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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## To challenge Golay as CM is to dishonor people's verdict: Khaling

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 14 JUL:**

To challenge the appointment of PS Tamang [Golay] as the Chief Minister was tantamount to dishonoring the people's verdict and democratic processes, Sikkim Krantikari Morcha spokesperson and Political Secretary to the CM, Jacob Khaling countered today while commenting on the Sikkim Democratic Front backed writ petition in the Supreme Court challenging Mr Tamang's chief ministership.

The writ petition in the Supreme Court, it may be recalled, challenges Mr Tamang's appointment on the grounds that a person convicted on corruption charges cannot hold a constitutional post for a period of six years. Mr Tamang, it may be recalled, had not contested the assembly elections.

The SKM is arguing that the party had always projected Mr Tamang as its chief ministerial candidate during the election campaign and the fact that people elected SKM into office was also an endorsement of Mr Tamang for chief minister.

About the Supreme Court notices issued on the petition which is scheduled to come up for hearing on admission at the end of this month, Mr Khaling alleged that SDF was trying to whip up hysteria around the notice.

"In a democracy, the people's verdict is supreme... above everything," he held.

## Birth anniv of 'Iron Man of Natu La' celebrated

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 14 JUL:**

The Black Cat Division stationed in Sikkim celebrated the centenary birth anniversary of Lieutenant General Sagat Singh, at Natu La on Sunday with full military grandeur.

During the unprovoked belligerence by the Chinese at Natu La and Cho La in August and September 1967 respectively, General Sagat Singh displayed leadership of the highest order and gave a befitting reply to the Chinese, an army press release conveys.

Due to his resolute outlook, the Indian Army stood firm at these two passes and showed to the nation and the world that such hostile acts by

the Chinese would not go unchallenged, the release adds.

The General Officer Commanding 17 Mtn Div inaugurated a bust of Lieutenant General Sagat Singh at Baba Harbhajan Shrine near Sherathang and laid a wreath in honour of the officer "to whom we attribute the Indian Army's presence at Natu La today," the release further informs.

"The Tri Colour continues to flutter with pride today at Natu La because of the grit, determination and farsightedness of the officer and our Nation shall always remain grateful to him. Indeed, he shall always be remembered as 'The Iron Man of Natu La,' the release concludes.

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## SKM ORGANISES STUDENTS' RIGHTS DAY Govt committed to interests and aspirations of students: CM

**Henceforth, even  
VIPs to undergo  
treatment at  
STNM Hospital**

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 14 JUL:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party observed the fifth edition of Students' Rights Day here at Mannan Kendra on Sunday. The programme, which had Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] as the chief guest, was attended by college and school students.

SKM has been marking every 14th of July as Student's Rights Day to mark the student movement of 2014 involving students of Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College, Tadong, against fee hike.

It may be recalled that the protest had received support from students, parents and locals and the three-day

string of protests included lathi-charges and tear gas shelling.

The event was organized on a much grander scale this year now that SKM has formed the government in Sikkim.

In his address, the CM remarked that SKM had demanded the rights of the students when it was in opposition, and now that it has formed the government, it was working diligently to provide full rights to the students.

He added that SKM had organised this day in a grand manner today to discuss and deliberate with students on their rights and aspirations.

During direct interaction, students placed their issues, demands and suggestions to the CM.

In response, the CM committed that the State government would take their issues, demands

and suggestions seriously and begin work on them immediately. He also stressed that the government has been working in education and health sector on priority basis.

During the programme, SKM spokesperson, Jacob Khaling, who is also the Political Secretary to the CM, gave a power-point presentation on the student's movement of 2014.

Also on the occasion, seven sportspersons of Sikkim from different disciplines were felicitated for their outstanding performance and achievements at the national and international levels. The felicitated sportspersons are: footballers Nirmal Chettri and Bikash Jaiu, cricketer Nimesh Lamichaney, boxing coach Pratima Goorooong, certified fitness trainer Pandi

Targain, MMA fighter Passang Lepcha and runner Shanti Ram Sharma.

In his address, the CM also commented on the practice of VIPs bypassing STNM Hospital and heading to hospitals in the metros for treatment on government expense.

Henceforth, even VIPs, if they wish to undergo medical treatment on government expense, will have to seek treatment at STNM Hospital for all ailments that can be attended to here, he said, underlining that this would apply to even the CM and Ministers.

Crores are being wasted due to such preferential treatment, he said, adding that it was not proper for VIPs to seek treatment outside the State when the specialists and facilities were available in Sikkim.

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**SETI JHORA CLEARED, FOR NOW:** Finally, after five days of uncertainty two-way traffic was restored at Seti Jhora on Sunday afternoon. A break in the rain and the courage and diligence of West Bengal PWD's JCB pilots helped clear the debris enough for vehicles to get unimpeded travel through the area.

## Next Dalai Lama must be chosen within China; India should not intervene: Chinese authorities

**MANASH PRATIM BHUYAN**

**LHASA/BEIJING, JUL 14 (PTI):** The successor of the Dalai Lama has to be decided within China and any interference by India on the issue will impact bilateral ties, Chinese authorities have said.

In first clear assertion on the sensitive issue, senior Chinese officials and experts said the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama must be approved by the Chinese government and the selection should take place within the country based on an over 200-year old historical process.

"The reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is a historical, religious and political issue. There are established historical institutions and formalities for the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama," Wang Neng Sheng, an official in the rank of vice minister in Tibet, told a small group of Indian journalists in Lhasa.

"The Dalai Lama's reincarnation is not decided by his personal wish or by some group of people living in other countries," he added.

Wang, the director general at the government of Tibet Autonomous Region, said the current Dalai Lama was recognized by Beijing and his successor must be found through the "draw of lots in

golden urn process" within China.

Echoing Wang's views, Zha Luo, director at Beijing-based China Tibetology Research Centre, a government-run influential think tank, said any refusal by India to recognise the next Dalai Lama to be chosen within China will impact bilateral ties.

The 14th Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 following a crackdown on an uprising by the local population in Tibet. India granted him political asylum and the Tibetan government-in-exile is based on Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh since then.

The Dalai Lama is 84 years old now and the issue of his successor has gained prominence in the last couple of years.

"It will be a major political difference that would impact bilateral relations and any wise political leader wouldn't do that," said Zha whose team advises central government on policy issues for Tibet said.

He was asked what will happen if India refuses to recognize the next Dalai Lama chosen by China.

"Since the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama is an important issue for China any friendly country or friend of China would not interfere or meddle on the issue," he added.

Zha, however, called it

a hypothetical answer to a hypothetical question.

India has maintained its stand on the Dalai Lama.

"Government of India's position on His Holiness the Dalai Lama is clear and consistent. He is a revered religious leader and is deeply respected by the people of India. There is no change in that position. His Holiness is accorded all freedom to carry out his religious activities in India," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson had told a media briefings in March last year.

Wang said the process of selecting the next Dalai Lama must follow two clear steps: "It must go to draw of lots in the golden urn and the reincarnation must be recognised by the central government."

He said the "centrality" of the central government must be recognised and that any personal move by the current Dalai Lama on the issue is not going to be recognized by Chinese government or religious followers in Tibet.

"It was with the central government's recognition that the Dalai Lama became the 14th Dalai Lama. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been in that position," Wang said.

He alleged that the Dalai Lama has been "inciting" and "misguiding" young

Tibetan people for his political motives.

Asked about the Dalai Lama's comments that he was ready to accept Tibet as part of China, Wang said he has been resorting to political rhetoric without taking any action.

"He still believes that Tibet is an independent country. Without any concrete moves from his side, his words do not mean anything," he added.

He said there were around 10 rounds of discussions between private representatives of the Dalai Lama and Beijing. The last round took place in 2011 in Beijing.

"The discussions were about the future of the Dalai Lama and did not include or touch on the topic of future of Tibet as a part of China's sovereign territory," Wang said.

The Indian government had issued a note nearly a year back to senior officials, asking them not to attend events organised by the Tibetan government-in-exile.

India has also been supporting the 'One China' policy, which states that Taiwan and Tibet are part of China's mainland. Beijing made the 'One-China' policy a prerequisite for countries to establish diplomatic ties with it.

## Building collapses in HP's Solan

**SHIMLA, JUL 14 (PTI):** At least two people, including an Army man, were killed and 23 injured after a four-storey building collapsed in Himachal Pradesh's Solan district Sunday, a district official said.

The building, located on the Nahan-Kumarhatti road, housed a restaurant and collapsed amidst heavy rains in the area, he said.

An Army man and a civilian were killed in the incident, Solan Deputy Commissioner (DC) K C Chaman said.

Chaman, who is on the spot, told PTI that 37 people were trapped, and till now 23 people have been rescued and two bodies pulled out of the debris. The rescued people sustained multiple injuries and have been admitted to a nearby hospital. Twelve others are still trapped under the debris, the official said.

Eighteen Army personnel are among the injured, he added.

The Indian Army, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and police are jointly carrying out the rescue operation, the official said, adding that National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team has also been called from Panchkula in Haryana.

The Army personnel and their family members had reportedly stopped for lunch at the restaurant.

## Minister tours Gyalshing, directs officials to prioritise people

**GYALSHING, 14 JUL [IPR]:** Minister for FS & ADD, H&CCDD, AHLF & VS, IPR & Printing Department, Lok Nath Sharma, along with DC West, Karma R. Bonpo, and officials from District Administration and other concerned line departments visited the stretch from Gyalshing bazaar to Omchung School today.

The Minister examined and took

proper account of various issues of the public with regard to basic facilities like electricity, water, condition of sewage line, waste management, protection walls and others needs for the people of the community residing in the area.

He then asked the concerned authorities to pay extreme attention towards the issues of

the public and urged them to take necessary steps in favour of the people.

He also advised the officials that schemes should be well utilized by the public for their own benefit.

Further, he also met with the vegetable vendors of Gyalshing Market and interacted with them in regards to the problems faced by them.



**RAIGAON THANKS NHIDCL AND CEEPL FOR DOING RMDD'S JOB:** The relieved residents of Raigoan, Lower Burtuk, have expressed heartfelt gratitude towards the authorities and contractors of NHIDCL and CEEPL (construction company of the new STNM Hospital) for voluntarily clearing the slip along the PMGSY road to Raigoan from the new hospital. The landslide, which occurred on the forenoon of Tuesday (09 July) was attended to disinterestedly by RMDD officials despite being informed that the village had remained cut-off for four days. Only when a delegation met the District Magistrate (East) and concerned officials of the Disaster Management Unit, the matter was put into action on 12 July, a press release informs. The residents of Raigoan now anticipate timely action for permanent restoration of the road from the concerned department.

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

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## We never promised Gorkhaland, says Bengal BJP chief

**NAGRAKATA (WB), JUL 14 (PTI):** West Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh, whose party swept the north Bengal region including Darjeeling seat in the Lok Sabha elections, Sunday said the party has never promised to create a separate Gorkhaland state.

Ghosh also said the National Register of Citizens (NRC) will soon be implemented in West Bengal on the lines of Assam.

"We want development of Gorkha people. We are sympathetic to the Gorkhaland statehood demand, but had never promised a separate state," he said while speaking to the media after a workers' meet here in Jalpaiguri district.

Reacting to the statement of the BJP chief, Darjeeling MLA and Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) spokesperson

Neeraj Zimba said, "Dilip Ghosh has his own political compulsions but that does not stop us from continuing our demand for separate Gorkhaland state."

"We want a permanent political solution to the issue," he said. Absconding Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) leader Bimal Gurung, in an interview to PTI in April this year before the Lok Sabha elections, had claimed the BJP has promised to look into the Gorkhaland demand.

Wanted in many cases including sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, murder and rioting, Gurung is on the run for over two years.

However, for the first time in about three decades, the Gorkhaland statehood demand was not a poll issue in the Darjeeling Hills as

parties, including the GJM and GNLF, sought development and restoration of democracy in the region.

Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of the state had witnessed a 104-day strike in 2017 seeking creation of separate Gorkhaland state. The agitation saw a split in the GJM, that rules the semi-autonomous Gorkhaland Territorial Administration in the hills, with the Binay Tamang and Anit Thapa faction shifting loyalties to the ruling Trinamool Congress. BJP candidate Raju Sing Bista won the Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat.

Darjeeling Lok Sabha constituency has been returning BJP candidates since 2009, with Jaswant Singh winning the seat that year followed by Surinder Singh Ahluwalia in 2014.

## Cabinet to soon take call on reconstituting Law Commission

**NEW DELHI, JUL 14 (PTI):** With the country without a Law Commission since September last year, the Law Ministry has initiated the process of setting up the body which gives advice to the government on complex legal issues.

The three-year term of the 21st Law Commission ended on August 31 last year. On at least one occasion, the Law Ministry had moved the proposal to reconstitute the panel.

But the proposal could not move further and the government later went into election mode.

Sources in the government said the proposal to reconstitute the panel would be before the Union Cabinet in the next few days.

The 21st commission, under Justice BS Chauhan



(retd), had submitted reports and working papers on key issues such as simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies and a uniform civil code.

While the Law Commission had supported simultaneous polls, it had said time is not ripe for a common code.

The cabinet approves reconstitution of the law panel for a period of three years.

It is usually headed by a retired Supreme Court judge or a former chief justice of a high court.

In 2015, a proposal was mooted to make

the law panel into a permanent body either through an Act of Parliament or an executive order (resolution of the Union Cabinet).

The move was shelved after the Prime Minister's Office felt that the present system should continue.

In 2010 also, the then UPA government had prepared a draft cabinet note to give statutory status to the Law Commission and the Law Ministry had mooted to bring the Law Commission of India Bill, 2010. But the idea was shelved.

# SOA felicitates medal winners from NE Olympic Games

## SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 14 JUL:

Sikkim Olympic Association today felicitated medal winners from Sikkim who excelled in the 1st North East Olympic Games held in October last year in Manipur. Sikkim bagged one gold medal, seven silver medals and 17 bronze medals along with three team-championship trophies in different disciplines.

The felicitation was organized on the occasion of SOA's annual general body meeting here on Sunday.

Sports & Youth Affairs Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha, who was present as the chief guest, handed over the souvenirs and cash prizes of Rs 5,000 each to the medal winners.

SOA also felicitated coaches Zarina Rana [table tennis], Palden Bhutia [football], Basant Pradhan [athletic], Santosh Subba [badminton],

Mukesh Rai [boxing], Hem Kumari Rai [karate], Aaron Gurung [wushu], Sonam Paljor Bhutia [weightlifting] and Bijay Gurung [taekwondo].

On the occasion, SOA also handed over grants-in-aid of Rs 20,000 each to 18 sports associations of the State affiliated with it.

In his short address, the Minister congratulated all the medal winners and held them up as the 'pride of Sikkim'.

Addressing the function, SOA president, BK Roka, congratulated all the medal winners and coaches of different discipline and further encouraged them to continue with their practice and hard work to continuously win medals and laurels for the State.

He informed that the annual general meeting of SOA was held for the first time since its formation and various important issues were discussed.



He assured to provide all possible support to sports associations of the State and to work for the welfare of players.

Mr Roka stated that SOA will send coaches from different disciplines on exposure trips to Manipur.

He also assured to provide better cash incentives and support to players in the days to come. He informed that the association has been working to establish a sports complex in the State.

SOA president informed that the prestigious National Games are scheduled to be held in November in Goa and asked officials of different sports associations to immediately forward names of players who have qualified for the National Games.

He further informed that the 2nd North East Olympic Games 2020 will be held in Arunachal Pradesh and urged associations to immediately start preparing for the same to improve in the State's performance.

## Beauty pageant finalists liven up promo bash



## REBYNA RANA

GANGTOK, 14 JUL:

The 30 finalists of Glam Miss Sikkim and Glam Miss Teen Sikkim 2019 walked out in front of audiences for the first time during the promo bash night held Saturday evening at Saramsa Resort near Ranipool.

The organizers informs that the event was organized

to familiarize the contestants with the audiences and also to involve their parents by updating them on how the contestants were doing.

Amjad Khan Pathan, director for Miss India multi national and Miss Teen International, who is also the show director for Glam Miss Sikkim and Glam Miss Teen Sikkim,

informs that the finale is scheduled for 20 July at Manan Kendra here.

The pageant is expected to be judged by Devika Vaid [Miss India Earth], Taniska Bhosle [Miss India International], Akriti Mallick [the world's Next Top Model India], Isha Sharma [Director Fit & Glam Magazine], and Debojit Das Gupta.

## New office bearers installed at Rotary Club of Gangtok; Entrepreneurs feted with Vocational Excellence Awards



## SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 14 JUL:

The 52nd installation ceremony of Rotary Club of Gangtok was held on Saturday, 13 July, at Hotel Sikkim Retreat here, a press release informs. Also held the same day were Vocational Excellence Awards in which five entrepreneurs

were felicitated by the Club.

HRDD Minister Kunga Nima Lepcha was present as the chief guest and in his address, enumerated a series of projects the Club could take up and assured all possible support from his end. The Club now has Mohan Lal Sarda as the new president and Mira

Obero as Secretary.

Also on the day, Vocational Excellence Awards were presented to: Kevin Rasaily of Olivet; Priya Dahal of Beautiful Earth; Sumit Thakur of Untap'd; Abhinandan Dhakal & Abhimanya Dhakal of Shoten Group; and Anup Zimba of Zimba Enterprises.

## Need to expedite process to elect new Cong prez: Shashidhar Reddy



## HYDERABAD, JUL 14

(PTI):

Senior Congress leader and former MLA Marri Shashidhar Reddy has suggested that the process to elect a new president in the wake of Rahul Gandhi's decision to step down should be expedited and an interim chief be put in place for the confidence of the party's rank and file.

"I think there is a need to expedite it. Because, the feedback from the grassroots level is that the party cadre is growing restless. What appears to be a leadership vacuum should not be allowed to continue for long," Reddy, son of former chief minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh Marri Channa Reddy, told PTI here.

"The perceived vacuum should not be allowed to continue particularly in the light of alleged use of money

power and all kinds of intimidation by the BJP to wean away people from other parties," he said.

"When I interact with people at the grassroots level, they ask me what should we do... (where are we heading). This question should not creep into the minds of Congress cadres and workers at the lower level. Because, they are the base," Reddy said.

The hardcore Congress workers, small or big, form the nucleus and the vacuum is creating anxiety in their minds which is not good for the party, he asserted.

"We may be down, but we will not be out," he said.

Reddy, also former vice-chairman of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), suggested that

an interim president be declared for the party immediately as it cannot remain a headless organisation.

"I am not an expert or somebody who can say what needs to be done. But, certainly, one of the suggestions I would like to make is that let them immediately declare an interim president," he said.

Rahul Gandhi, having declared that he is no more the president of Congress, is being described in news channels as a Member of Parliament, he said.

"He (Gandhi) is no more the Congress president. He has made it very clear. So, it cannot be a headless organisation.

Let there be an interim president... At least, that will give some confidence to the people," Reddy said.

## SSA beats JVC FC 3-0



## SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 14 JUL:

State Sports Academy racked up three more points from another victory at the ongoing Sikkim Football Association U-17 Football League 2019 being played here at Paljor Stadium on Sunday. SSA outplayed JVC Football Club, Singtam, 3-0. Lakpa Sherpa, John Tshering Lepcha and Milan Chettri scored a goal each for the SSA.

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## Had heard about moon in stories: Kids after visiting ISRO station before Chandrayaan-2 launch

## ANIL BHATT

JAMMU, JUL 14 (PTI):

For a brother-sister twin from Jammu, the moon had always been about the stories they had heard from their grandmother: a friendly celestial body so far away that they could only imagine to reach there some day. Not anymore, they say.

Swapnil and Swapnila, both Class 10 students, this week visited the ISRO station in Andhra Pradesh and saw the massive rocket that will spark their lunar imagination into reality. There, they heard stories about the the moon again, but they would have surely missed the warmth of their grandma's storytelling.

"The launch was only in our imagination. We used to hear stories of moon from our grandmother. When we actually saw it (the rocket), we were spell-bound. It was amazing," Swapnil told PTI. "It's a dream come true."

Swapnila said they saw the GSLV Mk-III rocket that will launch the mission into space. "It was so huge," she added.

The students are

among 110 children who are part of Chandrayaan-2 project. In Sriharikota, scientists explained the mission to them and they said they feel happy about it.

Eleven years after the success of its first lunar mission, the Indian Space Research Organisation is set for the launch of Chandrayaan-2 project at 2.51 AM on Monday.

The mission on board the Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle Mk-III will take 54 days to reach the moon's south pole. Billed as the most complex mission ever undertaken by ISRO, Chandrayaan-2 will make India the fourth country to soft land on the lunar surface after Russia, the US and China.

"We saw the track through which the Chandrayaan-2 vehicle will be transported to the launch pad. We saw the launching control centre and the main control centre," Swapnila said.

ISRO has launched a programme for schoolchildren, called the 'Yuva Vigyani

Karyakram' (YUVIKA), from this year in tune with the government's 'Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan' vision.

Swapnil and Swapnila were selected after undergoing a series of test of their academic, sports and extra-curricular record. At the age of 7, both have flown the Microlite Aircraft at Hindon Air Base as co-pilots.

The government is inculcating a "scientific zest among the youth" with such programmes for students, Swapnila said. "Best scientists and technocrats will come up now in the country".

Shib Narayan Acharya, a photo officer in the Ministry of Defence, and Sarmistha Acharya are proud parents and said they are happy about their children visiting the ISRO station.

"The full family will see the live telecast of Chandrayaan-2 launch," said their mother.

Their father said the children were invited by former president the late APJ Abdul Kalam, who spent a few hours with them.

## Navjot Singh Sidhu resigns as Punjab Cabinet Minister

CHANDIGARH, JUL 14

(PTI):

Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, who has been at loggerheads with Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and was stripped off key portfolios in the cabinet reshuffle in June, has resigned from the state cabinet.

The 55-year-old Sidhu took to Twitter on Sunday, making public his resignation letter, which was sent just four days after his portfolio was changed.

The resignation letter dated June 10 was addressed to Congress President Rahul Gandhi. "I hereby resign as Minister from the Punjab Cabinet," Sidhu said in the letter to the Congress chief, which he posted on his Twitter handle on Sunday.

The date of his resignation letter was a day after he had met Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi when his portfolio was changed.

In another tweet later, Sidhu said he would be sending his resignation letter to the chief minister.

On June 6, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had divested Sidhu of the Local Government and Tourism and Cultural

Affairs Departments and allotted him the power and new and renewable energy portfolio.

Portfolios of several other ministers too had been changed in the reshuffle exercise.

In an apparent snub, Sidhu, the Congress MLA from Amritsar East, was also left out of the consultative groups formed by the chief minister on June 8, two days after the cabinet reshuffle, to accelerate implementation of government's flagship programmes.

Over a month after he was stripped of key portfolios, Sidhu had not taken charge of his new assignment, as a stalemate with the chief minister had continued.

Congress veteran Ahmed Patel had been entrusted with the task of resolving issues between Sidhu and Singh.

Singh had met Patel during his visit to Delhi last month, but the party reportedly described the meeting as a "courtesy call".

The fact that Sidhu waited for over a month before making his resignation letter public indicated that he could have been waiting for reconciliation.

## Prepped for Disasters?

*Not always all ready.*

*And that is a worry*

Three years back, at around this time of the year, an entire cliff collapsed in Dzongu. The bhir crumbled at a safe enough distance from the nearest habitation to ensure that no casualties occurred. It was however still close and dramatic enough to be captured on smartphones and the frightening visuals and videos were circulated widely on social media. The material loss at Mantam, a habitation of around 24 homes, was substantial. The settlement was battered by the extremely violent headwinds of the landslide, suffered through the confusion of zero visibility caused by the fine-as-talc dust kicked up by the landslide and watched Rongyong Chu [Kanakan to some], a friendly stream, turn into a 3km long lake dammed up behind a nearly 300 feet high dam of debris. The landslide lake has since spilled over the debris dam, has silted over, become a picnic spot during winters and a headache during monsoons, and although the risk of this artificial dam bursting and causing a flash-flood is now rather remote, the downstream areas will probably not ever be fully out of the woods. The lake has remained erratic, sometimes full of sand banks and debris, at others a spilling bucket of turbid water.

North Sikkim has traditionally been unlucky when it comes to natural disasters, but what keeps things of as even a keel as its situation would allow is the diligence of the officers it has always had in the people's service. At the end of the day, no one person or set of officers can do much after a major disaster has struck. But when they make the effort and reach affected people despite obvious dangers and difficulties, they reassure them that they matter. And for a people grappling with nature at its most fearsome, such assurances go a long way. It is in a similar context that one needs to see the rush of good Samaritans who had raced to disaster-hit places with relief materials. Even if the relief was collected without checking what the affected area really required, it was the gesture that counted. And then there was also the National Disaster Response Force which was pressed into service. They were unfamiliar with the terrain, unsure of what to do since no rescue was required and their boats unlikely to navigate the debris-heavy lake at Mantam, but seeing these men in their orange overalls busy at the site was a reassuring sight for the people there since it convinced them that they were not forgotten. But all of these were for the immediate days after the disaster. And this is true for all natural disaster events and not just the one at Dzongu. After the adrenaline has worn off and the sympathy wave ebbed, the real task of rehabilitating and adjusting should have begun in earnest. The true mettle of the officers and the authenticity of good Samaritans gets tested then. The numbers in Dzongu are low, so rehabilitation was never very challenging, so what remains of this space can be used to discuss the importance of disaster prevention over disaster management.

For a place which has a natural disaster for every season, Sikkim is staggeringly casual about preventive measures. It is also very poor when it comes to mitigation, and it is thanks only to its small size and conscientious officers, that the fallouts of disasters are not much worse than what is seen. When it comes to preparation, the first requirement should be area-specific list of potential threats, preventive measures to keep those threats at bay and a checklist of things to do in worst-case-scenarios. These should be worked in detail down to the ward level, but has obviously not been done at any scale, anywhere beyond documents which speak in vague generalities. These documents should be given to village elders to draft because they know the history of natural disasters in their respective areas, still remember the traditional safeguards the communities had worked into their lifestyles, and, well, will be motivated more by the greater common good than the civil-works priorities which might influence the less public spirited consultants. That is really where Sikkim's preparation for disasters needs to begin, should have begun rather.

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# Food system needs a revolution, not tinkering around edges by the ultra-processed producers

NORAH CAMPBELL & FRANCIS FINUCANE  
theconversation.com

Eating ultra-processed food is definitely bad for you, a recent study has confirmed. In the experiment, people were fed either ultra-processed or unprocessed food, with meals matched precisely for calories, salt, sugar, fat and fibre. Those on ultra-processed food ate more and gained more weight within two weeks.

This finding puts two torpedoes in the notion that “all calories are the same”. Recent studies have linked ultra-processed foods to obesity, cancer, heart disease and early death.

Most foods need some level of processing, such as freezing or pasteurisation in order to prolong shelf life, food safety and commercial viability, but “ultra-processed” products have little or no intact “food” remaining. Rather, they are made principally from already processed commodities, such as potent sugars, modified oils and salts and they undergo an array of further processes such as emulsification, thickening and carbonating. No longer really foods, they are better thought of as formulations.

One strategy to make ultra-processed products less harmful is to reduce the amount of salt, sugar and unhealthy fats in them through what is known as “reformulation”: redesigning an existing processed food product with the objective of making it healthier. Reformulation could help if it had adequate scope and intensity – and it may act to bolster other sugar, salt and fat reduction strategies such as taxes or improved product labelling. But while about a dozen countries have mandatory salt and trans-fat limits, none have set legal limits for sugar and saturated fats in foods.

Food reformulation has been around since the early 1980s, and it has always been a business opportunity for large food brands to compete for health conscious consumers. Only recently – since the mid-2000s – has it become a high-level strategy for food companies seeking to proactively adopt it to avoid mandatory nutrient limits. Countries all over the world now collaborate with the food industry to reformulate ultra-processed foods – a partnership that has received widespread and enthusiastic endorsement from senior policy makers. A recent food industry report to the Irish government on putative improvements in diet resulting from industry reformulation is a case in point.

But we have found what we feel are selection biases, ecological fallacies and inappropriate study design that we argue make the inferences about the benefits of industry-led reformulation in this report unsound. Others have described how methodological weaknesses limit the policy “relevance” of similar industry reports. In seeking to lead and influence national dietary strategies, the food industry promotes two consistent narratives: that reformulation is enormously difficult and expensive, and that it must happen slowly because consumers will react negatively to dramatic changes in taste.

So what exactly is wrong with industry-led reformulation? We think it has four serious dangers.

#### 1. A PR STRATEGY

Because reformulation has been framed by industry as a series of voluntary commitments, big food actors across the world look like they are



doing government and society at large a massive favour, all the while burnishing their corporate images. Indeed, the websites of ultra-processed food companies prominently feature reformulation. Consider, for instance, Mondelez's “commitment to improve the nutritional content of our most loved brands”. We feel this slow progress towards the promotion of significantly healthier diets.

#### 2. INDUSTRY SAVIOURS

Industry-led reformulation stages the food industry as the saviour from our obesity problem. It places them as a central authority which can speak reliably and legitimately about nutrition goals with governments. Food brands speak convincingly about how much sugar, salt or fat they extract from national diets.

The Irish reformulation report for example, states that between 2005 and 2017, beverage companies removed 10 billion calories from the annual diets of the country's 4.8m people. But it is silent about how many calories the companies are responsible for introducing to the diet in the first place. This mirrors industry development of low tar cigarettes, which were an ineffective, tokenistic industry-led solution to the public health crisis that smoking presented. In the same way, voluntary reformulation of unhealthy food products that are making so many of us sick risks delaying more substantive strategies to get rid of the most harmful products altogether.

#### 3. A FALSE PICTURE

The ultra-processed food industry reformulates existing products while adding more to the food system. It is constantly creating new products such as cereal bars or “snackfections”); new formats which masquerade as portion control but actually increase snacking (bites, thins, share size); new eating occasions (Domino's World Pizza Day, Cadbury's Friendship Day); new category expansions (biscuits for breakfast, meat snacks) and new retail concepts.

A recent study by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland found that while there were indeed some decreases in the amount of salt and sugar in the category of “baby foods” in the country, there were whole new classes of foods created for babies that it deemed “inappropriate”: products that normalise snacking in babies and young infants. We need to measure not just reformulation at a product level, but how many new ultra-processed foods are being produced, to get a true picture of the changing food system.

#### 4. STATUS QUO BIAS

Status quo bias happens when a baseline is mistaken for a standard to strive towards. The Irish reformulation strategy is a good example: if Irish children are eating 101g of added sugar per day, it will take about 300 years to reach the recommended intake of 25g at current rates of decline. Such bias contributes to policy inertia, where it is imagined that the food system can be tinkered around with, rather than needing to be fundamentally revolutionised.

Industry-led reformulation has become a public relations strategy – a goodwill gesture that enhances the dominance and legitimacy of the ultra-processed food category. The ultra-processed concept is not challenged. It is inadvertently legitimated as attention is focused on changing the formulas of energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods instead of working out ways to replace them altogether.

Some of the ways that governments might intervene include subsidies for fruits and vegetables, tax breaks for local food co-operatives and food growers, school and adult education. Ultimately, cultural norms need to change so that people have more time to think about what they eat – and to engage with preparing and cooking it.

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# How the brain prepares for movement and actions

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Our behaviour is largely tied to how well we control, organise and carry out movements in the correct order. Take writing, for example. If we didn't make one stroke after another on a page, we would not be able to write a word.

However, motor skills (single or sequences of actions which through practice become effortless) can become very difficult to learn and retrieve when neurological conditions disrupt the planning and control of sequential movements. When a person has a disorder – such as dyspraxia or stuttering – certain skills cannot be performed in a smooth and coordinated way.

Traditionally scientists have believed that in a sequence of actions, each is tightly associated to the other in the brain, and one triggers the next. But if this is correct, then how can we explain errors in sequencing? Why do we mistype “form” instead of “from”, for example?

Some researchers argue that before we begin a sequence of actions, the brain recalls and plans all items at the same time. It prepares a map where each item has an activation stamp relative to its order in the sequence. These compete with each other until the item with the stronger activation wins. It “comes out” for execution as be-

ing more “readied” – so we type “f” in the word “from” first, for example – and then it is erased from the map. This process, called competitive queuing, is repeated for the rest of the actions until we execute all the items of the sequence in the correct order.

This idea that the brain uses simultaneous activations of actions before any movement takes place was proven in a 2002 study. As monkeys were drawing shapes (making three strokes for a triangle, for example), researchers found that before the start of the movement, there existed simultaneous neural patterns for each stroke. How strong the activation was could predict the position of that particular action in execution.

#### PLANNING AND QUEUING

What has not been known until now is whether this activation system is used in the human brain. Nor have we known how actions are queued while we prepare them based on their position in the sequence. However recent research from neuroscientists at Bangor University and University College London has shown that there is simultaneous planning and competitive queuing in the human brain too.

For this study, the researchers were interested to see how the brain prepares for executing well-learned action sequences like typing or playing the piano. Participants were trained for two days to pair abstract

shapes with five-finger sequences in a computer-based task. They learned the sequences by watching a small dot move from finger to finger on a hand image displayed on the screen, and pressing the corresponding finger on a response device. These sequences were combinations of two finger orders with two different rhythms.

On the third day, the participants had to produce – based on the abstract shape presented for a while on the screen – the correct sequence entirely from memory while their brain activity was recorded.

Looking at the brain signals, the team was able to distinguish participants' neural patterns as they planned and executed the movements. The researchers found that, milliseconds before the start of the movement, all the finger presses were queued and “stacked” in an ordered manner. The activation pattern of the finger presses reflected their position in the sequence that was performed immediately after. This competitive queuing pattern showed that the brain prepared the sequence by organising the individual actions in the correct order.

The researchers also looked at whether this preparatory queuing activity was shared across different sequences which had different rhythms or different finger orders, and found that it was. The competitive queuing mechanism acted

as a template to guide each action into a position, and provided the base for the accurate production of new sequences. In this way the brain stays flexible and efficient enough to be ready to produce unknown combinations of sequences by organising them using this preparatory template.

Interestingly, the quality of the preparatory pattern predicted how accurate a participant was in producing a sequence. In other words, the more well-separated the activities or actions were before the execution of the sequence, the more likely the participant was to execute the sequence without mistakes. The presence of errors, on the other hand, meant that the queuing of the patterns in preparation for the action was less well-defined, and tended to be mingled.

By knowing how our actions are pre-planned in the brain, researchers will be able to find out the parameters of executing smooth and accurate movement sequences. This could lead to a better understanding of the difficulties found in disorders of sequence learning and control, such as stuttering and dyspraxia. It could also help the development of new rehabilitation or treatment techniques which optimise movement planning in order for patients to achieve a more skilled control of action sequences.

[the writer is PhD Researcher, Bangor University]

# Rain continues to wreak havoc in north Bengal; one dead

**JALPAIGURI/KOLKATA (WB), JUL 14 (PTI):** A man died in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district after he fell into an overflowing drain, a police officer said on Sunday, as incessant rain continued to wreak havoc in the low-lying areas of north Bengal.

Bimal Sil, a man in his early 40s, reportedly slipped into the gutter while wading through a flooded street on Saturday night at Shanupara locality of the district, he said.

Sources in the administration said downpour over the past five days has inundated several parts of the sub-Himalayan districts of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and Alipurduar.

The Met department has warned of "heavy to very heavy" rainfall in these districts till Monday.

Among other areas, Malda, North Dinajpur



and South Dinajpur are also likely to experience heavy rain, the weatherman said.

Overflowing rivers have breached banks at many places, flooding localities and displacing thousands of people, an official said.

Water level at Teesta, Sankosh, Raidak, Kaljani, Korola, Shil, Torsa and Ghish rivers have risen to alarming

levels owing to the rainfall, he said.

Traffic movement on National Highway-10, which was disrupted over the past two days due to landslides, have, however, resumed, following clearing of debris from the thoroughfare, the official said.

In the worst-affected Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar districts, several people have taken shelter

in school buildings and some were seen moving to higher ground.

At Moynaguri town of Jalpaiguri district, around 200 families had to move to safer locations after rainwater entered their homes. Angry residents on Sunday blocked National Highway-27 for over five hours, protesting lack of relief materials and shelter provisions

in the area.

Jalpaiguri recorded the highest rainfall of 204 mm in 24 hours till Sunday 8 am, the Met department said.

Among the other north Bengal districts, Alipurduar recorded 150 mm rainfall, followed by Coochbehar at 110 mm, Siliguri at 105 mm, Kalimpong 60 mm and Darjeeling at 30 mm.

## Rain-triggered floods, landslides claim 60 lives in Nepal

**KATHMANDU, JUL 14 (PTI):** Floods and landslides caused by incessant rains in Nepal have till now claimed 60 lives and left 38 others injured, police said on Sunday.

Thirty five people are reported to be missing in the rain-related incidents that have thrown normal life out of gear in central and eastern parts of the country.

Heavy rainfall since Thursday has hit more than 25 districts, affecting 10,385 households.

Nepal Army and police personnel have so far rescued 1,104 people from several places across the country with 185 alone from Kathmandu.

According to Nepal Police, a total of 27,380 police personnel have been deployed across the country for search and

rescue operations.

The Flood Forecasting Section (FFS) said that monsoon is active and the rainfall will continue for two to three days in most places across the country, The Himalayan Times reported.

The Meteorological Forecasting Division (MFD) warned the public to remain on high alert and said that air and road traffic could be affected due to low visibility.

Heavy rainfall has led the water level in the rivers to rise.

FFS said that water level in Bagmati, Kamala, Saptakoshi and its tributary the Sunkoshi has crossed the danger mark.

People living in these regions should remain alert, Binod Parajuli, hydrologist at FFS, was quoted as saying in the news report.

Meanwhile, weather experts have attributed the heavy rainfall in such short duration to climate change.

The Kathmadu Post reported that over the last three days, the country has witnessed heavy rainfall in an indication of the changing rainfall pattern. The country is receiving more rainfall in a short duration of time - an abnormal phenomenon that is slowly becoming a new normal.

There has been a change in precipitation in recent years. The intensity of rainfall has gone up, Madhukar Upadhyaya, a watershed practitioner and climate change expert, told The Kathmandu Post.

We are experiencing a high intensity of rainfall in short durations, he said.

## Kolkata metro death: FIR lodged against Metro Railway

**KOLKATA, JUL 14 (PTI):** An FIR was registered Sunday against the Metro Railway after a complaint alleging negligence on its part was lodged by the family of a man who died after he was dragged by a train as his hand got stuck between two of its doors, police said.

The incident took place at the Park Street station on Saturday when the man, Sajal Kanjilal, a resident of Kasba area of Kolkata, was trying to board a Kabi Subhash-bound train.

According to eyewitnesses, Kanjilal fell on the tracks as the train entered the tunnel. The train came to a halt, with four of its eight coaches still at the platform, after staff and passengers outside raised an alarm.

The man was rushed to the SSKM Hospital, where the doctors declared him "brought dead".

Rajkumar Mukherjee, Kanjilal's cousin, said he

has filed a complaint at Park Street police station accusing the metro authorities of criminal negligence.

"We will take up the matter with the highest metro authorities, no matter what," he said.

"An FIR was lodged against Metro Railway today on the basis of a complaint filed by Sajal Kanjilal's family, alleging criminal negligence," a police official said.

The Metro Railway authority has ordered an inquiry into the incident by the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS), an official said.

He said the mishap took place in one of the newly inducted rakes, manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory. The rakes, delivered more than 20 months ago, were put into service only a few months ago.

The CRS will conduct an inquiry to ascertain the cause of the incident and submit a report at

the earliest, he added.

"Questions are being raised over the sensor technology used in the rakes and its alleged failure to detect Kanjilal's hand between the doors, but a clear picture in the matter will be available only after the investigation," the official said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Saturday ordered a police inquiry into the incident, which she described as "very unfortunate".

She asked state Urban Development Minister and Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim to assure Kanjilal's family of full cooperation from the government.

Theatre artists Sunday took out a protest march near the Park Street station, alleging that laxity on part of the Metro Railway led to Kanjilal's death. They also sought a response on the allegations from the authorities.

## Bangladesh's former military dictator Ershad passes away

**ANISUR RAHMAN DHAKA, JUL 14 (PTI):** Bangladesh's former military dictator Hussain Muhammad Ershad died on Sunday due to complications from old age at a hospital in Dhaka, officials said here.

He was 91 and is survived by his wife Raushan Ershad, a teenage son from his now severed second marriage and two other adopted children.

Ershad, the Jatiya Party chief and also the leader of the opposition in Parliament, was admitted to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) on June 22 after his condition deteriorated.

The former president breathed his last at 7:45 am on Sunday at the inten-

sive care unit of the facility where he was kept in life support for the last nine days after his organs gradually stopped functioning, the Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) said.

"Previously, he used to try to respond through his eyes, but on Saturday he could not even blink his eyes," Ershad's younger brother and Jatiya Party leader G M Quader told reporters here yesterday.

President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chudhury mourned Ershad's death and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

Ershad's namaz-e-janaza (funeral prayers)

was held at the Army Central Mosque after Zuhur prayers, Jatiya Party secretary general Moshir Rahman Ranga told reporters here.

Three more funeral prayers have been planned for the former president.

His second namaz-e-janaza will be held at South Plaza of the parliament building at 10 am on Monday. The body would then be taken to the party's central office located at Kakrail road for party-men and common people to pay their tributes.

On Tuesday, Ershad will be flown to his ancestral home district in Rangpur, from where he will be brought back to Dhaka on the same day

for burial at the Banani army graveyard.

A former army chief, Ershad took over the state power in a bloodless coup in 1982 and subsequently ran the country for eight years until he was forced to quit in a pro-democracy mass upsurge in 1990.

Despite being imprisoned subsequently on several charges, Ershad emerged as one of the most powerful political leaders in the 1990s after his Jatiya Party became the country's third biggest political outfit.

He was elected to parliament several times, once contesting from the prison even.

Ershad, who was also a prolific poet, was considered to be a soft

hearted person in private life though he faced with iron hand the opposition street campaigns to topple him during his nearly a decade of rule, first as a dictator and then as an elected president.

His rule was marked by a controversial move to make Islam the state religion of the officially secular Bangladesh.

Ershad was born in 1930 in Dinhat, a subdivision of Coochbehar district of present-day India's West Bengal to Mokbul Hossain and Mazida Khatun. His parents migrated from Dinhat to Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) in 1948 a year after the the India-Pakistan partition.

## Provision that criminalised beggary by transgender people removed from bill

**PAYAL BANERJEE NEW DELHI, JUL 14 (PTI):** A contentious provision that criminalised begging by transgender people has been removed from the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, which was cleared by the Union Cabinet last week.

Another provision that made transgender people subject themselves to certification by a district screening committee to be acknowledged as a transgender, has also been struck out.

The Section 19 under chapter VIII (Offences and Penalties) of the Bill earlier read as, "Whoever compels or entices a transgender person to indulge in the act of begging or other similar forms of forced or bonded labour other than any compulsory service for public purposes imposed by government" shall be punished with imprisonment not less than six months but which may extend to two years and with fine.

The word "begging" has now been omitted from the provision while the rest of the content remains the same, said a senior official from the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry.

The previous pro-

vision of the bill which criminalised begging had drawn flak from the community members who said it had long been the primary source of their income and bringing in such a legislation would take away their source of living without offering an alternative.

In August last year, the Delhi High Court quashed provisions in the law that made begging a punishable offence, saying criminalising begging is a wrong approach to deal with the underlying causes of the problem.

The act of begging in the national capital was made a criminal offence after the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959, was extended to Delhi by a Central government amendment in 1960.

According to sources in the ministry, the secretary last month held a meeting with members of the community and other stakeholders after which provisions were amended.

The provision that proposed that transgender people will be subject to certification by a District Screening Committee to be acknowledged as a transgender, has also been struck out.

According to the new provision, a transgender

person may make an application to the district magistrate to obtain a certificate of identity and the DM shall issue to the applicant an identity certificate as transgender person on the basis of the rules which will be formed once the Bill becomes an Act, the senior ministry official explained.

According to the community members, the clause that transgender people will be subject to certification by a District Screening Committee violated the Supreme Court verdict which states that the only thing needed to acknowledge a person's gender identity is their word for it.

The committee comprised chief medical officer, district social welfare officer, a psychologist or psychiatrist, a representative of transgender community and an officer of the appropriate government nominated by that government.

On Wednesday, the Union Cabinet approved the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, which provides a mechanism for social, economic and educational empowerment of transgenders by defining their identity

and rights to prohibit discrimination against them.

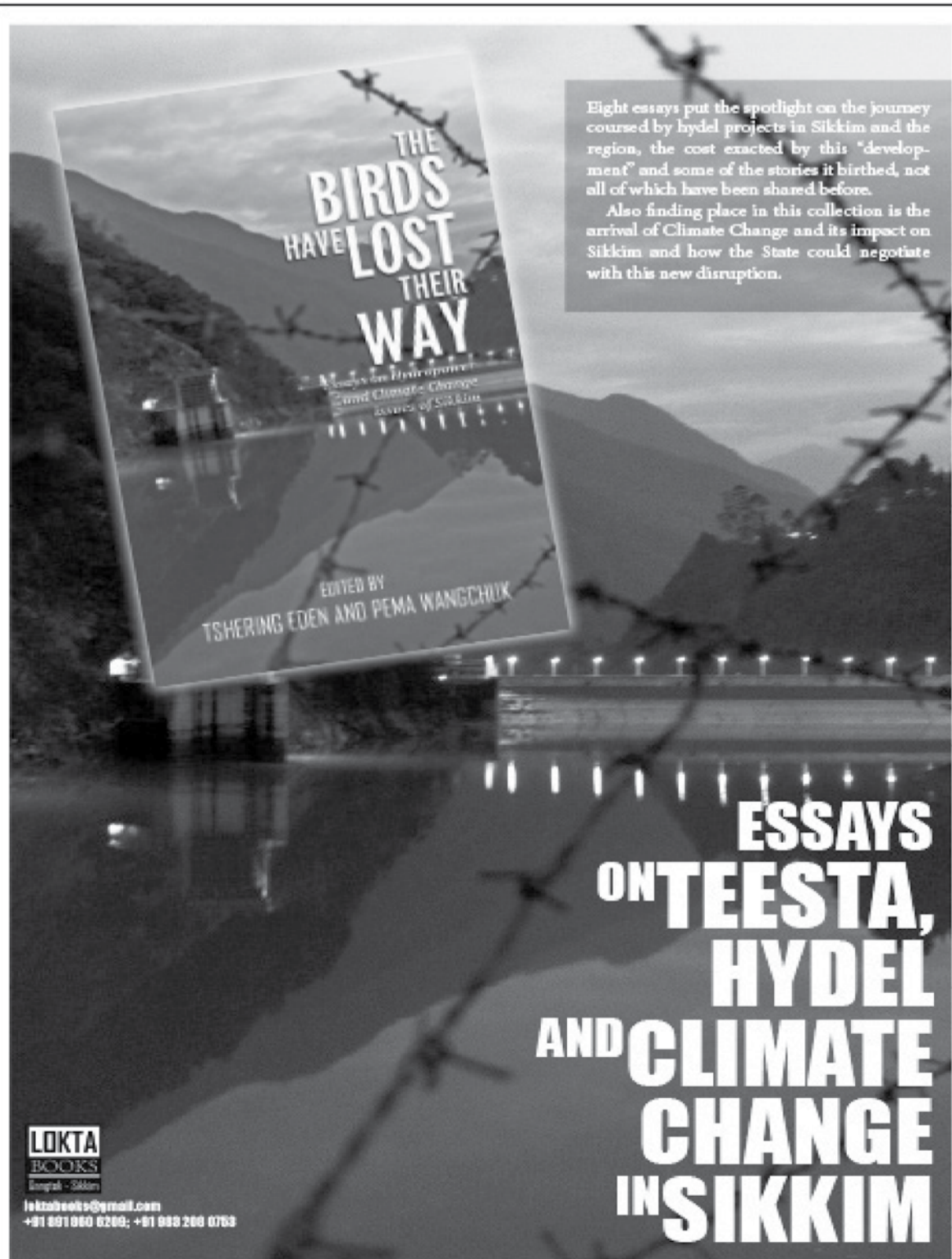
The bill will benefit transgender people, mitigate the stigma, discrimination and abuse against this marginalised section of the society, the ministry has said.

The bill will be introduced in the ensuing session of Parliament, officials said.

Passage of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, which aims to empower the community by defining and protecting their rights, is one of the priorities of the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry in the first 100 days agenda of the second term of the Narendra Modi government, an official source said.

The bill prohibits discrimination against a transgender person in education, employment and healthcare. It directs the Central and state governments to provide welfare schemes in these areas.

Offences like compelling a transgender person to beg, denial of access to a public place, physical and sexual abuse, etc. would attract up to two years' imprisonment and a fine.



## Atletico will take Griezmann grievance to FIFA: press



**MADRID, JUL 13 (AFP):** Atletico Madrid will challenge the amount Barcelona paid to acquire Antoine Griezmann's transfer, Spanish media reported on Saturday. Sports daily AS said Atletico will go to FIFA, the governing body of world football, to argue that Barcelona owe more than the 120 million euros (135 million) release clause deposited by a lawyer for the player on Friday.

AS wrote that Atletico wants to have both Barcelona and Griezmann punished. Contacted by AFP on Saturday, the club refused to comment. Atletico complained that Barcelona and Griezmann

negotiated the deal before the buy-out price dropped from 200 million euros at the start of July. "Atletico Madrid believes that the termination of the contract took place before the end of last season," the club said in a statement on Friday, adding that Griezmann had made that clear in his actions and words. Atletico said in a statement that Griezmann had gone to the headquarters of Spanish Football League to "unilaterally" break his contract after Barca met the release clause, and added they had already "begun appropriate procedures" to defend their "rights and legitimate interests".

## No stopping Vijender, wins 11th successive pro bout to continue unbeaten run

**Newark (USA), Jul 14 (PTI):** Indian boxing star Vijender Singh remained an unstoppable force, clinching a Technical Knockout over the more experienced Mike Snider on his debut in the US professional circuit here. In what was to be an eight-round super middleweight contest on Saturday night (early Sunday morning in India), the 33-year-old from Haryana prevailed in four rounds for his 11th consecutive victory in the circuit. "It was excellent getting back in the ring after a long time off. It's great to be here in the USA and to get the win. It was really exciting. I am really happy for my winning debut in USA," Vijender said after the bout. The triumph came in the second minute of the fourth round when Vijender cornered Snider with a flurry of straight punches, prompting the referee to stop the bout in the Indian's favour. "It took me about



four rounds to get back in the swing of things. I expected it to take two or three rounds, but it took me four. I felt good," said Vijender. This was Vijender's eighth knockout win in all. The 38-year-old Snider was flailing his arms without any significant force in his punches for most of the bout. Vijender, on the other hand, was sharp as ever despite fighting his first bout in more than a year.

The Indian never looked threatened by the local favourite and thwarted his feeble attacks quite easily. Snider came into the fight with an overall record of 13-5-3. Vijender, a former WBO Asia Pacific champion, recently fought and lost in the Indian general elections from the South Delhi seat. Vijender would be aiming to compete in two more fights this year after signing up with Hall of Famer Bob Arum's Top

Rank Promotions. "Top Rank has a bigger plan for me, and whatever they say is next, I'm fine with it," Vijender said. Vijender's British trainer Lee Beard, who has been with the Indian ever since he turned pro in 2015, lauded his commitment. "I am happy that after a long gap Vijender is finally back in good shape and action in the ring. His dedication helped him. We will now look forward to have

bigger plans for him," he said. Commenting on his defeat, Snider said, "Vijender is a good boxer and I believe I underestimated his experience and technique. It was his day and he won. I had never thought that I would lose in early rounds." Vijender's India promoters IOS Boxing's Managing Director Neerav Tomar said bigger fights await the former Olympic medallist in the next few months.

## India U-19 side face Oman and Jordan in exposure tour

**NEW DELHI, JUL 14 (PTI):** The Indian U-19 team will play against Jordan and Oman national U-19 sides in an exposure tour in Turkey, in preparation of the AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers later this year. The Indian U-19 team will face Oman U-19 and Jordan U-19 teams and play a friendly match against a local club Kocaelispor in Kartepe, Turkey between July 19 and 27. Head coach Floyd Pinto said, "We aim to play as many international matches as possible, the more we play the better get. The exposure tour to Turkey serves as a good platform to test ourselves against West Asian opposition." "We aim to solidify our playing style, narrow down on our core group of players as we inch closer to the AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers in November," he said. The Squad: Goalkeeper: Prabh-sukhan Singh Gill, Niraj Kumar, Lalbiakhula Jongte Defender: Jitendra Singh, Narendar, Gurkirat Singh, Sumit Rathi, Muhammad Rafi, Akash Mishra, Bikash Yumnam, Manish Chaudhary, Thoiba Singh Midfielder: Amarjit Singh, Jeakson Singh, Ninthoiganba Meetei, Givson Singh, Ricky Shabong, Sailo Lalchhanhima, Robin Yadav Forward: Harmanpreet Singh, Vikram Paratap Singh, Rohit Danu, Ridge Demello.

## India holds bright spot as ISRO eyes dark side of the Moon

**SRIHARIKOTA (AP), JUL 14 (PTI):** Aimed at taking a giant leap in its space programme, India will Monday launch its second Moon mission Chandrayaan-2 onboard its heavy-lift rocket GSLV-MkIII, nicknamed Baahubali, from the spaceport here, to land a rover near the unexplored Lunar Southern Pole. The lift-off of the three-component spacecraft weighing 3,850 kg and comprising an orbiter, the lander and the rover has been scheduled for 2.51 AM from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) here.

Eleven years after its successful first Lunar mission, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch the Rs 978 crore Chandrayan-2 onboard Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle GSLV-MkIII on a voyage which will then take 54 days to accomplish the task of landing on the Moon through meticulously planned orbital phases. After a full dress rehearsal last week, the countdown for the mission commenced Sunday and scientists were involved in propellant filling, ISRO officials said. "The launch countdown of GSLV-MkIII-M1/ Chandrayaan-2 commenced today (Sunday) at 0651 hrs IST," ISRO said in its latest update Sunday. Billed as the most complex and prestigious mission ever undertaken by the ISRO since its inception, Chandrayaan-2 will make India the fourth country to soft land on the lunar surface after Russia, the United States and China. Indicating the chal-

lenges involved in soft landing, which will feature a series of critical manoeuvres by scientists, ISRO Chairman K Sivan said they will undergo about "15 minutes of terror (filled moments)." After offering prayers at the hill shrine of Lord Venkateshwara at Tirumala Saturday, Sivan said all preparations for Chandrayaan-2 were on for the launch scheduled at 2.51 am on July 15. "Chandrayaan-2 is the next leap in technology as we attempt to soft land close to South Pole of Moon. The soft landing is extremely complex and we will experience approximately 15 minutes of terror," he said

ISRO, which has planned for the landing around September 6, said the mission aims at going where no other nation has so far forayed - the Lunar South Pole and seek to improve understanding of the Moon which could lead to discoveries that will benefit India and humanity as a whole. The Chandrayaan-2 has 13 payloads in total with eight of them in the orbiter, three payloads in Vikram and two in Pragyan. Five payloads are from India, three from Europe, two from the US and one from Bulgaria. A Laser Retroreflector Array (LRA) of NASA is among the payloads and is aimed at understanding dynamics of Earth's Moon system and deriving clues on Lunar interior. President Ram Nath Kovind will witness the launch at Sriharikota. About 16 minutes after the lift-off, the GSLV MkIII will inject Chan-



drayan-2 into 170 x 40400 kms Earth orbit. From then onwards, the mission will witness a series of manoeuvres by scientists to carry out different phases of the mission. For the first 17 days from lift-off, the spacecraft will be in Earth-bound phase before its orbit is finally raised to over 1.05 lakh km. After that, it will be nudged into the Lunar Transfer Trajectory taking it to the proximity of Moon in the next two days. Then gradually over the next few days it will be brought to 100 X 100 km circular orbit when the lander will separate and after another few days of orbiting it will make a soft landing at a chosen place on Lunar surface. Through Chandrayaan-2, in which home grown technology is deployed, scientists aim to expand India's footprint in space, shed light on unexplored section of Moon-- the South Pole region, enhance knowledge about space, stimulate advancement

of technology and promote global alliances. It is first expedition by ISRO to attempt a soft landing on the lunar surface equipped with "home grown" technology. It would also be the first mission to explore the lunar terrain. But why the South Polar region of the Moon? According to ISRO, the lunar South Pole is an interesting surface area which remains in shadow than North pole. There is a possibility of the presence of water in permanently shadowed areas around it, the agency said, adding craters in the South Pole region have cold traps and contain fossil record of the early solar system. The lander 'Vikram', named after father of Indian space research programme Dr Vikram A Sarabhai, carrying the rover 'Pragyan', will be landed in a high plain between two craters at a latitude of about 70 degree South of the moon. Then the 27-kg 'Pragyan' meaning 'wisdom' in Sanskrit and a six-wheeled robotic vehicle,

will set out on its job of collecting information on lunar surface. The rover can travel up to half a km leveraging solar energy and both Pragyan and Vikram have a mission life of one Lunar day, which approximately equals 14 Earth days. ISRO officials said the challenges involved in the Moon landing were identifying trajectory accurately; taking up deep space communication; trans Lunar injection, orbiting around the moon, taking up soft landing on the moon surface and facing extreme temperatures and vacuum. Scientists have pegged to make the landing of lander 'Vikram' on September 6 and then undertake a series of complex manoeuvres comprising "rough braking" and "fine braking." A safe site free of hazards for landing would be decided based on pictures sent back by the camera onboard the lander and after touchdown the rover will carry out experiments for 14 Earth days.

## Neymar says he's fit, posts mischievous Barcelona video

Sao Paulo, July 14 (AFP): Neymar says he has recovered "almost 100 per cent" from the ankle injury that ruled him out of Brazil's victorious Copa America campaign. The world's most expensive player was speaking Saturday in Sao Paulo ahead of his be-

lated return to his club Paris Saint-Germain on Monday. PSG were upset at Neymar's no-show at the resumption of training last week, an absence that fuelled speculation of his possible departure back to Barcelona. And later Saturday

he added fuel to the fire over a possible return to the Camp Nou when he posted on Instagram a mischievous 10-second video of him, a Barcelona shirt, his father, and a quote from the Bible: "No weapon turned against you will prosper." (Isaiah Chapter 54, Verse 17).

Both the player and his father had insisted last week he had prior agreement from PSG to stay in Brazil to help his foundation, the Neymar Institute. Interviewed on the Parida Grande beach, where he took part in a five-side tournament organised by his charity, he

ducked any questions regarding his future at PSG. When he missed last Monday's first training session PSG issued a statement declaring they would take "appropriate action" against the star who joined them from Barca in 2017 for 222 million euros (252 million).

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### Why Megan Rapinoe is America's badass sweetheart

EDWARD HELMORE  
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When the celebrations die down, Team USA will disperse to their regular season teams in the National Women's Soccer League. For team co-captains Megan Rapinoe and striker Alex Morgan that means Reign FC in Washington state and Orlando Pride in Florida, respectively. Brimming with confidence, Rapinoe is known for her agile style of play as a midfielder and winger, a skillset that has taken the team from international triumph to international triumph. With the World Cup battle won, Rapinoe, Morgan, forward Carli Lloyd and defender Becky Sauerbrunn filed a lawsuit against the US Soccer Federation claiming that they should be paid the same as the men's team for international games.

While Rapinoe's place as a US women soccer superstar is assured - she's been described as her generation's Muhammad Ali - she is always careful to attribute her success to the team.

"This group ... is just so badass," said Rapinoe during last week's parade. "There is nothing that can faze this group. We're chilling. We've got tea-sipping. We've got celebrations. We've got pink hair and purple hair. We've got tattoos and dreadlocks. We've got white girls and black girls and everything in between. Straight girls and gay girls."

It won't be long until we see them again. Next summer, in fact, at the Tokyo Olympics.

#### THE CELEBRATION

The team, with Rapinoe in the forefront, didn't stop partying for days after their 2-0 victory over the Netherlands in the final on 7 July. They stumbled off the jet home, singing We Are the Champions, waving their arms and spilling their drinks. "Brought you back a little something. World Champs, baby!" the team tweeted. The players were given a ticker-tape parade down Wall Street, during which Rapinoe refused to sing the national anthem. Goalkeeper Ashlyn Harris posted a video on Instagram of Rapinoe clutching the trophy and saying: "I deserve this! I deserve this. Everything!"

But it was Rapinoe's goal celebration during the tournament that sealed the love (or loathing) for the 34-year-old. Fans turned her power pose into a Twitter meme. Rapinoe told ABC's Good Morning America: "I guess I'm looking at myself as a performer and trying to entertain. It's sort of a funny playful pose."

Good Morning Britain presenter Piers Morgan invited scorn when he criticised Rapinoe's "arrogance" under a picture of her pose. "Try winning it first, Ms Rapinoe - then inform us of your latest tiresome political activism," he tweeted.

#### THE ACTIVISM

Rapinoe's political profile was given a stratospheric boost by her team's win. A self-described "walking protest", she is exuberantly out about being gay and is at the forefront of a drive for equal pay for female and male players - the squad

is greeted with chants of "U-S-A! Equal pay!" wherever it goes. In March she was one of the 28-strong group of US women's team players who filed a gender discrimination lawsuit against the US Soccer Federation. The case is still going on.

Her outspoken eloquence on a range of causes, including women's rights and LGBTQ issues, is in marked contrast to the many monosyllabic or media-trained sports stars. With partner Sue Bird, an American-Israeli pro basketball player, she is active in the effort to normalise gay relationships in sports. The couple posed naked for ESPN's Body Issue in 2018. Asked how it felt to lead the US team, Rapinoe replied, "Go gays!" She continued: "You can't win a championship without gays on your team. It's never been done before. Ever." She also showed solidarity with Colin Kaepernick's protest against racial injustice in 2016 by taking a knee during the national anthem at games, including an international match against Holland.

#### THE WHITE HOUSE

Rapinoe has had numerous run-ins with the president. She has made it clear she has no time for a presidential bid but, according to one poll, she'd win. In an interview in June, Rapinoe said she would not visit "the fucking White House" if her team won the World Cup. Trump responded by tweeting: "I am a big fan of the American Team, and Women's Soccer, but Megan should WIN first before she TALKS! Finish the job!"

# Macron showcases Europe military prowess at Paris parade

**Paris, Jul 14 (AFP):** French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday sought to showcase European military co-operation in the annual Bastille Day parade at a time of growing tensions between Europe and the United States.

Key EU leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, joined Macron to watch the parade down the Champs-Élysées that marks the July 14, 1789 storming of the Bastille fortress in Paris in the French Revolution.

Over 4,000 members of the armed forces, including regiments from other European armies, marched down the famed cobbles of the avenue in a tradition that dates back to the aftermath of World War I.

Army dogs festooned with medals, members of France's celebrated Foreign Legion and mounted cavalry in glittering uniforms brandishing ceremonial sabres all paraded in front of the high-ranking guests.

Meanwhile, French inventor and entrepreneur Franky Zapata showed off his futuristic flyboard, soaring above the Champs Élysées and the assembled leaders.

Standing in an open-top command car alongside France's chief of staff General Francois Lecoin-

tre, Macron inspected the waiting forces and waved to the crowds.

But in a reminder of the domestic troubles the president has faced in the last months, he met jeers and whistles from supporters of the "yellow vest" movement who have staged weekly protests against the government.

Two prominent members of the movement Jerome Rodrigues and Maxime Nicolle, were both detained by the police, sources told AFP.

Closer European defence cooperation has been one of Macron's key foreign policy aims and the president shows no sign of wavering despite growing political turbulence in Germany and Britain's looming exit from the European Union.

At the 2017 parade, Macron's guest of honour was the freshly-inaugurated US President Donald Trump as the young French leader sought to take the initiative in forming a bond with his counterpart.

But since then ties between Trump and Macron have soured over the US pullout from the Paris climate accord and the Iran nuclear deal, as well as France's new law for a tax on digital giants, mostly US companies.

Macron, who pushed



the idea of the European Intervention Initiative (E2I) to undertake missions outside of existing structures like NATO, says European defence cooperation is crucial.

"Never, since the end of World War II has Europe been so important," Macron said in a statement to mark July 14.

He said the aim of the E2I was to "act together and reinforce our capacity to act together," adding: "Our security and our defence pass through Europe." Forces from all nine countries taking part alongside France in the E2I -- including Britain and Germany -- were represented at the parade.

In a sign of France's ambition to be a leading modern military power under Macron, the president Saturday an-

nounced the creation of a national space force command that will eventually be part of the air force.

Highlighting France's continued commitment to NATO, the alliance's secretary general Jens Stoltenberg was also present at the parade.

A German A400M transport plane and a Spanish C130 took part in fly-bys, as well as two British Chinook helicopters.

The Chinooks are a major symbol of British-French defence co-operation even as Brexit looms, with Britain deploying three of the aircraft and 100 personnel for France's operation in the African Sahel region.

Outgoing British Prime Minister Theresa May had been expected to attend but Britain was

instead represented by senior cabinet minister David Lidington, the Elysee said.

Also present were members of the 5,000-strong Franco-German Brigade (BFA), which was created in 1989 as a symbol of postwar unity between France and Germany, and celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

Merkel, who is battling to keep her grand coalition together at home, was again under close scrutiny after she suffered three episodes of shaking at official events in recent weeks.

Some 4,300 members of the armed forces, 196 vehicles, 237 horses, 69 planes and 39 helicopters were mobilised for the event in the heart of the French capital.

## France's Macron announces creation of a space force command

**PARIS, JUL 13 (AFP):** French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday announced the creation of a new national military space force command that would eventually be part of his country's air force.

The declaration -- made on the eve of France's Bastille Day national celebrations that feature a military parade down Paris's Champs-Élysées -- mirrors an initiative in the US championed by President Donald Trump.

Macron told military brass gathered for a traditional pre-Bastille Day reception that the new space command would be created in September and aims to "ensure the development and reinforcement of our spacial abilities".

He called the renewed military focus on space a "true national security is-



sue" and said it would go to "better protecting our satellites".

The "indispensable" outlay needed to see through the space command "will be decided," he promised.

France's declared interest in boosting its military readiness in space follows increased spending and interest in the area by the United States, China and Russia.

Observers see military activities -- including spy satellites, location tracing and jamming, communications

and cyber attacks -- increasingly being set up in orbit around Earth.

France notably has a 2019-2025 military spending plan that allocates 3.6 billion euros (USD 4 billion) to defence in space.

That includes the renewal of the France's CSO observation and Syracuse communication satellites, the launch of three CERES electromagnetic-monitoring satellites, and the modernisation of a spatial radar surveillance system called GRAVES.

## Major 7.3 quake hits remote Maluku in eastern Indonesia

**LABUHA (INDONESIA) JUL 14 (AFP):** A major 7.3-magnitude earthquake hit the remote Maluku islands in eastern Indonesia Sunday, sending panicked residents running into the streets, but no tsunami warning was issued.

The shallow quake struck about 165 kilometres (100 miles) south-southwest of the town of Ternate in North Maluku province at 6:28 pm (0928 GMT), according to the US Geological Survey.

"The earthquake was quite strong, sending residents to flee outside. They are panicking and many are now waiting on the roadside," said local disaster mitigation official Mansur, who like

many Indonesians goes by one name.

Officials were assessing the situation but there were no immediate reports of casualties, he told AFP.

In the town of Labuha, one of the closest to the epicentre, panicked residents took to motorcycles in a bid to flee to higher ground, according to an AFP photographer in town when the earthquake hit.

Local disaster official Ihsan Subur told Metro TV that no damage or casualties had been reported there so far, but residents took to the streets and many evacuated to higher ground. "Electricity went of during the earthquake, but now it's back to normal," Subur said, adding that at least seven big af-

tershocks were felt after the initial quake.

The province was also hit by a 6.9-magnitude tremor last week.

Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.

Last year, a 7.5-magnitude quake and a subsequent tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi island killed more than 2,200 people, with another thousand declared missing.

On December 26, 2004, a devastating 9.1-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Sumatra and triggered a tsunami that killed 220,000 across the Indian Ocean region, including around 170,000 in Indonesia.

## International arbitration court imposes USD 5.97 bn penalty on cash-strapped Pak

**ISLAMABAD, JUL 14 (PTI):** In a jolt to cash-strapped Pakistan, an international arbitration court has imposed a whopping USD 5.976 billion penalty - one of the biggest in its history - on Islamabad for the unlawful denial of a mining lease to a company for the Reko Diq project in 2011.

The Tethyan Copper Company (TCC) - a joint venture between Chilean mining company Antofagasta and Canada's Barrick Gold Corporation - had filed claims for international arbitration before the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) in 2012 after the Balochistan government rejected a leasing request from the company.

In its 700-page ruling against Pakistan, the tribunal on Friday awarded a USD 4.08 billion penalty and USD 1.87 billion in interests, Dawn reported.

The company had claimed USD 11.43 billion in damages. The case between the Pakistan government and the company continued for seven years.

Reko Diq, which means sandy peak in the



Balochi language, is a small town in Chagai district in Balochistan, close to the border with Iran and Afghanistan. The Reko Diq mine is famous for its vast gold and copper reserves and is believed to have the world's fifth largest gold deposit.

The TCC completed an extensive and detailed bankable feasibility study establishing the basis for mine development at Reko Diq during August 2010 and submitted a mining lease application in February 2011, along with an environmental and social impact assessment report, the paper said.

The project stopped in November 2011, when the Balochistan government summarily rejected the application by the TCC's local operating subsidiary for a

mining lease in respect of Reko Diq.

The then Supreme Court chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry had in January 2013 declared the Reko Diq agreement void and in conflict with the country's laws.

The ICSID's ruling is a major setback for Pakistan, which is at a "critical juncture" where it needs an ambitious and bold set of reforms, according to the Washington-based International Monetary Fund (IMF) which agreed to give a USD 6 billion bailout package to the cash-strapped country.

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday issued orders for the formation of a commission to investigate and fix responsibility for the massive loss borne by Pakistan in the Reko Diq

case, the Express Tribune reported.

"The prime minister has directed formation of a commission to investigate into the reasons as to how Pakistan ended up in this predicament; who were responsible for making the country suffer such a loss and what are the lessons learnt, so that mistakes made are not repeated in the future, said a statement issued by the attorney general's office on Sunday.

A thorough internal review of this long-standing arbitration shall also be conducted in the due course, it added.

"This [attorney general's] office and other stakeholders, particularly the provincial Government of Balochistan, are studying the Award and reflecting upon its financial and legal implications," the statement added.

Cash-strapped Pakistan has so far received billions in financial aid packages from friendly countries like China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE during the current fiscal year. Last month, Pakistan secured a bailout package of USD 3 billion from oil-rich Qatar.

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**KANG DANIEL TO MAKE COMEBACK: Mark your calendars for 25 July, because Kang Daniel will officially make his solo debut on that day! The 22-year-old K-pop star unveiled the release date of his solo debut on his official website yesterday, along with what seems to be a new stage name for the performer: Daniel K. Fans were so excited at the prospect of the star's imminent release that the website reportedly crashed within minutes of the update. According to soompi, three internationally renowned choreographers worked with Kang on the solo debut, including Chris Brown's choreographer, Antoine Troupe. CEO of Devine Channel, Kei Lim, is the main producer of the singer's debut album.**

## John Carpenter to write new Joker comic book for DC

**LOS ANGELES, JUL 13 (PTI):** Filmmaker John Carpenter is penning a DC comic book about iconic villain The Joker.

Titled "The Joker: Year of the Villian", the book will feature artwork by Philip Tan and Marc Deering.

Anthony Burch, writer of the video games "League of Legends" and "Borderlands 2", will co-write the 40-page issue with Carpenter, a statement by DC Comics said.

The two have previously collaborated on six-issue miniseries "Big Trouble in Little China Old Man Jack".

The official plotline of the book read, "Now a human-alien hybrid, Lex Luthor has made his appeal to the world, asking its citizens to embrace doom and give in once and for all to evil, humanity's true nature. In exchange, he will grant them the tools to ascend to their ultimate selves." "While some DC villains (and heroes) are willing to hear what 'Apex Lex' has to offer, the Clown Prince of Crime isn't going to wait around until Lex gets to him. This puts The Joker on a mission to get his swagger back in a world gone bad by out-badding everyone else, proving that the greatest evil is always the one that leaves them laughing," it added.

"The Joker is the greatest villain in comics. I'm proud to be reunited with Anthony on this project," Carpenter said.

Co-writer Burch said, "I'm excited beyond words to be writing for Gotham's greatest villain. I hope the Joker's exploits make you laugh, shudder, and grow nauseous all at once." The book is scheduled to be released on October 2, 2019.

## YouTube star Gigi Gorgeous marries Nats Getty

**YouTube Star Gigi Gorgeous is married!**

The 27-year-old Canadian beauty influencer and activist, who became even more famous in 2013 after coming out as a transgender woman, has wed Nats Getty.

Gigi, aka Giselle Loren Lazzarato, wed the 26-year-old model, fashion designer and LGBTQ+ activist, aka Natalia Williams, on Friday in a beachfront wedding at the Rosewood Miramar Beach in Montecito, California. Gigi sported a white strapless custom Michael Costello ball gown and cathedral-length veil at the ceremony, while Nats sported a long white suit she designed from her own label, Strike



Oil, People reported.

Gigi's father David Lazzarato walked her down the aisle as an instrumental version of Céline Dion's 1996 ballad "Because You Loved Me" played, as seen in a video posted by guest and fellow YouTube star Trisha Paytas.

"My daughter's getting married today!" he said excitedly hours earlier, as seen in a video posted on Gigi's Instagram Story.

### Virgo:

The full moon is a time of 'fullness'. If you wake up feeling overwhelmed, know that you aren't going crazy. You're just synching with Mother moon. Word for the wise: allow yourself to feel your emotions in their entirety. This is the secret to releasing that which no longer serves you. In the realm of love and relationships, temporary separation may be on the cards. Be patient, Virgo. If the love you share is real, they will find their way back into your Universe.

### Libra:

Have you been dancing with your demons yet again? What the Universe wants you to remember: you are in the midst of a massive ascension. Learn to use the power of manifestation to create a beautiful reality for yourself. Your mind is the most powerful tool at your disposal. The words you use when in conversation both with yourself and others are just as important. Be kind. Be gentle. You are a work-in-progress.

### Scorpio:

Turn your wounds into wisdom, Scorpio. Who says you have to make your way to a better

# For me, story is above my character: Ayushmann

**MUMBAI, JUL 14 (PTI):** Ayushmann Khurrana says for him more than his character, the story of a film and the message it leaves behind, is a bigger priority.

The 34-year-old actor said he does not mind playing an immoral character if the plot does justice with the fate of the part.

"I would love to do a variety of scripts and characters. If the story resonates with me, I would definitely do a character which is not moral.

"But at the same time, it has to be a message in the end, against a character or maybe whatever that character needs to learn eventually. For me the story matters above my character. I am obsessed with good stories," Ayushmann told PTI.

The actor, who has made a mark for himself courtesy his unique choice of films, believes every performer has "different aspirations".

"It also really depends on what your priorities are. Some scripts are to prove your acting abilities, some scripts are there to have a certain social responsibility and as I said everyone has different aspirations in life, so, being progressive and regressive is a very subjective thing," he added.

Ayushmann has struck a chord with the audience, but the actor said there is no formula to maintain the connect.

"Anybody can go wrong. Whatever is relevant right now may be irrelevant five years



from now. Our industry is ever-changing and our society is ever-evolving so I cannot be cocky and pompous enough to say that I have a great script sense. I hope my gut supports me in future as well," he said.

His latest "Article 15" has turned out to be the second-biggest opener of his career after "Badhaai Ho!" and the actor is elated with the overwhelming response from both the audience and critics.

The Anubhav Sinha-directed film, which released on June 28, has earned over Rs 70 crore worldwide.

"Commercial success is really important but at the same time, it has to be a mix of both critical and commercial acclaim. Credibility is the key for any artiste."

Ayushmann will be seen next in "Dream Girl" and "Bala" - releasing this year while his other film "Gulabo Sitabo" with Shoojit Sircar will come out next year.

## Christoph Waltz to reprise his super-villain Blofeld in 'Bond 25'

**LOS ANGELES, JUL 13 (PTI):** Celebrated actor Christoph Waltz is set to return as antagonist Ernst Stavro Blofeld in the upcoming "Bond 25".

While the iconic character has been previously essayed by actors including Donald Pleasence and Max von Sydow, Waltz first played the role in 2015's "Spectre".

According to Variety, the movie is currently being filmed in London and Waltz is among a number of actors returning to reprise their roles, including star Daniel Craig, Ralph Fiennes, Lea Seydoux, Naomie Harris, Jeffrey Wright, Ben Whishaw and Rory Kinnear.

Cary Joji Fukunaga is directing the James Bond film, which also features Rami Malek as the main villain along side new entrants Ana De Armas, Lashana Lynch, David Dencik, Billy Magnussen and Dali Benssalah.

The currently untitled movie, which is Craig's fifth and final outing as the suave British spy, was previously filming in Jamaica.

The film is set to bow on April 8, 2020.



## Shah Rukh Khan to produce horror series for Netflix

**MUMBAI, JUL 14 (PTI):** Superstar Shah Rukh Khan will co-produce a horror series for streaming service Netflix.

According to sources, it is a horror series titled 'Betaal', written and directed by Patrick Graham, co-directed by Nikhil Mahajan. It will be co-produced by Gaurav Verma, Red Chillies Entertainment and Netflix.

Graham had earlier helmed Radhika Apte-starrer "Ghoul" for Netflix. This series is reportedly going to feature Vineet Kumar Singh and Aahana Kumra among others.

The official announcement will be made soon. This will mark as the third piece of content to be produced by Red Chillies Entertainment for Netflix, after "Bard of Blood", featuring Emraan Hashmi, and "Class of 83" with Bobby Deol.

"Class of 83" is directed by Atul Sabharwal. The film tells the story of an upright policeman-turned-police instructor whose students grapple with the complexities of honour, morals and devotion towards their nation.

Recently, Netflix had an-

nounced that "Bard of Blood", will premiere on its platform on September 27.

The seven-episode show is based on Bilal Siddiqi's bestselling book of the same name.

The official logline of the show reads, "The story is about four Indian intelligence officers belonging to the Indian Intelligence Wing (IIW) who are compromised, before they can relay an important piece of information to India. They get captured and are about to be decapitated. The stakes are high."

### Aries:

It's not you versus them. It's the two of you against the problem. Think and work like an A-team, Aries. If the foundation you have laid is strong, you'll find a way to survive this storm. But don't forget to resolve the conflict in your own head first. What you need to keep in mind as you move forward: love is not a battlefield.

### Taurus:

On the cards for this weekend: love, harmony and togetherness. Spend more time with the soul family. Spend more time in the company of those who make you feel like 'home'. For some of you, this could be a time of positive changes on the domestic front. PS: Let your home transform into a haven of good vibes.

Tip: Expect positive changes on the domestic front.

### Gemini:

Ah, the classic communication gap! Why are you shying away from sharing your side of the story, Gemini? Daily reminder: you matter and so do your feelings. If you don't have clarity on how to put things forth, step back.

Retreating into your space of silence will help you find the answers you need right now. Tip: You have the permission to express your side of the story.

### Cancer:

You know what's sexy? Hustling hard and staying focused. Blinders on, Cancer. Refuse to budge until your mission is accomplished. The success you deserve will come to you in due course of time. It's amazing how much you will have shifted by the end of the year. But for now, you're being asked to cultivate patience.

Tip: Hustle hard and stay focused. You are in the process of manifesting your best life.

### Leo:

A wish is being granted, Leo. The Universe wants to experience cosmic union with your divine counterpart—somebody who nourishes your soul and holds a mirror for you to see light within. Single lions, get ready to meet somebody with serious potential. Has a loved one been trying to play Cupid for a while? There's no harm in considering your options.