



**HERO HAS NO GENDER:  
TAAPSEE PANNU**

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**DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA:  
SUCCESS STORIES THAT  
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**GWEN STEFANI CANCELS  
LAS VEGAS GIG**

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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## North Bengal braces for deluge again, south remains parched

**KOLKATA, JUL 24 (PTI):** Low-lying areas in North Bengal are staring at a flood-like situation yet again, with heavy rain lashing the region since Tuesday and the Met department predicting another deluge over the next two days.

In the districts of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and Alipurduar, the weatherman has forecast heavy to very heavy rain till Friday.

South Bengal, on the other hand, continues to remain parched with very little rainfall since the onset of monsoon.

The Met department, however, offered a ray of hope for the southern districts, forecasting moderate rain from Thursday.

In North Bengal, Siliguri recorded the highest rainfall in 24 hours till 8.30 am on Wednesday at 181.4 mm.

Among other areas that experienced downpour, Coochbehar recorded 73.2 mm rainfall, Jalpaiguri 40.6 mm, Darjeeling 37.3 mm and Malda 39.9 mm, the Met said.

The sub-himalayan districts of West Bengal had received very heavy rain last week, leading to the inundation of catchment areas of several rivers, including Teesta, Sankosh, Torsa, and Mahananda.

With the situation improving during the week-end, water level in these rivers had subsided, but the latest round of downpour has brought back fears of flooding in the low-lying areas of north Bengal.

The weatherman also predicted thunderstorm with lightning and heavy rain in the districts of Gangetic West Bengal over the course of three days.

## Govt decision to relieve temp employees raises eyebrows

**CS issues follow-up "corrigendum" announcing govt will take extension of temp services into consideration**

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 24 JUL:**

The recent Cabinet decision to terminate services of government employees who had completed their respective "tenures" was received with much delight by the lay people and party supporters since it appeared to be in line with the SKM promise to end the practice of keeping hand-picked government servants on service extension and re-employment.

The Cabinet meeting was held on 22 July, but it was only a day later, when a government circular issued by the Chief Secretary started making the rounds and fleshed out an aspect of the government decision which none had been expecting.

Clearly, the "tenure" mentioned by the Cabinet was not the service of "regular" senior government officers but the appointment schedules of those on temporary employment, or so the Circular conveyed.

A Circular issued by the Chief Secretary on 22 July, copies of which started circulating on social media only a day later, pointed out that the Department of Personnel has been receiving requests "time and again" seeking extension of services of temporary employees ["ad hoc, consolidated etc"] appointed as "interim arrangement" at various departments.

The Circular went on to highlight that "recently, thousands of candidates" were appointed under the OFOJ scheme "thus all the departments now have enough manpower and that there is no requirement to grant extension to temporary employees."

"Rather, there is an immediate need to relieve those officers and employees who have finished their tenure of appoint-

ments," the Circular stressed and went on to request all Secretaries and Heads of Departments "not to recommend the cases of extension of temporary services of such employees duly keeping in mind the austerity measures and need for rapid efficiency being adopted by the Government."

Needless to add, this surprise policy decision of the State Government led to much consternation among the people and today, the Chief Secretary issued a "corrigendum" in continuation of the Circular of 22 July.

This "corrigendum" conveys that the "State Government has decided that the extension of the services of temporary, ad hoc, Muster Roll employees and those belonging to consolidated category will be taken into consideration after thoroughly examining the genuineness of their actual requirement in respective departments."

"Same shall be subject to final approval by the State Government," the Corrigendum states.

## Bhaichung bats for promotion-relegation system in India

**NEW DELHI, JULY 24 (PTI):** India must introduce the promotion-relegation system with bigger pool of teams, said football icon Bhaichung Bhutia, hinting that merger of I League and ISL is the way forward.

Former captain Bhutia did not say it in as many words but it appeared he was not against the idea of merger to settle the controversy surrounding the Indian Super League and the I-League.

"I am not talking about merger. We need to have bigger number of teams with separate divisions, say 1st, 2nd and 3rd divisions, where we

can have relegation and promotion system. This is what the format is all across the world and I think we need to get into that format soon," Bhutia said.

He spoke on the sidelines of a knowledge session on 'Integrity in Sports' organised by the All India Gaming Federation and industry body, FICCI.

Bhutia was of the opinion that the I-League clubs' move to approach FIFA won't work as the world body will eventually pass the buck on to the AIFF to clear the mess.

Top I-League clubs such as Minerva Punjab, Mohun Bagan and East

Bengal have written to FIFA president Gianni Infantino, asking for his help in their fight for survival in Indian football.

Churchill Brothers, Aizawl FC and Gokulam Kerala FC are among the six clubs to have written to the sport's global body, with Minerva owner Ranjit Bajaj signing the letter.

The clubs' biggest bone of contention is the top tier status accorded to Indian Super League by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) as per the Master Right Agreement (MRA) signed between the AIFF and IMG-Reliance in 2010.

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## SKM drivers' front gears up to celebrate Chalak Diwas on 27 July

**SAGAR CHHETRI  
GANGTOK, 24 JUL:**

Chalak Morcha, the drivers' front of the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, has announced plans to celebrate state-level Chalak Diwas in a grand manner on 27 July at Namchi helipad in South Sikkim. SKM president, Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay], is scheduled to attend as the chief guest, it is informed.

It may be recalled that during a meeting on 07 January this year, the SKM president had



announced that 27 July will henceforth be celebrated as Chalak Diwas by the party to honour the contributions of the driver community. This announcement was also included in the election

manifesto of the party.

Addressing a press conference here today, Chalak Morcha general secretary, Raju Thatal, stated that the day will be exclusively dedicated to

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## Gangtok to be connected by rail by March 2022

**NEW DELHI, JUL 24 (PTI):** The railways is set to link Sikkim's capital Gangtok to capitals of all north-eastern states by March 2022, a senior official said on Wednesday.

With this linkage, all the seven northeastern state capitals will be connected to the national railway network, the railways official added.

The capitals of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura have been already been connected by broad gauge rail network.

Work on new broad gauge lines has been taken up to connect the other state capitals -- Meghalaya (Shillong), Manipur (Imphal), Nagaland (Kohima), Mizoram (Aizawl) -- which is expected to be

completed by 2020.

In Sikkim, the project has been riddled with land acquisition issues. The project of laying a broad gauge line from Sivok to Rangpo of length 45 km was sanctioned in 2008-09, however, the project has been in limbo since then with just 19 per cent of work being completed so far, officials said.

"There are land acquisition issues and the extremely challenging terrain in the entire northeast which we have to deal with while taking on such projects. However, we have already completed 45 per cent of the work in projects of the northeast. We hope to bring Sikkim on the national railways' map by

March 2022," said a senior official.

Among the most significant of the ongoing projects is the 111 km Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal line, 64 per cent of which has been completed so far will not only put the Manipur capital on the railway map in the next couple of years but also prepare grounds for taking the railways to Moreh on the Myanmar border and beyond to become part of the proposed Trans-Asian Railway.

A 10 km section from Jiribam-Vaingai-chungpao has already been completed.

In Mizoram's capital Aizawl, the Bhairabi-Sairang 51.38 km line

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<https://soundcloud.com/tshering-eden-506860426/stray-thoughts-01>

## First EWC hosted in Sikkim by AIC-SMUTBI Majitar

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 24 JUL:**

AIC-SMU Technology Business Incubation Foundation (SMUTBI), Majitar Sikkim, one of the 100 world class incubator of Govt of India, envisioned and fully supported by Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Govt of India, hosted the First Entrepreneurship World Cup (EWC) Regional Finals in Collaboration with MiSK (the Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Foundation of Dubai), in partnership with the Global Entrepreneurship Network and The Global Education & Leadership Foundation (tGELF).

With around 30,000 registrations from across the nation and seven cities hosting the regional finals, 20 teams were selected for each regional finals. The winning teams from each region will proceed to the National Finals in Delhi on 03 Aug, 2019. The winner in Delhi would represent India at



the Global Finals in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 12 Nov, 2019 with prizes worth \$5 million.

There were 16 start-up participating teams judged by 5 premiere judges from around the nation. The team of Editor-in-chief, Karma Palzor, East Mojo, Founder/CEO of iShippo, Karma Bhutia, MeGoYo, Niko, CTO/ Founder Member of Smarter Specs, Mr Krishanu Seal, Singapore, Vice President (Legal), Rupesh Mishra, Executive Capital, and Mentor cum Program Director at inQ innovation, Mr Deba-

sis Chakraborty evaluated all the start-ups to decide who proceeds to the national finals.

The inaugural ceremony saw the presence of Vice Chancellor, SMU, Lt Gen (Dr) Venkatesh as the Chief Guest and Hon'ble Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia, Department of Science and Technology as the Chief Guest for the second half of the day. Joint Secretary, N Jaswant, Commerce and Industries Department was the Guest of Honor for the event. In the presence of tGELF

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**Screening of BTS performances**

**Games & Activities**

- Dance Offs
- Cham Cham
- Chinese Whispers with a Twist!
- Quiz Competition
- ...And lots more!

**Date: 27th July 2019**

**Venue: Thuendel, Sichey.**

**Time: 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm**

**Use our official hashtag  
#ouryouniverse**

**Don't forget to tag us and for any inquiries message us on Instagram**

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## 61ST STATE LEVEL BANKER'S COMMITTEE MEETING

## CM wants 100% financial inclusion by March 2020

*Bankers point out connectivity as a challenge*

## SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 24 JUL:

The 61st State Level Banker's Committee Meeting was held in the conference hall of Chintan Bhawan today. The Chief Minister who was to be the chief guest of the programme could not attend the meeting due to urgent engagements, however, Cabinet Ministers Kunga Nima Lepcha, Lok Nath Sharma, Arun Upreti, Dr Mani Kumar Sharma along with the Chief Secretary AK Shrivastava were present on the occasion, an IPR release informs.

Chief General Manager- State Bank of India, Ranjan Kumar Mishra; General Manager-Reserve Bank of India (Gangtok), RV Sangvai; General Manager-NABARD (Gangtok), R Tshering; Regional Manager-SBI, Aftab Ahmed Mallick and representatives of various banks were present. Head of Departments, officials and the press attended the meeting as well.

GM RBI, Mr Sangvai



expressed his happiness and delight at the presence and participation of the Cabinet Ministers and their interest in the financial affairs of the state.

He said that while main branches have access to digital portal certification, he would look into all branches to have the same facility but also keep in mind the suggestions put forward by the Ministers in catering to those illiterate and in need of services and help with technology.

Chief General Manager SBI, Mr Mishra, talked about the limitations faced by the banking institutes but he also expressed that banks empower an in-

dividual to make a difference in the lives of the general public.

He put forth the various economic developments that have happened in the region and also stated that connectivity is a major problem faced by banks.

He informed that they have held co-ordination meetings and discussions with network companies like BSNL for better functioning of the banks.

The Chief Secretary read out the Chief Minister's message, which included his apology for not being able to attend the programme due to pressing engagements. He thanked the Committee for giving him the

opportunity to be a part of it. The Chief Secretary conveyed that the Chief Minister feels that focus should be given in achieving 100% financial inclusion by the end of March 2020.

The substantial improvement in CD ratio from 40.9% to 47.1% in the financial year 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 will eventually stand at 79.5% after taking credit from outside the state, it was informed.

In his message, the Chief Minister expressed his gratitude and acknowledged the banks for their tremendous work in providing credit linkages to the Self-Help Groups with the help of SRLM in the North, East

and NERLP in the South and West Districts which have further enhanced the agriculture-related activities.

The Chief Minister relayed through the message that he would like to call upon all bankers to inculcate the habit of banking through awareness at the grass-root level and that banks should focus on organizing Financial Literacy Camps at School/College levels, indicating that students play a vital role in the progress of our country through digitization.

A 29-page agenda paper containing information and details of the annual credit plan was distributed, the release mentions.

Addressing that

meeting, the Chief Secretary expressed his pleasure at the presence of the four Cabinet Ministers on the occasion, despite the Chief Minister's absence. He asked the gathering to give a standing ovation to the Ministers who had readily displayed attendance in the programme.

The Ministers also addressed the meeting wherein they put forth their suggestions. Regional Manager SBI, Mr Mallick answered queries made during the session by the Chief Secretary and other Ministers regarding various schemes.

Principal Director-cum Secretary (FS&AD), Khorlo Bhutia responded to agriculture-based schemes and plans while Commissioner (RMDD), P Senthil spoke on the various Self-Help Group schemes and banking facilities provided by the department.

The afternoon session included a meeting of the SLBC with the Chief Secretary, where the points that were highlighted in the morning session was talked over in detail, keeping in mind the annual credit plan.

## Preparatory meeting for I-Day celebration held in Namchi

**NAMCHI, 24 JUL (IPR):** A preparatory meeting for the grand celebration of the 73rd District Level Independence Day Celebration, 2019 was held at the DAC Conference Hall, Namchi today.

The meeting was chaired by DC (South), Ragul K also had presence of SP (South), Prawin Gurung, ADC (South), Satyen K Pradhan, SDM (HQ), Hemant Rai along with HODs of Line Departments, representatives of Central Government Agencies and NGOs from South District.

Addressing the gathering, DC (South), Ragul K spoke about the importance of celebrating Independence Day. He underlined the various roles and responsibilities provided to line departments and urged them to work collectively and in effective co-ordination in order to make this Independence Day a successful one.

## First EWC...

officials and the guests, the event was hosted by Khushboo Gurung and Nikola Okero (tGELF). Chief Guest, SMU Vice Chancellor, Lt Gen (Dr) Venkatesh, addressing the function mentioned the day to be historical and praised the enthusiasm of all the participants to come all the way to Sikkim for the event.

The first half of the day saw the pitching competition where all the start-ups ranging from ideation stage to established ones presented their ideas to the present mass.

The second half of the day also saw a simultaneous 1st Cohort screening done for the entrepreneurs of Sikkim for AIC- SMU Technology Business Incubation Foundation (SMUTBI), Majitar by CTO/ Founder Member of Smarter Specs, Krishanu Seal, Singapore, Vice President (Legal), Mr Rupesh Mishra, Executive Capital, and Mentor cum Program Director at inQ innovation, Mr Debasis Chakraborty along with the winners been declared for the First Entrepreneurship World Cup (EWC) Regional Finals.

Eventuate Innovations Pvt. Ltd. for Ezy Spit from Nagpur was declared the winner of the Sikkim leg. Pavingplus and Primary Health Tech. were two teams who received special mention from the jury.

## AFFIDAVIT

I Mrs Dadiki Sherpa wife of Naresh Sherpa (Army No, 3001787P, Rank- HAV(GD)). Resident of village Tadong, Tehsil - Gangtok, Dist- East Sikkim as per affidavit my actual Date of Birth is 05/02/1982 for all future official purpose.

## Gangtok to be...

has been 58.43 per cent completed, while in Nagaland's capital Kohima, the railways has made a progress of 25.23 per cent in the Dimapur - Zubza 82.5 km line.

In Shillong, Meghalaya, the Tetelia Byrnihat 21.50 km line has seen a progress of 40 per cent while a 10 km section from Tetelia-Kamlajari has been completed.

Another line in the state, the 108.40 km Byrnihat Shillong line has only seen progress of around 5 per cent.

## SKM drivers'...

the driver community. He underlined that this was not only the first for Sikkim, but it could possibly be a first of its kind observation in the world.

He said that the main objective of the celebration was to extend honour and respect to drivers for their contributions towards the society.

"We want to invite all men and women drivers and people of the State to come together for this state-level celebration," Mr Thatal said.

Chalak Mocha vice-president, Chung Chung Bhutia, further stated that SKM has always been working on the interests and welfare of drivers of the State and that this event was a continuation of the same commitment.

He added that SKM also wants to set an example in the country by celebrating Chalak Diwas so that others will also follow suit.

He added that all government and private driver associations and organisations have been invited for the celebration and more than 5,000 drivers are expected to attend the celebrations during which the CM is likely to make several announcements in the interest of the drivers of Sikkim.

## Bhaichung bats...

Bhutia is confident that AIFF will sort out all the issues.

"I can't really comment on the federation and what is right and what is wrong but I am sure there are challenges for the federation as well. It's not that the federation is not doing anything. I welcome (AIFF President) Praful Patel's statement few days ago where he said that within few years the two leagues will be merged," he said.

"I think we should be looking at leagues at different level with promotion and relegation system. It might take time but we should get into that structure.

"At the end of the day the game should go on. The game should be organised in a bigger and better way."

Bhutia, nicknamed as the Sikkimese Snipper, also said the federation needs to give time to new coach Igor Stimac to settle and the home team's below-par performance at the Intercontinental Cup shouldn't be taken too seriously.

Going into the tournament as defending champions, India failed to progress to the final, losing two games while drawing one.

"We have a fairly new coach so it will take time for him to build a new team with new players. Our defenders have been hampered by a lot of injuries. He has not watched Indian football before coming here. The Intercontinental was more about seeing the players, getting the right combination, giving opportunities to a lot of young players," Bhutia said.

India has been handed a relatively easy draw in the second round of 2022 World Cup qualifiers as they are pitted against Qatar, Oman, Bangladesh and Afghanistan in Group E.

"I think we were very lucky with the draw because our ranking was much better. Only Qatar looks a difficult team but overall we are fairly in a decent position this time,"

Eight years after retiring from international football, Bhutia is likely to return to the ground once more as he is likely to don East Bengal colours for a brief period in a match to mark the centenary celebrations.

"East Bengal is celebrating its centenary so there are talks going on in between me and the club that I should officially retire from club football with the team that gave me my career's first opportunity," he said.

## South deptts meet to coordinate efforts



**NAMCHI, 24 JUL (IPR):** District Collector (South), Ragul K chaired a coordination meeting with all the line departments under South District at the conference hall of DAC, Namchi today. The meeting was attended by SP South, Prawin Gurung, ADC South, Satyen K Pradhan, ADC Development, SDMs, heads of department, representatives from institutions and organisations, and other officials from various departments.

The meeting was convened to review and take full stock of issues pending with different departments, institutions and organisations.

At the onset, DC South spoke at length about

the importance of improved coordination and transparent accountability among the various line departments as this will lead for an effective implementations of various schemes, projects and proposals of the State Government.

He added that all future actions which the line departments undertake should be intimated to the office of the DC and the SP.

While deliberating on issues of water scarcity, electricity, roads and internet connectivity faced by various organisations and institutions, the DC asked the concerned officials to look into and expedite this process especially that of road connectivity.

He also directed the officials to inspect the damaged entry gate at the Government Degree College, Kamrang on priority basis.

Likewise, he has also suggested the concerned officials to float a proposal concerning the roof top of Kisan Bazar for the usage of various sports activities to be carried by Sports Authority of India, Namchi.

Similarly, for construction of toilet and water tank at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), Rabongla, the DC requested ADC Development to look into the matter right away.

The imperative need for wide publicity with regard to the application for admissions in class VI

at JNV Rabongla for the students exclusively of the south district including its last date i.e. 15th of September, 2019 was also discussed.

The meeting also had an elaborate conversation on the various ongoing matters relating to land, water, electricity. Agendas pertaining to NERLP, Nehru Yuva Kendra, CCCT, Sikkim University, SAI Namchi, NHIDCL and other institutions were also touched upon.

During the course of the meeting, the incomplete infrastructure works which required immediate attention from the District administration and concerned authorities were also discussed.

## North prepares for Measles-Rubella campaign

**MANGAN, 24 JUL (IPR):** The second District Task Force meeting on Measles-Rubella (MR) was held here at the chamber of the District Collector, North, today. The month-long District Level MR campaign will have a total of 381 sessions in 17 different schools and 16 ICDS centre of the District. The said campaign will conclude in the first week of September 2019.

The meeting chaired by the District Collector, North, Rinzing Chewang Bhutia, had the presence

of the Chief Medical Officer, North, DC Sharma, Joint Director, Human Resources and Development Department, North, Deelak Pradhan, District Reproductive and Child Health Officer, Dr Purna Basnett, Pediatrician, DHM, Dr Roshan Poudyal, DPM, BK Nepal, Health Educator, Rinchen Bhutia and CDPOs of North District.

The main agenda of the meeting was to discuss and prepare measures for MR vaccination campaign which is scheduled to begin on 29 July in the district.

Presiding over the meeting, DC, Mr Bhutia, asked the DTF team to make all necessary provisions before the commencement of MR campaign, so that the DTF team can handle any unforeseen incident that may take place in the course of campaign. He further asked them to work in close co-ordination with school faculty in order to achieve 100 percent outcome.

Furthermore, Mr Bhutia asked the house to ensure proper maintenance of "Cold Chain Point" in case of power

outage. He also instructed the DTF team to keep on standby an ambulance vehicle during the vaccination session in case of adverse event following immunization (AEFI).

During the meeting, Mr Bhutia has assured to extend all possible help from his end to the DTF team so as to make the mission a success.

Dr Sharma gave the background of MR campaign and updated the house about the MR campaign that is schedule to kick-off on 29 July from Mangan Senior Secondary School.

~ SummitTIMES ~  
CLASSIFIEDS

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## WANTED

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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,  
Panihouse, Deorali, East Sikkim**

*Four & half Storied building on SALE, behind Hotel Agarwal at Pani House, Gangtok, East Sikkim. Interested parties may also buy flats - 2 flats - 1650 sq.ft, 1 Flat - 1186 sq.ft & 1 Flat on top (1 & half)- 3000 sq.ft. Contact: -9434751150*



# Governor meets delegation of teachers



## SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 24 JUL:**

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad granted audience to a group of 35 persons including training coordinators and participants from a career counselling training of trainers (ToT) at Raj Bhavan today, a press release informs.

The programme is being organised by Primitive Tribe Welfare

Board, Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare Department, Government of Sikkim from 22 to 25 Jul, 2019 in collaboration with Rajiv Gandhi National Youth Development Regional Centre, Chandigarh under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India at Bal Bhavan.

The participants include 32 Bhutia, Lepcha and Limboo language

Post Graduate Teachers from across the State, the release mentions.

Director RGNVD Regional Centre, Dr Shekhar Kuttu, Chandigarh, also the course director, provided insight into the objectives and scope of the career counselling training being imparted to the selected group of teachers for the benefit of tribal students of the State.

In his brief address to the participants, the Governor stressed on the role of teachers towards moulding the future of students which should be beneficial to the student, his family and society at large.

He underlined that the right orientation to young students at the right time by the teacher will determine the career and future of stu-

dents and said that the teachers thus have the most important responsibility to shape the future of the nation.

He also extended best wishes to participants and coordinators for the success of the programme and their respective careers ahead.

Earlier two trainee participants also shared their learning experience.

## SKM victimizing shop owners in West Sikkim, alleges SDF

Summit Report

**GANGTOK, 24 Jul:**

Sikkim Democratic Front has accused the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha government of victimizing shop owners in West Sikkim who voted for SDF.

The SKM Government has been indulging in the "undemocratic act" of checking documents of shop owners at the IDMI shopping market and in Housing Department building in Gyalshing, West Sikkim, an SDF press release states.

SKM is playing politics and checking documents of shop owners is only an excuse, the party has said.

According to SDF, the West District Administration took this action on the verbal order of the Area MLA and Minister, LN Nepal.

Troubling local shop

owners and attempting to snatch their livelihood away in the name of checking of documents is the murder of democracy, the party has said.

If license was given to those who did not have Sikkim Subject and Residential Certificate then it was the District Administration's fault, SDF has said.

The West District Administration has now become the spokesperson of the ruling government by making allegations against the previous government only to hide their failings, the party has alleged.

Stating that the party welcomes action against those with fake documents, SDF has threatened to launch a people's movement if only shop owners who voted against SKM are targeted.

## Agri Minister interacts with newly recruited ADOs, HDOs and Marketing Assistants



**GANGTOK, 24 JUL (IPR):**

Agriculture Minister Lok Nath Sharma held an interactive session with the newly recruited Agriculture Development Officers (ADO), Horticulture Development Officers (HDO) and Marketing Assistants at the training hall of State Agriculture Management & Extension Training Institute (SAMETI) today.

The interactive session, which was part of the inaugural function for a two-day training programme, was also attended by the Agriculture and Horticulture secretaries and the Chief Executive Officer of Sikkim Organic Mission.

23 new ADOs and HDOs have been recruited and posted to the districts.

The Minister, in his keynote address, congratulated the trainees and extended best wishes on behalf of the state government.

Mr Sharma urged the ADOs and HDOs to

bring notable change in the field within one year through target oriented methodology and instructed them to submit progress reports on a monthly basis through proper channels.

Besides, delivery of seeds and saplings and other facilities to the farmers, ADOs and HDOs were also asked to carry out follow up activities at every stage of cultivation.

He also announced an award for best performance in field work and spoke about progress achieved by the farmers of Budang Kamarey GPU. The Minister also urged trainees to advise unemployed youths about the lucrative profession of Agriculture and its scope.

The Minister encouraged Marketing Assistants and other employees appointed under One Family One Job scheme and said that they were additional manpower of the department who can bring reformation and revolution in agriculture

sector collectively.

Minister also directed the officials to revive nurseries on Government farms and left out barren lands so as to develop model farms where farmers can be educated and encouraged.

As informed by the Agriculture Secretary Agriculture, Khorlo Bhutia, of the 323 employees appointed under OFOJ scheme in Agriculture Department, 261 Marketing Assistants will be posted at ward level in East District to collect and ascertain data pertaining to various Agriculture and Horticulture productions from the respective farmers.

They will also identify the beneficiaries of Prime Minister Kishan Samman Nidhi within one month. The Agriculture Department has issued a diary/notebook to the employees who have been directed to submit collected data to the concerned department.

## Additional CS chairs I-Day preparedness meet

**GANGTOK, 24 JUL (IPR):**

A preparedness meeting for the upcoming Independence Day, 2019 was held at the conference hall of New Tashiling Secretariat today chaired by Additional Chief Secretary SC Gupta and attended by HODs, officials, representatives of various agencies and the line departments involved.

The Additional CS discussed the roles and responsibilities of the different departments involved for the I-Day celebrations.



Issues like maintaining Law & Order, Traffic Security and magisterial arrangements, uninterrupted power supply at Paljor Stadium, provision of safe drinking water at the venue, face lifting and cleanliness of places of function, invitation and vehicle passes etc. were also discussed

in detail.

He urged the officials present to work in coordination for the success of the event.

The HoDs and the representatives present have committed themselves to work in coordination for the success of the Independence Day Celebration.

# 170 Aapda Mitra volunteers trained in Flood Management

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 24 JUL:**

A Distribution of Training Module & Emergency Responder Kits for Management for Aapda Mitra Volunteers was held at Mini Auditorium, Manan Bhawan, an IPR release informs.

Aapda Mitra is a centrally sponsored scheme focused on training 6000 community volunteers in disaster response in 30 most flood prone districts (200 volunteers per district) of 25 States of India.

The scheme aims to provide community volunteers with the skills that they would need to respond to their community's immediate needs in the aftermath of a disaster thereby enabling them to undertake basic relief and rescue tasks during emergency situations such as floods, flash-floods and urban flooding.

The programme was attended by Land Revenue & Disaster Management Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha along with State Relief Commissioner cum Secretary Land Revenue & Disaster Management Department, Ambika Pradhan, Director HRDD, Hondala Gyaltsen, Commanding Officer Of 3rd Battalion NCC Sikkim, Col Rajeev Kumar, Additional Director, SSDMA, GC Kharel, representatives of Sikkim Mountaineering As-



sociation [SMA], DANS Energy Pvt Ltd, National Cadets Corps, students, teachers, dignitaries and other Officials and staff of SSDMA, LR&DM and AAPDA Mitra volunteers.

Minister Mr Lepcha in his address congratulated all the 170 young and enthusiastic volunteers for getting themselves trained in Flood Management from Shillong and appreciated their efforts.

He talked about the threat of Glacier Lake Outburst (GLOF) in the State.

So far, four batches of volunteers from Sikkim have undergone training. The first batch had 45 volunteers from SMA, DANS Energy. The second batch had 52 School students while the third batch had 27 volunteers

from SMA. The fourth batch had 46 NCC girls and boys.

LRDM Secretary, Ambika Pradhan also talked about GLOF and said that today the State is better prepared to handle disasters. She urged all the volunteers to work responsibly and proactively in the communities to disseminate information and to train others.

Earlier, a presentation on Aapda Mitra was held followed by experience sharing from the volunteers. Passang Sherpa, Prabha Tamang and Abhishek Chettri talked about their training period at Shillong.

Later, Emergency Responder Kits were distributed to the Volunteers by Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha.

## Red Panda FC wins Summer Cup at Pipalay

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 24 JUL:**

Red Panda FC outplayed Naya Bazaar FC 3-1 to emerge champion of the 14th Summer Cup Open Football Tournament 2019 at Pipalay in South Sikkim today. The tournament was organised by Samajik Sadawana Samiti and the final match had Power Minister MN Sherpa as chief guest.

A total of 24 teams had participated in the tourney which got underway on 11 July. The main motive behind or-

ganising the tourney was to provide youth with healthier options and to keep them away from distractions like substance abuse, a press release informs.

The winner's received Rs 50,000 in cash and trophy while the runners-up took home Rs 30,000 and a trophy.

Hem Thapa was adjudged the man of the final match while the golden boot award went to Kunjaman Thapa and Arun Subba was adjudged man of the series.

The chief guest, in his

address, assured to fulfil the public demand for installation of streetlights from the IRBn Camp Road to Rothak within the next three months.

Dilliram Sanyasi of Bara Samsing was also felicitated on the day having been selected for the Minerva FC academy.

Also on the day, a pea-counting game was organised in a fund-raising initiative to support the treatment of 70-year-old Chandra Bahadur Bishwakarma of Jorethang who is suffering from cancer.

## DC checks on projects, proposals and schemes underway in South Sikkim

**NAMCHI, 24 JUL (IPR):**

DC South Ragul K convened a meeting with all the department heads to discuss and deliberate on the status of ongoing schemes and programmes at conference hall of the DAC here today.

The agenda of this meeting is to draw up an action plan for future programmes and policies of the State and Central governments. The meeting was attended by ADC (South), Satyan K Pradhan, ADC Development (Rabongla), SDMs, heads of departments and representatives from line departments.

Addressing the gathering, the DC directed the Block Development Officers to hold comprehensive credit committee meetings on a quarterly basis.

This meetings should be arranged at all blocks involving concerned departments and lead banks to facilitate with subsidies and other benefits to genuine beneficiaries, he added.

Mr Ragul also enquired about the status of Fasal Bima Yojana and PM-KISAN Yojana and also informed that a District Level Committee to screen One Family One Job has been

formed, thus respective BDOs has been assigned for documents verifications of OFOJ accordingly.

Similarly, he also took stock of progress on projects like alternate sewage treatment plant of Namchi, solid waste management, online certification process, requirements, adjustment of government offices which are presently functioning from private buildings.

Likewise, due to the current torrential downpour the south district has witnessed several landslides and with regards to this, the DC directed that thorough checking and solution will be delivered at the earliest. He also said that it is impertinent for the officials to regulate meat stalls and slaughter houses.

Mr Ragul also asked the RMD, HRD and other concerned departments to organize awareness programmes in the schools on scholarship programmes and Jal Shakti Abhiyan. The DC also stressed on the necessary clearance for dumping locations site which is to be carried out in accordance with

line departments. He also conveyed the attendees about the restart of each Friday field day which commenced from DAC South from next month onwards for effective delivery of welfare measures at the grassroots.

He also reiterated the proper coordination and cooperations from all line departments concerning the execution and timely completion of various schemes of the State Government.

SP South Prawin Gurung also apprised the gathering to use the State Disaster Relief Force located at Pipalay for South and West districts for mitigation of any future disasters.

He also elucidated that the South Police department and other line departments in a synchronize manner will check the movement of heavy vehicles at entry point in Melli.

The meeting also touched upon the conditions and status of Smart City Project Namchi. During the course of the meeting, a District level Committee for Sexual Harassment was also reconstituted.

## Aparajita SHG carries out plantation drive in Rongneck



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 24 JUL:**

Rongneck-based Aparajita Self Help Group carried out a massive plantation drive at Rongneck Gram Prasashan Kendra premises in East Sikkim on Tuesday.

Members of the organisation planted more than 50 saplings of Chaanp and Guraans during the drive, it is informed. The plantation

drive was also joined by residents of the area.

It is informed that Aprajita SHG has been actively engaged in various social activities and already taken various initiatives towards the beautification of Rongneck. The organisation had also undertaken roadside plantation of flowering plants and cleanliness drives in the area.



## Social Service Scenario

*At nearly two thousand NGOs, much more could have been achieved*

The Sikkim Regulation of Societies, Associations and Other Voluntary Organizations Act was promulgated in 2008. Given the casual disinterest with which governments tend to follow-up policy commitments recorded in Bills and Acts which they tend to forget notifying so that they become rules and laws, it is any body's guess whether this regulation has moved beyond a legislated Act and become a rule in practice. Be that as it may, a year after this Act was promulgated, the Legislative Assembly was informed that as per data available with the concerned department, there were 1,843 registered NGOs in Sikkim! The number had stumped the powers that be as well and the House was informed that the NGOs will be directed to submit their books of accounts details of activities. The idea was clearly to verify whether these were actually NGOs working on ground or just registered bodies which stay in hibernation until the whiff of funds arrives and they begin issuing press releases to dispel any notions that they have been dormant. It is unlikely that anything substantive came out of that proposed activity either because NGOs of the dormant kind are invariably linked to those with ears in the corridors of power which pick up the faintest rustle of funds being processed and get rejuvenated accordingly. Of course, there are also several which started with good intentions, but lacked the staying power. This condition is not unique to Sikkim, and when it comes to NGOs there is also the oddity of "project developers" operating their own NGOs to spend their CSR commitments.

Returning to numbers. With 1,843 registered NGOs, and this number could have grown in the past decade, Sikkim is arguably among the best serviced states in the world when it comes to the density of organisations engaged in 'social service'. Put the numbers in perspective and one stares at a number that projects one NGO per 344 people in the State! Just to drive the point home, every set of 325 people in Sikkim, has an NGO dedicated to its welfare!! An NGO, by general understanding, is a citizens' organisation. Because only conscious citizens join hands to engage in socially-productive and not-for-profit initiatives, NGOs are expected to be civil society collectives. By definition, an NGO is a Non-Governmental Organisation. When the concept began, they were genuinely NGOs in composition and conduct, in that they neither sought government representation, nor pursued government funding. Over time, the Government realised the effectiveness of these bodies in getting things done at the grassroots level and sought their assistance and used their commitment to engage beneficiaries of State assistance, initiative and doles. It has been downhill ever since.

Now, in Sikkim as elsewhere in the country, too many NGOs are launched when new schemes and funds are sniffed. At times, the departments reflect the insider trading that one sees in stock markets, only in this case, NGOs are launched by sections close to hands that move files. These sections get wind of funds arriving earmarked for specific NGO-managed programmes and a new non governmental organisation gets born or some other gets revived. Then there are groups which start earnest, but soon lose direction. There are also some NGOs that actually work hard, but only as programme implementers of 'projects' that have state sponsorship, not as organisations that identify people's crises and then work without profit to resolve the situations. NGOs that are genuinely civil-society manifestations are the rarest. Look around, how many of the nearly two thousand NGOs registered in Sikkim do you think are open, competent, effective, earnest and durable? Now, imagine the social engagement that could have happened if enough of these too many had all these attributes...

### WRITE US:

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

Mail us at: [news@summittimes.com](mailto:news@summittimes.com)

# Democracy in Africa: success stories that have defied the odds

NIC CHEESEMAN  
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When I first said that I was going to write a book about the history of democracy in Africa, quite a few people responded with a joke. That will be one of the world's shortest books, up there with the compendium of great English cooking, they would say.

But, it turned out that there was a lot to talk about: Africa's past reveals more fragments of democracy than you would think. And, its present has a number of important things to teach the world about the conditions under which democracy can be built.

The poor quality of elections in many sub-Saharan African countries, combined with a tendency for the media to focus on controversy, means that Africa is often depicted as a bastion of authoritarianism. But, it actually has some of the most remarkable and important stories of democratic struggle.

Countries such as Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Namibia, Mauritius, Senegal and South Africa have not only become beacons of political rights and civil liberties, they have done so against the greatest of obstacles. These experiences teach us important lessons about where democracy can work, and why.

### PRE-CONDITIONS FOR STRONG DEMOCRACY

Political scientists like to talk about the conditions necessary for countries to build a strong and stable democracy. These lists are fiercely fought over, but there are a number of factors that most researchers would agree are probably important.

A cohesive national identity is likely to make it easier to maintain national unity, while wealth and economic success have been found to promote political stability. A strong national infrastructure, underpinned by respect for the rule of law, means that the government is likely to be effective without being abusive. And, a vibrant middle class and powerful civil society are usually seen as important to promote accountability and responsive government.

What is remarkable about the democratisation of African states is that most did not enjoy a single one of these "pre-conditions".

With the exception of South Africa, all of Africa's democracies entered multiparty politics with low GDP per capita and high levels of unemployment. This was compounded by weak and underdeveloped states that had been designed – both in the colonial era and during the authoritarian rule of the 1980s – to exploit resources rather than

empower citizens. In states like Ghana, this was compounded by a history of military rule, which heightened the risk of further coups.

Almost all of these states also featured civil societies that were fragile and fragmented, despite the strength of religious organisations. At the same time, in the early 1990s, the middle class was small. More often than not, it was also economically dependent on the government. It was thus poorly placed to fight against corruption or democratic backsliding.

### CHALLENGES

These were not the only challenges that African states faced. With the exception of Botswana, they are all diverse multi-ethnic societies in which the question of national identity has been problematic. In Ghana and Mauritius for instance, ethnic identities have historically played a role in structuring political networks. This increased the tension around elections.

Worse still, under colonial rule and during apartheid, white regimes sought to entrench racial divisions and hostilities in Namibia and South Africa, creating a particularly difficult environment.

Against this backdrop, all of these states might have been expected to collapse into some form of authoritarian regime by now. Given this context, their success should be celebrated and studied for what it tells us about how democracy can be built even in the most challenging of contexts.

### BUCKING THE TREND

It is striking that, with the exception of Benin and possibly Senegal, these democracies have grown stronger during a period in which the world is supposed to be backsliding on democracy.

While Europe is convulsed by Brexit and the rise of right-wing populists, and Donald Trump is doing his best to undermine America's reputation for political checks and balances, Africa's most democratic states have proved to be remarkably resilient.

Ghana has experienced numerous transfers of power and, in 2016, the first ever defeat of a sitting president. Namibia has consolidated its position as a "free" political system with robust respect for civil liberties, according to Freedom House.

South Africa suffered politically and economically during the presidency of Jacob Zuma, but now has the chance to bounce back after the governing African National Congress (ANC) voted to pursue reform under President Cyril Ramaphosa.

For their part, Botswana and Mauritius – the continent's oldest democracies – continue to com-

bine respect for political rights with prudent economic policies.

Praising Africa's democratic success stories does not, of course, mean that we should overlook its failures. A number of countries have taken steps backwards in recent years, including Tanzania and Uganda. Authoritarian leaders also remain entrenched in Cameroon, Chad, Eritrea, and many more. But it is important to recognise that there is much more to Africa than authoritarianism.

### EXPLAINING SUCCESS

In the absence of the conventional building blocks of democracy, we need to look elsewhere to explain these success stories. Some might be tempted to think that the role of the global community has been critical in keeping governments on the straight and narrow. But in reality, democracy is built from within, as the fact that aid-dependent countries such as Uganda and Rwanda have remained firmly authoritarian shows only too well.

We should, therefore, give greater credit to the politicians and people of Africa's democratic states. African presidents are often lambasted for being corrupt and self-serving. But, in a number of countries, they have shown considerable restraint, establishing institutions capable of checking their power.

In Ghana, cohesive relationships among the political elite have underpinned a growing consensus on the value of democracy. In South Africa, inclusive leadership played a critical role in overcoming racial divisions and building trust in the new post-apartheid political system since 1994. In Namibia, successive presidents have refused to use the electoral dominance of the governing party to remove the opposition.

The role played by African citizens also deserves greater recognition. It was their willingness to take to the streets that forced democratic openings in the late 1980s. The same has been true in recent years, with mass action challenging authoritarian regimes in Burkina Faso and Sudan.

Despite economic challenges and democratic difficulties, high levels of public support for democracy in Africa mean that leaders understand the costs of backsliding.

At a time when people are questioning the value of democracy in many Western states, many African populations who have lived under one-party, one-man, or military rule are prepared to fight to prevent their return. This should serve both as an important lesson and a source of inspiration.

*[the writer is Professor of Democracy, University of Birmingham]*

# Mansplaining: New solutions to a tiresome old problem

SARAH KAPLAN  
*theconversation.com*

In 2008, author Rebecca Solnit's now famous essay, Men Explain Things to Me, set off a firestorm.

Though Solnit didn't use the term "mansplaining," the essay is credited with birthing the term that's now part of regular parlance. Women (and other underrepresented groups such as people of colour and non-binary people) had finally found a way to articulate that phenomenon they routinely experienced, particularly at work.

Men feel the need to explain something to a woman, even if the woman hasn't asked for an explanation and often pertaining to something that's directly in the woman's area of expertise and not at all in the man's. Or when the topic is about a woman's own experience and the man wants to explain her experience to her.

Even women who are famous for their mastery of a domain find themselves being mansplained.

Sallie Krawcheck, a former CEO of wealth management at Citibank and before that the CEO of Smith Barney investment advisers, says that venture capitalists interested in her new financial investment venture Ellevest mansplained financial advising to her.

We all have our own stories. Most women I know just roll their eyes knowingly when asked about mansplaining. Most of us experience it so often that we aren't always even conscious it is happening.

### 'CLUELESSNESS'

Note, as Solnit does, that "mansplaining is not a universal flaw of the male gender, just the intersection between overconfidence and cluelessness where some portion of that gender gets stuck."

But the mansplaining term has stuck. And research demonstrates that the feeling of being mansplained is, in fact, not just a feeling.

Studies show that in meetings, men speak more, and more powerful men speak even more. Men interrupt more, and are less likely than women to cede the floor when they are interrupted. Women worry (correctly)

that if they fight to get their voices heard, they will experience backlash.

The blogosphere is filled with recommendations for how women should handle mansplaining when it happens: "7 Ways to Handle Mansplaining," "How To Deal with a Mansplainer" and "How to Handle Mans-

dress it — rather than how and why men should stop doing it.

It's a further demand placed on women to solve the problems imposed on them by others. I'd like to take another tack.

### MANSPLAINING ERADICATION TACTICS

In Sweden, a major union has set



plaining at Work."

The recommendations are good — ignore the mansplainer, stand your ground, ask the mansplainer questions about their expertise and what they hope to accomplish by "explaining" the topic, explain mansplaining to the mansplainers, use other women as allies to stand up for you, and use as much humour as you can.

As with #MeToo and other efforts to point out the inequalities that women experience, many men feel attacked, even when women try to respond with humour, as feminist blogger Elle Armageddon did with her 2015 flow chart "Should You Explain Thing to a Lady?"

"Not all men" is the regular refrain. But, honestly, such protestations smack of an unwillingness to listen to the legitimate experiences of women in the workplace. And it's unfair that while mansplaining is done by men to women, the solutions all seem to be about how women can ad-

up a mansplainer hotline you can call to report offenders and receive advice and commiseration. But that's not a resource available to all of us.

So what can potential mansplainers do? Armageddon's advice is pretty good: If you aren't an expert on a topic, maybe you don't need to talk.

For those of you who fear you might be mansplainers, keep in mind — even if you are an expert, but the woman is an expert too and hasn't asked for your advice — maybe you still just stay silent. What's the harm in listening? You might learn something. Even if you speak a lot less than you do now, the research I cited above suggests that you still might be speaking more than the women in the room.

The point is, you can dial it back a lot and still speak your fair share about issues on which you are an expert and have something unique to contribute.

But mansplainers almost by definition can't help themselves. The advice on self-restraint is bound to be

ignored. So maybe we need to think about more structural solutions. In other words, what can organizations do to even the playing field?

### 'HIGH-TESTOSTERONE SETTINGS'

As a professor of strategic management, I've thought about this a lot in my own teaching to MBA students. MBA programs have historically been pretty high-testosterone settings. I have an explicit practice to call on those students who are quiet, find out who the true experts are and shut down interrupters.

I also evaluate students on their contributions to the classroom learning experience, and those evaluations reward listening and building on the ideas of others (not just rehearsing their own lines in their minds while they are waiting to talk).

Organizations could replicate these practices. They could develop guidelines for meetings that require each person to share their point of view or instructions to the meeting leader to shut down mansplaining and support women who are speaking.

It is not enough, by the way, to simply extend the amount of time for questions or discussion with the hopes that women will speak up more or men will run out of things to say. Research experiments show that doesn't work.

Further, performance evaluations could be adapted to sanction mansplaining and to reward listening and building on the ideas of other team members.

In short, we need to stop giving women advice on how to fix the inequalities and discrimination they face and instead look to the perpetrators to change their behaviour and to organizations to change workplace dynamics.

"Fixing the women" is a costly solution for women, and could result in companies losing valuable female employees. It will ultimately be ineffective without organizational change. Women shouldn't be asked to "handle" mansplaining. Organizations should handle it for them.

*[the writer is Professor, Strategic Management, Rotman School of Management; Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, University of Toronto]*



# IIT Kharagpur team develops app for elderly people

**KOLKATA, JUL 24 (PTI):** In a move to help geriatric care, students of IIT Kharagpur have built an app which will inform the caregiver when the elderly person falls down with the exact location.

Named 'CARE4U' the android-based app will connect the caregiver to the elderly person. The app have been built by an interdisciplinary team of the second year B-Tech students of the institute, an IIT Kharagpur statement said on Tuesday.

The network-based fall detection algorithm in the app installed on the phone of the elderly can detect whether the elderly has fallen down.

If there is a fall, it automatically calls the caregiver and emergency services along with the exact location of the elderly person.

CARE4U can also detect emotions and whenever the elderly opens the app, the phone takes his picture and a mood



index is calculated.

This detects whether the person is sad or not and automatically updates the caregiver with the time stamp.

The caregiver can check what mood the senior citizen has been through in the day.

To make this feature more effective the team has developed a cognitive intelligent chatbot for the elderly person

to engage with.

Team member Kanishka Haldar from the Department of Electronics and Electrical Communication Engineering IIT KGP says, "We customized it to recognize the current mood of the person and, accordingly, fine tune its conversations with that of the person. For example, the chatbot can recommend a motivational quote or

an old song when the person is sad.

Fellow student from the same department, Aadi Swadipito Mondal explains the functioning of the app.

"The best thing about our app is that except for the chatbot, all other machine learning models run on the mobile itself, so no cloud service is needed. Even if there is no internet connection,

all other features such as fall detection, emotion detection will work," he says. CARE4U can also do a plethora of other day-to-day activities like make a call, send a text, book a cab and so on.

The app also has a record of medical histories, allergies' account, an SOS button, real time location tracking and so on.

It has a 'Medicine Reminder' feature to remind both the elderly as well as the caregiver that it is time for the former to take medicine.

"To make a list of the medicine, all one has to do is take a photo of the medicine. The image-to-text recognition algorithm automatically detects the name of the medicine and adds it to the list. The user then just needs to set the time at which the medicine has to be consumed," explained team member Partha Sarathi Roy from the Dept of Geology and Geophysics.

## LTVC wants govt to initiate LT seat resolution process during budget session

### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 24 JUL:**

Limboo Tamang Voluntary Committee has requested the SKM Government to begin the process of securing reserved seats for the LT community during the upcoming budget session itself.

And LTVC press release states: "LTVC would like to request SKM led govt to initiate the process by raising the LT seat reservation in this up coming Budget Session and keep their given promise to LT communities. LTVC knows it

will take time to resolve the LT seat issue but initiatives for basic process must start at the earliest."

The organisation has reiterated its demand that the State Government withdraw the Burman Commission Report forwarded by the previous government and also the 40-seat proposal by it. LTVC wants LT seats to be worked out from the existing 32 legislative assembly seats.

The organisation has also demanded that all stakeholders be involved in the matter "to come

out with conscious solution for LT seat reservation in SLA."

It also wants the SKM Govt to pass a new formula on LT seats, have it endorsed by the Legislative Assembly and then "send the proposal at centre as full and final solution for LT seat reservation in Sikkim Legislative Assembly."

"It's time for SKM led New govt to prove their sincerity towards their given promise to LT communities for LT seat reservation in Sikkim Legislative Assembly," the release underlines.

## Human sacrifice bridge rumours spark Bangladesh lynchings

**DHAKA, JUL 24 (AFP):**

Eight people have been killed in vigilante lynchings in Bangladesh sparked by rumours on social media of children being kidnapped and sacrificed as offerings for the construction of a mega-bridge, police said Wednesday.

The victims -- which include two women -- were targeted by angry mobs over the rumours, spread mostly on Facebook, that said human heads were required for the massive 3 billion project, police chief Javed Patwary said.

"We have analysed every single case of these eight killings. Those who were killed by lynching mobs -- no-one was a child kidnapper," Patwary told reporters in Dhaka.

More than 30 other people have been attacked in connection

with the rumours.

Patwary said police stations across the country had been ordered to crack down on rumours, and at least 25 YouTube channels, 60 Facebook pages and 10 websites have been shut down.

AFP has identified several posts still on Facebook that share the rumour, however.

Mob lynchings are common in Bangladesh, but the latest incidents are particularly brutal.

Local media said they started after reports circulated of a young man allegedly found carrying the severed head of a child in the northern district of Netrokona.

Among the latest victims was a single mother-of-two, Taslima Begum, who was beaten to death in front of a Dhaka school on Saturday by a mob which suspected her of being a child kidnapper, a

police official told AFP. A deaf man was also beaten to death outside the capital that day while trying to visit his daughter.

Police said eight people have been arrested over Begum's murder, and at least five others detained for their role in spreading the rumour on social media.

The lynchings could be "a sign of people's distrust in the existing law and order system", Dhaka University sociology professor Monirul Islam told AFP.

The bridge -- which is set to be Bangladesh's biggest -- is being built on the Padma, a major tributary of the Ganges.

Rumours of human sacrifices being required for a bridge in Bangladesh have surfaced before, with several people attacked in 2010 over another structure, according to local media.

## Panel on Assam holds first meeting; MoS Home Reddy assures full support

**NEW DELHI, JUL 24 (PTI):** A reconstituted high-level committee, set up to assess the quantum of seats to be reserved in the Assam Assembly and local bodies for Assamese people, Wednesday held its first meeting where members suggested the change in the panel's terms of reference so that the possibility of vesting land rights only to indigenous people can be discussed.

The members also suggested that issues of reservation of Lok Sabha constituencies in Assam for the indigenous people and in central government jobs should also be brought in its ambit.

Chief Advisor of the All Assam Students Union (AASU) Samujjal Kumar Bhattacharya, who is part of the panel, said several members have suggested that a time-frame should be fixed for implementation of the recommendations of the committee, which will submit its report within six months.

"We want that the issues of reservation of seats in Lok Sabha constituencies, central government jobs and land rights should be part of the terms of reference of the committee," he told PTI.

Another member, journalist and political commentator Wasbir Hussain said it was an introductory meeting where people suggested that a representative of the tribal communities should be part of the committee and the spirit of the 1985 Assam Accord should not be diluted while dealing with the Clause 6 of the document.

"The members feel that Clause 6 should not be seen in isolation of other issues like land rights for the indigenous people and it should be brought under the ambit of the terms of reference," he said.

The committee, headed by former Gauhati High Court judge Biplab Kumar Sarma, was set up under Clause 6 of the 1985 Assam Accord.

Attending the meeting, Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy said the central government attaches highest importance to the committee and will provide full support to it so that the panel can complete its task without losing any more time.

According to its mandate, the committee will examine the effectiveness of actions taken since 1985 to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord and hold discussions with various stakeholders, including social organisations, legal and constitutional experts, eminent persons from the field of art, culture and literature, conservationists, economists, linguists and sociologists.

The new committee will recommend the appropriate level of reservations in employment under the state government for the Assamese people and suggest any other measures as may be necessary to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social and linguistic identity and the heritage of the people.

The other members of the committee include Advocate General of Assam Ramesh Borpatragohain, Advocate General of Arunachal Pradesh Niloy Dutta, retired IAS officer Subhash Das, former IPS officer Pallav Bhattacharya, retired professor Srishtidhar Dutta, author Sumanta Chaliha, and professor and columnist Jaikanta Sharma. AASU president Dipanka Kumar Nath and general secretary Lurinjyoti Gogoi are also members of the panel. Joint Secretary (North East) in the Ministry of Home Affairs is the member secretary.

## Minor reshuffle in Nagaland Cabinet

**KOHIMA, JUL 24 (PTI):** Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has carried out a minor Cabinet reshuffle and also announced changes in the allocation of departments assigned to the advisors to the chief minister, an official said on Wednesday.

Though no one has been removed from the Council of Ministers in the reshuffle effected on Tuesday, Rio has inducted his brother, Zhaleo Rio, who was the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly, as an advisor to the CM.

The chief minister would continue to hold charge of Finance, Personnel and Administrative Reforms and any other portfolio not allotted.

In a press release, Nagaland Chief Secretary Temjen Toy said, Deputy Chief Minister in charge of Home, Y Patton, has been relieved of the charge of national

highways and given the responsibility of roads and bridges.

Minister for Planning and Coordination and Land Revenue, Neiba Kronu, has been allocated Parliamentary Affairs portfolio, which was earlier held by Minister for Forest, Environment and Climate Change, C M Chang.

Metsubo Jamir will now look after the Rural Development department, the release said.

Tongpang Ozukum, who was the Minister for Roads and Bridges, has been given the charge of Housing and Mechanical department and Minister for Higher and Technical Education, Temjen Imna Along, has given the additional charge of Tribal Affairs.

The portfolios of ministers S Pangnyu Phom, N Jacob Zhimomi, Paiwang Konyak and V Kashiho Sangtam have not been changed, the release said.

## No proposal to fence borders along China, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar: Minister

**NEW DELHI, JULY 24 (PTI):** There is no proposal for fencing of international borders along China, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar, the government informed Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Replying to supplementaries during Question Hour, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai asserted that instances of infiltration are almost nil because of high security on borders.

"As of now, there is no proposal to erect fence along Indo-China, Indo-Nepal, Indo-Bhutan and Indo-Myanmar Borders," Rai said in a written reply.

The minister gave details of fencing along Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh Borders.

On Indo-Pakistan border, Rai said fencing

work on 2069.046 km was sanctioned and of this 2004.666 kms have been completed. Work is in progress on 64.38 kms and the probable date of completion is March 2022, he said. Regarding Indo-Bangladesh Border, he informed that fencing work on 3326.14 kms was sanctioned, of which 2803.013 kms have been completed. Work is in progress on 169.64 km and the probable date of completion is December, 2020.

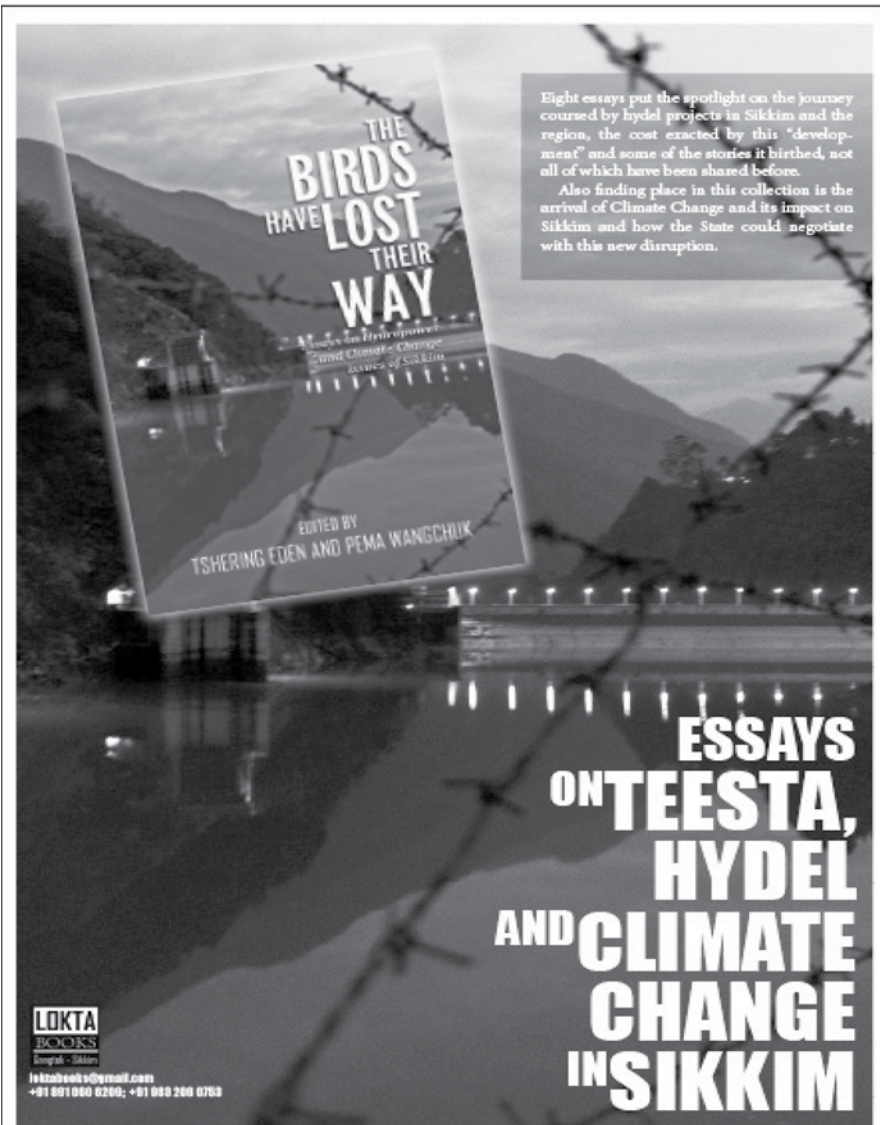
Replying to a supplementary, Rai said the fencing work on 353 km on Indo-Bangladesh border is yet to commence because of quagmire.

India's land borders are characterized by deserts, mountains, forests and riverine terrain, he said, adding the government has adopted a

multi-pronged approach to contain cross-border infiltration. This includes deployment of Border Guarding Forces along the international borders and erection of border fencing/ floodlighting.

He said the government ensures effective domination of the borders by patrolling, laying Nakas, manning observation posts along borders, vulnerability mapping of Border Out Posts, deployment of surveillance equipments, strengthening of intelligence network, anti-tunneling exercise in vulnerable areas and deployment of technological solutions in non-feasible areas like riverine gaps, etc.

"Regular repair/ replacement works of fencing damaged due to floods/corrosion is a continuous process," Rai said.



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*Nikhat, Deepak storm into semis; India on a roll at Thai boxing tourney*

**NEW DELHI, JUL 24 (PTI):** Former junior world champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) and Asian silver-medallist Deepak Singh (49kg) were the prominent ones to assure themselves of medals on Wednesday as Indian boxers continued their commanding performance at the Thailand International Tournament in Bangkok.

Nikhat, also an Asian Championships bronze-medallist, recorded a 5-0 triumph over Uzbekistan's Sitara Shogdarova.

In the men's draw, Deepak took barely a couple of minutes to leave his rival Samak Saehan of Thailand with a bloodied forehead, forcing a stoppage in the first round itself.

"The bout went well for me and I think my game is coming together very nicely," Nikhat told PTI from Bangkok.

Also advancing to the medal rounds were Ashish (69kg), Manju Rani (48kg), Brijesh Yadav (81kg) and Commonwealth Games bronze-medallist Mohammed Husammuddin (56kg).

Ashish defeated Jamaica's Joshua Frazer 5-0, putting in a dominating performance.

Husammuddin also toyed with his Korean rival Lee Yechan before fetching a 5-0 verdict, putting on quite a show with his attacking game.

Brijesh, on the other hand, had to toil a bit to edge past Thailand's Jakka Pong Yomkhot 4-1.

But Manju had no trouble out-punching Italy's Roberta Bonati in the women's draw. The Indian won on a unanimous decision.

However, Asian silver-medallist Manisha Moun (57kg) lost to Russia's Luidmila Vorontsova in a unanimous verdict to sign off without a medal at this event.

*Selectors should be consistent, Shubman should have been in team: Ganguly*

**NEW DELHI, JUL 24 (PTI):** Former India captain Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday questioned the omission of veteran Ajinkya Rahane and young Shubman Gill from the ODI squad for the tour of West Indies, urging the selection committee to be consistent with their policies.

An inconsistent Kedar Jadhav has been retained while Gill, who has been adjudged man-of-the-series in the five List A games in the West Indies, scoring 218 runs. Ganguly took to Twitter to take a dig at the selectors stating the main agenda should be picking the best possible team and not making people happy.

"Time has come for Indian selectors to pick same players in all formats of the game for rhythm and confidence. too few are playing in all formats .great teams had consistent players .it's not about making all happy but picking the best for the country and be consistent @bccci," Ganguly tweeted.

# 1 Year: Tokyo Olympics unveil gold, silver, bronze medals

**TOKYO, JUL 24 (AP):** Gold, silver, and bronze Olympic medals were to get their first public viewing on Wednesday as Tokyo organizers marked exactly a year until the games open.

Fans, sponsors and politicians were celebrating the day around the Japanese capital, displaying placards and clocks showing 365 days to go until the opening ceremony on July 24, 2020.

A fencing gold medalist at the 1976 Olympics, IOC President Thomas Bach showed off his skills in a demonstration with school children.

Japanese Prime Minister was also scheduled to take part during the day-long festival.

Tokyo is spending about 20 billion to prepare the city to host the games, though exact Olympic spending in disputed and difficult to track. Five of the eight new venues are already finished, and the centerpiece, the 1.25 billion National Stadium, is to open by the end of the year.

"The excitement is growing," John Coates, who heads the IOC inspection team for Tokyo, said. "You've seen the unprecedented level of interest in ticket sales."

Ticket demand by Japanese residents appears to be a least 10 times above supply maybe more with



demand also surging abroad. A recent law banning unauthorized ticket resales in Japan is sure to be tested despite glaring loopholes.

Organizers are also preparing for Tokyo's typically hot summer weather, though this summer has been wet and cool. Traffic and subway congestion is also a concern, as is earthquake preparedness.

"This year Tokyo is chilly rather than hot," Yoshiro Mori, the president of the organizing committee, said. "It's quite different from what we experienced last year."

Mori said Japanese

Emperor Naurhito had accepted a role "as honorary patron" of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. He will be expected to announce the opening of both the Olympics and Paralympics.

Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike was asked a few days ago to justify spending billions on the Olympics.

Organizers have been under pressure to cut costs, and they say they have cut billions by using existing venues. Tokyo is building eight new venues, but using 35 "temporary" or older venues.

Koike described the Olympics and Paralympics as an "accelera-

tor" to get things done, though research shows that the Olympic deadlines drive up costs. And Tokyo is famous for building things with or without the Olympics.

"I'd like the legacy of the 2020 Games to be something more intangible, a new way of thinking for people and for society," she said.

Koike described the Paralympics, which open Aug. 25, 2020, as a "springboard" to make the city more accessible to people with disabilities.

The goals for next year are more modest than they were in 1964 when the Tokyo

Olympics showcased bullet trains, futuristic designs, and a new expressway to document Japan's recovery following World War II.

A group of anti-Olympic activists, many from outside Japan, have held small protests and other events in the last few days under the Japanese title "Hangorin no Kai" roughly No Olympics.

They oppose Olympic spending, which they says cuts into budgets for local housing and environmental issues. They also call for more money to rebuild Fukushima prefecture located northeast of Tokyo.

"For us, the Olympics

are a disaster," Misako Ichimura, a spokeswoman for the anti-Olympic group, said on Tuesday. She said the billions spent on the Olympics should be used instead in to rebuild Fukushima, which was devastated by a 2011 earthquake, tsunami and the meltdown of three nuclear reactors.

"The Olympics is scary entertainment for us," she added.

Tokyo organizers have shattered records for local sponsorship revenue, which has passed USD 3 billion about three times more than any previous Olympics.

The 2020 Games will showcase four new

sports karate, skateboarding, sports climbing, and surfing. Baseball and softball are returning to the sports program.

IOC President Bach has repeatedly described Tokyo preparations as "the best" in history. But there have been glitches and scandals.

Tsunekazu Takeda, the head of the Japanese Olympic Committee, was forced to quit earlier this year when he was implicated in a vote-buying scheme to land the games.

He has denied wrongdoing, but acknowledged he signed off on about 2 million that French investigators allege went to buy votes of some IOC members.

The 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics are implicated in the same kind of vote-buying bribery.

Tokyo organizers were also forced to redesign their logo when the original draft faced charges of plagiarism, and an international labor union has alleged work-safety violations at Olympic venues, largely regarding migrant labor.

A futuristic design for the new stadium by the-late British architect Zaha Hadid was scrapped when costs soared to 2 billion. Japanese architect Kengo Kuma was chosen instead with a design focused on wood lattice and greenery.

## Goa govt seeks new dates for holding National Games

**PANAJI, JUL 24 (PTI):** The Goa government is not in position to host the National Games in November this year for want of necessary infrastructure and has requested the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to allot fresh dates in May 2020, the Legislative Assembly was told Wednesday.

Notably, the IOA had recently fined the Goa government for frequently missing the deadlines to host the games in the last four years. The National Games were earlier scheduled to be held in March- April 2019, but were postponed to November on account of Lok Sabha elections, by-polls in the state and HSC examinations.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant told the Legislative Assembly Wednesday that it was not possible to put up the infrastructure required



for hosting the National Games by November this year. "The Goa government has requested the Indian Olympic Association to grant minimum five-month time for holding the Games. We have requested the IOA to allot dates in May 2020," Sawant said.

Justifying its request for a new schedule, the CM said the government would have to issue tenders for various works and that some equipment have to be purchased from abroad.

Meanwhile, state Sports Minister Manohar Ajgaonkar told the House in a written reply that the government had received Rs 97.80 crore for devel-

opment of infrastructure for the Games. He had earlier informed that the quantum of penalty was reduced to Rs six crore by the IOA after negotiations. "The amount (Rs 97.80 crore) received has been utilised for construction of infrastructure meant for the Games, which was also used for the Lusofonia Games held in the year 2014," Ajgaonkar said.

The minister said the Sports Authority of Goa (SAG) had availed loan towards construction of infrastructure for the organisation of Lusofonia Games. "The same infrastructure will be utilised for the National Games," he added.

## Growth of Indian table tennis has forced China, S Korea to notice us: Sharath

**NEW DELHI, JUL 24 (PTI):** India's recent streak of good performances at tournaments like the Asian and Commonwealth Games has grabbed eye-balls in table-tennis powerhouses like China and South Korea, according to veteran star A Sharath Kamal.

Indian paddlers had their best outing at the Gold CWG, bagging a record haul of eight medals including historic gold in the women's team and

singles event in Gold Coast Games in 2018.

A few months later, at the Asian Games, the paddlers ended a 60-year-wait for a table tennis medal. The men's team comprising veteran Sharath Kamal, G Sathiyar, Anthony Amalraj, Harmeet Desai and Manav Thakkar clinched a bronze at Jakarta.

"The teams are putting us on a very high level in world competition. Olympic silver med-

allist Kim Taek-Soo from South Korea came after the Asian games and said told us Indian team has become very strong now," Sharath said on the sidelines of the Ultimate Table Tennis curtain raiser.

"Chinese coaches also lined up and clapped for us even though we didn't beat them but because we put up a strong fight. So we know everyone is watching the growth of Indian Table Tennis," Sharath added.

## AYUSH ministry considering proposal to give yoga asanas status of sports

**NEW DELHI, JUL 24 (PTI):** The Ministry of AYUSH is working on a proposal to give 'yoga asana' the status of sports to promote it and pave the way for its possible inclusion in Olympic games.

The National Board for Promotion and Development of Yoga and Naturopathy has recommended recognising yoga asana as a sport so that more youths adopt it, a government official said.

"Promoting it as a sport will be an added attraction for the youth. So maybe by the time we have the Olympics in 2036 or 2040, yoga asanas may find a place in the mega event," the official said, adding there were very few sports of eastern, Asian or Indian origin in the international sports arena.

Joint Secretary in Ministry of AYUSH P N Ranjit Kumar said the proposal is currently under consideration and the ministry is in talks with the Sports Ministry over the issue.

Speaking at the '6th India Wellness Conclave 2019 - Nurturing the



Wellness Industry for a Healthier and Happier India', organised by FICCI on Wednesday, he said that with India targeting to become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2024, the contribution of the wellness industry is poised to be USD 50 billion at current growth rate.

"However, we should aim for a faster growth to make it USD 100 billion industry and centre of new India growth story," he said.

Stressing that yoga was gaining popularity world over, Kumar said that while there were 85 lakh people who participated on the International

Day of Yoga in 2016, it rose to 2.8 crore in 2017, 9.5 crore in 2018 and 13 crore this year according to provisional figures.

"These are people who follow the yoga protocol on their own without compulsion. It's not about yoga. It's about wellness, about maintaining one's own health, taking care of self and about a happier India," he said.

The government is setting up Naturopathy Certification Board on the lines of Yoga Certification Board, Kumar added.

To support formalisation of the highly unorganised wellness

and beauty industry, Dr Harish Nadkarni, CEO, National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) said, "If cost is the concern for NABH accreditation, we can come out with entry level standards for the wellness centre, which will be win-win proposition for both the industry as well as NABH."

Sharad Marathe, Chairman, AYUSH Task Force in the ministry said that the industry players should target the global market and that skill development will happen the moment market demands for it.

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# Indian-origin peer hails diverse Boris Johnson Cabinet

BY ADITI KHANNA

**LONDON, JUL 24 (PTI):** A prominent Indian-origin peer in the House of Lords on Wednesday said he believes that Britain's Prime Minister-in-waiting, Boris Johnson, will appoint one of the UK's most ethnically diverse Cabinets in history.

With British Indian Conservative Party parliamentarians Priti Patel, Rishi Sunak and Alok Sharma all tipped for frontline jobs in the new Cabinet, Lord Jitesh Gadhia said it signals the incoming prime minister's very different approach to politics and critical issues such as immigration.

"Boris Johnson will appoint the most ethnically diverse Cabinet in British history. This is a big moment and a bold statement by the incoming prime minister. It proves that in modern Britain you can reach the highest office regardless of your background or origins," Gadhia said.

"It also signals the different approach which Boris Johnson is expected to take towards immigration welcoming the best and brightest talent to the UK based on the needs of the economy



rather than setting arbitrary targets," he said.

Johnson won the Conservative Party leadership election by a landslide, defeating foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt by 92,153 votes to 46,656 after the results of a month-long contest were announced on Tuesday.

The 55-year-old ardent Brexiteer is set to take formal charge at the 10 Downing Street later on Wednesday, when Theresa May's term as a caretaker prime minister will come to an end with her final Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons and then a meeting with Queen

Elizabeth II to tender her resignation.

The 93-year-old monarch will then invite Johnson to form the new government, following which he will make his first speech on the steps of Downing Street before heading indoors to finalise his team of Cabinet ministers.

Patel, a fellow Brexiteer alongside Sunak, the son-in-law of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, have both been prominent members of the "Back Boris" campaign and are widely expected to be in the top team.

Alok Sharma, a junior minister in the May

Cabinet, is expected to be promoted by being given charge of his own ministry. Pakistani-origin home secretary Sajid Javid, who was among the final six candidates to go head to head in the Tory leadership race and threw his weight behind Johnson after being knocked out, is expected to win one of the top ministerial jobs as well.

The PM-elect's confidants have also indicated that he is keen to redress the gender balance in Cabinet by appointing a large number of female lawmakers.

Gadhia believes Johnson will send out a strong unifying message with

the new appointments, expected to be finalised this week before Parliament breaks for its summer recess from Friday.

The peer, who hosted the first India Day in the Parliament last month, also expects that Johnson would be "pro-India" and establish a close rapport for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"During his leadership campaign, he expressed his strong desire for India to be one of the most important partners for UK on the global stage. Boris was among the first global leaders to congratulate Prime Minister Modi following his recent election victory and welcomed his optimistic vision of New India and looked forward to an even closer partnership between UK and India in the years ahead," he said.

"As Mayor of London, Boris Johnson travelled extensively across India in 2012 and received a warm reception wherever he went. I am confident that Prime Minister Modi and Boris Johnson will establish a close rapport as they have similar optimistic visions for their countries," he added.

## Human sacrifice bridge rumours spark Bangladesh lynchings

**DHAKA, JUL 24 (AFP):** Eight people have been killed in vigilante lynchings in Bangladesh sparked by rumours on social media of children being kidnapped and sacrificed as offerings for the construction of a mega-bridge, police said Wednesday.

The victims -- which include two women -- were targeted by angry mobs over the rumours, spread mostly on Facebook, that said human heads were required for the massive 3 billion project, police chief Javed Patwary said.

"We have analysed every single case of these eight killings. Those who were killed by lynching mobs -- no-one was a child kidnapper," Patwary told reporters in Dhaka.

More than 30 other people have been attacked in connection

with the rumours.

Patwary said police stations across the country had been ordered to crack down on rumours, and at least 25 YouTube channels, 60 Facebook pages and 10 websites have been shut down.

AFP has identified several posts still on Facebook that share the rumour, however.

Mob lynchings are common in Bangladesh, but the latest incidents are particularly brutal.

Local media said they started after reports circulated of a young man allegedly found carrying the severed head of a child in the northern district of Netrokona.

Among the latest victims was a single mother-of-two, Taslima Begum, who was beaten to death in front of a Dhaka school on Saturday by a mob which suspected her of being a child kidnapper,

a police official told AFP.

A deaf man was also beaten to death outside the capital that day while trying to visit his daughter. Police said eight people have been arrested over Begum's murder, and at least five others detained for their role in spreading the rumour on social media.

The lynchings could be "a sign of people's distrust in the existing law and order system", Dhaka University sociology professor Monirul Islam told AFP.

The bridge -- which is set to be Bangladesh's biggest -- is being built on the Padma, a major tributary of the Ganges.

Rumours of human sacrifices being required for a bridge in Bangladesh have surfaced before, with several people attacked in 2010 over another structure, according to local media.

## No common pattern of mob lynching in country: Govt in RS



**NEW DELHI, JULY 24 (PTI):** There is no common pattern of mob lynching across the country with incidents occurring in different states ruled by different political dispensations, the government said in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy said during Question Hour that the BJP government was serious about tackling the issue and the prime minister had expressed concern.

"Available data shows that there is no common pattern of mob lynching and incidents have happened in different states

at different times. Incidents have happened in different states ruled by different political parties," he said.

Reddy said such incidents have been reported from Tripura, West Bengal and Kerala and had occurred previously also. Earlier, Leader of the Opposition in the Upper House Ghulam Nabi Azad said during the last five years, incidents of lynching and violence against minorities and Dalits have become too common.

He said these were not shown on television but whatsapp messages circulating show that

minorities were forced to chant slogans by members associated to a political party and asked how many advisories were sent by the Centre to state governments in this regard.

Later Manoj Kumar Jha (RJD) raised the issue of communal riots in Muzaffarnagar, saying 40 accused have been acquitted.

He questioned what is being done for witness protection.

To this, Home Minister Amit Shah said the minister concerned can only respond when he has information on the specified time period.

## 2 S. Koreans, 15 Russians held in NKorea after boat drifts

**Seoul, Jul 24 (AP):** Seoul says two South Koreans and 15 Russians have been held in North Korea for a week after their boat drifted into North Korean waters.

Seoul's Unification Ministry said Wednesday that the crew members were aboard a Russia-flagged fishing boat when it was detained by North Korea on July 17.

A ministry statement says North Korea hasn't responded South Korea's repeated calls for their

repartition. North Korea is holding six other South Koreans it has detained in recent years for alleged attempts to build underground churches inside the North and other charges.

Ties between the Koreans improved last year after North Korea entered into talks on its nuclear program. But North Korea has reduced its exchanges with South Korea amid a lack of progress in nuclear diplomacy.

## Landslide hits village in China, kills 11 people



By K J M Varma  
**Beijing, Jul 24 (PTI):** A landslide has hit a village in southwest China's Guizhou Province, killing 11 people and leaving 34 others missing, the local authorities said on Wednesday.

The landslide engulfed a village in the city of Liupanshui on Tuesday, burying 21 houses. More than 50 people were living in the affected area when the landslide struck it, according to rescuers.

So far, 11 people have been found dead, another 11 were rescued, and an estimated 34 remained missing, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The rescue work is still going on.

The Ministry of Emer-

gency Management said Wednesday that it immediately activated an emergency response and sent a team to the site to assist the local governments in disaster relief.

Currently, some 560 professional rescuers are searching the site thoroughly for the missing to minimise casualties, the ministry said.

The ministry called for intensified geological and meteorological monitoring to prevent secondary disasters, and efforts to ensure the safety of rescuers.

Another landslide struck a construction site in a village in Hezhang County in Guizhou Province on Tuesday, leaving one dead and six others missing, according to the county government.

## Sri Lanka pacer Nuwan Kulasekara calls it a day

**COLOMBO, JUL 24 (PTI):** Sri Lanka seamer Nuwan Kulasekara has decided to call time on his international career, finishing as the third highest wicket-taker among his country's pace bowlers after Chaminda Vaas and Lasith Malinga.

For Indian fans, their biggest connect with Kulasekara would be Mahendra Singh Dhoni hitting him for the World Cup-winning six at the Wankhede Stadium in 2011.

The 37-year-old had

199 scalps in 184 ODIs while he took another 66 wickets in 58 T20 matches in a career spanning over 15 years. He also played 21 Tests for the island nation taking 48 wickets.

Kulasekara last represented Sri Lanka in an ODI against Zimbabwe in Hambantota in July 2017 and hasn't played any competitive match since March 2018.

Kulasekara was one of Sri Lanka's heroes during their victorious

2014 World T20 campaign in which he took eight wickets in six matches at an economy rate of 6.42.

In the final against India in Dhaka, Kulasekara had figures of 1 for 29 with Yuvraj Singh failing to go big against him.

Kulasekara was ranked as the No.1 bowler in March 2009 ICC rankings and his career-best ODI figures of 5 for 22 came in 2013 against Australia in Brisbane.

## Pak PM Khan faces protests by religious and ethnic minorities during first US visit

**BY LAIT K JHA**  
**WASHINGTON, JUL 24 (PTI):** Prime Minister Imran Khan on his maiden visit to the US faced protests by ethnic and religious minorities from Pakistan, drawing the attention of the Trump administration towards human rights violations and forced disappearances in that country. The Mohajirs and the Balochs are accusing the Pakistani security agencies of engaging in human rights violations against the minority communities.

Mohajirs are Urdu-speaking people who migrated from India during partition. A large number of Mohajirs reside in Sindh province's urban areas - notably in Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas and Sukkur. The minority group has time and again accused the Pakistan government of human rights violation.

Balochs living in the US have been raising their voice against alleged atrocities, disappearance and human rights violations in the country's southwestern Balochistan province by Pakistani security forces.



At separate rallies in front of the White House, US Capitol and in front of US Institute of Peace building, the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) brought together ethnic and minority groups, including Balochs, to protest against Khan.

MQM held a peaceful protest against Khan in front of the US Capitol on Sunday alleging that Mohajirs are being subjected to grave human rights violations in Karachi and other parts of the country. A group of Baloch activists also raised anti-Pakistan slogans during Prime Minister Khan's address to the diaspora here, demanding freedom for the country's southwestern Balochistan province on Monday.

Khan was on a three-day visit to the US where he met President Trump and discussed ways to

resolve the Afghanistan conflict and the challenge terrorism poses to the regional stability.

The Jul 21-23 visit of the prime minister was the first summit-level engagement between Pakistan and the United States since 2015.

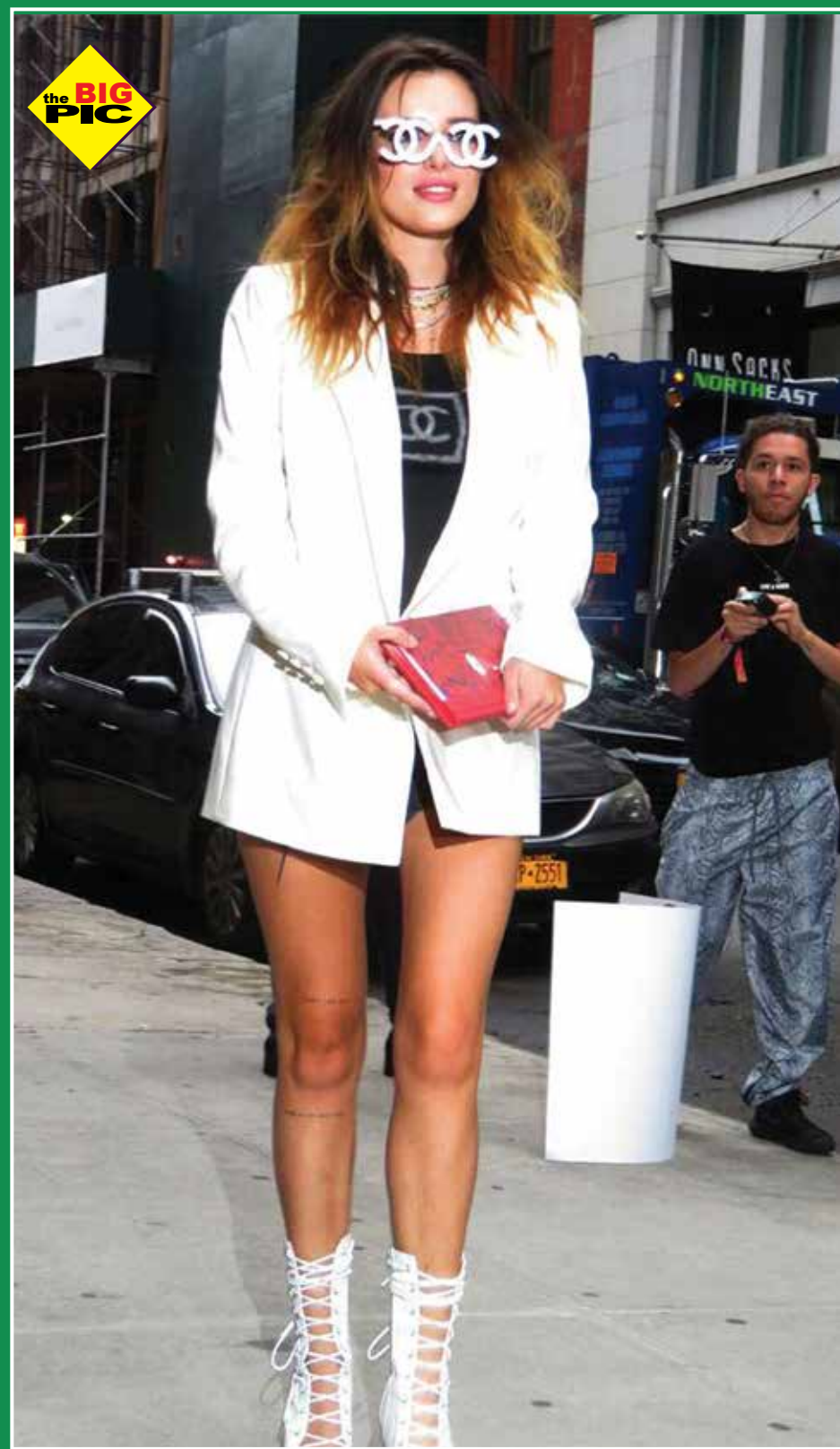
The protesters belonging to Mohajir (MQM), Baloch, Pashoon, Sindhi, Gilgit Baltistan and Saraiki communities urged the US Government to raise the issue of human rights violations with Khan during their meeting.

We demand (to) stop mass killings of civilians and state sponsored terrorism by the Pakistan Army in Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Rehan Ibadat, one of the protesters who joined the protest in front of the White House on Monday, said.

The protesters sought the release of political prisoners, members of Parliament Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar from the custody of Pakistan military and demanded lifting ban on Altaf Hussain and speeches of other political leaders.







**CHANEL GIRL!** The actress, Bella Thorne was spotted wearing some Chanel eyewear at her Barnes and Noble book event.

## Book to tell behind-the-scenes tales of Harry Potter play

**NEW DELHI, JUL 24 (PTI):** In some good news for Potterheads, a new book will chronicle behind-the-scenes details of the award-winning play "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child".

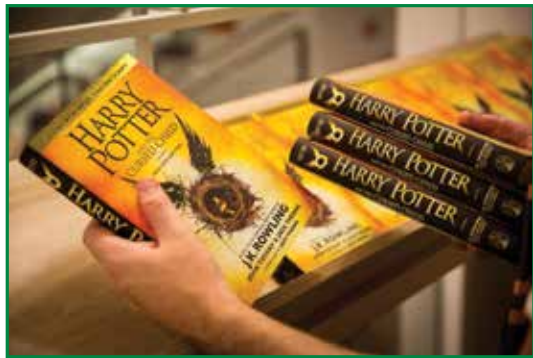
Replete with photographs of the Wizarding World and of the backstage, interviews, sketches, notes, and unbelievable trivia, "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child: The Journey Behind the Scenes of the Award-Winning Stage Production" is slated to be released in India on November 1.

Hachette imprint Little, Brown will be publishing the book by Harry Potter Theatrical Productions and Jody Revenson.

The book traces the show's journey to the stage - from the earliest phases of development with producers Sonia Friedman and Colin Callender, to the crafting of the eighth Harry Potter story with J K Rowling, director John Tiffany and playwright Jack Thorne, and to the gathering of a team of artists and actors together to bring this new

part of Harry's story to life.

"Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" is regarded as one of the most celebrated stage productions of the past decade. Opening in London's West End in 2016, on Broadway in 2018 and in Melbourne this year - and with



more productions worldwide still to come including San Francisco later this year - the play has broken records, collected countless rave reviews and awards, and captivated audiences. According to the publisher, this book is the "ultimate backstage pass that every Harry Potter fan has been waiting for 'Harry Potter and the Cursed Child' was first published in July 2016 and was the fastest selling book of the decade".

The "Harry Potter" series, published between 1997 and 2007, have sold over 450 million copies worldwide, distributed in more than 200 territories and translated into 79 languages, and have been turned into eight films.

**ARIES:** Examine the idea you parted ways with a while ago. What is the reason behind this bitter breakup? Did you not believe in yourself enough or did you lack the resources required to set things up? Resurrection is on the cards, Aries. Grab the opportunity to breathe new life into the given project.

Tip: This is a time of resurrection on the work front.

**TAURUS:** Two words, Taurus: financial planning. You don't want to bear the brunt of your own miscalculations. From now on, plan ahead and be extra vigilant about your expenditure. Avoid partnering up with people who spell trouble from the start.

Tip: Understand how you can manage your finances better.

**GEMINI:** What a wonderful feeling it is to be in the right place at the right time. The work you are putting in is yielding success, recognition and power. Plus, the kind of financial stability that was once a distant dream. Find a way to balance your creative and entrepreneurial side, Gemini. This is the secret to joining the league of

the power players.

Tip: Find a way to harness both your creative and entrepreneurial skills.

**CANCER:** When you're at the end of the tunnel is when the light finally appears. Cancer, don't back down now. Just see how you can reroute. This is the secret to finding a new way to arrive at the desired destination. Remember, you don't have to deal with the trauma alone.

Tip: If you've reached the end of the road, reroute.

**LEO:** "Imagine one of the most important symbols in alchemy: a snake biting its own tail. That's what life is for people like you and me. We're constantly destroying and rebuilding ourselves," Paulo Coelho narrated. Where are you in your journey of creative-destruction? What outmoded identities are you letting go of? Continue to shed old skin, Leo. You are in the process of becoming more \*you\* than you ever have.

Tip: You are in the process of becoming the most authentic version of yourself.

**VIRGO:** The gestation period is just as important as the birthing process. You've

planted your seeds with intention, wild one. Now continue to love and nurture them the way a mother would. If there's one thing this phase of your life is teaching you, it's that patience certainly is a virtue. Take a moment to reflect on your past patterns as well. This will give you a deeper understanding of the methods that have worked for you and the ones that have not.

Tip: The gestation period is just as the birth.

**LIBRA:** A warrior always has two options: doing the right thing and taking the easy way out. Stand up for the truth, Libra. Be the voice of the underdog. Understand that every action we take has a karmic imprint. So, you want to wield your power for the greater good.

Tip: Wield your power for the greater good.

**SCORPIO:** "Make a conscious effort to surround yourself with positive nourishing and uplifting people—people who believe in you and encourage you to go after your dreams, and applaud your victories." A Jack Canfield quote that perfectly describes where you are at in this moment. Continue to

make magick with your good vibe tribe. You are inspiring each other to be a better version of yourself—each and every day.

Tip: Make magick with your good vibe tribe.

**SAGITTARIUS:** So what if you failed a few times? So what if you got bruised in the bargain? Don't let that stop you from believing in your own power and potential. This is the week to challenge all the self-negating beliefs you have held onto, and show your circumstances that you are invincible. Keep in mind that there's a fine line between being daring and being reckless though.

Tip: This is the week to challenge your self-negating beliefs.

**CAPRICORN:** The money you desire could be slow to come to you. But this may not be a negative in the larger scheme of things. Other things you want to consider before you create a downward spiral in your head: #1 Is the project I am working in alignment with my higher goals? #2 Will this association benefit me in the long run? #3 Will it open the door to the future I have

always envisioned for myself?

Tip: Focus on the positives and you will discover that are a multitude.

**AQUARIUS:** Lo and behold, Aquarius! The gates of abundance are opening for you. You are now ready to receive the kind of wealth you both desire and deserve. What you want to keep in mind when the numbers multiply is that you have big plans for the future—like the company you want to build for yourself or the project you want to fund.

Tip: You are ready to receive the wealth you truly deserve.

**PISCES:** You are this close to the finish line. Don't let your negative thought patterns get the better of you or make you doubt all the things you are capable of. What you're being asked to focus on: offering the metaphorical darkness within to the flames. A Robin Sharma quote to awaken you to the power of your subconscious mind: "Everything is created twice. First in the mind and then in reality."

Tip: Awaken to your inherent power.

## Hero has no gender: Taapsee Pannu

Mumbai, Jul 24 (PTI): In an industry where a male actor is called a hero, Taapsee Pannu says her aim is to break this gender-based stereotype and she plans to do so slowly and steadily.

The 31-year-old actor believes the acceptance for female-centric films from both the industry and audience can help bridge the gap between male and female actors being successful at the box office.

"I feel hero has no gender and I am trying to prove that. We have for so many years fed our audience that hero is a gender-based term and they have also accepted that.

"Now the change can not come overnight, it will be slow and steady. It requires a lot of perseverance from the side of all-female actors who are trying to bring the change," Taapsee told PTI.

Citing the example of her last release "Game Over", she said the home invasion thriller did not make it to the Rs 100 crore club and it is a fact she accepts.

"I am expecting and hoping that it will become a commercially successful film so that other people will take a risk in the future," she added.

Taapsee's last two releases "Badla" (over Rs 100 crore in India) and "Game Over" (Rs 11 crore in India) were fronted by

a woman protagonist and the actor believes there is an audience for female-driven cinema today.



"We are in the transition phase. All kinds of good films in this space are being accepted. Like 'Game Over' was a dark film, it did not have a regular entertainment quotient like a song or a comedy scene or anything. It is not visually that easily an attractive film but it got good response. Such films require a certain kind of trust from the audience."

There is a perception that usually mainstream potboilers with A-listers tend to be a crowd-puller to the theatres but the actor believes it isn't necessary to choose films that are only commercial.

"I am not giving up easily and not succumbing to this pressure that I have to do a certain kind of films to make sure I am

saleable. I am ready to push the boundary slowly and steadily as in every way possible.

"But I can't change my choice because it doesn't fall into the conventional formula. I am ok to have my own audience but an audience that believes in my choice of films."

Taapsee's other two releases this year are "Mission Mangal" and "Saand Ki Aankh". The actor is also working on a Tamil action thriller.

## Online bullying daunting, can affect family members: Ananya



**MUMBAI, JUL 24 (PTI):** Newcomer Ananya Pandey says online bullying can be extremely daunting as it not only disturbs the victim but also family members.

The "Student of the Year 2" actor was at the receiving end of accusations on social media that she lied about getting selected in a prestigious US university.

Ananya eventually shot down the rumours by posting a photo of her with the university's letter of acceptance.

In an interview with PTI, the actor said social media bullying is quite prevalent in the society nowadays and it affected not just her but "everyone around me".

"It affected my family because they felt that I have worked so hard in my entire life, and that's why is someone bringing me down.

"I realized people believe everything, whatever is fed to them online. I feel that they are being really irresponsible as they are spreading incorrect information. They need to be more responsible," Ananya said.

The actor said the bullying was "daunting for sure" with moments of doubt but she emerged stronger as she had a solid support system of friends and family.

It eventually became a trigger

for her to launch 'So Positive', a special initiative against social media bullying which she had been thinking for a while.

"So Positive' is here to tell people that if they don't have people to talk to in life, then they can talk to me on this digital platform. I feel they are not the only ones going through this," she added.

The initiative aims at spreading awareness about social media bullying and the measures that can be taken by the victims in order to deal with it.

The 20-year-old actor said she was initially scared as she did not know how people would react to the initiative but felt it was an important topic to talk about as it is barely discussed.

"I believe that ignorance is bliss and I believe in quietly doing your work and ignoring stuff, that's also because I am slightly more thick skinned... But I have to realise that not everyone is the same and they might not be able to handle it in the same way.

"So, I want to provide people with every option they can deal with it. To build the community, to create awareness and just to let people know that they are not alone and they have someone to talk to," Ananya said.

## Gwen Stefani cancels Las Vegas gig



**LOS ANGELES, JUL 24 (PTI):** Singer Gwen Stefani has cancelled an upcoming performance in Las Vegas due to ill health.

The 49-year-old musician, who is on an extended Las Vegas residency till November, said that her show at Zappos Theater, scheduled for Wednesday, has been called off.

"I am so upset to share that I am unwell & will not be able to perform my Vegas residency show tomorrow night. I was so looking forward to seeing everyone & performing and I wish I wasn't feeling the way I do.

"To everyone who was coming to Wednesday's show, I am so sorry. I am doing everything I can to be back on stage on Friday," Stefani wrote on Instagram on Tuesday.

Refunds for Wednesday's performance are being offered at point of purchase, reported ETOnline. Live Nation Las Vegas and Caesars Entertainment said that the singer "does anticipate recovery and plans to return to stage for her scheduled show on Friday".