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Summit **TIMES**

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Dikchu-Mangan road in peril

WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 08 JUL:

Continuous rainfall for the past few days has damaged the foundation of Dikchu-Mangan road near Dikchu Bridge at the border of North and East Sikkim.

Some parts of the road formation were

damaged on 17 June by a swollen Teesta which also washed away the NHPC Guest House located below the bridge.

The lifeline of North Sikkim, this road is now in a dangerous condition and could collapse anytime as the reservoir below the road is continuously scouring its foundation and endangering the main foundation of the bridge.

Meanwhile, police personnel from Pheedang Check Post have been deployed at the spot to monitor the movement of the vehicles. GREF has been asked to remove the boulders stocked at the corner of the road.

Couple killed in Darjeeling landslide

DARJEELING, JUL 8 (PTI): A middle-aged couple was killed in a landslide in Darjeeling district of West Bengal early on Monday, police sources said.

According to reports, the landslide, triggered by heavy rainfall, struck the couple's brick house around 2.30 am at Pubung Fatak area of Sukhiapokhri in Darjeeling.

The victims, 60-year-

old Kumar Lopchan and his 55-year-old wife Bal Kumari Lopchan, were found buried under the debris, the sources at Darjeeling Sadar police station said.

Though the police and the fire brigade personnel managed to pull the victims out of the debris and rush them to Darjeeling district hospital, the doctors there declared them brought dead, they said.

Traffic between Ghum and Sukhiapokhri areas has come to a halt following the incident.

Work on clearing the debris is on and traffic flow is expected to resume by 6pm, a district disaster management official said, adding that Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) officiating chairman Anit Thapa inspected the site of the landslide Monday morning.

HRD Minister and Lok Sabha MP call on Union Minister



Place issue of permanent campus for SU and NIT

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 JUL:

HRDD Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha, Lok

Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba and Additional Chief Secretary HRDD, G P Upadhyaya called on Union HRD Minister, Ramesh Kr Pokhriyal in his chamber at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi, an SKM press release informs.

They apprised the Union HRD Minister re-

garding the pending issue of construction of permanent campus for Sikkim Central University and National Institute of Technology (NIT).

The Union Minister not only gave a patient hearing but also assured immediate action, the release mentions.

New state portal to be launched today

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 JUL:

The State Portal of Sikkim [www.sikkim.gov.in] and its mobile application is scheduled to be officially launched by the Chief Minister at Samman Bhawan here on 09 July, Tuesday.

The new State Portal is disabled-friendly under the website accessibility

project of the accessible India campaign and a dynamic portal wherein the contents of the Department can be managed by the respective Departments through content management system.

In addition, features such as map view of Government infrastructures, internal communication within the Department

and point-to-point video conferencing has also been incorporated.

The Chief Minister will also officially launch the Online Tax Payment System under the Motor Vehicle Division of Transport Department at the said programme in the presence of Transport Minister Sanjit Kharel and the Chief Secretary.

Call for Gen Next leader to head Cong grows louder

NEW DELHI, JUL 8 (PTI): The view that a young leader should succeed Rahul Gandhi as Congress president is fast gaining traction with the party's youth cadre battling for a Gen Next chief over the old guard.

The young brigade's preference for youth over experience got a boost when Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday asserted that a young person should be chosen as Gandhi's successor.

Though no Congress leader or worker has publicly put forward any name, party insiders said Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot and senior Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia could be front-runners for the top job in the Grand Old Party.

Pilot, 41, led the party to victory in the assembly polls as the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress chief and has a lot of grassroots experience. Scindia, 48, is also seen as a dynamic leader with mass appeal though he could not win his seat in Madhya Pradesh in the Lok Sabha election.

While Pilot and Scindia seem to be ahead of others in the young brigade, former Union minister Milind Deora could well be the dark horse, say political observers.

The focus swivelled to the young brigade on Sunday when Scindia made public his resignation

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60 vehicles stranded on Damthang Namchi road



NAMCHI, 28 JUL (IPR): Due to incessant rainfall of 07 July in the South District, major landslides were reported from in and around Namchi. As per

report, approximately 60 numbers of vehicles carrying tourists and passengers were stranded in the landslides at Damthang Namchi road stretch.

These vehicles halted at secured sites along the highway due to the continuous rainfall and possibility of fresh slides.

Additionally, at

around 1:30am on 08 July Police patrol team escorted some of the stranded vehicles to Namchi before further slides rendered evacuation of the rest of the commuters impossible.

As of today, the road from upper Jaubari, Dharey to Damthang is cleared making it convenient for commuters to reach their respective destinations. Moreover, as a humanitarian gesture some snacks were provided to the stranded people by the officials.

The South Disaster Management team along with Police personnel, Engineers, contractors and various others stakeholders mobilized manpower and machinery in clearing the debris as well as making a way for thoroughfare.

SC plea alleges pollution from Bhutan's Pasakha industrial belt; top court seek Centre's reply

NEW DELHI, JUL 8 (PTI): Pollution from Bhutan's Pasakha industrial belt has deeply affected the lives of citizens as well as flora and fauna in Alipurduar district of West Bengal, a plea said Monday in the Supreme Court which asked the Centre to file its response.

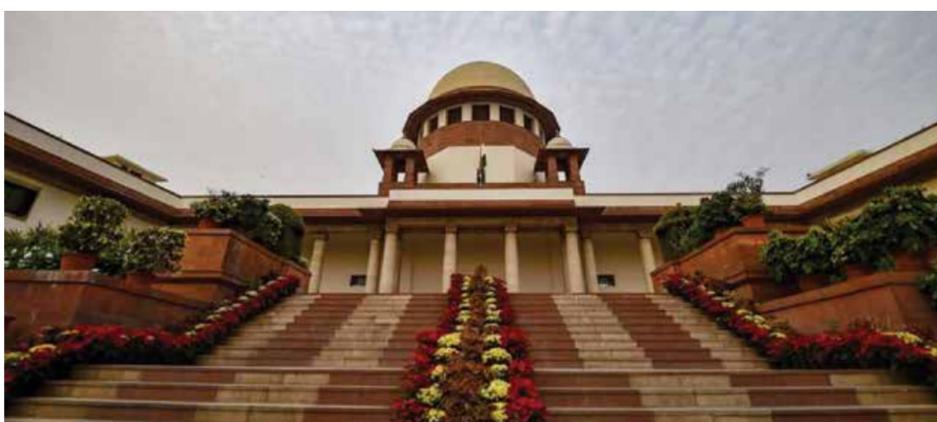
The industrial town is located near the Indian border.

A bench comprising Justices S A Bobde and B R Gavai also issued notices to the Ministry of External Affairs, the West Bengal government, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), West Bengal State Pollution Con-

trol Board and Municipal corporation of Alipurduar seeking their replies on the plea.

The plea, filed by NGO Cooch Behar Himalayan Nature Development Society, has alleged that Pasakha industrial belt of Bhutan was established in 1991 and ever since, the residents of Alipurduar districts have been living under "environmentally hazardous conditions".

Advocate Sukriti Kashyap, appearing for the petitioner, told the bench that pollution has also affected the tea estate workers in the area. The plea said that



Alipurduar is geographically located at the India-Bhutan border and not only the inhabitants but wildlife of Jaldapara

wildlife sanctuary and Buxa Tiger Reserve are also "adversely affected" due to the polluted water body in the area.

It claimed that the Centre and authorities concerned have "completely failed to take any proactive step" to initiate

any consultation or de-liberation with Government of Bhutan on the issue of pollution originating from Pasakha in-

dustrial belt.

"The three rivers, Bhalu Jora, Singhi Jora and Basra originate from the Himalayas of Bhutan and flow into the Indian terrain to form Kaljani river. Kaljani river is highly contaminated with industrial effluent and untreated waste generated from Pasakha, so much so that it has deeply affected the lives of the inhabitants of Alipurduar with various skin diseases and respiratory disorders," it said.

It claimed that industrially polluted water of Kaljani river is also used for irrigation in Rangamati

turn to pg02

Lingdok boy Kaushal takes travelling seriously

REBYNA RANA

GANGTOK, 08 JUL:

"Travelling and adventures are my passion. Travelling makes me modest and gives me a different perspective of the world. We meet new people and become friends along the way," says traveller and adventurer, Kaushal Neopany while speaking to SummitTIMES. Kaushal hails from Lingdok, East Sikkim.

Kaushal, who is 26 years old, has been travelling and "adventuring" for 7 years. He has hiked through the famous trails of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. Some of his adventures include; the Everest Base camp trek, the Annapurna Base camp trek, Dhaulagiri Base camp trek, Dzongri Goechala trek, Sandhakpu Phaluk base trek, and the famous Tiger's Nest Parotaksang hike in Bhutan. He has also been an avid mountain biker for around three years and feels lucky to have visited



plenty of beautiful places in Sikkim on his bike. Some of them include Lachung, Yumthang, Dzongu, Okhrey, Kabi, Lingdok and Rangpo.

"I have this tendency to take my bike to unexplored places of Sikkim,

pitch my tent and stay there overnight," says Kaushal who rides a Scott Aspect 750, hard tail bike.

"There are many hidden treasurers in Sikkim, some of which locals are unaware of. I go to these places and promote them

by making adventure/lifestyle videos and uploading them on my YouTube channel," he shares.

Kaushal has always been interested in adventure and travelling, ever since he was a child.

"I still remember back in the day when my Sunday school would get over and I would gather some friends, collect some money and make our way to the riverside. As years passed, this turned into my hobby and it later turned into my passion," he informs.

Kaushal graduated from Delhi University and did his Masters in International Relations. He then started working for about a year and managed to save enough to fund his own ventures. In future, he plans on furthering a career in tours and travels which focuses on camping and biking in the least explored, raw, unseen places of Sikkim, thereby making his small contribution to the state.

'Neighbour' blocking foreign funds for Arunachal flood protection schemes: Khandu

ITANAGAR, JUL 8 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu Monday claimed the proposed funding by international agencies for flood protection measures in the border state was being withdrawn due to objections raised by a "neighbour", an apparent reference to China.

An alternative funding mechanism has been sought from the Centre to mitigate the sufferings of the people affected by flood, he said in the assembly.

"The state government has appraised the Centre on the issue of non-availability of foreign funding to the state for flood protection measures due to intervention by a neighbour," the chief minister said. Although Khandu did not take China's name, the reference was obvious as Arunachal Pradesh shares a 1,080-km long border with China which has refused to recognise India's claim on the region.

New Delhi has consistently maintained that the state is an "integral" and "inalienable" part of India. Khandu did not cite any specific instance of foreign funding getting blocked, but official sources said proposals by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for flood protection projects were withdrawn following objections raised by China during the past several years.

Responding to a question raised during the Question Hour by Ninong Ering of the Congress, he said the state government had already submitted proposals to the Centre for funds to cope up with the flood problem in the state.

The chief minister said the funds allocated by the Centre under the Flood Damage Relief (FDR) schemes were not adequate and the state would soon take up the matter with NITI Aayog so that additional funds could be availed.

TMC members protest against disinvestment in Rajya Sabha

New Delhi, Jul 8 (PTI): Trinamool Congress members in Rajya Sabha on Monday sought to disrupt proceedings of the House by entering the well and raising slogans to protest disinvestment of public sector companies.

Some TMC members, including Derek O'Brien and Sukhendu Sekhar Roy, were also on their feet and repeatedly asked the Chair to permit them to raise the issue of disinvestment of state-run firms during the Zero Hour.

Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu did not allow them to raise the issue, saying members should not resort to such measures to raise issues and that he would not succumb to pressures.

Naidu, however told TMC members he would allow them to raise the matter only if there is

time left. TMC members continued to raise slogans but the Chair said nothing of that sort would go on record.

Some members of the ruling BJP too were seen responding to the sloganeering of TMC members.

Just before the House adjourned for lunch, Naidu cautioned members not to enter the Well and use such measures to press for their demands.

The last session of the Rajya Sabha, held before the general elections, had witnessed several adjournments due to protests by opposition parties.

However, the current Budget session has not witnessed any major protest by opposition parties.

Members raise important issues of public interest during the Zero Hour after the Chair per-

mits them to do so.

Earlier, the issue of rejection of two bills by the President of India, which were sent to his office in 2017 by the Tamil Nadu government, to exclude the state from the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) was raised.

Arch rivals in Tamil Nadu -- AIADMK and DMK -- lodged their protest against the rejection of the bills.

A Navaneethakrishnan (AIADMK) and Tiruchi Siva (DMK) lodged protests on behalf of their parties.

DMK members also staged a walkout.

In his Zero Hour mention, Rewati Raman Singh (SP) highlighted the situation in the country due to deficient rainfall.

He said 18 states have been hit by deficient rains and it would badly affect paddy sowing,

Tharoor uses cricket analogy to criticise Union Budget

NEW DELHI, JUL 8 (PTI): The Union Budget has "unnecessarily defensive strokes, drop catches and quite a few no balls", Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said in Lok Sabha on Monday, slamming the government for allegedly not addressing key issues facing the economy, including farm distress, and raising fuel prices.

Tharoor, who was initiating discussion on the Union Budget for 2019-20 in Lok Sabha, used cricket analogy to target the Centre.

"Since cricket is on our minds these days with World Cup semi-final tomorrow, let me say that instead of bold boundaries we expected in this first budget after the elections, what we have are unnecessarily defensive strokes, drop catches and quite a few no balls and wide," the Congress leader said.

He said the budget was characterised by "mediocre set of announcements, distinctive misses, defining silences of matter of substance".

"We were left with a



sort of 'trishanku' budget, neither here nor there," he said.

There was hardly any mention of country's GDP growth rate, he said, adding that the word 'GDP' came up only once.

"Hastily and ill thought through demonetisation bears the large share of responsibility for shutting down lakhs of small and micro enterprises, throwing many more lakhs of people out of work," he alleged. Tharoor also raised the issue of agrarian distress and farmer suicides.

"Our nation's farmers who provide food security have in the last five years received stepmotherly treatment which has resulted in

record level of farmer suicides," he alleged.

The PM Kisan Samman Nidhi in its current form is away from reality of the acute agrarian crisis the country is facing, Tharoor said, referring to the scheme of providing Rs 6,000 per year cash transfer to small and marginal farmers.

The government's announcement that it was again targeting 3.3 per cent fiscal deficit target hardly inspires any confidence because it is the same figure the government announced last year and failed to meet, Tharoor said. "Now the government is hoping for lakhs of crores (of rupees) by selling loss making Air India. But the far more successful Jet Airways has failed to find buyer. Who is going to bid for Air India?" he questioned.

Meanwhile, the common man, he said, was already paying the highest fuel prices in the world because of the government's taxes on petrol and diesel at a time when prices of fuel were dropping worldwide.

Sikkim coordinates for Jal Shakti Abhiyan

GANGTOK, 08 JUL [IPR]:

The first state-level co-ordination meeting to discuss and draw up an action plan for the implementation of the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan' in Sikkim was convened by the Rural Management & Development Department at Tashiling Secretariat under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary AK Shrivastava today.

The Chief Secretary spoke on the importance of water conservation and delved on ways by which wastage of water can be reduced.

He also highlighted the various ways in which government departments could intervene and contribute to this campaign.

The Secretary, RM&DD, then spoke on the Jal Shakti Abhiyan campaign starting from 01 July to 15 September



for Sikkim.

He informed that JSA has been started with the prime objective of water conservation through rejuvenation of water bodies, rain water harvesting structures, treatment of waste water etc.

It was informed that the campaign will be targeting 1,500 water stressed blocks covering 254 districts at the national level while for Sikkim, all the eight blocks

under South District have been identified for implementation of the campaign.

Additional Secretary and PD-MGNREGA gave a detailed presentation on campaign and addressed interventions that can be done by RM&DD to drive the campaign towards a successful outcome.

Senior officers from the Ministry have been assigned to monitor the project and will be visit-

ing the State shortly.

The meeting concluded with an open discussion which was participated by all the departments present on the possible ways by which they can contribute to this campaign within the given timeframe. The educational institutions also agreed to submit detailed inputs for the action plan by 31 July. The deadline for other departments is 15 July.

Call for Gen...

as general secretary in-charge western Uttar Pradesh and Deora announced he has quit as Mumbai Congress chief. On Saturday, Keshav Chand Yadav resigned as Youth Congress president.

All three resigned citing accountability, Gandhi's focus after the Lok Sabha polls debacle.

The Congress got only one seat in Uttar Pradesh, that of Sonia Gandhi in Rae Bareilly, and lost all the five of the six seats in Mumbai it contested.

Announcing his resignation as Mumbai Congress president, 42-year-old Deora said he was looking forward to playing a role at the national level to help stabilise the party.

The resignations citing accountability have put party veterans in a spot with pressure mounting on them to follow suit.

Some Youth Congress leaders met Rahul Gandhi last week and told him a young leader who has connect with the youth is the need of the hour and should be handed the reins of the party, sources said.

"Whoever becomes Congress president has to be someone whom people can identify with across the country. People should be able to identify and also look for their long term future with that president," a senior leader said on condition of anonymity.

"Someone who is well-known, articulate and has charisma -- that is the kind of person people expect the Congress to hand over the reins to," he added.

A large section of the party comprising young leaders feels the party needs to connect with the youth and a young leader at the helm is a must as an old guard leader may fail to attract millennials and Gen Next.

"Rahul Gandhi has always encouraged and worked for building a strong second line leadership of young leaders. I completely agree with his vision. Young leaders at all levels of the party, including at the top, must be encouraged," Congress leader Rajesh Liloithia told PTI. Liloithia also tendered his resignation as working president of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee along with scores of office-bearers after Rahul Gandhi quit as chief.

Asked about the situation arising out of Gandhi's resignation, Jitin Prasada, former Union minister and party's young face from Uttar Pradesh, told PTI, "We urge Mr. Gandhi to reconsider his resignation. However, in the letter (Gandhi put out on Wednesday) he talked about the challenges ahead of the party which must be discussed threadbare and acted upon."

Sushil Kumar Shinde, Mallikarjun Kharge, Motilal Vora and Ashok Gehlot are among the 'old guard probabilities' for the position of party president. However, there is no official confirmation on it.

On Saturday, Punjab Chief Minister Singh said a young leader with a forward-looking approach would "galvanise" the rank and file of the party after Gandhi's "unfortunate" resignation.

He urged the Congress Working Committee (CWC) to look for Gandhi's replacement in a charismatic Gen Next leader, who can "enthuse" people with his "pan-India appeal and grassroots presence". "Rahul had shown the way for the youth leadership to take the party's reins and steer it to greater heights," he said. "Any change in the party leadership must reflect India's societal reality, with 65 per cent of its population under 35," Singh said.

Gandhi last Wednesday publicly announced his resignation as its president, taking responsibility for the Lok Sabha polls debacle, and called for "hard decisions" to rebuild the party and making people accountable for the "failure" of 2019.

The 49-year-old leader -- who has been adamant on his decision to quit as party president since May 25, two days after the results in which his party won 52 seats -- also stressed on the need for the Congress to "radically transform itself". He succeeded his mother Sonia Gandhi as Congress president in December 2017 and his major success at the helm of the 133-year-old party was winning the three state elections in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh in December last year. The Congress is yet to finalise the schedule for the all important CWC meeting which will declare a way forward for the crisis-ridden party.

On Monday, veteran Congress leader Karan Singh the working committee to meet without delay under the chairmanship of former prime minister Manmohan Singh to take necessary decisions.

SC plea alleges...

tea estate, which leads to further deterioration of quality of tea produced there.

"The Dolomite miners of Pasakha Industrial Belt in Bhutan do not adhere to the principles of international environmental law and due to their disregard for the same, they release the ash in the open air which travels to the Indian terrain because the wind direction is perpetually travelling in the direction of North West Bengal," it alleged.

"The present case is not only the case of the violations against the citizens of India residing in Alipurduar, North Bengal but also a case of disregard for the sovereign state of India by the neighbouring state," the plea claimed.

It said that hygienic environment is an integral facet of the right to healthy life but environmental degradation caused due to pollution in Pasakha industrial belt violates the right to healthy life of residents of Alipurduar and adjoining areas.

It said India and Bhutan both are signatories to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their disposal.

The plea said that as per Article 12 of the convention, the parties shall cooperate with a view to adopting, as soon as practicable, a protocol setting out appropriate rules and procedures in the field of liability and compensation for damage resulting from the transboundary movement and disposal of hazardous wastes and other wastes.

The plea has sought constitution of a committee to scrutinise and determine the quantum of damage that has been caused due to the pollution and decide the compensation and rehabilitation plan for the citizens as well as flora and fauna in Alipurduar.

SummitTIMES CLASSIFIEDS

URGENTLY REQUIRED:
Urgent Recruitment for a waiter with at least 3 years experience and one kitchen helper. Contact: Hotel Paramount, Dentam, West Sikkim- 9735909625 / 8348285444

PLOT FOR SALE:
Vacant plot measuring 0.38 Acres for sale at Amdo Golai, Deorali. Contact: 09717191985/097474651223

WANTED
HOUSEKEEPER/BABYSITTER .
Contact: 9933443442/9800500696.

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

Mr. Subash Lama
Proprietor
Hotel Parasol Residency,
Panihouse, Deorali, East Sikkim

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

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

Fashion industry stakeholders meet

**NITESH R PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 08 JUL:**

A meeting on the fashion industry was held today which was chaired by Joint Secretary, Commerce and Industries department, Government of Sikkim, JN Aswant. The meeting was also attended by MD Temi Tea Estate, Mrinalini Srivastava and various stakeholders.

The meeting discussed a feasibility study to be undertaken by the stakeholders for which Temi Tea and Echostream have been selected for the joint study presentation. It also discussed ways to develop better coordination of fashion industry players within the state and, at national and international level.

Mr Sikkim and Miss Sikkim will be taken up on priority and made annual calendar state level events. Cluster formation around fashion industry was identified as one of the important aspects of further developing the sector.



It was also decided in the meeting that every first Monday of the month, fashion and retail industry stakeholders will hold a meeting.

Fashion Designer, Rinzing Bhutia while highlighting the present scenario of the industry stated that collaborative

efforts are needed to accelerate the growth for fashion designers and related stakeholders.

The need for fashion week was also discussed which can attract further inputs from fashion stakeholders from across the country and neighbouring regions.



CM wishes Governor on birthday

GANGTOK, 08 JUL (IPR): Chief Minister, PS Tamang (Goley) along with his Cabinet Colleagues, Chairperson STCS and Chief Secretary called on Governor, Ganga Prasad

at Raj Bhavan this afternoon to wish him on his birthday today.

During the short interaction with the Governor, the Chief Minister wished him

good health and also sought blessings of the Governor and hoped that he will continue to receive guidance and vision for speedy development of the State.

On the other hand, the Governor thanked the Chief Minister, his Cabinet Colleagues, Chairperson STDC and the Chief Secretary for their wishes and greetings.

PET for SI aspirants at Khel Gaon



GANGTOK, 08 JUL (IPR): Sikkim Public Service Commission is conducting a Physical Endurance-cum-Eligibility Test (PET) for the post of Sub-Inspector (Civil Police) and Sub-Inspector, Excise (Abk.) Department from 08 to 11 July, 2019, at Khel Gaon, Reshithang, Ranka.

A total of 150 candidates had qualified for the post of Sub-Inspector (Civil Police) after the preliminary examination and 417 candidates were registered for the post of Sub-Inspector, Excise (Abk.).

A total of 5 events are scheduled to be held during these days. Events covered on first day are

100 meters, Shot Put & Long Jump. High jump and 1500 meters race are scheduled to be held on subsequent days. In order to ensure free and fair selection of the candidates, Sports and Youth Affairs Department is providing the technical support for the conduct of PET.

Re-identification of Brus in Tripura camps to be completed by July 20

AIZAWL, JUL 8 (PTI): Re-identification of bona fide residents of Mizoram as part of the repatriation process of Bru refugees lodged in relief camps in Tripura was expected to be completed by July 20, state Home Secretary Lalbiakzama said here on Monday.

Officials from Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei districts would conduct the head count to figure out who are willing to return to Mizoram, from where the Bru community people had fled to Tripura in 1997 due to ethnic unrest. The physical repatriation of the Bru people from Tripura to Mizoram is scheduled to begin by September or October which would be determined by the length of monsoon, state Home Secretary Lalbiakzama told PTI.

Re-identification was necessitated as there is a possibility of change in the number of people in the camps due to births and deaths, and availability of proper documents, official sources said.

In the previous head count conducted in November last year, 32,876 Brus belonging to 5,407 families are lodged in six relief camps in North Tripura district.

Of them, only 33 families had returned during repatriation in 2018 and 5,374 Bru families were estimated to have

been remaining in the relief camps.

The Centre, in association with the governments of Mizoram and Tripura, had been repatriating the displaced Brus in phases.

The Centre, state governments of Mizoram and Tripura and the Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF), the apex body of the Bru community in the relief camps, had on July 3 signed an agreement for repatriation of all the Bru refugees from Tripura before September 30.

As the move did not succeed, it was decided to resume the process this year.

The Centre had earlier decided to discontinue all kinds of subsistence allowances, including ration supplies and cash dole, to the Bru refugees from October 1 last year, but continued with the assistance on humanitarian grounds.

Meanwhile, the Bru refugees recently demanded that Mizoram government resettle them in southern Mizoram due to "shortage of land" in Mamit and Kolasib districts where majority of them were to be resettled, official sources said.

The state government rejected the demand saying that the July 3 agreement should stand, the sources said.

Doc accused of impersonating SMIMS Dean denied anticipatory bail

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 JUL:**

High Court of Sikkim has denied anticipatory bail to Sumantra Gupta who is accused of impersonating the Dean of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences (SMIMS) and defrauding aspirants for medical seats in Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences.

Mr Gupta is a doctor by profession hailing from Siliguri and runs a Nursing Home at Malbazaar, Jalpaiguri.

The Dean of the Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences (SMIMS), Tadong, lodged an FIR in the Crime Investigation Department of Sikkim Police against Sumantra Gupta following which a case was registered on 16 Mar, earlier this year, under Sections 419/468/471/420/120B of the Indian Penal Code read with

Sections 66C & 66D of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

It is alleged in the FIR that some unknown individual had been impersonating as the Dean of the Institute and soliciting gullible students/parents to secure admissions in the said Institute on payment of money. Various accounts in which the deposits were made were also indicated, one of which is claimed to be that of Sumantra Gupta.

While rejecting the anticipatory bail, Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan observed that the High Court is strongly of the opinion that this is not a fit case for exercising discretion under Section 438 CrPC in favour of the Applicant.

The court said that due to the grave nature of the allegation and more than one FIR being registered, granting anticipatory bail "does not sound to reason".

In such circumstances, custodial interrogation may be a necessity and consequently it would greatly harm the investigation and impede the prospect of further investigation if the Applicant is granted anticipatory bail, it further stated.

The court also noted that the applicant had fled when sought to be apprehended and failed to join the investigations. Further stating that the materials collected by the investigating agency so far placed does reflect prima facie involvement of the accused person in the offences and considering the conduct of the applicant which has definitely not been amenable for investigation thus far, the single bench observed that the question of granting anticipatory bail does not arise.



GATC in Nepal

Girish and The Chronicles perform at Lord of The Drinks in Thamel, Kathmandu, on 06 July.

Jallianwala Bagh Bill introduced in LS, Cong opposes

NEW DELHI, JUL 8 (PTI): A bill which seeks to remove the Congress president as a permanent member in a trust that runs the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial to make the body "apolitical" was introduced in Lok Sabha on Monday amid opposition by the Congress.

The Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (amendment) Bill, moved by Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel states that it seeks

to "delete" the mention of 'President of the Indian National Congress' as a trustee.

A similar bill was brought by the previous government but it could not get parliamentary nod and lapsed.

Opposing the bill, Shashi Tharoor (Cong) said his party is opposed to the bill as it is a "denial of heritage of the country".

"...it should be stopped. It is a national memorial, do not betray

our history and heritage," he said.

Hitting back, Patel said for the last 40-50 years, the Congress did nothing for the memorial. He said he would give a detailed response once the bill comes up for consideration and passage.

The amendment bill also paves way for the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha to be a member of the trust. As of now, only Leader of the Opposition in the Lok

Sabha is a member of the trust. The amendment bill also confers power to the central government to terminate the term of a nominated trustee before the expiry of the term without assigning any reason.

As of now, the trust which manages the memorial, has the Prime Minister as the chairperson, President of Indian National Congress, Culture Minister, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Punjab governor,

Punjab CM as its members. Virendra Kataria, Ambika Soni and Harvendra Singh Hanspal are nominated trustees appointed in 2013 for five years, according to the Culture Ministry website.

Jallianwala Bagh memorial was established in 1951 by the central government to mark the massacre of unarmed people on April 13, 1919 by the British Indian Army under the command of Col Reginald Dyer.

U-17 Football League 2019 gets underway

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 08 JUL:**

Gangtok Football Club has defeated JVC Singtam in its first match in the ongoing Sikkim Football Association U-17 Football League 2019 here at Paljor Stadium on Monday. A goal by Abinash Rasaily helped Gangtok FC to win full three

points with its 1-0 victory.

Likewise, Sikkim Boys made a good start in the league with 3-0 victory in its first match. Sikkim Boys outplayed New Light Academy, Namchi to secure full three points. Suraj Limboo scored a brace and his teammate Alok Limboo contributed a goal in Sikkim Boys' victory.



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Have We Failed the Young?

Of course we have. Now, to make amends

Youth evolve from the societies they grow in. They are after all, products of what they are exposed to, groomed from influences they are surrounded by. Juvenile delinquency, like teen rebellion, is expected; but when the lines delineating youthful experimentation from criminal malefaction get blurred and digressions into darker aberrations surface, it is time to worry.

At around this time last year, there was a rash of bag snatching and assault with intent to rob incidents around Gangtok. Those incidents have stopped now, but from what the victims recalled, the assailants were all “young” boys, fresh out of their teens. Not that long ago, a “gang” attacked a motorist in Gangtok and left him severely battered. Across the state borders, although the cases of arson and overnight attacks have gone down, it would not surprise if these were commissioned to “young” people, youth who should ideally be more moved by ideas of sacrifice and idealism than assault and mindless arson. Agreed, these isolated incidents are not representative of the entire generation, but they are still worrying signals.

Worry, in fact, might be too mild a reaction, it's probably time to panic. Panic, not against the young who crossed over into near morbid criminality, but a society that has so disassociated itself from the grooming of its young that it did not even notice the spiral it has pushed innocence into. And there have been other incidents in between, some got reported, others were covered-up. So, yes it is time to panic.

It is inexcusable that such incidents should transpire. Harrowing as it is for the victims, Sikkim's collective failure in addressing the issue - not as individual cases or in terms of victims and perpetrators, but in terms of figuring out how the young can be counseled better and kept safe - is shameful. The young are obviously growing in a vacuum, untouched by proper nurture despite all the talk of moral education. The schools perhaps concentrate too much on regimented teaching to have time for grooming, and parents too obsessed with other priorities to notice how an entire generation is coming unhinged. Teenagers are committing suicide in Sikkim, some are falling to fatal over-doses of substances of abuse, still more are buying substances of abuse on the streets and as they grow more asocial, some have lost the faculties to differentiate between right and obvious criminality.

Slightly older, and these juveniles would have been dismissed by the society at large as ‘no-good, anti-social elements’. But in many cases, the perpetrators are still “young” enough to have the need for their parents/guardians to be informed of their actions. What we hence end up staring at is a reflection of our failings. For this situation, there are no prescribed solutions or government-funded interventions to bring NGOs crawling out of the woodwork to implement. The young, the victims and the perpetrators, need to be saved from our failings. A good place to begin would be to accept that we have failed collectively. Then can begin the process of figuring out how the right counseling and right inspirations can be dispensed to ensure that innocence grows into maturity in Sikkim, and does not derail into antisocial excesses as is obviously happening at present...

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Addis Ababa's street hustlers helped build the city – now they're being pushed out

MARCO DI NUNZIO
theconversation.com

The population of Africa is booming, but as long as productivity and employment remain unsteady, “global experts” and economists contend, African cities could descend into conflict and disorder.

From their perspective, activities like street hustling are seen to embody chaos and delinquency. Hustlers are assumed to be young, sometimes criminal, unemployed, and enmeshed in the informal economy of the streets, living in informal settlements or “slums” and illegally occupying urban land that could be used more productively.

These portrayals have a long history, rooted in colonial attitudes toward informal workers and economic policies that have long overlooked the value street hustlers have created in modern African cities.

A successful hustler is embedded in the city's social relations. To get by, hustlers connect people, provide services and enable economic exchange, in both licit ways (such as retail, brokering transactions and providing electricity, water, transport and sanitation) and illicit ways (retrieving and fencing stolen goods).

Of course, the street economy is not all roses. Hustling can be predatory and criminal. But this not the whole story, as my own research on street lives in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa taught me.

SMARTNESS IN THE CITY

Hustling has a special place in Addis Ababa, especially in Arada – a historic part of the city centre. Since the mid-20th century, Arada has conveyed a sense of smartness and urban sophistication, which generations of residents have nurtured and cultivated.

In the 1950s and 60s, intellectuals, artists, government officials and members of the city's emerging middle class described themselves as “Arada” to make sense of how the city, with its bars, restaurants, cinemas and theatre, shaped their lifestyles, sensibilities, and social lives. To this day, being Arada signifies a proud local history of cultural and intellectual production among the city's middle classes.

At the same time, hustlers and sex workers – poor men and women who lived side by side with the middle classes – also claim to be Arada. For them, the hustler's ability to navigate the city and get by against the odds was a sign of smartness. Being Arada has been a way for these people to assert their presence in the city and achieve a sense of self-worth and respect.

HIT WITH EVICTIONS

Both the intellectualism of the elites and the street smarts of hustlers and sex workers transformed the neighbourhood of Arada into a social and cultural hotspot. But today, the very people who gave the neighbourhood its meaning and value are under attack. In the past decade, the Addis Ababa city government has initiated waves of evictions targeting inner city areas, including Arada and neighbouring Arat Kilo.

Government officials I interviewed over the years are adamant that the cleared areas were unfit to live in, with dilapidated housing, poor sanitation and health conditions. The evictions are for development, they say – they make room for private investment and regeneration.

But in all likelihood, evicted residents won't be able to return to the city centre. Those who can afford a down payment of between 25,000 and 180,000 birr (roughly US\$850 to US\$6,200), and monthly instalments of 2,000 to 3,000 birr (US\$70 to US\$100) over 15 to 25 years, will relocate to the outskirts of Addis Ababa, where the government has been building large tracts of “affordable housing”. Those who cannot afford it – 20% of the city's residents – will need to look for a cheap place to rent elsewhere.

Commercial spaces, high-end apartments, leisure facilities and office blocks will replace inner city residences, alongside a few blocks of “affordable housing” for a lucky few. The old trope of the African city as a site which needs to be ordered and contained has struck again. And this time, it has hit longstanding residents hardest.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

For elite economists, developers, investors and policy makers, hustlers have no place in the new, beautified vision of Addis Ababa, and places such as Arada – with their dilapidated housing and informal economies – have no economic value. In fact, these very actors stand to profit from the cultural meaning and value generated by the residents that they evict from these historic areas.

One of these investors is Jonny (not his real name), an Ethiopian businessman in his fifties who I interviewed as part of my research. While holding a drink at the lounge bar at the Hilton, he showed me pictures of furnishings he had ordered from China. He was building a hotel in a newly cleared inner city area. It is an exciting business opportunity, he told me: “It was an old house, in an old area. Very beautiful, very beautiful.”

The real estate motto “location, location, location” has as much to do with the historical and cul-

tural significance of a place, as its proximity to local amenities or spectacular city views. But while developers like Jonny can now pursue their dreams, the people who made the area desirable in the first place are being pushed out.

URBAN EXILES

“They want to get rid of the poor,” said Ibrahim, a former hustler and current car attendant in his late thirties, as we walked around what remained of nearby neighbourhood Arat Kilo after a wave of evictions in 2012. Others clearly agreed. Just a few days after the evictions, graffiti appeared on the remaining buildings: “Since they were jealous of us, they tore down ours,” one message read. Some parts of Arada are still standing, but residents worry that sooner or later, it will be their turn.

In research interviews, government officials emphasised to me that evictees are compensated, and that being offered place in the government's affordable housing programme is a change for the better.

But Eden, a mother of two who lives in a new built housing complex on the eastern outskirts of Addis Ababa, did not agree:

“We live in these new houses, but there is not much change! Now we have to pay thousands for the mortgage. Then your salary is cut, first by taxes and then by transport costs – it is not fair!”

Evictions in Addis Ababa will continue regardless, this time also with the involvement of international investment. In November 2018, Abu Dhabi-based real estate developer Eagle Hills and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched La Gare, a new development with shopping malls, luxury hotels and over 4,000 high-end residences. La Gare will replace Kirkos, one of the oldest neighbourhoods in the inner city.

This April, Abiy Ahmed announced another milestone in his plans for the regeneration of Addis Ababa. His riverside project – “Beautifying Shegher” – will be supported by the Chinese government: a 12-kilometre redevelopment of densely populated parts of the Ethiopian capital.

As Ethiopia's economy continues to grow, development is in demand and inner city residents, including hustlers, expect it. But it should not be pursued at the expense of the very people who helped create value and meaning in the city. This value must be recognised: historically and politically but – above all – morally and monetarily.

(The names of individuals interviewed as part of the research project have been changed.)

[the writer is Lecturer in the Anthropology of Africa, University of Birmingham]

All the hype around Libra is a red herring. Facebook's main game is Calibra

PRIYA DEV
theconversation.com

Amid the hype around Facebook's plan to launch its own cryptocurrency, Libra, there's one big question. How is the company going to profit from it?

The project relies on developing blockchain technology. But blockchain's whole raison d'être is to challenge the way corporate capitalism and businesses like Facebook make money.

Facebook has also established, with several dozen equally capitalistic partners, the Libra Association, a nonprofit organisation based in Switzerland, to spearhead the venture.

After years of copping criticism for questionable business practices, has Facebook decided to take an altruistic turn?

Probably not. It's more likely that blockchain, and even Libra, is a means to a end; it's about Facebook wanting to be not only the world's biggest social media platform but also the globe's go-to marketplace, putting Amazon, eBay, Apple and Google in the shade.

To appreciate why this suggestion isn't also hyperbole, we need to talk not so much about Libra but its companion technology, the “custodial wallet” called Calibra.

BLOCKCHAIN, BUT NOT BLOCKCHAIN

First, let's do a quick recap of some fundamentals.

In 2008, a person or group calling themselves Satoshi Nakamoto proposed a method for transacting over the internet without a trusted third party such as a bank. It uses a distributed ledger known as a blockchain and cryptography to maintain a tamper-proof record of ownership of electronic cash – hence the term cryptocurrency.

Blockchain's core innovation is to do away with the need for trusted entities like banks. So how do people safely send or receive cryptocurrency? Well, they can use a “cryptocur-

rency wallet”. A cryptocurrency balance is recorded against a blockchain address. Proving ownership depends on a secret code (or “private key”) known only to the owner. The “wallet” is essentially software that allows people to manage their private keys and authorise transactions.

Facebook has other ideas for its cryptocurrency. The Libra Association says it wants to “make sending money as easy and cheap as sending a text message”. Tapping addresses and se-



cret codes into a wallet interface every time wouldn't be that easy. These codes can be long – up to 64 characters, compared to 16 for a credit card.

So Facebook will instead provide a “custodial wallet” – Calibra. It will be the custodian of your cryptocurrency, much like a bank is custodian of your money, and thus manage your wallet for you.

Facebook can certainly argue that this makes it much easier to use Libra – and it wants to make Libra easy to use so you can buy items through Facebook and its other platforms, such as Whatsapp and Instagram.

But this aspect has little to do with the original ideals behind blockchain. It makes Calibra more like a

bank, with a record of your electronic payments. It will know everything you buy or sell through its wallet; and it will share “Calibra customer data with managed vendors and service providers – including Facebook”.

HOW FACEBOOK MONETISES DATA

Why is this important? Because Facebook is in the business of gathering your personal data.

It now uses this information to make about 99% of its income from selling advertising – US\$14.9 billion

in the first quarter of 2019 alone.

Its value as an advertising delivery mechanism comes not just from its sheer number of users (1.56 billion daily users, and 2.37 billion monthly users) but from what it knows about them.

This goes way beyond basic personal details like your birthdate. Almost everything about Facebook is designed to get you to reveal personal information. You do this through what you post and the posts you like or respond to. You do this even when not directly using Facebook. Lots of online stores report back to Facebook when you visit them, for example.

Identifying key personality traits can be used to predict purchasing behaviour – or political preference, as demonstrat-

ed in the Cambridge Analytica controversy. The British-based political consultancy bragged it effectively swung the US 2016 election to Donald Trump by using Facebook to harvest user data and then directing customised political messages to users' newsfeeds.

While there is some scepticism about Cambridge Analytica's electoral impact, it is generally agreed the process of “micro-targeting” can be very effective for marketers.

So the more information Facebook has about you, the more money it can potentially make by influencing you.

BECOMING BIGGER THAN AMAZON

There's more. Facebook's value as an advertising powerhouse has made its founder, Mark Zuckerberg, extremely wealthy – worth an estimated US\$73 billion. But that's less than half of Amazon's founder, Jeff Bezos, who's worth US\$158 billion.

Both companies are in the business of helping merchants sell products. But Amazon's position as an online marketplace is more lucrative than Facebook's role as a shop window. Amazon can take a cut from every sale. Its retail business makes up about 80% of its US\$950 billion value, which is greater than Facebook's total value of US\$550 billion.

What if Facebook could be both the shop window and the cash register? What if it no longer just introduced users to merchants but also became the digital marketplace supporting those merchants? What if it could collect not just social data but also buyer history data?

This is what Libra, and more critically, Calibra, could mean for Facebook. Libra's an important part of this picture. But it's Calibra that could deliver the data Facebook needs to become possibly the most valuable, and powerful, online company in the world.

[the writer is Blockchain Researcher & Lecturer Data Analysis, Australian National University]

US rejoices after women's football World Cup win

WASHINGTON, JUL 8 (AFP): Politicians, athletes and even an astronaut celebrated the US victory in the women's World Cup on Sunday, and the mayor of New York announced a ticker tape parade for the football champions.

A penalty by Megan Rapinoe and a strike by Rose Lavelle took the United States women to a 2-0 victory over the Netherlands in the final in Lyon, France.

It was their second consecutive win in the tournament and a record-setting fourth overall.

"I want to congratulate the women's soccer team on winning the World Cup. That's an incredible achievement," US President Donald Trump told reporters in New Jersey.

"It is a great honor to have them capture it for the United States."

In a statement, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said "the confidence, grit, and perseverance of the US women's national soccer team (serves) as an inspiration to all who watch them," and that they'd be welcomed to the city with a parade on Wednesday.

They received a similar honor after their previous World Cup victory in 2015.

The US women "never fail to make our country proud -- on and off the field," Joe Biden, the former Democratic vice



president who leads Trump, a Republican, in polls ahead of next year's presidential election, wrote on Twitter.

In Chicago, nearly 9,000 people wearing the red, white and blue of the American flag gathered to watch the final on a large screen, jumping and cheering with each goal scored.

"It was an incredible game to watch and my body was tense the whole time. It's like, go US, man!" soccer fan Emma MacMillan told AFP.

Alexandra Warrington, who attended a viewing party at National Harbor outside the capital Washington, called Rapinoe's performance a highlight.

"I've idolized her my whole life growing up so just seeing her keep ex-

celling is just awesome," she said.

US media pointed to the historic nature of the team's win, which put the American women among the great teams in global football.

"It's not only the history they made, though there is plenty of that," wrote USA Today.

The daily noted that their fourth victory was more than any other women's team but also the same number as the German and Brazilian men's squads, who are in second-place for total victories in the men's World Cup.

"It wasn't just what the Americans did on the field. The monumental expectations on them, the relentless criticism of them -- they shouldered it all without a seeming care," the

newspaper said.

The team is no stranger to controversy and dispute, having filed a lawsuit against the US Soccer Federation accusing the organization of gender discrimination.

House of Representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi alluded to their grievance when she wrote on Twitter: "The Women's National Team showed us their greatness - now show them the money."

-- SKY-HIGH --

After the World Cup started in June, star player Rapinoe publicly feuded with Trump.

Rapinoe said she'd stay home if the team is invited to the White House. She urged her teammates to do the same to protest the president's policies and character.

Trump responded

on Twitter that "Megan should never disrespect our Country, the White House, or our Flag, especially since so much has been done for her & the team."

Championship US sports teams are traditionally honored with an invitation to Washington, though Trump has at times revoked invitations after team members criticized him.

While the spirit of the nation soared sky-high with the women's victory, former American astronaut Scott Kelly was just happy to be on Earth for their win.

When the US side beat Japan in the 2015 World Cup final, Kelly celebrated aboard the International Space Station, posting on Twitter a picture of an American flag floating in space.

Arunachal budget focuses on agriculture, hikes import duty on liquors

ITANAGAR, JUL 8 (PTI): The Arunachal Pradesh government presented the state budget in the assembly on Monday, attaching priority to agriculture and allied sectors while proposing additional import duty on all alcoholic beverages.

Presenting the BJP government's Rs 520.98 crore deficit budget, Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein said thrust was given on agriculture to double farmers' income by 2022, in tune with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The rate of import duty per case of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), beer and wine was increased from the existing Rs 100 to Rs 150.

The first budget of the Pema Khandu-led government after coming to power for the second consecutive term also proposed a to bring a 'blue revolution' to enhance production and productivity of table fish and fish seed.

For this, a new programme - Mukhya Mantri Neel Kranti Abhiyan - will be launched to dig new ponds for exclusive aquaculture, revamp water logged areas, rejuvenate existing ponds, upgrade

existing hatcheries, create nurseries and rearing space for seed rearing and develop backyard ornamental fish farms.

Mein who also holds the finance portfolio, said in the budget estimates of 2019-20, the government is projecting a revenue expenditure of Rs 13,406.78 crore as against the revised estimate of Rs 13,483.45 crore in 2018-19.

"We are projecting capital expenditures including loan components of Rs 8,602.19 crore for the year 2019-20 as against revised estimates of Rs 7,821.64 crore in 2018-19," he said.

The government also proposed to bring 7 lakh hectares of additional land under micro irrigation with an estimated cost of Rs 17,712 crore for wet rice cultivation.

"Under the Chief Minister's Sashkat Yojana, various horticulture crops will be covered and accordingly a fund provision of Rs 95.70 crore has been earmarked," Mein said.

For the benefit of the farmers, the government has proposed to set up markets which would be linked with e-NAM (National Agricultural

Market) so that the produces could be auctioned online. "The government also proposed to set up R&D centre for kiwi at Ziro in Lower Subansiri district and oranges at Roing in Lower Dibang Valley district," he said.

A proposal has been made for construction of State Horticulture Research and Development Institute and Bio-Resource Mission in the current year. In a Rs 5 crore scheme, the government seeks to augment the tourism sector by providing financial assistance to home stays.

"Under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Rural), we have a commitment to provide housing for all population living below poverty line by 2022. The state has a target to cover 11,221 beneficiaries under the scheme, out of which 1265 beneficiaries have been covered till now," he added.

The budget also focused on gender empowerment, development of children, social justice and inclusive development, skill development and employment generation, water security, affordable and clean energy besides governance and policy reforms.

ED interrogates TMC leader Madan Mitra in Rose Valley scam



KOLKATA, JUL 8 (PTI): The Enforcement Directorate Monday interrogated senior Trinamool Congress leader Madan Mitra in connection with the Rose Valley scam, official sources said.

This was the first time Mitra was interrogated in this connection and his statements were recorded, ED sources told PTI.

He was interrogated for more than four hours.

Mitra, who was the then transport minister, was arrested in 2014 by the Central Bureau of Investigation for his alleged connection with the multi-crore Saradha ponzi scam. He served a jail term of over 21 months before getting bail.

According to the ED

estimates, the Rose Valley scandal is at least five times the Saradha ponzi scam. The agency had arrested its chairman Gautam Kundu and attached his assets worth Rs 2,300 crore, including hotels and resorts.

Multiple charge sheets had been filed by the ED in the courts of Kolkata and Bhubaneswar.

Tea Board initiates separate platform for Assam Tea



KOLKATA, JUL 8 (PTI): Tea Board has taken the initiative to float a separate electronic auction platform at Jorhat to cater to the Assam tea cluster for developing an innovative e-market place, an official said.

The platform would also be facilitated with associated services like central warehousing and logistics, he said.

Deputy chairman of Tea Board A K Ray said that the proposed e-marketplace, to be developed by Mjunction Services, was also expected to bring on board secondary and tertiary buyers from all over the country.

Ray said the Tea Board had also consulted IIM, Bangalore, for certain policy reforms in respect of e-auctioning.

He said that big companies had been affected

due to rise in the production volumes of small growers due to their huge cost structure.

"Increase in production due to small growers was causing problems for the big companies having huge cost structure and subsequently facing liquidity problems", Ray told reporters here on Monday.

He said that Tea Board had also decided to allow exports of tea waste which was not permitted till now.

"By allowing this, ten to 20 million kilos could easily be added to the exports basket of Indian tea", he said.

This, he added, would also reduce the availability of poor quality tea in the market.

This calendar, Tea Board has fixed the export target at 260 million kilograms.

DoNER Ministry reviews implementation of progs in aspirational districts of NE

NEW DELHI, JUL 8 (PTI): The DoNER Ministry Monday reviewed the status of implementation of programmes in different sectors in aspirational districts of the north east, officials said.

The meeting, chaired by Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Secretary Inderjit Singh, decided to identify common issues, challenges and thrust areas of all the aspirational districts with reference to the presentations made by nodal officers and references of NITI Aayog's data.

The status of themes on health, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure was reviewed at the meeting, an official of the DoNER Ministry said.

Singh said the min-

istry will take follow-up action based on the inputs received from the nodal officers of aspirational districts.

The secretary instructed the officers concerned to monitor the progress of these districts on a regular basis on different parameters so that their performance is improved.

Singh directed them to coordinate with the line ministries, state governments and districts administration to intensify their efforts for development of aspirational districts.

The Narendra Modi government in its first term had launched the "Transformation of Aspirational Districts" programme aiming to quickly and effectively carry out development projects in these backward districts.

During the meeting,

the nodal officers of the following aspirational districts gave presentations: Barpeta, Baksa, Darrang, Dhubri, Goalpara, Haikandi and Udalguri (Assam); Namsai (Arunachal Pradesh), Chandel (Manipur); Ribhoi (Meghalaya); Mamit (Mizoram); Kiphire (Nagaland); West Sikkim (Sikkim) and Dhalai (Tripura).

Their presentations were based on five themes of aspirational district programme i.e. health, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure, and official statement said.

The meeting was also attended by North Eastern Council (NEC) Secretary Ram Muivah and representatives from various ministries and departments.

Five bills introduced in Arunachal Pradesh

Itanagar, Jul 8 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh government on Monday introduced five bills including the Lok Ayukta amendment bill in the state Assembly.

Home Minister Blaming Felix introduced the Arunachal Pradesh Lokayukta Amendment Bill 2019 to amend the state Lokayukta Act 2014.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu introduced the Arunachal Pradesh Goods and Service Tax (Amendment) Bill 2019, which seeks to amend the exist-

ing GST Act 2017.

Town Planning and Urban Local Bodies Minister Kamlung Mosang introduced the Arunachal Pradesh Municipal Corporation Bill, 2019 for making a legal framework and putting a mechanism in place for establishment and constitution of municipal corporation in the state.

Education Minister Taba Tedir and Health Minister Alo Libang introduced the Arunachal Pradesh State Higher

Education Council Bill 2019 and Arunachal Pradesh Protection of Medical Service Personnel and Medical Service Institution (Prevention of Violence and Damage or Loss of Property) Bill 2019, respectively.

Speaker Passang Dorjee Son announced the names of Congress MLA Wanglin Lowangdong, NPP member Mutchu Mithi and BJP legislators Jambey Tashi and Nyatog Rigia for the panel of chairmen for the current session.

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

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

THE BIRDS HAVE LOST THEIR WAY

EDITED BY TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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USA carried social and sporting burdens at the World Cup. They won anyway

CAITLIN MURAY
theGuardian

There were plenty of reasons to expect the US wouldn't repeat as Women's World Cup champions. Most teams only need to beat their opponents. For the Americans, meanwhile, it often seemed like they had to accomplish that task while taking on their president as well as social inequality.

Yes, the US were used to pressure. They had won the World Cup in 2015, but clinching back-to-back World Cups is exceedingly rare – it had only happened once on the women's side and twice on the men's. It's far too easy for complacency creep in – just look at how Germany stumbled in the men's World Cup last year after winning in 2014.

And it's not as if it had been smooth-sailing for the Americans since they won in 2015. With veterans like Abby Wambach retiring, the look of the team changed, and then the Americans suffered a humiliating and early exit at the 2016 Olympics. The US, despite their history of dominance, just didn't look as imposing as they once had.

Maybe the rest of the world had caught up. Maybe Jill Ellis wasn't a good coach. Maybe the squad – the oldest in the tournament – was past it. And maybe the players were distracted by the dispute over equal pay with their bosses at the US Soccer Federation.

Indeed, by the time the US arrived in France, that dispute had reached fever pitch. Every player on the team has sued US Soccer in federal court – the case will be heard in the coming weeks – and,



for many, the topic became a sort of Rorschach test about feminism and equality. The players, who had to file their lawsuit before the World Cup began, were getting dragged into divisive and potentially distracting conversations. They didn't need to win the World Cup to secure equal pay (and nor should they) but it sure as hell would help.

Even the President of the United States seemed to have a problem with the anointed "bad guys" of the Women's World Cup. Donald Trump didn't like that Megan Rapinoe had said she would not attend the White House if the team won the tournament, and suddenly everyone on the team had to decide whether they would defy Trump and the more toxic parts of his fanbase. Suddenly, this was a team that – fairly or unfairly – repre-

sented a lot more than the hopes of just soccer fans.

And then there were the worries on the pitch: Hope Solo, arguably the greatest goalkeeper the women's game has ever seen, was no longer on the team, and the untested Alyssa Naeher looked error prone. The back line in front of her had been built to be ultra-attacking and looked vulnerable to quick counterattacks.

Once the games started, however, those vulnerabilities didn't seem so glaring. Sure, Naeher made a couple mistakes, but there weren't costly – the US still steamrolled through the group stage without conceding a single goal. They dropped 13 goals on Thailand, three on Chile and another two on Sweden, setting scoring records along the way.

That wasn't enough though. Pundits, anxious US fans and op-

ponents still looked for reasons why the US would eventually lose. Maybe USA's opponents in the group stage hadn't been enough of a test, or in Sweden's case, with a second-string team, maybe they didn't try hard enough.

And yes, the Americans had looked utterly dominant against Thailand – but to some they also looked arrogant too. The team celebrated all 13 goals they scored against the minnows, and the US quickly became the villains that neutrals were rooting against. The target was squarely on the backs of the USA players.

But then Rapinoe, who had already irked some with her willingness to speak out on everything from social inequality to goal celebrations, scored twice and sent the hosts, France, packing in the quarter-finals. The French played bet-

ter and had more of the ball – just as they were supposed to – but those relentless Americans somehow found another level to close out the game. As France's Amandine Henry explained: "I don't think we've ever dominated the US that much. But still, dominating them still isn't the same as winning."

When England came next in the semi-final, their coach Phil Neville conjured up what would be dubbed "spygate" as a new psychological roadblock for the US. A couple of US operations coordinators had scouted the hotels for the final round, including the one England were staying at, and Neville complained it was bad etiquette, another example of American arrogance.

Making matters worse, Rapinoe, who scored all the USA's goals in the knockout stage, had a minor hamstring injury and couldn't play

against England. Christen Press replaced her – and Press scored within 10 minutes. Naeher, who was supposed to struggle in her first World Cup, saved a penalty. If the US were supposed to lose, they clearly hadn't gotten the memo.

By the time the US reached the final, the talk around the team had shifted sharply. Maybe the Americans weren't lacking quality, weren't going to be distracted and weren't falling behind – perhaps the US were just as good as they seemed all along.

After seemingly everyone had given into the idea that the US were the real deal, the Netherlands finally gave the Americans a tough challenge. After scoring within 12 minutes of kick-off in all their games so far, the Americans had to wait until the 61st in the final, a credit to the Dutch players' organization. But, thanks to goals from Rapinoe and Rose Lavelle, the Americans were World Cup champions once again.

It certainly had a different feel to their previous World Cup victories. No one was paying attention in 1991, when the US won the first-ever Women's World Cup. In 1999, the victory was a cultural phenomenon that changed the game's landscape forever. In 2015, it was relief after waiting so long since the 99ers' big moment.

But this one? This was different. There were so many reasons they shouldn't have lifted the trophy – the burdens on and off the field were much more than most teams ever have to cope with. But then they went ahead and won the World Cup anyway.

Brazil coach Tite tells Messi to show some respect



RIO DE JANEIRO, JUL 8 (AFP): Brazil coach Tite told Lionel Messi to show some respect following claims from the Argentina captain that the Copa America had been "fixed" so the hosts would win.

Brazil clinched the Copa by defeating Peru 3-1 at the Maracana on Sunday but Tite felt that his side had been hard done by in some refereeing decisions and said Messi's words had weighed on the officials.

"He has to show some respect, he must understand and accept when he's defeated," said Tite, whose side beat Argentina 2-0 in a controversial semi-final.

"We've been affected in many matches, even in the World Cup, so be very careful.

"He put a lot of pressure on because of how great a player he is.

"Everyone has their own problems and you have to be respectful."

Messi had hit out at South American football's governing body CONMEBOL, accusing them of "corruption" after he was sent off in Saturday's third place play-off in which Argentina

beat Chile 2-1. He'd also claimed after Argentina's semi-final defeat that the tournament hosts were "managing a lot in CONMEBOL these days."

Argentina had been angered that VAR wasn't used on two occasions to check the validity of their claims for a penalty that hadn't been seen by the referee.

Messi was then harshly sent off against Chile following a tangle with Gary Medel in which he seemed to do nothing wrong.

The Barcelona star claimed afterwards he had paid for his previous criticisms.

"My words had repercussions, but you must always be sincere," he said.

Tite agreed with that, claiming that Peru's penalty in the final – converted by their captain Paolo Guerrero – should never have been given.

"Today it wasn't a penalty. You have to be careful and show respect, as we respect others," said Tite.

Peru coach Ricardo Gareca, who is Argentine, agreed with his Brazil counterpart.

"Messi is a voice of authority but that doesn't mean I agree with what he said," Gareca added.

Brazil midfielder Casemiro refused to be drawn on the Messi controversy, though.

"They can say what they want, we only talk about Brazil," said the Real Madrid player.

As Brazil celebrated and posed for photos with their trophy, they were joined by the country's far right President Jair Bolsonaro, a deeply divisive figure who has been accused of making racist, sexist and homophobic comments.

As he huddled with the players, some of them chanted "Legend," as his supporters do.

His reception from the crowd was more mixed, though, with jeers audible above many cheering fans.

Asked about the message conveyed by his team celebrating with Bolsonaro, Tite sidestepped it.

"I'm so involved with football, I know things happen, but the way I've been brought up is that my focus is my essence," he said.

Hima Das wins second international gold inside a week

NEW DELHI, JUL 8 (PTI): Star Indian sprinter Hima Das claimed her second international gold in women's 200m with a top finish at the Kutno Athletics Meet in Poland.

Hima, who has been struggling with a back problem for the past few months, clocked 23.97 seconds to clinch the gold while VK Vismaya bagged the silver in 24.06 on Sunday.

National record holder Muhammed Anas also won the gold in men's 200m race with a time of 21.18 seconds.

This was Hima's second competitive 200m race of the year. She has a personal best of 23.10s, which she clocked last year.

In her first competitive 200m race of the year, the Assam runner had clocked 23.65s on her way to gold in the Poznan Athletics Grand Prix, also in Poland, on Tuesday. Vismaya had finished third in that meet with a personal best time of 23.75.

Hima is the reigning world junior champion and national record holder in 400m. National record holder Muhammed Anas also won the gold in men's 200m race at Kutno Athletics Meet in Poland on Sunday.

M P Jabir won the gold in men's 400m hurdles in 50.21 seconds while Jithin Paul was third in 52.26 secs.

Indians swept the women's 400m race through P Saritaben (52.77 secs), Sonia Baishya (53.73 secs) and R Vithya (53.73 secs).

Stead hopes Ferguson will make the difference against India

MANCHESTER, JUL 8 (PTI): Lockie Ferguson is in "good shape" and expected to play in the World Cup semifinals, said New Zealand coach Gary Stead, who has put his faith on the tearaway quick to make the difference against India on Tuesday.

Ferguson, who has emerged as New Zealand's leading wicket-taker in the tournament, had missed their last league match against hosts England at Chester-le-Street due to a hamstring strain.

"I absolutely expect Lockie to play. If the last game was a semi-final or final, we probably would have played him, so it was more a precautionary measure not to play him," Stead told reporters.

"He definitely had some hamstring tightness and he needed 48 hours for that to settle down. He's in good shape and barring getting through the next couple of days, then I expect him to play."

The 28-year-old Ferguson has taken 17 wick-



ets to sit joint-third in the list of bowlers with most wickets in the tournament.

"Lockie has been enormous for us. It is his first World Cup as well and I've just been delighted that every time he's come on to bowl, he's looked like he's going to make a difference out there," Stead said.

"Whether that's through pace, whether that's through creating pressure for the other person at the other end he always has been looking likely and hopefully he can do that again against India."

Martin Guptill has struggled with his form after starting the tour-

nament with an unbeaten 73 against Sri Lanka and Stead said he expects the New Zealand opener to get back among runs soon.

"Martin's got a lot of ODI hundreds and he has been a key player for us in the past. Our job as support staff is to get him in the right frame of mind," said Stead.

"He'll go out and express himself and who knows, if he makes 150 in the next game, then we probably won't be talking about this anymore.

"People go through form slumps and heights all the time. He's had a tough tournament but there's nothing from my point of view that sug-

gests that's going to continue for a long period of time." A hat-trick of losses in the final three league games mean the Black Caps are going into the semifinals as underdogs and Stead believes it will only allow his team to play with more freedom and show their never-say-die attitude.

"We've got a couple of afternoons to be ready for India now. I'm just excited about it as India are a quality team and there's no doubt they've got match-winners throughout their lineup," he said.

"I said from the very start, whoever we play, we're going to have to be somewhere near our very best to beat them but that's the excitement, that's the challenge in front of us."

New Zealand had finished second best at the 2015 World Cup after losing to Australia in the final.

However, the Black Caps have lost six out of seven World Cup semifinals so far and Kane Williamson and his men will try to reach their second World Cup final Tuesday.

Khawaja ruled out of World Cup as Australia call up Wade, Marsh

MANCHESTER, JUL 8 (AFP): Australia head coach Justin Langer has confirmed batsman Usman Khawaja will miss the rest of the World Cup with a hamstring strain.

Top-order batsman Khawaja suffered the left hamstring injury in Australia's surprise 10-run defeat by South Africa at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Matthew Wade will replace Khawaja in the World Cup holders' 15-man squad, subject to confirmation from the International Cricket Council.

Khawaja's absence will be a

blow for Australia heading into Thursday's semi-final clash with old rivals England at Edgbaston.

"It's such a pity for Khawaja, for someone who's been so integral to how we've been playing," Langer told Cricket Australia's website on Sunday. "Like Shaun (Marsh, who broke his arm on Thursday) I feel that sad for him that he's going to miss the World Cup semi-final."

"Matthew Wade is coming up, he's in great form, he's had a great 12 or 18 months back home but he also just scored two hundreds (for Australia A) so he's in great nick."

Meanwhile, Marcus Stoinis was hampered by a side complaint against South Africa, an issue which had already sidelined the all-rounder for two group-stage matches.

Mitchell Marsh has been added to the squad as cover for Stoinis, who missed Australia's wins over Pakistan and Sri Lanka before returning against Bangladesh.

"Mitch Marsh is going to come on standby for Marcus Stoinis to see how he comes up. If they have to come in they'll be ready to step up," Langer added.

Hong Kong police arrest five after new night of clashes

HONG KONG, JUL 8 (AFP): Five people were arrested during overnight clashes in Hong Kong between riot officers and anti-government protesters, police said Monday, as the political violence rocking the international hub shows no sign of abating.

The city has been plunged into its worst crisis in recent history following a month of huge marches as well as separate violent confrontations with police involving a minority of hardcore protesters.

The rallies were sparked by a now-suspended law that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China, but have since morphed into a wider movement calling for democratic reforms and a halt to sliding freedoms in the semi-autonomous territory.

Sunday night saw fresh political violence break out in the district of Mongkok as police baton-charged small groups of masked, largely young protesters who were walking along roads and refused to disperse following another massive, peaceful rally earlier in the day.

In a statement issued early Monday morning,



police said the group were taking part in an "unlawful assembly" and had been warned that officers would take action.

"Some protesters resisted and police arrested five persons for assaulting a police officer and obstructing a police officer in the execution of duties," the statement said.

Activists hit out at the police tactics, saying the protesters in Mongkok had remained peaceful as they made their way home and that violence was started by a shield wall of riot officers that had blocked the crowd's path.

"HKers joined rally

peacefully... against extradition bill result in being beaten and assaulted by HK Police," democracy activist Joshua Wong wrote in a tweet accompanying pictures of at least two protesters with bleeding head wounds.

"Just another example of excessive force used by the police," he added in another tweet.

Public anger has soared against the city's pro-Beijing leaders and its police force after officers used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse protesters outside parliament last month.

Since then the chaos has only escalated.

Last Monday, anger peaked as hundreds of youth-led demonstrators successfully stormed and trashed the city's parliament.

Those unprecedented scenes -- and renewed huge marches -- have failed to persuade the government, whose sole concession so far has been to suspend the loathed extradition bill.

Protesters are demanding the bill be scrapped entirely, an independent inquiry into police use of tear gas and rubber bullets, amnesty for those arrested, and for the city's unelected leader Carrie Lam to step down.

They have also demanded authorities stop characterising protesters as "rioters", a definition that carries much steeper jail terms.

Beijing has thrown its full support behind the embattled Lam, calling on Hong Kong police to pursue anyone involved in the parliament storming and other clashes.

Despite repeated requests, police have not released a breakdown of how many people have been detained in the last month of protests.

A tally kept by AFP shows at least 72 people have been arrested but it is not clear how many have been charged.

BY LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON, JUL 8 (PTI): California's powerful Indian-origin Democratic Senator Kamala Harris has raised more than USD 23 million since she announced her presidential bid in January.

Among over 20 Democratic presidential aspirants, Harris, 54, whose mother had migrated to the US from Chennai, is running neck and neck with former US vice president Joe Biden, particularly after her impressive show at the first Democratic debate held recently.

Harris's presidential campaign raised nearly USD 12 million from more than 279,000 people in the second quarter of 2019. Almost 150,000 new donors contributed to her campaign during the second quarter.

In total, she has raised more than USD 23 million since she announced her presidential bid in January.

According to a campaign statement, Harris brought in more than USD 7 million through her digital programme alone. The campaign's average contribution was USD 39, and the average online contribution was just USD 24. Harris launched her campaign on January 21 with a promise to reject money from corporate political



action committees and federal lobbyists.

So far, Harris's campaign has brought in nearly half a million dollars this quarter from its online store, which has already sold 1,400 'That Little Girl Was Me' t-shirts that feature a now-viral photo of Harris as a young girl. This was the single best-selling item in the month of June, despite not being available until June 28.

"The momentum Kamala Harris is seeing right now is buoyed by hundreds of thousands of grassroots supporters who believe in her 3 am Agenda to address the issues keeping people up at night," said Harris campaign manager Juan Rodriguez.

"As it has been from the beginning, this campaign is powered by the people. These resources will help expand Kamala's growing strength in this primary and put her

position to win the Democratic nomination, Rodriguez said.

Following her commanding performance in the first debate, Harris will return to campaign in New Hampshire Sunday, July 14. At a house party in Gilford and a town hall in Somersworth, Harris will discuss her plans to deliver tangible solutions to the real challenges facing American families.

A day earlier, she announced her USD 100 billion plan to invest in minority home ownership to address the racial wealth gap. The plan would affect four million home buyers who either live on rent or in historically redlined communities' area, amend the credit reporting process and hold lenders accountable for discriminatory practices.

"I will remove unfair barriers Black Americans face when they go to qualify for a home loan. I will strengthen anti-discrimination lending laws and implement stricter enforcement. And I'll invest I'll invest through the federal government USD 100 billion to put home ownership within the reach for those who live in redlined communities and it would help up to four million families with down payments and closing costs," Harris said.

Maryam Nawaz demands PM Imran Khan's resignation

ISLAMABAD, JUL 8 (PTI): Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, has severely criticised Prime Minister Imran Khan and demanded his resignation, the media reported on Monday. In a post-midnight rally on Sunday in Mandi Bahauddin, the 45-year-old opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President, raised slogans against Khan and said that the 66-year-old cricketer-turned-politician does not have any legitimate right to rule Pakistan. Addressing Khan in her speech, she said: "Give your resignation! Go home!" and urged the crowds to chant along with her, Dawn news reported. Maryam also said that keeping her 69-year-old ailing father Sharif in jail will be a crime now, following Saturday's "evidence" alleging that his sentencing had been given under "immense pressure from hidden hands", a claim rejected on Sunday by the presiding judge, Arshad Malik.

In her address, which was held on Jail Road, she claimed that Sharif "will be released, and will become prime minister once more - but this time more powerful than ever before". At a press conference in Lahore on Saturday, Maryam said that the entire judicial process regarding the trial that led to her father being convicted and sentenced to prison was severely compromised.

She also played a secretly recorded video that she claimed featured a conversation between Nasir Butt, a man she described as a loyal fan of Sharif, and Malik, who had in December last year sentenced Sharif to seven years in jail in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills corruption reference and acquitted him in the Flagship Investment case.

Put off by US, Chinese students eye other universities

BEIJING, JUL 8 (AFP): Caught in the crossfire of the US-China trade war, Chinese students are looking for alternative study destinations -- threatening to turn off an important source of revenue for American universities.

China accounts for nearly a third of foreign students on US campuses who pour billions of dollars into the economy, but in March their numbers dropped for the first time in a decade.

Visa delays, concerns over being shut out of research projects and safety fears have turned off Chinese students, according to several admissions consultancies and nearly a dozen parents and students interviewed by AFP.

Rival education powerhouses such as Britain, Australia and Canada are the biggest beneficiaries, a survey by New Oriental China's biggest private education provider said.

Japan and South Korea -- traditional study abroad destinations for the Chinese elite -- and parts of Europe, especially Germany and Scandinavian countries with strong engineering programmes, have also seen an uptick in applications, the survey found.

The chilling effect started mid-last year, after President Donald Trump's administration slashed the visa duration of students in science and technology fields from five years to one in some cases.

"Now there's a lot of uncertainty on whether they can even finish their studies," said Gu Huini, founder of boutique college consultancy Zoom In.

Over one third of the roughly 360,000 Chinese students in the US study in "STEM fields" -- science, technology, engineering and mathematics -- according to the Institute of International Education in New York.

But the number of Chinese students in the US dipped by two per cent in March compared to the previous year, the first drop since 2009, data from the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement shows.

Melissa Zhang, a high school senior in Beijing, said she has



abandoned plans to go to the US and was instead taking German lessons, in the hope of getting into a robotics programme in Dresden.

"I've already wasted a year preparing for my SATs," the 17-year-old said, referring to the standardised test needed to enter a US university. "But what's the point in going to the US if I might be shut out of a research lab, just because I am Chinese." Her mother, Mingyue, said "the American dream is losing its shine" to many Chinese students. "If America makes them feel unwelcome, they'll go elsewhere... this generation feels the whole world is open to them."

Chinese students contributed USD 13 billion to the US economy last year, a figure that includes tuition fees and living expenses, according to NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

Top US universities, including Yale and Stanford, have complained that the trade war has affected campus recruitment.

Rafael Reif, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wrote in an open letter on June 25 that students and faculty felt "unfairly scrutinised, stigmatised and on edge -- because of their Chinese ethnicity alone".

The State Department has said the increased scrutiny was prompted by a rising number of students who were co-opted by foreign intelligence while in the United States.

Eric Wang, 25, a doctoral student at Purdue university in In-

diana, said he was nervous about having to renew his visa every year. "It's difficult to plan long-term research projects or even think about going steady with your girlfriend," said Wang.

Trump attempted to allay Chinese students' fears after reaching a trade war truce with President Xi Jinping at the G20 summit last week, saying they would be treated "just like anybody else".

He also proposed a "smart person's waiver" that would make it easier for the brightest minds to get a Green Card allowing permanent residency.

A Chinese government travel warning last month citing "gun violence and robberies" in the US has also given Chinese high school students and parents cold feet.

"State media have been pumping up reports about crime in the US and families, especially from smaller Chinese cities, feel America isn't safe," said Li Shaowen, who organises foreign college tours.

"We have over 250 families visiting universities in Europe and the UK during this summer break, while only 75 families are going to the US," he said. "The numbers were reverse last year."

Chinese students and parents start hunting for prospective colleges two to three years before application deadlines.

"The pipeline is drying up," said Dorothy Mae, an independent college consultant in Beijing. "US universities will see fewer students from China for several years.

Trump hits back as UK's top envoy calls his White House 'inept'

LONDON, JUL 8 (AFP): US President Donald Trump hit back on Sunday and the UK launched an inquiry after leaked memos revealed Britain's ambassador in the US had described the president and his White House as "inept" and "uniquely dysfunctional".

Trump said Ambassador Kim Darroch had "not served the UK well" and that he and his administration were "not big fans" of the envoy.

Darroch had said Trump's presidency could "crash and burn" and "end in disgrace", according to a cache of secret cables and briefing notes sent back to Britain seen by the Mail on Sunday newspaper.

"We don't really believe this administration is going to become substantially more normal; less dysfunctional; less unpredictable; less faction riven; less diplomatically clumsy and inept," Darroch allegedly wrote in one dispatch.

The paper said the most damning comments by Darroch described Trump, who was received by Queen Elizabeth II during a state visit to Britain just last month, as "insecure" and "incompetent".

A memo sent following the controversial visit said the president and his team had been "dazzled" by the visit but warned Britain might not remain "flavour of the month" because "this is still the land of America First".

He reportedly wrote that the "vicious infight-

ing and chaos" inside the White House -- widely reported in the US but dismissed by Trump as "fake news" -- was "mostly true".

Asked about the leak, Trump told reporters in the US: "The ambassador has not served the UK well, I can tell you that."

"We are not big fans of that man and he has not served the UK well. So I can understand it, and I can say things about him but I won't bother."

The UK foreign ministry said it would carry out a formal investigation into the leak.

Jeremy Hunt, the foreign minister, distanced himself from Darroch's remarks, saying: "It's really important to say that the ambassador was doing his job as an ambassador which is to give frank reports and personal opinions about what's happening in the country where he works, and that's his job to send back those reports but they are personal opinions, not the opinions of the British Government, not my opinion."

"And we continue to think that under President Trump the United States administration is both highly effective and the best possible friend of Britain on the international stage."

Darroch is one of Britain's most experienced diplomats whose posting in Washington began in January, 2016, prior to Trump winning the presidency.

The Mail on Sunday said the memos, likely leaked by someone with

in Britain's sprawling civil service, cover a period beginning in 2017.

In one of the most recent reported dispatches filed on June 22, Darroch criticised Trump's fraught foreign policy on Iran, which has prompted fears in global capitals of a military conflict, as "incoherent" and "chaotic".

He allegedly said the president's assertion that he called off retaliatory missile strikes against the Iranian regime after a US drone was shot down because it risked killing 150 Iranians, "doesn't stand up".

"It's more likely that he was never fully on board and that he was worried about how this apparent reversal of his 2016 campaign promises would look come 2020," Darroch reportedly stated, referring to the next presidential election.

Britain's Foreign Office did not dispute the veracity of the memos.

"The British public would expect our ambassadors to provide ministers with an honest, unvarnished assessment of the politics in their country," a spokeswoman said. "Their views are not necessarily the views of ministers or indeed the government," she added, noting "we pay them to be candid".

"Our team in Washington have strong relations with the White House and no doubt that these will withstand such mischievous behaviour," the spokeswoman said of the potential fallout from the leak.

Want to celebrate being cancer free with good roles: **Nafisa Ali**

BY KOMAL PANCHAMATIA

MUMBAI, JUL 8 (PTI): Veteran actor Nafisa Ali is cancer free and is keen to get back to acting.

Last November, Ali revealed on social media that she was diagnosed with stage three cancer and she took to Instagram again recently to reveal that she was looking for work, preferably elegant roles befitting her seniority and experience.

"My message was to send a greeting and say, 'I am medically certified as cancer-free'. I wanted to share it with my industry and everyone. I am a cancer warrior and I have overcome it and I want to celebrate my life.

"I want to celebrate that I am ok, I am not sick anymore, if there is work for me then I am

happy to do that work. I act in a film once in while and enjoy it. Acting is not my profession, it is my passion," Ali told PTI in an interview.

Veteran actor Neena Gupta had also sought work on social media, which led to performances like "Badhaai Ho".

"She (Gupta) is my dear friend. It is amazing that she did and she got beautiful roles to act. I am happy for her," Ali said. In her Instagram post, Ali wrote a brief introduction: "I am Nafisa Ali Sodhi

and I would like an elegant role to portray in Indian cinema. So looking for a perfect script as a senior actor, I need to work to express my emotions. I will not be dictated to. May God give each of us the strength to follow our dreams."

The actor said she would love to be

Ali's was last seen in 2018 release "Saheb, Biwi Aur Gangster 3".

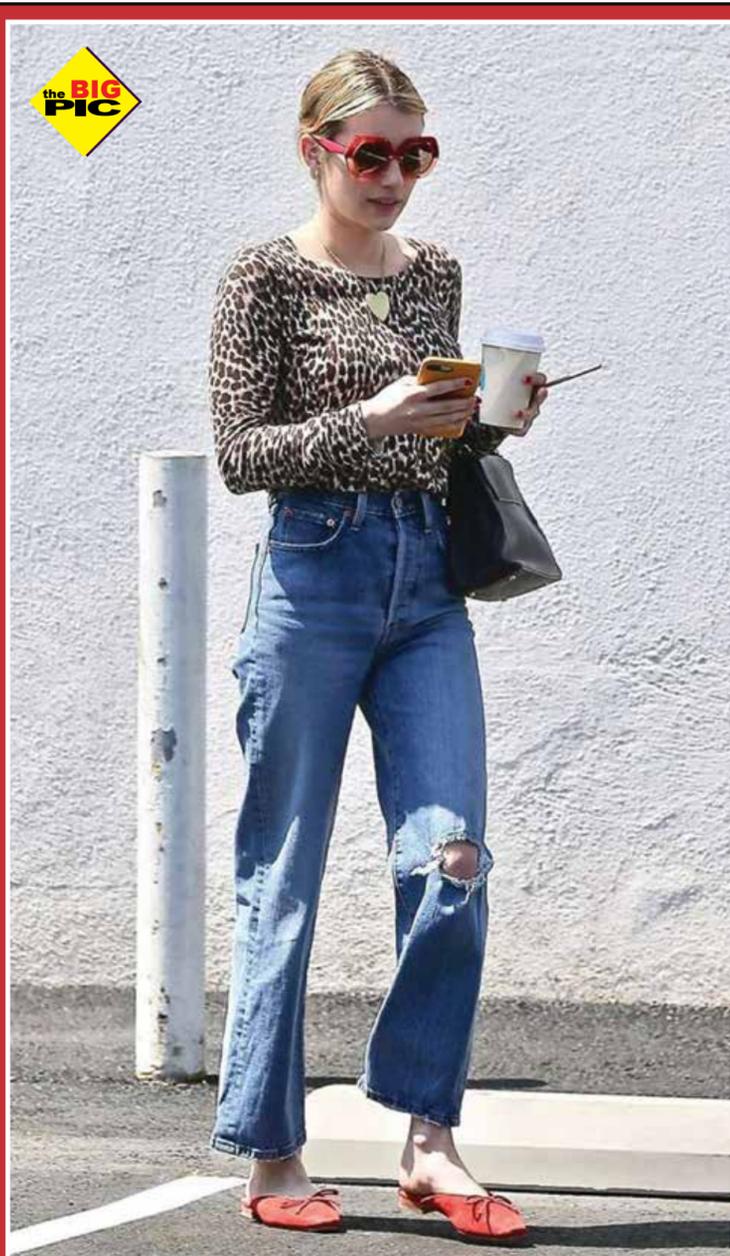
Asked if her post had led to any offers, Ali said it had but she would talk about it when things materialise.

The 62-year-old actor, whose credits include films such as "Major Saab", "Life In a Metro" and "Yamla Pagla Deewana", believes today both storytelling and the audiences' preference have changed.

"There are blockbuster movies but the storytelling today has become interesting. The after effects and all is good. The audience has to be motivated to see a film. Today the audience has become sharper. Today people don't want to see a slapstick, mediocre or badly performed film. People want to see good cinema."

Ali also caught up on Netflix original series "Leila", which explores a dystopian future of oppressive socio-political-religious order.

"I have seen 'Leila' recently and I thought it is a very interesting perspective, of course, it is all fictional. How frightening it can be to have religious fanaticism."



ON THE GO! The actress, Emma Roberts is seen grabbing lunch with friends in Los Feliz, Calif in a casual and fun outfit.

It's time Bollywood stopped recreating, destroying old classic songs: **Baba Sehgal**



MUMBAI, JUL 8 (PTI): Rap star Baba Sehgal has criticised Bollywood for its trend of recreating and remixing old popular songs, calling the Hindi film industry "Copywood".

The recording artiste questioned the intent behind harking back to classic songs, adding the job done by the current crop of music composers was "pathetic".

"It's time Bollywood stop recreating/ remixing old classic film soundtracks. There's no harm in creating a song but the quality, instrumentation and the output in doing so is sad and pathetic. Is it because there is no creativity left or is it because they want to encash

on super popularity of the old song?" asked Sehgal in a statement on Twitter on Sunday.

One of the most popular artistes of the 1990s, Sehgal is best known for songs such as "Thanda Thanda Paani", which sampled Vanilla Ice's "Ice Ice Baby", which in turn sampled Queen's "Under Pressure", "Aaja Meri Gaadi Mein Baith Ja" and "Dil Dhadke".

He also urged the industry to mine out original talent.

"Please tap the right talent as we have it in abundance here and stop destroying and ruining the original. It's become more of Copywood than Bollywood," Sehgal wrote.

nobody's business.

Tip: Exit the war zone before you say or do something regrettable.

CANCER: What if owning less is the secret of living a more fulfilling and purposeful life? Take a look at what you have accumulated and ask yourself how many of these possessions continue to be a source of joy. Decluttering and doing away with all that is redundant could be an important theme for you today. Is there anybody else who could benefit from that old pair of jeans or the books you've read from cover to cover?

Tip: Channel your inner Marie Kondo and do away with the clutter.

LEO: Productivity hack: create a to-do list consisting of five realistic goals. Yes, five is your operative word, Leo. But before you go into panic mode, let me explain. The simpler you keep things for yourself, the easier it is to achieve your target. Given that you are entering an important phase of your career, you want to be on the top of your game.

PS: Just remember to block out distractions while you are at it.

Tip: The secret to increasing your productivity could be a concise to-do list.

VIRGO: Weekly reminder, Virgo: up the social media game. If you can't get your head around the digital world, hire an expert or get a friend to strategise. Remember to be watchful of the ideas that are coming through you at this point. Receptivity is the key to finding creative solutions to your problems.

Tip: The world is ready to celebrate your art.

LIBRA: Who says a banker can't moonlight as a DJ or that a writer can't claim her place on the front stage? Multiple sources of income are opening up for you. Plus, the opportunity to express yourself through a different medium. How you learn to balance the two sides of you will make all the difference.

Tip: Pay attention to the different sources of income that are opening up for you.

SCORPIO: Forgiveness heals. Forgiveness frees. Forgiveness makes space for good chi. Have you been holding onto a grudge since time immemorial? Here's a powerful exercise, Scorpio: take a piece of paper and write

"Apart from Ram and Raavan, every character, be it, Sita, Lakshman or even Hanuman, has something to say which is why we are telling the story in three parts," Tiwari said in a statement.

Udyawar said he is looking forward to direct the film.

"I heard these stories from my grandmother and mother and passed them on to my children. Everybody knows the story of Ram, Sita and Raavan, it's the storytelling that will make our trilogy memorable and I'm putting everything I have learnt into it to make it fun and engaging while staying true to the original," he added.

"Ramayana" will be made with actors from Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati and Punjabi film industries as the makers are targeting pan-India as well as the global audience.

The project has been in progress for the past three years.

The team is hoping to start production next year and eyeing a 2021 release for the first part.

Nitesh Tiwari, Ravi Udyawar to direct live-action 'Ramayana' trilogy



MUMBAI, JUL 8 (PTI): Nitesh Tiwari and Ravi Udyawar are set to co-direct live-action trilogy "Ramayana", producer Madhu Mantena announced on Monday.

Tiwari of "Dangal" fame and "Mom" director Udyawar are joining hands to helm the series which will be made in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu and shot in 3D, a press release said.

Besides Mantena, Allu Aravind and Namit Malhotra are also attached to produce the project, which is mounted on an estimated budget of Rs 500 crore.

The epic Ramayana is not only a revered ancient text in Indian mythology but also an integral part of the culture, said Tiwari, adding the team will make sure the film bears a stamp of authenticity.

"Madhu and Ravi have been friends for years, Allu sir and Namit are legends and Sridhar has fabulous credentials as a creator. All we have to do now is zap the world..."

'The Platform' winners announced, will showcase at LFW Winter/Festive 2019

MUMBAI, JUL 8 (PTI): Fashion designers Akshat Bansal, Shweta Gupta and Salita Nanda, who emerged as the winners of the competitive rounds of the second edition of 'The Platform', will showcase their creations at the upcoming Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) Winter/Festive 2019.

LFW and smartwater, water brand by Coca-Cola, made the announcement on Monday.

A jury comprising ace-fashion designer Amit Aggarwal, Anoop Manohar, Director, Emerging Categories, Coca-Cola India; Jaspreet Chandok, Vice President and Head of Fashion, IMG Reliance; Nonita Kalra, Editor of Harper's Bazaar and Azmina Rahimtoola co-owner at Atosa, selected the winners.

"After the successful launch of 'The Platform' in Lakme Fashion Week Winter Festive 2018, we are happy to associate with smartwater once again to reinforce our commitment to creating multiple opportunities for identifying and nurturing fresh talent.

"Happy to add that we have received more than double the number of entries as compared to the first season which further exemplifies how the property is growing a step upwards every season," Chandok said in a statement.

Manohar said the team is proud to give direction to the careers of budding fashion designers.

"We feel honoured to be surrounded by such talent, who portrayed the theme Made Differently' magnificently in their designs with a touch of innovation. Looking at the entries that reflected the increased enthusiasm for The Platform' among young designers, we feel all the more encouraged to come up with creative themes, more challenging and more exciting for the next edition," he added.

LFW is scheduled to happen from August 21 to 25 here.

ARIES: Don't let your impatient side get the better of you today. You are being tested. The best thing you can do for your inner well-being is surrender to the flow and allow things to unfold naturally. Trust that everything is taking place in divine time. Move beyond your three dimensional perception of things. Connecting with your spiritual side is going to be just as important for you this week. Pay attention to the guidance that's coming through.

Tip: Clichéd as it is, everything is sign.

Taurus: Food for thought courtesy Maya Angelou: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Continue to vibrate at the frequency of unconditional love.

Tip: Your good vibes will draw people to you.

GEMINI: Your weather forecast for the week: 100 per cent chance of chaos and 50 per cent chance of conflict. Exit the war zone before you say or do something regrettable.

With eclipse season in full force, you'll find that people are projecting their shadows like