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SummitTIMES

Vol 04 | Issue 229 | Gangtok | Tuesday | 27 August 2019

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

BJP Sikkim welcomes its 10 new MLAs

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

The BJP on Monday accorded a grand welcome to the 10 Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) MLAs who switched over to the party earlier this month in New Delhi. The MLAs along with some SDF Panchayat members were welcomed by the State BJP president, DB Chauhan in a function organized near the BJP office at Golitar, Singtam. Also present were executive members and other party members.

“We expect that these MLAs will work with dedication to make our party a strong outfit in Sikkim,” state Mr Chauhan said at the reception at Singtam, about 25 kilometre from here.

The 10 legislators include former Minister D T Lepcha, once a trusted aide of the former Chief Minister and SDF president, Pawan Chamling.

MLA DT Lepcha, in his address, called on the



people not to harbour any fears or doubts about BJP.

Addressing the worry triggered by the abrogation of Article 370 by the BJP Government at the centre, Mr Lepcha while claiming that Article 370 [for Kashmir] and Article 371F which extends spe-

cial status to Sikkim cannot be compared.

He added that Central leaders have reassured them that Article 371F is safe and that anyone suggesting otherwise was peddling in rumours and fear-mongering.

Rangang Yangang

MLA, Raj Kumari Thapa explained that being people's representatives, they took the decision to join the BJP keeping in mind the interests and developmental needs of the people and the State.

As for the ridicule

and criticism which has been heaped on the defecting MLAs, Ms Thapa said that when it comes to the interest of the people, they were ready to absorb all the brickbats thrown their way.

Similarly, Upper Bur-tuk MLA, DR Thapa ap-

pealed to the people for support and claimed that the 10 Opposition MLAs, now that they belong to the party in power at the Centre, will have more power and influence and will be able to work more effectively in the interest of the people. Opposition MLAs have traditionally been sidelined in the State.

Later, Tumin Lingee MLA, Ugen T Gyatso Bhutia, while speaking to media persons, called on the people to deliver the State a strong and stable government.

“We took up politics to serve the people and have now joined the BJP to continue serving the people and work in their interest,” he said.

The 10 legislators had met BJP working president, J P Nadda and joined the party on 13 Aug in the presence of its general secretary Ram Madhav, who is in charge of the party's affairs in the Northeast.

TMC hopeful of regaining control of Bongaon municipality

KOLKATA, AUG 26 (PTI):

The Trinamool Congress on Monday exuded confidence of regaining control of Bongaon municipality, that it had lost to BJP due to defection of its councillors, and accused the BJP of trying to threaten its elected representatives there.

The BJP was quick to hit back, alleging it was Trinamool Congress which was threatening the councillors, who had switched over to saffron party, with dire consequences if they didn't return to the party fold.

The war of words between the two followed a Calcutta High Court order during the day which set aside a vote of confidence held at Bongaon Municipality on its chairman last month and ordered to carry a fresh process to decide his fate.

The court on Monday directed that a fresh vote of confidence be held within 12 days at the office of the district magistrate of North 24 Parganas.

“We are confident of regaining the control of Bongaon municipality. We had the majority but BJP threatened and forced our councillors to join BJP. Later on the councillors returned to us as they couldn't accept the culture of BJP,” TMC secretary general Partha Chatterjee told reporters here.

Reacting to Chatterjee's claim, BJP state president Dilip Ghosh said if a trust vote is held in a free and fair manner, the BJP would win.

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Sikkim Govt writes to MHA against opening of sacred peaks

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

The State Government has written to the Home Secretary, Government of India to withdraw the decision to open 24 peaks in Sikkim for mountaineering/trekking, as per an IPR release. The CM has also written a letter to the Home Minister, Government of India to immediately de-list the 14 sacred peaks, which are already notified by the State Government as such.

The Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava informed the Chief Minister about the letter today in a meeting held at Tashiling Secretariat with the CM, Minister for Ecclesiastical Department, Home Secretary and Tourism Secretary.

The CS informed that the letter has already been issued to the Home Secretary, Government of India to withdraw the decision to open 24 peaks in

Sikkim for mountaineering/trekking which is of grave concern to the Government and the people of Sikkim.

The Government has also spoken to the authorities of the Ministry of Home Affairs about the issue which is being resolved by the Ministry, the release informs.

The CM along with the Ecclesiastical Minister may call on the Union Home Minister to follow up on the issue, the release mentions.

Changemakers: A convocation at 13,000 ft in Ladakh for young innovators with Himalayan dreams

KUNAL DUTT

HEMIS (LADAKH), AUG 26 (PTI): When 52 young innovators dressed in maroon graduation robes gathered in the courtyard of a 17th century Buddhist monastery, surrounded by jagged mountains at nearly 13,000 ft in Ladakh, the convocation was anything but ordinary.

The first batch of year-long Naropa Fellowship graduated in a ceremony held on Sunday at the iconic Hemis Monastery premises, where Ladakh MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal and Chief Executive Councillor, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Gyal P Wangyal were among the guests.

The Naropa Fellowship, named after ancient Buddhist scholar Naropa, was inspired by His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa, of Drukpa Buddhist lineage, and co-founded by His Eminence Drukpa Thuksey Rinpoche and educationist Pramath Raj Sinha, also founder of the Ashoka University.

“We named the fellowship after Naropa, as he was a great scholar and also was a student of the Nalanda University. The programme seeks to foster in these select candidates a spirit of innovation with a sensitive eye on the fragile Himalayan region. These are our Himalayan heroes,” Rinpoche told PTI.

The Buddhist leader earlier spoke at the ceremony in Ladakhi as many monks watched the ceremony from the sidelines eagerly. “It's an honour to present leaders of



tomorrow who will create a meaningful impact in the Himalayan region,” he was quoted as saying in a statement issued by authorities at Naropa Fellowship on Monday.

“With Ladakh being declared as a Union Territory, our vision is now aligned in removing major barriers in the prevailing education system in the region and create opportunities for youth to study and become successful entrepreneurs,” Rinpoche said.

The Buddhist leader of the Drukpa lineage also emphasised on the beautiful setting of the convocation, which he said, will inspire these young minds to dream big but remain humble towards the nature. The 52

fellows, drawn from different parts of the country, including one-third from Ladakh region, collected their certificates on a modest stage that was dwarfed by towering dry, brown mountains and overhanging skies on a sunny afternoon in heavenly Ladakh.

Namgyal said the fellowship was introduced for the first time in Ladakh, and such steps were needed for Ladakh's future as also for the global ecological system.

With Ladakh standing at a cusp of a historic change, these 52 young, dynamic entrepreneurs, during their fellowship, came up with several innovative projects across diverse fields to

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Governor's recent address proves Chamling led Sikkim well: SDF

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

Sikkim Democratic Front has asserted that the Governor's speech at the launch of a magazine in Gangtok on Sunday has proved that strong strides were made towards women's upliftment and empowerment in the State during the SDF government led by former Chief Minister Pawan Chamling.

Reiterating that Sikkim received inclusive development, the party has credited this to the far-sightedness and visionary leadership of Mr Chamling which brought Sikkimese women to the forefront of social, political, administrative, economic, educational and other fields.

An SDF press release issued by its spokesperson, JB Darnal, mentions that in his address, the Governor mentioned that Sikkim was the most secure state for women in the country and that the State has more women officers in the State administration than men.

It is informed that he also termed Sikkim as a model State for women's empowerment and security.

On the same, the release adds that the Governor's observations have proven Mr Chamling's credentials as an able leader and underlines that women's empowerment was not an overnight event and required consistent commitment and visionary programmes and strong political will.

SPG: 3,000 plus force provides proximate security to 4 VVIPs

NEW DELHI, AUG 26 (PTI): Special Protection Group (SPG), an about 3000-strong “zero error” security force for the prime minister, former prime ministers and their immediate family members, guards just four people now, officials said on Monday.

Personnel for the SPG are drawn from various Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) on deputation and it is a highly trained unit equipped with some of the most modern weapons, gadgets and vehicles. “The SPG with its 3,000 strong commandos now provides close proximate security to just four persons-- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her two children -- Rahul and Priyanka,” a security official said.

The government on Monday confirmed that the SPG protection given to former prime minister Manmohan Singh has been withdrawn but he will continue to enjoy ‘Z-Plus’ security cover by one of the CAPFs.

SPG officers are ingrained in high leadership qualities, professionalism, knowledge of proximate security and inculcate the culture of leading from the front, according to the SPG's website.

“The SPG has strived to achieve this by adopting innovative methods not only in its own working, but also in the overall security arrangements in collaboration with the Intelligence Bureau and state/UT police forces.

“It is because of the high leadership qualities, professionalism and knowledge of its officers that the SPG ensures fail proof and zero-error security for its protectees,” it said.

The elite force has a very unique set of security protocols and every time its protectees are expected to travel, multiple small teams are formed to ensure that a VVIP is safe against all kinds of security threats.

The agency has an advance security liaison protocol in which officials visit a venue in advance and sanitise the place about 24 hours before the arrival of the VVIP.

“The SPG has the first right amongst all security agencies when it comes to ensuring protection to the VVIP. It is their common protocol to take over a venue about 24 hours in advance and they are empowered to direct any changes or modifications at the venue be it a political rally or a ceremonial event,” a former SPG officer said.

Apart from other essential teams, including snipers, spotters and bomb disposal experts, the SPG is known to provide proximate security to VVIPs and move with them like their shadow.

The agency, another official said, follows a special ‘blue book’ to undertake its special drills which are clandestine till they are executed.

The training of SPG personnel is a continuous process and it includes training in physical efficiency, marksmanship, anti-sabotage checks, communication and other operative aspects, connected with close protection drills, the official said.

turn to pg02

Jal Shakti Abhiyan rally by Tinik JHS



JORETHANG, 26 AUG (IPR): As part of Jal Shakti Abhiyan a slogan rally was taken out by school students of Tinik Junior High School today. The aim of this rally is to sensitize people regarding water conservation at Tinik Chisopani Village under Poklok Nandugan BAC.

The students were led by BDO Poklok-Kamrang, Tenzing Bhutia present amongst others were Gram Panchayats along with Assistant Director, Reepa Lepcha, Assistant Engineer, Laxmi Prasad

Pradhan, Headmaster, Dawa Tsh Sherpa, APO MGNREGA, Sangita Sharma alongside Teachers and BAC staff.

During the rally, students carried placards displaying messages of Jal Shakti Abhiyan in order to inform people about the importance of conservation of water and its security. The slogan rally was carried out from Gram Prasashan Kendra Tinik Chisopani to CCCT Fatak covering the nearby 25 households and more than 100 individuals.

Sikkim Diploma Engineers Assoc forms new exec body



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

A new executive body of All Sikkim Diploma Engineers Association was formed under the guidance of the former executive body which had restored the association, a press release informs.

The following members have been unanimously appointed to the main governing body:

President-Sonam Karthak; Vice President-Sinora Lepcha; General Secretary-Sangay Tamang; Organising Secretary-Navin Chettri; Fi-

nance Secretary-Hishey Choden Gurung; Publicity Secretary-Tenzing Norbu Bhutia

The formalities of handing-taking over were held on 25 August and the new executive body constituted district-level representatives.

The association plans to table recommendations for the future of their members and include diploma engineers under Sikkim State Civil Engineering Rules in a recommendation they propose to submit to the Chief Minister, it is informed.

SPG: 3,000...

As per the SPG Act, state governments and UT administrations are bound to provide all kinds of cooperation the force whenever there is a need.

Commandos carry ultra-modern assault rifles, dark-visor goggles, communication earpieces, bulletproof vests, gloves and elbow and knee pads, the official said.

The SPG has a fleet of modern vehicles, most of them are armoured or bullet-proof. These include armoured BMW 7 series sedans, armoured Range Rovers, SUVs of BMW, Toyota and Tata make.

It also uses Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft, including helicopters, for transporting its personnel, equipment and vehicles for service of the dignitary whenever he or she travels within the country as well as abroad, the official said.

The agency was raised in 1985 after the assassination of prime minister Indira Gandhi. Parliament passed the SPG Act in 1988, dedicating the group to protecting the prime minister.

Later, the Act was amended for providing security to former prime ministers and their immediate family members.

TMC hopeful of...

The Bongaon municipality had witnessed a lot of drama since the Lok Sabha poll results after majority of the 22 councillor strong Bongaon municipality switched over to BJP.

Initially TMC had 21 councillors and CPI(M) one. But, after the Lok Sabha poll results, 11 TMC crossed over to the BJP camp and brought a no confidence motion against the Chairman. The BJP thus gained effective control of the municipality.

But, within a month, four of its councillors, who had defected to the BJP, returned to the party fold, taking Trinamool Congress strength from 10 to 14.

The TMC held a trust vote on July 16 and claimed to have got hold of the civic body with the support of the lone Congress councillor.

The 11 BJP councillors, however, could not attend the trust vote as they were allegedly locked up inside the civic body office. Later, the saffron party moved the Calcutta High Court against the trust vote claiming that they have the majority.

Four SDF Panchayats join SKM

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

Four Sikkim Democratic Front Panchayats from Daramdin Constituency joined Sikkim Krantikari Morcha today, as per an SKM release.

The four Panchayats are Panchayat member, Ward No 4 under Lungchok Salangdang GPU, DR Bhujel; Panchayat member, Ward No 3, Lungchok Salangdang GPU, Ganga Maya Subba; Panchayat member, Ward No 6, under Lungchok Salangdang GPU, Rup Narayan Chettri; and Panchayat member, Ward No 1 under Lungchok Salangdang GPU, Deepak Darjee.



They were accorded warm welcome by Chief Minister cum SKM president, PS Tamang [Go-lay] in his office. While interacting with the new Panchayat members, the CM appreciat-

ed their decision to join SKM and assured them all the necessary support from his end for the development of their respective gram panchayat wards.

Also present were

Minister cum MLA, MN Sherpa, MP, Indra Hang Limboo, Political Secretary to CM, Jacob Khaling, Confidential Secretary to CM, Bikash Basnet and members of CLC Daramdin Constituency.

CS attends Regional Workshop on Inclusive Green Economies

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava attended the Eastern Regional Consultative Workshop towards Inclusive Green Economies at Kolkata on 23 Aug 2019.

The workshop was organised by Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) on multi agency initiative of the UN comprising UN Environment Programme (UNEP), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

PAGE in collaboration with The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), in India, organised the workshop on the

above theme with a vision to foster an inclusive green economy to support studies, visioning processes, stakeholder engagement, dissemination of knowledge, best practices and capacity building and support for development of national plan on 10YEP for sustainable consumption and production. The workshop had the participation of 11 (Eleven) Eastern and North Eastern States of the Country.

The Chief Secretary was invited as the Keynote Speaker of the workshop. He highlighted the various important aspects of sustainable development and the initiatives taken by the State Government.

The workshop acknowledged the efforts of the State in ensuring a cleaner and greener environment for all, the release mentions.

Allow BJP MLAs to sit together, WB party chief to ask speaker

KOLKATA, AUG 26 (PTI): West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh on Monday said he will meet state Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee to request him to allow the six party MLAs to sit together in the house.

These six legislators of the BJP had either won in the 2016 Assembly election or during by-polls later.

"The MLAs of Congress, CPI(M) are allowed to sit together but our MLAs are not. This is not right. I would meet the speaker and request him to make arrangements. It would help our MLAs for better coordination on the floor of the house," Ghosh said.

Besides these six who had won on BJP tickets, there are eight MLAs - seven from the TMC and one from the Congress - who had switched over to the BJP after the Lok Sabha polls.

The BJP is on a wait and watch mode over the issue of assembly membership of these eight.

"There are around 19 MLAs from the Congress and the CPI(M), who had switched over to the TMC since 2016 assembly polls. But they are yet to resign as MLAs. If they resign, we would also ask the TMC MLAs,

who had joined our party, to resign. Till then we will keep a close watch on what the ruling party does," a senior BJP leader said.

The Trinamool Congress leadership is in a fix over deciding the fate of seven party MLAs, who have switched over to the saffron camp recently.

According to TMC sources, the party is yet to take a call on bringing these MLAs under the anti-defection law, as such a step would also force legislators of other parties who had crossed over to the TMC in the last few years, to lose their membership.

The BJP has asked TMC MLAs, who had defected to the BJP, to raise voice on the "misrule" prevailing in Bengal.

A special session of the West Bengal Assembly began on Monday and will continue till September 6.

Buoyed by impressive performance in the Parliamentary election when the BJP won 18 out of a total 42 Lok Sabha seats in Bengal, only four less than the TMC, the saffron party leaders have been asserting that their next target was to unseat the Mamata Banerjee government in the 2021 assembly polls.

North BLOs trained in Electoral Verification Process



MANGAN, 26 AUG 26 (IPR): A day-long training-cum-workshop on Electoral Verification Process to the Block Level Officers who are assigned to supervise polling stations in the district was conducted here at Election Hall of DAC Mangan today.

Deputy Director, Information and Technology Department, East, Zangpo Gyaltsen explained the features present in the "BLO-NET" App which will be launched soon on Android smart phones. This app will allow the BLOs to correct logical errors and to check details of the electors on the go. The features of NVSP were also explained.

Mr Gyaltsen also explained about the marking process of polling stations on BLONET App which includes recording the visual details of the polling booths and its surroundings by the BLOs in their respective stations. This visual detail includes satellite image, road map, building front view, longitudes and latitudes and the close view of the polling booth.

The electoral verification process will begin from 01 September and concludes on 15 September as informed.

Rhenock SHGs hold annual meeting



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 26 AUG:

Annual General Meeting of eleven Self Help groups (SHG) of Sundunglakh Suintaley and Gairi Gaon Ward Development committee was organised at Mulukey under Sikkim State livelihood Rural Mission (SSLRM) Rhenock block today, a press release informs.

The meeting was chaired by senior citizen, Padam Chettri accompanied by Deputy CEO, Tenzing Geley, BPM, Dawa Yankee Bhutia and APM, Bhim Pd Dahal of Rhenock BAC, members of different SHGs and president Farmers Produc-

ers organization Rongli, Manoj Sharma.

The welcome speech was given by Gairi Gaon Ward resource person, Aakriti Rai and welcome dance was performed by students of Bethal Academy as well as a play by SHG members. Block resource person, Pranita Sharma talked on role of SHG in development of society.

Block Project Manager, Dawa Yankee Rhenock block and Deputy CEO of SSLRM/RM&DD Gangtok spoke on functions of SHG. Members of SHG and Anganwadi worker Mulukey participated in the interaction session.

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Changemakers...

shape the future of the Himalayan region with sustainable solutions.

"Perhaps, never has been a convocation held in such a beautiful and iconic setting where the grand beauty of nature puts you in a sense of awe. And, as you graduate today after finishing the fellowship, innovation will be your watchword but the sustainability of the Himalayan region at the core of it," said Sinha, also Dean of the Fellowship.

Hemis village, situated in an idyllic environment near the shimmering Indus River, is located about 45 km from Leh town. The eponymous monastery, the largest Drukpa lineage monastery, is perched in the mountains in a picturesque setting.

Giving a touch of Ladakhi culture, many parents attended the event in traditional attire, and one even spun a Buddhist wheel as the ceremony was underway, while little monks watched the programme from the first floor of a building in the courtyard.

The maroon robes of fellows matched the colour of traditional robes worn by monks amid the iconic architecture of the monastery.

Wangyal, in his address, said the Naropa Fellowship injects entrepreneurial skill that will "foster a sustainable environment in Ladakh and also in other parts of the country".

"Through innovation people in the Himalayan region will thrive and prosper for generations to come. This fellowship will address also rising challenges of unemployment and lack of training and skills, besides the steady cultural erosion of our old school tradition and morality," he said.

He said the younger generation needs to be educated "about the struggles of our forefathers and companionship with nature, and the Ladakhi culture".

Rudrangshu Mukherjee, chancellor of Ashoka University in his keynote speech, cited experiences of filmmaker Satyajit Ray at the Visva Bharati university in Shantiniketan about its aura, saying, similarly, the setting of "rough-hewn mountains and Indus river nearby should inspire a sense of contemplation and a sense of wonder".

ANTHYESTI KRIYA

Anthyesti Kriya of late Nimsang Doma Lama Pradhan, wife of late Shiva Pradhan, who left for heavenly abode on 16 Augusty, 2019 falls on 29th August (Thursday).

All relatives, friends, family and well-wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence, Balawakhani, Gangtok, Sikkim.

Daughters: Jyoti Pradhan and Preeti Pradhan. Contact 70768 53631



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Building and Other Construction Workers’ Welfare Board meets

GANGTOK, 26 AUG (IPR): The 36th Board Meeting of the Sikkim Building and Other Construction Workers’ Welfare Board was held today under the Chairmanship of Minister for Labour Department, MN Sherpa.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Labour Department, SD Negi, Joint Labour Commissioner, DS Kunwar and other Board Members as well as representatives of the NHPC, Teesta Urja Ltd, GREF and other organizations in the construction sector.

During the meeting, the Minister remarked that collection and utilization of BOCW welfare cess by the department and concerned organization, which needs a substantial utilization.

He elaborated, on the agendas and it commenced with the agenda wise discussion: confirmation of the Minutes of the last meeting of the Sikkim BOCW’ Welfare Board, finalization of Handbook for inspection



purpose, providing welfare facility to the registered workers and their family members, coverage of GREF and PWD workers under the Employees State Insurance (ESIC) Act, 1948 and the submission of progress of the construction work of Transit Accommodation/Labour Shed-cum-Night Shelter for the workers registered under the BOCW Act, 1996 at 7th mile, East Sikkim. They need to work effectively in this regard for ensuring welfare of workers, he added.

The meeting discussed proposed amend-

ments to the Building & Other Construction Workers Acts and Rules. Board Members called for improved Insurance of the labour, registration of workers as well as implementation of schemes for the welfare of construction workers.

The meeting decided to institute a system of compulsory registration and insurance by the labour and its organization. A decision was taken that all construction workers should be mandatorily enrolled in all the assistance provided by the Government, and the workers should be

supported in their Health Check-up which should be mandatorily conducted.

The Committee also decided to set up a sub-committee to examine in detail the recommendations and grievances put forth by the organizations and its labour for amendment of Acts and Rules and to suggest better implementation of schemes for welfare of construction workers.

It was also informed that through various schemes welfare facilities will be provided to the laborer as per the need.

SMIMS hosts workshop on clinical anatomy of pelvis

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 AUG: A two-day medical training workshop on dissection-based clinical anatomy of the pelvis, and procedures with chronic pelvic pain, as part of advanced medical training for students began at Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences (SMIMS), Gangtok, from today, a press release informs.

The workshop is being organised by the Department of Anatomy, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences (SMIMS), Gangtok and was inaugurated by Lt Gen, MD Venkatesh, Vice-Chancellor, Sikkim Manipal University.

It was also attended by Brig (Dr) Vijay Kumar Mehta, Dean, SMIMS, Prof Dr KS Sherpa, Registrar, SMU, faculty members and students.

The main resource person of the workshop is Professor & Chairperson of Anatomy, Ras Al Khaimah College of Medical Sciences, RAKMHSU, Ras Al, UAE.

Explaining the ratio-



nale behind the workshop, Assistant Professor, Department of Anatomy, SMIMS, Dr Polly Lama, who is also the Organising Secretary of the workshop said that as the anatomy of pelvis is complex, and pelvic surgeries are often avoided due to close association of the pelvic structure with furthermore complex sympathetic, parasympathetic and enteric nerves. Thus, the main focus of this workshop is to provide an anatomical overview of the pelvis along with recent clinical, surgical and anatomical updates.”

The workshop will

be of benefit to the post graduate medical students of SMIMS and Sikkim Manipal College of Physiotherapy (SMCPT), junior and senior residents, as well as final year medical students.

The workshop will provide comprehensive knowledge about the topographical relations of the structures in the pelvis with recent updates on anatomical and clinical correlations. It will also address and discuss chronic pelvic pain problems with emphasis on gastroenterology, gynaecology, musculoskeletal, nervous system and oncologic cases.

Pelvic dissections of the structures and corresponding organs will follow up with discussion on complexity of sympathetic and parasympathetic innervations with updates on sympathetic and parasympathetic neuropeptides/neurotransmitters as a basis of pain for clinical research.

Interactive discussion sessions with faculties on clinical cases, updates on anatomical variations of the pelvic viscera, nerves and corresponding structures will be of value to practising medical students for future diagnostic evaluations and developing interventions.

Centre to skill 30,000 people in Meghalaya: Irani

SHILLONG, AUG 26 (PTI): Union Minister Smriti Irani Monday said that the Centre will skill 30,000 people in Meghalaya under the ‘Samarth’ scheme in apparel, textiles and handloom sectors.

Irani, who is the union minister for textiles said that it is the direction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to skill the people of Meghalaya so that 54,000 craftspeople in the state get benefits from and are aided by the Centre.

The number of people to be skilled has been increased from 7,200, which was decided upon earlier, as the Centre is committed to supplement Meghalaya government’s endeavours for development in the textiles sector, Irani said laying the foundation stone of the Integrated Textiles Tourism complex at Nongpoh in Ri-Bhoi district. The Samarth scheme - 2018 launched by the Centre under the supervision of the textiles ministry is focused on offering employees employment opportunities and training in the textiles sector. Under this scheme the central government aims at provide skill development training programme to over 10 lakh selected youths.

The complex and its activities are being funded by the Centre so that the art of Meghalaya prospers, she said. Irani also visited the upcoming National Institute of Fashion Technology campus here and said that the work on it be completed soon as Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to inaugurate it in November.

I must compliment that the Shillong NIFT has one of the most beautiful NIFT campuses in the country, she said.

Irani, who is also the union minister for women and child development, reviewed the functioning of the social welfare and health and family welfare departments and took stock of the implementation of various schemes under the department of women and child development.

DC East contributes cash award to CM’s Relief Fund

GANGTOK, 26 AUG (IPR): DC/East, Raj Yadav called on Chief Minister, PS Tamang (Golay) at his office in Tashiling, Secretariat this afternoon and handed over the Indian Express - Excellence in Governance Award 2018, which he recently received in the national capital.

Mr Yadav also gave the prize money of Rs 1 lakh received by him along with the award to the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund.

During the short interaction, the Chief Minister,



ister, PS Tamang (Golay) congratulated Mr Yadav for his achievement and also hoped that he will continue with his good work in the East district where he is posted now as DC, just like the way he did in South and North districts.

On the other hand Mr

Yadav assured the Chief Minister to give his best and work even harder and more diligently for the betterment of the state.

Minister RMDD, Sonam Lama, Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava and Secretary to Chief Minister, SD Dhakal were also present.

UPF holds Peace Principle Seminar

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 AUG: Universal Peace Federation of Sikkim organised a daylong programme on “Peace Principle Seminar” at UPF Hostel, Daragaon, Tadong. The programme was attended by students of Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College Gangtok.

Leader of UPF Sikkim, Guena Salazar Tamang gave a lecture on introduction of UPF which is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United



Nation. She also briefly introduced Divine Principles where she highlighted the importance of family values.

A programme was also organised on Sunday which was attended by members of Youth & Students for Peace where center leader, Krishna Tamang gave a speech on

moral values.

He further discussed various programmes to be organised in different parts of Sikkim on family values & activities to be carried out. He plans to organise one programme at Temi-Tarku & one at Namthang, South Sikkim in the second week of September this year.

“CHALISWA” (PRAYER MEETING)

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

“AMEEN”

Maniul Haque Ansari(Husband), Naseema Bano & Rubina Anjum(Daughters) Mohshin Raza (son).

Time: 10:00 am onwards



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

Two Sikkim girls clinch gold in shooting C’ship at Uttarakhand

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 26 AUG: Two girls from Sikkim, Tussita Rai and Devanshi Agarwal bagged seven medals in the 16th Uttarakhand Inter School State Shooting Championship held at Rana Shooting Range from 16 to 18 August, a press release informs.



Tussita bagged three gold and one silver medal while Devanshi Agarwal bagged one gold and two silver medals for Ecole Globale International Girl’s School, Dehradun.

The girls were part of Ecole School’s team which bagged a total of 56 medals, comprising of 34 Gold, 15 Silver and 7 Bronze medals.

Tussita Rai is from Gangtok and daughter of CB Rai while Devanshi Agarwal is the daughter of Sanket Agarwal from Singtam.



Government of Sikkim

Social Justice & Welfare Department

(Welfare Division)

Namchi, South Sikkim

Ref No: 36/SJ & WD/WD/S

Dated: 23/08/19

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from the Local Eligible candidates for filling up of 2 (two) posts of Graduate Language Teachers (Bhutia & Tamang) on Adhoc basis for Ekalavya Model Residential School Suntoley, South Sikkim, under SJ & WD(Welfare Division). The initial appointment shall be upto the end of 2020, Academic Session and further extension shall be decided as per the performance and requirement.

The eligibility criteria:-

Sl.NO.	Name of Post	Post	Educational Qualification	Consolidated Pay	Age Limit
1	Graduate Teacher (Bhutia)	1	Graduate/Post	Rs.18000/-	Should not have attained 40 year of age, as on September 2019.
2	Graduate Teacher (Tamang)	1	Graduate from a recognized University	Rs.18000/-	

Requisite documents:-

1. Sikkim Subject Certificate/ Certificate of Identification (COI) (attested copy).
2. Mark Sheet & Pass Certificate of Class X, XII, Graduation/ Post Graduation (attested copies).
3. Valid Employment Card (attested copy).
4. Passport Size Photographs 3 copies.
5. Birth Certificate (attested copy).
6. Community Certificate (attested copy).
7. B.Ed Pass Certificate (attested copy).
8. Preference will be given t TET Passed Candidates.
9. Aadhaar Card (attested copy).

The last date for the submission of application is 12th September 2019, at Welfare Office, NAMchi, South Sikkim.

The interview shall be held for the eligible candidates and the details of the same shall be intimated after 12th September 2019.

For further details please visit Welfare Office SJ & WD, DAC Namchi, South.

Contact No. 9832068189, 9593282030, 9832071998.

Sd/-

Member Secretary

EMRS Suntoley Sadam

South Sikkim.

R.O. No. 160/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20

Dated: 26.08.2019

It's Everyone's Responsibility

The minors need to be kept safe and allowed their childhood

It is not easy to grow inured to issues that demand our involvement. We ease into such somnolence after years of consciously looking the other way until we reach a stage where most people prefer to remain silent spectators even when they are witness to obvious maltreatment. We deflect guilt by pretending sympathy at discussions around the dinner table and convincing ourselves that it is not 'proper' to get involved in what transpires beyond our private spaces. Soon, with this distancing sets in indifference, and with that everything that a society stands for starts falling apart. The collapse is already happening all around us and this is because the society is not striving to make things better for the underprivileged and the marginalised. It is in societal impassivity as this that the government has to step in and make specific laws protecting the ignored, marginalized, underprivileged and even children; sections for whom the society should be looking out, but does not. Had the society remained involved, these sections would not have suffered so much that legislations had to be brought in to ensure humanity.

And with that setting up, we segue again into a problem that refuses to get contained. And no, "catching" the culprit, although necessary, is not the same as keeping the children safe. One of the most difficult demands of putting together a newspaper is filing reports about abuse against minors. Apart from the disturbing chore of piecing together details to highlight the level of depravity that made a victim out of a child who has not even begun understanding the life around her/ him, there is the fear of over-sensationalizing the incident in a way that might force the incident and the reaction to it on a tangent that is not necessarily what the situation demands. There is also the worry of underplaying it so much that it trivializes the issue. But that is an uncertainty that challenges journalists; what is that befuddles the society at large so completely that it remains insensate to the trauma of the young victims? It is one of those moments in the process of putting out a newspaper when we regret being the bearers of news [since we have to confront all the gory details] and not receivers [readers do have the benefit of not reading beyond the headline and a sanitized retelling of the incident]. What is even more disturbing is to realize that we continue to fail in keeping our children safe. And make no mistake, this is a societal failing, not a failure of the law and order machinery.

Crimes against minors continue to occur [a few get reported, many get swept under the carpet and too many remain secrets with the victims and traumatize them throughout their lives] because Sikkim, as a society, blindsides its children. Secure years while growing up are the least that can be guaranteed to the young, and despite its small size, the society here continues to come up wanting in this regard. The solution is not in lynch mobs to punish the accused, nor even in over-protective cushions created by paranoia. As a society we need to start realizing that children here are in harm's way, as parents and hopefully because we are also responsible citizens, we need to educate the young and ourselves on the ways and means that the young can be kept safe. Child abuse is no longer rare in Sikkim and minors suffer sexual abuse in numbers which are distressing. Still more are denied their basic rights and continue to work as domestic servants in homes across the state, invariably working in conditions which are deplorable.

As per the 2011 Census, there were 64,111 children aged 0-6 in Sikkim. This is also the most vulnerable age-group when it comes to abuse. Given that Sikkim has a population of 6.11 lakh, this means that there are more than 9 people above the age of six to look out for the minors. Pedophiles form a tiny, very tiny, sliver of this remaining population. And no, it is not being suggested that we form nine-abreast wall of bodyguards around the children, but ensure that these nine are adequately informed about warning signs and wrong behavior and are effectively reassured that when they spy a predator, he will be taken one and taken away.

WRITE US:

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

Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

It's not just Brazil's Amazon rainforest that's ablaze – Bolivian fires are threatening people and wildlife

CLAIRE F.R. WORDLE
theconversation.com

Up to 800,000 hectares of the unique Chiquitano forest were burned to the ground in Bolivia between August 18 and August 23. That's more forest than is usually destroyed across the country in two years. Experts say that it will take at least two centuries to repair the ecological damage done by the fires, while at least 500 species are said to be at risk from the flames.

The Chiquitano dry forest in Bolivia was the largest healthy tropical dry forest in the world. It's now unclear whether it will retain that status. The forest is home to Indigenous peoples as well as iconic wildlife such as jaguars, giant armadillos, and tapirs. Some species in the Chiquitano are found nowhere else on Earth. Distressing photographs and videos from the area show many animals have burned to death in the recent fires.

The burnt region also encompasses farmland and towns, with thousands of people evacuated and many more affected by the smoke. Food and water are being sent to the region, while children are being kept home from school in many districts where the air pollution is double what is considered extreme. Many families are still without drinking water. While the media has focused on Brazil, Bolivians are asking the world to notice their unfolding tragedy – and to send help in combating the flames.

It's thought that the fires were started deliberately to clear the land for farming, but quickly got out of control. The perpetrators aren't known, but Bolivian President Evo Morales has justified people starting fires, saying: "If small families don't set fires, what are they going to live on?"

The disaster comes just a month after Morales announced a new "supreme decree" aimed at in-

creasing beef production for export. Twenty-one civil society organisations are calling for the repeal of this decree, arguing that it has helped cause the fires and violates Bolivia's environmental laws. Government officials say that fire setting is a normal activity at this time of year and isn't linked to the decree.

Morales has repeatedly said that international help isn't needed, despite having sent just three helicopters to tackle the raging fires. He argued that the fires are dying out in some areas – although they continue to burn in others and have now reached Bolivia's largest city, Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Many say that the fires could have been contained far sooner with international help, as videos show volun-

aeroplanes of water arrived, hired from the US. But if the reactions to the president's announcement on Twitter are anything to go by, many Bolivians think this is too little, too late. Morales is fighting a general election and has faced criticism for staying on the campaign trail while the fires spread.

Some Indigenous leaders are asking for a trial to determine responsibility for the fires, and the response to them. Alex Villca, an Indigenous leader and spokesperson, said:

"It is President Evo Morales who should be held accountable. What are these accountabilities going to be? A trial of responsibilities for this number of events that are occurring in the country, this number of violations of Indigenous peoples and also the rights of Mother Nature."

President Morales came to power in Bolivia in 2006, on a platform of socialism, Indigenous rights, and environmental protection. He passed the famous "Law of the Rights of Mother Earth" in 2010, which placed the intrinsic value of nature alongside that of humans. His environmental rhetoric has been strong but his policies have been contradictory. Morales has approved widespread deforestation, as well as roads and gas exploration in national parks.

While the fires in the Chiquitano have dominated the media within the country, hundreds more rage across Bolivia, assisted by the recent drought. It's unclear whether the response to these fires

will affect the October election outcome, but sentiments are running high in the country, where more than 70% of people prioritise environmental protection over economic growth.

Bolsonaro and Brazil might grab the headlines, but Bolivia too is now host to a desperately serious humanitarian and environmental situation.

[the writer is Research Associate, Conservation Evidence, Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge]



teers trying to beat back the fires with branches.

As the fires worsened, people gathered to protest in Santa Cruz state. Chanting "we want your help", they complained that the smoke was so bad they were struggling to breathe. They want Morales to request international aid to fight the fires. While firefighters and volunteers struggle to tackle the blaze in 55°C heat, Bolivians have set up a fundraiser to tackle the fires themselves.

A fortnight after the fires began, a supertanker

Why we laugh when we know it's wrong

ALICE RUDG
theconversation.com

For the Batek people of the Malaysian peninsula rainforest, laughter can be dangerous. Within the system of taboos of these egalitarian hunter-gatherers, laughing in certain situations can cause storms, illness or even death. And yet sometimes, Batek people – like anyone else – laugh when they know they shouldn't. In fact, laughter can be especially pleasurable when it's forbidden.

What does this paradox tell us about ideas of right and wrong? My recent research with the Batek suggests that examining contagious, uncontrollable laughter can help explain why we do things we say we shouldn't. Rather than always being "wrong", laughing when we shouldn't can be a way of shaping our ethical beliefs by interacting with others, testing out the limits of right and wrong. To understand this, we must look not only at what is funny, but at how people laugh.

In the Batek's forest, to laugh at anything you might be about to eat would risk diarrhoea and even death in extreme circumstances. Laughing around fruits, flowers, bees, honey, certain insects or in fact anything that has to do with the ecology of the fruit season carries enormous risks. These include caterpillars coming out of your eyes, a gigantic swelling head, or being unable to speak.

This kind of laughter might also affect the fruit season itself, causing some fruits or flowers not to appear. Laughing too much, too loudly or at certain creatures – in particular leeches and other invertebrates – might risk angering the thunder-being, causing terrifying storms.

Adhering to these taboos is seen as ethical behaviour, a way that people demonstrate respect for the non-human persons of the forest that provide the Batek with sustenance. But sometimes people can't control their laughter. So they cannot do the "right" thing every time.

During my fieldwork with the

Batek, one night I was staying up late with Na? Srimjam, a Batek friend, when a frog began to croak. This frog's croak sounded a lot like someone breaking wind, causing her to crack up. Na? Srimjam tried desperately to get her laughter under control, gasping through her giggles that her laughter was taboo. As soon as she had stopped laughing, the frog let out another croak. This cycle happened repeatedly until she was weeping with laughter.

Na? Srimjam was fully aware that

den laughter among the Batek show that both can be true at once.

On the one hand, our ideas about what is funny are shaped by our social contexts. This moment was so funny to Na? Srimjam because she knew that, as a Batek person, it was taboo for her to laugh at this frog. This was demonstrated by how she kept pointing out that we were being taboo, even while she was doing the taboo thing.

On the other hand, people will always have their own reactions to



she was being dangerously taboo, but was revelling in the subversive laughter anyway. She just couldn't help herself. In this instance, her laughter was uncontrollable, erupting even though it was wrong. And yet no one judged her as wrong or bad for having laughed when she recounted the story the next day.

SOCIETY OR INDIVIDUAL?

Scholars have long debated whether our ethics are shaped by society or whether we control them as individuals. But moments of forbid-

things that happen. Social contexts help shape these reactions but aren't the only thing that determines our behaviour. Laughter can erupt whether or not it is culturally or socially appropriate.

When it comes to the ethics of laughter, people may recognise the rules of what's appropriate but also take the rules into their own hands. How much freedom people have to choose what is ethical reflects their broader understandings of their relationships with others.

In the Batek's egalitarian society, where no one person has systematic authority over another, individual autonomy is paramount. This focus on autonomy is why the Batek do not punish one another for inappropriate laughter, even when it is considered wrong and risks dangerous consequences for the group such as the anger of the thunder-being. Instead, people say, it's up to "them on their own".

Because of this, laughter is a unique tool for socialisation. There is

a constant interplay between doing the right thing, and doing (just the right amount of) the wrong thing. And understanding how this works through laughter helps people establish their personal ethical values in relation to the rest of the group. When it comes to what we find funny, we may either follow the rules or just laugh them off. But either way we are learning about right and wrong.

[the writer is Junior Research Fellow, Institute of Advanced Studies, UCL]

Assam BJP flays Hajela over handling of NRC revision process

GUWAHATI, AUG 26 (PTI): NRC state coordinator Prateek Hajela came under attack from the ruling BJP on Monday, with the party raising apprehensions that foreigners might make it to the register as he was allegedly undertaking the revision process in consultation with just two to three organizations. The final NRC list, which will identify bonafide citizens of Assam, is set to be published on August 31. The exercise of updating the NRC, unique to Assam, is being conducted under the supervision of the Supreme Court.

Addressing a press meet here, BJP state president Ranjit Dass said people have told his party members that their names had appeared in the first list, published in 2017, but was removed from the "final draft" in July last year.

"NRC Coordinator Prateek Hajela had been carrying out the revision work based on his own opinion and those of two to three organisations, after the Supreme Court asked Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal not to interfere in the process," Dass claimed.

The state BJP chief, however, did not name



the organizations he was referring to.

In such a situation, it is difficult for Assam to come up with an error-free register, he said.

"We have received feedback. Many have told us their names appeared in the first NRC list, but went missing from the final draft. These people had to appear several times in different offices for re-verification of their documents.

"Also, there are reports that people who have been declared 'foreigners' were being engaged for the NRC

citizenship verification work," he explained. Dass claimed that names of descendants of freedom fighters and Assam agitation martyrs were excluded during the verification process.

"It seems we will get an NRC which will include the names of illegal foreigners and exclude genuine Indian citizens," the state BJP chief said.

Appreciating the Centre's decision to extend the deadline to 120 from 60 days for filing appeals in the Foreigners Tribunals, the BJP leader said around 40 lakh workers

of saffron party have been directed to assist the ones approaching the district legal cells.

"We will not allow the exclusion of any genuine Indian citizen, be it Hindu, Muslim, Christian or people of other religion, from the NRC. The 1200-crore exercise will not be of any worth if even one genuine citizen's name gets excluded from the register," he asserted.

Claiming that the saffron party was not satisfied with the revision process, Dass urged the Centre and the state gov-

ernment to take action against "doubtful" citizens only after a proper investigation. Assam is the only state to have a National Register of Citizens (NRC). The NRC was first prepared in 1951 under the purview of the Census Act, 1948.

In July last year, 40,07,707 people out of a total 3,29,91,384 applicants were excluded from the final draft of the NRC. An additional 1,02,462 persons were included in the list of excluded persons in June, taking the total ineligible persons to 41,10,169.

Calcutta HC sets aside trust vote held at civic body

KOLKATA, AUG 26 (PTI): The Calcutta High Court on Monday set aside a vote of confidence held at the Bongaon Municipality for its chairman last month and ruled that a fresh process be held for deciding his fate.

Justice Samapti Chattopadhyay asked the civic body to hold a fresh vote of confidence within 12 days at the office of the district magistrate of West Bengal's North 24 Parganas. The court said a notice for conducting the vote should be sent to the councillors willing to exercise their franchise.

Justice Chattopadhyay directed the district superintendent of

police to ensure security of all councillors participating in the fresh mandate for Chairman Shankar Addhya.

The order was passed on separate petitions moved by 11 Bharatiya Janata Party councillors, who claimed that they were forcibly prevented by the police and people owing allegiance to the Trinamool Congress from participating in the trust vote.

Both the ruling TMC and the opposition BJP have claimed victory in the no-confidence vote held at the 22-member municipality board on July 16.

After the vote, which

was attended by councillors of the TMC, the election officer had reported to the sub-divisional officer and the district magistrate that Addhya won by 10-0 votes. Of the 22 members in the civic board, 10 are of the TMC and one of the CPI(M).

Supporters of the TMC and the BJP had clashed and bombs were hurled in front of the municipality office following the dispute over trust vote.

The BJP councillors, who had individually moved the high court, claimed that they had come up with a resolution later, signed by all 11 of them, expressing "no confidence" in the chairman.

10 foreigners released on bail ahead of final NRC list



GUWAHATI, AUG 26 (PTI): Ahead of the publication of final NRC list in Assam, ten persons declared foreigners have been released on bail from a detention camp in Goalpara district, a police official said here Monday.

The ten have been released as per a Supreme Court direction that those declared foreigners and are under detention for more than three years should be released on bail, he said.

The ten persons, including a woman, have been granted bail by the Foreigners Tribunal for a surety bond of Rs two lakh each and their biometric details, district additional superintendent of police Amitabh Basumotary said. Their conditional release began on August 9 and they were allowed to leave the camp which is located inside Goalpara district jail, Basumotary said.

The final National Register of Citizens list,

which will identify bonafide citizens of Assam, is set to be published on August 31.

Of the ten granted bail nine are from Goalpara district and one from neighbouring Chirang district. They are aged between 39 and 69 years.

The Supreme Court, which is monitoring the updation of the NRC, had during the hearing of a PIL last month on detained foreigners had set five conditions - deposit of a bond with two sureties of Rs 1 lakh each from an Indian citizen, a verifiable address of stay after the person's release from the detention centre and reporting once every week to the police station specified by the home and political department. The other two conditions are biometrics of the person's iris (if possible) and fingerprints of all 10 fingers and photos. Assam has six detention centres in-

side district jails in Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Tezpur, Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Silchar for persons declared foreigners by Foreigners Tribunals if they failed to prove that they or their forefathers lived in Assam before March 24, 1971 - the cut-off date as per the Assam Accord, 1985, to determine illegal foreigners.

Assam is the only state in the country where the exercise to update the citizens' register has been undertaken after 1951 when the exercise was done for the first time. The first draft NRC of the current updation was published in December 2017. The final draft NRC was published on July 31, 2018 in which 40,07,707 out of a total 3,29,91,384 applicants were excluded.

In June this year the number of ineligible persons rose to 41,10,169 after 1,02,462 persons were added in the list of excluded persons.

Trump says China trade talks 'more meaningful than at any time'

BIARRITZ (FRANCE), AUG 26 (AFP): President Donald Trump on Monday said trade talks with China were "more meaningful than at any time" because the United States was doing well while China was "losing millions of jobs".

"I think anything is possible," Trump said when asked about what he would do next in his trade war with Beijing.

"I can say we are having very meaningful talks, much more meaningful, I would say, than at any time.

"I think, for the most part, it's because we are doing very well. China is a great country, I consider President Xi (Jinping) to be

a great leader," he added during a press conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

"Look, they are losing millions and millions of jobs, they're going to other countries and if I was them, I'd want to make a deal."

Earlier, Trump said Chinese officials had made contact on Saturday evening and said "let's get back to the table. So we'll be getting back to the table."

The United States is trying to force China into deep reforms of its trading model to end the theft of intellectual property, lower subsidies and open up Chinese markets to US companies.

2 people die in explosion near TN shrine, another shell found

Chennai, Aug 26 (PTI): Two people have died in an explosion suspected to have been caused by an artillery shell found near a temple in suburban Thiruporur, police said on Monday, as another such shell was recovered from the vicinity.

According to a senior officer, the entire place has been sanitised and a technical team is studying the materials recovered. "We found an artillery fuse of 51mm and a shell. We have sent it to our technical team to ascertain what exactly it is. The cause of blast is because of that," the officer said, adding another mortar shell was recovered on Monday from the vicinity.

"The area has been sanitised and there are no more shells. Tomorrow we are hoping to have a better picture," the officer said.

"Only the survivors, who are presently under

treatment in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at the government hospital, would be able to tell us where exactly they found these shells," he said.

A man died and one of the four injured men succumbed to his injuries on Monday after the explosion near the temple at a spot abutting a pond, right in the backyard of Sri Ganaiamman temple at Manamathi village, around 50 km from Chennai.

Following the incident on Sunday, a team of forensic experts and bomb squad personnel inspected the premises and collected samples.

The explosion rattled the local people and it left pockmarks in portions of the temple walls and some structures.

Last night, police cordoned off the temple premises and barred people from accessing the site of explosion.

Nepal, India launches Kathmandu-Siliguri bus service



SHIRISH B PRADHAN KATHMANDU, AUG 26 (PTI): A bus service was launched on Monday between Kathmandu and Siliguri, the 10th bus service between Nepal and India.

The Kathmandu-Siliguri bus service will operate on a daily basis, according to the bus operators. India will operate buses on the route in the beginning.

Speaking on the occasion, Mahaseth said that the people of Nepal and India have historical links since the time of Ramayan and Mahabharat, which will be further strengthened through this bus service.

The direct bus service will not only benefit visitors of the two countries but will also help to ex-

pand trade links, he said. This is the 10th bus service between Nepal and India. The Kathmandu Gorakhpur direct bus service will also start in the near future, he said.

Ambassador Puri said the Kathmandu-Siliguri route is an important land route between Nepal and India as it connects eastern Nepal with Siliguri and Darjeeling in West Bengal.

This will further strengthen people-to-people links between the two countries, he added.

Website to help litigants check case status in Nagaland

KOHIMA, AUG 26 (PTI): Kohima bench of the Gauhati High Court on Monday launched a website where litigants can check the status of their cases.

Justice S Serto of the Kohima bench launched kohimahighcourt.gov.in, according to which a total of 1,046 cases, including 94 criminal cases, have been pending in court for more than a year.

The website hosts the Case Information System of the court.

"The main purpose of launching CIS is to let litigants know the status of the cases online," said Neiko Akami, Registrar-cum-Central Project Coordinator of the Kohima bench.

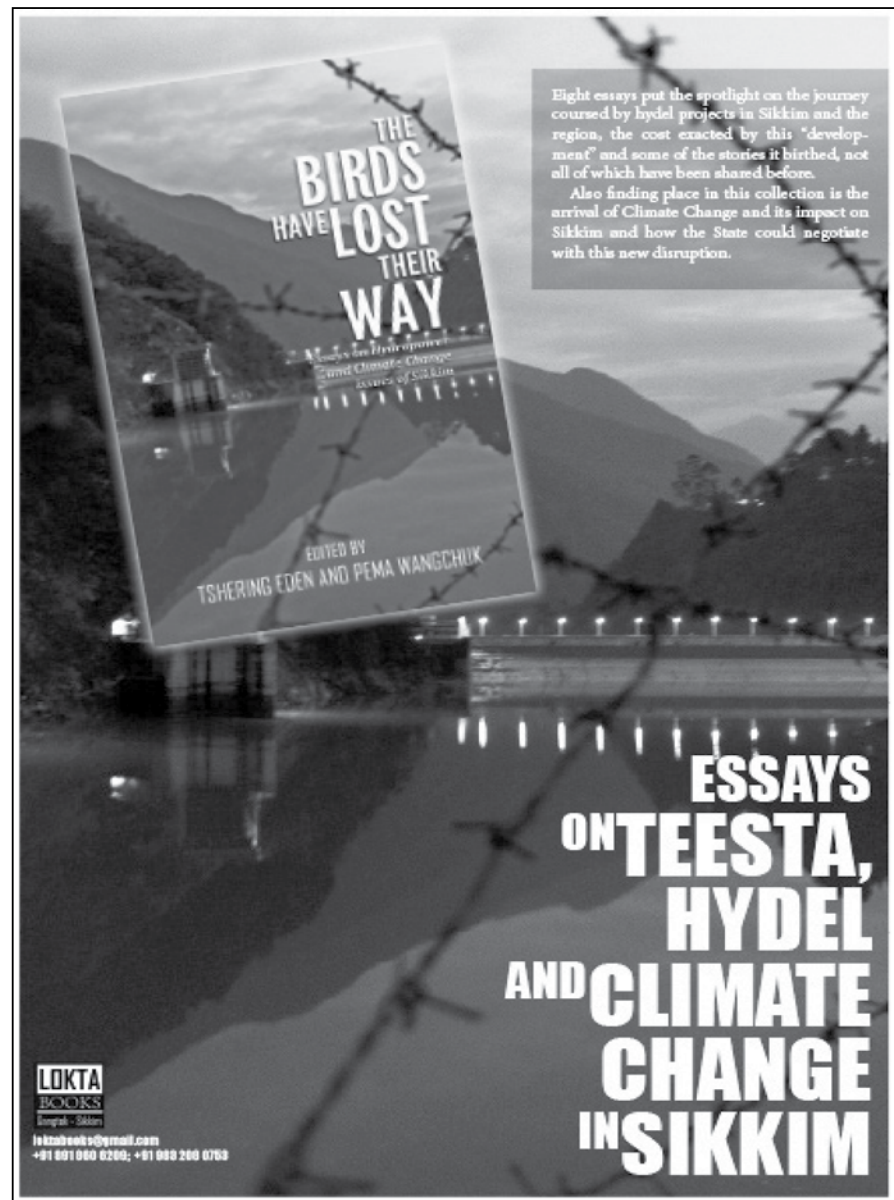
He said citizens can access all the orders passed by the court.

As per data available on the website, 1,046 cases have been pending in the court for more than a year, including 467 civil cases, 94 criminal cases and 485 writ cases.

The site has been designed by the Kohima bench.

While it is being hosted by National Informatics Centre-Nagaland State Centre (NIC-NSC), contents would be maintained and updated by the court, Akami said.

Shushanta Kumar Mondal, State Informatics Officer of the NIC-NSC, said with digitisation of districts courts, case updates would soon be attached to the website.



England star Stokes travels rocky road from zero to hero



LEEDS, AUG 26 (AFP): Many sporting careers contain their share of ups and downs but few can match the highs and lows that have come the way of England's Ben Stokes.

He became a national hero for the second time in just over a month when his astounding 135 not out saw England to an incredible one-wicket win in the third Ashes Test at Headingley on Sunday.

Stokes's ball-striking that yielded 11 fours and eight soaring sixes was impressive but so too was the maturity he demonstrated during five-and-a-half hours at the crease, with the all-rounder taking 50 balls to score his first two runs on Saturday when it was vital En-

gland, then three down, did not lose any more wickets.

It had been a similar story in the World Cup final, where an expertly paced 84 not out saw England tie the 241 total of his native New Zealand at Lord's before a seemingly exhausted Stokes then hit the Super Over runs that helped his team to a narrow win.

But "maturity" was not the word associated with Stokes when, in the early hours of the morning following a one-day international against the West Indies in Bristol in September 2017, he became involved in a fight outside a nightclub that led to his arrest.

Although eventually cleared of a criminal charge

of affray, the immediate fallout from the incident saw Stokes stripped of the England vice-captaincy and not be considered for selection for the 2017/18 Ashes tour -- a series where, in his absence, the team meekly subsided to a 4-0 series defeat by Australia.

- WORLD TWENTY20 HEARTACHE -

Stokes already knew about onfield setbacks -- he had been the bowler who when asked to defend 19 in the last over of the 2016 World Twenty20 final in Kolkata, was promptly hit for four successive sixes by opposing all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite as the West Indies turned a seemingly certain defeat into a memorable win.

But having come back from that reverse, the knowledge the court case nearly cost him his England career seems to have inspired Stokes to even greater heights since returning to international duty.

Stokes was born in Christchurch, New Zealand but moved to Britain as a boy when his father Ged, a former Kiwi rugby league international, got a job coaching Workington in northwest England.

He was soon on the radar of county side Durham, making his debut as a teenager and appearing for England at Under-19 level, where his abilities as a left-handed batsman, lively paceman and excellent fielder all became quickly apparent.

Having blotted his copybook by being sent home for a breach of discipline from a tour of Australia with the second-string England Lions in 2013, Stokes was included in the senior squad for the 2013/14 Ashes 'Down Under'.

Australia whitewashed England 5-0 but a rare moment of joy for the tourists came with Stokes' defiant maiden Test century in Perth.

Stokes, however, missed the 2014 World Twenty20 in Bangladesh after reacting to a dismissal in Barbados by punching a dressing room locker and sustaining a broken wrist.

A difficult year followed and such was his loss of form he was omitted from England's squad for the 2015 World Cup, where the team's woeful first-round exit paved the way for their triumph four years later.

Stokes, however, was soon back in the fold and in January 2016 his remarkable 258 off 198 balls against South Africa in Cape Town saw him score England's quickest Test double century.

His all-format talent also meant Stokes, now 28, become a millionaire twice over in the lucrative Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament, yet there has never been a doubt about his desire to play for England.

Nor is he one for looking back, with Stokes making it clear after Sunday's innings that England still had a job to regain the Ashes.

Asked if his life had been different a year ago, Stokes answered: "That was a year ago. A long time ago.

There will be opinions but we do keep best interests of team in mind: Kohli



NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA), AUG 26 (PTI): Captain Virat Kohli is well aware that India's playing XIs in Test matches are a subject of intense debate but insists that all decisions are taken keeping in mind the "best interests of the team."

India thrashed West Indies by 318 runs in their inaugural World Test Championship encounter but at the onset, there was a debate on the omission of senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. The legendary Sunil Gavaskar termed his exclusion as "astounding."

But the lone specialist spinner Ravindra Jadeja did his bit, scoring a timely half-century in the first innings along with a couple of wickets vindicating Kohli's decision.

"We have a group discussion and then we decide what's best for the team. There will always be opinions about the XI, but people will know that it's in the interest of the team," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

Kohli's preference for the young Hanuma Vihari over limited-overs vice-captain Rohit Sharma also worked wonderfully with the Andhra Pradesh-player scoring 93 in the second innings after looking good during a 32 in the first essay.

"Vihari got a nod because combination is important. He's an effective part-time bowler and helps us when we need to catch up with the over-rate."

Just like white-ball cricket, Jasprit Bumrah's form and fitness are paramount in the red ball set-up also. And the captain understands that only too well.

"Bumrah's workload is most important which is why he didn't play any white-ball games (vs WI) after the World Cup. He will be a key factor for us as long as the World Test Championship continues.

"Shami is the same and Ishant is a banker, always reliable. Umesh is there too and Navdeep is waiting in the wings. We are settled as our bowling options, but managing workloads will be important," Kohli said.

He was all praise for man of the match Ajinkya Rahane, who is back in form with scores of 81 and 102 in both innings.

"Jinx excellent in both innings, KL solid in both innings too. Mention to Vihari too. We had to come back in this game

3-4 times, so that is a positive moving forward from Australia," said the skipper.

Kohli said he is happy to be in a position where he has a team which is executing most of the decisions taken by him.

"I am taking decisions, yes, but execution is done by others who raise their hand. We enjoy everyone's company, and that's the reason for our success," he said.

"It's a blessing that I am in a position where I can contribute to the team in more than one way, but nothing is possible without your team. I don't think the credit can be taken away from the team at all."

The skipper expects that his team will put up another professional performance in Jamaica, starting on Friday.

"Jamaica is another opportunity to do a professional performance. We know WI will come hard at us, and we will try to plug the gaps from this Test."

His opposite number Jason Holder admitted that he is faced issues with regards to batting that need to be sorted.

"Bowlers did a good effort, but we didn't bat well. Batting issues to sort, going on for too long. Top order is not doing well, leaving much for the middle-order to do. The wicket was a good one and we should have batted better," Holder said.

He praised Rahane's efforts in both innings.

"Ajinkya batted really well and everyone batted around him. It was a difficult wicket to blast players out."

Holder, however, said that he had nothing to say about team selection.

"I wouldn't question the team selection. We played the same combination in the last series and we did very well. I think we've got to blame our batting performance. We could've put up a much better performance."

"In hindsight, you can say a lot of things, but we players need to take more responsibility. (Jasprit) Bumrah bowled really well, one of those spells that will dislodge most top-order players. That said, we need to be a lot better as a batting unit."

He does expect a better show in the next game in Jamaica.

"For Jamaica, it's a place we have found success and our players have done well. Hopefully we can do that."

Arjun Tendulkar in Mumbai squad for pre-season tournament



MUMBAI, AUG 26 (PTI): Arjun Tendulkar, son of cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar and a left-arm pacer, has been named in the 15-member Mumbai squad for the upcoming 'Bapuna Cup' to be held in Nagpur.

The squad, to be led by senior pro Suryakumar Yadav, was announced by the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) on its website on Monday.

The Bapuna Cup is a pre-season tournament organised by the Vidarbha Cricket Association.

This year, it will be played in 50-over for-

mat and will begin from September 5. In the past, Arjun Tendulkar has played in the T20 Mumbai League after he was picked for Rs 5 lakh.

The 19-year-old Mumbaier has also bowled to the Indian team in the nets.

Squad: Suryakumar Yadav (Captain), Aditya Tare, Jay Bista, Sarfaraz Khan, Shubham Ranjane, Raunak Sharma, Eknath Kerkar, Sufiyan Shaikh, Akash Parkar, Shams Mulani, Aditya Dhumal, Shashank Attarde, Aquib Kureshi, Kruthik Hanagavadi and Arjun Tendulkar.

This is my answer to those who questioned me: Sindhu

BASEL (SWITZERLAND), AUG 26 (PTI): PV Sindhu says she felt "angry and sad" after being criticised for not finishing on top in the last two World Championship finals and the gold medal in the just-concluded edition is her answer to all the critics who questioned her.

Two-time silver-medallist Sindhu ended an agonising wait for an elusive gold with a maiden World Championship title on Sunday.

"This is my answer to the people who have asked me questions over and over. I just wanted to answer with my racket and with this win - that's all," Sindhu was quoted as saying by the Badminton World Federation's (BWF) official website after her crushing win over Okuhara.

"I felt really bad after the first World Championships final and last year I was angry, I was sad. I went through all my emotions, asking 'Sindhu, why can't you get this one match?' but today came and I told myself to play my game and not worry - and it worked out," she added.

The 24-year-old from Hyderabad became the first Indian to achieve the feat by thrashing familiar rival Nozomi Okuhara of Japan 21-7 21-7 in one of the most lop-sided finals ever.

It was third time lucky for Sindhu, who lost to Okuhara and Olympic champion Car-



olina Marin of Spain respectively in the 2017 and 2018 finals to settle for the silver twice.

Sindhu has been at the receiving end of criticism for coming short in the summit clashes of major events ever since the 2016 Rio Olympics, where she had finished second best to Marin.

Two years ago, Sindhu was denied the gold by Okuhara after an epic 110-minute final that went down as one of the

greatest battles in badminton history.

The Indian also lost the finals of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, the Jakarta Asian Games, besides the World Championships twice. She had also finished runners-up at Thailand Open and India Open last year.

The gold was her fifth medal at the World Championships. She won a bronze each in the 2013 and 2014 editions.

Sindhu is now the joint highest medal-winner in women's singles in the World Championships history with former Olympic champion Zhang Ning of China, who won an identical 1 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze between 2001 and 2007.

"Everybody was wanting this win from me. After Rio Olympics silver medal, the expectations from me is really high. Every time I go to a tournament, everyone expects me to win a gold," Sindhu said.

"After a year I also thought what should I do for it and instead of thinking about others, I thought may be I should just play for myself and give my 100 percent and automatically I win because thinking about others would put extra pressure on me."

Now that Sindhu has added the missing World Championships gold to her cabinet, next in line for her will be the Olympic crown in Tokyo 2020.

"People are already asking 'Sindhu, what about gold in Tokyo 2020?'," she said.

"Olympics is not so far but right now it is step-by-step for me. I know the Olympic qualification is going so I hope I do well, but right now I just want to enjoy it and don't want to think anything else.

"Badminton is my passion and I feel that I can win more titles," she signed off.

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Iran president makes case for talks as G7 gambit slammed

TEHRAN, AUG 26 (AFP): Iran's President Hassan Rouhani came out strongly in favour of talks Monday as his top diplomat came under fire from headline media for a surprise visit to a G7 summit.

"I believe that for our country's national interests we must use any tool," Rouhani said in a speech aired live on state television.

"And if I knew that I was going to have a meeting with someone that would (lead to) prosperity for my country and people's problems would be resolved, I would not hesitate.

"The main thing is our country's national interests," he said to a round of applause from those gathered at an event marking government achievements in rural areas.

Rouhani's remarks came as his government faced criticism over the visit of Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to the French seaside resort of Biarritz on Sunday for meetings on the sidelines of the G7 summit.

Zarif was invited to Biarritz by French President Emmanuel Macron, who has been leading efforts to de-escalate tensions between Iran and its arch-enemy the



United States.

Iran's economy has been battered by US sanctions imposed since last year when President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between the Islamic republic and world powers.

The ultra-conservative Kayhan newspaper strongly criticised Zarif's

visit on Monday in an article that called the trip "improper".

Kayhan said the fact that the minister's visit was the second to France in a matter of days sent "a message of weakness and desperation".

"These improper measures are taken in the fantasy of an opening but it will definitely have no outcome other than

more insolence and pressure," it added.

The reformist Etemad newspaper, however, described Zarif's trip to France as "the most hopeful moment" for Iran in the 15 months since the US withdrew from the nuclear deal.

"Given Macron's attempts over the last two months, one can be hopeful that Trump's re-

sponse to Macron's ideas has been the main reason for Zarif's... trip to Biarritz," it said.

The spike in tensions between Iran and the United States has threatened to spiral out of control in the past few weeks, with ships mysteriously attacked, drones downed and tankers seized.

Rouhani said his government was ready to use "both hands" of power and diplomacy.

"They may seize our ship somewhere... we will both negotiate... and we may seize their ship for legal reasons," he said, referring to an Iranian oil tanker seized off Gibraltar that has since been released and a British-flagged vessel still impounded by Iran in the Gulf.

"We can work with two hands... the hand of power and the hand of diplomacy," said the Iranian president.

"We must use both our power, our military and security power, economic and cultural power and our political power. We must negotiate. We must find solutions. We must reduce problems.

"Even if the probability of success... is 10 percent, we must endeavour and go ahead. We must not lose opportunities."

Indonesia picks eastern Borneo island for new capital

JAKARTA, AUG 26 (AFP): Indonesia has chosen the eastern edge of jungle-clad Borneo island for its new capital, President Joko Widodo said Monday, as the country looks to shift its political heart away from congested megalopolis Jakarta.

The proposed location -- near the regional cities of Balikpapan and Samarinda -- is in the geographical centre of the Southeast Asian archipelago and an area where the government already owns some 180,000 hectares (445,000 acres) of land, he added.

The site in the province of East Kalimantan is at "minimal" risk of natural

disasters, he added.

"As a large nation that has been independent for 74 years, Indonesia has never chosen its own capital," Widodo said in a televised speech.

"The burden Jakarta is holding right now is too heavy as the centre of governance, business, finance, trade and services," he added.

The government would draft a bill for the move which would be sent to parliament, Widodo said.

He said the estimated cost of the project was around 466 trillion rupiah (US 33 billion). The move comes as concerns about Jakarta's future soar.

The megacity -- first

established by Dutch colonists nearly 500 years ago -- of is one of the fastest-sinking cities on earth, with environmental experts warning that one third of it could be submerged by 2050 if current rates continue.

The problem is largely linked to excessive groundwater extraction.

But the city of 10 million -- a number that bloats to about 30 million with surrounding satellite cities -- is also plagued by a host of other ills, from eye-watering traffic jams and pollution to the risk of earthquakes and floods.

Its foundations have been further stressed by unchecked development and poor urban planning.

Trump claims serious trade negotiations with China to begin

BIARRITZ, AUG 26 (AP): President Donald Trump, under pressure to scale back a US-China trade war partly blamed for a global economic slowdown, claimed Monday that the two sides will begin serious negotiations soon.

Trump said his trade negotiators had received two "very good calls" from China Sunday, hours after Trump waffled on whether he regretted the one-upmanship on tariffs Friday. Trump at first seemed to express regret over the escalating trade war, but the White House later said Trump's only regret was that he didn't impose even higher tariffs on China. Trump claimed the Sunday evening conversations were a sign China is serious about making a deal. "I think we're going to have a deal, because now we're dealing on proper terms. They understand and we understand," Trump said as he met with Egypt's president on the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit in France.

"This is the first time I've seen them where they really want to make a deal. And I think that's a very positive step," Trump added.

Trump declined to identify those involved in the most recent conversation and whether he is in direct contact with President Xi Jinping. Trump added Monday that the two sides will begin "talking very seriously," saying that after the calls he believes the Chinese "mean business."

A Chinese delegation had been expected to travel to Washington in September to continue talks and that remained the case even after Trump's escalation following China's tariff announcement last Friday.

It was unclear if Trump was referring to the previously scheduled talks next month or some other conversations. There was no immediate comment from the Chinese side.

Trump's optimistic comments on China came as he commented for the first time on the surprise appearance at the G-7 summit by Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, and as the international gathering put Trump's differences with his counterparts on display.

World leaders had encouraged Trump all weekend to deescalate the

conflict with China, he clashed with French President Emmanuel Macron over new France's digital services tax, and he broke with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in not forcefully condemning North Korea's recent ballistic missile launches.

But Trump on Monday claimed the reports of disagreements were overblown, starting with the Zarif visit.

Uncharacteristically silent Sunday while Zarif was in France, Trump insisted that Macron had asked his "approval" before asking Zarif to attend, as he looks to lower tensions in the Persian Gulf. And Trump rejected the assertion by some allies that the invitation to Zarif was somehow an insult.

"I spoke to President Macron yesterday and I knew everything he was doing and I approved whatever he was doing and I thought it was fine," Trump said of the Zarif talks. He said he thought it was too soon for he and Zarif to meet, but wouldn't say whether any Americans had come in contact with the Iranian. The Iranian government had said they would not meet with any Americans during the 8-hour visit to France.

Trump said there could soon be time for a meeting between himself and Iranian officials, but refused to lay out clear steps forward or say if he'd be willing to accede to a plan put forward by Macron to offer Iran some relief from crushing petroleum sanctions in exchange for restarting nuclear talks. He said of the Iran talks, "It's all very new.

They're under a lot of financial stress." After a breakdown in talks this spring, Trump and Xi agreed in June to resume negotiations. But talks in Shanghai in July ended with no indication of progress. Negotiators talked by phone this month and are due to meet again in Washington next month.

Trump last week hiked tariffs on China after China taxed some U.S. imports in retaliation for a previous round of imports levied by Trump.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged more than 600 points Friday as the latest escalation in the trade war rattled investors. The broad sell-off sent the S&P 500 to its fourth straight weekly loss.

Newly-appointed Lankan Army chief denies allegations of war crimes

COLOMBO, AUG 26 (PTI): The newly-appointed chief of the Sri Lankan Army has dismissed the allegations of human rights abuses during the brutal civil war with the LTTE, describing the military actions as a "humanitarian operation."

Lt Gen Shavendra Silva was named as the new Army Commander by President Maithripala Sirisena last week, evoking strong criticism from the US and the minority Tamils.

Silva headed the Army's 58th Division in the final battle against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels in 2009 and his brigade was accused of attacking civilians, hospitals and stopping humanitarian supplies to trapped Tamil civilians.

His name was mentioned in the resolution passed by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in 2013, alleging rights abuses by the Sri Lankan Army.

There were no war crimes committed. What we did was a humanitarian operation to free peo-

ple from a group of terrorists, Silva told reporters in Kandy on Sunday.

Silva was treated as a war hero for his contributions to ending the over three decades old separatist conflict.

The Tamil civilians appreciated our action to free them from terrorists, he said, adding that he only did his job as a soldier.

Those (Tamils) were our own people so we had a duty to protect them. The civilians know how well we protected them, Silva added.

Critics say Silva's appointment as the Army chief may strain Sri Lanka's cooperation in UN Peacekeeping operations and the defence cooperation between the US and Sri Lanka.

Besides the US, Canadian and European Union embassies too have expressed concern over Silva's appointment as the army chief.

There is a rule of natural justice, Silva said, referring to international allegations of war crimes against the Sri Lankan troops.

Pakistani Quran teacher in UAE helps two Indians duped by travel agent



DUBAI, AUG 26 (PTI): Indo-Pak tensions has not deterred a Pakistani Quran teacher to come to the rescue of two stranded Indians in the UAE since May this year after they were duped by their travel agent, media report said on Monday.

Mohammed Usman and Sivakumar, who hail from Kerala and Tamil Nadu respectively, approached the travel agent Noor Mohammed to get a job overseas, pay their debts and come back home, the Khaleej Times reported.

Initially, the duo were not supposed to go to the UAE. The travel agent asked both of them to pay Rs 200,000 each for the processing of their visas to Australia.

At first, they were provided with tickets to Thailand, telling them that their Australian visa would arrive soon. However, they were not allowed to enter Thailand as they did not meet the requirements for visa-on-arrival.

Stranded at the airport, the duo returned to India after making a dis-

stress call and asking their relatives to purchase return tickets for them.

After returning, Usman and Sivakumar asked the agent to return their money which was almost Rs 7,00,000 each, but the agent claimed that their visa to Australia was ready and travelling through the UAE was a better route.

When they reached the UAE, they were given accommodation in Ajman, one of the emirates of the UAE. The agent gave them Dh50 (Rs 979), left the country and never returned, the paper said.

They struggled in the UAE since and looked for job until Mohammed Asadullah, a Pakistani national, came to their rescue.

"We arrived here on May 1, expecting a better life. Now, we live in the cramped quarters of an old villa. We have overstayed for quite a long time and don't know what to do. We believed our travel agent, but he duped us," Usman said.

Asadullah, the Pakistani owner of the villa,

where the duo have been staying, has not charged rent and gave them free food, Sivakumar was quoted as saying by the paper. "Sharing my food with them is the least I could do. I have been asking my Indian friends to help these guys find a way out. Being an illegal resident is a crime in the UAE. And if they can sort that out faster, the better," he said.

Tensions between India and Pakistan have soared since February 14 when a suicide bomber of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) killed 40 CRPF personnel in Kashmir's Pulwama district.

India bombed the biggest JeM training camp in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan on February 26. The next day, Pakistan Air Force retaliated and downed a MiG-21 in an aerial combat.

Indo-Pak relations dipped further after the Indian government revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan responded by downgrading diplomatic ties with New Delhi.

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HAPPY BDAY! The model, Sofia Richie celebrates her 21st birthday with friends at Encore Beach Club at Wynn Las Vegas.

Tried to improve in comedy by leaps and bounds: John Abraham

MUMBAI, AUG 26 (PTI): Switching gears from cop-dramas and vigilante action films, John Abraham will be seen in the comedy “Pagalpanti” later this year and the actor says he has tried his best to grow in the genre.

“Pagalpanti” features an ensemble cast which includes Anil Kapoor, Ileana D'Cruz, Arshad Warsi, Pulkit Samrat, Kriti Kharbanda, Urvashi Rautela and Saurabh Shukla. The film reunites John with Anees Bazmee, who also directed the actor's last comedy, “Welcome Back” in 2015.

“The last time I was doing comedy was in ‘Welcome Back’. In ‘Pagalpanti’ you'll see my body language and everything else and you'll realise it's not the same John. There will be a visible change,” John told PTI.

The actor said his director was of the view that he has indeed grown in the genre and feels if he can make people laugh, his job is done.

“I've tried to improve in the genre by leaps and bounds. That's what my director told me. I believe it's very important to improve. Cinema is about entertainment and if I can do a convincing job by making people laugh, it's amazing. I am excited for the film,” he added.

The movie is produced by T-Series, Panorama Studios and co-produced by Aditya Chowksey and Sanjeev Joshi. It is scheduled to release on November 8.

Ayushmann was the only choice for 'Dream Girl': director Raaj Shaandilyaa

MUMBAI, AUG 26 (PTI): Raaj Shaandilyaa said Ayushmann Khurrana was his first and only choice for his directorial debut film “Dream Girl”. The director said the National Award-winning actor gave his nod to the project immediately after the first narration.

“While writing only we had thought of him for ‘Dream Girl’. ‘Badhaai Ho’ and ‘Aandhadhun’ had not released when I had sent a message to Ayushmann, asking for narration. He heard it and said yes immediately,” Shaandilyaa told PTI. The director, who has worked with comedian Kapil Sharma on his show “Comedy Nights with Kapil”, said he always wanted to make an entertaining film.

“I do feel the pressure as it is my first film as a director. My focus is to entertain people. Ayushmann has great comic timing and he is really great at his job and so the pressure is a bit less. But there is some pressure as a writer and director.”

In the film, Ayushmann essays the role of a young man who can imitate a female voice and plays female characters in Ramleela. He gets a job in an adult hotline, but things go haywire when customers, both men and women, fall for him and start searching for the face behind the sultry voice.

“For a male actor to balance the voice of a female with a feminine body language is always challenging. We were sure we don't want it to be over-the-top. And he played it so naturally,” Shaandilyaa added.

According to him, the film may look like a fun ride but there is also a message in it.

“It is a content-driven film with elements of humour. It talks about loneliness,” he said, without divulging any further details.

Talking about the title of the film, the director revealed, the team was toying with the idea of having names like “Kanyakumari”, “Googly”, etc. “...Then we thought ‘Dream Girl’ is the apt title, it goes well with the story. The only relation between the title of the film and Hema Malini ji, who is known as a ‘Dream Girl’ is that we have shot it in Mathura, which is her constituency.”

“Dream Girl”, an Ekta Kapoor production, also stars Nushrat Bharucha, Annu Kapoor, Manjot Singh among others. It is scheduled to be released on September 13. Shaandilyaa said today filmmakers, stars and a lot of creative people in the industry are becoming socially responsible.

“There are a lot of issues around us. There is more responsibility on all of us, especially creative people, as we have got this amazing medium to narrate a tale in an entertaining way in two hours.



“Every director has a different way of telling a story -- serious or comical -- and both have its own set of challenges. With light-hearted films, one has to be all the more careful while highlighting an issue.”

According to Shaandilyaa, social issues can be presented either in a serious or comical way, depending on the subject.

“There was a time when there was a loud cinema, today it is more natural. Like ‘Article 15’ talks about rape and casteism but in a serious way as the subject is such that it needs that kind of treatment.

“On the other hand a film like ‘Jabriya Jodi’ which highlights the issue of dowry but in a light-hearted way,” added Shaandilyaa, who has written dialogues and additional screenplay for the Sidharth Malhotra and Parineeti Chopra-starrer.

Salman Khan and Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'In-shaa-allah' has been pushed

MUMBAI, AUG 26 (PTI): Superstar Salman Khan on Monday announced that his much-awaited film with Sanjay Leela Bhansali has been pushed and will not release on Eid 2020.

Titled “In-shaa-Alah”, the love story features Alia Bhatt as the female lead.

“The film with Sanjay Leela Bhansali is pushed but I will still see you all on Eid, 2020. Insha-Allah,” Salman, 53, posted on Twitter.

Bhansali Productions also shared the news on their official page on the microblogging site saying the banner has decided to not go ahead with the movie for now.

“Bhansali Productions has decided to not go ahead with In-shaa-Allah for now... Further announcement will

be out soon,” the tweet read.

The project, a co-production between Salman and Bhansali's banners, marked

which starred Salman. The actor went on to feature in the director-producer's classic “Hum Dil De Chuke



the director-actor duo's first collaboration in two decades where Salman, 53, was supposed to play the lead.

Bhansali made his directorial debut with 1996's “Khamoshi - The Musical”,

Sanam” in 1999 opposite Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Ajay Devgn.

He also made a cameo in Bhansali's “Saawariya”, which launched Ranbir Kapoor and Sonam Kapoor.

We all are flawed, important to introspect: Arjun Kapoor

BY RADHIKA SHARMA

MUMBAI, AUG 26 (PTI): Arjun Kapoor is a wiser man today and the actor says accepting criticism and introspecting has made him a better person.

For someone who has seen more ups and downs in life than an average soul and being a public figure at the same time has what amounted to his overall growth, he said.

“I've always been a sorted person to a certain degree. I think circumstances in life have always taught me. I'm a willing learner. I'm somebody who listens and imbibes. A lot of people in our profession don't tend to do that.

“I've always been someone who is open to criticism and accepting that I'm flawed, we all are. I don't believe in pointing fingers at anybody else. I always try and introspect. Introspection takes a toll, but you come out of that a better person,” Arjun told PTI in an interview. He was speaking on the sidelines of the Lakme Fashion Week Winter/Festive 2019, which closed Sunday.

The “India's Most Wanted” actor said he has never been the one to make a big deal about the details of his life professional or personal.

In life's quieter moments he reassesses and unlearns, he said.

“For every big moment in my life, rather than being somebody who flaunts it, I've dealt with situations with dignity and grace that my mother taught me. These are all words that we know, but they are difficult to implement. I struggled from time to time, I'm also human.”

At the five day-long fashion gala, Arjun walked for his friend, designer Kunal Rawal as the showstopper. He sported a dark sea green coat with unique hem lines and black pants. The actor said walking the ramp for Rawal is being at home.

It's not so much about turning the designer's muse as much as it is about seeing his evolution, Arjun said.

“Being a friend, I normally sit by the sidelines and I'm always there to cheer him on

with all the showstoppers that we've had so many years. I've been part of some of the shows when he was starting out. It's always nice as but I don't look at myself as a showstopper. I look at myself as somebody who's a continuation of his (Kunal) journey. If you can see my journey through his and his journey through mine, it's always really nice.”

“It's just good storytelling -- two journeys unfolding in front of all of you,” he added.

Arjun will next be seen in Ashutosh



Gowariker's much-awaited period drama, “Panipat”. Describing the film as an “untold spectacle”, the actor said there are film directors and then there are filmmakers, and Gowariker is the second kind.

“He's somebody who goes into tremendous detail and is a maker in the epic sense of the word. He has evolved into someone who's a gigantic storyteller, who takes on these massive stories and allows them to unfold on the big screen. “That's something that's always been his forte. We have all heard about the Battle of Panipat, but we don't know the importance behind it. We will soon come to know,” he said.

The actor, who is currently dubbing for the film, said working on “Panipat” has been a learning experience.

“It's something I'm very proud of being a part of. We worked very hard on it. I can now finally see the film coming together,” he added. Also featuring Sanjay Dutt and Kriti Sanon, the film is slated to hit the screens on December 6.

ARIES: Your work environment doesn't have to be toxic if you don't want it to. How can you make the space a haven of good vibes? The change starts with you, Aries. The energy you bring in will reset the energy of the room. Make an effort to exude warmth even towards those who don't always mean well. You'll be surprised by how much a kind word or two from you can transform.

Tip: Good vibes become a magnet for good vibes.

TAURUS: Ready to write yet another success story? Power and prestige are both yours to keep. Plus, the monetary rewards that will make your bank account swell with pride. But this conversation is more about what you could potentially lose in the bargain. Your mental and physical health are just as important as making it big. In a world that constantly expects you to be on the go, allow yourself the time you need to hit the reset button.

Tip: You have just completed a significant journey. Allow yourself the time you need to rest.

GEMINI: You are not your cast. You are

not your creed. You are not the colour of your skin. You are not the money you make or the position you hold in society. Rewrite the rules, Gemini. This chapter of your life calls for a greater degree of self-expression. Remember, people may or may not be on board with your rebellion. But that matters little. You have never let the societal norms define you.

Tip: Hello, unicorn!

CANCER: If life seems like a multiple choice question at the moment that's because it is. Examine each of the options before you. While some promise to deliver, others simply look good on paper. This is where your wisdom comes in, Cancer. Focus on your long-term goals. Choose a path that will align you with the golden future you've been dreaming about.

Tip: Making the right choices will align you with the golden future.

LEO: If we didn't trip and fall every now and then, we wouldn't learn to put our big girl pants on and graduate to the next level. Don't let the failures keep you from believing in your dreams. You have so many

mountains to climb, Leo. If that feeling of stagnation is bringing you down, let innovation become your power word. Finding new ways to do the same old could be the key to initiating monumental change.

Tip: Innovate.

VIRGO: How do you feel about your bartending skills, Virgo? The start of this week promises to give you a multitude of reasons to get behind the bar. The best part of your big moment: you're not cha-cha-ing alone. Watch how your soul fam breaks into dance! But don't limit the kindness and compassion to your friends and family alone. Get to know your coworkers on an informal level.

Tip: Joy and celebration are on the cards.

LIBRA: Sometimes you just have to put on a kaftan, light some incense, and let them bad vibes go. You are likely to feel like your most unproductive self, and that's okay. Don't let the Gregorian calendar dictate what you can or cannot do. Turn your attention inwards, Libra. Listen to the voice in your head that's telling you to prioritise yourself.

Tip: Let the self-healing journey continue.

SCORPIO: Don't let that feeling of stagnation bring you down. What you want to do instead: step back. Examine how and why you strayed away from the path. The clarity you receive in these moments will help you realign. Get your law of attraction game back on, Scorpio.

Tip: The mysterious forces above are working with you to create your best life.

SAGITTARIUS: An idea is merely an idea until you put it into practice. What this day calls for: a greater degree of innovation and initiative. How can you set a trend, Sagittarius? How can you give the world something it has never seen before? Write the first chapter of your journey to greatness. To gain perspective, share your vision board with a handful of people who matter and let them provide you with constructive criticism.

Tip: It's time to put that great idea into practice.

CAPRICORN: This week, you're a magnet for joy, love, abundance, and blessings. Capricorn, there's a reason they're calling you destiny's favourite child. The best part about this phase is that you're not celebrat-

ing your victories alone. You are surrounded by those who take pleasure in watering you and pride in watching you grow.

Tip: Old friendships come into the limelight today.

AQUARIUS: Some may call you a sass machine. But there's nothing wrong with being too much to handle. Don't let the world tell you who you can and cannot be, especially when you are choosing authenticity over everything else. Truth-telling is going to be an important theme for you today. Remember, the ability to look past the BS and make impartial decisions has always been your forte.

Tip: Choose authenticity over everything else. **PISCES:** Having a larger-than-life vision sets you apart from the crowd. But could this vision be turning into an obsession? Something to think about when you find yourself at odds with those around. Having a structure in place is a good thing. It helps you channel your creativity in an efficient manner. However, replacing rigidity with flow will ensure things work out for seamlessly for you.

Tip: Be easy on yourself and those around.