



SummitTIMES

SKM convenes meet with tourism stakeholders



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 30 JUN:

Sikkim Krantikari Morch convened its first meet with tourism stakeholders since forming the government here on Sunday which had the Confidential Assistant to the Chief Minister, Bikash Basnet, as chief guest.

In his address, Mr Basnet shared that the State government was very positive on tourism and assured that all possible support will be extended to the stakeholders.

He urged stakeholders to further strengthen and expand the section and invited them to place positive and creative suggestions to the CM for the development of tourism in the State.

Mr Basnet encouraged the younger generation to join the tourism industry and focusing on village tourism and hotel management.

He stressed the need to develop proper tourism infrastructure and recognized that improvements in road connectivity were necessary.

Likewise, Lukendra Rasaily, representing the travel agents, appealed the government to ensure strict vigil against non-registered travel agencies so that tourists receive proper and accountable hospitality.

He also highlighted various issues and problems being faced by the sector and placed various suggestions at the meeting.

SDF tears in SKM Govt’s claims, advises it to focus on administration and not victimisation

SAGAR CHHETRI GANGTOK, 30 JUN:

Sikkim Democratic Front party spokesperson, Avinash Yakha, today alleged that the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha Government has been working against its promises made to the people in the run-up to the elections. He advised that the SKM government start working to fulfill its promises instead of misleading people with claims of false achievements. The SDF comments were clearly in response to claims by the State Government on what it has achieved in the one month that it has been in office.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Yakha alleged that the SKM government has failed to fulfill any of the promises it had earlier assured to deliver within one month of forming the government.

Instead, what the SKM Government has remained busy with was victimization



of government employees and organizing deputations and extensions of government employees.

He also tore into the SKM spokesperson, Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling’s speech delivered at an SKM meeting in East Sikkim yesterday.

“We had expected the SKM spokesperson to talk about the one month that

SKM has been in office, but his speech was full of political rhetoric aimed to spread panic and fear and level allegations and accusations,” he said.

On the same, he warned, “If Jacob Khaling is not able to give proof of his allegations against me within one week, then I will file a defamation case against him.”

The SDF spokesperson informed that there were reports of attacks on more than 400 houses, damage and torching of 320 vehicles and physical attacks on 32 persons by SKM supporters since it formed the Government.

He added that there has been no action from the Governor despite submission of the memorandum by SDF

legislators.

He rues that police stations have not taken any action except in a few cases.

Mr Yakha appealed that the Governor should intervene and use his powers to maintain peace and security in the State.

He alleged that the people of State have been terrorized but the State government has

remained totally silent on it.

He added that the Chief Secretary, DGP and the administration should make concerted efforts to normalise the law & order situation in the State.

On the issue of SPG protection to the SDF President, former CM Pawan Chamling, he informed that after formation of the government for the first time in 1994 with 19 seats, the SDF government provided pilot and Z-Category security cover to the then opposition leader Nar Bahadur Bhandari.

He added that SKM government has failed to provide security to a former CM.

He also informed that the party has not submitted any memorandum for SPG cover with the Home Ministry but it has still been provided by the Centre understanding the contributions of a senior leader of the country.

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Asar Mahotsav celebrated at Lingchom



GYALSHING, 30 JUN [IPR]: Asar Mahotsav, organised by Sarvodaya Samaj, was celebrated in grand manner here at Lingchom, Gyalshing, in West Sikkim with Agriculture Minister LN Sharma as the chief guest and joining the paddy planting activity that Asar Mahotsav celebrates. Today was also Asar ko Pandhra Gatey, the day when paddy has traditionally been transplanted to the fields.

The Minister, in his address, went over the achievements of the newly formed SKM government and praised

the leadership of Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay].

He then strongly urged the public to participate in agricultural practices.

He also shared that he has advised officials of departments under his charge to visit the districts on a regular basis to understand the plight of the people at the ground level and then come up with possible solutions.

He further briefed the people about the central scheme which provides financial aid to farmers under the PM Kisan

Scheme under which an amount of Rs 6,000 will be given to farmers in three installments as an honorarium for their contributions.

He also informed farmers in the audience that collection centers will be established soon along with the selection of a Model Village in each district where priority will be given to agricultural growth practices.

He assured that all possible help will be extended by the State government to make Sikkim’s farmers prosperous.

PHE Minister BH Limboo, who was also present for the occasion as guest of honour, in turn spoke about the significance of Asar Mahotsav and how it used to be traditionally be celebrated and how it has progressed over the years.

He also asked officials to assist farmers in whatever capacity they can.

The program included a paddy planting ceremony joined by the Ministers and other guests, quiz, cultural performances and different activities like mud football, volleyball etc.

Sikkim will need UP’s budget to deliver on SKM’s tall promises: SDF

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 30 JUN:

Sikkim Democratic Front spokesperson, MK Subba, today scoffed that if the SKM Govt was to fulfill all its “tall promises” made in the election manifesto, Sikkim will need to have a budget to the scale of Uttar Pradesh.

“The State’s budget will not be able to deliver the big promises made by SKM during the election,” he said. Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Subba alleged that SKM government has been misleading people with its list of achievements in the past one month.

“Most of the

achievements are just completion of works started by the SDF with only the orders handed over by the present government. The work was done by the SDF Government,” he said.

He also joked that while the SKM Government was making big claims about having reserved a seat for conductors in SNT buses, it has remained unable to effectively push for Limboo and Tamang seats in the State Assembly.

He pointed out that senior SKM leader, Sangha MLA Sonam Lama, had announced to reserve LT seats within 10 days

of SKM government formation.

He went on to comment that SKM does not have any formula or clear position on LT seat reservation.

He claimed that Chief Minister PS Tamang had issued an official statement around 12 years back that those who ask for LT seats were anti-Sikkimese and that his party’s lack of clarity on the issue reveals his mindset.

Mr Subba advised the SKM government to start working on real issues of the State as claimed by it in its election manifesto like restoring

the Nepali seats, tribal status to eleven left-out communities of Sikkim.

He claimed that the SDF government was sincere on these issues and had worked tirelessly and consistently to take them to their logical end.

“The SDF government handed over Sikkim with the highest growth rate, high revenue generation and immense opportunities in tourism and industrial sector and organic, eco-friendly, beautiful and peaceful State to SKM but it has taken the State to a deplorable condition within just one month,” Mr Subba said.

‘BJP government crushes freedom of media’: Cong hits out over reports of ad curbs in newspapers

NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI): The Congress on Sunday cited media reports to accuse the Modi government of indulging in “sheer vindictiveness” by freezing advertisements to some newspapers critical of the dispensation.

Congress’ attack came after media reports claimed that the government has stopped providing advertisements to some newspapers critical of its certain policies and actions.

Congress’ chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala tagged some of the reports to claim that the government had stopped advertisements to newspapers for “exposing Rafale

scam”, for being critical of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill and for reporting on alleged model code of conduct violations by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“BJP government crushes freedom of media and indulges in sheer vindictiveness by freezing ads to 4 newspapers (sic),” he tweeted.

“This is Modi 2.0 for you!” Surjewala added.

A report which claimed that the government had stopped giving advertisements to some newspapers also quoted an official as saying that “under Congress governments too”, such bans lasted for a shorter period.

Monsoon deficiency comes down to 33 pc; active monsoon week ahead

NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI): June ended with 33 per cent of monsoon precipitation and over 78 per cent of meteorological subdivision recording “deficient” rainfall, according to the India Meteorological Department. However, monsoon is likely to become active this week.

IMD’s Additional Director-General Mrutyunjay Mahapatra said formation of a low pressure in the Bay of Bengal will bring good rainfall to central India, including Odisha and parts of Rajasthan.

Parts of north India like Delhi, Punjab and Haryana may not benefit due to this low pressure area and it is unlikely that these states will get rainfall because of it, Mahapatra said.

Private weather forecaster Skymet’s

Managing Director Jatin Singh said monsoon surge is expected from June 30 to July 15 with a short break in between.

This spell would be a result of a low pressure area which is likely to form in the Bay of Bengal. Odisha, north coastal Andhra Pradesh, south Chhattisgarh, northern parts of Telangana, south Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha region, parts of central Maharashtra, southwest Madhya Pradesh, south Rajasthan and Gujarat would benefit the maximum from this spell, he said. The official monsoon season in the country starts on June 1 and ends on September 30.

As of June 30, monsoon has reached almost the entire country, except a few parts of north India. It is yet to reach Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

AAI spent Rs 4 crore in 2018-19 to maintain 26 non-operational airports

NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI): The Airport Authority of India (AAI) spent Rs 4 crore in 2018-19 to maintain its 26 non-operational airports, according to an official document.

In 2017-18, the AAI had spent Rs 2.66 crore to maintain these 26 airports, the document stated.

The AAI owns and manages around 100 operational airports

across the country. However, it also has 26 non-operational airports with it that have no flight operations currently.

Some of these 26 airports are in the following places: Donakonda in Andhra Pradesh; Daparizo in Arunachal Pradesh; Rupsi and Shella in Assam; Jogbani, Muzaffarpur, Raxaul in Bihar; Deesa in Gujarat; Chakulia and Deogarh in

Jharkhand; Panna, Satna and Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh.

As per the document, the remaining of these 26 airports are in the following places: Aizwal in Mizoram; Nadirgul and Warangal in Telangana; Vellore and Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu; Kailashahar, Kamalpur and Khowai in Tripura; Bareilly and Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh; Asansol, Balurghat and

Malda in West Bengal.

In 2018-19, Rs 85 lakhs was spent by the AAI to maintain the non-operational airport at Vellore in Tamil Nadu, as per the document.

On the non-operational airports of Warangal in Telangana and Kailashahar in Tripura, the AAI spent Rs 56 lakhs and Rs 48 lakhs in 2018-19, respectively, as per the document.

Badminton tourney concludes in Soreong

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 30 JUN:

The three-day West District Badminton Tournament, organised by Soreng Badminton Association in collaboration with Govt. Senior Secondary School, Soreng, concluded today at the school auditorium with area MLA Aditya Golay as chief guest.

Final matches in 12 categories were played today.

In Under-14 Girls, Simona Limboo defeated Ashriya Subba while in mixed doubles, Anju and partner registered a comfortable victory over

Promata and partner.

In 40+ men's single, Sajan Subba beat Kumar Pradhan, while in women's single Sangay Diki Bhutia outplayed Mamta Bhariti.

In the U-14 Boys final, Yougal Limboo emerged comfortable victor against Shidhart, while in U-17 Boys Kushal Yogi beat Manish Pradhan, 40+ Men's Double Namgyal and partner outplayed Sajan and partner.

In women's double, Sarita and partner beat Promata and partner.

The men's single



was won by NT Sherpa after he beat Avitra Chettri in the finals.

In conclusion, an exhibition match was played between Denish Pega [chief

advisor, SBA] and Lobsang Lama [chairman of the tournament] which the former won. Addressing the final day's event, the

chief guest appreciated Soreng Badminton Association's initiative in organizing the tournament commenting that badminton comes under well-structured

youth sports and on-going physical activities can provide many benefits for children and adolescents.

The positive experience that sports and an active lifestyle can bring play an important role in a young person's life, he said.

He also shared that the newly elected government will support sports & games and take them to new heights.

The event was also attended by Press Advisor to the CM, CP Sharma, Political Advisor to CM Jacob Khaling, SKM CLC members etc.

340 infra projects show cost overruns of Rs 3.3 lakh cr



NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI):

As many as 340 infrastructure projects, each worth Rs 150 crore or more, have shown cost overruns to the tune of over Rs 3.3 lakh crore owing to delays and other reasons, a report said.

"Total original cost of implementation of the 1405 projects was Rs 18,09,681.47 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be Rs 21,39,924.38 crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of Rs 3,30,242.91 crore (18.25% of original cost)," the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's latest report for March 2019 said.

The ministry monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above. Of these 1,405 projects, 340 reported cost overruns and 381 time escalation.

According to the report, the expenditure incurred on these projects till March 2019 is Rs 8,53,680.47 crore, which is 39.89 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.

However, it said the number of delayed projects decreases to 300 if delay is calculated on the basis of latest schedule of completion.

For 705 projects, neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation period has been reported.

Out of 381 delayed projects, 117 projects have overall delay in the range of 1 to 12 months, 63 are delayed by 13 to 24 months, 103 reflect delay of 25 to 60 months and 98 projects show 61 months and above delay.

The average time overrun in these 381 delayed projects is 43.17 months.

The brief reasons for time overruns, as reported by various project implementing agencies, are delays in land acquisition, forest clearance and supply of equipment.

Besides, there are other reasons like fund constraints, geological surprises, geo-mining conditions, slow progress in civil works, shortage of labour, inadequate mobilisation by the contractor, Maoist problems, court cases, contractual issues, ROU/ROW (right of use/right of way) problems, law and order situation, among others, the report said.

It also observed that project agencies are not reporting revised cost estimates and commissioning schedules for many projects, which suggests that time/cost overrun figures are under-reported.

Sahitya Akademi awardee, family of Assam Agitation martyr excluded from NRC

GUWAHATI, JUN 30 (PTI):

Sahitya Akademi awardee Durga Khatiwada along with the family members of Baijyanti Devi, the first woman martyr of Assam Agitation, have been excluded from the complete draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), an organisation of the Gorkhas said Sunday.

Along with them, Manju Devi, the great granddaughter of freedom fighter Chabilal Upadhyay, has also been left out from the NRC upgrade process, they said.

These three prominent cases involved Gorkhas and the NRC process has disrespected the

community by excluding them, and the matter may be taken to court if not resolved, Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh (BhaGoPa) National Secretary Nanda Kirati Dewan said at a press conference here.

"Families of freedom fighters and martyrs of Assam Agitation have been disrespected by excluding them from NRC. This is not only disrespect to the Gorkhas, but also an insult to the freedom fighters and martyrs," Dewan said.

The six-year-long Assam Agitation over identification and deportation of illegal immigrants was launched

by the All Assam Students Union in 1979. It culminated with the signing of the Assam Accord on August 15, 1985, in the presence of the then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

He said Sahitya Akademi awardee and president of Assam Nepali Sahitya Sabha Durga Khatiwada's name has appeared in the Exclusion List released by the NRC authorities on June 26.

"Khatiwada holds 1951 NRC of his father as legacy. Although names of all his family members' have been included in the NRC, he was excluded," Dewan added.

SDF tears in SKM Govt's...

On the same, he urged SKM and its government not to misguide the people on the issue and start working for the people instead.

He also alleged that SKM has started collecting 'Chanda' [donations] from the people and also took potshots at Chief Minister PS Tamang for holding a meeting in a hotel in Siliguri on Saturday.

He urged central and state agencies to investigate this matter.

SDF South District president, Ganesh Rai, in turn stated that SDF had not asked the State government to give a list of its achievements.

"We will seek the SKM government's achievements after completion four and half years, i.e. if it remains in power that long. At present, SKM has not even been able to control its MLAs," he said.

He also questioned the government's decision to make Saturdays holidays at schools and commented that while a 5-day week was good for the staff of the school, it was not advisable for students.

He informed that as per the Right To Education Act, the minimum number of working days for primary schools was 200 and a minimum of 220 for above primary. He added that despite increasing school hours, it will be not meet the criteria so this decision will imperil the future of students.

Mr Rai questioned the government on how this benefit of 'care and cure' will cover medical and police personnel and field employees of Forest Department.

On the same, he alleged that this benefit has been covering few sections of employees but not all of them.

He alleged that Sikkim Police has a good name in the country, but this has been tarnished in the last one month due to politicisation of the force.

He further alleged that the people of Sikkim have lost faith in the police in light of its failure to check the deteriorating law and order situation in the State.

Sikkim's Achievements through Peace: Organic Farming State

PD RAI

Food contamination is a matter of growing concern today as the high concentration of chemicals present in the food poses serious health risks. Organically produced food is becoming increasingly popular with more and more people realising its benefits as organic farming practices helps eliminate pesticide and fertilizer residues from the food chain. The demand of organic food is high in India and is only growing every year. A study conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India revealed that the market size for Indian organic packaged food is expected to cross INR 871 million by 2021 from INR 533 million in 2016, growing at a rate of 17%. Consumers everywhere are looking for safer food produced in environmentally friendly conditions while also emphasising animal welfare, food quality and health. These attributes are important to today's ethically and ecologically conscious consumers.

The first talks of developing

an organic farming policy in Sikkim in alignment with 'Green Sikkim' happened in 2001 following which an official political commitment to the cause was made by the then Chief Minister Shri Pawan Chamling in 2003. After persistent efforts over 15 years from the government and active support from the farmers, panchayats, entrepreneurs and general public, Sikkim achieved its goal of becoming a fully organic state and was declared India's first organic state in January 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Most of the policies implemented during the intervening period were very unique and could even be considered radical. For example, one of the policies was phasing out of pesticides, a move which was unheard of in India, a country where agriculture is often associated with increased use of pesticides and fertilizers owing to the greatly successful Green Revolution despite the problems associated with inorganic agricultural practices.

Due to the success of all the policies undertaken in the past

15 years, Sikkim received the Future Policy Gold Award in October 2018 for being India's first 100% organic state, awarded by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, Italy which Shri Pawan Chamling received personally. This award, which has been dubbed the 'Oscar for Best Policies', crowns the best policies on agroecology and sustainable food systems around the world. This award is indeed a matter of pride for every Sikkimese and has brought international attention to our state.

Today, not only is all of Sikkim's farmland certified organic, the organic approach has proven transformational for the state and its citizens covering, but not limited to, areas of health and nutrition, rural development and sustainable tourism. The boom to the tourism sector has been very visible with a large number of urban tourists coming into the state to stay in Sikkim's homestays and to enjoy organically produced food. This has proved to be greatly beneficial to village eco-tourism. The youth

have adopted the organic mission enthusiastically. Highly educated youth have begun to engage actively in organic farming and market distribution of organic produce, recognising the potential of the organic revolution that is happening worldwide. The educated young farmers have even started taking state produce to far off places in the country like Bengaluru and Delhi.

Organic farming has been the traditional way of farming adopted by farmers since ages in Sikkim and the use of chemical fertilizers has been lower than other states in India. Due to its fragile mountainous environment Sikkim is not well suited to intensive industrial farming. Pesticide and synthetic fertilizer residues are major water pollutants which contaminate our rivers and impact marine life. These polluted rivers, which are the main source of water for millions of Indians, then flow into the plains. Since most of India's rivers originates from the Himalayas, other mountain states in the Indian Himalayan Region should follow in the

steps of Sikkim and shift to fully organic agricultural practices for the well-being of current and future generations.

Properly implemented organic agriculture offers viable solutions to many of the problems the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are meant to tackle. The SDGs put forward by the United Nations are the blueprint to a better and sustainable future for all. This is especially important in the background of the climate emergency that we are currently going through. Therefore, Sikkim can also be said to be spearheading the adoption of SDGs in India. Nationally and Internationally, Sikkim is recognised as leading the organic revolution and we should all do our best to ensure that the status quo is maintained. Any reversal to the current practices in Sikkim would be greatly damaging not just to Sikkim's economy, but to the cause of organic farming and sustainable development overall.

[The writer is a former Lok Sabha MP and senior leader of the Sikkim Democratic Front]

Fund transfer via RTGS, NEFT set to get cheaper from Monday

MUMBAI, JUN 30 (PTI):

Fund transfer through RTGS and NEFT systems is set to become cheaper from Monday after the Reserve Bank of India decided it will not impose any charges on such transactions.

After announcing its decision to waive all charges on fund transfer through RTGS and NEFT systems from July 1, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had also asked banks to pass on the benefits to customers from the same day.

The real-time gross settlement (RTGS) system is meant for large-value instantaneous fund transfers, while the national electronic funds transfer (NEFT) system is used for fund transfers of up to Rs 2 lakh.

"With a view to push the digital transaction, the RBI has decided not to charge the RTGS and NEFT transactions. This would help banks reduce the fees from customers for these transactions," Indian Banks' Association Chairman Sunil Mehta said in IBA's newsletter.

The country's largest bank SBI charges between Re 1 and Rs 5 for transactions through NEFT and between Rs 5 and Rs 50 for RTGS route.

To provide an impetus to digital funds

movement, the central bank had decided to do away with the processing charges and time-varying charges levied on banks by the RBI for outward transactions through the RTGS, as also the processing charges for transactions processed in NEFT will be waived by the Reserve Bank of India.

Currently, the RBI "levies minimum charges" on banks for transactions routed through its RTGS and NEFT system.

Banks, in turn, levy charges on their customers.

The RBI has also constituted a high-level committee under IBA Chief Executive V G Kannan to examine ATM charges and fees by banks amid demands for reviewing the levies.

The use of automated teller machines (ATMs) has been growing significantly and there have been persistent demands to change ATM charges and fees.

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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

Hotel Parasol Residency,
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BUILDING FOR SALE

A 5 storied building with 3 floor completed having a land area of 30x70 at DABUWA, Melli road (2km from Namchi) is for sale. Rate reasonable. Interested party please contact: 6296370905, 9733284142, 8597088755.

Tiny Pearls celebrates silver jubilee

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 JUN:

Tiny Pearls School here at 6th Mile, Tadong, and with a branch in Ranipool, celebrated its silver jubilee today with HRDD Minister, KN Lepcha, as the chief guest.

Recalling the school's journey, Principal Kusum

Basnet recalled how the school had started in 1994 with only one



faculty member in Pumpha Pradhan and Anita Pradhan, one eight students. The school now has

25 teachers, 15 non-teaching staff and 500 students enrolled in



classes from nursery to grade VIII.

The school put up

a colorful cultural programme much to the delight of doting

Priyanka slams UP govt over reported reduction in honorarium of school instructors

NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI): Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday hit out at the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh over the reported reduction in the honorarium of school instructors, alleging the dispensation is committing atrocities on them.

She cited a media report which claimed that the honorarium of about 30,000 government junior school instructors has been reduced in Uttar Pradesh

Till now instructors

used to get Rs 8,470 per month. Now they will get Rs 7,000 honorarium, the report said.

"The BJP government in Uttar Pradesh is committing atrocities on instructors. Leave alone paying the promised Rs 17,000 per month, a reduction is being made even in the Rs 8,470 per month honorarium," Priyanka Gandhi said.

"Does the UP govt have an answer for this betrayal," the AICC general secretary in-charge of eastern UP said.

Veterans battle it out



GANGTOK, 30 JUN: Three matches were played in the ongoing Veteran's Football Invitational Tournament 2019 here at Paljor Stadium on Sunday. In the first match, Namchi Veterans humbled New United Veterans 8-3, while Denzong Boys Veterans outplayed Royal FC Veterans 6-2. In the last match of the day, Dooars Rhino Veterans defeated United Kalimpong Veterans 6-1.

New team takes office at Inner Wheel Gangtok

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 30 JUN:

The 19th installation ceremony of Inner Wheel Club, Gangtok, was held here on Saturday.

The new team, led by Asha Kiran as president took over the baton from outgoing president Shashi Goel. Additional Advocate General of Sikkim, Dr Doma T Bhutia, was present as the chief guest.

The new team has Sunita Kiran as vice-president, Deepti Oberoi as secretary, Shobha Sarda as treasurer, Rajkumari Khandelwal as joint secretary, Ruchika Somani as editor, Seema Sarda as ISO and Shashi Goel as IPP. In her acceptance



speech, the new president highlighted the various projects to be undertaken by the new team like Mission Mamta, which emphasizes on an orphanage free India, Creating Inner Wheel

Schools, Branding Inner Wheel Clubs and Forming Gen Clubs.

It is informed that in this term, the new team also plans to continue with the ongoing projects like Ignite,

Udaan, Swayamsidha, Clean Green Gangtok and Ban on Plastic.

A press release informs that the Inner Wheel Theme for this Year is, "Together We Can."

Pedestrian-friendly CP: Parking woes irk visitors, traders miffed as footfall reduces

NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI): There was chaos in parts of Connaught Place on Sunday as the NDMC set in motion its plan to make the shopping hub pedestrian-friendly, inviting sharp criticism from traders who claimed the footfall in the inner circle has reduced massively.

Visitors complained of inconvenience, saying the parking areas are far and chaotic.

"It's okay for people who take the metro to CP, they can take the required exit. But there's no auto-service for them if they want to go to another block. They will have to walk," said Shradha Gupta, who was visiting the area with her family for lunch.

Nipunika Shahid, who had to leave her car near Shivaji Stadium, said, "Since the entire inner circle parking was blocked, there was total chaos in the middle circle parking area. I had to go all

the way to Shivaji Stadium metro station and walk back to CP".

Representatives at United Coffee House, a popular joint, said they usually have at least half-an-hour waiting time for visitors but on Sunday, only five tables were occupied. "In B-Block parking, entry point is now exit point and exit is entry. And the parking machines are not supporting this change. Parking attendants are going crazy," another visitor said.

Vinay Behel, the treasurer of the New Delhi Traders Association, said, "We were assured that there would be no stopping of vehicles into inner circle for access to parking lots but it was the opposite and caused huge inconvenience to customers. And where are the pedestrians? Even the regular crowd has gone away."

"It is total chaotic. The footfall has fallen by 85-

90 per cent. The business is affected and customers are at inconvenience. Who is benefiting from this plan?" said Amit Gupta, a trader.

On Saturday, the civic agency carried out a mock drill to test the new traffic and pedestrian movement plan.

Miffed traders removed barricades placed by the civic body and shouted slogans.

The civic body had said the vehicular movement to the shopping hub will be restricted this Sunday and Monday as the NDMC plans to execute its pedestrian-friendly plan.

However, now the plan will be tested on Sunday only.

"A full-fledged plan to make Connaught Place pedestrian-friendly will be prepared based on the success of the trial run and after taking inputs from all

stakeholders," said a senior NDMC official.

Traders had raised objection to the plan, following which the NDMC tweaked it.

The initial plan was to make the inner circle completely car-free and giving access to all parking areas in the inner and outer circles to car owners.

Connaught Place market and Chandni Chowk were initially chosen for pedestrianisation in the national capital.

In January 2017, then Union urban development minister M Venkaiah Naidu had proposed the idea later taken forward by NDMC.

However, the plan never took off owing to strong opposition from traders.

This month, the NDMC announced it will do a trial run of the plan for two consecutive weekends.

Perform or leave: Tripura CM to govt employees

AGARTALA, JUN 30 (PTI): Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb Sunday sent a stern warning to non-performing government employees at all levels, saying anyone not found to be working properly would be sent on "voluntary retirement".

"I worship my work and take my job seriously. I want everyone to perform properly. If you want to do government job, do it properly. Thousands of youth are unemployed. So, if you don't want to perform, leave the service."

"Anyone from the chief secretary to a Group-D employee, who doesn't perform properly, would be sent on voluntary retirement," he said while addressing a rally of Tripura Karmachari Samiti here.

Noting that there were problems with work culture in various government offices, the chief minister advised employees to perform properly, if they wanted to save their jobs.

The BJP-IPFT government in this state, after assuming office in March, 2018 had introduced a new employment policy.

The government had also taken action against some employees for absence from work and negligence of duty.

Heat wave: Summer vacation extended by a week in Delhi schools for students upto class 8

NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI): The Delhi government on Sunday extended by a week the summer vacation in city schools for students till Class 8 in view of hot weather conditions in the national capital.

The schools for up to classes 8 will reopen from July 8 while for the higher classes will reopen from Monday as per the earlier schedule.

"In view of the hot weather in Delhi, the summer vacation for students up to class 8 are being extended till July 8. For other classes the schools will reopen as per earlier schedule," Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said.

Sisodia, who is also the Education Minister, clarified that the order will be applicable for both government and private schools.

Weather officials have predicted that heat wave may continue in the city.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us: news@summittimes.com



Sikkim State Legal Services Authority
Development Area, Gangtok : Sikkim
Phone: 03592-207753, Fax: 03592-207753



"Message"

Sikkim State Legal Services Authority is organizing National Lok Adalat on Saturday the 13th July, 2019 for the following types of pre-litigation and pending cases viz:

Pre-litigation

- N.I. Act cases under Section 138;
- Bank Recovery cases;
- Labour disputes cases;
- Electricity and Water Bills (excluding non-compoundable)
- Other (Criminal Compoundable).

Pending in the Courts

- Criminal Compoundable Offence
- N.I. Act cases under section 138;
- Bank Recovery cases;
- MACT cases;
- Labour disputes cases;
- Electricity and Water Bills (excluding non-compoundable)
- Matrimonial disputes;
- Land Acquisition cases;
- Service matters relating to pay and allowances and retirement benefits;

(x) Revenue cases (pending in District Courts and High Courts only);

- Other civil cases (rent, easementary rights, injunction suits, specific performance suits) etc.

Any individual or any department having such matters either pending in Courts/Tribunals /Departments or in pre-litigation stage may approach directly before the Sikkim SLSA, District Lok Adalats or Taluk Adalats for settlement on or before 02.07.2019 at the following address:

1. Sikkim State Legal Services Authority, Development Area, Gangtok, East Sikkim e-mail: sikkim_slsa@live.com. Phone No. 03592-207753.

2. High Court Legal Services Committee, Development Area, Gangtok, East Sikkim. E-mail: sikkim_slsa@live.com Phone No: 03592-207753.

3. District Legal Services Authority (East), District Court's Complex, Sichey, Gangtok, East Sikkim. Phone No. 03592-284462.

4. Taluk Legal Services Committee (East), District Court's Complex, Sichey, Gangtok, East Sikkim. Phone No. 03592 284131.

5. District Legal Services Authority (North), District Court Complex, Mangan, North Sikkim. Phone No. 03592 234502.

6. Taluk Legal Services Committee (North), Court of Civil Judge -cum- Judicial Magistrate, North Sikkim. Phone No. 03592 234383/234514.

7. District Legal Services Authority (South), District Court's Complex, Namchi, South Sikkim. Phone no. 03595 264356.

8. Taluk Legal Services Committee (South), Court of Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate, District Court, Namchi, South Sikkim. Phone No. 03595 263145.

9. District Legal Services Authority (West), District Court Complex, Kyongsa, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. Phone No. 03595 250061.

10. Taluk Legal services Committee (West), Court of Civil Judge-cum- Judicial Magistrate, Gyalshing, West Sikkim. Phone No. 03595 250061.

11. Taluk Legal Services Committee (North), Court of Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate, Chungthang, Sub-Division, North Sikkim.

12. Taluk Legal Services Committee (West), Court of Civil Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate, Soreng, Sub-division, West Sikkim.

(Published by Sikkim State Legal Services Authority)

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Make Space for People in the Public Domain

Enough of dictating terms while pretending to confer

Certificates of Identification, Old Laws, land acquisition, statehood, identity chauvinism, territorial integrity, seat reservation... these are some issues which keep returning to make news. There have been many comments issued in the public domain on these matters, but start scratching the nature of reactions and it quickly becomes apparent that most of the voices come out from the same bouquet of opinionators. Public opinion is claimed by those who have traditionally usurped the privilege to speak from the people, an empowerment which now allows them to dictate even though they might be claiming to be conferring and set the agenda even when they are supposedly trying to build consensus.

There is a small clutch of voices which occupies the public domain and while there is nothing wrong in holding opinions and broadcasting them, the quality of debate suffers in the absence of variety or new voices. The region, unfortunately, is afflicted by a paucity of representative voices which can claim to be genuinely speaking for a wide section of people. The public space is monopolised by political viewpoints, each comment anchored in the political position projecting the view. It does not help that political personalities and leanings infiltrate other organisations with ease and get their views echoed from there as well. The ruling and the Opposition groups and all sections and fronts aligned with either of them react on expected lines and never surprise with the positions they take and rarely enlighten with lucid explanations or justifications. And no, they stopped explaining their actions a long time ago.

The priority for them is to embarrass or dominate the other side and this they pursue with spite instead of reason. The media allows them the platform to exchange their barbs, and while all of this can be very entertaining, it is rarely informative. Refer to the short list with which this piece begins and it becomes obvious that though many allegations, counter allegations, justifications and claims have been made on these issues, the issues themselves remain largely under-explained and widely misunderstood. Because the political voices get so belligerent in these debates, the unattached voices hesitate from entering the discussions because that would attract immediate political branding which most apolitical stances would be uncomfortable with. It is time that this hesitation was overcome, because the people's right to know and understand is suffering as a result.

The process can be initiated if genuinely apolitical groups and organisations, even social organisations, overcame their passivity and engaged more energetically on issues that concerned the people, tried to understand them better and then shared their informed stands. Until that happens, as far as the people are concerned, they will view debates on all issues only as rants and counter-rants between political opponents, not as important discussions which could affect them.

Period pain is impacting women at school, uni and work. Let's be open about it

MIKE ARMOUR, CHRISTINA CURRY & FREYA MACMILLAN
theconversation.com

Menstrual symptoms including pain, heavy bleeding and low mood may be linked to nearly nine days of lost productivity per woman every year, according to a new study published in the British Medical Journal this week.

The researchers evaluated lost productivity associated with menstrual symptoms, as measured by time off from work or school (absenteeism) and working or studying while feeling ill (presenteeism), in 32,748 Dutch women between the ages of 15 and 45.

While just under 14% of respondents said they had taken time off from work or school during their periods, more than 80% said they had continued to work or study while feeling unwell, and were less productive as a result.

These findings tell us we need to better recognise the impact menstrual symptoms are having on women.

PERIOD PAIN IS COMMON

We recently reviewed the literature and found that globally, almost three-quarters (71%) of adolescents and women under 25 reported having period pain.

Period pain (dysmenorrhoea) is perhaps the most common symptom associated with menstruation. It's characterised by pain in the lower abdomen that usually occurs just before or during the first few days of a woman's period. Period pain can be mild for some women, but more severe, and even debilitating, for others.

Primary dysmenorrhoea is the most common type of period pain and is mostly caused by changes in hormone-like compounds called prostaglandins, which are responsible for the cramping feeling many women report during their period.

Secondary dysmenorrhoea occurs when pain is caused by an underlying problem in the pelvis, such as endometriosis or adenomyosis.



MISSING CLASS AND MISSING OUT

In our research, one in five young women (20%) reported missing school or university due to period pain. Two in five (41%) said pain affected their concentration or performance in class.

Many of these young women run the risk of falling behind during their final years of schooling – a crucial time in their academic lives.

Women in our research also missed social activities, other school activities and sporting activities because of their menstrual symptoms. This is concerning as social interaction and participation in physical activity are important for good health, particularly during adolescence.

JUST PART OF BEING A WOMAN?

Many women think of period pain and other menstrual symptoms as “normal”. They don't always recognise that their pain may be a health problem, and often believe it's just something they need to “put up with”.

So most young women use self care to manage the pain themselves rather than seeking medical care. This is likely due to a variety of factors, including not discussing menstruation because of social or cultural taboos, a lack of quality education on menstruation, feeling dismissed by medical professionals, or the pain occurring for so long it just becomes “normal”.

While mild pain or discomfort could be seen as part of a “normal” menstrual cycle, if pain or any other menstrual symptoms are enough to prevent normal activities such

as going to school or work, it's important to go and speak to your doctor.

Moderate to severe period pain alone doesn't necessarily mean you have a condition like endometriosis, but it's likely that something can be done to help reduce the impact of your pain.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

There is a range of effective treatments for period pain, although there's no “one-size-fits-all” approach that works for every woman. Some women may require multiple strategies to get their pain and symptoms to a level that doesn't impact their daily lives.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen, and to a lesser extent the oral contraceptive pill, can be effective in treating primary dysmenorrhoea. Both treatments carry the risk of side effects, so should be discussed with a doctor.

Paracetamol, despite being commonly used for period pain, doesn't appear to be particularly effective.

There's some evidence that heat and regular physical activity can help. Heat seems to work best if used when pain is present, whereas exercise, such as yoga, is better if it's done regularly throughout the month.

'PERIOD' ISN'T A DIRTY WORD

While symptom management is important, increasing young women's health literacy around menstruation is equally vital. Improving education on menstruation may help women make better self-care choices like

choosing more effective pain-relieving medications and taking the correct dose.

Several programs in Australia and New Zealand have been designed to help young people better understand the menstrual cycle. These include programs aimed at early adolescents, either at home or school.

The content of school-based programs varies but includes topics such as what a “normal” menstrual cycle looks like and how to identify symptoms that might indicate more serious conditions. Importantly, these programs generally target boys too, which should help reduce the stigma around discussing periods.

Whether at school, university or in the workplace, menstrual symptoms cause absenteeism and presenteeism among a significant proportion of women. We need to break down barriers that prevent open discussion of periods, so women of all ages feel they can discuss any period-related problems with their boss, teachers, family or doctor.

Secrecy and shame around periods can prevent access to effective health care. Ensuring menstruating women of all ages have the information they need to choose the best way to manage their pain and symptoms is vital.

[Mike Armour is Post-doctoral research fellow, Western Sydney University; Christina Curry is Lecturer in Health & Physical Education, Western Sydney University; Freya MacMillan is Senior Lecturer in Interprofessional Health Science, Western Sydney University]

Inequality and climate change: the rich must step up

ANDA DAVID, ÉTIENNE ESPAGNE & NICOLAS LONGUET MARX
THECONVERSATION.COM

From the beginning, the issue of inequality with respect to the impacts of climate change and the global response has been a recurring theme in international climate negotiations. Emerging and developing countries have been sought spur the developed world into acknowledging its greater burden of responsibility and, accordingly, its obligation to make a larger contribution to the shift toward a low-carbon economy. The concept of climate justice emerged from this debate, inspiring the legal principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR). The CBDR principle is recognised, among others, by the United Nations bodies charged with overseeing the negotiations – hence the effort at COP24 to translate the pledges enshrined in the Paris Agreement into specific, measurable commitments, particularly in relation to the financial transfers between the global North and South. This is the famous “100 billion dollars” a year that developed countries set as their collective target for 2020, with the aim of helping the countries of the Global South take measures to cut emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

UNEQUAL CO2 EMISSIONS

The complexity of the relationship between inequality and climate change is also linked to the scope of analysis we choose to adopt. Taking a simple approach, we can identify inequality in terms of carbon emissions on the one hand, and the inequality in terms of impacts on the other. The emissions gap can be measured at multiple levels.

At the country level, China recently became the world's biggest CO2 emitter, responsible for a startling 26% of global carbon emissions. Africa still has the lowest emissions of any continent, but this masks a great deal of variation between countries, with South Africa by far the largest emitter.

Oxfam. When we look at per-capita data for the entire globe, the contrasts become even more striking. The Oxfam study also indicates that the lifestyles of the wealthiest Americans are 10 times more emissions-intensive than those of China's richest.

In the United States, as the share of national income enjoyed by the top 10% grew between 1997 and 2012, there was a corresponding increase in emissions levels. Moreover, inequalities in consumption tend to encourage the formation of carbon-intensive habits: we know that the

compulsion to imitate socially prestigious behaviours is one of the key drivers of consumption patterns, and the result of this social mimicry is escalating carbon emissions, as more and more people base their aspirations on the lives of the richest 1%.

Almost 8% of global CO2 emissions, and the sector's growth is outpacing all efforts to curtail its impacts. It seems quite clear that highly unequal societies, where economic, cultural, and political power is disproportionately held by the rich, tend to incubate conditions that foreshadow a dangerously carbon-intensive future.

Meanwhile, other mechanisms are also at work. Inequality erodes social cohesion and undermines individual willingness to engage in collective action. It weakens the sense of social responsibility that is so vital to foster demand for pro-environmental policies, as we are seeing at the moment with the climate protests taking place across Europe.

From a technological perspective, economists Francesco Vona and Fabrizio Patriarca have demonstrated how high inequality hampers the development and adoption of new green technologies, as such innovations are accessible to fewer people. Similarly, Lucas Chancel and Thomas Piketty have proposed a consumption-based emissions inequality index to measure differences between income deciles within each country – thus shifting the focus from the national to the individual level. They argue that in a globalised economy it makes more sense to consider the quantity of emissions “consumed” (through the products we buy and the services we use) than to talk about emissions “produced”.

When we adopt this consumption-based approach, the map of emissions inequality reveals some arresting contrasts. A clear gap emerges between the North and South, but also between the world's wealthiest 10% and everybody else.

UNEQUAL EXPOSURE TO CLIMATIC HAZARDS

Differing degrees of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change are strongly correlated with existing patterns of income inequality. Individual and societal exposure to the hazards of a warming climate varies widely, not only between developed and developing countries (a gap we have known about for a long time), but also between different groups within a country.

In the United States, for example, the effects of climate change are disproportionately felt by the least privileged, and so climate becomes another

conduit for reinforcing existing inequalities.

A similar but much more pronounced effect can be observed in an emerging country like Vietnam, which is doubly vulnerable due to its high proportion of agricultural employment and elevated susceptibility to the hazards of climate change. We have demonstrated this in the larger context of a project carried out by the French Development Agency (AFD), GEMMES Vietnam, which presents a systematic analysis of the “socio-economic impacts of climate change and adaptation strategies in Vietnam.”

We found that one additional day per year where the temperature exceeds 33 °C seems to have a strong adverse effect on both the technical efficiency of rice cultivation and household income, widening the gap between income quartiles (the population having been divided into four income groups) irrespective of occupation. This highlights that exposure to climatic hazards is unequal.

Climate change not only increases the exposure of the most vulnerable to the ensuing climatic hazards, but it also heightens their sensitivity to its adverse effects and diminishes their capacity to adapt and recover following an extreme climate event.

All indications seem to point to the need to promote more restrained consumption patterns among the wealthy alongside the more general principle of reducing inequalities, if we are to have any hope of meeting the objectives set out in the Paris Agreement. Unless we address inequality and curb the excessive emissions generated by the lifestyles of the rich, there is a risk that efforts to live up to the Paris Agreement will lead to a breakdown in the social bond.

In other words, the responsibility to cut carbon emissions must be shouldered by the highest-income countries, and by the most privileged social groups in certain emerging and developing nations. Achieving this goal will require a drastic contraction of consumption habits. The surest path to meeting the COP21 objectives is by tackling inequality and strengthening the social bond – especially if we are to achieve the most ambitious goal of capping the average global temperature rise at just 1.5 °C.

[Anda David is Chargée de recherche, Agence française de développement (AFD); Étienne Espagne is Économiste, Agence française de développement (AFD); Nicolas Longuet Marx is Project Officer for Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, Agence française de développement (AFD)]

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Vardhan dispatches team to review situation in Assam after Japanese Encephalitis cases reported

NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI): In view of the recent cases of Japanese Encephalitis (JE) in Assam, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan Sunday dispatched a central team to review the situation in the state.

He directed the ministry to extend all support and assistance to the state government. "I am closely monitoring the situation. The Health Ministry is coordinating with the Assam government for prevention and management of JE to ensure that the cases don't rise in the state," Vardhan said.

He said the Health Ministry is providing all logistical and technical support to the state government in terms of surveillance and diagnostic kits to strengthen their efforts in addressing JE.

Noting that community participation and empowerment are the most crucial



in JE prevention, Vardhan urged all the stakeholders to start rigorous awareness campaigns regarding the preventive steps to be taken by the communities.

The central team is headed by Additional Secretary Sanjeeva Kumar and he is accompanied by the senior officers from the National Vector Borne Diseases Control Programme, New Delhi, an official statement said.

As per the directions of the health minister, the team will reach the state by Sunday evening to review the situation.

All 27 districts of Assam were covered under the JE vaccination campaign for those aged between one to 15 years followed by routine immunisation, it said.

Ten high endemic districts of Assam (Shivsagar, Barpeta, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Darrang, Udalguri,

Bongaigaon, Cachar, Morigaon, Nalbari) have been included under the multipronged strategy for prevention and control of JE.

These districts have also been covered under adult JE vaccination campaign. Out of 10 high burdened districts, funds have been provided for establishment of seven Pediatric ICUs (PICU). Of these, four PICUs have been made functional, the

statement added.

For the diagnosis of JE, till date 28 sentinel surveillance hospitals have been identified and the Health Ministry is providing diagnostic kits to the state free of cost, it said.

For rehabilitation of JE disabled patients, the central government has provided funds for strengthening of two Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PMR) departments at Dibrugarh Medical College and Guwahati Medical College.

Japanese Encephalitis is vector-borne encephalitis transmitted by culex groups of mosquitoes. These mosquitoes breed mainly in rice fields and large water bodies rich in aquatic vegetation.

Migratory birds along with pigs in the community play an important role in the transmission of JE from one area to another.

Nagaland govt upgrading all sub-health centres



KOHIMA, JUN 30 (PTI): Nagaland Health and Family Welfare (HWF) Department is upgrading the 394 existing sub-health centres in the state, an official said on Sunday.

The Department has already upgraded 49 out of the 394 existing sub-health centres and the remaining would also be upgraded in phased manner, said State Programme Officer, National Health Mission, Dr Thangho Lam.

Interacting with media persons on the sidelines of the inauguration of Health and Wellness

Centre (HWC) at Science College sub-centre here Sunday, he informed that the department has also set up several new sub-centres. Lam said the project is being implemented with the financial support from the Government of India under National Health scheme of Healthy India while technical expertise is imparted by USAID.

Director (Health Office) USAID Xerses Sidhwa speaking on the occasion said Nagaland

has been performing very well in healthcare delivery system, specially the death rates of children in the

state is the lowest in the entire country.

Principal Secretary Health and Family Welfare Department, I Himato Zhimomi said there is a paradigm shift in looking at health throughout the world. The Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) are expected to minimise out of pocket expenditure on health on account of primary healthcare, which at present is around 70 per cent of the total expenditure.

The HWCs will bring quality healthcare closer to the homes of the community, he said.

Kalinga Literary Festival to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi

NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI): Themed "Gandhi's Idea of India: Truth, Harmony, Non-Violence", the 6th edition of Kalinga Literary Festival (KLF) will open gates for bibliophiles in Bhubaneswar, the temple city of Odisha, starting July 19. The three-day event, to be attended by over 250 celebrities, will witness speakers deliberating on Gandhi's works and ideas through literature, lived experiences, politics, arts and films.

"The KLF is well known for its socially relevant themes and in a way compels all

creative people to think and articulate the contemporary. Like its past editions the KLF this year also has a hard-hitting theme for writers, poets and artists to ponder on.

"The central theme focuses on Gandhian Ideology. Several sessions on different themes will connect to the central theme on Gandhi's Idea of India," the organisers said.

The event will witness sessions and discussions by the likes of Namita Gokhale, Anand Neelakantan, Anu Chaudhary, Rashmi Bansal, Yashwant Sinha

and Swanad Kirkire, among others from varying fields of interest.

The key sessions at the literary festival will be on topics including cultural nationalism, Gandhigiri, generation Y, Odisha, media, market, cinema, and sports.

"This year the world is celebrating 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. It is only fitting to pay tribute to him, his ideas and reflect upon them in contemporary times. KLF 2019 will pay literary and creative tribute to the immortal spirit of Gandhi ji," Rashmi

director of KLF, said. Four awards in literature -- a distinguished

writer in Odia, a woman writer, a writer in any global language and a young writer in any global language -- will be conferred during the event. Also, more than 20 new books and monographs will be released during the three-day festival, the organisers said

A dedicated platform, Kalinga Art Festival, will provide a unique platform for artists to showcase their talent and connect their art to the central theme of the festival.

Man shot at from point blank range in West Bengal's Jhargram

JHARGRAM (WB), JUN 30 (PTI): A person was critically injured after he was shot at from point blank range in West Bengal's Jhargram district, police said on Sunday.

The BJP blamed the TMC for the incident, a charge denied by the ruling party.

The police has initiated an investigation and detained a villager in connection with the incident.

The incident happened at Bagua village under the jurisdiction of Jamboni police station on Saturday night, the police said.

Two persons approached Khagapati Mahato, while he was attending a Kirtan (devotional song) programme, and one of them shot at him from point blank range, a police officer said.

The miscreants fled

the scene immediately, he said, adding, the injured person and the miscreants are residents of Bagua village.

Khagapati Mahato was rushed to Jhargram hospital and from there he was taken to Midnapore Medical College and Hospital, the police officer said.

Later, he was referred to a hospital in Kolkata, he added.

BJP's Jhargram district president

Sukhomoy Satpati alleged that the TMC supporters were involved in the incident.

"We have informed the district administration. The miscreants should be arrested immediately," he said.

Denying the allegation, TMC's district core committee member Prasun Sarangi claimed that the incident happened as a result of personal problems.

My new book comes from companionship: Arundhati

NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI): Author Arundhati Roy says although writers usually walk alone, most of the essays she has written rose from the heart of a crowd.

Each of the essays she has written, Roy says, took her on journeys deeper and deeper into worlds that enriched her understanding and complicated her view, of the times we live in.

The God of Small Things writer has now come out with My Seditious Heart, a collection of her non-fiction of a two-decade period when she devoted herself to the political essay as a way of opening up space for justice, rights and freedoms in an increasingly hostile environment.

She says as much as the fiction she writes comes from solitude, this book comes from companionship.

Soon after her first novel The God of Small Things won the 1997 Booker Prize, Roy was a frontrunner in the line-up of people who were chosen to personify the confident, new, market-friendly India that was finally taking its place at the high table.

It was flattering in a way, but deeply disturbing, too. As I watched people being pushed into penury,



my book was selling millions of copies. My bank account was burgeoning. Money on that scale confused me. What did it really mean to be a writer in times such as these? she says.

As she thought about this, almost without meaning to, she began to write a long, bewildering, episodic, astonishingly violent story about the complicated waltz between corporate globalisation and medieval religious fundamentalism and the trail of destruction they were leaving in their wake. And of the remarkable people who had risen to resist them.

The backlash to almost every one of these essays when she first published them - in the form of police cases, legal notices, court appearances, and even a

short jail sentence - was often so wearying that she would resolve never to write another.

But equally, almost every one of them - each a broken promise to myself - took me on journeys deeper and deeper into worlds that enriched my understanding, and complicated my view, of the times we live in. They opened doors for me to secret places where few are trusted, led me into the very heart of insurrections, into places of pain, rage and ferocious irreverence, she says.

Although writers usually walk alone, most of what I wrote rose from the heart of a crowd. It was never meant as neutral commentary, pretending to be observations of a bystander. It was just another stream that

flowed into the quick, immense, rushing currents that I was writing about. My contribution to our collective refusal to obediently fade away, she adds.

The essays in this collection, published by Penguin Books imprint Hamish Hamilton, were written when a certain political space closed down, when a false consensus was being broadcast, when I could no longer endure the relentless propaganda and the sheer vicious bullying of vulnerable people by an increasingly corporatised media and its increasingly privatised commentators.

She says she wrote because she saw that what she needed to do would challenge her abilities as a writer.

THE BIRDS HAVE LOST THEIR WAY

Edited by TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

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

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

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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Aus are the team to beat in this WC, says Kiwi star Boul



LONDON, JUN 30 (PTI): Boasting of a good World Cup record, five-time champions Australia are the team to beat in the ongoing edition of the game's showpiece event, said New Zealand pacer Trent Boul.

In a repeat of 2015 final between the trans-Tasman rivals, pace spearhead Boul's historic hat-trick went in vain as Mitchell Starc's (5/26) brilliant five-for guided Australia to a convincing 86-run win over New Zealand at the Lord's here on Saturday.

With his swinging full-pitched deliveries, Boul sent back the well-settled Usman Khawaja (88 off 129 balls), Starc and Jason Behrendorff, while giving away just two runs of the last over to become the first Kiwi to grab a hat-trick in the World Cup.

But his efforts proved futile as New Zealand were shot out for 157.

By virtue of the win, defending champions Australia, who are already through to the semifinals, have consolidated their position at the top with 14 points from eight games.

"Australia turn up for World Cups. They have a good record in them and they're peaking nicely. They produced the complete performance and they were too good for us," said Boul, who returned with figures of 4 for 51.

"There are some quality sides here but it's all about timing in my opinion and Australia are performing well, there's only a couple of weeks left and they're the ones to beat."

Boul was effusive in his praise for pace counterpart Starc, the tournament's best bowler so far.

Boul was joint leading wicket-taker in the 2015 tournament with 22 wickets,

alongside Starc. But this time Starc overshadowed him and is leading the wicket-takers list with 24 scalps ahead of second-placed Lockie Ferguson of New Zealand, with 17.

"He's (Starc) six foot seven, bowls 157kph and swings it both ways! He's a classy bowler. He was used very nicely with short spells to be aggressive. He's had a stellar campaign so far," the Kiwi left-arm pacer said.

Boul, however, said it was special to grab a hat-trick at the 'Home of Cricket', his second in ODI cricket.

"It would have been nice if it was in the first over but any bowler dreams of getting three wickets in a row. To do it at the 'Home of Cricket' in front of a good crowd against Australia was pretty cool," he said.

"It's a pretty simple game plan. I wanted to disturb the woodwork and it was nice to see the stumps light up. It was a bit of entertainment for the crowd."

He said New Zealand let Australia off the hook on Saturday.

"To have them 90 for five and let them get over 200 was frustrating. If we had kept them under 200, then it's a whole different ball game," he said.

New Zealand have now suffered two successive defeats, against Pakistan and Australia, and face England in their final group match on Wednesday, a match that could yet decide who makes the final four.

"We need to win the last one. It will be a big one for England and they will be hungry it's certainly not panic stations. The bowling plans work well against any side so there won't be much reinvention," Boul signed off.

Ananya Panday launches initiative against social media bullying



MUMBAI, JUN 30 (PTI): Actor Ananya Panday has launched a special initiative, 'So Positive' against social media bullying on the occasion of World Social Media Day. The initiative aims at spreading awareness about social media bullying and introduce measures that can be taken by the victims in order to deal with it.

The 20-year-old actor, who made her Bollywood debut with "Student of the Year 2", announced

her new initiative 'So Positive' as a Digital Social Responsibility (DSR) on her social media accounts.

"A part of growing up is taking responsibility & as a woke Millennial I, Ananya Panday introduce y'all to my Digital Social Responsibility initiative 'So+' (So Positive)" the actor wrote on Instagram.

She also launched the logo of the initiative on the photo-video sharing platform.

An insider's guide to how England can beat USA

HOPE SOLO
THEGUARDIAN

England can beat the USA. As much as I hate to say it, my advice to Phil Neville would be to go direct. Most teams want to be entertaining, pass the ball, and play an attractive style that everyone likes to see and play. The problem for England is that the US knows how to defend against teams that play like that. The way to win is to catch the US with their lack of speed in defense and the way to do that is to play fast and direct.

England can't let the US get ahead early. As the Americans showed against France, once they go one up, the US can lock up the game. The great irony is that at the Rio Olympics in 2016, Sweden packed the box against us and won a penalty shoot out. Against France, the US took a similar approach but executed it slightly differently by scoring early and then dropping the whole midfield back to defend.

At times against France the US had five players in the backline and eight behind the ball. It was a very conservative approach. They didn't attack in numbers and the midfield didn't get high up the field to support the attacking players. When you have Megan Rapinoe, Tobin Heath, and Alex Morgan in a talented forward line you can get try to get an early goal and then focus on defending.

During the game

against France, you may have seen coach Jill Ellis and assistant Tony Gustavsson on the sideline screaming at players to get back and defend. I can tell you from experience that only adds to the stress for the players. Some players were telling the coaches to calm down. The players on the field have a lot of experience and know how to close out a match.

The US has played five at the back in big games for some time now but taking a conservative approach almost backfired against France. Not many people in the US seem to be discussing it but in Europe a lot of people want to talk about Kelley O'Hara's handball late in the game. Should it have been a penalty to France? Why didn't VAR take a look at it? I watched the replay three different times and it was definitely not handball.

Earlier in the tournament it was being called but, if you read the law, it's only handball if a player's body is stretched out or in an unnatural position. The ball definitely did strike Kelley's arm and I understand why a lot of people are upset by it but her arm was next to her body in a natural position. The bigger issue is that law has not been applied consistently.

Megan Rapinoe played well against France but England will also need to pay attention to Tobin Heath. Lucy Bronze is a great one-on-one defender



and her likely duel against Rapinoe will be something to see. England might need to clone Lucy and also have her look after Tobin on the right wing. The English defense is not very quick and that could provide an opportunity for Alex Morgan to take control of the game. If Alex does what she does best - run behind defenses with diagonal runs at speed - then England will have a lot of problems to deal with.

Maybe Jill Ellis will surprise us with her lineup against England but it looks like she's decided on her starting line-up. Maybe Lindsey Horan comes in for Rose Lavelle but I think any change will only come as a result of how the players recover after the France game. Jill seems sure that she likes Julie Ertz as her defensive midfielder and builds the midfield around her.

England's Ellen White is one of my favorite players of the tournament. She's strong,

stays on her feet, can hold the ball, and turn on a dime. She's a smart player who can elevate the players around her. I would love to have her as a teammate. Nikita Parris against Crystal Dunn will be another key match up. Dunn was fabulous against France.

France's Kadidiatou Diani is a fantastic attacking players with speed and strength and the ability to turn but Dunn but locked her down. Even though Rapinoe scored twice against France, Dunn was my player of the game and Nikita Parris will have to be at her best for England.

Phil Neville will need to look at the USA-France game and think of a different way to break down the USA. France is a great attacking team but they couldn't find a way to get past a big block of defenders. Being direct is one idea but Phil Neville will know by now that the US backline doesn't like to be pressed. We

saw Spain do that and it forced mistakes.

I'm not sure England can tighten up its own defense in a few days. Norway got behind England's backline quite often but didn't finish the chances they created. The US doesn't miss many chances. That said, Phil Neville is a good tactician and can outperform the US coaching staff. It will be interesting to see what he has in store. I think he's a good tactician and knows how to fill his players with confidence. England will be very well prepared and they will need to be. Player for player, the US has better athletes and more endurance. England, though, are playing with confidence, they believe in themselves, and Phil Neville is a great leader. I'm confident the US will win but can England find a way to prove me wrong? On the day, I won't be surprised if they do.

Djokovic, Federer, Nadal primed to tighten Wimbledon grip

LONDON, JUN 30 (AFP): Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are set to tighten their private stranglehold on Wimbledon as rivals struggle to keep afloat as they bid to dethrone the sport's A-list stars.

World number one Djokovic is the defending champion and chasing a fifth title at the All England Club.

Federer, promoted to second seed, can win a ninth crown while two-time champion Nadal is seeking to complete a rare back-to-back Roland Garros-Wimbledon double. Twelve months ago, Djokovic arrived at Wimbledon with his career threatening to spiral into decline.

Unable to shake off the effects of right elbow surgery, the Serb was ranked at 21, his lowest position for over a decade.

But two weeks later, Djokovic had captured the 2018 title to add to his 2011, 2014 and 2015 wins, becoming the lowest-seeded player to take the Wimbledon trophy since Andre Agassi in 1992.

Since then, he has been rejuvenated, going on to claim a third US Open and seventh Australian Open title.

The only blip was a rain-hit semi-final exit to Dominic Thiem at Roland Garros, a loss which ended his attempt to

become just the second man to hold all four Slams at the same time twice.

"Coming off from the surgery, being unable to have consistency with results, this was a huge springboard for me, the win at Wimbledon last year," said Djokovic, who will take a 10-2 career record over Philipp Kohlschreiber into their first-round clash on Monday.

Federer, chasing a 21st major, first played Wimbledon in 1999.

Pushing 38, he would be the oldest ever Grand Slam champion if he were to lift a ninth title.

The Swiss star is also just five wins from becoming the first man to register 100 victories at the same Slam. - 'BETTER BECAUSE OF EACH OTHER' -

But Federer is quick to praise the influence of Djokovic and Nadal -- between them, the trio have won 53 of the last 64 Slams. "I think we definitely became better because of one another," he said. Federer starts on Tuesday against South Africa's Lloyd Harris, who is making his Wimbledon debut.

Nadal, meanwhile, arrives in London on the back of a 12th Roland Garros title.

His 18th career major also meant he moved within two Slams of Federer's all-time mark for the first time.

Astronomers discover precise location of cosmic radio waves

Melbourne, Jun 30 (PTI): In a first, Australian scientists have determined the precise location of a powerful one-off burst of cosmic radio waves.

The discovery was made with Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) radio telescope of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

A team of researchers made a high-resolution map showing that the burst originated in the outskirts of a Milky Way-sized galaxy about 3.6 billion light-years away.

"This is the big breakthrough that the field has been waiting for since astronomers discovered fast radio bursts in 2007," said Dr Keith Bannister, lead author of the study, which was published in the journal Science.

In the 12 years since the radio bursts were first discovered, a global hunt has netted 85 of these bursts. Most have been 'one-offs' but a small fraction are 'repeaters' that recur in the same location.

In 2017, the researchers found a repeater's home galaxy but localising a one-off burst was much more challenging.

Bannister's team developed new technology to freeze and save ASKAP data less than a second after a burst arrives at the telescope.

"From these tiny time differences - just a fraction of a billionth of a second - we identified the burst's home galaxy and even its exact starting point, 13,000 light-years out from the galaxy's centre in the galactic suburbs," said team member Dr Adam Deller of Swinburne University of Technology in Australia.

"The burst we localised and its host galaxy look nothing like the 'repeater' and its host. It comes from a massive galaxy that is forming relatively few stars. This suggests that fast radio bursts can be produced in a variety of environments, or that the seemingly one-off bursts detected so far by ASKAP are generated by a different mechanism to the repeater," he added.

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Money in Swiss banks: India slips to 74th place, UK remains on top

ZURICH/NEW DELHI, JUN 30 (PTI): India has moved down one place to 74th rank in terms of money parked by its citizens and enterprises with Swiss banks, while the UK has retained its top position, as per data released by the central banking authority of the Alpine nation.

India was ranked 73rd last year, after jumping 15 places from its 88th position a year ago.

An analysis of the latest annual banking statistics released by the Swiss National Bank (SNB) shows that India remains ranked very low when it comes to money parked by Indian individuals and enterprises in Swiss banks, including through their India-based branches, while accounting for just about 0.07 per cent of the aggregate funds parked by all foreign clients of Switzerland-based banks.

In comparison,

the top-ranked UK accounted for more than 26 per cent of the total foreign funds parked with Swiss banks at the end of 2018.

Among the top-ranked jurisdictions, the UK is followed by the US, West Indies, France and Hong Kong in the top five.

The top-five countries alone account for more than 50 per cent of the aggregate foreign funds parked with the Swiss banks, while the top-10 account for nearly two-thirds.

The top-15 countries account for nearly 75 per cent of all foreign money in Swiss banks, while the contribution of the top-30 is almost 90 per cent.

The top-10 countries also include Bahamas, Germany, Luxembourg, Cayman Islands and Singapore.

Among the five-nation BRICS block of emerging economies,



India is ranked the lowest while Russia is ranked the highest at 20th place, followed by China at 22nd, South Africa at 60th and Brazil at 65th place in terms of amount of money parked by their residents and enterprises at the end of 2018.

The countries ranked higher than India also include Mauritius (71st), New Zealand (59th), the Philippines (54th), Venezuela (53rd), Seychelles (52nd), Thailand (39th),

Canada (36th), Turkey (30th), Israel (28th), Saudi Arabia (21st), Panama (18th), Japan (16th), Italy (15th), Australia (13th), UAE (12th) and Guernsey (11th).

However, several of India's neighbouring nations are ranked lower, with Pakistan ranking 82nd, Bangladesh 89th, Nepal 109th, Sri Lanka 141st, Myanmar 187th and Bhutan 193rd.

This is the first time in the last four years that the funds linked to Pakistan in Swiss

banks have slipped below that of Indians.

A number of other major countries also saw their funds falling in Swiss banks amid a global clampdown against the erstwhile banking secrecy walls in the Alpine nation.

The funds, described by SNB as 'liabilities' of Swiss banks or 'amounts due to' their clients, are official figures disclosed by Swiss authorities and do not indicate the exact quantum of the much-debated alleged

black money held in famed safe havens of Switzerland.

The official figures, disclosed annually by Switzerland's central bank, also do not include the money that Indians, NRIs or others might have in Swiss banks in the names of entities from different countries.

It has been often alleged that Indians and other nationals seeking to stash their illicit wealth abroad use multiple layers of various jurisdictions, including tax havens, to shift the money to Swiss banks.

Also, Switzerland putting in place an automatic information exchange framework with India and various other countries, the famed secrecy walls of Swiss banks are said to have crumbled. India will start getting this automatic data from this year, while it has already been getting information on accounts where proof of illicit funds can be furnished.

The funds officially held by Indians with banks in Switzerland now accounts for only 0.07 per cent of the total funds kept by all foreign clients in the Swiss banking system, almost same as the level seen at 2017-end after a modest increase from 0.04 per cent a year before that, as per an analysis of the latest figures compiled by the SNB (Swiss National Bank) as on 2018-end.

India was placed at 75th position in 2015 and 61st in the year before, though it used to be among the top-50 countries in terms of holdings in Swiss banks till 2007. The country was ranked highest at 37th place in the year 2004.

The total money held in Swiss banks by foreign clients from across the world fell by about 4 per cent to CHF 1.4 trillion (about Rs 99 lakh crore) in 2018.

In terms of individual countries, the UK continues to account for the largest

chunk at about CHF 372 billion (down from CHF 403 billion a year ago), which remains more than 26 per cent of the total foreign money with Swiss banks.

The US remains on the second position despite a dip to about CHF 144 billion (from CHF 166 billion a year ago), accounting for nearly 10.3 per cent of all foreign funds. The share is more than 1 per cent only for 21 jurisdictions.

India was ranked in the top-50 continuously between 1996 and 2007, but its rank started declining after that -- 55th in 2008, 59th in 2009 and 2010 each, 55th again in 2011, 71st in 2012 and then to 58th in 2013.

Money parked by Indian clients fell by nearly 6 per cent in 2018 to 955 million Swiss francs (about Rs 6,757 crore) to hit its second-lowest level in over two decades.

Trump-Modi had 'productive discussion' on range of issues during meeting in Osaka: Ivanka

OSAKA, JUN 30 (PTI): Donald Trump had a "productive discussion" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on topics like Iran, 5G and national security during their meeting here, the US President's daughter and top adviser Ivanka Trump has said as she described India as a "critical" trading partner, security partner and ally of America.

Modi and Trump met in the Japanese port city of Osaka on the sidelines of the G20 Summit, the first since the Indian prime minister led his Bharatiya Janata Party to a landslide win in the general elections.

In a video of Ivanka tweeted by the White House on Saturday, the final day of the G20 Summit, she gave a brief summary of Trump's separate bilateral meetings between her father and Prime Minister Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Ivanka, who has made

women's economic issues her main focus, said the US President especially talked about the 5G telecommunications technology and its security implications with other global leaders in his bilateral meetings on the margins of the G20 Summit.

"We are here at the G20 in Osaka and Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Abe just concluded a meeting with the President talking about 5G technology, particularly with focus on its security implication," Ivanka said about the meeting between the top leaders of Japan-America-India here. "A one-on-one meeting between the President and Prime Minister Modi where the same issues were covered, of course 5G, as well as trade relationship between the United States and India, a critical trading partner; a critical security partner and a critical ally," she said while commenting

on the Trump-Modi meeting.

"So it was a productive discussion, everything from Iran to national security was covered by the President and the US delegation with their Indian counterparts," the 37-year-old businesswoman-turned politician said, adding that it has been a productive Friday morning for the US President.

Modi himself tweeted that the topics discussed during his talks with President Trump were wide-ranging.

"We discussed ways to leverage the power of technology, improve defence and security ties as well as issues relating to trade," the prime minister said on Twitter.

Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale told reporters that Prime Minister Modi and President Trump had a "very open and productive" meeting.

"This was a very open and productive meeting. The two leaders had a

very warm discussion," he said.

President Trump congratulated Prime Minister Modi on his victory and the two leaders discussed issues related to Iran, to 5G, to trade and to defence relations.

On the issue of Iran, Modi outlined India's energy concerns as well its concerns regarding peace and stability in the Persian Gulf region.

Both sides agreed that they would remain in touch on the issue of Iran and will continue to have mutual discussion on how to ensure regional peace and stability.

The discussion came at a time of heightened tensions between Iran and the US, which has accused Tehran of being behind a series of operations against oil tankers in highly sensitive Gulf waters. The US has also deployed its warships and additional soldiers to the region.

On 5G, the prime

minister highlighted the technical and business opportunities that this new area provides for cooperation between India and the United States.

The Prime Minister outlined that India would have a billion users of the 5G technology and in that sense India is the second largest market in the world.

"The way India moves or the way whatever choices India makes will essentially determine the way the global trend will go," Gokhale said.

He said Prime Minister Modi underlined the importance of Indo-US collaboration in the further development of 5G technology for mutual benefit. The two leaders discussed the issue of 5G at a time when Chinese telecom giant Huawei has urged India to make an "informed and independent decision" on permitting its 5G trials in the country.

John Legend Sings His Heart Out in New "Oh Pitera" Love Song for SK-II

Global prestige skincare brand SK-II's latest instalment of their Bare Skin Chat series is here, and it's as star-studded as ever. Their latest PITERA™ Masterclass web series features the return of Late Late Show host, James Corden and Japanese comedian Naomi Watanabe. Joining the cast are top Chinese actress, Tang Wei and award-winning singer, John Legend.

The A-list quartet travel to Japan to discover the origins of SK-II's PITERA™, a special yeast strain derived from a natural fermentation process & the star ingredient in the brand's iconic Facial Treatment Essence.

This is Legend's first collaboration with SK-II and fans are in for a treat!

His song, "Oh PITERA™" is an ode to the dubbed Miracle Water. "You're my new obsession," croons Legend to an awestruck audience of Watanabe,



Corden, and Tang.

Beloved by many all over the world, including celebrities like Chloe Grace Moretz and Behati Prinsloo, it's no wonder SK-II's Pitera Essence has developed a cult following. The formula has been kept top secret and remained untouched for over 38 years.

This is just a taste of what's to come in SK-II's PITERA™ Masterclass web series as we follow the hilarious duo, Corden and Watanabe travel to Japan to uncover the origins of SK-II's mystical ingredient, at a sake brewery no less!

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Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris racially targeted online

WASHINGTON, JUN 30 (PTI): Kamala Harris, the first Indian-origin Senator and one of the top Democrats eyeing the White House in the 2020 presidential run, has been racially targeted online of her identity as "not an American Black", according to media reports.

Harris, 54, who was born in the US to an Indian mother and a Jamaican father who were both immigrants, has directly confronted critics before who have questioned her black heritage.

Harris, Senator from California, was the target of birtherism-like attack, the latest jabs to racism faced by former President Barack Obama, CNN reported.

"Birtherism," promoted by some Republicans, including President Donald Trump before he assumed the presidency, was a movement that denied

former President Obama was a natural-born US citizen, implying he was ineligible to be president.

"Kamala Harris is *not* an American Black. She is half Indian and half Jamaican," the critic, who identified as African American, tweeted on Thursday.

"I'm so sick of people robbing American Blacks (like myself) of our history. It's disgusting. Now using it for debate time at #DemDebate2? These are my people not her people. Freaking disgusting," the critic tweeted.

The viral tweet by right-wing personality Ali Alexander, has also gone by the name Ali Akbar, The New York Times reported.

The tweet was however, re-tweeted by President Trump's son Donald Trump Jr. Trump, a valuable Republican surrogate as his father faces a bruising 2020 race, posted the



tweet of unverified information, then asked his more than three million followers: "Is this true? Wow," the report added.

"Don's tweet was simply him asking if it was true that Kamala Harris was half-Indian because it's not something he had ever heard before," said the spokesman, Andy Surabian, "and once he saw that folks were misconstruing the intent of his tweet, he quickly deleted it."

Harris officially launched her campaign in January for the US presidential election next year.

If elected, Harris

would create history by becoming the first woman in the White House.

Lily Adams, the campaign communications director for Harris, dismissed the attack, explaining that people, including President Trump, used similar rhetoric to question Obama's birthplace. Obama was born in Hawaii.

"This is the same type of racist attack his father used to attack Barack Obama," Adams told CNN.

"It didn't work then and it won't work now."

Harris has often resisted sharing her

personal background on the campaign trail. But during Thursday's debate, she confronted former Vice President Joe Biden about his history opposing busing and said she herself had been bused to a public school. Biden, however, defended Harris on Saturday, saying in a tweet that "racism has no place in America."

"The same forces of hatred rooted in 'birtherism' that questioned @BarackObama's American citizenship, even his racial identity, are now being used against Senator @KamalaHarris," Biden said. "It's disgusting and we have to call it out when we see it."

Of the 2020 Democratic hopefuls, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren appeared to be the first on Saturday to defend Harris.





WOMAN TO WATCH: Remember her for coming up tops in the third season of the award-winning reality modelling competition Asia's Next Top Model in 2015? Since then, Ayu Gani — the spritely Indonesian beauty with the heart of gold — has moved to London and called the English capital her home for almost three years before moving back to Asia.

EXO Members Had A Group Dinner Ahead Of D.O's Military Enlistment

On Tuesday night, EXO's maknae, Sehun uploaded a photo on his Instagram that both warmed and broke the hearts of EXO-LS everywhere.

It looked like the popular K-pop boy group sat down for a wholesome dinner ahead of D.O's mandatory military enlistment next week. The 26-year-old lead vocalist was treated to a wonderful meal by his band members.

All the members of EXO were present, save for Xiumin who has already enlisted into the military and Lay who is currently promoting his recently released solo EP in China. As D.O's enlistment looms closer, this EXO family photo is both heartwarming and heart-breaking to EXO-LS.

At the same time, it also shows how well-loved D.O is with both fans and his fellow members.

D.O is set to enlist into the military on 1 July and it has been confirmed that the singer will be dropping a brand new solo single as a small "thank you" gift to EXO-LS.

He will be the second member of the group to enlist with the first being the eldest in EXO, Xiumin.



Nice to step into brother's shoes in Dabangg 3: Pramod Khanna

MUMBAI, JUN 29 (PTI): Pramod Khanna, brother of late Vinod Khanna, says it feels great to step into his brother's shoes, essaying the role of Chulbul Pandey's dad in "Dabangg 3".

Salman Khan took to Twitter Thursday to welcome Pramod Khanna as member of "Dabangg 3" cast.

"It sure feels nice. Doing something which my late brother did. It is thrilling to be essaying the same role," Pramod Khanna told PTI Saturday.

"I just completed a two-day shooting schedule for the film, which is expected to hit the cinemas in December," Pramod said. Some more shooting for his role remains, he added.

The businessman, who is also a key figure in the Indian rugby, said the shooting

reminded him of the time spent with Vinod as kids and the bond they shared as they grew.

Salman shared a video where he, Sonakshi Sinha and the film's director Prabhu Deva are seen welcoming Pramod onboard.

Veteran actor Vinod Khanna, who passed away in 2017, played Salman's father 'Prajapati' in "Dabangg 3".

Salman shared the video on twitter saying, "Introducing Pramod Khanna . . #Dabangg3 @sonakshisinha @PDDancing."



Today there are few stars and more artistes: Diljit



MUMBAI, JUN 30 (PTI): Actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh says with new talents emerging everyday across platforms, the mechanics of the industry has completely changed, with star system giving way to artistes.

Diljit says today the definition of a "star" has changed.

"Back home, no one looks at me as a star. At least I know my mother doesn't. I don't about others. But I think there's nothing like a 'star' anymore. People will like you as an artiste, they'll respect you for that and not just because you're a star.

"There are very few stars today, there are more artistes. Which is very good," Diljit told PTI.

The actor, who made his Bollywood debut with "Uda Punjab", says social media has given access and voice to many good singers and actors.

"They make even short videos with all seriousness. It makes you realise that you're working and you've got an opportunity but isn't because you're the best.

"Whatever God has given me, I feel blessed but I don't take it for granted. There are much better looking, more talented people, sometimes one gets an opportunity and that's all luck," he says.

Though there is a constant influx of new talents in the industry--or on the Internet--the 35-year-old actor says it doesn't cause insecurity.

"If you're getting way too much than perhaps what you deserve, there's no insecurity. It comes up when you feel 'I expect and deserve much more but I'm not getting it.'" Opportunity is a key which describes Punjabi artistes ability to multitask. Most of

them write, sing, act and produce their own content.

"That's because when there are less opportunities, one does everything on their own. Of course, no doubt there is talent in North. Today if there's an individual music scene, it's only in Punjab. Even in Hindi films we have Punjabi songs.

"We had heard 'Kaala Chashma' long back, it comes to Bollywood and becomes a hit again. Everyone benefits. Hindi has a massive reach. So singers get a platform as well. Both parties are happy," the actor says.

Diljit will be next seen in the spoof-comedy "Arjun Patiala", featuring Kriti Sanon and Varun Sharma. In the film, directed by Rohit Jugraj, Diljit is playing a quirky small town cop.

For the actor, who has done several hit comedies in Punjab, the genre is never easy.

"I never approach comedy thinking 'I know it all.' Comedy is tough. To make people laugh is not easy. Written material, the story and situation matter a lot. In Punjabi films I do give me inputs. In Hindi not really.

"I don't have that much control in Hindi language, in Punjabi I can say a particular dialogue will sound funnier if we tweak it. In Hindi I just follow."

The actor says he was bowled over the script at the narration stage itself.

"I've never done a comedy in this space. I thought I should give it a try. Maddock has made some fantastic films too. All it takes is two minutes for me to say yes or no to a script. I had to do this one the moment I heard it."

Written by Ritesh Shah and Sandeep Leyzell, "Arjun Patiala" is scheduled to release on July 26.

Zoe Kravitz, Karl Glusman remarry

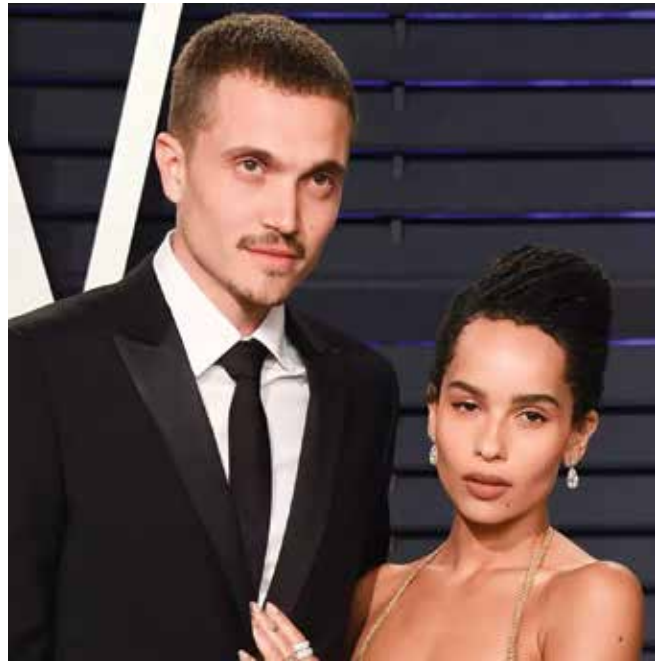
NEW YORK, JUN 30 (PTI): Actors Zoe Kravitz and Karl Glusman have tied the knot once again.

The couple, who exchanged vows earlier this year, said their 'I dos' this time in front of family and friends at Zoe's father Lenny Kravitz's home in Paris, France.

According to Elle magazine, the actor's mother, actor Lisa Bonet and her stepfather, "Aquaman" star Jason Momoa were also in attendance.

Zoe's "Big Little Lies" co-stars Reese Witherspoon and Shailene Woodley were also present and so were Ashley Benson and Cara Delevingne, Denzel Washington, Chris Pine, Aaron Taylor-Johnson and his wife, director Sam Taylor-Johnson.

Earlier, Karl was photographed arriving at their rehearsal dinner at Restaurant Laperouse in royal blue suit, while Zoe was dressed in bridal biker shorts which she paired with a matching satin bra top



and crochet fringe dress.

Last October in an interview with Rolling Stone magazine, Zoe accidentally revealed she was engaged to Karl after he popped the question in her living room in early 2018.

ARIES: Stop and smell the antique roses, Aries. Saturday's sensuous alignment of the moon and Venus encourages you to be powerfully present. Romance lives in the here and now, not the elusive fantasy of "someday." If you want to capitalize on the heart-expanding vibes, do less, not more.

TAURUS: Look at all the pretty, shiny things! Saturday's beauty-boosting alignment of the moon and Venus makes you restless, mercurial and bubbling over with curiosity. Who you, unreliable? Inconceivable, Taurus! But don't forget that you still own the prerogative to change your mind. Variety is the spice of your day. Flit from brunch and a matinee to a gallery opening, then shopping before a night of dancing.

GEMINI: Letting go is shockingly easy Saturday, whether you're saying goodbye to a dying romance or simply giving up control of where you'll meet a friend for brunch. Although it's your preference to play cultural curator, surrender and go with the flow. Surprise! You'll have a far

better time when you stop trying to direct the universe and let spontaneity lead. Pay attention to synchronicities.

CANCER: Ask, believe, receive. Today, the soulful moon unites with intuitive Neptune in Pisces and your broad-minded ninth house. This is the day to imagine what you want, because you can magnetize your dreams to you through creative visualization. The ninth house is all about expansion, so don't just aim for the "safe," low-hanging fruit. Go bigger, Cancer! Feeling out of touch with your power to manifest? Try writing up a gratitude list. When you recall all the things you're thankful for, you'll begin to attract more abundance.

LEO: You SAY that you want happiness, love and freedom, but do you actually believe that your desires are possible, Leo? Today's moon-Neptune conjunction in your mystical eighth house encourages you to examine your own limiting beliefs. Since you may need tangible proof to REALLY change your mind, hunt for people who are living

the life you want for yourself.

VIRGO: Relationships can be hard work, we know, we know. But they can also be a haven from stress and struggle so stop telling yourself that you don't need people. Today, the moon and compassionate Neptune align in Pisces and your partnership house. The tranquilizing effect can be beneficial to your bonds with the ones who matter most. Soften your stance with your partner, and be gentler in your interactions with close friends.

LIBRA: Arm candy can be fun to play with, but you need more than empty calories to satisfy your romantic appetite. On Saturday, reserve your final rose for someone with style AND substance. It's a lot easier to teach someone the finer points of fashion than it is to imbue them with a great character. With the right raw materials—a caring heart, a sense of integrity, compatible interests—you'll have more than enough to work with.

SCORPIO: Still musing over the weekend's romantic escapades? Don't rush to "back to business" mode. Today, the moon

and quixotic Neptune embrace in your fifth house of passion, adding a sensual spin to your agenda. An attraction could spark, or you could be feeling especially amorous. Nobody to sidle up to (yet)? Get glamorous for yourself, Scorpio.

SAGITTARIUS: Home is where your heart is today, as the moon conjoins with sensual Neptune in your domestic fourth house. If you must trek into the office, bring the cozy vibes with you. Keep an open-door policy so coworkers can plop down and share tales of their weekends. (That expense report can wait).

CAPRICORN: Straight to the point? Not today, Capricorn. The reflective moon and compassionate Neptune meet in Pisces, your communication house. Doling out tough love and stern reprimands will get you nowhere. Validating the other person's emotions and experience? That will help you feel connected. Sometimes, a person just needs to be heard before you rush them into problem-solving mode. Instead of being emphatic, be empathetic. Catch yourself if you're being too hardcore, and dial back the intensity.

AQUARIUS: Bring more intimacy to your exchanges Saturday and don't be afraid to bare your soul. Thanks to a cozy alignment between the moon and Venus, conversations could quickly accelerate from weather talk to tales from your recent vacation and latest dating escapades. Don't just entertain; investigate! People will be warmed by your interest in what's bubbling below the surface in their lives. Plan for a languid movie night or a dinner date with a favorite plus-one.

PISCES: A beautiful mind is the ultimate turn-on this Saturday, as the moon and Venus mesh in your mentally agile third house. Go deeper in discussions, Pisces. The sparks of an intellectual connection could fan the flames of romance. A word to the wise: You don't have to impress anyone by interjecting your own stories into the mix. Let others hold the talking stick a little longer. Then, allow your journalistic curiosities to take hold. The more interested you are, the more interesting you'll become. Hand the wheel to your poetic side on Sunday, as artsy Venus and seductive Pluto align in your communication houses.