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SummitTIMES

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THE RESHUFFLE CONTINUES

More than 100 transfers in Sikkim Police

Akshay posted as Recovery Officer at SBS; South, East and North receive new SPs, Thanas get a rejig

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 11 JUN:**

With the administrative reshuffle having begun, today it was the turn of Sikkim Police to receive a major rejig. Upwards of a hundred transfers were ordered

by the State Government today, spanning from the Inspector rank right up to the Additional DGP.

It is no secret that there is no love lost between Sikkim Krantikari Morcha and ADGP Akshay Sachdeva, and with the party now in government, the ADGP was among the first transfers affected in the Police Department. Currently holding charge as Director, Fire & Emergency Services, ADGP Sachdeva was today transferred and posted as Recovery Officer, State Bank of Sikkim.

SBS has also received

Assistant Recovery Officer from Sikkim Police with Deputy RTO on deputation at Singtam, Kharka Bahadur Gurung, posted as one today.

IGP Avichal, in charge of AP and Training, will also hold charge as Director, Fire & Emergency Services.

Similarly, DIG Sarda Rani Lepcha, already at Planning and Modernisation will now hold independent charge.

DIG, Sikkim Vigilance, Sonam Tenzing Bhutia, has been transferred as DIG Range, while DIG, AP and Training, Rajiv

Ranjan, has been posted as the new DIG Sikkim Vigilance. The current DIG Range, DB Giri, meanwhile, has been transferred and posted as DIG, Home Guards and Civil Defence.

East District receives a new SP in Hari Prasad Chettri who comes in from Special branch while the current SP-East Hem Raj Rai has been posted as Principal, PTC at Yangang.

Sr SP-North, Kunzang Dorjee Sangderpa, has been posted as CO, 2nd IRBn, Pipalay, exchanging offices with Sonam Gyatso Bhutia who is the

new SP-North.

Similarly, CO, SAP, Prawin Gurung has been posted as SP-South. The current SP-South, Manish Kumar Verma, is now SP, CID.

DIG, Home Guards and Civil Defence, Khilburna Gurung, moves out on deputation as CEO, Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation, while AIGP, PHQ, Shammi Rai, has been posted as SP, Communication Branch.

And the list of transfers goes on, running through every rank down till the PI, with several thanas of receiving new SHOs.

CM calls on Union Ministers, raises pending demands



NEW DELHI, 11 JUN (IPR): Chief Minister, PS Tamang (Golay) and Minister, Rural Management and Development Department, Sonam Lama, met Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, G Kishan Reddy at New Delhi today.

They congratulated Mr Reddy on assuming charge as Minister and for the massive victory of BJP in the recent Lok Sabha election. The Chief Minister requested Mr Reddy to facilitate the process towards according seat allocation in favour of Limboo and Tamang communities in the Sikkim.

Legislative Assembly, and towards the consideration of Government of India for giving tribal status to all the eleven left out ethnic communities of Sikkim as existed prior to the merger with India so that they could be given justice and provided with all possible opportunities in future at par with other Tribal communities.

He thanked Ministry of Home Affairs and Mr Reddy for considering the issue of allowing the 17th Karmapa, Gyen Trinley Dorje, to visit Sikkim. Mr Reddy heard the

demands patiently and assured to consider them and provide all possible cooperation.

The Chief Minister along with Minister RMDD, Sonam Lama, also met Union Minister of Defence, Rajnath Singh, at New Delhi, today. The CM congratulated Mr Singh for the outstanding achievements during his last tenure and also extended best wishes for the upcoming assignment as Defence Minister, Government of India.

During the meeting, Chief Minister, briefed the Defence Minister about various aspects of the State Government; like upgradation of the Pakyong Airport to make it useful and operational throughout the year; compensating for the state government of Sikkim duly against all the lands presently occupied by all the Defence organisations in different parts of Sikkim; providing special quota to the Sikkimese youth in the Defence recruitment process and from Defence point of view strengthening the most peaceful State Sikkim that shares its border with three neighbouring countries.

After giving a patient

hearing, Mr Singh assured to extend all possible support to Sikkim.

The Chief Minister also called on Minister of State (IC) of Youth Affairs and Sports, Kiren Rijiju, today and congratulated him upon assuming the charge of Sports Ministry.

While discussing various issues pertaining to Sikkim, the CM expressed his gratitude to Kiren Rijiju for his continuous support and help that was extended towards granting permission to the 17th Karmapa Gyen Trinley Dorje to visit Sikkim.

The Chief Minister requested the Minister of State (IC) to help Sikkim in building world-class sports infrastructure including upgradation of Paljor stadium, especially its turf improvement work.

Mr Rijiju thanked the Chief Minister for the good wishes and assured to look into the issues discussed, he also urged the talented Sikkimese youth to avail the opportunities bestowed under "Khelo India Youth Games" programme that is held annually and which offers a big platform for talent identification.

Deptts reminded of proper channels to process projects

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 11 JUN:**

The process of the Chief Minister reminding government officers about the basics of administration continues. In the latest instance, a circular issued on 06 June informs that the State Government has been observing with "concern" the practice of departments approaching the Chief Minister through the Ministers for their schemes and projects bypassing the Departments of Planning, Finance and the Chief Secretary.

The circular, which closes with the appeal,

"Let us all work for the benefit of common man with full transparency," underlines that the sidestepping of these three offices was "irregular" and "puts unnecessary burden on State exchequer."

Accordingly, the Departments have been directed that "all such proposals and files" are submitted through proper channel following due procedure."

"In addition, no engineer and contractor oriented schemes will be proposed and approved in public interest," the circular states.

Formalities for starting Imphal-Mandalay bus services at final stage: CM

IMPHAL, JUN 11 (PTI): Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh Tuesday said the formalities for starting a bus service between Imphal and Mandalay, the second largest city of neighbouring Myanmar, are at the final stage.

Efforts are also on to extend rail and air link from the north eastern state of Manipur to Myanmar, Singh said at a conference on Act East Policy in which delegates of the neighbouring country were also present.

The Act East Policy is "a reflection of commitment to deepen ties with the ASEAN region" and more importantly with Myanmar, he said.

On improving connectivity between Manipur capital Imphal and Myanmar, Singh said "Formalities for starting Mandalay-Imphal bus services are at its final stages."

Myanmarese Communication and Transport Minister U Thant Sin Maung had met his Indian counterpart Nitin Gadkari in October last year in New Delhi and discussed Imphal-Mandalay bus service.

It was decided that a bus from India will take passengers to Myanmar

border where they will be transferred to the bus run by Myanmar operator for travelling further.

Likewise, India-bound Myanmar nationals will be transferred to the bus run by an Indian operator.

At the conference, the Manipur chief minister said a survey has been made to extend rail link between Imphal to the Indo-Myanmar border town of Moreh as well as with that of the South East Asian nation.

"We are also keen for air links (between the two countries) to promote trade, tourism and greater people to people contact," he said.

However, the chief minister said the mechanism for sharing of security-related information needed to be strengthened.

In order to unlock the latent potentials of the state and the region, physical and social infrastructure have to be robust, Singh said.

For pilgrims from Buddhist-majority Myanmar, Manipur could also serve as the gateway to Buddhist religious centres of Bodhgaya in Bihar, Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh and Rumtek in Sikkim, he said.

Debutant Sanju FA becomes C Division Sikkim League 2019 champion



**SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 11 JUN:**

Sanju Football Academy, Sombaria, have become the champions of Sikkim Football Association [SFA] C Division Sikkim League 2019 played here at Paljor Stadium. This was the team's debut appearance in the State C Division League.

The win is a big achievement for the academy, which was established by Indian international and professional footballer from Sikkim, Sanju Pradhan in his hometown, Sombaria mainly to provide better training, exposure and

opportunity to footballers from rural parts of the State.

In a contesting final match of the C Division league played on Tuesday afternoon, Sanju FA defeated another strong team, Sikkim Boys in a tie-breaker to become the champion of the league.

The first half of the final match ended in a goalless draw. Both teams fought neck-to-neck in the second half but missed some good opportunities to take the lead in the match. Finally, Ingsha Subba scored the lead for Sanju FA in the 60th minute.

Sikkim Boys fought back but missed some

good chances to equalise the score. In a nail-biting finish, the equaliser came from King Lepcha of Sikkim Boys in injury time of the match.

In the tie-breaker through penalty shootout, Sanju FA players converted four shots into goals while Sikkim Boys managed to score just two goals from four shots.

Along with finalists, Sanju FA and Sikkim Boys, Red Panda FC, Namchi and Brotherhood FC have also been promoted to the Sikkim Football Association [SFA] B Division Sikkim League 2020.

turn to pg02

Grassroots women's organisation in Andhra Pradesh wins prestigious UN award

YOSHITA SINGH

UNITED NATIONS, JUN 11 (PTI): A grassroots women's organisation in Andhra Pradesh is among the 22 winners of a prestigious United Nations award given biennially to recognise outstanding efforts towards local, innovative, nature-based climate solutions.

The Deccan Development Society has been awarded the Equator Prize 2019, organised by the Equator Initiative within the United Nations Development Programme. Each of the 22 winners represents outstanding community and indigenous initiatives that are advancing nature-based solutions for climate change and local sustainable development.

"In the Zaheerabad region of India, the Deccan Development Society promotes women-led regenerative agriculture and community-seed banks to empower Dalit and tribal women, promote sustainable land use, and achieve food security," the citation said.

According to information on its



website, the Deccan Development Society (DDS) is a two and half decade old grassroots organisation working in about 75 villages with women's voluntary village level associations in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh.

"The 5000 women members of

the Society represent the poorest of the poor in their village communities. Most of them are dalits, the lowest group in the Indian social hierarchy," it said.

The women of the DDS sanghams have worked towards autonomy over food production, seeds, natural re-

sources, market and media.

Other winners of the prize include 'Solar Freeze' of Kenya, an initiative that is pioneering the production of portable solar cold rooms that reduce post-harvest losses of food grown primarily by women smallholder farmers by 90 per cent, increase household incomes, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through food loss.

'Indigenous Group of Dayak Iban Sungai Utik Long House'- Indonesia that has protected an estimated 1.31 million tonnes of carbon in their 9,504-hectare customary forest and for decades fought against corporate interests; Hui Maka'ainana o Makana', Hawaii, a native Hawaiian grassroots initiative has woven together traditional, place-based knowledge and policy advocacy to sustainably manage their near-shore fisheries and

'Associacao Indigena Kisedje' in Brazil, an association of Kisedje indigenous people that has transformed the status

turn to pg02

Training on off-farm organic inputs at Duga

**NITESH R PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 11 JUN:**

A day long training program on usages of off farm organic inputs (Bio fertilizers and Bio pesticides) was held at Block Administrative Centre, Duga today. The program was organised by Budang Kameray Organic Farmers Producer's Cooperative.

Additional Director, Bina Rai, Agriculture department was present in the program to guide the farmers on various bio products useful in agriculture without causing damage to the environment. She also added that Duga-Budang and surroundings have a unique advantage of sustaining agriculture the year round.



Members of Farm-

ers Producer's Organisation(FPO) called for more awareness and

appealed to all farmers to contact them for any assistance in production and marketing. These cooperatives have been

registered under the state government and have been helping farmers and farming communities in Sikkim with

knowledge and help.

An active group of local farmers participated in interaction with officials on methods and

other expert knowledge on many aspects of farming and its sustainability. Many have raised caution on insects, pests and animals eating away a large portion of their produce.

"An overall mechanism for proper mitigation of this issue has been felt for long," said an official, T Gurung. BDO, CL Sharma, Duga was also present in the function and has assured all cooperation from the BAC in the field of agriculture.

He further added that the BAC would continue to deliver services to the people with the support of all nodal departments for a sustainable village or block.

LT delegation meets Minister, demands land protection for Tamangs

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 11 JUN:**

A delegation of Sikkim Limboo Tamang Tribal Joint Action Committee met the Minister for Human Resource Development Department, Kunga Nima Lepcha on 09 June at his office. The delegation led by president, SP Limboo submitted a memorandum to the Minister demanding that a legislation to protect Tamang land from alienation be passed in the State Assembly, informs a press release

from the committee.

The committee has said that in other states of India, land protection is provided as soon as tribal status is granted to a community but this was not done under the previous SDF government when Limboo and Tamang got tribal status in 2003.

Due to this decision of the government many Limboo and Tamang have already become landless, the release states further adding that different Limboo and Tamang organisations have

been demanding that the government take action since 2004.

The SDF government passed this Act in the State Assembly but only for Limboo community and not for Tamang community, but Sikkim Limboo Tamang Tribal Joint Action Committee demands that amendments be made in the Act to include Tamang community.

After hearing them out, Minister, Mr Lepcha gave positive assurance to the committee, the release informs.

Heat wave rages on; 4 elderly pilgrims die of heat in train

NEW DELHI, JUN 11 (PTI): Several parts of the country continued to reel under sweltering heat Tuesday with mercury crossing the 45-degree mark, even as four elderly pilgrims travelling on a train from Agra to Coimbatore died due to extreme heat.

The pilgrims, hailing from Tamil Nadu, were travelling in non-AC coaches of Kerala Express. They complained of uneasiness and by the time, the train reached Jhansi, three of them died. One of the pilgrims died in a hospital, officials said. Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh has been experiencing severe heat wave in the recent weeks. It recorded a high of 48 degrees Celsius Tuesday.

The maximum temperature hovered close to 45 degrees Celsius at most places in Punjab and Haryana.

Hisar in Haryana and Patiala in Punjab sizzled at 45.5 degrees Celsius, a MeT official said.

Intense heat wave conditions also swept Bhiwani at 45.3 degrees Celsius, while Karnal and Narnaul recorded above normal temperature of 44 degrees Celsius each.

Common capital Chandigarh recorded a high of 43.9 degrees Celsius, up by five notches against normal.

In the national capital, Safdarjung observatory, reading of which is considered official for the city, recorded a high of 44.5 degrees Celsius, five notches above the season's average.

The weatherman, however, has forecast that the mercury will see a fall in the city.

Over the next few day, Delhi may experience

thunderstorm or dust storm leading to slight rain, said a MeT department official.

The official said the maximum temperature is likely to be between 41 to 42 degrees Celsius on June 12 and 13; 43 degrees Celsius between June 14-16; and 39 degrees Celsius on June 17 in the city. The maximum temperature in most parts of Rajasthan remained near and above 45 degrees Celsius. Though isolated places in east Rajasthan recorded light rainfall and lightning, whereas the western parts of the state witnessed heat wave conditions.

Churu remained the hottest place in the desert state at 47.3 degrees Celsius followed by 46.2 degrees in Sriganganagar, 45.9 degrees in Kota and 45.1 degrees Celsius in Bikaner. Barmer and Jaisalmer also recorded maximum temperatures above 44 degrees Celsius.

Dry weather prevailed in most parts of Uttar Pradesh with state capital Lucknow recording a maximum temperature of 42.1 degrees Celsius, three degrees above normal.

According to the meteorological department, rain or thunderstorm is very likely at isolated places in the state. It also warned that severe heat-wave conditions are likely to prevail at isolated places in the state.

Jhansi was the hottest place in the state where mercury soared to 48 degrees Celsius, seven degrees above the normal mark. Allahabad witnessed a high of 46 degree Celsius.

The temperature soared above 40 degrees Celsius in at least 13

places in Odisha.

While the entire western region sizzled under boiling heat, coastal and interior areas of the state also encountered unbearable weather conditions due to rising temperature coupled with high level of relative humidity. Sambalpur in western Odisha turned out to be the hottest place in the state, recording 45 degrees Celsius followed by 44.4 degrees in neighbouring Hirkud and 44.2 degrees in Jharsuguda, the Meteorological Centre here said.

The state capital Bhubaneswar recorded a maximum temperature of 40.3 degrees Celsius, up from 37.8 degrees Celsius measured on Monday, while relative humidity in the city stood at 87 per cent, it said.

The MeT has forecast heat wave conditions to prevail in many parts of the state for at least next three days.

People of Himachal Pradesh, however, got some respite from the scorching heat as light rains lashed isolated parts of the state.

Shimla and Kufri were lashed by 8 mm rains each followed by Bhuntar 3 mm, Manali 2 mm, Chamba and Baghi 1 mm each and Kangra recorded 0.1 mm rain. Una was the hottest place at 44.8 degrees Celsius.

There were reports of mild snowfall on high peaks of Lahaul and Spiti. Rain is also likely to occur in several parts of the state on Wednesday.

The Met Centre has issued yellow weather warning of thunderstorm accompanied with gusty winds for plains, low and mid hills of the state on Wednesday.

Training for Soreng FPOs



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 11 JUN:**

A series of training cum farmer interaction on issues related with off-farm inputs, FPO Trading and the role of FPO (Farmer Producer Organization) was held for the FPOs of different district of Sikkim which is started from 10 Jun, 2019. These trainings were organized by FS&ADD and FPOs in collaboration with all the Service Provider Agencies under MOVCD (Mission Organic Value Chain Development) – NER PHASE – 1, a press release informs.

Mevedir, Service

Provider Agency was assigned for training at Soreng in the presence of Pranai Gurung (Deputy Director of Agriculture), Mahendra Dahal (Soreng FPO President), Dr Kavita Kashir Sagar, Dr Sreenath Solanki and Jr Scientist Seema from Krishi Bio Product & Research Pvt Ltd and Goushalya Devi (Jr Scientist) from Green Global Ventures Pvt Ltd along with Mevedir representative Jason Nim Sherpa, Amber Chettri on 10 Jun, 2019.

Dr Kavita highlighted about the off farm organic inputs (Bio fertilizers & Bio Pesticides) like Green SK Azoto Azotobacter sp.,

Green SK PSB etc.

In the next session, Ms Goushalya spoke about the Vendeep bio-fertilizer input and the usage of this bio fertilizer. Thereafter, Mr Jason Nim Sherpa from Mevedir explained about what is FPO and what are the roles of FPOs and to join FPO what are the procedures that has to be taken was also explained.

Before concluding, Pranai Gurung (Deputy Director) briefed about the MOVCD and its role. He also gave awareness on cashless transaction for farmers and how to develop the infrastructure in e-banking.

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Debutant Sanju...

It has to be mentioned here that Sanju FA emerged as the topper of Group A and Red Panda FC stood on the second position in the group, while Sikkim Boys finished the league round of C division as topper of Group B and Brotherhood FC finished on the second position in Group B.

Forest Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia was present as the chief guest of the final match and was accompanied by former Indian football team skipper, Bhaichung Bhutia and Sikkim Football Association president, Menla Ethenpa among other dignitaries. The chief guest and other guests gave away trophies and certificates to its winners.

On the occasion, SFA also felicitated International footballer and member of Indian women's team, Anju Tamang with a certificate of appreciation for her international achievements and contribution towards football.

Speaking to media persons after the match, Sanju FA mentor, Sanju Pradhan expressed his immense happiness and

satisfaction on the team's performance throughout the league. "This league was very important for players of the academy and they really performed tremendously well throughout the league. We also deserve this champion's title as we have not prepared few days for this league but we have been preparing for some years for this league," he said. He credited the win to teamwork and hard work.

"Being a professional footballer, I have a dream to produce more professional footballers from my home State. We have been working hard to bring out more talented footballers by providing them better training and opportunities through this academy," Mr Pradhan said. He also expressed his happiness on a team from West Sikkim becoming the champion and being promoted to the second division league.

"Sanju FA is a factory to bring out talented footballers mainly from rural parts of Sikkim and we have been working hard on this mission to take them to the national level," he expressed.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us: news@summittimes.com

Grassroots women's...

quo by reclaiming their traditional lands and developing an innovative entrepreneurial model that uses the native pequi tree to restore landscapes, foster food security, and develop products for local and national markets.

The Equator Initiative received 847 nominations from 127 countries around the world. The winners were selected after an extensive, four-stage peer-review process guided by a Technical Advisory Committee of international experts. Winners will be celebrated at a high-level award ceremony in New York in September.

The organisation said that as sustainable community initiatives take root throughout the tropics, they are laying the foundation for a global movement of local successes that are collectively making a contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As local and indigenous groups across the tropics demonstrate and exemplify sustainable development, the Equator Prize shines a spotlight on their efforts by celebrating them on an international stage.

KUTSE SHEGU

The 49th day Kutse Shegu of Late Doma Bhutia w/o Lakpa Thendup Bhutia who left for her heavenly abode on 01.05.2019 falls on 18.6.2019 (Tuesday). All relatives, friends & well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Below Law College, Helipad, Lower Burtuk, Gangtok, East Sikkim.



Lakpa Thendup Bhutia(Husband), Kesseng Norbu Bhutia(son) & all family members.
Mob: 9800655921/ 6294186876.

BEFORE THE LD.OATH COMMISSIONER, EAST SIKKIM AT GANGTOK

AFFIDAVIT

I, Shanti Pakhrin(Tamang) d/o Shri Bhagi Shamsheer Pakhrin(Tamang) , R/o Sang, East Sikkim at present residing at Nam Nang Road, Gangtok East Sikkim, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare on oath as under:-

1. That the actual and correct spelling of my name is Shanti Pakhrin (Tamang) instead of Santi Pakhrin (Tamang).
2. That inadvertently the spelling of my name has been wrongly recorded as Santi Pakhrin(Tamang) instead of Shanti Pakhrin (Tamang) in my Certificate of Identification, as well as Scheduled Tribe/ Caste Certificate, issued by the Government of Sikkim.
3. That the purpose of this affidavit is to declare that the correct spelling of my name is Shanti Pakhrin(Tamang) and not Santi Pakhrin.
4. That this affidavit is made bonafide.

Shanti Pakhrin
DEPONENT.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

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AIFF “D” License Course begins at Paljor Stadium

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JUN:

Sikkim Football Association [SFA] in close coordination with All India Football federation and M/S. Ideas Sports Management, Kolkata

is conducting AIFF “D” License Course for the football coaches at Paljor Stadium, Gangtok from 12 to 17 June 2019, an SFA release informs. Choaba Devi, renowned ex-footballer of

Manipur and presently AIFF Instructor, has arrived in Gangtok to conduct the course. There are 24 candidates participating out of which 20 candidates are from Sikkim.

Delhi’s power demand on Monday night breaches 6686 MW, highest this summer



NEW DELHI, JUN 11 (PTI):

As there is no relief from the scorching heat, the peak power demand in Delhi broke all records of this season on Monday and touched a high of 6686 megawatt.

The peak power demand was recorded at 11.23 PM on Monday, a power discom official

said. On Tuesday, the peak power demand was 6679 MW at 3.04 PM, second highest in the month of June, according to state load dispatch centre (SLDC) figures. It was 6658 MW on June 6.

The mercury shattered all records in Delhi on Monday with parts of the national capital reg-

istering 48 degrees Celsius, the highest for the month of June.

This year, the highest peak demand is expected to cross the 7,400-MW mark, the official said.

Last year, the power demand breached the 7,000-MW mark in the city in July, peaking at 7,016 MW, they added.

Adhoc teachers’ assoc wants all OFOJ appointments to be scrutinised

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 11 JUN:

All Sikkim Adhoc Teachers & Temporary Employees Association [ASATTEA] has asserted that the State government should re-verify all beneficiaries of One Family One Job scheme and provide jobs only to genuine beneficiaries. The association also stated that jobs should be provided according to qualifications after proper verification.

Addressing a press conference here today, an executive member of ASATTEA, Yogesh Sharma, alleged that OFOJ appointments were made “randomly and without proper scrutiny” by the earlier government.

He further alleged that jobs were provided just for vote bank politics and OFOJ beneficiaries have been suffering due to such “random process”.

However, he assured that ASATTEA would always stand by these “suffering beneficiaries” to support their struggle for justice. On the same, he urged the government to undertake proper verification of all OFOJ ben-



eficiaries and provide them jobs as per their qualifications.

“It is not good to pressurize the new government which is barely around 15 days old on this issue. They should be given time to work on this issue,” Mr Sharma said.

He also contended that the association has evidence that jobs were even provided to non-domicile Sikkimese and overage candidates and not as per their qualifications.

He further observed that if the government did not work on these serious issue, the matter could create more problems in the future.

Another executive

member, Sonam Wangdi, echoed Mr Sharma’s sentiments and alleged that not all needy and genuine candidates received appointment letters under this scheme even as some privileged candidates were taken in.

He claimed that in many cases, jobs were given to candidates who already have government employees in their family and in some other cases, around 2 to 3 youth from the same family got a job under this scheme.

On behalf of the association, Mr Sharma congratulated the new government and expressed hope that the new government would listen to their is-

sues as well and work in the interest of all adhoc teachers of the State.

He mentioned that the association has prepared a new memorandum covering all issues of adhoc teachers to be submitted to Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] upon his return from Delhi.

He informed that the association has already met some Ministers and also the Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling, and received positive assurances from them.

Another executive member, Rajesh Dahal mentioned that the association would also submit a formula for

regularisation of adhoc teachers along with the memorandum to the government. He added that the association wants the regularisation of teachers on seniority basis in a phased manner.

Speaking on other issues, he mentioned that Human Resource Development Department had not conducted any teacher interviews from 2016 to 2018.

“There were no interviews held during this period but 26 Graduate Teachers Arts were appointed on regular basis in 2018. The work orders were issued by the department on 12/6/2018 to these 26 teachers,” he informed.

He alleged that such backdoor appointments to regular jobs were not only illegal but also an injustice to other qualified youth of the State.

On the same, ASATTEA has demanded that services of these 26 teachers be immediately terminated to give justice to others.

Mr Dahal said the association would also search if there was such practices in other departments as well.

IMF team leaves for Pindari Glacier to retrieve climbers’ bodies

DEHRADUN, JUNE 11 (PTI):

A 14-member mountaineers’ team Tuesday left for Pindari Glacier to retrieve through land routes the bodies of five climbers who died last month on way to the Nanda Devi East peak.

The Indian Mountaineering Foundation team left for Pindari glacier in Bageshwar district through which it intends to retrieve the bodies, spotted close to an unscaled peak by IAF helicopters on June 3, Bageshwar SP Lokeshwar Singh said. The team comprising 12 climbers and two cooks will camp at Kharkov before proceeding further towards the glacier, he said. The ascent to the Pindari zero point from where the team will move eastward to the Nanda Devi East peak may take a couple of days more, he said.

The decision to bring back the bodies by the land route was taken last week following repeated futile attempts to retrieve them using IAF helicopters, amid the high altitude turbulence and bad weather.

Meanwhile, Pithoragarh District Magistrate VK Jogdande under whose supervision the initial operations were carried out to locate the bodies Tuesday released a sum of Rs 10 lakh for another team of rescuers formed under the ITBP for a ground expedition to be conducted from Munsiyari side to retrieve the bodies, District Information Officer, Pithoragarh said. The ITBP team will leave for Munsiyari Wednesday and will leave for the base camp the next day, he said. An eight-member team of mountaineers, including seven foreign nationals, on its way to Nanda Devi East peak in Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand, was reported missing since May 25.

From Jaguar to AN-32, IAF lost nearly 10 aircraft this year

NEW DELHI, JUN 11 (PTI):

The Indian Air Force has lost nearly 10 aircraft this year, the latest being an AN-32, whose wreckage was spotted on Tuesday in a heavily-forested mountainous terrain in Arunachal Pradesh, eight days after it went missing after taking off from Assam’s Jorhat.

From Mirage 2000 to MiG-27, many of these aircraft had crashed in the month of February, officials said.

In January, a Jaguar aircraft of the Indian Air Force had crashed in Uttar Pradesh’s Kushinagar district, with the pilot ejecting safely, local police had said.

The military aircraft had crashed soon after taking off on a routine mission from the Gorakhpur Air Force Station.

District magistrate Anil Kumar Singh had then said, the incident took place around noon time when the pilot had sensed some problem in the plane and turned it towards a safe destination before jumping to safety.

On February 19, a pilot was killed and two others had ejected to safety when two aircraft of IAF’s aerobatic team Surya Kiran crashed near the Yelahanka airbase in Bengaluru, a day before the opening of the Aero India show.

The two Hawk aeroplanes had collided mid-air and crashed, killing Wg Cdr Sahil Gandhi and injuring Wg Cdr V T Shelke and Sqn Ldr T J Singh.



Earlier in February, a Mirage 2000 aircraft of the IAF had crashed at the HAL airport in Bengaluru killing a pilot on the spot and leaving another critically injured, police had said.

The HAL, in a statement, had said the incident occurred at 10.30 am during a sortie.

In the same month, a MiG-27 fighter aircraft of IAF had crashed in Eta village in Pokaran tehsil of Rajasthan’s Jaisalmer district, a defence official had said. “A MiG-27 aircraft airborne from Jaisalmer crashed during a routine mission today evening. Pilot ejected safely. A Court of Inquiry will investigate the cause of the accident,” defence spokesperson Col Sombit Ghosh had said after the incident.

A MiG-21 Bison of the IAF, piloted by Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was downed during a dogfight between India and Pakistan sides on February 27 after the Balakot airstrike. Also, on February

27, a Mi-17 helicopter had crashed in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, killing at least one person. The jet had crashed in an open field near Garend Kalaan village in Budgam at 10.05 am, the officials had said.

Sources late May had said, a court of inquiry (CoI) was also probing whether the helicopter crashed after being accidentally hit by the IAF’s air defence system, which was on highest alert following the Balakot strikes.

In March, the IAF lost two aircraft in separate crash incidents.

A MiG-27 aircraft had crashed late March near Jodhpur in Rajasthan but the pilot ejected safely, official sources had said. The jet had taken off from Utarlai airforce base and it experienced engine problems leading to the crash around 11:45 am in Sirohi district about 120 km south of Jodhpur, they said.

Early March, a MiG-21 fighter aircraft of the IAF had crashed in Ra-

jasthan’s Bikaner district with the pilot ejecting safely, a defence ministry spokesperson had said.

The aircraft was on a routine mission and crashed after getting airborne from the Nal airbase near Bikaner.

The latest in the string of loss this year for the IAF is the Russian-origin transport aircraft AN-32 that was going from Jorhat in Assam to Menchuka advanced landing ground near the border with China on June 3 when it lost contact with ground staff at 1 pm, within 33 minutes of taking off.

The IAF launched a massive operation to trace the missing aircraft but the search was badly hit due to poor weather conditions.

“The wreckage of the aircraft was spotted today 16 km north of Lipo, north east of Tato at an approximate elevation of 12,000 feet by an IAF Mi-17 helicopter undertaking search in the expanded search zone,” the IAF said in a statement.

Health Ministry proposes to ban electronic smoking devices by classifying them as ‘drugs’

PAYAL BANERJEE

NEW DELHI, JUN 11 (PTI): Going tough on Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), including e-cigarettes, the health ministry has proposed to classify such alternative smoking devices as “drugs” under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, in a bid to ban their manufacture, sale, distribution and import.

According to official sources, the proposal has been approved by the Drug Technical Advisory Board (DTAB), the government’s top advisory body on technical matters related to medicines in the country. The move comes amid a raging debate over the harm-reduction aspects of ENDS.

Some organisations claim that these devices help in smoking cessation and are less harmful alternatives to traditional cigarettes, while the government is seeking to ban them contending they pose health risks to users, similar to those of conventional cigarettes.

ENDS are devices that heat a solution to create an aerosol, which also frequently contains flavours, usually dissolved into propylene glycol and glycerin. There are various types of ENDS devices like e-cigarettes, heat-not-burn devices, vape, e-sheesha, e-nicotine flavoured hookah among others.

Indian drug regulator, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), under the health ministry has proposed that manufacture, sale and distribution of ENDS, including e-cigarettes and similar products, should be prohibited under Section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, while their import should be outlawed under Section 10A of the legislation.

The proposal stated that under the provisions of ‘drugs’ in the Act, any item intended to be used as an aid to help quit smoking is covered under the definition of drugs.

Various drugs have been approved as aid for smoking cessation under the provisions of the Act and its rules, a source said while elaborating on the proposal.

According to the proposal, “After revisiting its earlier deliberations, the Drugs Consultative Committee has recommended that since ENDS and the like products are used as a tobacco cessation product and function for nicotine delivery for reasons including nicotine de-addiction, hence these devices and product fall under the definition of ‘drug’ as defined under section 3(b) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.”

Asserting that availability of ENDS devices is widespread in the country and is posing serious health risks, the

proposal mentioned that the safety aspect of these products has not been established and their efficacy on Indian population too has not have been approved under the provisions of the drug law.

Some states, including Punjab, Haryana, Kerala, Mizoram, Karnataka, and Jammu and Kashmir, have already banned e-cigarettes as an unapproved drug. While all of them have banned it under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, some have added the Poisons Act, 1919.

Apex research body - the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recommended a “complete ban” on ENDS, saying their use can initiate nicotine addiction among non-smokers also. In a white paper released last month, the ICMR said e-cigarettes adversely affects the cardiovascular system, impairs respiratory immune cell function and airways in a way similar to cigarette smoking and is responsible for severe respiratory diseases.

It also poses risk to foetal, infant and child brain development, the white paper claimed.

A consumer body, the Association of Vapers India (AVI), has questioned the veracity of ICMR white paper on ENDS, saying empirical evidence from countries that have allowed e-cigarettes show “smoking rates have declined at a historic pace”.

In August last year, the Union Health Ministry issued an advisory to all states and Union Territories to stop manufacture, sale and import of ENDS. The advisory was subsequently challenged in the Delhi High Court which ruled it to be non-binding on states and government bodies. However, some states, including Punjab, Karnataka, Kerala, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Mizoram have already banned use and sale of e-cigarettes, vape and e-hookah.

The health ministry was earlier in a dilemma on whether to ban ENDS under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) or the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

In March, the CDSCO directed all drug controllers in states and UTs not to allow the manufacture, sale, import and advertisement of ENDS, including e-cigarettes and flavoured hookah, in their jurisdictions.

Over 1,000 doctors from 24 states and three UTs in April this year urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to enforce a ban on ENDS before it becomes an “epidemic in India”, especially among the youth.

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Reputation is Everything

Handle the budget tourists with more care

The past few tourist seasons have been “bumper” for Sikkim, and the latest one is in search of an even higher superlative. Everyone associated with the sector has kept long hours and raked in handsome earnings. But it has not all been good. Reports abound about tourists not only being charged usurious amounts for their holidays, but also being stood up by cabbies who landed still higher rates or hotels which overbooked and extended only miserly hospitality. In the rare case, the reasons were genuine, stemming from infrastructural limitations and impossible to resolve logistics. Unfortunately, in most of the cases, it was sheer greed. Travellers realise that arriving in a new place and jacked up on endorphins from the experience leaves them vulnerable to the occasional cheating. In fact, these even form part of the whole touristy experience, but when this becomes the dominant memory, the negativity becomes palpable and the word of mouth can prove damaging. No one will blame the destination or its people for flights missed due to landslides or traffic jams, but if a holiday is spoiled by stakeholders driven purely by profit margins, the word will spread.

Harrowing tales of tourists ill-treated and unattended are not rare aberrations any more. Tourists, especially those travelling on a tight budget, are snared in cons with embarrassing regularity and this is not something that the State should take lightly. For all its hopes of roping in the dollar tourists, fact remains that tourism in Sikkim is sustained by those who love Sikkim so much that they scrimp and save to get here. They may be loud, they may drive a hard bargain, but they are the ones who come to Sikkim in the largest numbers and who pay higher fares and sit through a bumpy five-hour ride [one way] to get their half an hour with Tsomgo. They are the backbone of the tourism industry here. They are the bird in the hand for Sikkim Tourism while other prospects are still in the bush.

They need to be handled with greater care. It is all too easy to dismiss reports of their harassment as one meted out by agents in their own backyards and hotels being operated on lease by their ‘own’ people. Fact remains that it is Sikkim’s image that takes a beating. Reputation is everything in this business. The best example can be seen in neighbouring Darjeeling. In the wake of its two Aandolans, tourism had reduced to a trickle. It had just about resuscitated, that Aandolan 3.0 had arrived at this time two years back and derailed some future seasons too. Even until then, although Darjeeling still attracted more tourists than Gangtok, the numbers had fallen and peak season days reduced. Even through the lull, tourists avoided the neighbouring hills if they could because of the reputation it has earned. Sikkim, which is just about finding its feet as far as tourism is considered, cannot afford such blacklisting.

The industry has to remember that for every tourist complaint filed, there are many more that go unreported to the authorities. It is another matter that many vent on social media which, let’s accept it, can do as much for promotion as it can do for ruining carefully cultivated images. Every complaint should thus be taken seriously and some examples set to convince tourists and those in the tourism business that Sikkim is serious about proving itself to be a tourist-friendly destination. Tourism is a thrust sector of the Sikkimese economy and yet it is allowed to blunder about unregulated. There appears to be yawning gap between the industry, its players and its policy makers. Policies are framed with a particular audience in mind while the ground realities on tourist arrivals are different. Associations are granted many privileges and yet internal monitoring of services remains muddled. For a State so particular about local protection, it is ironic how a significant portion of the hospitality industry [especially those catering to the budget tourists] operates on lease. This ambiguity has to be done away with so that regulation of the industry becomes more meaningful. Every time a tourist is duped in Sikkim, it is not the establishment that suffers, it is Sikkim’s reputation that takes a beating. And, as mentioned earlier, reputation is everything in this business.



Everest: 11 climbers dead in 16 days – how should we deal with the bodies on the mountain?

JONATHAN WESTAWAY
theconversation.com

Climbing Mount Everest has long been a metaphor for extreme achievement – something that is both hard and hazardous. And, over the years, the bodies of those seasoned Sherpas who perished in accidents or climbers who succumbed to the cold and altitude have testified to just how dangerous it is to attempt to climb to the 8,848-metre summit.

But recent overcrowding has led to a spate of “blue sky” deaths on the mountain. Snaking queues of climbers above 8,000 metres in the oxygen-depleted death zone have been forcing people to spend dangerously long at altitude.

The adventure filmmaker Elia Saikaly described his recent experience on Everest, where at least 11 people died descending from the summit this season:

“I cannot believe what I saw up there. Death. Carnage. Chaos. Lineups. Dead bodies on the route and in tents at Camp Four. People who I tried to turn back who ended up dying. People being dragged down. Walking over bodies. Everything you read in the sensational headlines all played out on our summit night.”

What, if anything, can be done to ensure that these and past human remains on Everest are treated with dignity and respect – in ways that reflect the wishes of the deceased and their families? And how can we prevent a new wave of deaths during the next summit season?

DEALING WITH DEATH

Recovering bodies from Everest is extremely difficult – and hugely expensive. High altitudes, strong winds and subzero temperatures make getting up enough of a challenge, let alone freeing and carrying down a newly frozen body. Recovery expeditions risk the lives of the team of courageous Sherpas who brave the mountain again and again.

The more inaccessible corpses from past ascents have remained in limbo for decades, becoming landmark features in the landscape. Their images

circulate on social media and are sometimes given nicknames by mountaineers, something that causes significant distress to families and loved ones.

Sometimes religious sensitivities lead to action. After lobbying by families, in 2016 the government of West Bengal paid US\$90,000 to recover the bodies of two Bengali climbers, enabling them to be returned for cremation according to Hindu rites.

Western states offer no such support. Expensive insurance plans that cover recovery are often not purchased. Some grieving families request that their loved ones be left united with the mountain that they loved. But as the death toll increases, and climate breakdown reveals more and more bodies from past improvised disposals down the steepest faces of Everest into the glacial basins below, new approaches are required.

The Chinese and Nepalese authorities have different ways of managing the mountain. On the Tibetan side, the Chinese mountaineering authorities only allow experienced climbers to ascend. They have also been known to clear bodies from the north-east ridge in an effort to clean up the image of commercial mountaineering in Chinese-occupied Tibet.

Nepal is less tightly regulated, leading to cut-price expeditions and overcrowding. In the absence of proficiency checks, the country attracts inexperienced climbers seduced by the social status of reaching the summit of Everest. They risk not only their own lives, but those of others too. Inevitably, more people are currently dying on the Nepalese side of Everest.

The Nepalese authorities have begun to coordinate annual clean up expeditions to remove litter from the mountain, which frequently bring down human remains in the process. However, they often lack the means to identify them – and there is no clear indication that they are disposed of in culturally appropriate ways.

The governing body of the world’s mountaineering associations, the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA), urgent-

ly needs to bring together all stakeholders in Everest’s future. Engaging in dialogue with Chinese state agencies on activities in occupied Tibet is complicated, but the UIAA could assist the Nepalese state in tightening regulation and implementing proficiency tests for prospective climbers to tackle the overcrowding that will otherwise risk further deaths next season.

Agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Commission on Missing Persons should also be invited to share their experience with local NGOs and state agencies to improve methods of locating and identifying human remains as well as the recording of their removal and disposal, and the notification of next of kin.

Finally, the UIAA needs to develop a values-based code of ethics for the mountain that would bring together not only the above parties, but also the insurance industry, adventure travel companies and – most importantly – the Sherpa community. The aim must be to develop a shared understanding of how to look after the mountain and its climbers.

As the labour force on the front line of dealing with human remains on the mountain, the Sherpa community should be central to this process. Here, the UIAA should look to existing successful models that prioritise indigenous rights, such as the San Code of Ethics. After decades of invasive and exploitative research into their genes and culture, the hunter-gatherer San people of southern Africa developed this ethical framework with an NGO to ensure that research is mutually beneficial and conducted in line with San values.

There are no easy solutions to the bodies on Everest, nor the deaths that precede them. But anything other than urgent change will disfigure the mountain and seriously damage commercial mountaineering’s reputation for good stewardship. Indifference is not an option.

[the writer is Senior Research Fellow in History, University of Central Lancashire]

More countries need to give peaceful protest the chance it deserves

CHRISTOF HEYNS
theconversation.com

The right of peaceful protest is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in December 1948. Today, this right is recognised in the constitutions of 182 countries. However, we are still far away from universal acceptance of this right in practice.

There is, of course, nothing inherently good or bad about the causes pursued through peaceful protest. It has been used, for example, to foster acceptance for many fundamental human rights. It’s also been used to call for the rejection of foreigners, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people. It has also been used for and against abortion. And in some cases assemblies deteriorate into riots.

But when a society permits people to air their grievances in the streets in a peaceful way, it allows public engagement with the matter, and creates a powerful tool for tensions to be resolved in an inclusive and peaceful manner. This is an integral part of a democratic and pluralistic society.

Yet, in spite of noble promises in their constitutions, a significant number of countries worldwide have a very restrictive approach to demonstrations.

At the Centre for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria we did a comprehensive survey of the use of force laws of every country in the world. Many countries allow the use of force by the police to disperse assemblies, without regard to the principles of necessity and proportionality, as is required under international law. Or they ominously provide that the police may use “all means necessary”.

Such an approach very easily results in an es-

calation of force on all sides - or in the long term suppression of the population, which can only be sustained with more repression.

The national laws of a country are the first line of defence of the population’s freedoms. The international human rights system can help to set universal standards. But it can provide only limited protection if this is not done in the country itself. Moreover, uncertainty about the applicable laws leads to dangerous “surprises”. The reform of national laws to reflect internationally accepted and clear “rules of engagement” during peaceful protest is a matter of greatest importance.

International law reflects the experience of many years and societies. It requires accommodation of those who want to take their protests to the streets but also provides that the legitimate interest of the State in maintaining law and order and protecting the rights of the rest of society should be recognised. For example, such assemblies have to be peaceful, hate crimes must be prohibited, and advance notification of large gatherings may be required to allow the State time to prepare.

USE OF FORCE LAWS

But, there are still some unanswered questions concerning the international standards. It is in this context that those of us who serve on the United Nations Human Rights Committee are in the process of drafting a document aimed at helping to bring more clarity on the standards applicable to peaceful assemblies.

For example, may demonstrations be held on privately owned property? If the marketplace where people used to assemble has been replaced by shopping malls, can people no longer demonstrate there? Can assemblies occur online, or do they require physical presence? What are

the standards for the use of less lethal weapons for law enforcement?

In the wake of the killing of 34 striking miners by police in Marikana, South Africa, in August 2012, a local company has started marketing drones which can be used to dispense weapons such as teargas and rubber bullets.

The selling point is that this will prevent situations where the police may feel compelled to use lethal force to defend themselves. However, the remote use of force raises the risk of treating people like animals, and adding insult to injury. Should this be allowed?

There are also questions where the African context may matter. The approach in Europe and elsewhere has largely been that organisers of demonstrations cannot be held responsible for riot damage.

Do the same considerations apply in Africa, where vendors who bear the brunt may not not have insurance and are without recourse? The South African Constitutional Court has held that organisers can, under certain circumstances, be held responsible.

NEED FOR REFORM

While it is necessary to find answers to these questions on the international level, the real protection of people’s rights lies in their countries’ legal systems. The test for the new UN guidelines will be whether they help to ensure greater compliance with international standards, and the realisation of the promises of nations’ constitutions.

It is in the interest not only of the people concerned, but of democracy itself, in Africa and elsewhere, that internationally accepted ground rules are set for peaceful assembly as a tool of change.

[the writer is Professor of human rights law, University of Pretoria]

Mamata unveils Vidyasagar bust, statue; says 8 TMC workers among 10 killed in post-poll clashes

KOLKATA, JUN 11 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Tuesday installed a new bust of 19th century social reformer Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar at the college where an old one was vandalised during a roadshow of BJP president Amit Shah last month.

She also unveiled an 8.5-ft pristine white fibre-glass statue of Vidyasagar in the courtyard of the college.

After unveiling the bust near Hare school, which was then transferred to Vidyasagar College, Banerjee said altogether 10 people were killed in post-poll violence in the state and eight of them belonged to her party -- the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

The other two are BJP supporters, she said.

"Every death is unfortunate. I will ask the chief secretary to provide assistance from the disaster management fund to the families of the 10 deceased," she said, adding all the deaths will be investigated.

Post-poll violence has



been reported from various places of West Bengal after the BJP secured 18 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in the state, just four less than that of the TMC.

Clashes between the ruling TMC and the BJP took place in several districts, including North 24 Parganas, Coochbehar, Howrah and West Burdwan, resulting in many deaths and injuries. The saffron party leaders are claiming that they would dethrone TMC in the legislative assembly in

2021. Claiming that the BJP is "planning to turn Bengal into Gujarat", she said, "I am ready to go to jail but will not allow it to happen."

The new bust was unveiled by Banerjee at a programme held near Hare School and then transported in an open jeep to Vidyasagar College, where it was installed at the same place where the vandalised old one was placed.

Eminent poets, writers and senior ministers

were also present at the programme.

The shattering of the bust led to bitter recrimination, with both Banerjee and Shah accusing each other's party workers of vandalism.

On Monday, the West Bengal chief minister had accused the Centre and the BJP of engineering violence in the state to topple her government, a charge denied by the saffron party.

A wounded tigress is more dangerous, the

feisty TMC supremo had said. Amid spiralling violence in the state, West Bengal Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Amit Shah in the national capital and apprised them of the situation in the state. Asked about the possibility of imposition of President's rule in West Bengal, he had said there was no such discussion during his meetings.

The Centre had on Sunday expressed "deep

concern" over continuing violence in West Bengal, saying the "unabated violence" even after the Lok Sabha polls appeared to be a failure on part of the state government.

In an advisory to the state government, the Ministry of Home Affairs also asked it to maintain law and order, peace and public tranquility.

Unhappy with the advisory, Banerjee stepped up attack on the Centre, saying the violence was a "planted game.... The

central government and (BJP) party cadre are trying to incite violence in West Bengal."

The Trinamool Congress also wrote a letter to Shah objecting to the advisory and termed it a "deep-rooted conspiracy" and an "evil ploy to grab power" in opposition-ruled states.

The BJP has, however, said it would not demand President's Rule in West Bengal even though "a lawless situation prevails" in the state

as Banerjee would then seek sympathy votes, and vowed to "defy" her ban on its political programmes, including victory processions.

In one of the worst post-poll clashes in the state on Saturday, three persons were killed and some others are claimed to be missing at Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district.

The BJP observed a black day in the state and held a bandh in Basirhat sub-division of the district on Monday in protest against the death of two of its supporters. A TMC worker was also killed in the incident.

Senior BJP leader Mukul Roy Tuesday blamed Mamata Banerjee for the violence in Sandeshkhali, saying her speeches "fuelled" the attacks on supporters of the saffron party.

Roy, who was once the number two in the Trinamool Congress, switched over to the saffron camp in 2017, and is considered as a key strategist behind the stupendous performance of the BJP in the state.

Journalist Prashant Kanojia be released immediately, right to liberty 'non-negotiable': SC

NEW DELHI, JUN 11 (PTI): Directing immediate release on bail of journalist Prashant Kanojia, arrested for allegedly making objectionable comments on social media against Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Supreme Court Tuesday said fundamental right to liberty is "sacrosanct" and "non-negotiable".

The apex court clarified however that granting bail to Kanojia cannot be construed as approval of the posts or tweets.

The order is being passed in "view of the excessiveness of the action taken", it said, making it clear that the proceedings against the journalist will go on as per the law. The top court slammed the Uttar Pradesh government for arresting the scribe and observed that fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution cannot be infringed upon by the state.

"May be, we don't appreciate these tweets, but the question is whether he should be behind bars for these social media posts," it said after perusing the tweets. It was a "glaring case of deprivation of liberty" as Kanojia has been remanded to almost two-week judicial custody for putting up posts or tweets in social media, said a vacation bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and Ajay Rastogi. The bench was hearing a habeas corpus petition (a writ for producing a person who is under arrest or in unlawful detention before a court) filed by Kanojia's wife, Jagisha Arora, challenging his arrest.

"We direct that the petitioner's husband be immediately released on bail on conditions to the satisfaction of the jurisdictional Chief Judicial Magistrate. It is made clear that this order is not to be construed as an approval of the posts/tweets in the social media. This order is passed

in view of the excessiveness of the action taken," the bench said in its order. Kanojia had allegedly shared a video on Twitter and Facebook wherein a woman is seen speaking to reporters of various media organisations outside the chief minister's office in Lucknow, claiming that she had sent a marriage proposal to Adityanath.

An FIR was registered against Kanojia by a sub-inspector at the Hazratganj police station in Uttar Pradesh last Friday in which it was alleged that accused made "objectionable comments against the CM and tried to malign his image".

During the hearing, the apex court said it is granting bail to Kanojia as it disapproves the deprivation of right to liberty by the state. "A citizen's right to liberty is sacrosanct and non-negotiable. It is a fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution and can not be infringed upon by the state," the bench said and asked the state to show "magnanimity" in releasing him.

The bench also observed that even courts have to bear the brunt of social media. "Sometimes even we have to suffer the brunt of social media. Sometimes it is just and sometimes it is unjust but we have to exercise our powers."

It said the court need not comment on the nature of the posts or tweets for which action has been taken against the journalist. "The question is whether the petitioner's husband-Prashant Kanojia ought to have been deprived of his liberty for the offence alleged. The answer to that question is prima facie in the negative," the bench noted in its order.

"The fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution and in particular Articles 19

(freedom of speech and expression) and 21 (right to life and liberty) of the Constitution of India are non-negotiable," it said.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Vikramjit Banerjee and advocate Swarupama Chaturvedi, appearing for the Uttar Pradesh government, said a habeas corpus plea cannot be entertained as the accused is in judicial custody.

The ASG argued that a remand order was passed by the jurisdictional magistrate and the petitioner should have first approach the Allahabad High Court.

He said the plea was "not maintainable" and the apex court does not ordinarily entertain writ petitions unless the high court has first been approached. To this, the bench said, "The law is very clear. A person cannot be deprived of his fundamental rights. Even if it is an Article 32 petition, the Supreme Court can entertain it and the court can not keep its hands folded when there is deprivation of right to liberty."

It noted that as a matter of "self imposed discipline and considering the pressure of mounting cases on this court", it has become the practice of top court to "ordinarily" direct the petitioner should first approach the high court even in cases of violation of fundamental rights.

"However, Article 32 which is itself a fundamental right cannot be rendered nugatory in a glaring case of deprivation of liberty as in the instant case, where the jurisdictional Magistrate has passed an order of remand till June 22, 2019 which means that the petitioner's husband- Prashant Kanojia would be in custody for about 13/14 days for putting up posts/tweets on the social media," the bench said.

Green Mizoram Day observed

AIZAWL, JUN 11 (PTI): Green Mizoram Day was observed across the state on Tuesday with Chief Minister Zoramthanga and others planting thousands of saplings with the aim of improving the environment.

The state government has been observing the day on June 11 since 1999 and 38,46,043 trees have been planted across the state till last

year, an official statement said. Zoramthanga, who planted saplings in the premises of the Assam Rifles headquarters, said selected plants should include economically profitable ones like fruit trees.

Besides the chief minister, other ministers, legislators, officials, students and volunteers planted trees on the day, the statement said.

Irani meets Assam CM to discuss solutions for malnutrition among women, children

NEW DELHI, JUN 11 (PTI): Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani Tuesday met Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal to deliberate on solutions related to malnutrition among women and children.

"Met CM @sarbandandsonwal ji in Guwahati to discuss progress of POSHAN Abhiyan in Assam and deliberated on solutions to make

Assam a leading state in the fight against malnutrition among children and women," she wrote on Twitter. Irani had on Sunday met Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar to discuss the progress of 'Poshan Abhiyaan' in the state.

She met Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das on Monday and reviewed various ongoing projects of the ministry in the state.

Gogoi calls for setting up of National Rhino Conservation Authority

GUWAHATI, JUN 11 (PTI): Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi on Tuesday called for the establishment of a National Rhino Conservation Authority for the protection and conservation of the species.

Gogoi in a letter to Union Minister for Environment and Forests Prakash Javadar expressed concern over the lack of a Central authority to deal with protection and conservation measures for rhinos. "My home state Assam is home to more than 90 per cent of the country's rhino population, out of which 70 per cent reside at Kaziranga which lies within my constituency of Kailabor," he said.

There is an urgent need for the establishment of a National Rhino Conservation Authority, which would be modeled along the lines of the existing programme for tigers - the Project



Tiger under the National Tiger Conservation Authority, he said. "It is imperative that a Centrally sponsored scheme in a similar manner is put in place with a Central authority that would have exclusive powers for the protection, conservation, and management of rhinos in the country and safeguard the boundaries of national parks and sanctuaries," the MP said.

It is apparent that the extent of the threat to these species is high and the government must step up to provide protection to them, Gogoi added.

APDCL pays compensation to family of man who died of electrocution



GUWAHATI, JUN 11 (PTI): Assam Power Distribution Corporation Limited (APDCL) has handed over a compensation of Rs 2.5 lakh to the wife of a man who died of electrocution in Dhemaji district after Assam Human Rights Commission took suo moto cognizance of the matter.

The commission had taken cognizance of the incident following a news item published in a local daily on July 18, 2017 which reported that Anidhar Saikia of Narauthan Balijan

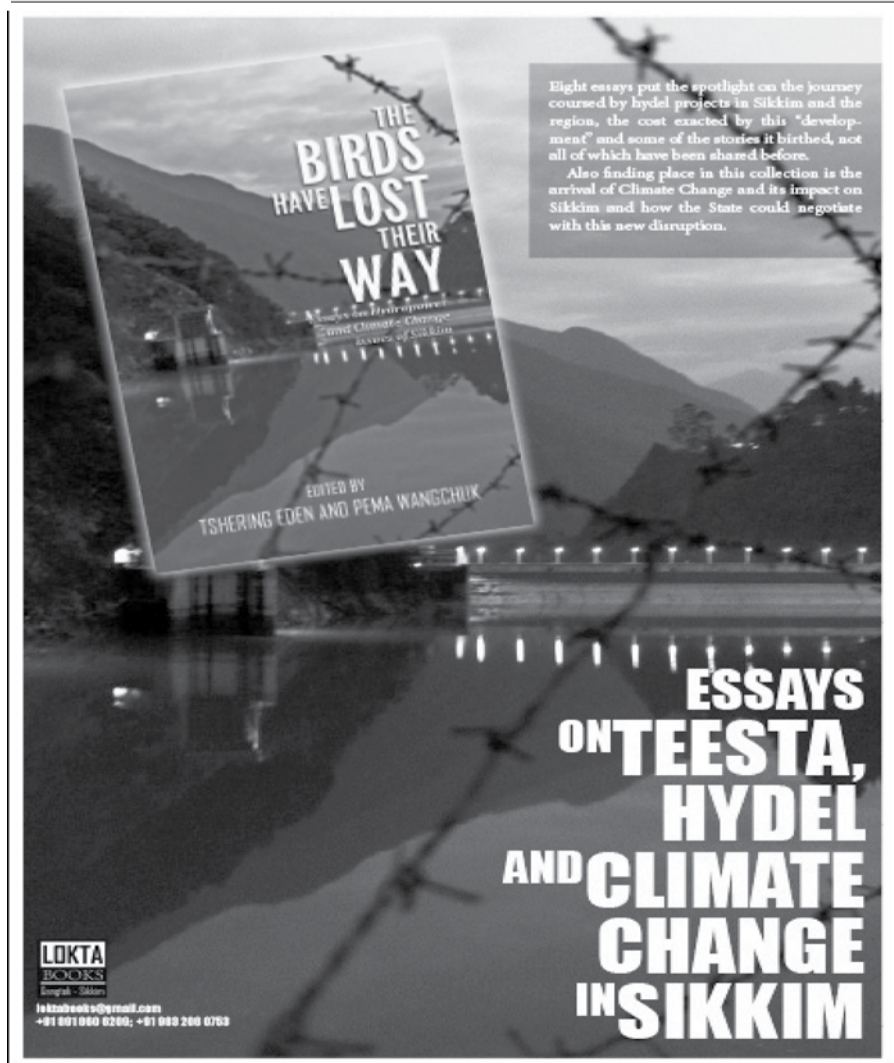
Gaon in Dhemaji district was electrocuted while climbing a tree and he later succumbed to his injuries, an AHRC release said on Tuesday.

The AHRC issued notice to the managing director of APDCL to conduct an inquiry into the circumstances leading to Saikia's death, it said.

The enquiry which was carried out by the Electrical Inspector, Tezpur Zone, was of the tentative opinion that the APDCL was guilty of contravening the Cen-

tral Electricity Authority's measures relating to Safety and Electric Supply regulations, 2010 as amended in 2015 which led to the death of Saikia.

The deputy general manager of the APDCL offered to pay a compensation of Rs 2.5 lakh and the cheque was handed over to Saikia's widow Pratibha Saikia on Monday in the presence of AHRC's full bench comprising Chairperson Justice T Vaiphei and members N K Bora and D K Saikia, it added.



Yuvraj deserved a better farewell: Rohit Sharma

NOTTINGHAM, JUN 11 (PTI): India opener Rohit Sharma hailed Yuvraj Singh's roller-coaster career and said the stylish southpaw deserved a better send-off after 17 years of top-flight cricket.

"You don't know what you got till its gone. Love you brotherman. You deserved a better send off," wrote the Indian vice-captain on Twitter.

Yuvraj played 40 Tests, 304 ODIs and 58 T20Is for India. He put together 1900 runs in the longest format, and 8701 in the one-dayers, the format in which he enjoyed most success. His one-day runs tally places him 22nd in the overall list, and seventh among Indians.

He is among the Indian greats who did not get a farewell game after contemporaries Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid, VVS Laxman and Gautam Gambhir.

After he announced his retirement in Mumbai on Monday, Yuvraj revealed that he was promised a farewell game by the BCCI provided he failed the 'Yo Yo' fitness test. However, he passed it and the swansong never happened.

The 37-year-old last played for India in June 2017. Former captain Sourav Ganguly, under whom Yuvraj enjoyed plenty of success, wrote on the social networking site, "Dear Yuv .. every good thing comes to an end .. I tell u this was a marvellous thing..u were like my brother very dear.. and now after u finish even dearer.. the entire country will be proud of u . Love u lots.. fantastic career.

Zardari produced before court, anti-graft body seeks physical remand

ISLAMABAD, JUN 11 (PTI): Pakistan's former president Asif Ali Zardari was produced before an accountability court here on Tuesday by the anti-graft body seeking his physical remand, a day after he was arrested from his residence in the fake bank accounts case.

A team of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) accompanied by police, including female officials, arrested the Pakistan Peoples Party co-chairman hours after the Islamabad High Court rejected his bail plea. Prior to his arrival at the court on Tuesday, a three-member team of doctors conducted a medical examination of the former president. According to the NAB sources, Zardari was found to be fit for physical remand.

Zardari, 63, and his sister are two of the main accused in the money laundering scandal which utilised fake bank accounts to channel illegally gained funds out of Pakistan. According to the NAB officials, the duo made transactions of Rs 150 million through alleged fake bank accounts.

Hopeful Messi keen to end Argentina title drought

RIO DE JANEIRO, JUNE 11 (AFP): With Neymar sidelined by an ankle injury, Lionel Messi heads into the Copa America this weekend as the competition's main attraction but one with a desperate need to end more than a decade of hurt with Argentina. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner has one of the most impressive trophy hauls in football history but there is a glaring void when it comes to national team accolades. Four Champions League crowns and 10 La Liga titles with Barcelona are not matched by Argentina success.

And the 31-year-old knows he's running out of time to rectify that anomaly. "I want to end my career having won something with the national team, or at least try to do so as many times as possible," he told Fox Sports last week.

Four finals played with Argentina, four defeats, including the last two Copa finals on penalties against Chile.

But the most painful was the 2014 World Cup final to Germany at the iconic Maracana, where Messi will hope to return on July 7 for the Copa



title decider. That Germany defeat began a run of losing finals in three successive years and after the last of those, a bitterly disappointed Messi announced his international retirement.

He and his teammates came in for a torrent of abuse and criticism. "People were attacking us from every side," he said.

His retirement lasted

just six weeks, though, and it was his hat-trick in Argentina's final qualifier that secured a 3-1 win in Ecuador that sent the team to the World Cup in Russia last year.

But, as so many times before, Messi was unable to recapture his Barca form while on international duty and dejection followed as the albiceleste were sent home in the second round after

a 4-3 defeat to eventual winners France.

But while Messi then missed Argentina's next six matches -- all friendlies -- there was no talk of retirement this time.

His son Thiago "loves it when I play for the national team," Messi told Fox.

But the disappointments have kept piling up despite a 10th La Liga crown secured in May.

- 'BEAUTIFUL CUP' -

Messi had made no secret at the start of the season that winning the Champions League for the fifth time was his priority as he wanted to bring that "beautiful cup back to Camp Nou".

Things looked so good as Barca took a 3-0 advantage to Anfield for the semi-final second leg last month.

What happened next

-- an inspired Liverpool stormed to a 4-0 victory and 4-3 aggregate success -- left as bitter a taste in Messi's mouth as had the Germany loss five years ago.

"To lose a final of the World Cup is the most important of all, it is a big disappointment," he said in May.

But he admitted that the Liverpool loss felt a bit worse "because we

were winning and we didn't expect them to come back". Messi has long been talisman for club and country but he will be even more so in Brazil with a rejuvenated squad full of inexperienced campaigners.

But that hasn't dampened expectation either within the group or the country as a whole.

"We're going there with the same hope and desire as ever. Argentina is going through a process of change with young and new lads," he told TyC Sports last week. "For most of them it's their first official tournament, but that won't stop Argentina trying to win the competition," he added. It's 26 years since Argentina last won the Copa America, despite contesting four of the last five finals.

"It's been a long time since Argentina won it and we all want to celebrate again, us and the fans want a title."

None more so than Messi himself, who turns 32 on June 24, the day after Argentina's final group B game against invitees and 2024 World Cup hosts Qatar, the reigning Asian champions.

Dhawan sustains thumb fracture, Cup future hangs in balance

KUSHAN SARKAR

NOTTINGHAM, JUN 11 (PTI): In-form senior India opener Shikhar Dhawan was Tuesday ruled out of at least two World Cup matches after his left thumb was found to have a hairline fracture, dealing a major blow to one of the top title contenders at the showpiece.

The team management was tight-lipped on a possible replacement, which may not even be called if the hairline fracture heals within two weeks.

Dhawan will, however, miss the game against New Zealand on Thursday and the marquee clash against Pakistan on Sunday, a BCCI source told PTI.

It remains to be seen if he regains fitness for the match against Afghanistan on June 22.

Dhawan was the hero of India's win over Australia on Sunday with a knock of 117 off 109 balls.

He played through pain after being hit on his left thumb by a rising delivery from pacer Nathan Coulter-Nile. He didn't take the field due to the injury during the



clash and Ravindra Jadeja fielded in his place for the entire 50 overs. He underwent scans here in which the fracture came to light.

Dhawan along with physio Patrick Farhart, are currently in Leeds for consultation with specialists, an hour's drive from Manchester.

The team management and the selectors will decide if a replacement needs to be summoned as they are hoping for his complete recovery for the business end of the tournament.

Since India play Afghanistan on June 22 in Southampton, which is six days after the Pakistan game in Manchester

on June 16, Dhawan will get at least 11 days time to recover.

Even if Dhawan misses the Afghanistan game, the next match against West Indies in Manchester is on June 27, which gives him another six days' time to recover.

The team management is thinking about taking a chance that will allow him to recover for the last two league games (against Bangladesh on July 2 and Sri Lanka on July 6) before gearing for a semi-final where India are certain to feature.

It has been learnt that the tem management is not too keen on a replacement right now unless the doctors rule

him out for more than a month. The Indian team has KL Rahul, a specialist opener who can join Rohit Sharma at the top of the order.

In that case, one among Vijay Shankar or Dinesh Karthik will come in the middle-order for the next two games. Rishabh Pant and Ambati Rayudu are on BCCI's official stand-by list but Mumbai batsman Shreyas Iyer's name is also doing the rounds as he is a specialist No.4 batsman.

The ICC doesn't have any specific stand-by list as such and anyone could replace a current player based on approval from the event technical committee.

Kohli calming fans who booed Smith was class act: Steve Waugh

LONDON, JUN 11 (PTI): Former Australian captain Steve Waugh has lauded Indian skipper Virat Kohli for "calming down" the crowd which booed Steve Smith in their World Cup clash in London, calling the gesture a "class act".

Waugh, one of the toughest and most successful captains of all time, said he was impressed by Kohli's action of asking the crowd to not boo Smith, who is continuing to cope the fansire after returning from a one-year ban for

ball-tampering.

"Leadership reveals itself in many forms but I thought Virat Kohli's gesture in calming down the rough reception given to Steve Smith from the Indian spectators was a class act that calmed a volatile situation," Waugh, who led Australia to World Cup title in 1999, wrote for the ICC.

During the clash with India here on Sunday, which Australia lost by 36 runs, the Indian fans booed Smith and chanted "cheater, cheater" when the defending

champions were fielding. Kohli urged them to calm down and instead cheer his batting.

"I just felt for him, and I told him, 'I'm sorry on behalf of the crowd because I have seen that happen in a few earlier games as well'. In my opinion, that's not acceptable," the Indian captain had said in the post-match press conference.

Waugh said India's 36-run victory in the high-pressure World Cup clash will provide them with enormous confi-

dence as they move forward in this tournament.

"India against Australia was always going to be a highly charged encounter between two teams that have met on numerous occasions over the past 12 months. This rivalry has revealed no clear dominance by either," he wrote.

"India's batting display was both measured and calculated with their plan clear and well executed. Their plan is to lay a foundation by not losing wickets and they stuck to it.

Amir aims for another Taunton triumph as Australia await

TAUNTON, JUN 11 (AFP): Mohammad Amir will hope to enjoy another landmark occasion at Taunton when Pakistan face Australia there in a World Cup match on Wednesday.

The group fixture at southwest county Somerset's headquarters sees Amir back at the ground where he made his return to first-class cricket in England three years ago.

Amir was the rising star of world cricket when his career came to a stunning halt during a Lord's Test in 2010 after both he and new-ball partner Mohamed Asif were caught bowling no-balls on the orders of then Pakistan captain Salman Butt as part of a newspaper sting operation. The trio all received five-year bans from cricket and jail terms.

That same 2010 season had seen Amir produce a superb display of swing bowling in taking three for 20 as Pakistan dismissed Australia for just 88 on the first day of a 'neutral' Test at Headingley. Those skills remained intact as Amir marked his 2016 return to the first-class game in England in 2016 with a haul of three for 36 against Somerset at Taunton.

All three wickets -- including that of former England opener Marcus Trescothick -- owed much to late swing. The intervening years have not been easy for Amir, however, and he almost missed what is his first World Cup after taking just five wickets in 14 matches before a recent one-day international series in England. Amir did not bowl in the washed-out first match against England and missed the last four games with chicken pox. England won the series 4-0.

But having been left out of Pakistan's preliminary squad for the World Cup, the 27-year-old made it into the final 15. His World Cup debut was a rare Pakistan highlight after they slumped to 105 all out against the West Indies, with Amir taking three for 26 in a seven-wicket loss at Trent Bridge. He was in the wickets again at the Nottingham ground, but this time in a winning cause, with two for 67 as Pakistan surprisingly beat tournament favourites England by 14 runs last week. But Pakistan's progress was checked by a total washout against Sri Lanka at Bristol.



- 'AGGRESSIVE APPROACH' -

Pakistan have won just one of their last 14 matches against champions Australia, the five-times World Cup winners. That victory was inspired by Mohammad Hafeez's 72 at Melbourne in January 2017.

And it was Hafeez's 84 that laid the foundations for an impressive total of 348 for eight against England. "We have not won many matches against Australia but we had not won too many against England either," said Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed. "But we have finally beaten England and that has given us a lot of positives. "We will go with the aggressive approach we showed

against England." The wicket-keeper expects to face an Australia side stung by a 36-run loss to India last weekend -- their first defeat of this World Cup following wins over Afghanistan and the West Indies.

"We know Australia will try to come back and with (Steve) Smith and (David) Warner back they are at their best again," said Sarfaraz.

"We respect all our opponents and are ready for them."

- WARNER WORRY -

Australia will hope opener Warner, for all he has already scored two fifties this World Cup, is back to his destructive best at Taunton.

Warner's 56 off 84 balls against India -- of which 48 were dots -- helped contribute to a slow run-rate that left Australia with too much to do at the end of their innings. The left-hander was also involved in the run-out of Australia captain and opening partner Aaron Finch.

But Finch backed Warner, who along with Smith is playing in his first major tournament for Australia since serving a year-long ban for ball-tampering.

"They (India) bowled very well to Warner and he needs some more time. He's a world-class player and will get us off to a flyer," said Finch.

China going to make trade deal with US: Trump

BY LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, JUN 11 (PTI): US President Donald Trump said China will be left with no other option but to enter into a trade deal with the United States because his increased tariffs on Chinese products is having an impact on its economy.

"The China deal is going to work out. You know why, because of tariffs, because right now China is getting absolutely decimated by companies that are leaving China going to other countries, including our own, because they don't want to pay the tariffs," Trump told CBS news in an interview.

In recent months, Trump has imposed additional tariffs on Chinese products worth USD 200 billion and he has ordered for another round of tariffs on rest of the Chinese imports amounting to USD 300 billion.

"And China will, in my opinion, based on a lot of



facts and a lot of knowledge, China is going to make a deal because they're going to have to make a deal," he said.

"China will subsidise their product because they want to keep people working. So China is going to pay a lot. We have put 25 percent on USD 250 billion of Chinese goods coming into our country, including USD50 billion of high-tech-

nology equipment and things," he said.

"You haven't seen any or virtually any price increase because what China does basically their companies--they subsidize their companies because they want to keep people working. They want to stay competitive. We have another USD300 billion to go with China," he said.

"I haven't done that

because it's a very big thing for them, not for us. For us it's not going to matter because we'll be able to buy the product in other countries that don't have the tariffs. So it's not going to have an effect, said the US president.

Later in the day, Trump told reporters that he will meet Chinese President Xi Jinping in Japan later this month on the sidelines of the G-20

Summit. Some reports say that Xi might skip the G-20 summit.

I think President Xi of China -- great relationship with him -- I think he'll be there. We are scheduled to talk and to meet. I think interesting things will happen. Let's see what happens, he said in response to a question.

Right now, we're getting 25 percent on USD250 billion worth of goods. That's a lot of money that's pouring into our Treasury. We've never gotten 10 cents from China. Now we're getting a lot of money from China. I think that's one of the reasons that GDP was so high in the first quarter, because of the tariffs that we've taken in from China, he said.

We always have the option to raise it another USD300 billion at 25 percent. And the 25 percent could be much higher than 25 percent, he asserted.

Indian peacekeepers in Congo garner appreciation for their professionalism

BY YOSHITA SINGH

UNITED NATIONS, JUN 10 (PTI): Indian peacekeepers serving with the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo have garnered appreciation for their high standard of professionalism and humane approach, with the deployment of the first team of Indian female peacekeepers now promising to serve as an inspiration to women of the Central African nation.

India is the second largest troop contributor to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), with 2,624 peacekeepers and 274 police personnel deployed as of March 2019.

"The image of Indian peacekeepers in Congo is that of a highly competent, humane force that is very very professional. The Indian peacekeepers have been supporting our Congolese friends to have sustainable peace," a high-level Indian military officer deployed with the mission told PTI in a Skype interview.

The senior officer's identity has not been revealed as required by authorities in India's Defense Ministry.

The officer added that as one of the founding members of the UN, India's contribution to maintaining international peace and security has been second to none and DRC is no exception.

India was one of the first countries to send its peacekeeping troops in Congo in 1960 as violence started in the country and till date 68 of its soldiers have made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty in Congo.

"Beginning in 1960s, our contribution till date has not only been very very substantial but also very vital for the unification of Congo. All our humanitarian efforts and professionalism have drawn acclaim and respect locally as well as internationally," he said of the role and contribu-

tion of the Indian peacekeeping contingent.

The officer stressed that till the time the Indian contingent is there, its role and effort will be to ensure that minimum number, and if possible none at all, human rights violations take place. We will try and ensure that peace prevails in the country, the officer said.

The Indian contingent also welcomed earlier this month the first set of 22 women peacekeepers from India, who began their induction into the mission June 5 as part of a contingent rotation. "Women in the UN are present in all spectrum of activities, in military, police and civil. They have a very important role to play as far as societies that are plagued by these kinds of situations. Women in any field, especially in field missions are seen as role models by the local women here, the officer said adding that women peacekeepers inspire women of the countries where they are deployed in contributing in the peace and security of the country.

A young lady officer in the Indian contingent also underscored the critical role that women play in peacekeeping missions, through their expertise and also by being seen as role models for the women in local communities.

"Women broaden the skills available on the ground. Women of the host country are empowered by the presence of women who are in peacekeeping operations. Young girls and women see us as role models. They can push for their rights in a male-dominated society and be a greater part of the peace process," she said.

As the first Indian female engagement team arrived in Congo, the young lady officer described it as a big achievement and said a gender-balanced leadership is what will sow seeds of a peaceful soci-

ety in Congo.

Emphasizing that peace is the pivot, she expressed hope that DRC goes on the path of economic development for a peaceful future for its children.

The high-level Indian military officer stressed that the Indian contingent and other peacekeepers in Congo are focussed on fulfilling the mandate of protection of civilians. "We have taken certain steps that include revival of local protection committees in far flung areas where it is slightly time consuming for us to react. The local communities have to have a stake in their own security, he said.

With the Indian brigade required to govern a huge area of approximately 5 lakh sq km, the officer said challenges in covering almost 26 per cent of the entire DRC includes road connectivity, communication infrastructure as well as dealing with the myriad armed groups.

Of the total 121 armed groups active in DRC, 34 fall under the Indian contingent's area of responsibility. "Inter-armed group clashes leading to human rights violations also pose significant challenges, which the peacekeepers have to address, he said.

Further, with the Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo now in its 11th month and the number of new cases increasing in recent weeks, the officer voiced concern over the violence targeting the Ebola response team and said providing a sense of security to the teams is a big challenge. The Indian contingent is working with help of the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) to tackle these challenges.

The Indian officer stressed that peacekeepers need to have a very clear understanding of the nature of conflict wherever they are deployed.

Watergate figure Dean details Trump-Nixon parallels

WASHINGTON, JUN 11 (AFP): John Dean, the White House lawyer who helped bring about the Watergate downfall of Richard Nixon, has told Congress that there are "remarkable" similarities between the former president's illegal behaviour and alleged acts of obstruction by Donald Trump.

Dean told the House Judiciary Committee on Monday that the Mueller report, which outlines 10 possible acts of obstruction by Trump, is equivalent to the famous "road map" that prosecutor Leon Jaworski delivered to Congress in 1974, sparking impeachment proceedings against Nixon and forcing his resignation.

"In many ways the Mueller Report is to President Trump what the so-called Watergate roadmap... was to President Richard Nixon," the 80-year-old Dean told the House Judiciary Committee.

There were "remarkable parallels" between the two, especially related to obstruction of justice, said Dean, who as Nixon's White House counsel was deeply involved in illegal efforts to stifle the Watergate probe.

One of those parallels, Dean noted, was the primary role in Trump's alleged obstruction efforts of former White



House counsel Don McGahn, a main source for the Mueller investigation. McGahn, who has been prevented by the White House from testifying to Congress, "is the most prominent fact witness regarding obstruction of justice cited in the Mueller Report," Dean said as he himself was 46 years ago. Dean's testimony came as congressional Democrats debate impeaching Trump for his interference in the special prosecutor Robert Mueller's Russia meddling investigation.

It sparked an angry attack from Trump, who has struggled in vain to put the Mueller probe behind him.

On Twitter he called Dean a "sleazebag attorney" in a Democratic effort to "redo" the probe.

"Can't believe they are bringing in John Dean, the disgraced Nixon White House Counsel who is a paid CNN con-

tributor. No Collusion - No Obstruction! Democrats just want a do-over which they'll never get!" Trump tweeted.

Trump told journalists separately that Dean has "been a loser for many years." Asked if he thought he could be forced to step down like Nixon, Trump replied: "I don't leave." "You can't impeach somebody when there's never been a thing done wrong," he added. Dean was the top lawyer for the Nixon's White House in 1972 when the president sought his help to cover up his staff's involvement in the break-in of Democratic offices at the Watergate complex.

Facing criminal prosecution, Dean turned against Nixon, laying out his own work with the president to hide their ties to Watergate.

He was sentenced to one to four years in prison, but was freed af-

ter four months, during which he gave evidence against other key Watergate conspirators.

In recent years he has been a commentator on politics for CNN. Republicans on the committee accused Democrats of putting on the hearing which included three other witnesses for show, as none of those testifying had any direct knowledge of the Mueller investigation or Trump's actions. Representative Matt Gaetz accused Dean of making a career out of his Watergate history.

"Mr Dean has made a cottage industry out of accusing presidents of acting like Richard Nixon," he said.

Calling the hearing a "frivolous exercise of going after the president," he challenged Democrats: "You guys need to get your act together and figure out if you are going to open an impeachment inquiry or not.

Saudi downs two attack drones from Yemen: coalition

RIYADH, JUN 11 (AFP): Saudi air defence forces intercepted two drones launched by Huthi rebels from neighbouring Yemen, state media reported Tuesday, as the Iran-aligned militia steps up attacks on the kingdom.

The drones targeted Khamis Mushait in the kingdom's south on Monday and caused no damage or casualties, the Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen said in a brief statement released by the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

The rebels said earlier via their news outlet Al-Masirah that they had targeted the King Khalid air-base near Khamis Mushait.

The attacks come as SPA reported the coalition was intensifying air raids on Huthi positions in the northern Yemeni province of Hajjah.

The rebels have stepped up drone and missile attacks on the kingdom amid tensions between Shiite power Iran and the United States, Saudi Arabia's main ally.

Last month, the Saudi air force shot down a bomb-laden drone deployed by Huthi rebels that targeted Jizan airport, close to the southern border with Yemen, the coalition said.

The airport is used by thousands of civilians every day, but

the coalition reported no casualties and warned the rebels of a strong response.

The Saudi-led coalition intervened in Yemen in March 2015 to push back an advance by the Huthi rebels, who still hold the capital Sanaa, and to restore to power President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. Since then, the conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, many of them civilians, relief agencies say.

It has triggered what the UN describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with 24.1 million -- more than two-thirds of the population -- in need of aid.





SPAIN SIGHTING! KThe actress, Jessica Alba is trendy in a striped skirt and cropped button-down during a photocall for LA's Finest in Madrid.

Sam Rockwell to join 'The Ballad of Richard Jewell'

LOS ANGELES, JUN 11 (PTI): Academy Award winning actor Sam Rockwell is in talks to star in Clint Eastwood's upcoming drama "The Ballad of Richard Jewell".

According to Variety, Rockwell will essay the role of a Defense Attorney in the film.



Eastwood is also producing through his Malpaso production banner.

The film is based on a real-life security guard whose world turned upside down after law enforcement leaked to an overenthusiastic reporter at the Atlanta Journal Constitution that Jewell was a possible suspect for the pipe-bombing at Centennial Park during the

1996 Atlanta Olympics.

From that moment on, Jewell went from a hero, who discovered the suspicious abandoned backpack and saved hundreds of lives, to one of the most hated men in the US.

"As law enforcement asserted Jewell planted the bomb himself and then "found" it to make himself a hero. Jewell maintained his innocence throughout and was finally fully cleared by the FBI 88 days later, though his reputation was never restored. While Jewell eventually became a police officer, he died of heart failure a few years later at the age of 44," the plot synopsis read.

Rockwell will play the attorney who defends Jewell after he is wrongly accused.

Casting for the role of Jewell has not been announced yet.

Jonah Hill and DiCaprio were originally attached to star, but they will no longer feature in the film. Their involvement will be limited to producing the project.

Billy Ray is writing the script, which is based on a Marie Brenner article in Vanity Fair.

Dhanush Explains Why Actors 'Cannot Afford To Snooze'

Dhanush has been in the industry for nearly 17 years and though he has an extremely successful career with a huge fan following, the actor says he would not be able to survive if he starts taking it for granted. Dhanush, who has headlined several blockbusters in South and made a successful Bollywood debut with Raanjhanaa, says an actor is always striving to give what the audience wants. "You'll get kicked in your face. You cannot afford to snooze, not even a bit. You have to be updated, on your toes, always thinking what to do, what people want. That's the million dollar question: what people want from your films and you. If only you can master that, things would be easier and simpler," Dhanush said in a group interview.

The 35-year-old actor believes as an artiste it is important to work hard as there are many talented people who can replace the one who is lazy. "It's very difficult to understand how people want different things at different times and you have to work really hard on yourself, your films. You cannot afford to be lazy. There are always so many better talents out there to replace you," he said.

Contrary to common perception, Dhanush says, even a star cannot get away with a bad film and has to constantly adapt to the changing times. "I don't think stars ever got away with a bad film. A star can give you an opening but that's it. If your film isn't good then... A

star is as good as the film, as the script. Content has always been the king. "The taste has changed, perception of quality has changed but that doesn't mean they ever accepted a film just because it has a big star," he added.

The actor is currently gearing up for the release of his first international project The Extraordinary Journey of the Fakir. The adventure film is directed by Ken Scott and is based on Romain Puertolas' novel The Extraordinary Journey of the Fakir Who Got Trapped in an Ikea Wardrobe.

Dhanush said he took the film as an opportunity to get out of his comfort zone. "I was looking forward to learn and unlearn, understand how things work there. I took this as a great opportunity to explore more. I am not very fluent with the language and that was the only tiny block I had in mind. Other than that, there was no pressure."

There has always been an interest with regards to when will the actor return to Bollywood - his last project was Shamitabh (2015) - and Dhanush says he has finalised something. "It wasn't that I took a break (from Bollywood). I take it as it comes. When I find a good script, I don't see which language it is in. So it's not as if I've never found any good script here. Probably I wasn't lucky enough, it went to a better actor, other actors... So many things have to fall in place. But I can tell you confidently I'm doing something very soon," he said.

The Extraordinary Journey of the Fakir is slated to be released on June 21.



'Love, Death and Robots' renewed for season 2

LOS ANGELES, JUN 11 (PTI): Netflix has renewed "Love, Death and Robots" for a second season.

The streaming platform made the announcement on its See What's Next Twitter page and also revealed that Jennifer Yuh Nelson has joined the series as supervising director, overseeing all episodes.

She previously directed multiple episodes of "Spawn", "Kung Fu Panda 2" and "Kung Fu Panda 3", and the live-action feature "The Darkest Minds".

The first season of "Love, Death and Robots" was a collection of animated short stories spanning several genres, including science fiction, fantasy, horror and comedy.

Each episode ran from six to seventeen minutes in length and hailed from different writers, directors, and animation studios.

"Love, Death and Robots" is executive produced by David Fincher, Tim Miller, Jennifer Miller and Josh Donen.

Geena Davis to join 'GLOW' season 3



LOS ANGELES, JUN 11 (PTI): Actor Geena Davis will be guest starring in the third season of Netflix's comedy series "GLOW".

The Academy Award winning actor will portray Sandy Devereaux St Clair, a former showgirl turned entertainment director of the Fan-Tan Hotel and Casino.

"Viva Las Vegas! Season 3 glows up with newest cast member, Geena Davis," a tweet on the show's official twitter handle read.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the 63-year-old actor will guest star in five of the 10 episodes of the season three of Netflix's female wrestling comedy, premiering on August 9.

The series, created by Liz Flahive and Carly Mensch features Alison Brie as Ruth "Zoya the Destroya" Wilder and Betty Gilpin as Debbie "Liberty Belle" Eagan.

"GLOW" which stands for 'Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling' is inspired by the syndicated women's professional wrestling circuit of the same name, founded by David McLane in 1986.

The first two seasons are set in 1985 Hollywood. But the second season finale put the 15 wrestlers led by Brie and Gilpin on a bus headed out of Hollywood after their wrestling show-within-a-show was cancelled.

The third season will open in Vegas.

John Abraham, Emraan Hashmi in Sanjay Gupta's next gangster drama

MUMBAI, JUN 11 (PTI): Actors John Abraham and Emraan Hashmi have been locked to feature in filmmaker Sanjay Gupta's upcoming gangster drama.

The film is set in the 1980s and 1990s and in a fictionalised manner revolves around the key events that turned Bombay to Mumbai.

According to a press release, the untitled drama will chronicle the closing of mills, the murder of a key businessman, the nexus between politicians, cops, the

underworld and the business fraternity of the city.

"It's my third outing with John and I'm super excited to work with Emraan, I have always wanted to work with him and I am back to my base of filmmaking, gangster dramas and all I can say is...It's good to be home," Gupta said in a statement.

The film, scheduled to go on floors next month, is produced by Gupta's White Feather Films and Bhushan Kumar's T Series.

Esha Deol, Bharat Takhtani welcome second child together



MUMBAI, JUN 11 (PTI): Actor Esha Deol and her husband, businessman Bharat Takhtani, are blessed with a baby girl, their second child together.

The couple welcomed their daughter on June 10. They are already parents to daughter Radhya, who was born on October 23, 2017.

"Welcome to our tribe

Miraya Takhtani. Born on June 10, 2019. Gratitude to the divine," Esha posted on Instagram.

She also shared a photo of Radhya and wrote, "I'm being promoted to big sister."

Esha, daughter of veteran actors Dharmendra and Hema Malini, and Bharat tied the knot in June 2012.

ARIES: Opinions, opinions! Under today's frustrating face-off between the Sun and Jupiter, people may confuse their POVs with empirical facts. And get ready for some spirited debates! Sure, you could learn something fascinating from a wise soul. Then there are people who seem immune to logic and proof. Don't get caught up in senseless arguments with know-it-alls...or trolls!

TAURUS: You're sexy and you know it, Taurus, but try not to lose your cool because some wildly flattering attention is coming your way. Today, as the Sun faces off with Jupiter in your intense eighth house, those live-for-the-moment adventures can lead you down an obsessive rabbit hole. Although you're turned on and lit up, try to hold out for lasting value in all partnerships.

GEMINI: Under today's stars, you're more naughty than nice, so unleash your mischievous side. Let your hair down and allow your inner bad girl/guy to come out to play. Get yourself glammed up for a night on the town, or inject some spice into your day by sending

the object of your affections a suggestive message or photo.

CANCER: Today, people's expectations (and soon, their demands!) might balloon out of proportion. Here's the rub: This whole situation might be your "fault." With the Sun and supersizer Jupiter working at cross-purposes, your ego could be out to prove something, leading you to take on responsibilities that are above your pay grade. Don't get swept up in the competitive vibes: As it's been said, pride goeth before a fall.

LEO: The world's your oyster as quicksilver Mercury makes a global entry into your ninth house of travel and adventure until May 6, sparking your wanderlust. Grab your car keys—or passport—and enjoy a spur-of-the-moment getaway. If you can't get out of Dodge on such short notice, consider this your long-lead nudge to start planning your late-spring or summer vacay NOW.

LIBRA: Body language isn't just a dialect spoken by a few—it's the universal language of love! And today, your cosmic ruler, sil-

ver-tongued Mercury, flits into your sultry, seductive erotic eighth house until May 6, inviting you to flirt with abandon. It's a time to let your desires be known, directly or with more secretive subtlety.

VIRGO: Even someone with superhuman powers couldn't keep up with everything you've got piled on your plate, Virgo. Compromise is mandatory if you hope to maintain some semblance of sanity, so find ways to scale back and streamline. In order to accomplish your most important work mission today, you'll need to backburner each and every nonessential to-do on your list. Tune out those around you, and you'll cross the finish line before the end of the day. Phew.

SCORPIO: Today's emo moon brings out your empathetic side. Don't fight those feelings, Scorpio! If you feel a surge of sadness or anger in response to a friend's plight, express it! Let the tears flow and open your heart to those who mean the most to you. Go out of your way to let them know how important they are in your world. When you need a steady shoulder and a compassionate ear, they'll be there

for you with bells on.

SAGITTARIUS: Pull off that oversized cashmere sweater and slip into something more glamorous—or better yet, sexier. Today, messenger Mercury wings into your amorous, glamorous fifth house until May 6, turning you into an unabashed flirtaholic. Harboring a secret crush? It's time to act on it, Archer. Plan more playful dates over the next few weeks, whether you're single or spoken for. Think: private whisky tasting or an adventurous road trip to see Hamilton on tour. You'll be a magnet for magnets, so don't be shy about approaching the power players in any room!

CAPRICORN: Trying to make everyone happy, Capricorn? Today's stars turn that into an exercise in futility. If you've piled one too many obligations on your plate, your stress levels are liable to peak. Your best bet is to graciously bow out of a few responsibilities in the name of preserving your peace of mind. Don't worry—the people who really count will understand. And if anyone tries to send you on a guilt

trip, remember that their emotions are not your responsibility!

AQUARIUS: The more is not the merrier today if it means being upstaged by someone's off-putting swagger. Don't force yourself to include a "big personality" in your plans. You need to guard your precious group hangs from disruptive forces. Of course, with the Sun in your theatrical fifth house opposing live-out-loud Jupiter in your teamwork zone, it could be YOU who's hogging the spotlight. Bring on the witty one-liners and wildly spontaneous whims. But remember, you're gathering to connect with people, not be the entertainment!

PISCES: It's easy to overshoot the mark today as the Sun and Jupiter face off and pump up your swagger to baller levels. Your ambition is admirable, but ignoring protocol could mean stepping on the wrong person's stilettoes. At least for today, pay attention to the power pyramid and play the political game. Take time to add a personal touch to all your professional dealings