



**PRESSURE POST 'BAAHUBALI'
IS SCARY: PRABHAS**

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**KASHMIRIS ARE LIVING
A LONG NIGHTMARE OF
INDIAN COLONIALISM**

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**FLOP FILMS DON'T KILL AN
ACTOR, NOT BEING WANTED
BY ANYONE DOES: SUDEEP**

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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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*SLYA deeply
resent MHA
circular
on sacred
peaks of
Sikkim*

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 AUG:**

The Sikkim Lepcha Youth Association has registered "deep resentment" over the Ministry of Home Affairs' decision to open Khangchendzonga and other sacred peaks of Sikkim for mountaineering.

At a meeting held on 22 August, SLYA put on record that the decision has "greatly disturbed" the sentiments and cultural ethos of the people.

"Lamenting such developments the meeting gravely expressed their deep resentment against such decisions of Government of India that overlooked the cultural sentiment of the Sikkimese People," an SLYA press release informs.

The meeting reiterated that the MHA should reconsider its decision immediately and that the State Government should take a strong stand against such developments.

The meeting also appealed to "all the people of Sikkim to stand united to protect the holy Mt Khangchendzonga from such sacrilege."

SIRIJUNGA YAKTHUNG SAKTHIM PHOJUMBO CELEBRATES 39th ANNIV

LT seats will be reserved soon, CM assures

**RUDRA KAUSHIK
GYALSHING, 23 AUG:**

Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] today assured that the SKM Government was working tirelessly to resolve the long-pending Limboo-Tamang seat reservation issue and informed that during his recent visit to New Delhi, Home Minister Amit Shah also assured him of looking into the matter in earnest.

The CM added that along with the LT seats, the State Government has also reiterated the demand seeking scheduled tribes status for the 11 left-out communities.

He maintained that as promised in the party manifesto, the SKM government will secure the LT seats without doing injustice to any other community of Sikkim.

The CM was speaking at the 39th Foundation Day celebrations of Sirijunga Yakthung Sakthim Phojumbo (SYSP), the Limboo Cultural Society, at Tharpu under Soreng-Chakung constituency.

Mr Tamang went on to allege that the politics of betrayal and lies practiced by the previous SDF Government had delayed the LT seats.

He went on to allege



that the SDF Government had betrayed the Limboo community even in the Sirijunga statue project which has not been executed as planned, leaving the project compromised and delayed.

He lamented that in order to appease the community, the former Chief Minister had inaugurated an incomplete project. In this regard, he assured that the SKM

government will complete the project in befitting manner.

On the other delayed project, that of the Staircase to Heaven at Daramdin, Mr Tamang informed that construction work on this project too would resume soon.

The Chief Minister also stressed that community-based and social organizations should be kept

apolitical so that they can serve the people the best.

He commended SYSP for working effectively for the welfare and development of the community and assured that the State government will place a proposal with the Central government for inclusion of Limboo, Bhutia and Lepcha languages in the 8th Schedule of Constitution of India.

Mr Tamang also reassured that the sanctity of Article 371F which accords special status to Sikkim was safe and secure. He claimed that the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir was in the interest of the country and hence was supported by SKM, and stressed that this should not lead to fears about Article 371F which, he said, will not be touched or tinkered with.

Also today, the organizing committee felicitated the Chief Minister and the founder members of the organization.

The CM, on behalf of the SYSP committee, felicitated Chandra Mani Limboo for his contributions towards literature; and Aita Rani Subba and Man Bir Limboo for their works in the preservation of Limboo culture.

CM assures to resolve Khangchendzonga issue

*Delegation of
Ministers will
meet, discuss
and resolve
matter with
MHA: CM*

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 AUG:**

Speaking on the Ministry of Home Affairs' approval for mountaineering on Khangchendzonga and other sacred peaks of the State, Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] today assured

that the State Government would resolve the issue with the Central Government in an amicable manner.

The MHA decision has drawn sharp criticism from various quarters, and the CM, while speaking at the 39th Foundation Day celebrations of Sirijunga Yakthung Sakthim Phojumbo (SYSP) at Tharpu in West Sikkim today, said that a delegation of Ministers from Sikkim will go to Delhi to rectify the issue.

He maintained that the State Government was not taken into confidence by the Central government on the matter and that the MHA was unaware about the religious sentiments attached to Khangchendzonga.

The notification was an oversight and it was not for hurting Sikkimese sentiments, he said, while adding that the State Government will not allow the sanctity of the mountain to be defiled in any way.

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

**SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 22 AUG:**

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

He has threatened to launch a strong movement if MHA did not roll back its decision by 13 September,



when Pang Lhabsol, the worship of Khangchendzonga, is held in the State.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Sherpa stated that the notification in question was anti-Sikkim and anti-Sik-

kimese and in abject violation of Article 371F of the Constitution of India.

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

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Students debate Euthanasia at SLSA debate



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 AUG:**

Students from classes IX to XII of schools in East District debated over - "Should Euthanasia be Legalized" - at a debate competition organized by the Sikkim State Legal Services Authority here at Chintan Bhawan today.

The debate was won by Pragati Gurung, a class X student from Paljor Namgyal Girls Senior Secondary School, while Neha Kumari, class XII [Science], Deorali Girls Sr Secondary School, came second and Karma Rinzing Dorjee Bhutia, class XII [Science] of Tadong Sr Secondary School came third.

The competition, organized on the directions of Executive Chairper-

son, Sikkim SLSA, Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, was attended by 318 students from Tashi Namgyal Sr Secondary School, Enchey Sr Secondary School, Modern Sr Secondary School, West Point Sr Secondary School, Paljor Namgyal Girls Sr Secondary School, Deorali Girls Sr Secondary School and Tadong Sr Secondary School.

Member Secretary, SLSA, Sonam Palden Bhutia, gave a brief introduction to the topic and its relevance while welcoming the participants.

The debate was judged by a panel comprising of Health Deptt Principal Director, Dr KJ Tobgay, Senior Advocate A Moulik, and Senior Advocate, B Sharma.

HSP protests MHA decision on Khangchendzonga; Bhaichung discusses issue with Rijiju

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 AUG:**

Hamro Sikkim Party has strongly objected to the recent decision of the Central Government regarding the "commercial exploitation of sacred peaks in the Sikkim Himalayas, including the State's Guardian deity, Khangchendzonga.

"The circular in question is surprising because the Govt of Sikkim had banned climbing of these peaks on religious grounds in 2001, based on the religious faith, and demand of the Sikkimese people. Despite such a ban, this new notification comes across as a blatant disregard to the will of the common people who had wanted the ban, as well as an imposition



by the central government in contravention of peoples' wishes," an HSP press communique states.

Meanwhile, the HSP working president, Bhaichung Bhutia, called on Union Minister Youth Affairs & Sports, Kiren Rijiju, under whose Ministry mountaineering also

comes, and discussed the issue with him apart from also submitting a letter requesting that he take up the matter with the concerned Ministries and have the MHA decision reconsidered.

"He said he would surely look into the matter

turn to pg02

CM inaugurates Buddhist Circuit Building at Phodong Monastery

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

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

Upon his arrival, the Chief Minister was welcomed with a ceremonial reception by Udor Chosum at the main Monastery. Thereafter, the Chief Minister offered prayers at the main shrine.

Addressing his maiden visit to North Sikkim as the Chief Minister, Mr Tamang extended his congratulations to the people of the district and the monks of Phodong Monastery for getting a new Buddhist Circuit Building to cater to the needs of the growing number of pilgrims coming to the monastery.

Responding to the demands placed by the Omjay of Phodong Monastery regarding visit of the 17th Gyalwang Kar-

mapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje to Sikkim, the Chief Minister informed that the Government of India has given its consent to allow the Karmapa to visit Sikkim and also assured that the Karmapa will make his maiden visit to Sikkim in the near future.

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

The Chief Minister mentioned the importance of bringing the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa to the State for blessing, peace

and communal harmony of the state.

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

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

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

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Janmashtami greetings from Governor

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 AUG:

Governor Ganga Prasad has extended warm greetings to the people of Sikkim on the occasion of Janmashtami. "Let us all endeavour to make Janmashtami, as the festival of love and mutual respect among fellow beings. May Bhagwan Krishna's life and teachings further enrich our lives as we work together for peace and greater good of mankind," the Governor conveys.

Air India owes Rs 5,000 cr in fuel dues; hasn't paid in 230 days: Oil cos

NEW DELHI, AUG 23 (PTI): Air India owes three state-owned oil firms Rs 5,000 crore in unpaid fuel bills with payments being delayed by almost eight months, forcing retailers to snap supplies, Indian Oil Corp (IOC) said on Friday.

IOC, Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) on Thursday afternoon stopped jet fuel or ATF supplies to Air India at six airports - Kochi, Pune, Patna, Ranchi, Vizag and Mohali - over payment defaults.

"The joint decision to stop fuel supply to Air India from six airports, i.e., Kochi, Mohali, Pune, Ranchi, Patna and Visakhapatnam, was taken by the oil marketing companies in the wake of long overdue payments to the tune of Rs 5,000 crore," IOC said in a statement issued on behalf of the three firms explaining the constraints that led to take the harsh decision.

The overdue amount includes the interest accrued on the outstanding dues. Air India has a 90 day credit period, which means the aviation turbine fuel (ATF) it buys on a given day has to be paid for in three months. But Air India had not been making payments and the credit period was now 230 days, IOC said.

"PSU oil marketing companies have been constrained to suspend supply of jet fuel to Air India and Alliance Air flights at six airports from the evening of August 22, 2019 due to mounting outstanding dues from the airline and their ramifications for their working capital requirements," the statement said.

The three firms through a letter dated August 14 intimated the Air India management of their decision to stop fuel supplies at the six airports with effect from August 22 if dues were not cleared. Air India uplifts about 250 kilolitres (kl) of ATF at the six airports on a daily basis.

"The three PSUs had served similar notices on Air India earlier but withdrew them subsequently and continued with ATF supplies on the assurance of Air India management that the outstanding dues will be cleared at the earliest. However, despite repeated follow-up and reminders for payment by the OMCs, no major reduction in the outstanding materialised from the airline till date," the statement said.

Awareness on Jal Shakti Abhiyan at Denchung

JOETHANG, 23 AUG [IPR]: An extensive one-day Awareness Programme for the Progressive farmers on Jal Shakti Abhiyan (Campaign for Water Conservation) took place at Denchung Community Hall today.

It was organized by Block Administrative Centre, Poklok-Nandugaon, South Sikkim led by Block Development Officer, Tenzing Bhutia.

District Coordinator, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Namthang, I. P. Sivakoti and Soil Specialist, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Namthang, Wilson Rai, were invited as the Resource Persons for the said program. The Programme was attended by about 50 Progressive Farmers from Poklok-Nandugaon Block.



The Programme started with the introductory speech by Additional Programme Officer, Sangita Sharma. She highlighted the various aspects of Jal Shakti Abhiyan which focuses on water conservation and rainwater harvesting, renovation of traditional and water bodies/tanks, reuse and recharge

structures, watershed development and intensive afforestation.

The programme continued with sessions by the Resource Persons on how Krishi Vigyan Kendra can contribute to the Jal Shakti Abhiyan. They focused on the facilities and opportunities that the farmers can avail through KVKs.

increase the productivity.

The next session was presented by BDO Tenzing Bhutia, where he explained about Water Conservation and the present situation of water in South District. He also talked about the roles of various stakeholders viz. general public, farmers, officers and all responsible individuals to conserve water for future.

Assistant Engineer, Laxmi Prasad Pradhan, briefed about the present growing instances of natural calamities like landslides, forest fires, floods, etc. He also talked about how these calamities are linked with man-made activities and also discussed about the ways to minimize them.

They also talked about Krishi Vigyan Kendra Melas designed to promote efficient water use for irrigation (per drop more crop) and better choice of water conservation. They also talked about the different soil types in Sikkim and also about various additives which can be added to different soils to

SPYF condemns MHA's opening of Khangchendzonga for mountaineering

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 AUG:

Sikkim Progressive Youth Forum (SPYF) has joined the State in registering disappointment with the Central government's unilateral decision to open Sikkim's sacred peak, Khangchendzonga, for mountaineering.

SPYF suspects that the Centre, by teasing out controversies like the Gurdongmar lake issue and now Khangchendzonga, was attempting to test the

pulse of the people here.

"The people of Sikkim possess the ultimate right to decide matters concerning their land. No imposed decision is acceptable to us. Before taking such decisions regarding Sikkim and the Sikkimese people the real stakeholders should be consulted. Sikkim must not be treated like UP or Bihar. We are late entrants into the Indian Union and there were clear terms written down before joining the Indian

Union. Those terms must be duly respected by the Central Government. Let's rise above caste, religion, regionalism, language, political affiliations, etc. We are just a half a million people, mere 0.04% of the country's population. With such insignificant population if we stay disunited pulling each other's leg some other will reap benefit out of it. We condemn any decision which is against the desire of the people," SPYF has conveyed.

Dzongu MLA brings saffron to constituency



WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 23 AUG:

Dzongu MLA Pintso Namgyal Lepcha, who was recently among the ten SDF MLAs who abandoned their party and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party, hoisted the BJP flag in his constituency at a special function held at Pentok in Mangan.

The BJP flag hoisting ceremony was held in the presence of Panchayat and Zilla members along with the MLAs supporters from his erstwhile party.

A large number of supporters also turned up to garland him.

The function was also addressed by RSS member, Tashi Ongdup Lep-

cha, from Dzongu.

Mr Lepcha, in his address, stated that the new State government has not done anything except announcing holidays, which, in the long run, has inconvenienced the general public.

He added that SKM was indulging in politics of revenge and hate and informed that the central government has assured to support the BJP MLAs for the welfare of the Sikkimese people.

"Whatever we have done we have done for the people. Since I am your representative, and I cannot let you down," the MLA offered by way of explaining the move to BJP.

The Zilla and panchayat members also addressed the meeting.

Jal Shakti Abhiyan at Namthang



GANGTOK, 23 AUG (PIB): ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Pakyong, in collaboration with KVK, Namthang, observed two programs - Field Day and Jal Shakti Abhiyan - at Khop village at Namthang on 22 Aug, 2019.

Principal Scientist (Hort), Dr LC De, ICAR-NRC for Orchids and PC, Dr IP Sivakoti, KVK, Namthang, spoke about

different activities relevant to doubling of farmer incomes, organic farming, input management, micro-irrigation, water conservation, per drop more crop, rainwater harvesting systems and management of nutrient and insect-pests and diseases for enhancement of cropping intensity.

Scientists Dr SS

Biswas (Soil Sci) and Dr BP Mallikarjuna (Genetics and Plant Breeding), Project Staff of ICAR-NRC for Orchids Dr AK Singh, RK Singh and five Technical Officers of KVK, Namthang, South Sikkim also participated in these programs.

35 hand-sprayers were also distributed to farmers as part of Jal Shakti Abhiyan program.

Plantation drive at Poklok Nandugaon



NAMCHI, 23 AUG (IPR): Taking forward Jal Shakti Abhiyan, and to spread awareness about the importance of water conservation, a plantation drive was carried out at Samatar ward under Poklok Denchung GPU today.

The drive was organ-

ised by Poklok Nandugaon BAC and was led by BDO Tenzing Bhutia.

More than 250 ornamental and water-retaining saplings were planted at different locations by the BAC staff, Forest Department personnel and local residents.

Lingi Payong School organises excursion for tourism students



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 23 AUG:

A short excursion for students of class X of Lingi Payong School was organized today as part of curriculum under travel and tourism as vocational subject.

The students were taken to Mahadev Thaan at Upper Lingi, South Sikkim.

19 students, led by tourism faculty, Karuna Gautam, visited the site and understood its origin, history and religious significance.

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Passang Sherpa...

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

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

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

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

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

"The people of Sikkim have sent their representatives to speak for them but the representatives are only after power and position," he added. He further alleged that the people's representatives have betrayed the trust of the people on this matter.

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

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HSP protests...

and make sure the sentiments of people are respected," Mr Bhutia informs.

Meanwhile, the HSP press release also reminds the people of Sikkim that the State has a Sangha seat so that the Buddhist faith is protected in the state, "and the ban regarding these holy peaks was in deference to the Buddhists of Sikkim, who revere these peaks as their guardian deity."

HSP has demanded that the State Government immediately apprise the Centre and have the offending circular cancelled immediately; that the "Central Government immediately withdraw this notification as cancelled till the people of Sikkim are consulted, as should happen in the biggest democracy on earth."

CM inaugurates...

attract more tourists throughout the region, he added.

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

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

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

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

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

Sangha MLA Sonam Lama, who is also the RDD Minister, recalled the struggles faced by the monk community to bring the Karmapa to Sikkim and thanked everyone who stood for this noble cause in difficult times.

Forest Minister Karma Loday Bhutia, gave an introduction to Phodong Monastery and said that the monastery was one of the oldest and most precious institutions which has become a centrepiece of tourist attraction.

He anticipated that the newly constructed Buddhist circuit building will attract more tourists in the future.

Presenting the technical report on the Buddhist Circuit House, Tourism Secretary TT Bhutia informed that this new tourism infrastructure at Phodong Monastery was constructed under the Project/ Infrastructure Development for Destination and Circuits (PID-DC) Scheme in collaboration with Tourism Department, Government of Sikkim.

The Circuit House is equipped with seven guest rooms, a lobby, dormitory, basement, cafeteria and kitchen.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister was felicitated with a portrait of Gyalwang Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje by the Phodong Monastery committee.

Meanwhile, eight other revered monks of Phodong Monastery were also presented citations for their contributions to the monastery.

~ **SummitTIMES** ~
CLASSIFIEDS

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GENERAL INFORMATION

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

Mr. Subash Lama
Proprietor

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Public voices condemn opening of Sikkim's peaks for mountaineering

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 AUG:

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

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

"The Ministry of Home Affairs opening these peaks and mountains without consulting the people of Sikkim has undermined the sentiment of the Sikkimese people. The silence on the part of the State Government on such a crucial issue has further raised apprehensions in the minds of Sikkimese people," the release states.

The release adds that it is a known fact that Sikkimese revere mountains and peaks as sacred and there are many festivals and rituals worshipping these peaks. Moreover, the Places of Worship Act 1991 has enlisted many of these peaks and mountains as Buddhist places of worship. Independent Democrats of Sikkim has urged the Ministry of Home Affairs to immediately withdraw the "anti-Sikkimese" notification at the earliest to uphold the sanctity of holy peaks and mountains as already established under the Places of Worship Act.

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

West Pendam MLA tours constituency

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



the PHC. He interacted with the school heads, teachers, Medical Officer of PHC and the local public of the constituency. The Speaker assured to look into the grievances put forward to him on need priority basis.

Newly inducted BJP MLAs begin membership drive in South and West

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 22 AUG:

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

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

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

Locals also welcomed him while people in large

numbers have adopted BJP memberships, embracing the party's policies, the release mentions.

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

He appealed to all the people to accept the membership of the Bharatiya Janata Party, embracing the slogan of nationalism and development. He highlighted the recent bold steps taken by the Central Government and mentioned the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A from Jammu and Kashmir, the Triple Talak Anti-Divorce Laws, and the stringent action against terrorism and corruption.

Likewise on Wednesday, Maneybung Dentam MLA, NK Subba, also hoisted

the BJP flag at his residence and has begun extension work of the party in the area. Similarly, MLA of Chujachen Constituency, KB Rai, also held a co-ordination meeting taking his supporters and general public into confidence.

He further appealed to the supporters and locals to carry forward the expansion program of the Bharatiya Janata Party by adopting the policy principles of the party in the coming days.

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

“CHALISWA” (PRAYER MEETING)

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



“AMEEN”

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

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

RURAL MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM GANGTOK

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

Dated: 20 /08/2019

NOTICE FOR RE-TENDER

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

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

R.O. No. 152/IPR/PUB/Classi./19-20 Dated: 20.8.2019

Sr.Accounts Officer-MGNREGA RM&DD,Gangtok.

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

No. 451/Adm/Agri.

Dated: 20/08/2019

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from local candidates (Sikkim Subject/COI holders) for the following posts on contractual basis for a period of 1 year under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Scheme under Agriculture Department as under:

Sl. No.	Name of Post	No of Post	Educational Qualification	Remarks	Age	Pay Level
1.	Subject Matter Specialist (Agronomy/Soil Science) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Namthang, SouthMangan, North	02	M.Sc. (Agronomy)/ Ph.D (Agronomy) M.Sc (Soil Science) & Soil Chemistry) Ph.D (Soil Science & Soil Chemistry)		18-35	Level 9
2.	Subject Matter Specialist (Agro Meteorology) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Gyaba, Gyalshing West	01	Post Graduation in Agro Meteorology/ Meteorology/ Agronomy/ Agri Cultural Physics	Preference will be given to the candidates with Agro Meteorology/ Meteorology qualification.	18-35	Level 9
3.	Subject Matter Specialist (Agriculture Extension) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Gyaba, Gyalshing West	01	M.Sc (Agriculture Extension)		18-35	Level 9
4.	Agromet Observer Gyaba, Gyalshing West	01	12 th in Science Stream along with the basic knowledge of Computer		18-35	Level 3

The posts are purely temporary which shall cease to exist on termination of funding by the Government of India. The candidates will be selected through Walk-in-Interview. Eligible candidates may apply with the following attested documents:

- Educational Qualification Certificate from Class X onwards.
- Valid Employment Card.
- Age Certificate.
- Experience Certificate.
- C.O.I
- Resume (with contact No.)

Application should be produced in the Office of Under Secretary, Adm. Section, Agriculture Department from 26.08.2019 between 10 am to 4.30 pm on working days. The last date for submission of application is 06.09.2019.

6. The walk-in-interview will be held in the Conference Hall of Krishi Bhawan, Tadong at 11.00 am on the following dates:-

- Subject Matter Specialist : 23.09.2019
- Agromet Observer : 24.09.2019

7. No TA/DA shall be paid for attending the interview. Original documents should be produced on the above dates.

8. The Agriculture Department reserves the right to reject an application without assigning any reason thereof. Application along with all the relevant documents should be submitted at the office of Under Secretary, Adm. Section, Agriculture Department. Application submitted after 06.09.2019 will not be accepted.

Sd/- Under Secretary Agriculture Department.

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

No. 452/Adm/Agri.

Dated: 20/08/2019

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from local candidates (Sikkim Subject/COI holders) for the following posts on contractual basis for a period of 1 year in the Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA), SAMETI under Agriculture Department as under:-

Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA)

Sl.No.	Name of Post	No.of Post	Educational Qualification	Experience	Age	Consolidated Pay per month.
1.	Block Technology Manager (BTM)- <ul style="list-style-type: none">Chumbung Chakung, WestYuksom, West	02	Post Graduate in Agri./Allied Sector with computer skill	Minimum 2 years filed experience in Agriculture.	18-35	Rs.25000/-
2.	Assistant Technology Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none">Temi,SouthYuksom, West	02	Graduate/Post Graduate in Agri./ Allied Sector with computer skill	Minimum 1 year field experience in Agriculture.	18-35	Rs.15,000/-
3	Computer Programmer <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mangan, North	01	(i) B.Tech/MCA for Computer Programmer. (ii) Graduate with Diploma in Computer Applications or an equivalent qualification from a recognized or reputed institution.	1 year experience for B.Tech. and 1.5 years for MCA	18-35	Rs.16,000/-

The posts are purely temporary which shall cease to exist on termination of funding by the Government of India. The candidates will be selected through Walk-in-Interview. Eligible candidates may apply with the following attested documents:

- Educational Qualification Certificate from Class X onwards.
- Valid Employment Card.
- Age Certificate.
- Experience Certificate.
- C.O.I
- Resume (with contact No.)

Application should be produced in the Office of Under Secretary, Adm. Section, Agriculture Department from 26.08.2019 between 10 am to 4.30 pm on working days. The last date for submission of application is 06.09.2019.

6. The walk-in-interview will be held in the Conference Hall of Krishi Bhawan, Tadong at 11.00 am on the following dates:-

- ATM : 16.09.2019
- BTM &Computer Programmer : 17.09.2019

7. No TA/DA shall be paid for attending the interview. Original documents should be produced on the above dates.

8. The Agriculture Department reserves the right to reject an application without assigning any reason thereof. Application along with all the relevant documents should be submitted at the office of Under Secretary, Adm. Section, Agriculture Department. Application submitted after 06.09.2019 will not be accepted.

Sd/- Under Secretary Agriculture Department.

R.O. NO. 159/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20 Date: 23.09.2019

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Nothing Sacred

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

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

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

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

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



Kashmiris are living a long nightmare of Indian colonialism

GOLDIE OSURI
theconversation.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PURSUIT OF SELF-DETERMINATION

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

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

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

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

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

POST-COLONIAL COLONIALISM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RUPERT READ
theconversation.com

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

FROM GRIEF TO ACTION

It requires sustained strength and attention to gradually turn denial

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

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

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

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

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

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

Addicts spending up to Rs 2k a day on drugs: Study

CHANDIGARH, AUG 23 (PTI): Drug addicts in five states including Punjab are spending up to Rs 2,000 a day for buying and consuming narcotics with over 70 per cents of the addicts falling in the age group of 15 to 35 years, a study has revealed.

The study sponsored by the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) identified peer pressure, unemployment and easy availability of drugs as some of the key factors behind the drug menace that, it said, poses grave threat to the social, economic and political stability of the society.

The study was conducted by the Chandigarh-based Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development on the topic of 'Dynamics of Drug Addiction and Abuse in North West India: Social, Economic and Political implications.'

It covered 16 districts of five states -- Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir and was conducted among 1,140 drug addicts and 1,566 households.

It considered only those drugs such as heroin, opium and 'chitta', which have been banned under the Narcotic Drugs and Psycho-



tropic Substances Act.

It commenced in February 2017 and its 371-page report was submitted to the ICSSR in July this year.

The drug menace was one of the major political issues in the 2017 assembly elections in Punjab and after coming to power in Punjab, the Congress-led government even set up a special task force to curb the drug menace.

Giving details of the major findings of the study, CRRID Professor R S Ghuman said addicts end up spending Rs 200 to Rs 2,000 a day on drug consumption, while the cost of their treatment varies from Rs 5,000 to Rs one lakh.

About 72 per cent of

the addicts were in the age group of 15-35 years and four per cent in the age-group of 17 years, the study said.

As per the study, 65 per cent of addicts started taking drugs when they were between 15 to 20 years of age while 18 per cent fell prey to the menace when they were 21 to 25 years old.

The study identified peddlers as main source of the drug supply and heroin, opium, poppy husk and pharmaceutical drugs like tramadol and buprenorphine as key narcotics consumed by the addicts.

The problem of drug abuse seemed more serious in rural areas with 54 per cent of addicts belonging to villages,

the study said.

In rural areas, majority of addicts belong to cultivators' and labourers' households, it added.

The study also found that as per popular perception, the drug menace owes its sustenance to a nexus between some political leaders, drug smugglers and police in the drug trade.

Among the major recommendations of the study, it emphasized upon the need of preventive, punitive and curative measures to tackle the menace.

Drug menace is the manifestation of deep-rooted distortions in the socio-cultural, economic and political system. Being systemic and multi-dimensional,

its solution shall have to be systemic and multi-pronged, the study report said.

There is an urgent need to understand the complexity of the problem having far-reaching social, economic and political implications. There is a need to address all these factors responsible for drug menace in the region as punitive measures alone cannot uproot this menace, it added.

The study recommended generating gainful employment, cutting supply chain with punitive and preventive measures and counseling drug addicts and bringing them into mainstream as solution to the drug menace.

BSF lodges protest with BGB over assault by dry pea smugglers

SHILLONG, AUG 23 (PTI): Border Security Force (BSF) has lodged a strong protest with its Bangladeshi counterparts over an incident of assault on its personnel by dry pea smugglers from the neighbouring country, in Meghalaya's West Jaintia Hills district, officials said.

BSF on Wednesday asked Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) to take action against the accused smugglers.

Three country boats from Bangladesh, loaded with dry peas, were seized on August 20 after they entered India through the Myntdu river, called Hari in Bangladesh, a BSF spokesperson said.

The remaining two boats fled back to Bangladesh, he said.

When the BSF personnel asked the smugglers to stop, they attacked the troops, forcing them to retaliate by firing

non-lethal pump action gun, resulting in some injuries to the smugglers, he said.

Patrolling has been intensified in the area, the spokesperson said, adding BSF has requested BGB to join hands in curbing smuggling across the international border.

Meghalaya shares a 443 km-long border with Bangladesh, several stretches of which are not fenced.

Jadavpur University conducts tree census in its campus

KOLKATA, AUG 23 (PTI): Jadavpur University authorities have launched its first-ever census of trees in the campus, a senior varsity official said on Thursday.

The exercise, as part of which trees in the 58-acre university campus are being mapped through GPS, video-graphed and awarded number tags, has been launched in August 7.

"The mapping process, aimed at preventing cutting of trees, has begun in the main building area," he said, adding exact number of trees mapped till now has not yet been calculated.

He said such an exercise has never been undertaken in the campus.

The official said as part of the exercise, authorities have begun dividing the trees into separate zones.

He said no incident



of cutting of trees has been reported since commencement of the exercise.

The drive began after members of Jadavpur University Teachers' Association (JUTA) alleged two trees inside the campus were chopped by a group of people.

The JUTA members had submitted photographs of the two chopped trees to the authorities in mid-July, after which they had promised to conduct a census of the trees in the campus, a spokesperson of the teachers' body said.

"There had been past instances of trees being chopped and surreptitiously transported out of the campus," he said.

Trees in the campus include Mahogany, Mango, Arjun, Siris among others.

While supporting the tree census and promising to keep a vigil against cutting of trees, the Arts Faculty Students Union also undertook a plantation drive on Wednesday.

"The plantation drive is our initiative to conserve the greenery of the campus," Titash, a student, said.

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

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 22 AUG:**

Sikkim Democratic Front has accused Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] of keeping the people in the dark about his plans vis a vis Bharatiya Janata Party.

An SDF press release issued by its spokesperson, JB Darnal, points out that Sikkim Krantikari Morcha has been meeting BJP leaders frequently, but has failed to make its stand clear when it comes to its relationship with BJP.

The release highlights that a regional party can run an effective government in Sikkim and maintain cordial ties with the Centre as has been proven by the SDF for the past 25 years. However, SKM posts on social media of late have been creating confusion about whether SKM was a friend or competitor of BJP.

The release mentions that SKM had protested GST in its 2019 election manifesto but was now welcoming and supporting it.

Awareness on Intellectual Property Rights at Aho



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

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

Technical, Ajay Bhu-

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

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

#MeToo: Akbar filed false case to create chilling effect among women, Ramani tells court

NEW DELHI, AUG 23 (PTI): Journalist Priya Ramani told a Delhi court on Friday that ex-Union minister M J Akbar had filed a "false and malicious case" against her to create a "chilling effect" among all women who spoke out about their experiences of sexual harassment at his hands.

"It is unfortunate that women who experienced sexual harassment at workplaces must now defend themselves in criminal proceedings to speak the truth," she said.

Ramani, who accused Akbar of sexual misconduct during the #MeToo campaign, said that she spoke the "truth" in "public interest".

Akbar filed a private criminal defamation complaint against Ramani after his name cropped up on social media as the #MeToo campaign raged on in India. He resigned as minister on October 17 last year.

"The complainant has filed a false case against me. He has deliberately targeted me to divert attention from serious complaints against him. Through his testimony he feigned ignorance about my truth and my story," Ramani told the court in her deposition.

"It is an attempt to intimidate me. By deliberately targeting me, the complainant seeks to divert the attention away from the serious allegations of sexual misconduct against him and public outrage that followed," she said.

She told Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal that her allegations against Akbar, her former boss, were "factual" and the "truth".

"It is false that Akbar had an impeccable reputation. It is wrong to suggest that he is a perfect gentlemen holding a good reputation in the society. Many women, including me, had different experiences," Ramani said.

"All editors are hardworking men or women, keeping long working hours and travelling for political stories for journalism. There was nothing special about the complainant. It is false that I damaged complainant's reputation..."

"It is false to say that Akbar was a complete professional and that he had an impeccable reputation and he was held in high esteem in office in the eyes of the word," she told the court.

She said her tweets did not become

the basis of her articles in internationally known publications and websites, and that Akbar was "deliberately singling out my tweets".

"The article was in fact based on experiences of many women, including me, who spoke about their experience with their male bosses. It is false that my tweets affected his reputation. I spoke the truth and there was no deliberate attempt to harm the complainant's reputation," Ramani said.

She added that in October 2017, the #MeToo movement in USA emboldened countless women to share their experiences of sexual harassment at workplace.

"In that context I wrote the Vogue article addresses to a titled, 'To the Harvey Weinsteins of the world', where I spoke about many women's experiences with many male bosses. I began the story with my experience with M J Akbar but I did not name him," Ramani said.

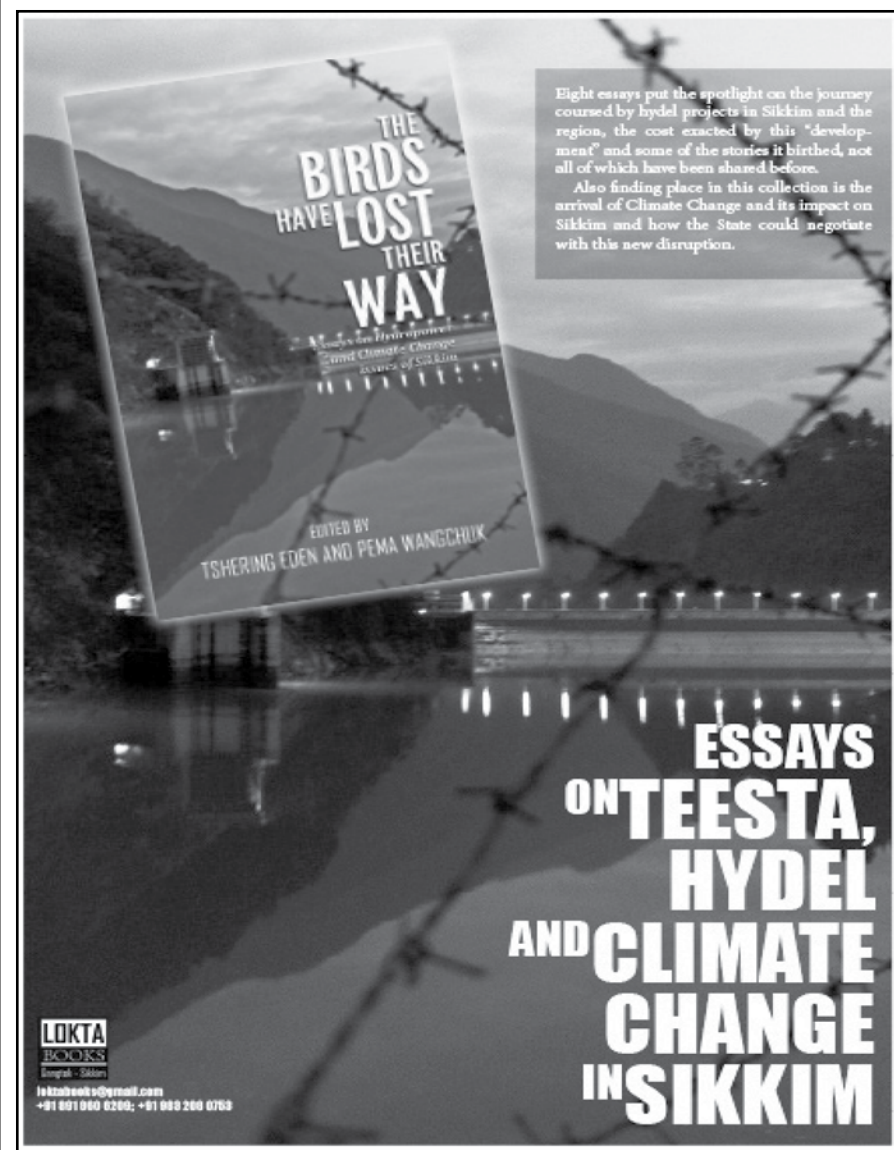
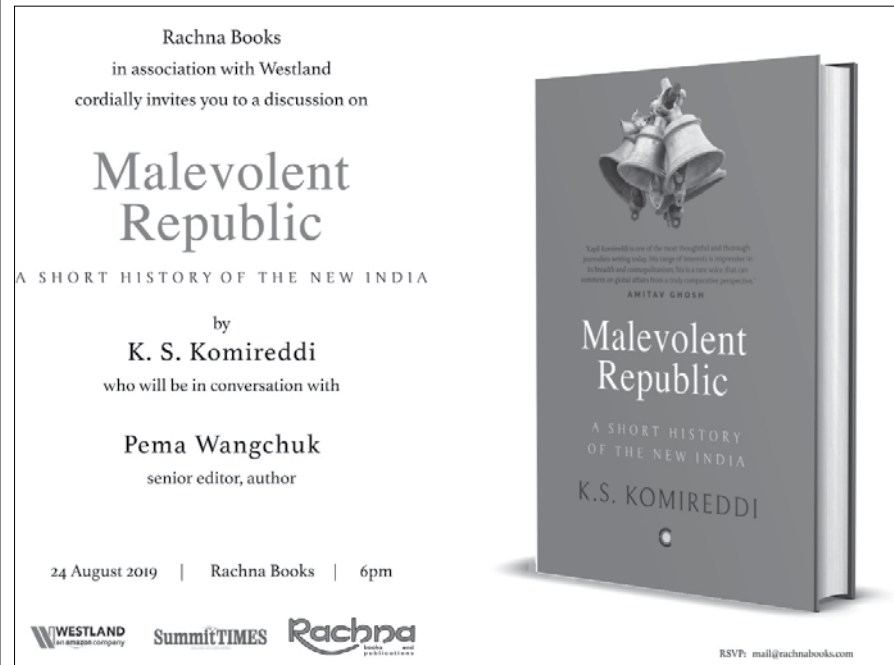
"One year later, when the #MeToo movement came to India and many women in my industry -- media -- started speaking up about their story of sexual harassment, I felt that as a senior journalist my responsibility is to remove the cloak of anonymity.

"I decided to name the editor in that vogue article. I spoke the truth in public interest and in the context of #MeToo movement I finally had the courage and platform to name the complainant," she said. The court will now hear the matter on September 7.

Ramani accused Akbar of sexual misconduct around 20 years ago when he was a journalist. He has denied the accusations.

Akbar had earlier told the court that the allegations made in the article in Vogue and the subsequent tweets were defamatory on the face of it as the complainant had deposed them to be false and imaginary and that an "immediate damage" was caused to him due to the "false" allegations by Ramani. Multiple women have come out with accounts of alleged sexual harassment by him while he was working as a journalist.

Akbar has termed the allegations "false, fabricated and deeply distressing" and said he was taking appropriate legal action against them.



Praneeth enters semifinals of World Championships

BASEL, AUG 23 (PTI): India's B Sai Praneeth recorded a stunning straight-game win over Indonesia's Jonatan Christie to seal the semi-final spot and end India's 36-year agonising wait for a men's singles medal at the BWF World Championships here on Friday.

World No. 19 Praneeth, who was awarded the Arjuna Award this year, notched up a 24-22 21-14 win over Asian Games gold medallist and World No. 4 Jonatan in the quarterfinals to assure himself of a medal at the prestigious tournament.

Badminton legend Prakash Padukone was the first Indian to win a men's singles medal -- a bronze -- in the 1983 World Championship.

Praneeth had won the Singapore Open in 2017 and finished runner-up in the Swiss Open early this year.

I find nets claustrophobic, prefer centre wicket for match simulation: Kohli

NORTH SOUND (ANTI-GUA), AUG 23 (PTI): India skipper Virat Kohli finds nets "claustrophobic" and instead prefers to practice on a centre wicket with fielders around as it provides him with match simulation.

Kohli gave his opinion during a chat with West Indies legend Vivian Richards, the video of which was posted on the Indian cricket board's official website, BCCI.tv.

"I felt like this many times where the pitches are fast and bouncy, or even in the nets when you are playing, I am sure you wouldn't go to the practice just randomly practising," Kohli said, seeking the opinion of Richards on his approach to net practice.

"You would go with the intent, with the purpose that I'm going to stand up against my own bowlers and not get out, not even hit a ball on the edge, hit everything from the middle of the bat."

Richards, who, like Kohli, has dominated bowlers of his time, replied: "It is the same thinking, you go and try to eliminate may be the getting out process, but I have always found nets to be claustrophobic for me and I never felt comfortable." The Indian skipper responded saying: "I think exactly the same things about net practice how it can be claustrophobic and I prefer having a centre wicket net which is open against our bowlers with fielders so that I have a match simulation."

In what was the second episode of a two-part interaction, Kohli also stressed on visualisation, which has played a big role in his success against Australia in 2014-2015

"After 2014, I went to England and I had a very bad tour but the next one was Australia which was even more hostile and tough so the thing that helped me was visualisation," he said.

Arsenal out to close gap on Liverpool, Lampard seeks first win

LONDON, AUG 23 (AFP): Early Premier League leaders Liverpool and Arsenal face-off, while Frank Lampard is under pressure to deliver his first win as Chelsea boss at Norwich on Saturday.

One of the only two remaining 100 percent records in the Premier League will go at Anfield where the European champions will hope to continue a fine recent record against the north Londoners.

Jurgen Klopp has never lost in seven previous Premier League meetings against Arsenal and his side have beaten the Gunners 4-0 and 5-1 at home in the past two seasons.

However, Unai Emery's outfit are hoping a busy summer in the transfer window, while Liverpool did not strengthen, will have significantly narrowed the 27-point gap between the sides last season.

Emery could hand a first start to 772 million (87 million) club record signing Nicolas Pepe, while on-loan Real Madrid midfielder Dani Ceballos earned rave reviews by creating both goals on his full debut against Burnley last weekend.

However, it is at the back Arsenal need a drastic improvement and there is an early opportunity for veteran centre-back David Luiz to make his mark by halting the free-scoring trio of Sadio Mane, Roberto Firmino and Mohamed Salah, who combined for all five Liverpool goals when the sides last met.

"A lot of times in my life I had sensational players always (but) not world-class players," Klopp told Liverpool's website.



"Now, thank God I have them and they make the difference. Sadio Mane, Bobby Firmino, Mo Salah - these guys in the last situation are really outstanding."

Arsenal have some outstanding finishers of their own. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who shared the Premier League Golden Boot with Mane and Salah last season, has scored his side's winner in the first two games of the campaign.

And on the evidence of Liverpool's first four games of the season across all competitions, a defence that registered 20 Premier League

clean sheets last season looks far less solid. Alisson Becker remains sidelined with a calf injury, meaning Adrian -- whose calamitous attempted clearance gifted Southampton a goal last weekend -- will keep his place in goal.

- SOLSKJAER'S VISION COMING TOGETHER -

Whilst Liverpool and Arsenal have taken advantage of a couple of kind fixtures to get their campaigns off to a bright start, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham all dropped points on matchday two.

The roles are reversed this weekend as United host Crystal Palace,

who have yet to score this season at Old Trafford, City travel to Bournemouth and Spurs seek to dismiss Newcastle with the ease newly-promoted Norwich did last weekend.

United paid the penalty for Paul Pogba's miss from the spot in a 1-1 draw at Wolves on Monday, but following on from a 4-0 win over Chelsea on the opening weekend of the season, there have been plenty of encouraging signs that Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's vision for a young, quick and hungry side is taking shape.

Harry Maguire and Aaron Wan-Bissaka, who will face his old

side this weekend, have made an immediate impact in shoring up a leaky defence, while Marcus Rashford and Anthony Martial have formed a dynamic partnership up front.

- PUKKI TO PILE PRESSURE ON LAMPARD? -

Lampard was not handed an easy start to life as Chelsea boss with a trip to Old Trafford followed by Liverpool in the UEFA Super Cup and the visit of an ambitious Leicester side to Stamford Bridge last weekend.

However, Lampard, who had just one year's managerial experience at Derby prior to taking over his old club, needs a win at Norwich to ease the questioning of his tactics.

The former England international has been accused of being too gung-ho in his approach as both United and Leicester cut Chelsea open relentlessly on the counter-attack.

If Lampard cannot tailor his approach, Norwich have a striker in form ready to take advantage. Teemu Pukki has scored four times in his first two Premier League appearances, including a hat-trick against Newcastle last weekend.

Fixtures (1400GMT unless stated)

Friday
Aston Villa v Everton (1900)
Saturday
Norwich v Chelsea (1130), Brighton v Southampton, Manchester United v Crystal Palace, Sheffield United v Leicester, Watford v West Ham, Liverpool v Arsenal (1630)
Sunday
Bournemouth v Manchester City (1300), Tottenham v Newcastle, Wolves v Burnley (both 1530).

Sindhu stuns Tzu Ying, inches closer to elusive World Championships gold

BASEL, AUG 23 (PTI): India's PV Sindhu staged a stunning come-from-behind victory over Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu Ying in the quarterfinals and inched closer to an elusive gold medal at the BWF World Championships here on Friday.

Sindhu, who won back-to-back silver medals in the last two editions of the prestigious tournament, edged past former world no 1 and Asian Games gold medallist Tzu Ying 12-21 23-21 21-19 in a pulsating contest that lasted 71 minutes, assuring herself of a fifth medal at the worlds.

The 24-year-old Indian, an Olympic silver medallist, will take on the winner of the match between China's Chen Yu Fei and Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt on Saturday.

Sindhu showed tremendous grit after being blown away in the opening game, edging past her fancied rival, who enjoys an upper hand (10-4) after 14 career meetings.

Sindhu, who had snapped a six-match losing streak against Tzu Ying with a win at the World Tour Finals in December, didn't have the desired start, falling back 3-9 early on. A masterful Tzu Ying played some exquisite strokes to derail the Indian's plans of constructing rallies and entered the break at 11-4, with a powerful cross court smash. Sindhu unleashed a smash and then gathered a point when her rival went wide but an alert Tzu Ying pounced on a weak return from Sindhu and also targeted her backhand to make it 14-7.

Sindhu's few weak returns and a shade slow on-court movement helped Tzu Ying as she reached 18-9 and then



earned nine game points with a brilliant net shot. The Indian saved one following an error from Tzu Ying, who took the opening game after her opponent went wide.

In the second game, Sindhu showed better intent to open up a 2-0 lead before being tied 3-3.

Tzu Ying's repertoire of strokes made life difficult for the Indian, who slipped to 5-8.

A gritty Sindhu, however, clawed back with three points - a cross court smash and two wide shots from Tzu Ying -- and then made it 11-9 at the break with the help of a precise forehand return. After the breather, Tzu Ying gathered two points at the forecourt with her deception to make it 12-12. Sindhu stepped ahead, but her opponent again equalised at 15-15, with another accurate return.

Another error on her backhand helped Tzu Ying gather a point but Sindhu neutralised with a powerful smash. Sindhu unleashed another big smash and when Tzu Ying missed the lines, it gave the Indian a 18-16 lead.

The Taiwanese drew parity before Sindhu grabbed two game points after Tzu Ying went wide. Sindhu miscued a return and then went wide to make it 20-20. With Tzu Ying finding the net, Sindhu hung in but went wide to level the scores.

A superb service re-

turn handed Sindhu the advantage and this time, she sealed it with a cross court return, which Tzu Ying couldn't connect. In the decider, Tzu Ying brought to the fore her deception once again and jumped to a 4-1 lead.

Tzu Ying displayed her superb technical skills to control the shuttle but Sindhu kept fighting to stay close. The Taiwanese led 8-4 at one stage and kept Sindhu guessing with her placements. Sindhu narrowed the lead to 7-9 but another magic stroke near the net gave Tzu Ying a point. The Chinese Taipei player entered the interval with a two-point advantage after producing another masterful backhand return.

After the breather, Sindhu unleashed a lethal smash but Tzu Ying's angled returns kept the Indian on the hook. A good-looking return took Sindhu to 12-13 before Tzu Ying again regained the two-point cushion.

Sindhu unleashed a body smash to draw parity at 14-14 and then grabbed a lead after her opponent made a judgement error. The Indian maintained her one-point advantage at 18-17 when Tzu Ying committed two unforced errors and soon moved to 19-17, but the Taiwanese fought back when Sindhu found the net.

A timely smash saw Sindhu grab one match point and she sealed it when Tzu Ying went wide.

Doping: the scourge of Colombia's cycling talent production line

BOGOTA, AUG 23 (AFP): Colombian cycling reached its zenith last month when pint-sized climber Egan Bernal became his country's first winner of the sport's greatest race, the Tour de France.

Colombia is riding the crest of a wave of euphoria with the likes of former Giro d'Italia and Vuelta a Espana winner Nairo Quintana, Esteban Chaves, Miguel Angel Lopez and Rigoberto Uran all capable of challenging for victory in the sport's most prestigious Grand Tours.

At just 22, Bernal could dominate the Tour de France for years to come. But there is also a dark side to Colombian cycling that is little known: it has a sorry record on doping. It's a sordid tale that AFP has uncovered by speaking to a former cycling team doctor, a retired cyclist, a physical trainer, an active coach and an investigative journalist.

All believe that cheating is a prerequisite to surviving in Colombia's highly competitive domestic cycling circuit.

According to the International Cycling Union, Colombia is second only to Costa Rica as the country with the most riders suspended for doping: it has 20.

Two of those -- Wilmar Paredes and Juan Jose Amador -- were caught earlier this year, precipitating the dissolution in May of Colombia's only professional cycling team, Manzana Postobon, which lost its sponsors over the doping cases. Two months later, Bernal was crowned Tour de France champion.

- YEAR OF SHAME -

The Manzana Postobon case shows that little has changed since Colombia's 2017 year of shame.

The Colombian anti-doping agency was handed a six-month suspension in February of that year by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) over quality control issues. It meant that doping samples from the Vuelta a Colombia -- at that point the country's primary stage race -- were handled by a UCI delegation that sent them for processing in the United States.

The result was eight positive dope tests -- seven Colombians -- the most in the race's history.

That might come as a shock to



those from outside cycling -- but not those in the know. According to journalist Gustavo Duncan, talent scouts have been desperate to extract potential young stars from Colombia's domestic scene as quickly as possible to avoid "contamination." "Foreign teams don't even look at riders over 23 because they know that outside of the youth categories, it's practically impossible to compete in Colombia without doping," added Duncan, who has long denounced the practice in the domestic peloton.

Coach Luis Fernando Saldarriaga, who discovered Quintana and Chaves, says there is a race against time to get the hottest young prospects out of the Colombian circuit.

"We never entered them into the Vuelta a Colombia because (European teams) would have doubted their capabilities," he said.

The Vuelta a Colombia was ditched from the UCI's calendar in 2018, when the Colombian federation took over anti-doping controls. No positives were recorded in 2018 and only one from this year's grueling 15-day race in June.

- 'COVER UP' -

Doping has been facilitated by the Colombian federation, according to a doctor who worked with a Colombian team in the 1980-90s, who spoke to AFP on the condition of anonymity.

"Doping has existed throughout the lifetime of Colombian cycling" and the national federation has ensured to "cover it up." Federation president Ovidio Gonzalez, who took over in 2017, denies

any wrongdoing and insists the body is transparent. "Absolutely all the positive cases we have are announced on our website and are sanctioned," he said.

But the practice continues, according to a physical trainer, who spoke on condition of anonymity as he is still working with professional cyclists.

"There are many cases of doped cyclists that weren't publicized because of the federation," he said.

Instead of publicizing the positives, the federation would instead quietly inform the riders' teams.

"It's something they did to avoid scaring off sponsors," he said. As much as the federation may claim that times have changed, the cases of Paredes and Amador leave little hope for the future, the physical trainer said.

"If two lads that have been earning a salary since they were kids and who worked with coaches that always explained to them the importance of not doping, can become cheats, then anyone can do so," he said.

The problem is getting through to the riders themselves that there is another way. An ex-cyclist, who raced professionally from 2008-10, says he saw packets of doping products on the floor at races.

"It was frustrating because I felt that I was already losing before the race started," he said on condition of anonymity.

He retired distraught in 2010. "In the peloton, no one calls you a cheat ... everyone knows that it can happen at any time," he said.

Despite tensions, Pak stands ready to open Kartarpur Corridor: Qureshi

BY SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, AUG 23 (PTI): Pakistan on Friday said that despite tensions with India, it stands ready to open the Kartarpur Corridor and welcome the Sikh pilgrims to take part in celebrations in connection with the 550th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak.

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said this while speaking to a delegation of civil society and parliamentarians of Afghanistan, which is currently visiting Pakistan for the "Track-II dialogue, Beyond Boundaries".

Tension between India and Pakistan has escalated after New Delhi revoked Article 370 of the Constitution which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the state into two Union Territories on August 5.

"Despite our tensions with India, we have decided go ahead with Kartarpur Corridor and we stand ready to welcome the Sikh pilgrims for the 550th anniversary



ry of Baba Guru Nanak," Qureshi told the delegation. The Kartarpur corridor will connect Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Kartarpur with Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district and facilitate visa-free movement of Indian Sikh pilgrims, who will have to just obtain a permit to visit Kartarpur Sahib, which was established in 1522 by Guru Nanak Dev.

Pakistan is building the corridor from the Indian border to the Gurd-

wara Darbar Sahib while the other part from Dera Baba Nanak up to the border will be constructed by India.

Qureshi also told the delegation that current tension with India will not affect Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan. Border (with Afghanistan) will not be closed nor trade will stop. Why should Afghans suffer because of the idiosyncratic behaviour of Narendra Modi, Qureshi was quoted as saying.

Despite tensions with India, Pakistan is totally focused on the situation and its role in Afghanistan. It (Kashmir situation) can be a huge distraction but we are very clear what we need to do in Afghanistan, he added while responding to a question if escalation of tension with India can distract Pakistan.

Qureshi said that Pakistan did not believe in any strategic depth. We want good neighbourly relations with Afghanistan and peaceful

co-existence. We have no favourites in the upcoming election. It is not our business who governs Afghanistan. We will not interfere. Whoever you [Afghanistan] will choose, we will work with them."

The foreign minister emphasised that honesty was the best way forward between the two countries. It is foolish to think we can trick each other, he said, adding that blaming each other was not an option. Accusatory statement will not help each other.

He also said that we do not want Talibanisation of any region but they [Taliban] are Afghans and they are a reality. He added: We will also support intra-Afghan dialogue. The process has to be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led.

Qureshi told the delegation that he had invited the foreign ministers of Afghanistan's and China for a trilateral meeting. The foreign minister will come to Pakistan in the first week of September for the talks, he added.

Israel bombed Iraq weapons depot: report

WASHINGTON, AUG 23 (AFP): Israel has carried out at least one strike against a weapons depot in Iraq, The New York Times reported Thursday.

There have been a series of blasts in Iraq over the past month at training camps and arms depots used by the Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary forces, which are mainly composed of pro-Iranian militias.

Israel has repeatedly bombed Iranian targets in neighboring Syria, but an expansion of the campaign to Iraq -- where the

Jewish state struck the Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981 -- would risk damaging Washington's relations with Baghdad.

A senior Middle Eastern intelligence official said Israel bombed a base north of Baghdad last month, while two American officials said the Jewish state carried out multiple strikes in Iraq in recent days, the Times reported.

The Hashed's deputy commander Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis, whose virulent anti-Americanism as a militia leader earned him a

US terror blacklisting, has been unequivocal in blaming Washington for the blasts.

But Faleh al-Fayyadh, the official head of the Hashed, has walked back the accusations, saying investigations were ongoing.

"Preliminary investigations" found the incidents were "an external, premeditated act," he said.

"The investigations will continue until the responsible entities are accurately identified to be able to take the appropriate stances.

North Korea foreign minister calls Pompeo 'poisonous plant'

SEOUL, AUG 23 (AP): North Korea's foreign minister on Friday called US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo a "poisonous plant of American diplomacy" and vowed to "shutter the absurd dream" that sanctions will force a change in Pyongyang. The North's blistering rhetoric may dim the prospect for an early resumption of nuclear negotiations between the countries.

A senior US diplomat said earlier this week that Washington was ready to restart the talks, a day after U.S. and South Korean militaries ended their regular drills that Pyongyang called an invasion rehearsal.

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho made the comments to protest Pompeo's remarks in an interview in which he said that Washington will maintain crippling sanctions on North Korea unless it denuclearises.

Ri said he couldn't just let the "reckless remarks" by Pompeo pass by him because they came amid a possible restart of the nuclear talks.

Ri said Pompeo is a "brazen" man because he "had begged for" North Korean denuclearization and improved bilateral ties when he visited Pyongyang and met leader Kim Jong Un several times.

In April, North Korea demanded President Donald Trump remove Pompeo from the nuclear negotiations.

Ri said North Korea is ready for both dialogue and confrontation. But he warned that North Korea will try to remain "America's biggest threat" if the

United States continues to confront the North with sanctions.

Ri likely referred to comments by Pompeo during an interview with the Washington Examiner earlier this week. During the interview, Pompeo said that the US will "continue to keep on the sanctions that are the toughest in all of history and continue to work towards convincing Chairman Kim and the North Korean leaders that the right thing to do is for them to denuclearize."

North Korea is notorious for crude and fiery diatribes against the United States and South Korea, although it lately focused its anger on South Korea rather than the US, particularly over the allies' military drills.

During the drills, North Korea carried out a slew of short-range missile and other weapons tests capable of hitting much of South Korea, not the mainland US. Some experts said these suggest that North Korea was interested in resuming talks with Washington.

The top US envoy on North Korea, Stephen Biegun, said Wednesday that the United States was "prepared to engage as soon as we hear from our counterparts in North Korea."

US-led negotiations on North Korea's nuclear weapons collapsed after Trump rejected Kim's demand for widespread sanctions relief in return for partial disarmament steps during their second summit in Vietnam in February. Trump and Kim met again at the Korean border in late June and agreed to resume the talks.

Two Govt hospitals in Pak deny specialised ambulance facility to Sharif

LAHORE, AUG 23 (PTI): Two government hospitals in Pakistan have denied a specialised cardiac ambulance facility for emergency medical cover to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a jail here, according to a media report.

The Punjab Prisons Department had requested the health higher-ups to provide a fully-equipped ambulance to station it in the Central Jail to shift Sharif to any hospital in case of any

emergency. The request was submitted on finding that the ambulance made available in the jail is insufficiently equipped, the Dawn reported.

The health department had been asked for a specialised cardiac ambulance equipped with a defibrillator, cardiac monitor, ventilator and ECG machine. A defibrillator helps save life by giving a high-energy electric shock to the heart of a patient in case of cardiac arrest.

The government hospitals refused to provide a specialised cardiac ambulance to Sharif because of heavy burden of medical cover to the VIP, VVIPs and their families," the daily reported.

There is a heavy burden of medical cover to the VIPs, VVIPs, foreign delegations and honourable members of the provincial assembly, and judiciary and their families..., reads one of the official replies to the health department.

UN, France raise concern over Amazon wildfires 'crisis'



SALVADOR, AUG 23 (AFP): Paris and the United Nations called Thursday for the protection of the fire-plagued Amazon rainforest as Brazil's right-wing president accused his French counterpart of having a "colonialist mentality" over the issue.

Official figures show nearly 73,000 forest fires were recorded in Brazil in the first eight months of the year -- the highest number for any year since 2013. Most were in the Amazon.

The extent of the area damaged by fires has yet to be determined, but smoke has choked Sao Paulo and several other Brazilian cities in the past week.

UN chief Antonio Guterres said he was "deeply concerned" by the fires.

"In the midst of the global climate crisis, we cannot afford more damage to a major source of oxygen and biodiversity," he said on Twitter.

"The Amazon must be protected."

France's President Emmanuel Macron said the wildfires were "an international crisis" and called on the globe's most industrialized nations to address it at their summit this weekend.

"Our house is on fire. Literally. The Amazon, the lung of our planet which produces 20 percent of our oxygen is burning," Macron said on Twitter.

"It is an international crisis. Members of the G7, let's talk in two days about this emergency." That did not sit well with Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro.

"The French president's suggestion that Amazon issues be discussed at the G-7 without participation by the countries in the region evokes a colonialist mentality that is out of place in the 21st century," Bolsonaro wrote on Twitter.

Neighboring Peru, which contains much of the Amazon basin, announced it was "on

alert" for wildfires spreading from the rainforest in Brazil and Bolivia.

Paraguay and Bolivia are battling separate wildfires that have devastated large areas of their rainforests.

Environmental specialists say the fires have accompanied a rapid rate of deforestation in the Amazon region, which in July quadrupled compared to the same month in 2018, according to data from the National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

Bolsonaro instead attributes the fires to increased drought, and accuses environmental groups and NGOs of whipping up an "environmental psychosis" to harm Brazil's economic interests.

"This environmental psychosis lets you do nothing," the president lamented, adding that it was hampering the country's development.

"I don't want to finish the environment, I want to save Brazil," said Bolsonaro, a climate change skeptic who had advocated opening up tribal lands and protected areas to farming and mining interests since assuming office in January.

Bolsonaro's comments come as Brazil hosts a UN regional meeting on climate change in the northeastern city of Salvador ahead of December's summit in Chile.

A senior Brazilian official defended Brazil's environmental policy at the conference and said it complied with the Paris Agreement against global warming.

"We are teaching the world how to produce. In only 29 percent of our territory we produce food for everyone.

"Worldwide, the average land use for agriculture exceeds 50 percent -- we only use 29 percent," said Roberto Castelo, an environment ministry official who was roundly booed by greens at the conference.

"I do not defend the burnings, because

there always was and always will be burnings. Unfortunately, this has always happened in the Amazon," Bolsonaro said, referring to dry season, land-clearing fires.

"But accusing me of being a Captain Nero setting fire to things is irresponsible. It is campaigning against Brazil," the president told reporters outside his Brasilia residence.

The reference to Captain Nero appeared to be to the Roman emperor said to have fiddled while Rome burned. Bolsonaro is a former army captain.

Forest fires tend to intensify during the dry season, which usually ends in late October or early November, as land is cleared to make way for crops or grazing.

"Just think, if the world begins imposing trade barriers, our agribusiness will fall, we will start to go backwards, the economy will start to get worse -- your life, the lives of newspaper editors, television owners, the lives of all Brazilians will be complicated, without exception. The press is committing suicide," Bolsonaro said. However, there are signs of growing concern from within the powerful agribusiness sector over Bolsonaro's environmental isolationism.

The governors of Brazil's Amazon states have also criticized the government for recent decisions by Germany and Norway to suspend Amazon aid projects.

"This week two big German media outlets expressed the idea that it was time to start boycotting Brazilian products. It's only a matter of time," Marcello Brito, head of the Brazilian Agribusiness Association, told the Valor daily. "The question is, who is interested in transforming Brazil into an environmental pariah," he asked.

"We cannot change the president of the republic. What our sector can do is work, in a unified way, to try to reverse the damage as much as possible.

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

Demi Lovato joins Will Ferrell's 'Eurovision'



LOS ANGELES, AUG 23 (PTI): Singer Demi Lovato has boarded the cast of Will Ferrell's Netflix feature "Eurovision". The project is based around the long-running global singing competition of the same name. Besides starring in the project, Ferrell has also penned the script along with Andrew Steele.

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

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

song for a live TV and radio performance.

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

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

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

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

Pressure post 'Baahubali' is scary: Prabhas

MUMBAI, AUG 23 (PTI): Headlining the country's biggest blockbuster "Baahubali" had its effects on Prabhas, who now feels the pressure to deliver again riding on him. With the "Baahubali" series, Prabhas became a pan-India star, with his popularity even reaching international regions. Prabhas says the SS Rajamouli-directed franchise will never be forgotten, "whatever happens", but he has to move on and is ready with his latest action-thriller "Saaho".

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



MUMBAI, AUG 23 (PTI): South star Kichcha Sudeep says an actor's career does not end with flops but with no one wanting to work with them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Priyanka Chopra is representing India very well, says Ayushmann Khurrana

MUMBAI, AUG 23 (PTI): Ayushmann Khurrana has come out in support of Priyanka Chopra, who has been at the receiving end of the Pakistan human rights ministry demanding to remove her as the UN Goodwill Ambassador for Peace. Ayushmann said the actor represents India "really well" on global platforms. "Priyanka Chopra is representing our country very well. She is not an Indian icon but a global icon. Being a daughter of an army officer she is a good representative of India," he told reporters here at the "Aandhadhun" celebration. On Wednesday, in a letter addressed to UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta H. Fore, Pakistan's Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari said the Bollywood actor supports the Indian government's policies on Kashmir. She further alleged that Chopra is in favour of a "nuclear war" between India and Pakistan.

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

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

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

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

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

Tip: Let go.

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

Tip: Watch your fears.

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

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

Tip: Break up with your demons.

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

Tip: Speak up for yourself.

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

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

VIRGO: This phase of your togetherness

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

Tip: Support each other's dreams.

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

Tip: Everything is exactly how it should be.

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

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

Tip: Beware of pushing against the flow.

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

Tip: Sometimes you just have to allow yourself to 'be'.

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

Tip: Love with all your heart.

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

Tip: This could be for the long haul.

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

Tip: Love and only love.