



‘BAD MAN’ GULSHAN GROVER HAS “GOOD MAN’S” HEART, SAY FRIENDS

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SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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CM salutes soldiers on Kargil Diwas

GANGTOK, 25 JUL (IPR): Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang paid tribute and homage to soldiers who sacrificed their lives during the Kargil war. In his message on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, the CM says, “We are safe because we have our Army keeping us protected each and every moment.”

“On this day, the 26th of July, let us all come together and take inspiration from the valour of our soldiers who took part in operation Vijay to inculcate in us a sense of always contributing towards the development and growth of our state and nation. We salute and forever remain indebted to our brave soldiers and their families,” he adds.

He also conveyed his best wishes to the Indian Army on this memorable day and extended his heartfelt gratitude for their selfless service to the nation and in maintaining peace and security of the country.

Kargil Vijay Diwas is celebrated on 26 July every year in honour of Kargil War and marks the successful completion of Operation Vijay. The Kargil war was fought for more than sixty days in 1999.

Bikash Basnett elevated as Confidential Secretary

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

Confidential Assistant to the Chief Minister, Bikash Basnett has been elevated to the post of Confidential Secretary to the CM, as per sources in the Chief Minister's Office. The post, it is informed, carries Cabinet rank status.

MG Kiran appointed

member SHRC

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

Former Secretary to the Government of Sikkim, MG Kiran, was today appointed member of the Sikkim State Human Rights Commission. As per a notification issued by the Home Department, the position comes into retrospective effect from 10 June 2019.

Mr Kiran shall hold the office for a term of five years or until he attains the seventy whichever is earlier.

The post carries the same status, salary and perks as are admissible to the State Chief Information Commissioner. His salary will be minus the pension he drawing, the notification adds.

Administrative reshuffle continues

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

The State Government today effected around 60 transfers in the senior administration. Officials from the Under Secretary to the Special Secretary ranks were reshuffled across the departments. Transfers were also seen in the SDM, Additional DC and Revenue Officer levels.

SECURE Himalaya project to be launched in Sikkim

27 villages of North and West Sikkim identified for pilot phase

GANGTOK, 25 JUL (IPR):

The Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department, Government of Sikkim in collaboration with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India and UNDP-India held a project inception workshop for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded project SECURE Himalaya at the conference hall of Chintan Bhawan today.

Initiated in 2017, the project aims to ensure conservation of locally and globally significant biodiversity land and forest resources in high

Himalayan ecosystem spread over four states of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Sikkim.

In Sikkim, the project was launched in 2018 and it strives to initiate a landscape level conservation approach in the conservation of snow leopard and its habitat while ensuring sustainable livelihoods for communities inhabiting the selected areas of North and West districts of Sikkim.

Forest Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia was present as the chief guest. Also present were Zilla Adhakshya, West District, Devika Subba,



Zilla Adhakshya, North District, Namday Lepcha and PRI representatives from North Sikkim.

The workshop also saw the attendance of Principal Secretary-cum-Principal Chief Conservator of Forest

(PCCF), ML Shrivastava, Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF), BP Pradhan, Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP-India, SK Khanduri, Officers and representatives from Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department, Government of Sikkim, UNDP- India, SECURE Himalaya project, professors and students from various institutions.

The workshop began with a short video message prepared by communications-cum-design partner Echostream, Gangtok introducing the background of the project. In his opening address, CCF, Mr Pradhan welcomed the dignitaries and the participants present. He gave a brief introduction of the SE-

CURE Himalaya project highlighting its main aim and objectives. Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP India, Dr SK Khanduri spoke on the genesis of the project. He said that the snow leopard has been identified as one of the 17 endangered species in India and SECURE Himalaya project will focus mainly on conserving the habitats within the snow leopard ranges in Sikkim while also enhancing lives and livelihoods of local communities. He further informed that those areas that are outside the protected area but are part of the habitat will also be covered under the project.

He spoke on the four main components of the project which are as follows: Effective management

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From opposition to ruling party, Navraj Gurung talks about SKM's victory

NITESH R PRADHAN

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

General secretary (Social Media) of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, Navraj Gurung, has been an active and vocal member of the party. He was recently accused of hauling insults at the former Chief Minister, Pawan Chamling inside the State Legislative Assembly on the first day of the new government's Assembly session.

In this interview with Summit-Times, Mr Gurung talks about the accusation, his party's victory in the 2019 elections, his views about the previous SDF government and more.

Q.1 Congratulations on SKM's victory in the recent elections. How is the party viewing this win?

Ans: Thank you, but I consider it more as the people's victory, as it is the people who wanted change or परिवर्तन the most and Sikkim Krantikari Morcha was only spearheading it on behalf of the people.

Now, about our first time in power, I would say the opportunity is God sent and SKM under the able leadership of Jan Nayak Prem Singh Tamang (Golay) will outshine its predecessor in terms of good governance.

The SKM Government led by Shri Golay has in these few weeks, taken exemplary steps and shown great maturity in governance.

Q 2) What do you think of the voting pattern this time?

Ans: The voting pattern of 2019 is very interesting. The urban areas saw an increase in support for SKM, however, support for SKM in rural areas didn't change much and was much less than what we expected. Now, this goes to show that appeasement politics is stronger in rural areas compared to urban towns.

This also goes to show that manifestos and policies, along with the conduct shown by the political party, its workers and leaders makes a difference in urban areas of Sikkim.

Q.3) What are the advantages of a having a new government?

Ans: Well, in a democracy it is not good for a Government to remain in power for a long time. When this happens, the individual ego gets high and those in power tend to think that what they do is right. Nepotism and dictatorial attitude becomes a part of their character.

In Sikkim's context many advantages have come along with the change in Government. Firstly, the state budget has come down as the previous Government was unable to submit Utilization certificates for the projects implemented in Sikkim. Now with a new Govern-



ment, the center is ready to pump money to the state but on conditions that no misuse of public money takes place. So Sikkim has got a new start when it comes to the financial aspect. Last but not the least, with regular change in the government, there will be healthy competition and one Government will try and do better than the previous government. So it helps in bringing about positive growth both economically and governance wise.

Q.5) What work of the previous government should be reviewed?

Ans: We feel there are many policies and schemes that need to be reviewed and amended. For Eg:

(i) CMRHM: The Chief Minister's Rural Housing (CMHRM) Scheme is again a good scheme but it needs major review. The present CMRHM scheme has no Operational Guidelines and thus there is nepotism in allotment of CM-RHM model houses. We need proper Operational Guidelines to be passed by the cabinet; once that is done, those eligible will automatically qualify for the scheme and this will also ensure that only genuine beneficiaries get benefited by the scheme.

(ii) ORGANIC: The organic policy was a visionary step, but the government's detachment from ground reality ruined its implementation. Just for the heck of declaring Sikkim an Organic state, the Government banned vegetables from outside the state and didn't even bother to study and understand the repercussions of such a ban. Although Sikkim was the first to implement the organic farming policy in India, it has not benefitted farmers in any way.

We feel that a review of the state's organic policy is a must and the policy should benefit the farmers which is not the case here. Secondly, data submitted

turn to pg02

Sikkim Police and SHSC qualify for Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial I-Day tourney

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JUL:

Sikkim Police and Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club have qualified for the Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial Independence Day Football Tournament 2019.

In the last matches played in the Pre-Independence Day Football Qualifying round at Paljor Stadium on Thursday,

Sikkim Police outplayed State Sports Academy 4-2 to qualify for the I-Day tournament.

In the other qualifying match played today, SHSC beat Kumar Sporting Club of Rongneck 3-1 to secure its place in the tournament.

Sikkim Football Association gave direct entry to the Sikkim Premier League champion, Sikkim United Football Club,

and runners-up Sikkim Aakraman Football Club and organised qualifying matches for the six remaining premier division clubs of the State.

The qualifying round was participated in by State Sports Academy, Unicorn Football Club, Sikkim Police, Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club, Boys Club and Ku-

mar Sporting Football Club, Rongneck.

Sir Tashi Namgyal Memorial Independence Day Football Tournament will feature four home teams, Sikkim United Football Club, Sikkim Aakraman Football Club, Sikkim Police and Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club while four teams will be invited from outside the State.

ENTRY FREE

Screening of BTS performances

Games & Activities

- Dance Offs
- Cham Cham
- Chinese Whispers with a Twist!
- Quiz Competition
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Date: 27th July 2019

Venue: Thuendel, Sichey.

Time: 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Use our official hashtag #ouryouniverse

Awareness on Scholarship Scheme for North District

MANGAN, 25 JUL (IPR): The Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare Department, (SJE & WD) Government of Sikkim organized a day-long Awareness Programme on Scholarship Scheme for North District here at the conference hall of North District Zilla Panchayat Bhawan today.

The programme was attended by District Collector, North, Rinzing Chewang Bhutia, who was accompanied by Additional Secretary, Benu Gurung, (SJE & WD), Joint Director, Norden Lepcha, SJE & WD, Deputy Secretary, Tshering Dorjee Bhutia, District Child Protection Officer, North, Wendy Lepcha and Welfare Inspector from the district. The programme also had the presence of Panchayats, School Heads, Teachers and officers from different departments.

Additional Secretary, Ms Gurung in her ad-



dress, she informed that the main purpose of the programme was to sensitize and disseminate the various provision of the scholarship such as Post Matric scholarship to ST, SC and Central OBC students, Dr BR Ambedkar Post Matric Scholarship to EBC (State OBC) students, Pre Matric Scholarship to ST, SC, OBC and Minority students, Post Matric scholarship to Minority students, Merit-cum-means based scholarship to Minority Students, National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education of ST students (formally Top Class Education for

ST students), Pre Matric Scholarship for students with disabilities, Post Matric Scholarship for students with disabilities and Scholarship for Top Class Education for students with disabilities.

Ms Gurung mentioned that the scholarship scheme also included children whose parents belonged to unclean occupation such as rag pickers. Children from this community are exempted from providing the Certification of Identification.

It was also revealed that only fourteen students from the district were enjoying scholar-

ship. She urged the District school administrators to do their best to make sure that the students can avail the above mentioned scholarship who are eligible. She further said that she wanted all the 77 schools in the district under scholarship scheme in the future.

She further informed that the students those who are eligible can now register online through state portal: www.sikkim.gov.in and www.scholarship.gov.in. Students who belong to SC and OBC category (Class I to X) can register through a manual form.

The DC/N, Mr Bhut-

ia, said that the statistics of the students receiving scholarship were disheartening and unacceptable. He directed the Panchayats, Teachers and Headmasters to put some effort in changing the figures. He invited the school to approach his office after collecting the data to upload the information if they faced connectivity issue. He encouraged the schools to lend their assistance to make sure the students get the scholarship which is being provided the State and the Central Govt.

During the programme, eight students from the district received sponsorship from 'Sponsorship and Foster Care Fund' (S&FCF) from the hands of the DC/N. The S&FCF was sponsored by District Child Protection Unit, North under Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), SJE & WD, Govt. of Sikkim.

Lt Hasta Maya Sharma MPCS inauguration

Melli Paiyong, 25 Jul (IPR): Minister for Animal Husbandry, Livestock, Fisheries and Veterinary Services, Food Security & Agriculture Development and Horticulture and Cash Crops Development Department inaugurated, Lt Hasta Maya Sharma Memorial Bigyani Milk Producers Cooperative Society (MPCS) at Lower Paiyong, Melli Dara, South Sikkim today. Minister was accompanied by Secretary Food Security and Agriculture Development, Khorlo Bhutia, Horticulture and Cash Crop Development DK Bhandari, Principal Director Animal Husbandry, Livestock Fisheries and Veterinary Services Department, Dr NT Bhutia, Directors and other officials.

After the inauguration, Hon'ble Minister inspected newly constructed building thoroughly and interacted with the members and milk producers of MPCS. He also announced to install an additional facility of computer screen in the MPCS and also handed over a token from his personal level.

Thereafter, the Minister comprehensively visited infrastructures of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Department at Upper Paiyong. Minister expressed deep concern about the current state of existing infrastructure which was found dysfunctional.

After visiting Agriculture office, the Minister instructed the concerned Secretary to depute more than ten employees appointed under One Family One Job schemes along with an officer from the district for monitoring so as to revive the infrastructure functional within ten days and to carryout fodder plantation. He also instructed to provide seeds, saplings and other facilities based on the demands placed by the farmers. Minister also halt at Anganwadi Centre in the Agriculture office premises and interacted with the children.

The Minister also visited the ongoing construction of Feed Mill Plant and interacted with the local people and instructed the contractor to maintain quality while executing their work. Similarly, he also paid visit to Agro Service Centre and directed the concerned Secretary to provide necessary requirements for upkeep of the Centre.

Minister was also reported that a crusher machine for different grains was not even installed in the centre after purchasing in 1991, based on that report, Minister instructed to constitute a committee to conduct an enquiry and submit report within a month.

Minister also inspected a stockman centre of Animal Husbandry Department at Lower Paiyong and expressed deep concern on the dysfunctionality of the centre and instructed for immediate transfer of technical staff to the centre and to arrange required furniture and power connectivity.

Later, Minister addressed a public gathering

at Bigyani Government Primary school. In his address Minister informed that the closed office of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry department will be made functional, immediately, so that the people of the locality will not suffer anymore. He added that if the previous government has worked in the field those infrastructures would not have been deteriorated to dilapidated state. The GPU was running after the award without any practical action in the field and that irresponsibility has ruined fate and rights of the people, he added.

He also announced to establish Rain Water Harvesting Tank under Prime Minister Krishi Sichai Yojana at Melli Paiyong GPU.

He also announced to provide one each Power Tiller to Bigyani MPCS and Sadam Suntaley GPU within a month.

Speaking in the context of public complain raised against misuse of power in Check post, Minister assured to address issues seriously through proper investigation.

He informed that the State Govt will increase price of milk to encourage Milk producing farmers within few months. Further, he urged farmers to be motivated and dedicated to their profession which would be lucrative to earn livelihoods.

During the programme Minister also distributed Polypipe to Four farmers, Spray machine Seed Bin and token of Poly Tank (1000 Litre) to three beneficiaries.

Minister also handed over letter of appreciation to various personalities for their outstanding contribution in establishment of MPCS.

Earlier, Director (Dairy) Animal Husbandry Deptt, Dr BM Chettri highlighted various schemes including Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme, Kishan Credit Card, Departmental Insurance Scheme, National Livestock Mission, Poultry, Piggery and goat farming.

From opposition...

by organic mission needs to be reviewed and its authenticity confirmed.

(iii) CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEMES: Many centrally sponsored schemes have not been implemented well. For instance, allotment of Slum housing at Gangtok, Rangpo and Nayabazaar needs to be reviewed. There are many complaints about the discrepancies during allotment of the slum housing in Gangtok, Rangpo and Nayabazaar. SKM will review the allotment process and cancel those who are not eligible.

Rental and lease of Government space / properties / shops also needs to be reviewed. It is seen that all such properties of the Government have been leased to influential people of the SDF party for a long period and earn very little revenue from it. There is no allotment criteria and transparency in the process. The new Government will review it and come with allotment criteria.

(iv) Industrial Policy and MoU of all industrial units in Sikkim should be reviewed. These industries are violating labor rights and there are no financial benefits to the state. Our industrial policy should be such that benefits the state and the local people at large but in Sikkim the industrial policy needs review immediately.

(v) Review of state's Hydro power policy and MoU signed with power developers is the need of the hour. After allowing almost 22 hydel projects on our rivers, today most of them are shut down or are on the verge of being declared Non Performing Assets (NPA). The State Government has not benefited as expected and therefore a review is necessary.

Q.6) What do you have to say about the Assembly incident and the accusations against you?

Ans: Well, I have always maintained that the assembly incident was very unfortunate but Pawan Chamling was equally responsible for what unfolded on the 1st day of the Assembly session.

Secondly, even after repeatedly denying my involvement in the incident, the SDF social media kept on blaming me for the ruckus in the state assembly. They continued to link me with the incident. There was no evidence and I was seated in the opposite direction from where the hooting had started. But the SDF social media handlers kept accusing me, so as to settle political scores with me.

Q.7) Do you think the ruling party should listen to the demands of the opposition or public?

Ans: Yes the ruling party should be more considerate towards the demands raised by the public or the opposition party. This is very important as the public or the opposition party look at things from a very different perspective, therefore, it is in the best interest of the state that the ruling party pay attention to suggestions made from the opposite bench. The previous Government never listened to our suggestions but we will not do the same. SKM will give highest priority to public participation in landmark projects and hold public hearings in regular intervals.

Not just SDF but we are determined to give equal emphasis to other regional political parties regardless of their

popularity or reach. All party meetings will be called before putting forward any new demand with the central government.

Q. 8) Your party has been in the opposition. What is its role? Did you successfully do it?

And: Yes, we did complete our full term as the main opposition party and even when the seven SKM MLA's changed sides and joined the ruling party, the SKM party workers preferred to remain loyal to the organization and not an individual.

Also looking at the party's performance and growth during these five years as the main opposition in SLA, we can be certain that we stood up to the people's expectations and played our role of a constructive opposition pretty well.

We functioned as a watch dog and many anti people decisions had to be withdrawn after the opposition party protested against it. The Sherpa Land reforms bill, that was out rightly opposed by the Sherpa community and SKM, had to be withdrawn by the SDF government.

Q. 9) Do you think opposition should be institutionalised in Sikkim? Do you think giving the Leader of Opposition post to former CM is a step towards that direction?

Ans: It is a well-established fact that an opposition is necessary in a democracy to check and balance the Government of the day. Under the country's law, any party that secures one tenth or more on the total number of seats is thereby recognized as the main opposition party and their leader is given the title of Leader of Opposition, which is in itself a constitutional post with cabinet rank.

But the rules of procedures governing the Sikkim Legislative Assembly has no mention on the recognition of main opposition party and Leader of Opposition (LoP) title. This was stated by the then Speaker, KN Rai, during his ruling on SKM's claim for Main Opposition status. Now the same thing applies to SDF also.

Since there is no mention on the status of the main opposition party or LoP in Sikkim Assembly, there is no provision under which the Speaker could recognize or allot the title of LoP. Now had the SDF Government made appropriate rules in lieu with the country's constitution during their 25 years in power, then the ruling party today, would be compelled to recognize the eligible group providing them with constitutional status.

Q. 10) Your message to the youth who feel discouraged to join politics due to the general view that it is a dirty game.

Ans: Well politics is perceived as a dirty game and think all politicians are bad and corrupt. But in reality that isn't true. Yes there are a corrupt few who have degraded the level of politics especially in a third world country like India. But with that said and done, there are many who consider politics sacred and work sincerely for the betterment of this nation. Therefore, I appeal to our youth, not to shy away from politics and look at it with a broader perspective and accommodate people from every walk of life and contribute to nation building.

South prepares for Measles and Rubella campaign



NAMCHI, 25 JUL (IPR):

A co-ordination meeting chaired by DC (South), Ragul K to discuss the launch of Measles and Rubella (MR) vaccination campaign at district level which is scheduled for a state wide launch by Health Department, Government of Sikkim from 29 July was held at the DAC, Namchi today.

Present in the meeting were CMO (South), Dr Sharda Rai, ICDS Supervisor, Bina Rai alongside officials of line departments and health officials.

Addressing the meeting, DRCHO South, Dr Junita Yonzon informed that the vaccination campaign supported by WHO, UNICEF is being

held to protect children against measles and rubella which are highly contagious viral diseases and will cover all children between the age of 9 months to 15 years.

She emphasized the objective of the campaign is to eliminate measles disease by the year 2020. Dr Junita also added that the campaign will initially cover all Government schools followed by community based approach which will include Anganwadi centres.

It was also informed in the meeting that the district level programme on launch of Measles and Rubella (MR) vaccination campaign will be held at New Secondary School Namchi on 29 July paral-

lel to the state wide campaign launch in Gangtok on the same day.

The campaign will be carried out with support of stakeholders from departments such as HRDD, Women and Child Welfare Department, IPR, RM&DD and PRI, UDHD, Sports and Youth Affairs, Labour department and NGOs.

DC (South), Ragul K urged the stakeholders to work in coordination with one another to ensure widespread success of the campaign in the district. He also emphasized the need for robust awareness amongst the public so that the parents and guardians bring their respective children to avail vaccination during the campaigning period.

SECURE Himalaya...

for conservation of endangered species and their habitats and sustaining critical ecosystem services, Securing sustainable community livelihoods in high Himalayan ecosystems, Enforcement, monitoring and cooperation to reduce wildlife related threats and improved knowledge, policy and information systems for promotion of landscape conservation approaches. He further said that environment and wildlife conservation is a matter of great concern globally, hence it is time that we also focus on convergence of different sectors to ensure that environmental impact is minimum.

Principal Secretary-cum-Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF), ML Srivastava briefly outlined some of the achievements of state in terms of environment protection. He said that geographically Sikkim may be small in area but is rich in biodiversity. He outlined some of the significant achievements of the state in terms of environment protection. He advised that the project should make use of the database that is already available and start from there. Furthermore, strong emphasis on convergence with other ongoing schemes of related departments needs to be given.

Forest Minister, Karma Loday Bhutia in his address said that he had conceptualised 'A Day for Mother Earth' which is to be observed on 07 July every year wherein no vehicle would be plied for seven minutes at 11:00am throughout the state as an effort towards reducing carbon emission.

He expressed his concern regarding proper implementation of central funds that are received for various projects. He also shared his concern regarding over-population certain species of fauna which is causing man- animal conflict.

He suggested that plant species that are not edible and are of no use to the animals should not be introduced. He shared his previous experiences of having worked as a forester and urged everyone to come together and join hands in the conservation efforts.

During the technical session, presentations on project result framework and project management structures were made by associates of SECURE Himalaya and UNDP. Expected outcomes and quantifiable targets to be achieved by 2024 were discussed.

State Project Officer, SECURE Himalaya gave a brief overview of the project landscape. He informed that 27 villages of North and West Sikkim have been identified as sample villages and pilot demonstrations would be carried out in these villages. A brief overview of the progress made in Sikkim was also presented wherein annual work plan was also shared with the participants.

The workshop concluded with an open discussion and questions put forward by the participants were answered by a panel of experts and officers from Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department, SECURE Himalaya and UNDP-India. Vote of thanks was proposed by Conservator of Forest, Udai Gurung.

CHANGE OF NAME/SURNAME

I Sumitra Gurung wife of Mr. Nanda Kumar Gurung resident of House no. 24, Upper Pechrek under P.O. Hee Bazar & P.S. Gyalshing Bazar, West Sikkim would like to declare that henceforth I have changed my name/surname from Sumitra Rai to Sumitra Gurung for all purpose.

Date: 25/7/2019

Place: Namchi

Deponent

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

URGENTLY REQUIRED:

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

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HOUSEKEEPER/BABYSITTER .

Contact: 9933443442/9800500696.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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

Mr. Subash Lama

Proprietor

**Hotel Parasol Residency,
Panihouse, Deorali, East Sikkim**

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

SDF advises SKM to rise above petty politics and continue Organic Mission

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 JUL:**

Sikkim Democratic Front has advised Sikkim Krantikari Morcha to rise above petty politics and try and understand the importance of the Sikkim Organic Mission to take it forward in the interest of the farmers of the State.

SDF has asserted that the silence and ignorance of Agriculture Minister Loknath Nepal towards the organic mission will take away the benefits of organic farming from Sikkimese farmers.

An SDF press release issued by its spokesperson, JB Darnal, further suggests that the SKM government give continuity to all physical infrastructural and inclusive pro-people plans and programmes of SDF.

The release mentions that during his four-day official tour and inspection of organic farms established by the SDF government in West District, the Agriculture Minister did not mention Organic Mission even once.

SDF believes that this was so because either the Agriculture Minister has some personal issues with the former CM or is opposed to the Organic Mission of the former CM and SDF government.

The release stated that in the recent seminar of Agriculture Ministers of the country under the chairmanship of the Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar at Delhi on 09 July, the Union Minister asserted that agricultural scientists and farmers should visit Sikkim to study organic farming.

However, it is very unfortunate for the people of Sikkim that the State Agriculture Minister has not spoken a single word on the mission in his engagements in Sikkim despite claiming credit outside the State, the release adds.

Northern states to set up joint group against drug menace

CHANDIGARH, JUL 25 (PTI): The chief ministers of northern states on Thursday described drugs as a "national problem" and decided to set up a joint working group to share experiences and best practices to tackle the menace. At the second Regional Conference on Drug Menace, Challenges and Strategies here, the states expressed concern over the inflow of drugs from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria and other countries, and called for closer collaboration to fight the problem and make the region "drugs free".

In a joint statement, the chief ministers of Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, as well as top officials from Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Chandigarh, agreed on a series of powerful measures to eradicate the drugs problem in the region.

Rotary Club Gangtok South gets new office bearers

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 JUL:**

New office bearers of Rotary Club Gangtok South for the year 2019-20 were installed on 24 Jul, 2019. Uday P Sharma took over as the new president for the year 2019-20 and Prakash Sundas as the new secretary of the club at the Installation Ceremony held at Hotel Denzong Sangrila in Gangtok, a press release informs.

In the absence of the outgoing president, Sunila Verma, PK Dong handed over the charge of the management of the Rotary Club Gangtok South to the new president Uday P Sharma by administering the oath of office.

As a symbol of transfer of power Rotary International's Charter Certificate, president's colour and gavel were handed over to the new president. New secretary, Prakash Sundas and new treasurer, Anil Kumar Gupta were also administered oath of office.



Outgoing secretary, Geeta Chettri presented a report on the activities of the club during 2018-19.

Addressing the gathering, the new president, Uday P Sharma highlighted the activities of the club. During his tenure as president of the club, focus will be on quality membership, old age home, adoption of one school as a Happy School,

tree plantation, rural health camp beside normal activities.

Addressing the ceremony as chief guest, Dr Yogesh Verma, former DG, appreciated the activities of the Rotary Club of Gangtok South and advised it to take up big projects for the benefit of the community. He lauded the initiative of the club to focus on new generation.

Assistant DG, Renu Verma called upon the club to cooperate with government agencies for the success of ongoing Measles and Rubella vaccination campaign. Earlier in his welcome address, senior Rotarian, PK Dong dwelt upon international, national and local rotary clubs and said that the rotary movement in Sikkim was

started in 1968.

Interact Clubs of five local schools were felicitated with International Citation Award on the occasion. Musical presentation by veteran artist and architect Kiran Rasaily and mono-act of veteran comedian Mohan Sarada were other attractions of the event. The programme was conducted by Geeta Sapkota.

EVMs and VVPAT Machines shifted in West Sikkim



GYALSHING, 25 JUL (IPR): The Shifting of Polled Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) from Strong room located at Government Senior Secondary School, Auditorium to EVMs and VVPAT warehouse situated at Kyongsa was commenced today at 11:00am in pres-

ence of ADC, West, Karma L Lepcha, SDM/GYZ, Gilbert Lepcha, Under Secretary/Election, Sonam Palmu Bhutia and representatives of political parties.

An Election petition is a procedure for inquiring into the validity of the election results of Parliamentary or local government elections. In other words, it is a means un-

der law to challenge the election of a candidate in a Parliamentary, Assembly or local election. An election petition shall be filed within the time period of forty-five days from the date of declaration of results.

Entire shifting process of CUs, BUs and VVPAT was supervised by the ADC (W), and escorted by him till the warehouse.

All EVMs were segregated as Assembly Constituency and Assembly Segment wise at warehouse in the presence of the representatives of political parties and other authorized governmental officials along with the video and photo evidence. Entry to the warehouse is restricted and guarded by the police personnel 24x7.

Mangan to launch waste segregation campaign

**WANGCHUK BHUTIA
MANGAN, 25 JUL:**

In an effort to ensure 100 % segregation of waste in Mangan, the Mangan Nagar Panchayat (MNP) is planning to start a door-to-door public awareness campaign on source segregation of waste through which the MNP aims to educate citizens about the importance of segregating dry and wet waste at the source.

Mangan Nagar Panchayat (MNP) seeks to decrease the amount of solid waste that goes to the dumping grounds with this initiative.

Lower Mangan Bazar ward under MNP has been selected for the pilot project wherein the people are enlightened on the process and method related to the segregation of waste.

Municipal Executive Officer MEO, Mangan Nagar Panchayat, Tempo Tashi Bhutia informed that it is an effort that will solve half the town's problems of waste management.



agement as waste segregation costs nothing and takes hardly any extra time.

"It's a matter of understanding and more about responsible behavior," said Mr Bhutia.

He further added that the primary duty of Nagar Panchayat is to Manage Solid Waste. The Mangan Nagar Panchayat has conducted several awareness programs (information, education and communication strategy) to spread the message to increase awareness among citizens regarding waste management, to improve civic sense and also streamline the role played by NGOs in this process.

MNP had also distributed Green/Blue dustbin and Eco Bin for composting wet waste but some are not utilizing them in the proper manner. It came to the notice of MNP that the dustbins are being used as a container or water bucket due to which it is unable to achieve 100 % result. Most of the residents do not comply and still hand over mixed waste to the collectors.

Hence, he appealed to all the house owners, business communities and tenants to cooperate in this drive in order to make Mangan clean and responsible.

Karatekas leave for tournament in Kolkata



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 JUL:**

A 15-member team of the Sikkim State Karate-Do Association [SSKA] left today to participate in the 5th International Karate Championship, 2019 to be held at Netaji Indoor Stadium, Kolkata, from 26 to 28 July. The championship is being organised by the All India Seishinkai Shito-Ryu Karate-Do Federation.

The SSKA team com-

prises of: Bishwas Gurung, Anurodh Rai, Anuraj Subba, Kunal Ghimiray, Sukraj Limboo, Abinash Chettri, Yang Tshering Tamang, Abhigyan Cintury, Susmita Subba, Sakima Rai, Bhargavi Cintury, Sita Subba, Diksha Manger, Jerusha Tamang and Babyana Gurung.

The team is being accompanied by Binam Gurung as team coach and Bimala Tamang as team manager.

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FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT
GANGTOK.**

TENDER NOTICE

Tender No: 117/CHSO

Date: 24/7/19

Online tenders are invited from eligible manufacturers/ authorized dealers for the supply of Generic Drugs, Medicines & Consumables to the Central Health Stores Organization, Government of Sikkim, for the financial year 2019-20.

The Bid should be submitted online in the website <https://www.sikkimtender.gov.in> for which, the bidder should have the necessary portal enrollment with his/ her own Digital Signature Certificate (DSC).

Sd/-

Additional Director
Central Health Stores Organization
HC, HS & FW Department
Govt. of Sikkim, Gangtok.

R.O. No. 110/IPR/Pub./Classi./19-20

dt. 24.7.2019

EastshiftsEVMstowarehouse



GANGTOK, 25 JUL (IPR): District Election Officer (East), Kapil Meena, informs that the EVM strong-room located at Biraspati Parsai Senior Secondary School here at Ranipool was opened today.

The strong-room was opened to shift EVMs and VVPATs used for General Election 2019 to the district warehouse maintained at the office of the CEO, Baluakhani, Gangtok.

The opening and the

shifting of the EVMs and VVPATs was done under strict vigil of ADC (HQ), East, officials of the Election Department, Police and representatives of political parties.

The DEO informs that this process was conducted as per the guidelines of Election Commission of India and the shifting was cleared since no election petition was filed within 45 days from the date of the declaration of the result.

SKM prepares for Jan Unmukti Diwas



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 25 JUL:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) held a coordination meeting at Janta Bhawan, Gangtok for the celebration of "Jan Unmukti Diwas" on 10 Aug, 2019, a press release informs.

The meeting was chaired by Administra-

tive Advisor to CM, Political Secretary to CM, Press Advisor to CM, Cabinet Ministers, MLAs and many other Party CEC Executives.

During the meeting, discussion was held on venue, transportation, food, cultural program and a committee was formed for the event.

Dhoni to join his Army battalion in Kashmir from July 31-Aug 15

NEW DELHI, JUL 25 (PTI): Indian cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who was awarded the honorary rank of a lieutenant colonel in 2011, will join his battalion in Jammu and Kashmir at the end of the month and carry out duties with the troops, official sources said on Thursday.

Dhoni will be with the 106 Territorial Army battalion (Para) from July 31 to August 15 and will be taking on the duties of patrolling, guard and post duty while staying with the troops, they

said. Dhoni, who is not part of Indian cricket team's tour of the West Indies, had conveyed to the Army that he would like to serve his battalion which is at present stationed in Kashmir valley.

The unit is in Kashmir Valley as part of Victor Force.

"As requested by the officer and approved by the Army headquarters, he will be taking on the duties of patrolling, guard and post duty and would be staying with troops," said a senior official.

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TASHILING, GANGTOK - 737103 No. GOS/DTE/2019/861 Dated: 22/07/2019		
Counseling Notice		
It is for information of all concerned that the counseling for allotment of the following State quota seats for the academic session 2019-20 will be held in the Conference Hall of HRDD, Gangtok as per the schedule indicated below:-		
Sl.NO.	Date and Time	Course
1	1 st August 2019	M.Tech (10:00 am) MBA, MCA (12:00 noon)
2.	2 nd August 2019 (10:00 am)	M.Sc. (Agriculture, Forestry, Horticulture), M.Sc Economics, M.Sc Nursing, M.Sc Biotechnology, M.Sc Microbiology, M.Pharm M.P.H.
3.	5 th August 2019 (10:00 am)	M.A, M.Com, M.Sc (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics).
4.	6 th August 2019	B.Tech (Spot round-admission of Sikkim Institute of Science and Technology, Chisopani, South Sikkim).

Following information is available on the department's portal www.sikkimhrdd.org. All concerned are advised to log on to the above site on regular basis.

(i) The notification relating to reservation policy of the State Government for different categories of people of Sikkim for allotment of State quota seats.

(ii) Guidelines relating to procedure for allotment of State quota seats.

(iii) List of institutions, fee structure and number of seats available for allotment and,

(iv) Instruction for counseling.

All candidates are directed to be seated in the Conference Hall of HRDD, Gangtok thirty minutes prior to start of counseling.

Sd/-
Sonam Denzongpa
Director (I/C)
Technical Education, HRDD

R.O. No. 108/IPR/Pub./Classi./19-20

Date: 23.7.19

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Change Attitudes towards Climate

Climate Change is real, but our preparedness for it is still not

The dots have not been conclusively connected in as far as the intensified flooding we are seeing in the Northeast and the parched plains of the South; and this, barely a year out since the disastrous Kerala Flood which too was credited to climate change. There is also the extreme heat of the European summer preceded by a record winter and the temperamental nature of the monsoon over these parts, rather conclusive argument for changing climate. These events need to be seen as reiterations of climate change realities of the present times. Unfortunately, we continue to engage with it in confusion. If this attitude prevails, things will not end too well. Only the better informed will be better prepared and only the more responsive societies and communities stand a chance of making the transition with the least suffering.

Projections of climate change are admittedly based on imperfect science and worst case scenarios vary depending on the inputs and permutations deployed. What is however unanimously accepted is that the planet is getting warmer and that climate systems are in fact already changing. For a country which, despite the consistently falling productivity of its fields and disruptive economic tweaking like demonetisation, still depends on agriculture to occupy 60% of its population, we are doing woefully little to prepare for climate change. Agriculture in India is climate-dependent and the worry that the ongoing tap-dance of drought and inundation is triggering, reinforces this contention. Unfortunately, apart from more subsidies, loan waivers and funds for relief, the government is not engaging climate change with the scientific enquiry that the situation demands. Agriculture, lifestyles and livelihoods are not being prepared for climate change even though it is obvious that this adjustment is as necessary as all measures aimed at reducing CO2 emissions and adopting energy usage corrections. In the obsessive pursuit of calculating how much the polar icecaps will shrink and how high the seas will rise, the socioeconomic impact of climate change is not being discussed enough. Of course, there is the token mention of how the poor will suffer this the most, but that hardly carries any lifestyle-changing warnings because in our country, the poor suffer everything the most. Climate change will attract interest when people are told that it will impact Everyone, especially the rich and the well-heeled. And that might not be stretching things too far because the underprivileged are already hotwired with resilience, it is the rich who cannot handle change and disruptions.

Sikkim has taken the lead over all other states by first instituting a commission to study the health of its glaciers and the impact of global warming on it and then by tasking the Department of Science & Technology to also include Climate Change in its name and study the phenomenon with Sikkim in mind. At least that is what it intended to do, but has not really delivered anything worthwhile on either count. These were still good initiatives and could provide the raw data on climate change. For these measures to deliver realistically, the data will have to be crunched in time to inform the lifestyle and policy level corrections the State needs to make to prepare for climate change. Get realistic, there is really nothing Sikkim can do to effectively stall climate change, neither here, nor at the international level, but it can do a lot to prepare for it and support global initiatives. It is already doing the latter, but needs to work extra hard on the former aspect. The glaciers are receding, rain is now falling even in erstwhile rain-shadow zones and even the tree-line is advancing higher. Crops have failed, plant diseases have become more resistant and rainfall patterns are accurately mimicking the intense rain over shorter duration pattern projected by climate change. It has been getting hotter as well.

There are many studies and initiatives which should already have been undertaken. Since this piece has mentioned agriculture, let's look at that sector itself. Going organic is definitely a good idea because that will protect the fields from the added torture of chemicals, but one should have already started double-checking on the advisability of persisting with hybrids. It is already accepted across the world that hybrids are the least tolerant to temperature fluctuations while the indigenous variants are hardier. We have already seen how Punjab has drained away its water-table with over-use and perhaps a more organized and reasoned approach needs to be taken on how Sikkim taps on its water sources as well. Experts have already started suggesting that infrastructure development be undertaken with an eye on climate change and Sikkim needs to follow up on this advise seriously. In fact, for something that so pervasive, it is surprising that climate change has still not entered the lexicon of national security. How many war-game projections for Sikkim have, for example, factored in the possibility that the trans Himalaya of North Sikkim might become a frightening criss-cross of bogs and permafrost frequently ambushed by flashfloods in the years to come.

Without school, a 'lost generation' of Rohingya refugee children face uncertain future

RUBAYAT JESMIN
theconversation.com

The boy's eyes lit up when he talked about his dream of becoming a doctor.

Seven-year-old "Mohammad" – not his real name – is a Rohingya Muslim from Myanmar. I met him at a learning center at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, in early July 2019.

After sharing his aspirations, Mohammed quickly remembered reality.

"I know my dreams will never come true," he said with a faint smile.

REFUGEE CRISIS OF GLOBAL PROPORTIONS

Mohammed is among the more than 700,000 Rohingya who have taken refuge in Bangladesh after an ethnic cleansing campaign of rape, killing and torture by the Myanmar military in mid-2017. They joined the more than 200,000 Rohingyas who had previously fled Myanmar's brutal efforts to rid the Buddhist-majority country of this marginalized Muslim minority.

Of the newly arrived Rohingya, three-quarters are women and children, according to the United Nations.

In a noteworthy humanitarian gesture, the Bangladeshi government has given refuge to these persecuted people. Aided by Bangladeshi community organizations, various UN agencies and other international donors, the Rohingya have been receiving shelter, food, clothes and basic health care since the massive exodus in 2017.

This essential care, which cost an estimated US\$920.5 million in 2019 represents a gargantuan global effort. Still, the resources are woefully inadequate.

Most Bangladeshi refugee camps are overcrowded and, as a result, unhygienic. Residents survive on the absolute bare minimum of nutrition and other necessities. Monsoon rain, cold and landslides are everyday threats for these Rohingyas, as I've witnessed firsthand during my visits to Bangladeshi camps in 2017 and 2019.

It is a dismal existence for all. But it is the plight of the roughly 500,000 Rohingya children living in limbo that strikes me as bleakest.

CONCERNS OF A LOST GENERATION

Research shows that future of refugee children grows more imperiled the longer they remain out of school.

In many countries that host substantial refugee populations, including Turkey, Lebanon and Uganda, the United Nation's refugee agency and

the United Nations Children's Fund ensure children receive a quality, full-time education, either at the camps or in nearby public schools.

Even so, just 23% refugee children worldwide are enrolled in secondary school, according to the UN's High Commission on Human Rights. Just 1% attend university.

Because Bangladeshi authorities have not



granted the Rohingya official refugee status and consider them instead "forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals," the roughly 500,000 Rohingya children in the country have no access to a formal education. Rohingya children are not permitted to attend Bangladeshi public schools.

The United Nations Children's Fund and its partners offer Rohingya refugees aged 4 to 14 two-hour daily lessons on Burmese, English, math and life skills at about 1,600 learning centers located at the camps. These classes keep about 145,000 Rohingya children – or about 30% of the Rohingya youngsters in Bangladesh – occupied for part of the day but do not provide the kind of formal education that will allow the children to work toward a high school degree and enter the job market.

The camps offer no schooling at all for Rohingya

refugee adolescents aged 15 to 18.

Some teenagers, mostly boys, have turned to madrassas, or Islamic learning centers, where they can receive a religious education.

The remaining Rohingya children who attend neither UNICEF classes nor madrassas are simply left to fill their own day. At the Rohingya camps, I saw boys working in shops, playing cards or sitting idle at all hours of the day.

When I asked Mohammad what he does when he is not in school, he told me that he "takes care of his family."

"I play with the other kids, too," he added with a grin.

Adolescent girls, I learned, are often kept at home by their parents because of the Rohingya's conservative social and religious norms.

The camps can also be dangerous for girls. Human traffickers have been known to target young Rohingya women, promising them jobs outside the camps. Girls face other forms of violence and human rights abuse at Bangladesh's camps, too, including child marriage.

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Growing up in unstable conditions, with no possibility of study, Rohingya children like Mohammed are at risk of becoming a lost generation.

Their limbo may not last forever. In response to heightened international pressure, Myanmar in November 2017 agreed to take the Rohingyas back starting November 2018.

However, their return was postponed due to protests by the refugees, who feared conditions in Myanmar was not yet safe. The United Nations and other international refugee services have also voiced concern about sending the Rohingya back, saying there was no indication that the Myanmar government had punished the people responsible for the crimes in Rakhine state, nor agreed to give the Rohingya citizenship.

Considered foreigners in both Myanmar, their native country, and Bangladesh, where they've sought refuge, the Rohingya Muslims are the world's largest stateless people.

While the negotiations for their repatriation continue, a generation of traumatized Rohingya children wait for their futures to begin.

[the writer is Doctoral Student, College of Community and Public Affairs, Binghamton University, State University of New York]

Despite China's denials, its treatment of the Uyghurs should be called what it is: cultural genocide

JAMES LEIBOLD
theconversation.com

In China's far western region of Xinjiang, Chinese Communist Party officials are persecuting one of the worst human rights abuses of our time, what I labelled an act of cultural genocide in last week's ABC Four Corners report.

Pressure is mounting on the Australian government to go beyond statements of concern and challenge China over its treatment of the Uyghur minority, particularly those Australian citizens and permanent residents being held in the vast network of "re-education camps" in Xinjiang.

Two Australian Uyghur men are meeting federal politicians in Canberra today to push for the government's assistance in helping family members trapped in China.

Australia was one of 22 countries to sign a recent letter to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressing concern about the "arbitrary detention" of Uyghurs, but otherwise, its response has been muted.

In recent days, the Chinese government has defended its actions with a dubious propaganda report claiming that Uyghurs were historically forced to become Muslims and have been an integral part of China for thousands of years.

China repeatedly makes false and anachronistic claims like this about the ancient unity of the "Chinese people," which includes ethnic minorities like the Uyghurs. Its aim is to project modern notions of sovereignty, nationhood and fixed borders back through history.

In reality, the 11 million or so Uyghurs are an indigenous Turkic-speaking people who have inhabited what they call "East Turkestan" for over a millennium. Along with the Tibetans, the Uyghurs have born the brunt of China's settler colonial project, which seeks to assert its control over remote regions that are closer to Moscow and Tehran than Beijing.

Since March 2017, the Chinese government has interned over a million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in massive, prison-like camps

(including possibly 17 Australian residents), where they are subjected to coercive ideological remoulding.

Detainees are forced to denounce their religion, forbidden to speak their language, and taught how to adopt the norms of China's Han ethnic majority, while praising President Xi Jinping and the Communist Party for salvation.

In their own words, party officials are "washing brains" and "cleansing hearts" in order to "cure" those bewitched by extremist thoughts. In Xinjiang today, non-Han thoughts and behaviour are pathologised as deviant and thus in need of urgent transformation.

WHAT IS GENOCIDE?

A litany of words and phrases have been used to describe this process. The Chinese government calls the camps free "vocational education and training centres" where Uyghurs willingly learn Chinese language and employment skills in order to assist with their "rehabilitation and reintegration".

Scholars, journalists and rights defenders have spoken about cultural and religious "persecution" in Xinjiang, arguing the party-state's policies amount to mass ethnic cleansing, cultural re-engineering, forced assimilation, brainwashing, or even ethnocide.

In August 2018, Gay McDougall, the vice chair of UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, referred to Xinjiang as a "no-rights zone".

Yet, I believe the scale, sophistication and intent of China's policies in Xinjiang merits a stronger description.

The term genocide was coined by lawyer Rafael Lemkin in 1944 in reaction to Nazi Germany's coordinated strategy to annihilate the Jews, gypsies and other non-Aryan peoples. Four years later, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, with Australia one of the first counties to ratify it. The People's Republic of China ratified it in 1983.

The convention defines genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."

It also obligates signatories to punish those who engage in genocidal acts through a "competent" domestic or international penal tribunal.

Whether genocide includes only physical acts or can extend to attacks on cultural heritage has elicited intense debate, but for Lemkin, the term includes "drastic methods aimed at the rapid and complete disappearance of the culture, moral and religious life of a group of human beings."

Genocide also requires specific intent. In the words of political scientists Kenneth J. Campbell, genocide is a "premeditated, calculated, systematic, malicious crime authorised by the state's political leaders."

This is exactly what Communist Party officials did when they authorised and then legalised the mass internment of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in "concentrated transformation-through-education centres," ripping more than 10% of the population away from their communities so they could be deliberately re-programmed.

VARIOUS METHODS FOR ERASING CULTURE

Yet, facts arguably matter more than words when it comes to China's policies in Xinjiang.

We now have ample evidence (including internal party documents) of the deliberate efforts to destroy Uyghur culture and identity. Everyday actions like avoiding pork, speaking Uyghur, wearing a headscarf or praying quietly are now labelled "manifestations of religious extremism," or what party officials call "malignant tumors" requiring urgent excising in a radical form of cultural surgery.

In the city of Kashgar, for example, a party document highlights the need to sever the lineages, roots and cultural connections of Uyghurs in order to eliminate the fountainhead of potential extremism.

German researcher Adrian Zenz has uncovered evidence of the party's efforts to separate Uyghur children from their parents in state institutions, where they can be assimilated and indoctrinated by officials. In these institutions, cultural, religious,

and linguistic knowledge is intentionally ruptured.

In some parts of Xinjiang, mosques and shrines are being bulldozed, while others are transformed into empty sites guarded by facial recognition cameras and imams on the party payroll.

In the name of strengthening "bilingual education", Chinese is now the language of instruction across Xinjiang, from preschool to university. The use of Uyghur language, script, signs and pictures prohibited. Speaking Uyghur is now considered unpatriotic and can get one sent off for re-education.

Perhaps most disturbing, inter-ethnic marriages are being actively promoted to slowly breed out Uyghurness, with cash and other material inducements offered to Han men who take a Uyghur bride.

One can find numerous videos and messages promoting Han-Uyghur inter-marriage on Chinese social media, asserting Xinjiang is now safe and home to many beautiful and eligible Uyghur women who would appreciate a doting Han husband.

Finally, the Chinese government has intensified its family planning regime in Xinjiang to slow the growth of the Uyghur population and eliminate what party officials call "low quality births".

Beginning in 2017, the region adopted a uniform two children policy that nullified preferential rules allowing rural Uyghur women to have additional births. In the past, Uyghur women were given 3,000 RMB (roughly A\$620) to forgo a third birth and agree to some sort of "long-term contraceptive measure."

The Communist Party's calculated war on Uyghur identity is quite literally tearing families and communities apart, while the rich tradition of diversity and tolerance in China is left in tatters.

The resilient nature of culture and memory means that attempts at genocide, thankfully, are rarely successful. Yet the pain they inflict is real.

[the writer is Associate Professor of Politics and Asian Studies, La Trobe University]

Fast to continue till govt meets demands: Teachers' body in WB

KOLKATA, JUL 25 (PTT): The indefinite fast by a section of primary teachers in West Bengal seeking a pay hike entered the 13th day on Thursday even as state Education Minister Partha Chatterjee assured them that the government was looking for a solution to the impasse. The agitators, under the banner of Usthi United Primary Teachers' Welfare Association, have also sought the revocation of a state government order transferring 14 of their colleagues to faraway places.

Pritha Biswas, the spokesperson of the association, said the teachers are waiting for an official communication from the government on the matter.

"To this date, there has been no official communication from the state regarding our demands. We only get to hear the comments made by the education minister during his interactions with me-



diapers," Biswas said on Thursday.

Chatterjee had told reporters on Wednesday that the state government will certainly think about "hiking the pay scale of the primary teachers, keeping in mind two factors - their educational qualification and the fiscal condition

of state exchequer". He accused the BJP and the CPI(M) of "unnecessarily politicising the issue for personal gains"

"Political parties of different hues are visiting the agitating teachers and taking political advantage of the situation," the minister had said.

Earlier, Chatterjee

had said that raising the pay scale to the level the agitating teachers had been demanding would incur huge expense on the state exchequer.

Biswas, however, said that the fast would continue till the state agrees to fulfill the twin demands. "We want an official communication from

the education ministry. Till then, the movement will continue," she said.

A member of the association said primary teachers are paid between Rs 9,300 and Rs 34,800 elsewhere in the country, while in West Bengal the salary ranges between Rs 5,400-Rs 25,200.

15 pc tea production in North Bengal in July lost: ITA



KOLKATA, JUL 25 (PTI): The flood like situation in north Bengal which accounts for an annual production of 200 million kg of tea has affected crop volumes to the extent of 15 per cent in July, according to a senior ITA official.

Secretary general of Indian Tea Association (ITA), the apex body of tea planters of north India, Arijit Raha told PTI "15 per cent of the crop has already been lost in

north Bengal due to flood like situation".

He said that the annual production volumes in north Bengal was to the tune of 200 million kg, adding that 15 per cent of that was being produced in normal weather conditions in July itself.

"But due to floods, 15 per cent of the July crop has already been affected", Raha said.

Also, July is known for producing premium

quality tea which fetches a good price in the market. "That is lost forever", he said.

The overall situation in north Bengal is very bad due to incessant rains for the last several days with many bushes under the water, according to the industry experts.

Tea Association of India (TAI), said output in July was expected to be lower by around 20 per cent to 25 per cent.

Campaign in Arunachal to plant one lakh saplings in a day

ITANAGAR, JUL 25 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Thursday launched a campaign to plant one lakh saplings in a day.

Launching the 'Clean-Green Arunachal Campaign 2019' here, Khandu said the drive is being carried out across the state as the target is to plant one lakh saplings in a single day.

He said the campaign is part of Van Mahotsav celebration which has set a target of planting one crore saplings within the next five years.

Referring to the biodiversity richness of the state, the chief minister said, "Arunachal is known globally for its huge forest cover and is considered one of the eighteen 'biodiversity hotspots' in the world".

He claimed the forest carbon stock in



Arunachal comes to 148.52 tonne per hectare, which is highest in the country and whose value in terms of carbon credit at 6 Euros per tonne works out to Rs 48,000 crore annually.

Highlighting on the relevance of forest in tribal societies, Khandu said both are interconnected and culturally bonded where dependence on forest is vital for tribal people for their everyday needs.

He called upon the Forest department to

come up with a vision to preserve this intricate link and to enable the tribal people to reap economic benefit from the forest in a sustainable way.

During the occasion, the chief minister also called for giving forethought to such agendas, which in the name of protecting mother earth only aims to block the development vital for the well being of the state.

He said such misplaced agendas are not in the interest of the state.

30 Bangladeshis deported from Assam

KARIMGANJ (ASSAM), JUL 25 (PTI): Altogether 30 Bangladeshis, who had illegally entered the Indian territory, were deported to their country through Karimganj border on Thursday, official sources here said.

These people, including two women, were lodged in various detention camps of the state

after they were declared illegal foreigners.

They were handed over to the police and border guards of the neighbouring country, the sources said.

The Bangladesh nationals were apprehended from various parts of Assam at different times after they had entered India without valid travel documents.

Paris hits new heat record, London boils in Europe heat wave

PARIS, JUL 25 (AP): Hot, hotter, hottest! Paris, London and places across Europe are sweltering under all-time high temperatures or near-record heat Thursday as the second heat wave this summer bakes the continent.

Climate scientists warn this could become the new normal in many parts of the world. But temperate Europe where air conditioning is rare isn't equipped for the temperatures frying the region this week.

So tourists frolicked in fountains to seek relief, and authorities and volunteers fanned out to help the elderly, sick and homeless hit hardest by the heat. Trains were canceled in Britain and France, and French authorities urged travelers to stay home.

One by one, heat records are being broken across Europe. On Thursday afternoon the Paris area hit 40.6 C (105.1 F) beating the previous record of 40.4 C (104.8 F) in 1947. Authorities said the temperature was still rising, as a result of hot, dry air coming from northern Africa that's trapped between cold stormy systems. London expects to see 39 C (102 F). And swaths of Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Switzerland could face temperatures exceeding 40 C (104 F).

In Belgium, the meteorological institute said the nation saw temperatures rise past the 40 C mark for the first time since records were kept in 1833. The new all-time high now stood at

40.2 C (104.4 F), recorded close to Liege in eastern Belgium's Angleur on Wednesday. Germany recorded 40.5 degrees (104.9 F) Wednesday, and the German Weather Service is expecting even higher temperatures Thursday. In Austria, a 2-year-old died of dehydration in the country's Styria region after he climbed into an overheated parked car without his family noticing and fell asleep in it.

The Austrian news agency APA reported Thursday that the boy, who climbed into a car parked at the family's farm on Monday, died at a children's hospital on Wednesday. In the Netherlands, a government health institute warned of high levels of smog due to ozone in the air in parts of the country.

The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment issued a "smog alarm" Thursday for regions including the densely populated cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague.

The institute said air quality in the some regions will be "extremely bad" because light winds mean that pollution is not being blown away and sunlight transforms it into ozone.

The smog can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, and leave people coughing and short of breath.

Across Germany, Switzerland and Austria, some communities painted rail tracks in white hoping the light color would bring down the temperature by a few degrees.

Coordination meeting on I-Day celebration in North



MANGAN, 25 JUL (IPR): With a view to celebrate 73rd Independence Day in a grand manner the North District Independence Day Celebration Committee convened a coordination meeting regarding Independence Day Celebration with the head of offices of the district administrative centre, north here at conference hall of the DAC, Mangan today.

Presiding over the meeting, District Magistrate, North, Rinzing Chewang Bhutia who is also the President of the Independence Day celebration committee said since Independence Day has a great significance to every individual there-

fore it must be observed in a befitting manner in the district. Further, he opined that every head of offices and employees should supplement their best support in making Independence Day celebration a grand success.

Superintendent of Police, North, Sonam Gyatso Bhutia who is also the president of North District Football Association has informed that as usual years the NDFA will host men's open "MLA Challenge Football Tournament" which will kick off at Mangan public ground on 28 July.

Altogether, 25 teams will participate in the men's open football tournament. Winner of the tournament

will be accorded with the cash prize of Rupees 1,20,000 and Rupees 60,000 to the runner-up.

Similarly, women's open football tournament will played under "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" scheme.

During the meeting, SDM, Mangan, Samdup Bhutia asked to all head of offices of the DAC, North to carry out their entrusted duties positively.

Interestingly, to commemorate the Independence Day 2019 the private project developers those who are engaged in the district have shown their keen interest to extend their support to the Independence Day Celebration Committee.

HC appoints administrator on La Martiniere schools' board of governors

KOLKATA, JUL 25 (PTI): The Calcutta High Court on Thursday appointed an administrator on the La Martiniere schools' board of governors to oversee its functions till disposal of a petition before it by four deposed members.

A division bench comprising justices I P Mukerji and Md Nizamuddin appointed Justice (retired) Tapan Kumar Dutt of the Calcutta High Court as the administrator.

The bench directed that the board, appointed on June 21, 2019, will function under the supervision of Dutt.

The division bench said all decisions regarding school administration will be subject to approval of the administrator till disposal of the suit filed by four co-opted governors challenging their removal from the board.

The deposed governing body members and the existing governors had both filed appeals challenging an order of a

single bench of the high court. The single bench of Justice Arindam Sinha had on July 12 directed the board of governors at La Martiniere schools here to refrain from taking any decision on the management of the institutions till a suit over sacking of the nominated board members is disposed.

The court had verbally observed that the principals of La Martiniere for Boys' and La Martiniere for Girls' will run the show till a verdict is given in the case.

The existing board cannot remove or appoint any person as a governor to the board, Justice Sinha had ruled.

La Martiniere schools, one of the oldest and most prestigious English-medium institutions in the city, is run by a board of governors, of whom two are ex-officio members, while the other four are nominated by the ex-officio members for a year.

The two ex-officio governors had terminat-

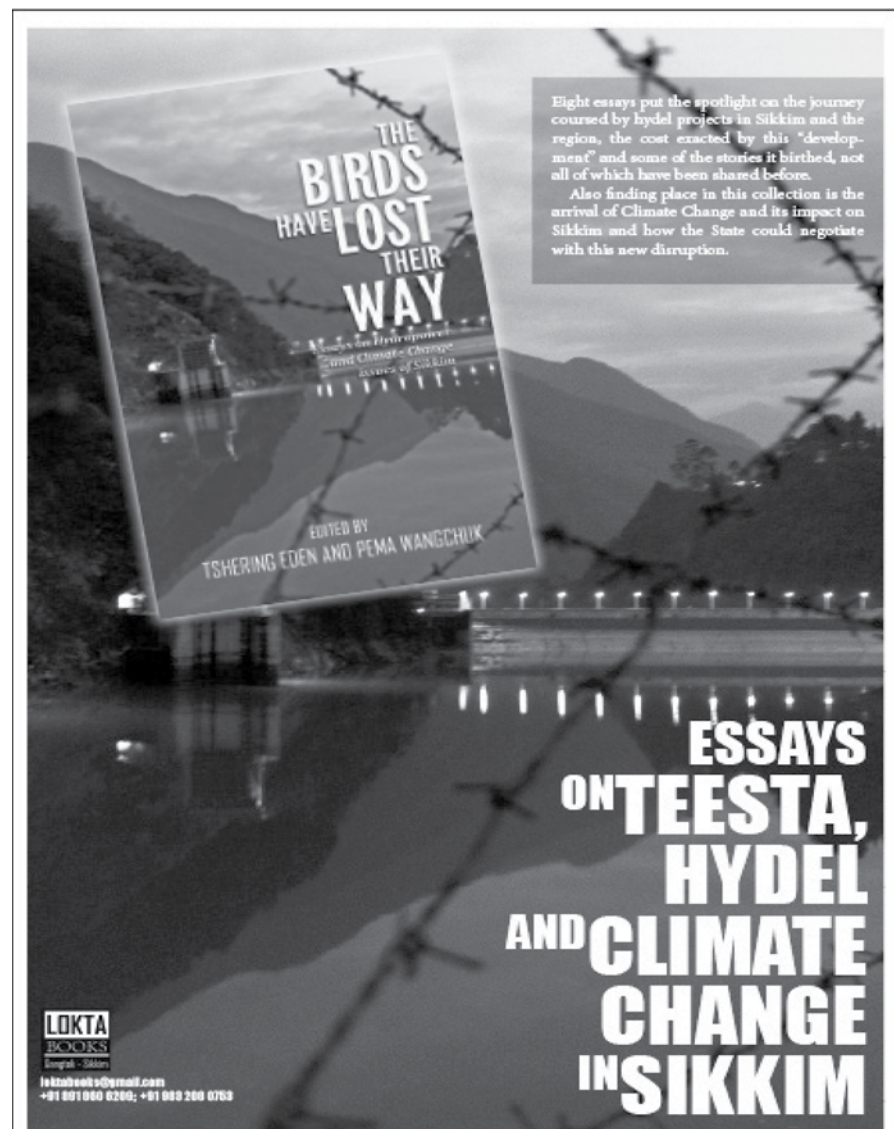
ed the membership of four nominated members on June 19, which the latter termed as illegal. Counsels for the two ex-officio members claimed that the appointment of the four co-opted members was illegally done in March and this was merely corrected in June.

Former Kolkata Bishop Probal Kanto Dutta was one of the ex-officio governors who had appointed the four in March.

Following Dutta's transfer in the second week of June, Paritosh Canning was appointed as the new bishop by the Church of North India.

Canning, as the new ex-officio member along with the other governor Swarup Bar, removed the four members and decided to replace them with new governors.

The decision was challenged before the high court by the four deposed governors - Anil Mukherji, Gerry Arathoon, Suchitra Guha and Anjali Das.



Oldest slinger in town: Sri Lanka to farewell shaggy-haired Malinga

COLOMBO, JUL 25 (AFP): Sri Lanka will start looking to replace key wicket-taker Lasith Malinga when the shaggy-haired fast bowler calls it quits after the first one-day international against Bangladesh here on Friday.

Both teams go into the three-game series nursing a World Cup hangover, with Sri Lanka facing an especially tough rebuilding task with the loss of the instantly recognisable Malinga.

The blond-highlighted bowler with the distinctive sling action proved his enduring worth when he tormented England during the World Cup, taking four for 43 as Sri Lanka stunned the eventual champions in the group stage.

Malinga, 35, is Sri Lanka's third-highest ODI wicket-taker with 335 wickets from 225 matches, behind only Chaminda Vaas (399) and Muttiah Muralitharan (523). Malinga needs three wickets to overhaul Anil Kumble's 337 for



ninth place on the international list.

Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne said finding a replacement for Malinga, who is retiring from one-day internationals, is just one of many challenges ahead following a disappointing World Cup.

"I think if you take the World Cup, we did fairly good. In patches we did

really well and sometimes we didn't do very well," he said.

"We know we need to find a wicket-taking bowler because Lasith Malinga is not available after this series.

"We need to find the bowlers who can take wickets in the middle part and the early overs. Those are the areas. I need some good young-

sters, we need to groom some youngsters for the next World Cup," he said.

- COACHING EXODUS -

However, Sri Lanka's problems don't end there, as coach Chandika Hathurusingha and his assistants will be shown the door after the Bangladesh series because of their sixth-place finish in England. Bangladesh, who finished eighth of

the 10 teams, are also entering a new era after they sacked coach Steve Rhodes following the World Cup. The visitors are also without key players, including skipper Mashrafe Mortaza and inspirational vice-captain Shakib Al Hasan.

Mashrafe has a hamstring injury while Shakib, who scored 606 runs and claimed 11

wickets in the World Cup, is being rested. Opening batsman Tamim Iqbal, interim captain for the series, said Bangladesh's younger players will get a chance to impress.

"I thought we had a pretty decent World Cup. There were a few games that we should have won. We, the cricketers also felt that we could have done more," said Tamim.

"I think that whoever plays the first one-day match they need to cash in on the opportunity," he added.

Bangladesh are the first foreign sports team to visit Sri Lanka since the Easter Sunday suicide attacks this year, which killed more than 250 people.

The team were given security usually reserved for visiting state dignitaries, with extra forces at their hotel and armed guards for their bus.

"I think the security has been fantastic. All the facilities they have given to us have been top notch," said Tamim.

Phelps hails 'incredible' Milak after losing world record

GWANGJU (SOUTH KOREA), JUL 25 (AFP): Michael Phelps paid tribute to Hungarian teenager Kristof Milak's "beautiful technique" after he took down the American legend's long-standing 200 metres butterfly record at the world championships in South Korea.

Phelps described Milak's time of one minute, 50.73 seconds in Gwangju as "incredible", although he admitted his astonishment was tinged with sadness at losing a world record which had stood since 2009.

"As frustrated as I am to see that record go down, I couldn't be happier to see how he did it," Phelps told the New York Times.

"That kid's last 100 was incredible. He put

together a great 200 fly from start to finish."

The 19-year-old Milak sliced a whopping 0.78 seconds off Phelps's previous world best, which was achieved during the bodysuit era, after flirting with the record for much of the past season. "It happened because there was a kid who wanted to do it, who dreamed of doing it, who figured out what it would take to do it," said Phelps, who had a special fondness for the 200m fly.

"(He) worked on his technique until it was beautiful and put in the really, really hard work that it takes to do it -- my hat's off to him."

Milak became the first swimmer to go under 1:51 minutes, while his winning margin was,

remarkably, more than three seconds as Japan's Daiya Seto finished a distant second and the South African Chad le Clos third.

Le Clos, who famously beat Phelps in the 2012 London Olympic final, shrugged: "Kristof is in another league -- he's a hell of a lot faster than all of us."

Milak said he was "honoured" to break a world record held by Phelps, who he had worshipped growing up and watched videos of to polish his technique.

"I wasn't expecting to break the record," he admitted. "But if you put in the hard work, good things happen and I was ready. I just tried to block everything out and find a good rhythm.

Home is where heartbreak is for struggling Vettel



HOCKENHEIM (GERMANY), JULY 25 (AFP): Spare a thought for Sebastian Vettel this weekend as he and Ferrari hope to push Fernando Alonso and Mercedes out of the spotlight and off the top of the podium at their home German Grand Prix.

Four-time champion Vettel will be seeking to end a miserable "nightmare" year since he crashed out of the lead at last year's German contest and, in the process, handed a remarkable victory and the impetus in the title race to his British rival.

Vettel has won only once, in Belgium last year, since that embarrassment.

Five-time world champion and current series leader Hamilton has not looked back since and leads this year's championship by 39 points, ahead of Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas.

Vettel, who was born at nearby Heppenheim, has endured a run of mistakes and disappointments that have thrown his future into doubt and left him languishing in pursuit.

On top of that, Hamilton is seeking his fifth German triumph this weekend as Mercedes celebrate their 200th start as a constructor and his fourth at Hockenheim, where the luckless Vettel has never won.

His sole German victory came at the Nurburgring in 2013, a year after Ferrari's last triumph on German soil when Fernando Alonso won at Hockenheim in 2012 -- statistics that Vettel, a keen student of his sport, will not enjoy being reminded of as he bids to claim Ferrari's first win since last year's United States Grand Prix.

"I know how it is and I know that we have to make up for last year," conceded Vettel.

"I am looking forward to racing at Hockenheim -- the atmosphere is phenomenal there always and the crowd is great too. I hope we can do something good for them."

Vettel has received support in his difficulties from Hamilton who reeled off another mighty victory, the 80th of his career, at the British Grand Prix where the Ferrari driver crashed into the rear of Max Verstappen's Red Bull on another undistinguished afternoon.

-- 'MERCEDES STAY HUMBLE' --

But he needs more than sympathy now as the 21-race season reaches its half-way point and Ferrari team-mate Charles Leclerc is pushed by the Italian sports media as being ready to replace him as the team's outright number one driver.

The 21-year-old Monegasque already has more poles, podiums and fastest laps than his senior partner this season and appears to have eradicated his own errors, albeit that he is still waiting for his maiden F1 victory.

A special occasion for the 'Scarlet Scuderia' may not be expected, but should not be ruled out on the weekend that Mercedes will run in a special livery to make 125 years of motorsport at their home race where they are also title sponsors.

Team boss Toto Wolff warned that Mercedes' only defeat this year in 10 outings came in sweltering heat at the Austrian Grand Prix where Verstappen banged wheels in passing Leclerc to seize victory while Bottas and Hamilton struggled with cooling problems.

"High temperatures are forecast so we must stay vigilant," said Wolff.

"We must stay humble and work hard to achieve the best possible result."

It is expected that Mercedes will introduce a new cooling system for their cars and ensure an enthralling three-team scrap for success with Ferrari and Red Bull also likely to be competitive.

After seven wins in 10 races, however, it is difficult to see beyond Hamilton.

Indian medallists at world boxing c'ships will get direct entry into Olympic qualifiers

NEW DELHI, JUL 25 (PTI): Indian boxers who win medals at the upcoming World Championships for men in Russia will get direct entry into the national squad for next year's Olympic qualifiers, the sport's High Performance Director Santiago Nieva told PTI on Thursday.

The world championships in Russia no longer have Olympic qualifier status after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) suspended the International Boxing Association (AIBA) from conducting the event in the 2020 Tokyo Games.

The IOC cited administrative and financial mismanagement in AIBA as the reasons for taking the decision.

The IOC took charge of the qualifiers as well and announced that the process will start only in January next year with the Asia/Oceania zone qualifiers in China. The dates of the event are not yet out.

"Those who get medals at the world championships will get direct entry into the squad for the Olympic qualifiers. Others will have to give trials," Nieva said.

"I think it is a fair enough process to judge the boys," he added.

The world championships are scheduled from September 7 to 15 in Yekaterinburg city.

India's overall record at the mega-event is four bronze medals, the first of which was won by the celebrated Vijender Singh in 2009 in Italy. Vijender turned professional in 2015.

Vikas Krishan (2011), also a pro now, Shiva Thapa (2015) and Gaurav Bidhuri (2017) are the other three in the select group of Indian boxers who finished on the podium in the elite competition.

"We are confident of improving the medal count this time," Nieva said.

Liverpool finish US jaunt with draw against Sporting Lisbon

WASHINGTON, JULY 25 (AFP): Liverpool wrapped up their US tour with a 2-2 draw against Sporting CP as the English Premier side failed to win a game in their first trip abroad since being crowned European champs.

Liverpool finished with no victories to show from their three-match stateside tour but did manage to salvage a tie against the reigning Portuguese champions at Yankee Stadium in New York.

Marcus Wendel tied the game at 2-2 in the 53rd minute on Wednesday with a right footed shot from the centre of the box to the bottom right corner after being set up by midfield star Bruno Fernandes.

Fernandes and Wendel also combined on the first goal of the game in the fourth minute for the 18-time Portuguese champs. Fernandes right footed a seemingly harmless long shot that Liverpool goalkeeper Simon Mignolet mishandled before it went into the net.

Divock Origi and Georginio Wijnaldum scored goals for the Reds who played all three exhibition contests in iconic American sports venues.

Jurgen Klopp's side was missing several of their top players, including forwards Roberto Firmino, Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane, who were taking a break after competing in COPA America and African Cup of Nations.

Goalkeeper Alisson also decided not to make the trip.

Liverpool came into the contest wondering how they managed to drop their first two games. They lost a 2-1 decision to Spanish club Sevilla on Sunday at Boston's Fenway Park, following a 3-2 defeat to Germany's Borussia Dortmund at Notre Dame Stadium on Friday.

Sporting's Luciano Vietto had one of the best scoring chances of Wednesday's game but was stopped twice in a row from point-blank range by Mignolet just before the half.

Teen sensation Sepp van den Berg made his exhibition debut for Liverpool in the Yankee Stadium showdown, as the 17-year-old Dutch defender came on in the 89th minute. Liverpool signed the teen over the summer from Eredivisie side PEC Zwolle.

Liverpool will now head home to Merseyside before facing Napoli in Edinburgh this weekend and then depart for a training camp in Evian.

India slips to 103 in FIFA rankings

NEW DELHI, JUL 25 (PTI): The Indian football team slipped two places to 103rd in the FIFA rankings released on Thursday.

India lost two matches and drew one in the Intercontinental Cup earlier this month in Ahmedabad. It lost 2-4 to Tajikistan and 2-5 against eventual winners DPR Korea before playing out a 1-1 draw against Syria.

India has 1214 ranking points to its kitty, down by five points from the previous chart issued last month.

The Indian team now lies at 18th among Asian countries. Iran (23rd) is at the top among Asian countries, followed by Japan (33), Korea (37), Australia (46) and Qatar (62).

Overall, Belgium leads the chart, followed by Brazil, France, England and Uruguay.

Boeing reports biggest-ever loss as 737 MAX grounding drags on

NEW YORK, JUL 24 (AFP): Boeing reported its biggest loss ever on Wednesday as the 737 MAX crisis drags on, and the company warned it could be forced to temporarily halt production of the plane if the grounding is extended much longer.

The aviation giant's troubles have been mounting since the MAX was taken out of service worldwide in March following two deadly crashes that claimed 346 lives, and it already set aside nearly 5 billion to compensate customers.

But the warning it might have to suspend production of the aircraft jolted Wall Street, prompting losses to accelerate during a late-morning conference call with Boeing executives that reinforced the cloudiness surrounding the outlook.

Getting the MAX back in the air is a "complex" multi-regulator process "that will take time to get done," Boeing chief executive Dennis Muilenburg said.

"We have a clear understanding of the work that has to be done but there is still uncertainty in the timeline."

Boeing reported a loss of 2.9 billion for the second quarter, a huge drop from the 2.2 billion profit posted in the same period of last year.

The loss was not surprising following last week's announcement the company had set aside 4.9 billion after taxes to compensate airlines for canceled flights and



the delay in plane deliveries. Meanwhile, revenues in the latest quarter tumbled 35.1 percent to 15.8 billion, reflecting the hit suffered due to halted deliveries of the 737 MAX, a top-selling plane.

Analysts from Cowen, an investment bank, pointed to a "strong performance" in production of Boeing's 787, another big seller, but noted the company pushed back first flight of the 777X, a new long-haul plane under development.

The company has blamed the delay on problems with the engine, which is being built by General Electric.

Adding to the confused outlook, Boeing has still not updated its full-year profit forecast after withdrawing its targets in April due to uncertainty about the MAX.

However, at the same time it boosted dividend payments in the second quarter. Compared with last year, Boeing spent 1.2 billion on dividends, up 20 percent from the year-ago period.

Temporarily halting output "is not something we want to do but it is an alternative we have to prepare for as a smart part of our thorough and disciplined process here to make sure we're covering all scenarios," Muilenburg said.

Boeing in April cut production on the MAX to 42 a month from 52, storing planes until the jet is cleared to fly. But it has not cut jobs at its Washington state factory.

The crisis already has rippled through the US economy, hitting manufacturing output as well as exports, which widens the politically-sensitive

trade deficit and could drag on growth.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Wednesday the MAX is a priority for the White House.

"We want to absolutely make sure that before the 737 MAX flies that it's safe," Mnuchin told CNBC. "We need to figure out how they continue to compete against Airbus because they are a leading US company."

Airlines have repeatedly pushed back the target date for returning the jets to service as the regulatory timeframe has dragged on.

The Federal Aviation Administration in June identified problems with microprocessor which extended the timeline.

Boeing is developing a software fix to address a problem the "MCAS" flight handling system

linked to both crashes.

Muilenburg said the company is in daily contact with the FAA and still expects to submit its software fix to regulators in September, with approval about a month later. However, that timeframe is "dynamic."

He also said the company also is in "the middle of working our way" through the FAA microprocessor issue.

"We know we're making progress," he said. "But until we complete all of the certification activities, there's always some risk of new items opening up." Boeing shares have lost about 14 percent since the Ethiopian Airlines crash in March, while the broader S&P 500 has gained about 10 percent.

Boeing shares ended 3.1 percent lower at 361.43.

Iran poses loyalty test for 'British Trump' Johnson

LONDON, JUL 25 (AFP): Iran's seizure and continued detention of a UK-flagged tanker deals Boris Johnson an immediate loyalty test: Britain's new prime minister may have to choose between Gulf escorts led by Europe or the United States.

Which way Johnson leans could set the tone for a complex agenda that includes withdrawing from the EU, striking a trade deal with the US, and maintaining or breaking European efforts to keep alive the deal curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Some US commentators see this is a make-or-break moment for Europe's policy on Iran as a whole.

"Johnson could simply announce that the UK is joining America's maximum-pressure campaign and calls for a new (Iran nuclear) deal," the editorial board of The Wall Street Journal wrote. "The rest of Europe would likely have no choice but to join its Anglophone partners -- and finally present a united front."

The idea of a European-led mission in the Gulf is carried over from a meeting chaired by Johnson's predecessor Theresa May this week.

Britain has proposed that France, Germany and other European partners join together in a "naval protection mission" to ensure commercial ships can safely navigate in the Gulf.

But such an operation would expose Britain's continued reliance on EU allies at the very same time that Johnson is determined to yank his country out of the bloc on October 31, "no ifs or buts". As an alternative, Johnson could instead sign Britain up to a US-led alliance outlined by Donald Trump's administration at NATO last month. That decision could boost London's chances of reviving stalled efforts to strike a post-Brexit trade deal with Washington, but carries the risk that British warships could be caught up in more aggressive US rules



of engagement.

Both Johnson and Trump played up their friendship during the British leadership race.

The US president cheered Johnson's election -- referring to him as "Britain Trump" -- and a source close to Johnson told The Daily Mail it was time to "reset" US-UK ties. Yet that might doom British efforts to salvage the remnants of the 2015 deal with Iran that Trump pulled out of last year.

Tehran's ultra-conservative Resaayat newspaper published a cartoon Wednesday of Johnson as a British butler being patted on the head by Trump in the Oval Office.

"British Trump," the banner of the reformist Sazandegi said. Johnson is yet to publicly comment on last Friday's capture by masked Iranian soldiers of the Stena Impero oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, at the entrance to the Gulf.

He will be expected to do so now.

His decision to push ahead with a European effort to secure the world's busiest oil shipping lane would still need to be coordinated with US forces in proximity to Iran.

Centre for European Reform foreign policy director Ian Bond, a retired diplomat who served in Washington and NATO,

said Johnson might actually win Trump's favour by shepherding European navies to the Gulf.

"Based on the fact that Trump is always complaining about how little the Europeans do for their own defence, he ought actually to think that it was a good thing that the Europeans were taking care of this," Bond told AFP.

"But whether that is, in fact, how (Trump) will react I find it hard to say."

Bond said Johnson's Brexit credentials might also be saved by the likely inclusion in this "coalition of the willing" of non-EU members such as Norway. "This would be a practical implementation of what Theresa May was saying -- that we are leaving the EU, we are not leaving Europe," Bond said.

But Chatham House's Middle East researcher Sanam Vakil advised Britain's new leader to "avoid the temptation to align completely with Washington on Iran".

"Rather than conflating the ships and the nuclear crisis, a direct UK-Iran bilateral negotiation on the tankers could provide both sides with a face-saving outcome," Vakil wrote. "The UK could position itself as a bridge between the EU and US, and in the process boost its post-Brexit relevance," he said.

Trump vetoes Congressional attempt to block arms sales to Saudi Arabia

BY LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON, JUL 25 (PTI): US President Donald Trump has vetoed three Congressional resolutions barring billions of dollars in arms sales to Saudi Arabia, a move criticised by the House Speaker for ignoring the Kingdom's "horrific abuses" including the gruesome murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi. President Trump defended his Wednesday's decision, saying these resolution S J Res 36, 37 and 38 "would weaken America's global competitiveness and damage the important relationships we share with our allies and partners".

"It is stunning that the President has chosen to not only turn a blind eye to Saudi Arabia's horrific abuses, including the atrocity of Jamal Khashoggi's murder, but to go further and allow the sale of more arms that will be used to perpetrate more human rights abuses around the world," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a statement. Khashoggi, a contributing columnist for the Washington Post, was killed and dismembered at the Saudi consulate on October 2 when he arrived to pick up documents he needed for his planned marriage.

China to fund 85% of Malaysia's revived rail project



DUNGUN(MALAYSIA), JUL 25 (AP): China's Export-Import Bank is expected to finance 85% of a 44 billion ringgit (10.7 billion) rail link project in Malaysia that will bolster economic development in rural eastern states, Transport Minister Loke Siew Fook said Thursday.

The East Coast Rail Link across peninsular Malaysia was suspended a year ago shortly after Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's alliance won a historic election, but the government said in April it will revive it after the Chinese contractor agreed to slash costs by a third.

The project connects Malaysia's west coast to poorer eastern states and is a key part of China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

At a ceremony in northeast Terengganu state to relaunch the project, Loke said state-owned Malaysia Rail Link has finalized negotiations with China's Ex-Im Bank and that an agreement will be signed soon but didn't give further details.

Loke said the 640-kilometre rail project will cut travel time from Kota Baru in northeast Ke-

lantan state to the government administrative capital Putrajaya to four hours at a speed of 160 kilometres per hour. By road, the trip can take at least eight hours.

The revised project will cut through five states instead of four, have 20 stations and is scheduled for completion by December 2026. It will include 30-40 tunnels and multiple viaducts, he said.

He said the project is expected to boost trade and tourism and attract investment.

Chinese Ambassador Bai Tian said that a Malaysian study projected the rail link project could contribute 2.7% to Malaysia's economic growth. He hailed the project as a "game-changer" that will revitalize the east coast economy and bring closer ties between Malaysia and China, its largest trading partner.

Malaysia Rail Link and China Communications Construction Company Ltd., which is building the project, plan to form a 50:50 joint venture.

Mahathir has said the fact that the project's cost could be slashed by 21.5 billion ringgit (5.2 billion)

showed initial projections were inflated when former Prime Minister Najib Razak's government awarded the main contract to CCCC in 2016.

Mahathir chose to renegotiate the deal rather than pay compensation of 21.78 billion ringgit (5.3 billion).

His government has axed or reviewed large-scale infrastructure projects to rein in surging national debt that it blames mostly on corruption in the previous government.

Apart from the rail link, the government also has cancelled two China-backed pipelines costing 9.3 billion ringgit (2.3 billion) after discovering that 90% of the project's costs had been paid but with only 13% of the work completed.

The government has said it is investigating whether any money in the rail project was used by Najib's government to repay debts at the 1MDB state investment fund.

A massive financial scandal at 1MDB led to the electoral defeat of Najib's coalition last May. Najib is on trial for multiple corruption charges linked to 1MDB.





RUNWAY READY! The singer, Ciara looks flawless as she leaves a Hollywood studio wearing a Balmain dress and lace up heeled boots.

Kapil Sharma to voice 'Red' in Hindi version of 'The Angry Birds Movie 2'

MUMBAI, JUL 25 (PTI): Comedian Kapil Sharma will be the voice of the hot-headed bird 'Red' for the Hindi version of the upcoming animated feature "The Angry Birds Movie 2".



Sony Pictures Entertainment India has roped in the comedian for the Hindi dubbing of the film, which is a sequel to 2016 original.

Kapil said he could relate to the character as he is the hero "but, at times, he gets entangled in tough situations. Knowing my history, you'd agree I am Red."

In a statement, Kapil said dubbing for a film is different than voicing for a character.

"In the West, artistes first voice for their characters and based on that, the film is shot using graphics. But over here, we have to talk according to the graphics," he said.

Kapil said his audience will not be disappointed as Red is quite funny, just like him. "The producers expected me to scale up the humour and I have but it's very situational. In fact, there are



times when the character's anger will make people laugh... Though I'll be voicing the character, they won't see me in it," he added. "The Angry Birds Movie 2" will release on August 23 in India in Hindi, English, Tamil and Telugu.

ARIES: As you sow, so shall you reap, Aries. Your relationships are a 10/10 reflection of the kind of energy you have been investing. But don't limit this love and nurture to your beloved alone. Think of their family as your own. Yes, despite their many quirks. This could be the secret to creating a harmonious life for yourself. PS: For some of you, this is a time of moving into a new space, refurbishing the house, or exchanging keys with your partner. Tip: Your relationships are a 10/10 reflection of your love and nurture.

TAURUS: If you've found yourself in yet another love triangle, you've only got yourself to blame. There is no fault in your stars, Taurus. You knew exactly what you were getting into before you entered this union. Those who are feeling 'limited' by their circumstances will have to make a decision. Others may be in the mood to explore their sexuality and kiss many a frog today.

Tip: Getting a love triangle can be injurious to your health.

GEMINI: Oh hello, material girl. This is the week to take the luxury up a notch and allow yourself some sweet indulgences. But

you're not the only one playing it up. Your partner is in the mood to spoil you silly too. Some of you could be thinking about jetting off on a vacation or planning a staycation in your home city.

Tip: Take the luxury up a notch this week.

CANCER: Quality time with the fam is on the cards. Try to be nice, Cancer. For some of you, this could be a time of meeting your partner's family or extended family and getting to know them on a deeper level. Be open to their eccentricities.

Tip: Get to know their family better.

LEO: Do people really change when they say they have? Are they capable of meeting you halfway this time around? Something to think about before you re-invest yourself in this relationship, Leo. Remember, the life you have built for yourself is too beautiful to be destroyed once again.

Tip: Show up for the people who show up for you.

VIRGO: If it didn't work out in the past, it's because you were making space for a greater love. That 'two bodies and one soul' connection is not a myth. Trust what's hap-

pening behind the scenes, wild one. Coupled Virgos, this is a time of harmony and togetherness. Can you be more in love with each other than you already are? This is the week to find out.

Tip: The Universe is conspiring to bring you that once-in-a-lifetime kind of love.

LIBRA: You're not daydreaming, Libra. Everything in your reality is picture perfect. Here's to a love that celebrates you for who you are and doesn't ask you to change a thing. Some of you are actively making space for another in your lives. Long-term commitment is certainly on the cards, despite what your skeptic side will have you believe.

Tip: Raise a goblet of goodness to that soul-mate kinda love.

SCORPIO: Here's to blood sisters, soul sisters, and synchronised moon cycle sisters. Raise a goblet of goodness to the women who have been showing up for you consistently, despite their personal dramas. This is a time to reciprocate their kindness and let them how special they are. For some of you, a landmark celebration such as an engage-

ment, a bachelorette or a baby shower may be on the cards.

Tip: A landmark celebration may be on the cards.

SAGITTARIUS: If they stepped away, they had a reason. Don't take this personally, Sagittarius. It was never about you to begin with. Everybody needs time and space to figure out who they are outside of their relationships. If this connection still matters to you, reach out and let them know that you're around in case they wish to communicate.

Tip: Respect their need for space, but let them know you're around.

CAPRICORN: Commitment with a big 'C', Capricorn. If you like it, put a ring on it, adopt a litter of kittens with it, and move into a fancy mansion together. Those who've been in the 'may be' and 'let's see' territory are getting ready to be a label on it too. It's all working out in divine time. Don't let your skeptic side get the better of you. But a joyful and harmonious life is not the only gift the Universe is offering you today. Looking for somebody to invest in your dream project?

Tip: You are building a lush and abundant

life together.

AQUARIUS: Beware of replaying the old narrative, especially when the Universe wants you to experience that once-in-a-lifetime kind of love. The gateway to transcendence is opening right now, Aquarius. Your professional life is not devoid of action either. Open your eyes to the signs and synchronicities. You are being led to prosperous opportunities that will help you create the financial reserve you desire.

Tip: The gateway to transcendence is opening for you.

PISCES: We all need space every now and then. We all need to discover who we are outside of our relationships. Instead of feeling rejected by their actions, make an effort to understand where they are coming from. Don't let fear and self-doubt get the better of you, especially when the love you share is real. Take this phase as what it is, Pisces: a wonderful opportunity to look within and journey closer to yourself.

Tip: Distance makes the heart grow fonder.

'Bad Man' Gulshan Grover has "good man's" heart, say friends

NEW DELHI, JUL 24 (PTI): His antagonist roles in films might have earned him the moniker of 'bad man', but to his friends in the industry -- and outside -- actor Gulshan Grover remains the man with a "golden heart".

Grover was here on Wednesday for the launch of his biography, "Bad Man", the title borrowed from the moniker only.

"He is a great and strong guy.... He has been beaten out badly so many times to reach where he is today," actor Jackie Shroff said.

"You (Gulshan) are a bad man on the book, but your heart is a good man's heart," said Shroff, whose sentiment was shared by his other colleagues present at the book launch, including Sunil Shetty and Mahima Chaudhry.

Shetty, who has shared screen with Grover in many films, said not one but at least "400 books" needs to be written to know "the man completely", not just the actor.

In a career spanning 40 years, Grover has acted in over 400 films, including international projects.

"They say 'friends are the family you choose', and I think we chose Gulshan. He is family, he has always been there. Be it good, bad or ugly, he is always always with you.

"He calls himself 'bad man', but I don't think anyone in the industry ever believes that he has got even one little bit of that in him," Shetty added.

The star-studded event also saw no-

table people from different walks of life, including veteran BJP leader L K Advani, former Supreme Court judge A K Sikri and BCCI acting president C K Khanna.

Sikri, who was also Grover's class-

mate in the Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), recalled the time spent together and said he often told the actor back then that "he can't act".

"My friendship with him goes back to 1971 when we joined SRCC... Both of us were in the same class. We would tell him 'Gulshan, tu acting nahi kar sakta, chhod de' (You can't act, just leave it).

"But look where he has reached now. We all are really proud of him for what all he has achieved in his life. He

is the man with the golden heart," Sikri said smilingly.

Grover did not speak much during the event. However, when asked by Mahima Choudhry what he think was the



highlight of his life so far, the 63-year-old actor replied without batting an eyelid: "Time spent with my son Sanjay."

In fact, according to Grover, one of the happiest moments in his life was when his son got a plum job in the Metro Goldwyn Mayer's Motion Pictures Group as "director, special projects".

"Bad Man" is written by senior journalist Roshmila Bhattacharya. Published by Penguin India, the book talks about Grover's life journey -- the ups and downs, his films, successes and failures, besides how he has always stayed relevant.

I'm just a regular guy looking to entertain people, says Varun Sharma

Mumbai, Jul 25 (PTI): Varun Sharma says he does not fall in quintessential Bollywood hero category but he is happy that he has been able to become a popular name as a "regular guy".

The actor, who is a household name as the lovable and dim Chucha from "Fukrey", has three releases for 2019 "Arjun Patiala", "Khandaani Shafakhana" and "Chhichhore". "Today people know me by my name and it is an achievement. I have always stayed true to my craft. I have come this far by giving auditions until 'Fukrey' happened. "I am not the fittest guy, I don't have biceps and six-pack abs. I am not a conventional hero. I am a regular guy trying to entertain people. So if someone like me can be here, then anyone who is talented can reach here through hard work," Varun told PTI.

The 29-year-old actor, who is currently shooting for "Rohi Afza", said there is no dearth of offers from big banners but he has been careful about choosing projects. "I don't want to commit some stupid mistakes for any reason or to show myself in a different light. I don't want to do films for the sake of it. I am looking at long-term goals. "I want to be associated with content and characters that will be embedded in the hearts and minds of people for a long time," he added.

He is happy being busy and living his dream, Varun said.

"Going to a film set is a magical and unbelievable feeling. I had dreamt of being in this profession and it finally happened. The journey has been hard but interesting."

Crediting "Fukrey" for changing his standing in the industry, Varun said when he saw himself on the poster of a film, he knew he had become a hero. "For me, a hero of the film is someone who is there on its poster. He is on the poster because he is a viable actor. In most of my films, I have been on the poster along with other actors. I am happy and content being viable," he said. "However, I am not under this facade that I am the hero. For me, my character is my hero. Like, Chucha is the hero. I feel, ultimately, the audience goes to the theatre because of the trailer and storyline," the actor added.

"Arjun Patiala", also featuring Diljit Dosanjh and Kriti Sanon, releases Friday.

Jennifer Lawrence to work with Paolo Sorrentino on 'Mob Girl'



LOS ANGELES, JUL 25 (PTI): Jennifer Lawrence is teaming up with filmmaker Paolo Sorrentino for the movie adaptation of true crime book "Mob Girl". Written by Teresa Carpenter, the story is based on the life of the mob wife-turned-police informant Arlyne Brickman.

The film follows Brickman who grows up among racketeers on the Lower East Side of New York City where she's drawn to the glamorous and flashy lifestyle of New York mobsters

Soon after, she begins dating "wise guys" and running errands for them, before

getting in on the action herself eventually becoming a police informant and a major witness in the government's case against the Colombo crime family.

Sorrentino, best known for helming Jude Law-starrer "The Young Pope" miniseries, will direct the film from a script by Angelina Burnett, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

In addition to headlining the film, Lawrence will produce the project along with Justine Polsky through their joint banner, Excellent Cadaver. Sorrentino and Lorenzo Mieli will also produce.