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Summit **TIMES**

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CM demands 50 electric mini buses for Sikkim

Will advocate relaxation in criteria for procuring mini buses: Meghwal

GANGTOK, 07 AUG (IPR): The Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Arjun Ram Meghwal called on Chief Minister, PS Tamang (Golay) in his office at Tashiling, Secretariat this afternoon.

The Chief Minister, Mr Tamang after accord- ing a warm welcome also held a brief meeting with the Minister of State, Arjun Ram Meghwal, which was also attended by Cabinet Ministers, BS Panth and Sanjeet Kharel along with the Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava, ACS cum Principal Secretary Finance, SC Gupta, ACS cum Principal Secretary Industries Dr Thomas Chandy, Secretary to Chief Minister, SD Dhakal, Secretary Transport, Raju Basnet and other officials from the Ministry.

MoS, Mr Meghwal was all praise for Sikkim



and talked highly about the happiness index in which Sikkim is leading in the country. He also apprised the Chief Minister about the World Happiness Report is an annual publication of the United Nations sustainable development solutions network (It contains articles, and rankings of national happiness based on respondent ratings of their own lives which the report also correlates with various life factors) where

out of 156 countries India is lying low at 133.

He also informed how Madhya Pradesh is aggressively working towards achieving a commendable happiness index and they have created separate Ministry for happiness, named Anand Mantralaya, while suggesting that Sikkim which is leading state in the nation in happiness index can have their own separate Ministry for happiness and lead the

nation in this field.

On the other hand the Chief Minister, PS Tamang liked the idea of having a separate department for happiness and said that his Government will definitely think about the suggestion put forward by the Minister for State.

The Minister, Mr Meghwal also informed the Chief Minister about how his Ministry under Fame India Scheme has started National Elec-

tricity Mobility Mission Plan 2020 which is a National Mission document providing the vision and road map for faster adaptation of Electric Vehicles (EV) and their manufacturing within the country. He further informed that his Minister has given more than 6,000 units of Electric vehicles to 64 cities across the country.

The Chief Minister, Mr Tamang informed that Sikkim had requested

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MHA move to open up Sikkim peaks to foreigners hurting local sentiments: CM tells Meghwal

GANGTOK, AUG 27 (PTI): Union minister Arjun Ram Meghwal called on Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang at his office here on Tuesday and discussed a range of issues, including MHA's move to open up 24 peaks to foreigners and introduction of electric vehicles in the state, a statement here said.

The Centre, in a bid to boost tourism, has recently issued a notification, allowing mountaineering expeditions to 137 peaks across the country, including Kanchenjunga and 23 others in Sikkim, it said.

In a letter to the Centre, the Sikkim government has sought immediate withdrawal of the notification, stating that the peaks are of sentimental and religious val-

ue to locals. Tamang, better known as Golay, urged Meghwal to apprise the central government about the sensitivity of the matter and spare at least 14 of the 24 peaks that have been opened to foreigners for expeditions.

The Union minister of state for heavy industries and public enterprises assured the CM that he would talk to the authorities concerned on the issue.

Meghwal said that he was hopeful that the Centre would try to protect local sentiments, the official statement said.

Talking about the need for industrialization in the state, the chief minister also requested Meghwal to consider his proposal for establishing ancillary units, if not manufacturing units, of

heavy machineries. It would solve the problem of unemployment to an extent, Golay insisted.

The Union minister, on his part, asserted that he would discuss the matter with automobile companies.

Meghwal also apprised Golay about his ministry's National Electricity Mobility Mission Plan 2020 - a mission document providing for a road map for faster adaptation of Electric Vehicles (EV) in the country.

When the CM said that Sikkim's demand for 50 electric mini buses were not approved by the Centre on the ground that it did not fulfill all criteria, Meghwal gave assurances that he would advocate for relaxation of norms for the state.

Save Khangchendzonga Forum formed to steer protest against mountaineering on Sikkim's sacred peaks

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Save Khangchendzonga Forum was constituted today under the aegis of Press Club of Sikkim with the expressed aim to convince the concerned authorities to rescind the recent decision to open Khangchendzonga and other sacred peaks of Sikkim for mountaineering.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, it may be recalled, had recently decided to open 137 Himalayan Peaks, including 24 in Sikkim, for mountaineering. The decision was

received with across the board condemnations in Sikkim and some groups have even issued a deadline of 13 September for the MHA to withdraw its decision. Sikkim celebrates Pang Lhabso, the worship of Khangchendzonga, on 13 Sept.

Save Khangchendzonga Forum will soon be organising a signature campaign and invite subject specialists to deliver talks on what makes Khangchendzonga sacred for Sikkim and why mountaineering on it is an ill-advised move.

West Bengal not to implement new Motor vehicles act: minister

KOLKATA, AUG 27 (PTI):

The West Bengal government will not implement the new motor vehicles act when it comes into effect, as it does not agree with the suggestions of the bill such as exorbitant fine on errand drivers, the state Assembly was informed on Tuesday. The Parliament in July passed the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which seeks to tighten road traffic regulations such as issuance of driving licence and imposed stricter penalties for violations in an attempt to improve road safety.

"The new motor vehicles act will not be implemented in Bengal as of now. We are not on the same page over the huge fine that

has been suggested will be imposed on drivers. We are still discussing the matter with the Centre," Transport Minister Suwendu Adhikari said while replying to the question and answer session in the assembly.

"We also have an objection to the clause that a company from which you are buying a vehicle will be entitled to give its fitness certificate," he said.

The legislation provides for stricter punishment for various traffic related offences as well as higher penalties, including compensations of Rs 5 lakh for death and Rs 2.5 lakh for grievous injury in a motor vehicle accident case.

Ministry of Heavy Industries holds awareness campaign on FAME India



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

The Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Government of India organized an awareness campaign today at Lemon Tree Hotel, Sichey on FAME India which is an incentive Scheme for the promotion of electric and hybrid vehicles in the country, a press release

from the Transport Department informs.

Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Arjun Ram Meghwal was the chief guest for the program while Lok Sabha MP, Indra Hang Subba was the guest of honor. Also present were Secretary, Transport Department, Raju Basnet, Deputy Secretary, Minis-

try of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Arvind Kumar and officers from Transport Department, GOI.

Government of India is looking to promote electric mobility as one of the key solution to reduce carbon emission. National Electricity Mobility Mission Plan 2020 (NEMMP) is a National

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Sikkim to host NE Zone Inter State Badminton C'ship this Sept

SAGAR CHETTRI GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Sikkim is hosting the prestigious North East Zone Inter State Badminton Championship 2019 from 19 to 22 September here at Indoor Badminton Hall in Paljor Stadium complex. The championship will have international and top ranking players from all North Eastern States. Badminton Association of Sikkim [BAS] has been working on war-footing basis to host the four-day championship in a grand and successful manner.

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, BAS president, C Zangpo mentioned that Sikkim is hosting this prestigious championship for the



fourth time in the State. He mentioned that BAS had organized North East Zonal Badminton Championship with great success in 1995, 2003 and 2011.

The championship will be an oppor-

tunity to see the game of international and top rated players of the country from North Eastern States, he added.

A total of 160 players from all north eastern States will be participating in the

championship. Each team will comprise of 20 players and two team officials.

The championship will have International and top ranking players like India ranking No 2 and World Ranking No 87, Ashmita Chaliha from Assam in women singles, India ranking No 1, Maisnam Meiraba from Manipur and India Ranking No 11, Bidyasagar Salam from Manipur in Boys singles U-19, India Ranking No 1 Dingku Singh Konthoiam and Manjit Singh Khwairakpam from Manipur in boy's doubles U-19 and India international, Maheshwari Devi Kshetrimayum from Manipur in girls singles U-19.

The BAS president said that such a

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Luing-based org highlights measures still awaited on their road

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:**

Luing-based organisation, Samaj Utthan Samiti [SUS], has expressed concerns over the recently carpeted Luing road from Bakthang to Perbing in East Sikkim. This 7KM stretch was reportedly carpeted around six months back.

Addressing a press conference here today, SUS member, Jagannath Pandey, expressed gratitude towards the State government for the carpeting of the road.

However, he raised concerns over problems still being faced by people using this road.

He informed that there was no drainage along the road so water ran on the surface. He informed that there were three accident-prone spots on this road which require protection walls.

He also suggested that the government promote Barbotey falls at Thami Dara as a tourism destination.

He also demanded today that panchayat and municipal elections not be held on party-basis any more.

He also stressed that the party flag politics should be stopped immediately.

Bengal govt to table bill against mob assault, lynching

KOLKATA, AUG 27 (PTI): The Mamata Banerjee government in West Bengal is planning to introduce a stringent Bill in the Legislative Assembly to check incidents of mob assault and lynching in the state, sources said on Tuesday.

The West Bengal (Prevention of Lynching) Bill, 2019 is likely to be tabled in the House on August 30, they said.

"The bill aims to protect the constitutional rights of vulnerable persons and prevent incidents of lynching. It also proposes action against those involved in perpetrating the crime," a senior TMC minister said.

As per the legislation, if anyone is found guilty of publishing, communicating and disseminating any offensive material either physically or electronically, shall be liable to imprisonment upto one year and fine upto Rs 50,000, the minister said giving a broad outline of the bill.

"Whoever contributes or enforces a hostile environment on a person or a group of persons shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend upto three years," the senior TMC minister said.

Sikkim to host...

championship in the State would provide better exposure to local players while international and top rated players would further motivate young players of the State. He added that BAI has designated referees and team of technical officials and tournament observer for the championship.

Mr Zangpo informed that the State coaching camp is currently underway in Gangtok and Namchi and final selection trial for the State team is scheduled to be held on 31 August. He added that after the final selection, the State team members will undergo rigorous coaching camp at Gangtok.

BAS general secretary, Sukanta Das mentioned that the championship will have the Live Scoring system in each court using Badminton World Federation

Coordination meeting with poultry sector stakeholders of South

NAMCHI, 27 AUG (IPR):

A coordination meeting chaired by District Collector (South), Ragul K with the poultry sector stakeholders under South District was held at DAC Conference hall, Namchi today.

The meeting was attended by SP South, Prawin Gurung, DCSO South, Dinesh Pradhan, Addl Director Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Dr. Mala Bajgai, Joint Director Weights & Measures South/West, LB Pradhan along with concerned heads of department, officials, cooperatives representatives and poultry farmers from the district.

The meeting was mainly convened to assess the problems and prospects of poultry



production and management in the district.

Addressing the meeting, DC, Ragul K. spoke about the objectives of the meeting and informed that the District Administration shall provide full

cooperation for the benefit of the poultry growers.

The DC further spoke about the need for a block level cooperative society under the umbrella of District level Cooperative Society which will over-

look the production and management of poultry farming in the district.

In the course of his address, the DC assigned the activity of identification of certain places for poultry supply under the district to the Department. He further emphasized the prompt deployment of a concerned official from AH&VS Department for timely assessment and administration of the poultry farms under the district.

SP South, Prawin Gurung also addressed the program where he assured police cooperation for stakeholders in the matter of poultry farming. He also informed that special instructions will be issued for police check post under his purview for illegal influx of poultry supplies.

The meeting also saw an interactive session between the poultry farmers and stakeholders where various suggestions were put forth by the officials present.

ASKCBYS to organize state level Teej festival

**RUDRA KAUSHIK
GYALSHING, 27 AUG:**

The West District unit of Akhil Sikkim Khas Chettri Bahun Yuwa Sangh (ASKCBYS) is celebrating the state level Haritaalika Teej festival at Hee bazaara premises in West Sikkim on 01 Sept. A preliminary meeting regarding Teej celebration was held on Sunday here at Hee Gaon.

The meeting chaired by Press advisor to Chief Minister, CP Sharma was also attended by SKM party's Maneybung Dentam constituency's In-charge, Purna Hang Subba, members of ASKCBYS and others.

Various subjects regarding Teej celebration was tabled in the meeting, suggestions and opinions of the persons present in the meeting were sought for efficient management of the event and resolutions were passed in the meeting.

It was informed that Teej festival management committee was formed earlier and sub committees comprised to take care of various aspects of the fest were formed on Sunday.

The organizing committee's President, RB Bista deliberating on objectives of Teej celebration, expressed that Teej would be part of the organizing committee's effort to preserve and promote traditions and cultures related to Khas community.

He added that Teej is an important festival celebrated especially by the women of Khas community and this year ASKCBYS has come forward to observe the state level Teej celebration at Hee Gaon with an aim of reviving age old traditions and cultures related to Teej.

"We do not aspire to confine Teej within

Chettri Bahun communities but we will promote Teej as a festival of the state," he said.

CP Sharma pressed for keeping Teej celebration sacred and traditional in nature, adding that ostentatious way of celebrating cultural festivals such as Teej would not fulfill the aspirations of promoting and protecting cultures and traditions.

Other persons present in the meeting also placed their opinions and suggestions and assured to work in unity for successful management of the festival.

The fest will have cultural procession, traditional food stalls, folk dances based on cultural theme and many more.

It was informed that Chief Minister, PS Tamang [Golay] has consented to be present as the chief guest in the Teej festival.

Dikchu bids farewell to senior teacher



**WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 27 AUG:**

Dikchu Senior Secondary School today organised a farewell program for senior teacher, Sarojini Syangbo.

Ms Syangbo has been in Dikchu Senior Secondary school in East Sikkim her entire teaching career. She had joined service in the year 1981 and retired last month.

The function today was attended by Director,

Dr YP Nepal, HRDD as chief guest, BDO Tintek, Pema Wangchen Bhutia, Headmistress, Tseten Lhamu Lepcha, Gor Secondary School as special guests in presence of Chandra Lall Neopany, ward Panchayat, AEO HRDD, RB Rai, RDA, Lall Man Subba, teachers, students, and the parents.

Principal, Dr Saroz Pradhan, highlighted the contribution of Ms

Syangbo in imparting education to the children and her selfless dedication in overall development of the school.

The students, teachers and general public along with ex-students offered garlands to Ms Syangbo and wished her a happy retired life.

A colourful cultural programme was also hosted by the students in her honour.

tournament software which can be viewed worldwide at the same time and will put Sikkim on the international map of badminton.

He informed that the four-day long event will have team championship for Rahimatulla Cup for men, Chadha Cup for women, Narang Cup for boys and Shafi Qureshi Cup for girls. Likewise, there will be open championship in men's singles & doubles and mixed doubles, women's singles & doubles and mixed doubles, boy's singles & doubles and mixed doubles and girl's singles & doubles and mixed doubles.

This is one of the zonal tournaments of India from which the winner will get direct entry in national championship as zonal winner from five zones, Mr Das informed.

Day-long training on PKVY in West Sikkim



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:**

A day-long training on Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana [PKVY] programme was organized by FS&ADD West Sikkim at Arithang Martam village cluster today, a press release informs.

The programme was attended by ADO Gyalshing, Ganesh Gurung, newly appointed ADO Martam, Suraj Chettri, Block Technology Manager ATMA West, Bivek Sharma, staff of One Family One Job, Sun Kumar Limboo and 50 progressive farmers.

CM demands...

for such Electric Vehicles specially 50 mini buses but couldn't fulfil the criteria for obtaining the electric vehicles from the Ministry due to its meagre population and good pollution control.

A visibly surprised Mr Meghwal assured that he will advocate relaxation in criteria for Sikkim to obtain EVs while adding that two such demo electric vehicles are being provided one to the Governor and another one to the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister, PS Tamang was also very vocal on how electric transport vehicles can be solution for traffic problems, which the people for state capital have to deal with everyday and requested the Minister to provide Sikkim with 50 EVs (Mini Buses)

The Minister for State assured that Sikkim will definitely get those mini buses from his Ministry and asked the representatives of the PSUs who were also present during the meeting to immediately identify locations for changing stations for such EVs in the state and also requested the state government to provide suitable locations for the same, to which the Chief Minister, his cabinet colleagues and the concerned officials gave him the nod.

During the meeting the Chief Minister also put forward few important demands for Electric Vehicles such as

- 1) The Minister of Heavy Industries may provide us with electrical mini buses on 100% subsidy basis for trial in the hills.
- 2) The cost of the vehicle and its expenditure cost are very high and not suitable for hilly region so we request the Centre Government for subsidies busses and its operational cost.

He also asked the Ministry to consider establishing ancillary units of heavy machineries for the industries to be established in West Sikkim which could not only give boost to the industrialization in the state but also solve the problem of unemployment.

The Chief Minister also suggested that Sikkim is capable of having at least assembly units for two wheelers if not manufacturing units and hoped that the Minister of State will take up the matter earnestly in his Ministry.

The Minister, Mr Meghwal assured he will definitely discuss the matter with the automobiles companies and suggest that they should have at least assembly units in the state of Sikkim.

During the meeting The Chief Minister also expressed his concern over the notification of Ministry of Home Affairs where sacred peaks of Sikkim including Mt Kancehnjunga has been opened for expedition.

He asked the Minister of State to kindly put forward the issue in the centre and also informed him that out of 24 mountains which was been opened for scaling 14 should be banned, as it has a religious and sentimental value to the people of Sikkim.

The Minister assured that he will definitely talk with the concerned Ministry about the issue and was hopeful that Centre Government will definitely try and protect the sentiments and religious values of Sikkimese people.

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Ministry of Heavy...

Mission providing the vision and the road map for faster adoption of EV and their manufacturing within the country. As a part of the NEMMP 2020, the Department of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, and Government of India formulated a Scheme viz FAME India Scheme Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) & Electric Vehicle in India launched w.e.f 1st April, 2015 and extended till 31st March, 2019 as FAME -I scheme.

Fame - II (in operation) launched in 1st April, 2019 for period of 3 years till 31st March, 2022. These schemes were launched to encourage buying of EV and reduce fuel/gas/diesel emissions. The demand incentive is available to buyers of EV in the form of an upfront reduced purchase price to enable wider adoption of EV.

The GoI has allocated sum of Rs. 10000 crores for awareness programme, development of infrastructure for public charging station (PCS) for electric vehicle and other incentive support for electric buses, 2, 3 & 4 wheelers which are to be used for commercial purposes. Further, Govt of India gazette notification dated 24th July 2019 has exempted battery operated electric vehicle from paying fee for renewal of registration certificate and assignment of new registration mark.

ANTHYESTI KRIYA

Anthyesti Kriya of late Nimsang Doma Lama Pradhan, wife of late Shiva Pradhan, who left for heavenly abode on 16 August, 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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BJP delegation meets MoS Meghwal

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

A Bharatiya Janata Party delegation called on Union Minister of State, Parliamentary Affairs, Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Arjun Ram Meghwal who is on a two-day visit to Sikkim from 26 Aug.

The delegation was led by Sikkim BJP president, DB Chauhan, seven legislators of the party, DT Lepcha, Ugen T Gyatso Bhutia, DR Thapa, Tashi Thendup Bhutia, Pintso Namgyal Lepcha, Rajkumari Thapa and Farwanti Tamang including general secretary, SB Karki, treasurer GD Agar-



wal, East District president, YT Lepcha and other party functionaries.

During the meeting, the delegation informed Mr Meghwal about the developmental works being carried out in Sikkim.

The role of the centre in development of Sikkim in coming days was also discussed with the Minister during the meeting.

Mr Meghwal was also informed about the ongoing widespread member-

ship campaign and organizational expansion of Bharatiya Janata Party in all four districts of Sikkim.

Mr Meghwal has assured the delegation that all the issues for the development of Sikkim will

be presented before the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. He also said that the central government will not spare any effort in the development of Sikkim.

During this period, he expressed happiness over the organizational expansion of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the state and called for further strengthening the party in Sikkim in the coming days.

Arjun Ram Meghwal, who was the Minister of State for Finance in the previous government, is now Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.

Governor visits adopted GPU Navey Shotak

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad today visited Navey Shotak Gram Panchayat Unit in East Sikkim and interacted with the Gram Panchayat members, PRI functionaries, farmers, local entrepreneurs and villagers in general. Kabi Lungtsok MLA and Forest Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia, Addl Chief Secretary to Governor, Dr K Jayakumar, District Collector East, Raj Kumar Yadav, Officers of Raj Bhavan, representatives of various departments were present on the occasion.

A Raj Bhavan release informs that this visit was for second review meet on the schemes and projects under implementation in the GPU following its adoption by the Governor.

Panchayat President, Tashi Doma Bhutia in her welcome address also presented in brief the status of schemes and progress achieved on various schemes undertaken after the adoption of GPU by the Governor.

She also placed before the Governor, the thrust areas which needed urgent attention for enhancement of farmer's

income and transformation of rural economy. These included dairy farming, mini agro-processing unit and incentives for promotion of organic farming and promotion of home stays in the area.

District Collector, Raj Kumar Yadav in his brief address outlined the activities and intervention to be undertaken by district administration in enhancing and enriching the facilities in the government schools, ICDS centres, Primary Health Centres and PHSCs located in the GPU in next three months.

Addl Chief Secretary to Governor, in his address, provided the status of schemes in the pipelines and new schemes being formulated for overall transformation of villages in the GPU.

He also informed the house about the special assistance from Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Government of India in the form of schemes dedicated to the GPU. He further urged all the officials, field functionaries and Panchayats to remain proactive and make the best use of the opportunities provided to them

to serve the villagers.

Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia in his brief address expressed the gratitude to the Governor for the adoption of GPU under his constituency and said the government, though new, will endeavour to bring overall transformation in the lives of Sikkimese and villagers in particular. He stressed on the need of coordinated effort among all departments, agencies and PRI functionaries to achieve the goal of progress and prosperity.

Addressing the villagers, the Governor stressed on the involvement of all in the schemes and projects being formulated and implemented in the GPU. He added that there is immediate need to transform rural economy by means of dairy farming, food processing and setting up small industries and enhance rural entrepreneurship in apparel and garment through various capacity building measures within the GPU.

He also outlined the objectives behind adopting the GPU which will inspire others to emulate the initiatives that would be accomplished in the village.

Union MoS calls on Governor



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Arjun Ram Meghwal called on Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad on his arrival late evening on 26 Aug. 2019 at Raj Bhavan, a press release informs.

It was a courtesy call by the Union Minister who is on a two-day visit to Sikkim to review central schemes and projects being imple-

mented in the State.

In a brief meeting various developmental issues concerning Sikkim were discussed. The Union Minister expressed the commitment and continued thrust of the Union Government towards the specific developmental needs of Sikkim and other North Eastern states.

The Union Minister also briefly raised the issues of Companies Act and its ramifications in the State.

Agri Minister chairs coordination meet with Scheme heads



GANGTOK, 27 AUG (IPR): Agriculture Minister, Lok Nath Sharma chaired a coordination meeting with the scheme heads of departments under his charge in the presence of the Secretary Horticulture Department, DK Bhandari and Secretary Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services Department, SB Subba.

While interacting with the scheme heads, the Minister stressed to ensure preparatory work in advance for the implementation of schemes on stipulated time period. The department should develop a mechanism so that the farmers could receive required inputs and seeds on right time.

The Minister also reiterated his advice to develop governmental farm as a model farm to educate farmers. He also discussed on technical aspects for carrying out different activities under various sanctions. Further, he asked officials to submit progress report on monthly basis.

Heads of various sections including Fruits, Bee Keeping, Spices, Vegetables, Flowers, Plastic

Culture, Human Resource Development (HRD), National Bamboo Mission, PMKSY/Micro Irrigation, Integrated Post Harvest Management schemes etc. described ongoing programmes and activities to be taken up in near future.

Later, the Minister visited State Veterinary Polyclinic of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department along with the concerned Secretary, Principal Director and officials. Minister made visit to various sections including X-Ray Room, Operation Theatre, Deworming & Vaccination Room and Administrative Sections, Disease Investigations Cell, Central Veterinary Store, Breeding Cell, FS & LN Storage Unit, Statistical Division, etc.

Subsequently, he convened a brief meeting with the officials and discussed on solution part of genuine requirements like establishment of infrastructures, basic necessities including repairing work of power and water connectivity in the State Veterinary Polyclinic.

Inaugural meeting of all Assembly Committees

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG (IPR):

The inaugural-cum-briefing meeting of all Assembly Committees (Financial & Legislative 2019-2020) constituted on 02 Aug, 2019 the concluding day of 1st Budget session of 10th Sikkim Legislative Assembly was held at Committee meeting room of State Legislators' Hostel, Gangtok today.

The meeting was attended by following dignitaries:-

1. Speaker, LB Das, Ex-officio Chairman (Rules Committee).
2. Deputy Speaker, Sangay Lepcha, Ex-Officio Chairman (Library Committee).
3. Chairman, Aditya Golay (Tamang) (Public Accounts Committee).
4. Sumita Gajmer, Chairperson (Estimate Committee).
5. Chairman, Em Prasad Sharma (Assurance Committee) and
6. Member, BK Sharma (House and Library Committee)

Speaker, LB Das while delivering his inaugural address, highlighted the powers, functions and importance of the different Assembly Committees.

Chairman, Mr Golay (Tamang), Public Accounts Committee while addressing the meeting requested for full cooperation from all the concerned and assured to give his fullest dedication towards the

Committee works entrusted to him.

The Commissioner - cum - Secretary, LM Pradhan recorded his best wishes and compliments to the newly elected Committee Members for their future endeavor and smooth functioning of the Committees as well.

While welcoming the newly elected



Committee Members, Special Secretary SLAS, Dr GP Dahal, highlighted the powers and functions of various committees.

Legal Officer, Barun Dahal enlightened the importance of PRS legislative research at National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi for all the Committee members who would be attending the ensuing PRS workshop from 28 to 30 Aug, 2019.

The meeting was conducted by Additional Secretary, Bindhya Rai, Committee and vote of thanks was proposed by Deputy Secretary, Mejrj Gurung, Committee.

Sikkim Judicial Academy holds workshops for Magistrates

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Sikkim Judicial Academy organized Workshops for Chief Judicial Magistrate and Judicial Magistrates of all the districts of Sikkim today, as per a press release.

The Workshops were on The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Chapter IX on Order for Maintenance of Wives, Children and Parents, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, The Negotiable In-



struments Act, 1881 and The Banker's Books Evidence Act, 1891.

The Resource Person was Justice, Jay Sengupta, Judge, High Court of Calcutta. The Resource Person

shared all the landmark judgments on all the varied topics as well as discussed the principles laid therein. The salient features of the various statutes were also discussed.

"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).

Seminar on Intellectual Property Rights at SU

GANGTOK, 27 AUG (PIB): The Intellectual Property Rights Committee of Sikkim University organized a one-day Seminar on "Awareness on Intellectual Property Rights Issues" at the Conference Hall, Barad Sadan today.

The objective of the Seminar was to give an overview on issues concerning copyrights, patents and biodiversity issues. The resource persons for the day-long Seminar were Founding Director, Dr Dhanpat Ram Agarwal, ITAG Business Solutions Ltd, Institute of International Trade, Kolkata and Independent IP Practitioner, Dr Shashank Mauriya, Former Assistant Director General, ICAR, New Delhi.

Dr Agarwal spoke about the importance of understanding the relevance

of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in being the drivers of economic growth and also stated the difference between Intellectual Property and Intellectual Property Rights. He elaborated on the legal framework to be recognized in understanding the concept of IPR. Dr Shashank Mauriya spoke on the vital issues concerning IPR and Biodiversity and mentioned that without Intellectual Property invention cannot prosper.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Avinash Khare welcomed the resource persons to the Seminar and mentioned the relevance of IPR in the ever growing economy. The seminar was attended by officials from the Botanical Survey of India, Department of Forests, Govt. of Sikkim, staff and students of the University.

RURAL MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM GANGTOK

Memo No. 575/RM&DD.MGNREGA/19-20

Dated: 26/08/2019

NOTICE FOR RE-TENDER

(NIT Reference no. 352/RM&DD/MGNREGA/19-20 dated 4/7/2019)
With reference to above tender notice published in the Sikkim Herald/Sikkim Express and Summit Times dates 6th July 2019 for supply of materials for GNREGA for the year 2019-20, the date for re-tender for supply of the materials under MGNREGA for the BAC, Khamdong, East Sikkim has been fixed on 2/09/2019 for submission of quotation from 10 am to 1pm and will be opened on same day at 2 pm at the respective BDO Offices. All other terms and conditions as mentioned in NIT Memo No. 287/RM&DD/MGNREGA dated 21/06/2019 shall remain same.

Sd/-
Sr. Accounts Officer-MGNREGA
RM&DD, Gangtok.

R.O. NO. 163/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20
Date: 27.08.19

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
WATER RESOURCES & RIVER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

Bid No: NHP-03 Online Re-Tender-01 of 2019-20. Date: 28th August 2019

E-Procurement Notice

Assignment Title: "Supply, installation, testing and Commissioning of equipment for setting up of Gauge Discharge Stations under NHP for WR&RDD, Sikkim.
The *Superintending Engineer, State Project Monitoring Unit, Water Resources and River Development Department, Government of Sikkim*, invites eligible registered Suppliers to indicate their interest in providing the above Services. Complete details are available in the website <http://sikkimtender.gov.in>

Superintending Engineer, NHP, SPMU,
Sokeythang, Tadong, East Sikkim-737102.
E-Mail: sikkimwrdd@gmail.com

R.O. NO. 166/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20
Date: 27.08.2019

Make Tourism Even More Hassle-Free

Hospitality should extend from facilities to policy for the sector to boom louder

Sikkim did not really need the summit-Khangchendzonga misadventure to give tourism a boom. The State and the Centre could have served the sector better, yes, it's still not officially an industry in Sikkim, if it just did the basics right and stepped out of the way of professionals instead of ambushing them with excessive rules, regulations and interference.

Just about every new construction in Gangtok is a hotel in the making. In fact, the hotel construction boom is not a uniquely Gangtok undertaking anymore and the entire region appears to be investing heavily in this sector. From homestays to 5-Star resorts and the entire spectrum in between, tourism is attracting enterprise at a hitherto unheard of scale. Time to take a pause, step back, evaluate and plan in earnest.

Tourism has marched strong in Sikkim, its infrastructural and locational disadvantages notwithstanding. Living in Sikkim, one tends to overlook just how handsomely this sector has grown in the State in the very recent past and it is on occasions like the recent string of bumper tourist seasons and the slow-down with winter, that a stock-taking becomes necessary. Sikkim, of late, has been receiving more visitors annually than it has people residing here! The Lonely Planet endorsement of Sikkim as the No. 1 destination to visit is a further reiteration of the State's still growing appeal. This needs to be leveraged more aggressively. To start with, Sikkim should work even more concisely to ensure that visitors enjoy themselves here, impressed as much by the State's hospitality as by its obvious natural beauty. And when one speaks of hospitality, it is about more than just the smiles of taxi drivers and the hotel staff, it is also about the ease with which the guests can arrive and travel here – the rules and paperwork they need to negotiate.

Needless to add, this sector needs some ironing, but that falls in the policy-framing domain and one hopes wider consensus is developed to make Sikkim more tourist-friendly in how easily it can be accessed and how convenient moving around here can get. Before one proceeds, one needs to add that this process has improved manifold in the recent past as well.

Not so long ago, tourism in Sikkim was essentially about catering to the spillover from Darjeeling; hosting tourists who were left with a day or two on their Darjeeling itinerary. Some of the older hoteliers will attest to this. That is clearly no longer the case anymore. Sikkim enjoys all the standard attractions of hill-escapes and has also managed to add some more value to it. Apart from Casinos which are trying to develop a whole new clientele for tourism in Sikkim, the State's traditional strong points have been in focus for some years as well. Sikkim's potential for alpine style climbing escapes continues to be explored, albeit in fits and starts, and is being promoted by intrepid climbers. The appeal of its landscape, the significance of its religious history and the diversity of its indigenous cultures are well recognized and continue to mesmerize guests, making repeat visits an easy sell. It routinely figures among the recipients of tourism industry-related awards. Tourism-specific infrastructure, from hotels to foot trails to village homestays, is being developed across the State and village tourism has been announced as a mission pursuit by the State Government. Impressive additions have been made to the places to visit list, starting from Guru Rinpoche's statue at Samdrup-tse a decade and a half back to Char Dhaam at Solophok and Tagathatha Tsal at Rabongla since and now the Chenrezig statue in West Sikkim. All these investments and achievements are impressive and welcome, but are let down by the fact that policies and rules governing travel to and within Sikkim are regressive and tourist unfriendly. The fact that foreign tourists require a special permit to be able to even enter Sikkim delivers the first stumbling block. Admittedly, from a time when this permit had to once be applied for at embassies in their respective countries to now arriving at the border checkpoints here and getting their travel documents stamped, is a substantial improvement. Acquiring the permit is a token formality now, but the fact that it still needs to be acquired stretches out the infamous Indian red-tape that every foreign tourist instinctively dreads. Extra paperwork discourages tourists, and since information is never very clear, not everyone knows that this is a mere formality and that it takes only minutes to get stamped into Sikkim. And after that is the dampener that awaits every foreign tourist on a Sikkim visit – news that the more exciting and appealing destinations in the State remain out of bounds for foreigners. And then there is the frustration of realising that even travel within Sikkim has its unique complications which make impromptu changes in plans and itineraries nearly impossible.

One could go on and on, but the point has been made. For a State investing so much as Sikkim is on tourism and harbouring aspirations as high as the State does from this sector, the policy interventions required to make it more accessible and tourist-friendly need to be more forcefully voiced. No amount of promotion and publicity will deliver the tourist traffic Sikkim has potential for unless guests can holiday without worries of documents and logistics weighing them down. Commission agents can afford to live in the moment and not bother about long-term ramifications, policy makers and the stakeholders, however, cannot afford such slackness and need to constantly work at refining policy and rules to make holidays in Sikkim as hassle-free as possible. And while on this topic, irritations like the recent drama over route permits with Bengal will also need to be stamped out much faster because nothing spoils a holiday more than monumentally than a pre-poned, forced departure.

3 ways China benefits from the Hong Kong protests

DEANA ROHLINGER
theconversation.com

The summer of 2019 has seen week after week of protest in Hong Kong.

The protests began June 9 when as many as a million people marched against a bill that could allow suspects to be extradited to China. Hong Kong's chief executive, Carrie Lam, who was appointed by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in 2017, proclaimed the legislation dead days later. But she also declined to withdraw the legislation, spurring additional – larger – protests that at times disrupted financial and transportation systems, leading to clashes with police.

Many in the West have wondered why China hasn't taken firmer action to quell the protests.

As an expert on social movements and political change, I believe that the conflict in Hong Kong – and its resolution – may have implications for America and the rest of the world. If China brings Hong Kong under its thumb, this shift would alter the territory's politics and economic decision-making. Such a change would undoubtedly ripple through the global economy and affect the ability of American companies to do business abroad.

Yet, for now, China's response is fairly subdued. That may be because China is benefiting from not appearing to be involved. Here are three ways.

1. REPRESSION AND CONTROL

Hong Kong's residents have more freedom than Chinese residents living in mainland China – including an independent legal system and a free press.

That's because Hong Kong is its own special administrative region, which gives it significant autonomy from China's central government. This model, known as "one country, two systems," was a condition imposed by the British when they transferred Hong Kong back to China in 1997.

But China's leaders in Beijing want to bring the territory under its control. In 2014, for example, a Hong Kong court purged several pro-democracy politicians from the territory's Legislative Council and installed pro-Beijing politicians in their place.

Much like this summer, Hong Kong's citizens took to the streets, and their calls for democracy were met with pepper spray, tear gas and rubber bullets.

While China is well known for its overt and covert repression against its citizens, in the case of Hong Kong, Beijing can argue it is not directing Lam's response, but is simply standing by if she calls on Beijing for assistance.

China has little to lose by taking this approach. If conflict between the police and citizens resumes and the political system destabilizes, China can swoop in and try to remake Hong Kong in its own image.

This is certainly a possibility. State repression, even when it involves violence against demonstrators, does not always end protest movements. If residents of Hong Kong sense that their window of opportunity to effect change is closing, they may risk their lives to push back against the government. That kind of violence between police and demonstrators can escalate and create a political crisis.

Chaos in Hong Kong enables Beijing to continue to exert more control over the region – possibly crushing the pro-democracy movement once and for all – all while letting it deny its intent to do so.

2. A SHOW OF MILITARY MIGHT

Even if it remains on the sidelines, China's central government can use the protests to influence other outcomes in its favor.

Over the last week, it has implied that it might intervene to end the demonstrations by moving military equipment and personnel to a sports center in Shenzhen, China, that is visible from Hong Kong.

This show of force is a reminder to Hong Kong's citizens that Beijing is willing – and prepared – to assume control of the territory through the use of force. That may provide enough of an incentive for demonstrators to find a way to work with Lam and encourage a resolution more in Beijing's favor.

Arguably, this has already influenced some demonstrators' behaviors. While protesters are still calling for Lam's ouster and more democratic freedoms, one of the leaders of the pro-democracy

Civil Human Rights Front told American news media that the group was working hard to ensure that the demonstrations would once again be peaceful. However, participants in mass demonstrations rarely share a single vision on how to effect political change. It is clear that some protesters continue to believe that violence will help them.

Another potential benefit to Beijing is the message their show of force sends to the Trump administration – proof that China can engage in video-ready shows of global military might. Such spectacles are one way that political leaders can buttress their authority and send a warning to other countries.

3. BUILDING SUPPORT AT HOME

Trump's trade war is hurting China's economy. In fact, China's economic growth stalled to a 27-year low of 6.6%. Although this rate is still high compared to most world economies, contractions such as these increase citizen dissatisfaction, particularly in nondemocratic countries.

While China has historically stymied popular protests, it has been harder to do so as more of its citizens gain access to the internet. Some Chinese citizens have moved away from politely protesting local officials to directly challenging government authority online, which is harder for government officials to contain.

The protests in Hong Kong give China an opportunity to quell that discontent by redirecting their attention toward a common enemy – the demonstrators, who, according to government accounts broadcast on state television, are violent and often paid provocateurs doing America's bidding.

Beijing's efforts to mobilize the citizenry around a Chinese identity seem to be working. On the social media site Weibo, users circulated a post that personifies China as a "little brother" whom its citizens are rallying around and willing to defend against the demonstrators' disparaging characterizations. At least in the short term, this surge of nationalism will quell discontent at home.

[the writer is Professor of Sociology, Florida State University]



Beer has a sexism problem and it goes much deeper than chauvinistic marketing

CHRIS LAND
theconversation.com

When CAMRA, the UK real ale campaign group, decided to ban beers with sexist names and labels from the Great British Beer Festival this summer, the responses were quite predictable. Liberal newspaper The Guardian celebrated the decision to call time on drinks that depict outdated, sexualised and derogatory images of women. Tabloid paper The Sun, by contrast, said that CAMRA lacks a "sense of humour", listing a series of beers, complete with images, that would "struggle to escape the PC brigade".

Like the reaction to Berkeley city council's decision to rename "man-holes" as "maintenance holes", gendered images and language are divisive topics. The evidence, however, suggests that the language and images we use in everyday life shape the way we think about who belongs in a particular social setting. And, more importantly, who doesn't.

CAMRA explained its decision as a ban on "discriminatory beers". The intention was to open beer drinking up to women who would otherwise feel alienated by sexist advertising. There is nothing inherently male about beer, and no reason why women shouldn't drink it. So diversifying beer culture seems like good business sense for brewers.

Women make up only 17% of beer drinkers in the UK so there is clearly an untapped market here. According to research conducted by YouGov for Dea Latis, a group of women brewers, advertising is the single largest barrier to more women drinking beer. So,

from this perspective, banning sexist marketing seems like a good idea.

INDUSTRY-WIDE INEQUALITY

While banning sexist beer names and pump clips might help to change the culture of drinking, more needs to be done to achieve gender equality in the brewing industry itself. There have certainly been moves to open up brewing to greater diversity. The Pink Boots Society has promoted women in brewing since the mid 2000s, and the FemAle beer festival has been celebrating women in brewing since 2014.

Despite this, academic research suggests that significant cultural barriers to women participating in brewing remain. Research that Scott Taylor, Neil Sutherland and I conducted in the craft brewing industry, with women from the US, the UK and Sweden, found several persistent barriers to women getting into and progressing in the beer business.

Sexual harassment is an issue in a range of industries and brewing is no exception. Ranging from inappropriate touching to unsolicited sexual advances and objectifying comments, several of the women we interviewed reported sexual harassment at work. The regular consumption of alcohol as a part of everyday working life made harassment even more likely.

For anyone in marketing and sales, spending time in bars and pubs is a crucial part of the job, so dealing with men under the influence is a part of everyday work. Many find that their working life regularly overlaps with other people's social lives – and a "professional context" is far from guaranteed.

The hours involved in the brewing

industry also create another barrier for women, who still shoulder most responsibility for unpaid domestic work and childcare. Unpredictable or anti-social working hours are more likely to impact on women's careers than men's.

The material process of brewing means that it doesn't always fit well into a standard nine-to-five working day. Depending on the type of beer being brewed, or the nature of the ingredients, getting the beer from raw material into the fermentation vessels, can stretch the working day from 5am to nearly midnight, as one brewer told us. Another explained: "The raw materials are in charge ... I thought I was going to be home at a certain time, and I wasn't. We had to stick it out and babysit our beer and make sure that it was OK."

As many breweries, especially in the growing craft beer scene, are small, brewers have to see a process through from start to finish. This can clash with the responsibilities placed on women outside of work. As pay in the industry is relatively low, outsourcing these domestic responsibilities is not always an option.

INADVERTENT SEXISM

The design of brewing equipment also creates barriers. As women are, on average, a different shape and size than men, the design of equipment can create additional challenges for women in the industry, a point that sociologist Cynthia Cockburn made back in the 1980s. Several of the brewers we spoke to discussed the physical demands of brewing, and recurrent back injuries. Of course, these affect men too, but have a disproportionate impact on women, as

equipment is designed with men's bodies in mind.

Brewers must master all aspects of the process and men can inadvertently exclude women from career progress by trying to help them. As one brewer told us, when she started out she faced "a huge hurdle of getting over everybody's instinctual chivalry, which wasn't allowing me to do my job. There was never a problem about it, but I would go: 'Okay, I'll lift that, and they'd be like: 'No, are you sure? I'll lift it.' And I'd be like: 'yes, I'm really sure.'" Overcoming this inadvertent sexism was another barrier for women wanting to get on in the industry because they had to constantly prove themselves in a way that men didn't.

These kinds of everyday discrimination continue to create barriers to women working in brewing and suggest that genuine diversity in the beer business will require more than a change of pump-clips and advertising. Despite this, our research did suggest that changes in the industry, and particularly the rise of craft brewing, has created new opportunities for women.

As the craft beer scene is focused on innovation, experimentation and aesthetic taste, women can position themselves as disruptors in the industry, challenging the "male, pale and stale" image that has fenced real ale off as a masculine space. By bringing new styles of beer, and new methods of production, women can claim a place in a business that has been dominated by men for the last 400 years.

[the writer is Professor of Work and Organisation, Anglia Ruskin University]

Indians have higher average resting heart rate: IHS

KOLKATA, AUG 27 (PTI): Indians have an average resting heart rate of 80 beats per minute which is higher than the desired rate of 72, Indian Heart Study (IHS) has found.

The IHS also highlighted that unlike people of other countries, Indians have higher blood pressure in the evenings than in mornings.

The study was conducted on 18,918 participants, both men and women, across 355 cities in 15 states over a period of nine months from April 2018.

It was carried out by 19 doctors to rethink about the timing of prescribing anti-hypertension drug dosage.

"The study has provided us with insights on the prevalence of white-coat hypertension, masked hypertension, and resting heart rates pertinent to Indian population," said Prof Dr Soumitra Kumar, Head of the



Department of Cardiology of city-based Vivekananda Institute of Medical Sciences and Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan and a co-ordinator for IHS. Masked-hypertension is a phenomenon when an individual's blood pressure reading is normal at the doctor's

clinic but high at home, while white-coat hypertension is a condition in which people exhibit a blood pressure level above the normal range in a clinical setting only.

The IHS findings highlight a high prevalence of masked hypertension and white-coat hypertension in Indians

at 42 per cent on first visit to a doctor's clinic.

In West Bengal, 22.50 per cent of the respondents were white-coat hypertensive, while 17.30 per cent were found to have masked hypertension.

White-coat hypertensives, who are misdiagnosed and put on anti-hy-

pertension drugs have to take unnecessary medication while a masked hypertensive may go undiagnosed running the risk of complications of the heart, the kidneys, and the brain, leading to premature mortality, the study said.

"There is a close link between high blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases, which are on the rise in our country.

We need to take right measures to cut down on the risks by monitoring our blood pressure," Dr Kumar said.

Dr Lalit Kumar Agarwal, nephrologist at a private hospital here said, kidneys are at a high risk of damage in people with high blood pressure or hypertension.

The study was conducted on "drug-naive" set of participants -- people not on any anti-hypertension drug -- using a comprehensive process of taking blood pressure readings.

BJP protests Mizoram's Chakma autonomous dist council rules

AIZAWL, AUG 27 (PTI): The Mizoram BJP on Tuesday said it has demonstrated in Lawngtlai district to protest against the Chakma Autonomous District Council (Land and Revenue) Rules, 2019 claiming that some of its provisions are anti-people.

They held the demonstration in front of the Chakma Autonomous District Council's office at Chawngte and set fire to the copies of the Rules

on Monday. "There are certain provisions in the Rules which are against the interest of the residents of the area. The BJP sees it as a policy of the executive committee to snatch people's lands," the statement said.

The saffron party said there were no land lease and ceiling provisions in the CADC Land Revenue and Settlement Act, 2002 which safeguarded the lands of the residents of the area. The council's ex-

ecutive committee headed by Chief Executive Member RM Chakma of the Mizo National Front passed the Rules on August 21 during the monsoon session of the council with 17 votes in favour and seven votes against it, the release said.

"All seven opposition BJP members of district council voted against the Rules as the party found it to be a threat to permanent residents of the district council," it said.

If attacked, beat up policemen, TMC workers: BJP WB chief to party activists

KOLKATA, AUG 27 (PTI): West Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh has courted controversy by advising his party workers to beat up Trinamool Congress activists and police personnel if they attack them and the consequences would be "managed".

Ghosh, an MP, also warned TMC workers of the same fate as senior Congress leader P Chidambaram, who is presently in CBI custody over alleged corruption cases.

The police on Tuesday started a case against MP on the charge of trying to incite violence.

"Don't be afraid of TMC goons and police personnel.

Incidents of attack on BJP workers in various parts of the state have become regular. Instead

of arresting the culprits, the police are implicating our boys in false cases.

"If you are attacked, beat up TMC workers and police personnel. Don't be afraid. We will manage if there is any problem," he said while addressing a party programme at Mecheda in East Midnapore district on Monday night.

TMC leaders and police personnel are nothing when compared to the BJP, he said.

"If former union home minister P Chidambaram can be put behind bars, these TMC leaders are nothing but mosquitoes and insects to us," he said.

Ghosh's comment also kicked off a political storm in the state with the TMC criticizing the BJP and its leaders for making provocative re-

marks. "The comments made by Ghosh only reflects the vindictive mindset of BJP leaders. We condemn such provocative remarks which are aimed at disturbing the peace and stability of the state," senior TMC leader and minister Partha Chatterjee told reporters.

The East Midnapore district police started a suo- motu case against Ghosh for trying to incite violence, police sources said.

Reacting to this, Ghosh said he would again make such comments if his party workers are attacked.

"The West Bengal police has earlier lodged 22 cases (against me). This will be just one more case. I am not bothered," he said.

Status quo to be maintained along disputed Assam-Mizo border

HAILAKANDI (ASSAM), AUG 27 (PTI): Officials of Assam's Hailakandi and neighbouring Kolasib district of Mizoram have decided to maintain status quo along the inter-state border which has been tense during the past few months, an official release said here on Tuesday.

Deputy commissioners, superintendents of police and forest officials of both the districts attended the meeting held at Bairabi in Kolasib district on Monday.

Both sides discussed the prevailing law and order situation in the area and agreed to maintain status quo along the inter-state border, the release said.

A blast had partially damaged a place of worship at Kachurthal near

the Assam-Mizoram border on May 24. Following the incident, the situation in the area has been tense as local people are divided on which state the area belongs to.

It was decided at the meeting that mischievous elements would not be allowed to create misunderstanding among people living in the border areas. Both sides also agreed to intensify point-to-point contact of border magistrates, strengthen information sharing and deployment of security forces, including patrolling, the release said.

Assam and Mizoram have a long-standing boundary dispute, and there had been tension in the Hailakandi-Kolasib region several times in the past too.

Mizoram begins hearing claims of Brus left out of citizen list



AIZAWL, AUG 27 (PTI): Officials on Tuesday began hearing the claims and objections of 260 displaced Brus, whose names were excluded from the list of Mizoram's bonafide citizens during an identification process in July, state home secretary Lalbiakzama said.

Altogether, 26,128 Brus, lodged in six relief camps of neighbouring Tripura, have made it to the list, he said.

Over the next one week, officials from three districts of Mizoram will be hearing the pleas of those excluded from the list, Lalbiakzama stated.

Most of them are willing to return to Mizoram from Tripura's relief camps, but "hardliners and anti-repatriation organisations" may dissuade them from doing so, he claimed.

The district officials will prepare a final list after a thorough verification of the claims and

objections, Lalbiakzama said. "A total of 350 names were excluded from the list, but 90 names were cleared after a scrutiny in Aizawl. The final list will be prepared after a thorough verification of the claims," the home secretary said.

Thousands of Brus fled to Tripura in 1997 in the wake of a communal tension triggered by the killing of a forest guard by militants inside Dampa Tiger Reserve.

The Centre and the governments of Mizoram and Tripura have made multiple attempts to repatriate the Brus to their home state since 2009, but majority of them stayed back in the relief camps, citing inadequate rehabilitation package.

The government has promised to deposit Rs 4 lakh in the bank account of every repatriated family. It has also assured a sum of Rs 1.5 lakh as housing assistance, free

ration and Rs 5000 for other expenses for two years. The next phase of repatriation is likely to be held in October, the home secretary added.

Police sources had earlier said that Bru insurgents have threatened the community members from returning to Mizoram as they plan to escalate their demand for a separate autonomous district council carved out western Mizoram, adjoining Bangladesh and Tripura.

The first attempt to repatriate the Brus in November 2009 had fizzled out following the murder of a Mizo youth at Bungthum village in Mamit district. The murder had also triggered a fresh wave of exodus.

The Bru community, also called Reangs, is among the 21 scheduled tribes in the country. They are scattered across Assam, Mizoram and Tripura.

Pak Army chief discusses situation in Kashmir with top Chinese general

BY SAJJAD HUSSAIN ISLAMABAD, AUG 27 (PTI): Pakistan and China have signed an MoU for the enhancement of defence cooperation and capacity building of the Pakistani Army, as the top generals of the two armies discussed the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Tensions between India and Pakistan spiked after New Delhi abrogated provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution that gave the special status to Jammu and Kashmir. China's Central Military Commission Vice-Chairman Xu Qiliang visited the Pakistan Army's General Headquarters in Rawalpindi with a high-level delegation on Monday and held a one-on-one meeting with Pakistan's Army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security, avenues to enhance bilateral defence collaboration, and particularly the situation in Kashmir

were discussed, the Inter-Services Public Relations, the media wing of Pakistan's military said.

Bajwa appreciated its all-weather ally China's understanding and support on all important issues particularly Kashmir. Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had air-dashed to Beijing to discuss the Kashmir issue with the top Chinese leaders after India scrapped the Article 370.

The visiting general said China "greatly values its time tested relations with Pakistan and its Army and is looking forward to further solidify this relation", according to the ISPR statement. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by the two sides for enhancement of defence cooperation and capacity building of the Pakistan Army.

It was China that had asked for "closed consultations" in the UN Security Council to discuss India revoking the special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

Siliguri mayor Ashok Bhattacharya suffers cardiac arrest, shifted to Kolkata

KOLKATA, AUG 27 (PTI): Senior CPI(M) leader and Siliguri mayor Ashok Bhattacharya, who suffered a cardiac arrest on Sunday, was shifted to a hospital here on Tuesday for advanced treatment, family sources said.

Bhattacharya, who suffered a cardiac arrest while he was at his home in Siliguri on Sunday morning, was rushed to a private nursing home in the north Bengal city, they said.

"Ashok da (Bhattacharya)

had complained of uneasiness, vomited a couple of times and was sweating profusely while he was being taken to the nursing home," one of his relatives said.

Senior doctors at the nursing home had found blockages in Bhattacharya's arteries.

"He (Ashok Bhattacharya) requires advanced treatment for which he has been brought to Kolkata. We are providing him with necessary treatment,"

hospital sources said. Bhattacharya, considered a mass leader, became a member of the CPI(M) in Siliguri in 1968. He was elected the chairman of Siliguri municipality in 1988.

He became an MLA for the first time in 1991 and was appointed as the state municipal affairs minister. Bhattacharya was elevated to the post of a cabinet minister, which he held for three terms till Left Front lost the 2011 Assembly polls.

Left, Cong MLAs walk out of Bengal Assembly over discussion on para-teachers' assault

KOLKATA, AUG 27 (PTI): The Congress and the Left Front legislators on Tuesday staged a walk-out from the West Bengal Assembly after their demand for a discussion over alleged police assault on para-teachers was turned down.

The demand of Left Front legislature party leader Sujan Chakraborty that an adjournment motion be brought in and a discussion held on the matter was rejected by Speaker Biman Banerjee, prompting the Left

Front and Congress legislators to walk out after shouting anti-government slogans.

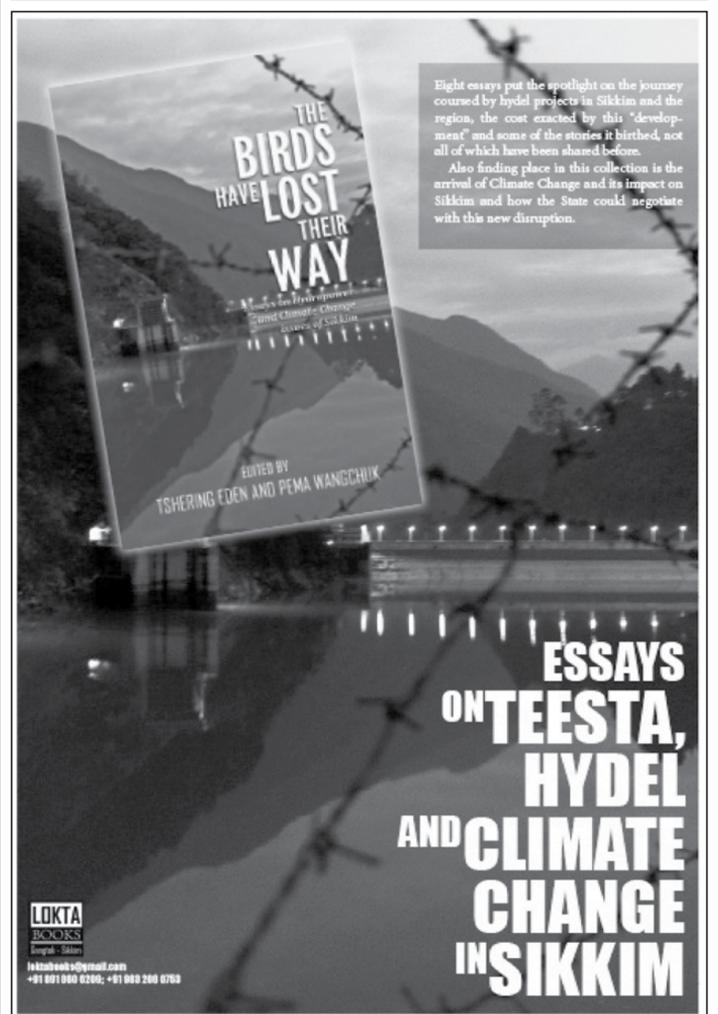
They then staged a protest outside the House.

"There are several issues but the state government neither allows the Opposition to raise nor discuss them. The way the para-teachers were beaten up by the police is not only undemocratic but also inhuman. We condemn it," Chakraborty told reporters. The Left Front

and the Congress legislators, however, joined the House proceedings in the second half.

Para-teachers sitting on a hunger strike in Nadia's Kalyani to press for hike in their salaries were allegedly assaulted by police on August 17.

Ten eminent personalities of the state had written an open letter to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on August 20 over the incident, urging her government to resolve the issue in a democratic manner.



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Mithali says available for SA T20s but will selectors pick her on Sep 5?

BHARAT SHARMA
NEW DELHI, AUG 27 (PTI): India veteran Mithali Raj on Tuesday made herself available for the upcoming T20 home series against South Africa but with the focus on youngsters ahead of next year's World Cup, the selectors may not pick her.

The five-match series begins on September 24, while the T20 World Cup is scheduled in Australia in February-March.

The 36-year-old, who is the ODI captain and remains committed to play the 50-over World Cup in 2021, is not an automatic pick in the T20 eleven.

"I am definitely available for the T20 series next month but, at the moment, haven't really thought about the T20 World Cup. I usually take it series by series," the Indian women's cricket great told PTI when asked about his plans for the shortest format.

The selectors are scheduled to meet in Mumbai on September 5 to pick the squad for the first three T20 Internationals. The series in Surat will be followed by three ODIs in Baroda.

"Mithali has been a great of the game but she needs to decide soon on her T20 career. The T20 World Cup is six months away and the selectors need to try out a few players. And for that, they also need to know what Mithali's plans are. She is also not an automatic pick in the eleven," a BCCI official said. It has been learnt that the selectors will speak to Mithali about her plans ahead of the team selection.

While India are doing okay in ODIs, they need a lot of improvement in T20s, having lost their previous six games. The team doesn't have much time left to sort out its combinations. After the South Africa series, India travel to the West Indies before playing a tri series in Australia ahead of the T20 World Cup.

Mithali acknowledged the issues facing the team in T20 cricket.

"As a team, we still have a lot to catch up on the T20 format but we do have youngsters coming in and with the exposure of T20 leagues around the world they will get more experience and mature faster," she said.

The shortest format is a lot about power-hitting and that is one of the areas India need to improve significantly. "Genetically we can't be like other teams but we can be more smart in our planning and shot selection. We worked very hard on our fitness in the recent camp in Bangalore and you can see the girls are much fitter on the ground and that reflects in their drills," added Mithali.

Speculation has been rife over Mithali's future in T20s ever since she was controversially left out of the playing eleven for the World T20 semifinals against England last year. There were reports that she would retire after the home series against England in March but ended up playing all three games.

SICA signs Yashpal Singh for 2019-20 season

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Sikkim Cricket Association (SICA) has signed Yashpal Singh, a Delhi born batsman who has been playing first-class cricket since 2001-02. He signed the contract with SICA today for the upcoming season as a professional player, a press release informs.

"I would like to thank the Sikkim Cricket Association (SICA) for having trust in my abilities and giving me an opportunity to play for Sikkim in the upcoming season. I am looking forward to the season and will give my best and prove myself an asset to the entire team", said Yashpal Singh.

Yashpal made his debut in first-class cricket for Services and has played for 15 years with them. In his debut match against Delhi, he scored two half-centuries against an established bowling lineup and in the next match he scored a double century against



Punjab and never looked back. He has also represented other teams like Tripura, Kolkata Knight Riders, and Kochi Tuskers Kerala. Last year he played for Manipur and was one of the leading scorers of season 2018-19. He has scored 9,085

runs in first-class cricket, 4,448 runs in List A matches and 1,239 runs in T20 matches and also have taken 111 wickets totaling first-class, list A and T20's. The right-handed middle-order batsman boasted an average of over 50 in

both first-class cricket and List A matches.

"Seasoned professional players with over 18 years of experience in the team would uphold and boost the morale of the team and help in team building," said Sonam Palden Bhutia of SICA.

Roger Federer predicts a solid career for Sumit Nagal



NEW YORK, AUG 27 (PTI): The improbable did not happen but India's Sumit Nagal exited the US Open fighting, stretching and even earning the respect of his opponent, the incomparable Roger Federer. In another first-round match featuring an Indian, Prajnesh Gunneswaran got a taste of high-level tennis, losing to world number five Daniil Medvedev in straight sets at the Flushing Meadows on Monday night. With their losses, India's singles challenge drew to a close on the opening day itself.

After taking a set off Federer, Nagal lost 6-4 1-6 2-6 4-6 in a match that lasted two hours and 50 minutes here on Monday night to bow out after making his maiden Grand Slam main draw.

"I think he knows what he can bring. That's why I think he's going to have a very solid career," said Federer after the match.

The debut, at least in the opening set, was impressive as he stretched the "rusty" Federer, a five-time champion here with a career tally of 20 Slams.

But the gulf between Prajnesh and his fancied Russian opponent, who recently vanquished multiple Grand Slam winner Novak Djokovic, was wide and apparent as he lost 4-6 1-6 2-6.

Nagal was more competitive. The 24-year-old troubled Federer quite a bit during the much-anticipated match and the Swiss legend's problems were also compounded by his own unforced errors. One of the game's all-time greatest players, Federer had a word of praise for his opponent from India.

"...of course it's not the game that comes out with the biggest surprises. It's really consistent. I think he did it very well tonight," Federer said after the match. Asked what he thought was the standout feature of Nagal, Swiss legend Federer said, "I guess maybe how he handled the moment."

"I think his game is based on being really consistent, moving well, moving the ball around well. Sort of very much a clay-courter. Nagal became only the

fourth Indian to win a set in the main draw of a Grand Slam in the last 20 years. What made it special was that it came against Federer, a colossal figure across all sports globally.

Only Somdev Devvarman, Yuki Bhambhani and Saketh Myneni have managed to win a set in a Grand Slam main draw before Nagal, in the last two decades. Nagal, who made the main draw through qualifying, returns from the US Open not only richer by USD 58,000 but also with the experience of what it takes to compete at the biggest stage.

Prajnesh took sometime to find his range even though long rallies featured from the word go.

The Indian left-hander began aggressively but could not maintain his intensity after losing a well-fought first set at the Louis Armstrong Stadium.

The Indian dropped his serve in the first game of the match but broke back Medvedev in the fourth with a crushing inside-out forehand winner after serving at love. The Russian broke back immediately when he placed a cross-court forehand from baseline in the open court.

Medvedev nosed ahead again with another break of serve and consolidated it with a hold.

Prajnesh mixed it up nicely by striking hard from the baseline with his free-flowing forehand and played some deft drop shots to set up points.

Prajnesh's body language was aggressive while Medvedev largely remained calm as he served big and his solid returns in long rallies helped him take those extra points. Unforced errors from Prajnesh, when Medvedev served for the opening set, made the job easy for the world number five.

"He is very consistent. He does not make many errors. But I did feel I was able to hit him with my game. I needed to do it consistently and for that I needed to move well, but I twisted my ankle and it made it a bit difficult," Prajnesh told PTI, reflecting on his defeat.

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Bhubaneswar gets provisional clearance for FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020

BHUBANESWAR, AUG 27 (PTI): Odisha's capital city Bhubaneswar on Tuesday became the first venue to get a provisional clearance for FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020.

This was revealed by Tournament Director of the Local Organising Committee, Roma Khanna.

"We are happy to give a provisional clearance to the city of Bhubaneswar and confirm them as the first venue for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup to be provisionally selected," she told reporters here.

Optimistic of Bhubaneswar emerging as the cornerstone event for women's football in the country, she, however, said: "The state government has to bring up the stadium and the training sites to FIFA standards. But we are satisfied with the commitment exhibited by the government to complete all the work that is required to obtain the full ratification."

The FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020 will help upgrade the infrastructure to FIFA standards. Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, will become the first to host a FIFA competition in Odisha.

"We feel delighted to announce that Bhubaneswar is the first city



to receive the provisional clearance to host the prestigious FIFA Women's U-17 World Cup. It will be the first global football tournament for women in the country and a huge honour for the state to host such a prestigious tournament of the world's most popular sport," said Odisha's Sports and Youth Services Minister Tusharkanti Behera. The minister said through the football Legacy programme the state is planning to lay a strong foundation for the development of women's football.

"It is a prestigious moment for us to be associated with a FIFA

World Cup and prospectively add Bhubaneswar to the list of some top cities of the world that have hosted a FIFA World Cup game," said Sports and Youth Services secretary Vishal K Dev.

He said the state is now developing and upgrading infrastructure as per the FIFA guidelines.

"I am confident that the event will make a positive impact and help create a football ecosystem for the youth of the state," Dev said. The final inspection will take place later this year.

After this, the venue of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020, will be finalised.

World champion Sindhu returns to hero's welcome, says feeling yet to sink in

NEW DELHI, AUG 27 (PTI): The feeling has not yet sunk in, said India's first badminton world champion P V Sindhu on Tuesday after she was given an exuberant welcome on her return to the country which included a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The 2016 Olympic silver-medallist, who outplayed Japan's Nozomi Okuhara 21-7 21-7 in a lop-sided final of the big event in Basel, Switzerland on Sunday, was mobbed at the airport after she touched down with national coach Pullela Gopichand by her side on Monday night here.

"I am really happy, I am very proud of my country. It's a much-awaited win and I am very happy about it," she said in response to a barrage of questions that were thrown at her once she came out of the airport.

Within a few hours of that, the 24-year-old had breakfast with sports minister Kiren Rijiju followed by a meeting with Modi.

The Prime Minister posted pictures of the meeting on his personal Twitter page and described the affable player as "India's pride". Rijiju, on the other hand, felicitated her with a cash award of Rs 10 lakh.

"It hasn't yet sunk in and we didn't get much time to celebrate because I had to come back early after the match and then next day take a flight back to India," she said.

The Hyderabad, who has had little time to reflect since her historic



achievement, headed to her hometown in the afternoon.

"I will work more hard and win many more medals," she promised when asked about her plans from now given that the Olympics is less than a year away and she is faced with expectations to finish on the podium for a second successive edition.

Sindhu was also asked about the moment she got emotional after the medal distribution ceremony in Basel. The five-time world medallist had tears in her eyes when the national anthem played. She had claimed silvers in the past two editions, besides a couple of bronze medals earlier.

"I had tears and there were a lot of emotions, it was a great moment for me. Thanks to all my fans for your blessings, your

achievements have brought me here," she said.

"I can't express how it felt on the podium. It gave me a lot of confidence to improve and win many more tournaments.

"I would like to thank my coaches Gopi sir and Kim (Ji Hyun). They have put in a lot of effort and done a few changes in my game," she added.

Kim Ji Hyun, a former international from South Korea, joined the coaching staff earlier this year on Gopichand's recommendation.

Sindhu also thanked the government agencies and the Badminton Association of India (BAI) for their support.

"The reception was really, really good. I would like to thank the Sports Authority of India (SAI), BAI, the Sports Minister and the government. They have been very supportive,"

she said.

Gopichand said Sindhu's gold was special but her past medals at the big event should also never be forgotten.

"It is phenomenal. This wait was definitely long but every medal that she has won is special," he said.

"We won bronze and silver (in the earlier editions). The question-mark was over gold. Going into the Olympics with this win is phenomenal. They way she did it was such a pleasure," he added referring to her dominant performance in the final.

Also present during their interactions with Rijiju and Modi were BAI president Himanta Biswa Sarma, Kim Ji-Hyun and Sindhu's father P V Ramana, a former bronze medallist in volleyball at the 1986 Asian Games.

China ban on some textbooks seen aimed at Uighur culture

BEIJING, AUG 27 (AP): For 15 years, Yalqun Rozi skillfully navigated state bureaucracies to publish textbooks that taught classic poems and folk tales to millions of his fellow minority Uighurs in China's far western region of Xinjiang.

That all changed three years ago when the ruling Communist Party launched what it says is a campaign against ethnic separatism and religious extremism in Xinjiang.

Suddenly even respected public figures like Rozi were being arrested, caught up in a crackdown that critics have said amounts to cultural genocide.

An estimated 1 million Uighurs have since been detained in internment camps and prisons across the region, and advocacy groups say that includes more than 400 prominent academics, writers, performers and artists. Critics say the government is targeting intellectuals as a way to dilute, or even erase, the Uighur culture, language and identity.

After being taken away by police in 2016, Rozi, 54, was sentenced to more than a decade in prison on charges of incitement to subvert state power.

As one of the first prominent people to be detained, Rozi's story illustrates how even Uighurs who toed the party line and were accepted by the government have been rebranded enemies of the state amid the widening campaign of surveillance and detention underway in Xinjiang.

"He had many friends among government officials. He was able to use his connections to sell his books," said Abdurweli Ayup, a linguist who knew Rozi through a Uighur bookstore Ayup



once ran. "Those books sold very well."

China's 11 million Uighurs are culturally, linguistically and religiously distinct from the country's overwhelmingly ethnic Han majority, who have increasingly migrated to the resource-rich region and occupy most of the well-paid jobs and powerful government positions. Uighurs speak a Turkic language and many are practicing Muslims.

For decades, Uighur intellectuals maneuvered carefully, working to advance their culture while avoiding being tarred as separatists or extremists. They thrived even as the government periodically relaxed and tightened its grip on the region.

Rozi's friends, family, and former classmates describe him as sharp, disciplined and very careful, standing out for his political and business savvy. As a college student in the 1980s, he stayed away from the

pro-democracy movements that were roiling China and avoided socializing with known activists.

He shot to fame among Uighurs after tangling with famous writers, winning people over during heated debates on television. He cultivated ties with state officials that allowed him to write on sensitive topics like Islam and Uighur identity.

Rozi urged his people to become educated to counter stereotypes of Uighurs as backward, exotic or extremist.

"It seemed like on TV and in state propaganda, all we did was sing and dance," Rozi's son Kamalrk Yalqun said from Philadelphia, where he and other family members live in exile. "My father didn't like this label.

He wanted us to become entrepreneurs, scientists, intellectuals." When the government tapped Rozi in 2001 to head a committee

in charge of compiling Uighur literature textbooks, he leapt at the chance. He and his family moved into a housing compound with Xinjiang Education Press editors and schooling officials, debating world events over dinner with others in the tight-knit community of Uighur scholars and writers. Rozi kept a large study overflowing with books, shutting himself in on weekends to focus on writing and editing.

Rozi was accustomed to dealing with the government's fears of an independent Uighur identity, and though he sometimes quarreled with censors, his works always made it to publication.

The family's fortunes and those of the Uighurs as a whole took a dramatic turn after a string of terror attacks in Xinjiang in 2014, shortly after Chinese President Xi Jinping came to power. In response, Beijing kicked

off its suffocating security crackdown.

Rozi was arrested soon after Chen Quanguo, a hard-line politician, became Xinjiang's top official in 2016 and his books were pulled from shelves.

Soon his former colleagues at Xinjiang Education Press began disappearing, as did the officials who used to supervise his work. Colleges held political meetings to denounce "problematic textbooks," including Rozi's, calling them "treasonous" and a "great scourge" that poisoned Uighurs with ideas of splitting China.

"Those textbooks weren't political at all," Kamalrk said from Philadelphia, where he and other family members live in exile. "There were things in there about taking pride in being ethnic Uighurs, and that's what the Chinese government was upset with."

The intensity of Beijing's crackdown caught many by surprise, shocking even hardened dissidents.

"In retrospect, it was a signal," said Abdurhim Dolet, Rozi's close friend and former business partner who now lives in Turkey. "We all thought this was only temporary, that things would get better. He was made an example."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry referred questions about Rozi's case to regional authorities, who did not respond to a fax for comment.

Experts say the campaign against Rozi's books is part of a systematic effort by Beijing to distance young Uighurs from their language and culture, including by putting thousands of Uighurs in Mandarin-only orphanages and boarding schools.

China expresses 'strong dissatisfaction' with G7 on Hong Kong

BEIJING, AUG 27 (AFP): Beijing on Tuesday voiced "strong dissatisfaction" with a joint statement issued by the G7 leaders, who backed Hong Kong's autonomy and called for calm after months of civil unrest.

G7 leaders meeting in France on Monday backed Hong Kong's autonomy as laid out in a 1984 agreement between Britain and China, and called for calm in the protest-hit city.

But Beijing has accused foreign governments of interfering over Hong Kong, and foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said the G7 was "meddling" and "harbouring evil intentions".

"We express our strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition to the statement made by the leaders of the G7 Summit on Hong Kong affairs," Geng said at a

press briefing in Beijing. "We have repeatedly stressed that Hong Kong's affairs are purely China's internal affairs and that no foreign government, organisation or individual has the right to intervene."

Hong Kong has been wracked by more than two months of protests over an attempt by its Beijing-backed government to pass an extradition bill which opponents saw as a huge dent in the city's autonomy.

It has since morphed into a wider call for greater democratic freedoms. In the G7 statement, the leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States called for calm.

Beijing has previously accused former colonial power Britain of interfering in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory, which was handed over to China in 1997.

"The rule of law, social order, economic livelihood and international image of Hong Kong has been severely affected," Geng said.

"No one cares more about the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong than the Chinese people, including the people of Hong Kong."

The financial hub faced more violence over the weekend, with police saying Monday that they were forced to fire water cannon and a warning shot to fend off "extremely violent" demonstrators, marking some of the worst violence in the last 12 weeks of political unrest in the city.

So far Beijing has not intervened over unrest in the semi-autonomous city, despite ramping up the rhetoric against demonstrators and mounting fears that they may act militarily to quell the violence.

Pak court summons counter-terror official on Hafiz Saeed's petition

BY M ZULQERNAIN LAHORE, AUG 27 (PTI):

A Pakistani court on Tuesday summoned an official of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police on a petition filed by Mumbai attack mastermind and JuD chief Hafiz Saeed challenging his arrest in the terror financing cases.

The Lahore High Court held the hearing after Saeed and 67 other leaders of Jammatt-Dawah (JuD) and Falah-i-Insaniyat (FIF) filed a fresh petition removing the objection of the Registrar office.

The LHC Registrar office earlier had raised an objection on the petition of Saeed and others that they attached pictures of mosques with it (petition) which were built on the occupied land in order to give it a "religious colour".

A two-member LHC bench comprising Justice Mazahir Ali Naqvi and Justice Mushtaq Ahmed

on Tuesday issued the notice to the CTD to file a reply on Saeed and others' petition within two weeks. The court also summoned a CTD official concerned after two weeks to explain about the arrest of Saeed and others in terror financing," a court official told PTI after the hearing.

The petitioners' counsel Advocate A K Dogar gave arguments



in the court. Dogar said Saeed has no link with Al-Qaeda or any other terrorist organisation. "Hafiz Saeed also has no connection with the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba," he said. Dogar further said the Indian lobby has been propagating against his client as he was not involved in the deadly Mumbai attacks.

Saeed-led JuD is believed to be the front organisation for the LeT which was responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attacks that killed 166 people. He was listed under the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 in December 2008.

He was arrested on July 17 in a terror financing case. He is kept at Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail in high security.

The JuD chief and others prayed to the LHC to declare that the property detailed in the petition was "dedicated for the purpose of mosques and is being used as such, therefore, the FIRs are without lawful authority and of no legal effect."

The CTD had regis-

tered 23 FIRs against the petitioners on the charges of "terror financing" in different cities of Punjab province. The cases have been registered in Lahore, Gujranwala and Multan for collection of funds for terrorism financing through assets and properties made and held in the names of Trusts or Non Profit Organisations (NPO), including Al-Anfaal Trust, Dawatul Irshad Trust and Muaz Bin Jabal Trust.

"These suspects made assets from funds of terrorism financing. They held and used these assets to raise more funds for further terrorism financing. Hence, they committed multiple offences of terrorism financing and money laundering under Anti-Terrorism Act 1997. They will be prosecuted in ATCs (Anti Terrorism Courts) for commission of these offences," the CTD said. The US Department of the Treasury has designated Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, and the US, since 2012, has offered a USD 10 million reward for information that brings Saeed to justice.

It's an inherent feeling: Vijay Varma on playing grey characters

BY RADHIKA SHARMA MUMBAI, AUG 27 (PTI): Blue may rule as the warmest colour, but for Vijay Varma, life blossoms in grey roles.

The actor, who saw critical acclaim and breakout success as the perceptive and enterprising Moeen in "Gully Boy", believes it was the "truth" in the script, co-written by film's director Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti, that set his character free.

"It's the right kind of grey in Moeen that I like because it represents life. I always find that whenever the writing is a little more subtle, a little more layered, something happens to the viewer."

"I have been a viewer who has been affected by great writing, poetry and performances before. The more truth one can find in the text, the more relatable it becomes for the audience to go back home with," Vijay told PTI in an interview.

Citing "Munna Bhai MBBS" as the example, the 33-year-old actor said when the viewers watched the film, they came back home with at least two new characters. "I remember when

'Munna Bhai' came out, people not only remembered Sanjay Dutt, they remembered the characters' names -- Munna Bhai and Circuit. They didn't care who the actor was, they went back home with the character," he said. But Vijay, who delivered a stellar performance in films like "Pink", said "Gully Boy" has made him "more relevant" but he isn't sure if he has arrived.

"I've been working tirelessly even before 'Gully Boy' came out. It's just that the work wasn't blown out to this magnitude. I'm just glad that the opportunities have opened up a lot more. I have a lot more to choose from," he said. "But still, it is up to me to kind of take and steer the way I want to my so-called career to go into," he added.

And yet, the actor has bagged his first international project in Mira Nair's "A Suitable Boy" TV adaptation. He will play Rasheed, a student at Brahmur University in the BBC series.

Vijay said Rasheed is again one of those characters which is in the grey zone -- "real and three dimensional".

Hong Kong leader open to dialogue but won't budge on demands



HONG KONG, AUG 27 (AP): Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said Tuesday that she has met with a group of young people about ongoing pro-democracy protests, but she showed no sign of budging on any of the protesters' demands. Lam said she explained the government's position on the five demands of the protest movement at the Monday meeting, which was closed-door and unannounced.

She disputed criticism that her government is ignoring the protesters, whose demands include democratic elections, the dropping of charges against arrested protesters and an independent

inquiry into what they believe is excessive use of force by police to quell the demonstrations.

"It is not a question of not responding," she said. "It is a question of not accepting those demands." Hong Kong, a semiautonomous Chinese territory, has seen more than two months of youth-led protests that have often ended in clashes with police.

More than 80 people were arrested this past weekend after protesters occupied city streets. They built barriers across the roads and threw bricks and gasoline bombs to try to block the police advance.

Lam announced last week that she is creating

a platform for dialogue and said Tuesday that it would include protesters. Opposition lawmakers have questioned the sincerity of her initiative, calling it a delay tactic.

The education and home affairs ministers also took part in Monday's meeting. The South China Morning Post newspaper, citing an unnamed source, said about 20 people took part and that they were mostly in their 20s and 30s.

Lam dismissed any suggestion of her resignation, telling reporters Tuesday that a responsible chief executive should continue "to hold the fort and do her utmost to restore law and order in Hong Kong."

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It's an inherent feeling: Vijay Varma on playing grey characters

BY RADHIKA SHARMA

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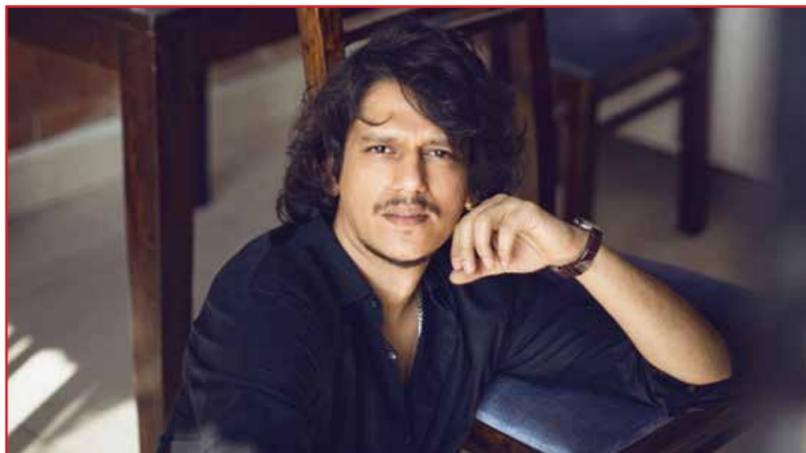
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"But still, it is up to me to kind of take

"When I say grey, it doesn't mean that this person is supposed to do bad things. Grey is an inherent sense of feeling that one feels about things -- like a marriage that you're not happy with or the son you're not okay with. It's all grey," he said.

The actor is looking forward to working with Nair.

"I'm super excited to be going on a



STUNNING! The singer, Halsey and model, Bella Hadid pose together at the 2019 MTV Video Music Awards in Newark, New Jersey.

Boman Irani to play Farokh Engineer in '83'

MUMBAI, AUG 27 (PTI): Boman Irani has joined the ensemble cast of filmmaker Kabir Khan's next "83", which features Ranveer Singh as Indian cricket legend Kapil Dev.

The film will chronicle India's win under Kapil's captainship, when the team defeated West Indies in the final to clinch their first-ever World Cup trophy in 1983.

Irani will essay the role of former opening batsman and wicket-keeper, Farokh Engineer, who was one of the commentators at the 1983 World Cup.

"He was the only Indian commentator during the 1983 World Cup. His story, along with co-commentator Brian Johnston's, runs parallel to the main narrative," the actor said in a statement.

The movie also features Pankaj Tripathi, Tahir Raj Bhasin, Saqib Saleem, Ammy Virk, Chirag Patil, Jiiva and Harrdy Sandhu.

The team is currently filming in England and Irani joined them for the shoot on Sunday.

"I will be shooting for a couple of days here, and then join the team in Mumbai. It's a

great honour to play this legendary character.

"I went to Manchester during the World Cup this year and stayed with him for a few days. We even watched the India versus Pakistan match together. It was so surreal; like meeting your boyhood hero. I stayed at his house and we had some good laughs while trying to understand the man for the role," he said.



The movie also features Deepika Padukone as Kapil's spouse Romi Dev. It marks Deepika and Ranveer's first on-screen collaboration post their November 2018 wedding.

'83' is being co-produced by Madhu Mantena, Sajid Nadiadwala and Reliance Entertainment. The movie is slated to hit the screens on April 10, 2020.

Sanjay Leela Bhansali shelves 'In-shaa-allah'

MUMBAI, AUG 27 (PTI): Filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali has apparently decided to shelve his much-anticipated film "In-shaa-allah", featuring superstar Salman Khan and Alia Bhatt.

The revelation was made by a source close to development, a day after both Bhansali's production banner and Salman announced that they have decided to "push" the film.

"In-shaa-allah" was scheduled for an Eid 2020 release.

"Sanjay Leela Bhansali respects and loves his actors and suggestions are welcome but not if they aim to alter the narrative. Hence, he has taken the decision to shelve the film. However, they are still friends and Sanjay Leela Bhan-

sali has immense love and respect for him," the insider said.

The project, which was a co-production between Salman and Bhansali's banners, would have marked 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", which starred Salman. The actor went on to feature in the director-producer's classic "Hum Dil De Chuke 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.

National award huge responsibility, won't take it for granted: Vicky

MUMBAI, AUG 27 (PTI): Actor Vicky Kaushal said winning the National Award is a "beautiful feeling", one which is both humbling and a reminder for him to keep doing good work.

Vicky shared the best actor National Award for his performance in "Uri- The Surgical Strike" along with Ayushmann Khurrana for "Andhadhun".

When asked about his win, Vicky told reporters, "It's a beautiful feeling. I would have never thought that in my four years of career, I will be honoured with something like this. But it also brings a huge responsibility.

"That one should keep working like this and keep doing good work and that

one shouldn't be complacent and that don't take it for granted. But it's a huge honour, I think the biggest honour in the country and it really means a lot to me."

The actor was speaking at a special event of his latest T-Series single, "Pachatoge".

Vicky said for the longest time he has been wanting to collaborate with Bhushan Kumar.

"I told him that I was really hooked to the song and he told

me about the team that was supposed to work on the song. I thought it would be a great team to work with. I really follow my heart when it comes to doing something creative. And this just took my heart away in a second. I just jumped into it," he added.



Story of Kashmir's last Hindu queen to get big screen treatment

MUMBAI, AUG 27 (PTI): A film on Kota Rani, the last Hindu queen to rule Kashmir, is coming to the big screen, the makers announced on Tuesday.

Reliance Entertainment and Phantom Films have joined hands to produce the ambitious project, according to a press release.

Kota Rani lived and ruled Kashmir in 13th century AD and was the principal protagonist of a highly dramatic period after which Shah Mir dynasty became the first foreign rulers of the state.

She was a great administrator and military strategist.

Madhu Mantena of Phantom Film said the queen's story deserved to be told.

"It's a matter of great surprise that as Indians we don't know enough or at all about a personality like Kota Rani. Her life was extremely dramatic and she is perhaps one of the most able woman rulers that India produced," said Mantena.

Sibashish Sarkar, Group CEO, Reliance Entertainment, said the primary aim is to make the story reach out to as many people as possible.

"Her character has many shades but without a doubt she is one of the tallest female characters to have come out of our country. We will be making this film at an ambitious scale," Sarkar said.

ARIES: How do you feel about whirlwind romances, Aries? Doesn't matter. You won't have the time to gather your thoughts today. The Universe is surprising you with an escapade that would put your favourite erotica to shame. Remember, you are worthy of love and you deserve to be celebrated. Don't let fear and self-doubt sabotage the joy you are experiencing in this moment. Tip: Did somebody say whirlwind romance?

TAURUS: We come to the lesson of reciprocity yet again. Guilty of making somebody your entire world, or glorifying relationships where you don't always feel seen or heard? Your personal life is calling for an overhaul, Taurus. It's time to restore the balance. Could time alone help you recalibrate? Prioritise self-healing. Do what it takes to get to a better place. Tip: Restore the balance within.

GEMINI: How do you feel about love and romance, Gemini? How do you feel about stolen kisses and secrets shared under the stars? No matter where you are in your journey, you will witness your partner become the most expressive version of themselves.

Yes, you are worthy of love, wild one. Allow yourself to receive what they have been giving so unconditionally. Single Geminis, expect the unexpected if you're in the market for love. Somebody in your circle is about to let their feelings be known. Tip: Ready to be swept off your feet?

CANCER: Bask in the attention you are receiving, but know where to draw the line. What you need to keep in mind about the suitor at hand: while they're charming as can be, they may not be looking for anything more than fun and flirtation. Best to take things slow and get to know each other in an organic manner. Tip: Know where to draw the line.

LEO: You know what doesn't make for a pretty accessory? The burden of the past. Address the pain you have been suppressing. Have a chat with the demons who have been lurking around. What if this is the secret to starting over on a clean slate? Coupled lions, this is the time to revisit the rules of engagement. Just because you have been relating with each other in a certain way, does not mean you have to continue to do

so. Have an open and honest conversation with the beloved about what feels authentic to you.

Tip: Rewrite the rules of engagement.

VIRGO: Healing is not a straight line, Virgo. Sometimes it's curvilinear, and at other times it is a spiral. Watch what's resurfacing from your subconscious without any judgements and biases. This is the key to releasing what no longer serves you. Could time off be the answer to resetting your body and mind? Tip: Hit the reset button.

LIBRA: This is the big moment, Libra. The love you have been hoping and praying for. Allow yourself to be swept off your feet, to be treated like the goddess you are. Spoiler alert: the chemistry you will share with them promises to be mind-blowing too. So don't just satiate yourself with the sparks. Jump into the fire and see what the fuss is all about. Tip: A whirlwind romance is on the cards.

SCORPIO: Scorpio, you are a goddess of joy, love, pleasure and sensuality. Why are you holding back from expressing your truest desires? Are your fears keeping you from being the most dynamic version of

yourself? This phase of your relationship requires a greater degree of authenticity. Remember, you will never have to dull your sparkle when you are with the right person. Tip: Free yourself from the fear of being judged.

SAGITTARIUS: You know that feeling of meeting somebody who is just as eccentric as you are, and allows you to be the most weird and wonderful version of yourself? Now that's what true love looks like, Sagittarius. Stay in the moment and enjoy the blessings this phase of your life is bringing you. There is no need to fast forward the story, or project old pain onto something that is flowing this freely. Tip: Allow yourself to enjoy the connection without worrying about where things are going.

CAPRICORN: Sometimes you just have to take yourself out for pizza, pour a glass of Prosecco and choose to focus on all that is good in your life. Things may or may not be perfect, but this moment can be. Learning to stay in the present promises to change your reality. 'I invite peace and harmony to dwell in me and surround me at all times.'

An affirmation to breathe into you if and when things get heavy.

Tip: You decide your inner and outer reality. **AQUARIUS:** You are joy. You are love. You are peace. You are positivity. You are a truckload of good juju in human form. Continue to vibrate higher and be a light unto yourself and the world. Things to do today: celebrate love in its myriad. When was the last time you took your mum out for cocktails, or told your best friends how special they are? Small gestures make a big difference, Aquarius. Tip: Good vibes only.

PISCES: Ah, the elusive work-life balance. Yes, you can have it all, Pisces, but what are you letting go of in the bargain? Something to think about as you put your adult pants on today. This week, vow to set an hour aside each day for self-expression. Write, draw, paint, cook and jump around. Do what it takes to get the good juju vibrating through your body. You will find that vibrating at the frequency of joy helps you bring your most creative self to work as well. Tip: Make time for self-expression.