flames of speculation. And I’m unashamedly going to fall into his trap. So is it time for a black James Bond? What the heck – why not?

TALL, DARK AND HANDSOME

Is it beyond fictionalisation – or the limitations of our individual and cultural imagination – to comprehend a reality in which

there’s a devilishly handsome and sophisticated black Englishman with an MI6-approved licence to kill. It gives new – or should I say restores (in my humble opinion) the original – meaning to “tall, dark and handsome”, right? Everything that Bond is supposed to be.

Wouldn’t it be more surprising, and perhaps unsettling, if such an imagining, even in fiction, couldn’t withstand the assumed fragility of our liberal mindedness? Especially when we are supposed to live in a post-racial society where – ironically – inequalities, discrimination and oppression are nonexistent. If they are nonexistent in the material world, it seems they are alive and well in the figments of our imagination.

Cast your mind back to the media’s preoccupation with Prince Harry and Meghan Markle’s “racially progressive” interracial union, or France’s international posturing as a bastion of ethno-racial equality, with its “colourblind” government prohibition on referencing the race and ethnicity of its citizens. Is that enough to convince you that we live in a multicoloured land of bliss where all is possible?

Rallying against this romanticism are traditionalists – or Bond literalists – who, in all their intransigent preoccupation with conserving the historically white purity and scriptural heritage of the Bond franchise, are irked at a blackened prospect. They offer a plethora of counter arguments, not least that in 1953 Casino Royale, the first in Ian Fleming’s 12-book Bond series, the secret agent is described as a white Englishman of part Scottish and Swiss heritage who was educated at Fettes College.



To which I submit: we aren’t in the 1950s. The films are no longer time-warped in black-and-white – they have changed and adapted to reflect the cultural zeitgeist of cinematic and contemporary public consciousness.

It’s interesting to note that these purists are not all white – disproportionately so, yes – but not all. Some non-white Bond enthusiasts have also put in their own two cents’ worth, asking producers to “stick to the script” and insisting that being white is integral to Bond’s character. But can we racialise character?

Others, meanwhile, have called for their own black, Walther PPK-wielding agent, in the manner of 007, to not only tell their own new or complimentary stories but also avoid falling prey to potential accusations of tokenism in film.

COLOURBLIND CASTING

Meanwhile, JK Rowling decried critics of the casting of black actress Noma Dumezweni as the fictional Harry Potter character Hermione Granger, as “a bunch of racists” and that “white skin was never specified”, challenging normative assumptions that fictional characters are white, by default.

Supporters of Bond’s racial metamorphosis urge for better ethnic minority filmic representation in the spy genre and stress that fiction is not exempt from transformation even in the context of race. It’s a sentiment I share.

I realise that my openmindedness unlatches a Pandora’s Box of “Whatabout-me-isms”. What about a polyamorous, gender-nonconforming, effeminate, anti-misogynist Gujarati Indian as Othello? Or, can I, as a Liverpoolian-accented, shaven-headed, transgendered lesbian, play Sherlock Holmes? Then again, what about a white Shaft? But wait wouldn’t that be “Whitesploitation”? Let’s not go there.

Would Elba make a fine Bond? Absolutely. Having seen 007 in all his white iterations, I’m all for a representational shift towards a salt-and-peppered Afro-textured, mahogany urbanite. Too far fetched? Surely not.

[the writer is Dr of International Development; Global Development Institute, University of Manchester]

Liquor & spirit worth Rs 1 crore seized in Bihar

GOPALGANJ, SEP 4 (PTI): Excise officials Tuesday seized 490 cartons of India Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and 40 drums of spirit worth Rs 1 crore and arrested a person in this connection from Bihar's Gopalganj district.

District Excise Superintendent Priya Ranjan said that 490 cartons of foreign liquor and 40 drums of spirit - each drum containing 200 litres - were seized from two trucks at Balthari check-post under Kuchaikot police station of the district.

The value of the seized items - liquor and spirit - are estimated to be around Rs 1 crore in the open market, the excise superintendent said.

During the search and raid, the team arrested the driver of a vehicle identified as Ravi Kumar, a resident of Sonipat district of Haryana while other persons managed to escape from the spot, the officer said.

Bridge in busy Kolkata locality collapses, one killed

KOLKATA, SEP 4 (PTI): A portion of the arterial Majerhat bridge in south Kolkata collapsed Tuesday evening, snuffing out one life, trapping several people and crushing many vehicles, police said.

The 40-year-old bridge in the crowded Alipore area caved in around 4.45 pm during rush hour over rail tracks. It runs over the Majerhat Railway Station and connects the city centre to Behala and other southern suburbs.

While police confirmed the death of one person, fire brigade personnel engaged in the rescue work said 25 injured were pulled out from the rubble.

The injured have been admitted to SSKM and CMRI hospitals, the police said.

State minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said she has heard about the death of five persons but it is yet to be confirmed.

NDRF DG Sanjay Kumar said earthmovers are being used.

"We have to take into account the safety aspect while clearing the debris", he said.

Another minister Firhad Hakim said efforts are being made to find out any trapped person under the debris.



After the rescue work is over "we will undertake technical inquiry", he said.

An eyewitness said some people in a minibus and private cars have been trapped.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the first priority is to rescue the injured and those who are trapped.

She said a probe would be

ordered to find out the cause of the collapse.

City mayor Sovan Chatterjee and senior police officers are at the accident site.

Circular Railway services and local train services in Budge Budge-Sealdah line were affected, an Eastern Railway spokesman said here.

The local train services were

suspended from 4.45 pm, he said.

The bridge collapse hit traffic movement to and from vast areas in south-west Kolkata and adjacent South 24 Parganas district.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed the incident as "deeply unfortunate" and hoped for the speedy recovery of the injured.



Chinese minister hails ease of doing business in Jharkhand

RANCHI, SEPT 4 (PTI): During a meeting with the visiting Jharkhand delegation headed by Chief Minister Raghubar Das, China's International department minister Sindh Thao Tuesday commended ease of doing business in the state which has a lot of potential for investment.

Thao said that though Jharkhand is a new state its growth rate is 8.2 per cent which is highly appreciable.

"The investment environment in Jharkhand, its growth rate, ease of doing business and the business environment are commendable," Thao, the Minister of International Department of Communist Party of China was quoted as saying by an official release issued here.

The Chinese minister said that there is a lot of potential for investment in Jharkhand.

The Jharkhand delegation under Das is on a five-day tour of China starting September 1 to

obtain information about latest technology.

Thao said that the population of both the countries is 256 billion, which is almost one-third of the world's population and presently holds 21 per cent of the world's GDP, and the GDP rate can be strong if the two countries work together, the official release said.

The two countries can also have a very large partnership in World Trade, he said.

Giving details about the Global Agriculture and Food Summit, 2018, which is going to be organized in Jharkhand on 29-30 November, the CM informed Thao that many companies related to Agriculture and Food Processing of the world will participate in the summit.

The Chief Minister also invited Thao to participate in the summit.

The release said that bilateral relations have improved after the last visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to China.



Conrad Sangma quits Lok Sabha, to take oath as MLA Wednesday

SHILLONG, SEP 4 (PTI): Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma Tuesday submitted his resignation as the member of Lok Sabha to Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, a week after he won the bypoll from South Tura seat.

Sangma, who assumed charge as the chief minister of Meghalaya in March, had to get elected to the Assembly to continue in office.

"I have submitted my resignation as Member of Parliament to the Speaker," he told PTI over phone.

Meanwhile, Assembly Commissioner and Secretary Andrew Simons

said the chief minister will take oath as MLA before Speaker Donkupar Roy tomorrow.

Sangma, son of former Lok Sabha speaker Purno A Sanga, defeated Congress candidate Charlotte W Momin and two other Independent nominees to win the South Tura seat on August 27. His sister Agatha Sangma vacated the seat in July to facilitate the contest.

After the by-elections to South Tura and Ranikor Assembly constituencies last month, the seat tally of both the ruling NPP and the Congress are 20 each.

VC asks agitating students to take care of their health

KOLKATA, SEP 4 (PTI): Presidency University Vice-chancellor Anuradha Lohia Tuesday urged the students, who are on indefinite sit-in demanding immediate accommodation in the under-renovation Hindu hostel since August 3, to wait for another six months for the work to be completed.

Asked about reports that three-four agitating students are down with malaria and viral fever, Lohia told reporters "I will request the students to take care of their health, not to lie on verandah but return to their present rented accommodation at New Town. They should take care of their health first."

Lohia said the present repair work of Hindu Hostel was taking some time and she cannot do much about the pace of work as all safety measures are to be looked into.

"But it is not like that there is no conveyance facility from the New Town premises, it is not like that there is no al-

ternative accommodation for the (Presidency) boarders.

Lohia recalled that the Dean of Students had made arrangements to send an agitating student to hospital when he fell sick.

"We would urge the students to take care of their health. They have come here to study, hence they should first take proper care of their health," she said.

The VC said the institution will make arrangement of hospitalisation and medical treatment of any ailing student and the Dean of Students have been asked to be responsive about their medical needs.

Around 50 students have been agitating in the university campus since August 3 demanding immediate accommodation in two of the six under-renovation blocks of the Hindu Hostel claiming these two blocks were fit for use but this claim was not corroborated by the authorities.

Mob clash with police over liquor shop, several injured

BALURGHAT (WB), SEP 4 (PTI): Several policemen were injured in a clash with a group of people who were protesting against a liquor shop in their locality in South Dinajpur district Tuesday.

The liquor shop at Gopal Colony area of Balurghat, the district head-quarter town, was also ransacked by the mob, police said.

The shop, owned by the security guard of an

MP, was earlier located at Hili More beside the state highway. But it was relocated to Gopal Colony following the Supreme Court's order prohibiting liquor vends within 500 metre of the national and state highways across the country.

Police said the people were angry with the liquor shop being relocated in the locality and today a large group went there and started ransacking it.

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Arunachal scribes's body meet CM, demand enactment of WJP Act

ITANAGAR, SEP 4 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has assured the members of Arunachal Pradesh Union of Working Journalists (APUWJ) to look into the demand for press reforms in order to promote a free-thinking society.

Khandu gave this assurance when an APUWJ team led by its president Amar Sangno called on him at his office here on Monday and demanded enactment of Working Journalists Protection (WJP) Act.

Presently, Maharashtra is the only state in India where an Act to protect the rights of working journalists has been passed.

"Journalists in Arunachal Pradesh often face daunting situations from various quarters. APUWJ strongly feels that the enactment of WJP Act would ensure the

safety of all scribes," Sangno said during the meeting.

The Union also demanded introduction of pension scheme for working journalists.

The chief minister was apprised that till date, the state governments of Assam, Tripura, and Haryana have implemented a pension scheme for journalists who have retired from their profession.

"It is only fair, under such circumstances, that journalists who have served the public should be rewarded after long years of service," the APUWJ president said.

Besides, the union also demanded exemption of journalists from toll and parking taxes on the ground that journalists often have to park their vehicles for performing their duties and have to pay heavy parking fees every day.

Implementation of Majithia

Wage Board and accommodation for accredited journalists at government guest houses were the other demands placed by the union.

"More than 10 years on since the formation of the Majithia Wage Board, and the Supreme Court ruling in favour of the recommendations made by the Board, majority of journalists under the Wage Board are yet to receive benefits," Sangno said.

Khandu assured them to look into the demands placed by the union said the issue of implementation of Majithia Wage Board may take some time.

The APUWJ also expressed gratitude to the state government for enhancing Journalists' Welfare Fund cum corpus fund from Rs 1 crore to Rs 2 crore.

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Black night as Federer, Sharapova crash at US Open

NEW YORK, SEP 4 (AFP): Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova crashed out of the US Open on Monday in back-to-back seismic shocks under the Arthur Ashe Stadium lights.

Federer, the five-time champion and looking to end his 10-year wait to add to his total in New York, was beaten by Australia's world number 55 John Millman 3-6, 7-5, 7-6 (9/7), 7-6 (7/3).

It was 20-time major winner Federer's first loss against a player outside the top 50 in 41 meetings at the US Open.

He finished with 77 unforced errors and 10 double faults.

"It was very hot. I felt I couldn't get any air and I was sweating more and more and became more and more uncomfortable," explained Federer.

"I guess I was happy when the match was over."

He added: "John dealt with it better -- he's from Brisbane, one of the most humid places in the world!" It was the world number two's earliest defeat at the tournament since a fourth round loss to Tommy Robredo in 2013.

The result meant there would be no quarter-final showdown with old rival Novak Djokovic who will now face Millmann instead.

"I have so much respect for



Roger and everything he's done for the game. He's been a hero of mine," said Millman.

"Today he was definitely not at his best. But I'll take it," Sharapova, the 2006 champion, suffered a second successive last-16 exit in New York, blasted off court by Carla Suarez Navarro.

The Spanish player marked her 30th birthday in style with a memorable 6-4, 6-3 win over the five-time major champion whose last

Slam title was in Paris in 2014.

Federer had cruised through the first set against Millman who was appearing in his maiden last-16 at the majors.

But the Swiss, who lost in the quarter-finals at Wimbledon where he was defending champion, began to look every bit the 37-year-old he is as he struggled in the suffocating humidity.

He squandered two set points in the second set and another in

the third set tiebreak as the errors piled up.

Federer was 4-2 up in the fourth set but was reeled in and two back-to-back double faults sent him 1/4 down in the tiebreak.

- 'Break a leg' -

The contest was over shortly before 1 a.m. when he hit a weary forehand wide.

Djokovic reached the quarter-finals with a 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 victory over unseeded Joao Sousa.

Djokovic, who ended a 54-week title drought with his 13th Grand Slam title at Wimbledon, said he was relieved to get past 68th-ranked Sousa in straight sets as temperatures soared again.

"Very happy to get this one done in straight sets," said Djokovic, who left the court for a medical evaluation early in the third set but returned to wrap things up in exactly two hours.

Marin Cilic, seeded seven, beat David Goffin of Belgium 7-6 (8/6), 6-2, 6-4 and next takes on Japan's Kei Nishikori who saw off German veteran Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-3, 6-2, 7-5.

Cilic defeated Nishikori in the 2014 final when he won his only Slam title.

Sharapova, the 2006 champion who was trying to reach the quarter-finals for the first time since 2012, hit 38 unforced errors and dropped serve six times.

The defeat also ended the former world number one's perfect record of 23 wins -- 22 of them on Arthur Ashe Stadium -- in night sessions at Flushing Meadows.

"I thought she played really well. I thought in today's conditions, her ball was getting up on me a little bit more, much more than my previous three opponents that I played," said Sharapova.

"I didn't take care of the chance

that I had. By 'chances,' I mean the balls that were a little bit shorter," Suarez Navarro, who was also a quarter-finalist in New York in 2013, goes on to face American 14th seed Madison Keys, the runner-up in 2017.

"Maria has played here at night many times so I knew I needed to be aggressive, focussed and play solid," said the 30th seeded Spaniard.

Meanwhile, Naomi Osaka reached her first Grand Slam quarter-final, beating Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus 6-3, 2-6, 6-4, tearfully admitting she was prepared to "break a leg" to win the match.

The 20-year-old became the first Japanese woman in the US Open last-eight since Shinobu Asagoe in 2004.

Osaka, seeded 20, came back from a break down in the final set to take the tie on a fourth match point when Sabalenka served up an eighth double fault.

"I would never have forgiven myself if I had lost that match," said a tearful Osaka.

"When I was a break down in the final set I thought I would even break a leg if needed so I could get to every ball." Osaka will next face Lesia Tsurenko, the 36th-ranked Ukrainian who beat Czech teenager Marketa Vondrousova 6-7 (3/7), 7-5, 6-2.

India to host FIBA 3x3 World Tour Masters event

HYDERABAD, SEP 4 (PTI): India will host the FIBA 3x3 World Tour Masters, one of the most prestigious basketball tournaments in the world, for the first time starting September 22 here.

The Hyderabad Masters will see participation from the leading international 3x3 teams and top two 3BL teams Delhi 3BL and Bangalore 3BL.

The qualification for the Indian teams was decided on the basis of the results of the inaugural season of 3x3 Pro Basketball League (3BL) which was held from June 9 to August 26 across six cities in India.

Members of the Delhi team comprise Inderbir Gill, Bikramjit Gill, Leandro Souza de Lima and Kiran Shastri. While the team from Bangalore includes Sowkin Shetty, Amit Sehrawat, Rajan Sharma and Lalrina Rentlhei.

Hyderabad Masters is the seventh stage of the FIBA 3x3 World Tour and is the first time an international 3x3 basketball tournament is being played in India.

The participating teams will compete for a chance to qualify for the FIBA 3x3 World Tour Bloomage Beijing Final on October 27-28.

The best international teams like Novi Sad (World No 1), Piran (No 3),



Belgrade (No 9) and more, along with top international players like Simon Finzgar (World No 8) and Anze Srebotov (No 9) will compete in the event.

"India is getting a chance like never before to host the FIBA 3x3 World Tour. Only nine other cities in the world have been the hosts in this edition," Chairman, Hyderabad Masters, Yoshiya Kato, said.

"This is an opportunity for Indian basketball players to compete against the strongest opponents and improve their game. We are proud to be a part of this landmark moment."

League Commissioner, 3BL, Rohit Bakshi, said: "One of my biggest dreams has been to see an Indian team win a medal at an international platform in 3x3 basketball. Team Delhi 3BL and Bangalore 3BL both have the potential to emerge at the top in Hyderabad Masters and qualify for the FIBA 3x3 World Tour Finals.

Manjit wants TOP Scheme inclusion after Asiad gold

NEW DELHI, SEP 4 (PTI): Asian Games gold medalist Manjit Singh, who doesn't have a regular job, Tuesday requested the sports ministry to include him in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme to prepare for the upcoming big events like the 2020 Tokyo Games.

Manjit, who won a gold in the men's 800m race in the Asian Games, was left without a job in March 2016 after the ONGC refused to extend his contract as he was not producing results.

Despite the odds, he continued training under army coach Amrish Kumar before getting a National Camp call-up.

"I lost my job in March 2016 as the ONGC refused to renew my contract. They said I was not producing results. I was getting stipends earlier," he said.

"But now I have won a gold in Asian Games. I hope the sports ministry will take notice of my achievement and the hardships I am facing. I



don't have any sponsor or any company giving me assistance. I am hoping that the Sports Ministry will include me in the TOP Scheme so that I can continue training."

Manjit told PTI during an interaction. The international season is over now and Manjit said next year will be crucial for him as the Asian Championships and World Championships are lined up.

"I want to do well in both the Asian Championships and World Championships next year. After that is the 2020 Olympics but for that I need financial assistance for training. I

hope the sports ministry will help me out," he added.

The 29-year-old Manjit, a native of village Ujhana in Jind district of Haryana, said he was on the verge of quitting the sport when the ONGC refused to renew his contract two years back.

"I was feeling very low and I did not know what to do. I am from a farmer's family and my family cannot afford to send big amount of money for my training. But somehow I continued with help from my coach Amrish Kumar," he said.

"I briefly thought I would quit athletics but my father (a former state

level shot putter) said I should continue and so I continued with the meagre income from my family."

Manjit earned a spot in the Indian athletics team for the 2010 Commonwealth Games but failed to qualify for the final round. He finished fourth in the Asian Championships in Pune in 2013 and won a silver medal in the Federation Cup in 2014.

His first and last gold medal until the recent win came in 2013 and he admitted that he mostly finished second in Nationals. He was not selected for the CWG and Asian Games in 2014.

In 2015, Manjit

moved to Bareilly and trained under Amrish Kumar, a former Army man who trained athletes at Jat Regiment Centre.

He approached the trainer after 2014 Asian Games bronze medalist Naveen Kumar told him about the training. Manjit then won a silver in the Federation Cup in 2015.

"It has been more

than 10 years I began my career and I have faced a lot of disappointments in my career. But I did not lose hope and I knew I can do something big," said Manjit who began competing in the national circuit in 2008.

Asked about the

800m final he ran in Jakarta, he said, "My tactics was to run along with the leading pack and then take a chance in the final stretch. I was determined to do something.

"Thank God, it was according to the script I had worked out. I had enough energy to make the final kick and overtake those who were ahead of me.

Series win over India on par with Ashes triumph: Bayliss

CHETAN NARULA

SOUTHAMPTON, SEP 4 (PTI): The victory against world no 1 India in the ongoing five-Test series is on par with beating Australia in the Ashes, said England coach Trevor Bayliss, who suggested they might experiment in the final match starting at London on Friday.

"It is right up there with beating Australia in the Ashes. Obviously India are a very good team, the number one team, and to knock them off is a very good feeling," said Bayliss after England sealed the series with a 60-run win in the fourth Test.

"There were some difficult conditions especially on day one. We have said before, under a bit of pressure these guys have got a bit of character which is a good sign going forward."

With opener Alastair Cook announcing his retirement after this series, and skipper Joe Root eager to bat at number four, England will have to figure out their top-order in the final Test as well as in the upcoming series against Sri Lanka and West Indies.

Moeen Ali was promoted to the number 3 spot in the second innings of the fourth Test, paving the way for Root to bat at four and Bayliss said the off-spinner might be an option in that position in the right condition.

"I'm sure there will be discussions on a



few things in the next couple of days. Batsmen would like to have a settled position in the order. You always find in any era or team there are one or two guys who have to be a bit flexible," he said.

"Moeen has been that guy for us over the last few years. When Root asked him if he was keen to do it he jumped at it. In

the right conditions I would not put it past him.

"He works hard at his game. In spinning conditions he can cover that pretty well at the moment but his challenge will be on the faster wickets but we haven't got any of those for a while."

Bayliss, however, wasn't sure if Ali

would be a permanent move and hinted it was possible for Root to revert to the role.

"Joe has always said he wants to bat at four. He understood where I was coming from that if we had a number three averaging 50 to allow him to bat at four, that would be handy. But I thought it was for the best of the team he batted at three," he

said.

"Hopefully we can find someone who can do a decent job at number three and he can bat where he feels most comfortable. All credit to him. He has taken that role on with no problems. He has taken one for the team in that respect."

The coach also said they will take a call on whether to field both James Anderson and Stuart Broad in the upcoming series.

"We will get together after this Test and see who is fit and available. We will definitely want to win the last Test, and I see a future with them (Anderson-Broad) at the moment," Bayliss said.

"They are the most successful pace bowlers in this series and it will go down to how their bodies are feeling. We spoke before the series if their bodies would double up in close Test matches. So we will have to wait and see how they are in 48 hours' time.

"The numbers of Tests we have played this year have been spread out. There is another reasonable gap until we play the Tests in Sri Lanka. There is a bigger gap again and then another couple of months leading in to the West Indies. Them only playing Test cricket does give them a bit of a break."

The fifth and final Test begins on Friday at London.



PTI's Arif Alvi elected new Pakistan president: Reports

ISLAMABAD, SEP 4 (PTI): Dr Arif Alvi, one of the founding members of Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, was elected as the new President of Pakistan on Tuesday, according to media reports.

Alvi defeated Pakistan Peoples Party candidate Aitzaz Ahsan and the Pakistan Muslim League-N nominee Maulana Fazl ur Rehman in a three-way contest to become the 13th president.

Of the 430 votes cast in the National Assembly and Senate, Alvi received 212 votes, Rehman bagged 131 and Ahsan garnered 81; six votes were rejected, Dawn-News reported, citing unofficial results.

Alvi secured 45 of the 60 votes cast by the Balochistan's newly elected lawmakers, it said.

In the PPP-dominated Sindh Assembly, Ahsan got 100 votes, while Alvi bagged 56. Just a solitary vote was cast in the favour of Rehman.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Alvi received 78 of the total 109 votes, while Rehman and Ahsan got 26 and five votes respectively.

In Pakistan, the President is considered as a symbol of the federation and head of the state and exercises all powers on the recommendations of the prime minister.

Outgoing President Mamnoon Hussain's tenure ends on September 8.

A dentist by profession, 69-year-old Alvi is one of the founding members of PTI. He served as the party's secretary general from 2006 to 2013.

He won the National Assembly elections from NA-247 (Karachi) during the July 25 polls. He was also elected member of the National Assembly in the 2013 general election.

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Afghan Taliban announces death of Haqqani network leader

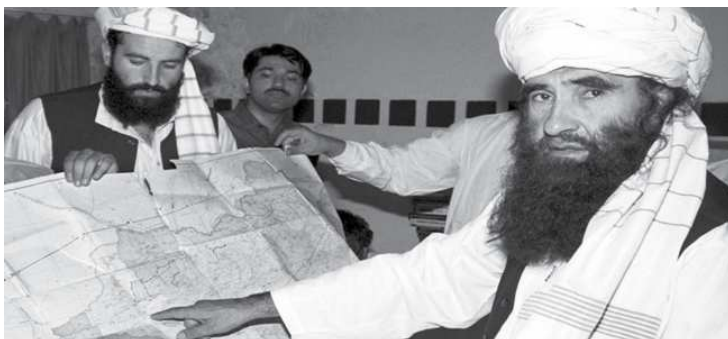
KABUL, SEP 4 (AFP): The Taliban announced Tuesday the death of Jalaluddin Haqqani, a former CIA asset whose eponymous militant group is now considered one of the most dangerous factions fighting Afghan and US-led NATO forces in Afghanistan.

The Haqqani network was founded by Jalaluddin, an Afghan mujahideen commander fighting the Soviet occupation in the 1980s with the help of the United States and Pakistan.

Now a Taliban affiliate, it is blamed for some of the most shocking and brutal attacks across Afghanistan since the US invasion of 2001. Designated a terror group by Washington, targeting it is one of the top US priorities in the region.

Long suspected of links to Pakistan's shadowy military establishment, the network was described by US Admiral Mike Mullen in 2011 as a "veritable arm" of Pakistani intelligence.

Jalaluddin gained notoriety for his organisation and bravery during the Afghan conflict of the 1980s, garnering attention from the CIA and



a personal visit from US congressman Charlie Wilson.

A fluent Arabic speaker, Jalaluddin also fostered close ties with Arab jihadists, including Osama bin Laden, who flocked to the region during the war. Later, Jalaluddin became a minister in the Taliban regime.

He is believed to have been ill for several years. The network has been led by his son Sirajuddin, who doubles as the Afghan Taliban's deputy leader, for some time now.

The Haqqanis are known for their heavy use of suicide bombers. Analysts have long suspected them of being be-

hind some high-profile attacks in Kabul that have been claimed by the Islamic State group in recent years.

Among many spectacular assaults, they were accused of killing around 150 people in the heart of Kabul with a truck bomb in May 2017 -- though Sirajuddin later denied the accusation in a rare audio message.

The network has also been accused of assassinating top Afghan officials and holding kidnapped Westerners for ransom.

That includes Canadian Joshua Boyle, his American wife Caitlan Coleman, and

their three children, who were released last year. They also held US soldier Bowe Bergdahl, who was released in 2014 in exchange for five Afghan Guantanamo Bay detainees.

Following the US invasion of Afghanistan, Taliban fighters flooded across the border into Pakistan, where they regrouped before launching an insurgency against the Americans.

That included the Haqqanis, who coordinated attacks on NATO from across the border in their stronghold of Miranshah, the biggest town in North Waziristan, one of Paki-

stan's loosely governed tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan.

The US launched repeated drone attacks against the group, while Pakistan's military conducted successive clearing operations, though sceptical Afghan officials have noted they always seemed to miss the Haqqanis.

Islamabad intensified military operations in North Waziristan in 2014, however, and now insists that there are no militant safe havens left on Pakistani soil.

Pakistan sees its arch-nemesis to the east, India, as an existential threat, and has long sought influence over Kabul as a bulwark against New Delhi.

The Haqqanis have frequently been accused of targeting Indian installations in Afghanistan, spurring speculation they were overseen by Pakistani intelligence.

Analysts say Pakistan appears to view the Haqqanis and more broadly the Afghan Taliban as an asset holding India at bay in Afghanistan.

Politicians and retired military officials in Islamabad

acknowledge privately that having open channels with the Haqqanis is vital, with many insisting that maintaining contact is not the same as offering support.

With Sirajuddin firmly in charge, Jalaluddin's death may not have much strategic impact on the network's operations.

Washington, which believes Pakistan is playing a double game, has long pressured Islamabad to crack down on militant groups, with the Haqqanis a top priority. Islamabad has repeatedly denied the claims.

On Saturday, the Pentagon announced it was cancelling 300 million in aid to Pakistan over its lack of "decisive" action against militant groups.

The cut, part of a broader freeze announced by the Trump administration in January, is seen as another attempt by Washington to bend Pakistan to its will.

However, analysts have said the moves are too little, too late, and that until the US addresses Pakistan's fears over India, Islamabad will not shake its support for militant proxies.

Myanmar defends Suu Kyi's silence over jailed reporters

YANGON, SEP 4 (AFP): A global outcry over the jailing of two Reuters journalists in Myanmar has been greeted with silence by civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, a stony response that an official defended Tuesday as a reluctance to criticise the judiciary.

Journalists Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, were arrested while reporting on atrocities committed during the violent expulsion by the military of some 700,000 Rohingya Muslims last year.

A Yangon court on Monday found them guilty under the Official Secrets Act and handed them each seven years in prison, sparking outrage from the UN, EU and US -- all of whom supported Myanmar's emergence from decades of junta rule -- as well as media and rights groups.

Suu Kyi, who was herself subjected to house arrest for some 15 years,



relying on foreign media to highlight her plight, has been widely condemned for her silence on the case and verdict, which has posed the sternest test in recent years to free speech in the country.

Aung Hla Tun, a former Reuters journalist who now works for the government as deputy Minister of Information, defended the Nobel Laureate's reticence.

"Criticising the judicial system would be

tantamount to contempt of court," he told AFP, explaining her silence so far. "I don't think she will do it." Lawyers for the pair will appeal the verdict while ultimately the country's president, a close ally of Suu Kyi, can pardon prisoners.

In April the president granted 8,500 jailed people an amnesty, including 36 deemed political prisoners.

But there were still some 200 others, including the two Reuters

journalists, facing trials linked to political activities, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners said at the time.

Erstwhile Suu Kyi advocates overseas have been left dismayed by her attitude to their case so far.

Her one public reference to the Reuters journalists during the court case -- telling Japanese broadcaster NHK that the pair had broken the official secrets act -- was criticised by rights

groups for potentially prejudging the verdict.

Former confidant and member of her advisory board on the Rohingya crisis US diplomat Bill Richardson alleged she also denounced the two reporters as traitors during a heated exchange at the beginning of the year.

While the case has horrified the West, the response within Myanmar has been muted.

Several papers marked the jailing of the pair with '7 Day News' publishing a large black rectangle on its front page and the Myanmar Times running a full front page photo of the pair calling the verdict "a blow to press freedom".

But the case has not garnered wider public attention, despite its implications for press freedom in a country, whose emergence from junta rule has been contorted by the violence in Rakhine.



Russian air strikes batter Syria's Idlib

BEIRUT, SEPT 4 (AFP): Russian warplanes battered Syria's rebel-controlled Idlib on Tuesday for the first time in three weeks, a war monitor said, as expectations mount of a government offensive in the north-western province.

Regime ally Moscow and rebel backer Ankara have held several rounds of talks aimed at averting an assault, but government troops have been massing near the rebel zone.

"Russian warplanes resumed bombing Idlib province after a 22-day pause," said Rami Abdel Rahman, who heads the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The air raids "came a day after rebel units in Idlib hit regime positions in neighbouring Latakia province, which killed three pro-regime fighters," Abdel Rahman told AFP.

Tuesday's bombardment hit several areas held by the jihadist-led Hayat Tahrir al-Sham alliance, among them the large town of Jisr al-Shughur, but also areas held by rival Turkish-backed rebels, including the town of Ariha.

Abdel Rahman could not immediately provide a death toll for the strikes.

Seized from government forces in 2015,

Idlib and adjacent areas form the last major chunk of territory still in rebel hands.

The Syrian military has been deploying reinforcements to the zone for more than a month and Russian has stepped up its war rhetoric.

"We know that the Syrian armed forces are getting ready to solve this problem," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday, calling Idlib a "pocket of terrorism".

Moscow has been carrying out strikes in Syria since September 2015, using aircraft based at the Hmeimim base in Latakia province.

Russia accuses rebels in Idlib of attacking Hmeimim with weaponised drones and insists jihadist groups in the province must be eliminated.

Analysts say there is still a window of opportunity to avoid the humanitarian impact of a full-scale offensive.

The presidents of Turkey, Russia and fellow regime ally Iran are to meet in Tehran on Friday for three-way talks that are expected to focus on Idlib.

An estimated three million people -- half of them displaced from other parts of Syria -- live in the province and adjacent rebel-held areas.

Ministers from three North Indian states woo Singapore investors

GURDIP SINGH SINGAPORE, SEP 4 (PTI): An Indian delegation comprising Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat and leaders from Punjab and Uttar Pradesh is in Singapore to woo potential investors.

Chief Minister Rawat along with Punjab's Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal and Public Works Minister Vijay Inder Singla and Uttar Pradesh's Industrial Development Minister Satish Mahana held a series of meetings with top Singaporean ministers.

They jointly led a delegation of 'Invest North' and met separately Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishna, Education Minister Ong Ye Kung and Communications and Information Minister S Iswaran.

The 'Invest North' summit is being organised by the Indian



High Commission in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The CM and Indian ministers also met Surbana Jurong, the town planner which has done a master plan for Andhra Pradesh's Amaravati city.

Jurong's expertise was sought for the proposed town-

ship near Mohali, Singla told PTI.

"We have 5,435-acre land through pooling scheme for the new township 'Aerotropolis' for which we are now doing a conceptual plan," said Singla.

Expected to cost USD 2.6 billion, a detailed project report is underway for the Mohali Aerotropolis.

Addressing the "Professional Diaspora Connect", gathering, the delegation also gave an update on the smart cities, saying some were in planning while others were progressing towards project implementation.

Addressing some 200 members of the Indian business community, Badal said Punjab will be among the first to complete its smart city projects covering Amritsar, Ludhiana and Jalandhar.

"We are moving ahead in a significant way. Most of the infrastructure is being put up in the cities," said Badal.

Uttarakhand's Dehradun smart city project is in the planning stage, added Rawat.

More than 50 delegates from the three states and CII are in Singapore pitching for investments.



STUNNING! On a night dedicated to film it was fashion that dominated as Naomi Watts commanded the red carpet at the 75th annual Venice Film Festival.

"BIGGEST LOAD OF COW DUNG" RAVI SHASTRI RUBBISHES RUMOURS OF DATING NIMRAT KAUR

Rumours of Nimrat Kaur dating Indian cricket team coach Ravi Shastri surfaced and all hell broke loose. If you have missed the memo, it was reported that the duo is in love and have been dating each other for the past two years. It apparently all began when they were roped in to launch vehicles for a German carmaker and make public appearances together as a part of a deal. But it is known now that they are ex-flames after a close friend revealed it.

However, that was yesterday. Today has brought in another perspective to the

entire episode and it's none than Shastri himself. When Mid-Day phoned him and quizzed him about the alleged whirlwind romance he called it the "Biggest load of dung." Even on further probing, he stood by his words.

"Nothing to say when it is the biggest load of cow dung," he added. In fact, when asked about his last meet with Nimrat, he maintained, "When

I say cow dung, you must understand."

Earlier, even Nimrat Kaur dismissed the same with a rather cryptic tweet that read, "Fact: I may need a root canal. Fiction: Everything else I read about me today. More facts: Fiction can be more hurtful, Monday blues exist and I love ice cream. Here's to trash free happy days ahead."

On the work front, Nimrat was last seen in Alt Balaji's web series The Test Case, and is currently shooting for the next season of the show. Ravi Shastri is in England where the Indian cricket team is participating in a test match.



Madhuri Dixit and Sanjay Dutt come together to resume the shoot of Kalank

Recently the shoot of Kalank was abruptly halted. A section of the set that was erected in Mumbai crumbled. But everything is back in business now. The shoot for the film has begun with none other than Madhuri Dixit and Sanjay Dutt. It is informed on how these two are part of Kalank but won't share screen space. Well, all that is wrong after all. Madhuri and Sanjay canned some dramatic sequences recently if a report in Mumbai Mirror is anything to go by.

A source revealed to the daily, "Sanjay and Madhuri shot a couple of dramatic sequences together over three days with co-stars Varun Dhawan and Alia Bhatt. While Varun's portions were wrapped up in two days, Alia was present on the set for a day after which



she headed to Bulgaria to resume work with Ranbir Kapoor on Ayan Mukerji's Brahmastra."

Varun did update on the same when he lamented on an Insta story that every time he shoots for Kalank it rains.

The source revealed, "It's not like Sanjay and Madhuri were conned to be a part of Kalank. They were well aware that the film will require them to shoot together which is why both Sanjay and Madhuri sat

down to discuss the same, even before signing the dotted line. And now that they are officially on board, they are only excited to be a part of Karan Johar's ambitious project that has been in the making for 15 years. They want to contribute in the best way possible and make it one memorable film."

"We realise we are stronger together": Victoria Beckham FINALLY addresses rumours about the state of her marriage

David and Victoria Beckham have finally addressed the state of their 19-year marriage in a new interview with Vogue, having been plagued by split rumours in recent months.

Cutting to the chase, Spice Girl-cum-fashion designer Victoria, 44 - who has also shared a new video for the publication, in which she celebrates her style icon status by posing in some of her most iconic outfits - admitted persistent speculation regarding the state of their marriage comes with the territory.

"People have been making things up about our relationship for 20 years, so David and I are pretty used to ignoring the nonsense and just carrying on as normal," she said. "But these things have a wider effect on the people around us, and that's unfair."

For the October edition of the iconic publication, the superstar couple have taken part in a photoshoot with their entire brood - children Brooklyn, 19, Romeo, 16, Cruz, 13, Harper, seven, and even their beloved cocker spaniel, Olive.

The image sees David and Victoria sat on the grass in the sunshine, the children and their dog

leaping about around them with water guns.

David, 43, looks proudly at son Brooklyn, while Victoria reclines in a navy dress, a content smile on her face, with Olive captured mid-jump, leaping over her. David sits out of the cover image, however, which features just Victoria, Olive and the kids underneath a tree.

The former pop icon smiles wryly in a crisp white shirt, while her photogenic brood encircle their mother, each one stylish in their own right.

Talking about brand Beckham, Victoria said: "We both realise that we are stronger together than we are as individuals. Would either of us be in the position that we are in now had we not met and been together all those years ago? It's all about the family unit.

We are much stronger - the six



of us - than we would be if we were individuals. We respect that family bond and that is key."

Back in June, the Beckhams were suddenly forced to vehemently deny speculation that they were heading for a divorce.

It later emerged that during this turbulent time Victoria sat down with her four children to

reassure them about the state of their parents' marriage.

The source added that while the couple of 21 years laughed off the rumours publicly, they took it 'much more seriously' at home.

At the time of the divorce rumours - which seemed to involve speculation about David's faithfulness to his wife - Jo Milloy, a

spokesman for Victoria, told the Daily Mail the gossip was 'absolute nonsense'.

Meanwhile, former England football captain David's spokesman, Simon Oliveira, dubbed the claims 'embarrassing and laughable'.

"There is no statement due, no divorce, and a lot of Chinese whispers and fake social media news," he said. "This is all very bizarre and an embarrassing waste of time."

David and Victoria began dating in 1997, marrying in 1999. Branded 'Posh and Becks' by the media, they welcomed their son Brooklyn in the spring of 1999, a few months prior to their wedding - which was a famously lavish affair at Luttrellstown Castle, Ireland involving crowns, thrones and a purple change of clothes.

Romeo was born in 2002, after which the family relocated to Spain, with David signed to new team Real Madrid. Meanwhile, Victoria was still working on a solo singing career - the Spice Girls having split in 2001 after their third album.

Between 2003 and 2007, Victo-

ria continued to work on her solo career, with two additional albums recorded, neither of which officially released (but leaking online years later). David was signed to LA Galaxy and the family moved to Los Angeles, with third son Cruz born in 2005.

Victoria re-joined the Spice Girls for their 2007/2008 comeback world tour - after which she put her stamp on Hollywood with her own reality show and a guest appearance on comedy series Ugly Betty. It was after this that she turned her attentions to fashion.

Her fashion line was launched in 2008 to much critical acclaim, continuing to build on its success year-after-year. The Beckhams moved back to London in 2011, with Harper being born that summer. They were reported to have spent £31.5 million on a detached home in London's Holland Park, renovating it in the process.

David retired from football in 2013, seen taking somewhat of a backseat as his wife's career grew. He revealed in 2017 that the pair had secretly renewed their wedding vows during a private ceremony at their London home.

ARIES: Flamboyant shows of emotions may not be as welcome as usual today, Aries. Realize that you may need to put a damper on things in order to earn the respect of the people around you. Tone it down and understand the importance of grounding and stability. Strong forces could bring you down to this level whether you want them to or not, so why bother trying to resist?

TAURUS: There may be some tension today as you try to stabilize your emotions, Taurus. There could be a force at work out there that's rather impersonal and detached. More than likely, this force doesn't relate as much to how you feel as it does to how well you've done the job. Stick to your tasks in a practical, grounded manner.

GEMINI: The tricky things to balance

today are your emotions and sense of duty, Gemini. Try not to let the stress of having to complete a task leak into your state of mind. The problem is that your emotions may be running away more quickly than you can handle. Meanwhile, there's a bit of a slowdown when it comes to your sense of duty and responsibility.

CANCER: There's a practical grounding today that may cramp your style, Cancer. More than likely you'll be aware of the time restrictions that point up your own limits. Maybe you aren't being realistic about certain areas of your life. These things will become clear today as things progress. Push through this blockage. You'll be a much stronger person once you've moved past this point.

LEO: Your mood should be good

today, Leo, although you should be careful not to rub it in others' faces. If people don't feel like being cheerful, don't force it on them. An important sense of duty is prominent and should be obeyed at all costs. Give your adventurous nature some sort of practical grounding that you can use to be more effective regarding whatever it is you do.

VIRGO: It isn't a good idea to talk behind other people's backs today, Virgo. If you have an issue with someone in particular, bring it up to that person directly. This isn't a good time to gossip. Maintaining trust is extremely important right now. This attitude will open many doors for you. Believe that the more you love others, the more love will be returned to you.

LIBRA: Put some of your fantastic

ideas to good use today, Libra. It's one thing to be a genius with plenty of masterpieces floating around in your head. It's quite another to actually put things into motion. You may be full of talk, but today it's important to be full of action. Restriction and limitation are creeping in, so do what you can to get things in place before it's too late.

SCORPIO: This is a good day to follow through on projects, Scorpio. Leaving many unfinished matters in your life only creates clutter that keeps other things from entering the picture. Either dismiss the project entirely or finish it and move on to something else. Don't leave things hanging, including people. Tell others what's going on and you'll be more successful in the long run.

SAGITTARIUS: There could be some restrictions on your emotions today, Sagittarius. You'll find that a practical, grounded force is working against your intuitive understanding of whatever issue concerns you. Do your best to anchor yourself in the truth before you scatter seeds of erratic emotions all over the place. It's important for you to maintain stability at all times.

CAPRICORN: Feel free to take care of any restructuring in your life that needs to be done now, Capricorn. Change may be a bit scary at first, but realize that it's a necessary variable in order to make progress. You may not have to change your focus or destination too much, but it's possible that you'll need to adjust your course to get there.

AQUARIUS: Your mood may be a bit detached and scattered today, Aquarius. This attitude could get you into trouble if you aren't careful. Make sure you keep at least one foot on the ground. It's important to stay strongly connected with reality or you could find yourself up a creek without a paddle. Feel free to get more deeply involved in a project that you might otherwise leave to others.

PISCES: Seek the counsel of someone older and wiser today, Pisces. Whether you want to or not, you may encounter someone with authority who's likely to tell you what he or she thinks. Heed the advice that comes from others. There is a whole other perspective out there that you need to take into account in order to bring things back to equilibrium.