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Summit **TIMES**

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Sikkim to host Agape Cup next month

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 28 AUG:**
Sikkim is all set to host a national-level Christian football tournament, the Agape Cup, for the first time in the State on the theme 'Growing Together in Harmony'. The 8th edition of the tournament is scheduled to be held from 27 to 29 September here at Paljor Stadium.

The tournament is being organised by Sikkim Sports Coalition in collaboration with John Paul Foundation and is being supported by all the churches of Sikkim, United Christian Welfare Society of Sikkim and Sikkim Christian Sports Committee.

An organising committee has been formed having members from churches of different denominations to organise the tournament in a grand manner.

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, the organising committee coordinator, Tseten Nudu Lepcha, stressed that it was a matter of pride to bring such a prestigious tournament to the State.

He informed that eleven States have already confirmed their participation and more are likely to join the tournament.

He mentioned that a national-level selection committee will spot talented and promising footballers from different participating States for the national team.

"Players selected for the national team will represent the country at the upcoming Unity World Cup," Mr Lepcha said.

He highlighted that this was a golden opportunity for local footballers.

Organising committee general secretary, Lawrence Lepcha, in turn mentioned that the objective of the tournament was to equip the younger generation with life values and good ethical thinking and also to promote healthy living through sports.

Mr Lepcha added that the tournament will also include a series of activities for youth and children. He urged all football fans and sports enthusiasts to come and support the tournament and cheer for the State team.

UCWSS general secretary, Pastor Peter Samsher, mentioned that the UCWSS has come forward to support the tournament since it is aimed at leading the youth on a productive and creative path through sports.

Likewise, SCSC president, Pastor Bhupal Basnett mentioned that SCSC has been organising state-level inter-church football tournaments for the past eight years.

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PNG girls make India proud, bag second prize in Robotex Asia



**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 28 AUG:**
A three-member team of Atal Tinkering Lab of Paljor Namgyal Girls Senior Secondary School have made the Country and the State proud by coming second in the recently held Robotex Asia at Shanghai, China.

A team of class XII science students of PNG School, Bath Sheba Lepcha, Sristika Sharma and Prerna Pradhan represented India in Lego Line Follower category in Robotex Asia held from 16 to 18 August at Shanghai, China. The team was

mentored and accompanied by their physics teacher and in-charge of ATL PNGSSS, Ivan Dorjee Lepcha.

It has to be mentioned here that the Lego Line Follower Team from PNGSSS qualified to represent the country in their respective category in Robotex Asia and Robotex International after bagging the first position in the Robotex National held on 27 and 28 July this year at Ahmedabad.

It is informed that Robotex Asia hosted 12 different competitions with 3280 competitors from

ten countries and more than 30,000 people visited the event. The event had participants and Robotex organisers from Japan, South Korea, China, Iran, Afghanistan, India, Estonia, Finland, Nigeria and other countries. Robotex India co-founders, Dhruv Patel and Gopal Maheswari also accompanied the India teams.

Indian teams had also participated in other categories of Robotex Asia but only Lego Line Follower team of PNGSSS were able to win a prize for the country. It is informed that Lego Line Fol-

lower category had more than 250 competitors.

Speaking to media persons here today, the team said that the competition was really tough and competitive in the presence of technology giant countries of Asia.

"It was an honour for us to represent the country and we gave our best in the competition. It is really exciting to win a prize in such a tough competition," they said.

They expressed that the competition was a learning experience for them to improvise and to

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CM chairs second day of meeting with Rural Development Department



**SHGs can supply school uniforms, proposes CM
SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 AUG:**

Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] chaired the second day of the meeting with Rural Development Department which started with the welcome address by Secretary RDD, CS Rao, an IPR press release informs.

During the discussion, the Chief Minister talked about allotting maximum opportunities to the Self Help Groups to improve their livelihood. He also suggested coordinating with the In-charge of North East Rural Livelihood Project and the concerned officers for further discussion on the proposal.

He proposed that SHGs be made the suppliers of school uniforms so that employment could be generated and quality

uniforms would be supplied to students.

The CM directed the concerned department to look into providing jobs to local youth in the 59 Pharmaceutical companies in Sikkim which have many posts lying vacant. The department was also directed to collect the status and data regarding the requirement for technical and non-technical staff in these companies.

Regarding people working under various projects and their fate after the project ends, the CM enquired about what could be done to ensure help such persons after the project ends.

RDD Minister, Sonam Lama instructed the Department to expedite ongoing construction works and those ready to be started. He expressed his concern about pending works and informed that alternative solution in this regard is being formulated.

turn to pg02

Man attacks wife with khukuri, neighbours come to rescue

**YOGEN THATAL
SINGTAM, 28 AUG:**

In a shocking incident that took place at Swaney, some 3 km from Singtam bazaar, a man attacked his wife with a khukuri early this morning at around 6 30 a.m. Fortunately, the woman survived with injuries on her leg.

"I was in my room studying when suddenly I heard my mother screaming. I rushed out to see what was happening. When I entered my mother's room I saw my father beating her and suddenly he hit my mother with a khukuri. The blow could have

been fatal but he missed and hit my mother's right leg," shared the couple's daughter.

When the daughter started screaming for help, some neighbours came and rescued her mother.

"If they hadn't come, I would have lost my mother today," said the daughter.

She also alleged that her father regularly tortured them but they were afraid to tell anyone.

The accused tried to flee after the incident but neighbours caught him and now he is in police custody. The case is under investigation at Singtam police station.

Minor missing from Arunachal since Dec 2016 rescued from Gangtok

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 AUG:**

Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of the Criminal Investigation Department of Sikkim Police have rescued a minor boy hailing from Arunachal Pradesh from a fast-food canteen at Deorali.

CID sleuths here were tipped off on the case by a letter from Superintendent of Police, Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh, Dr Hemant Tiwari, informing them that a minor boy missing from Lower Subansiri since December 2016 is suspected to be in Sikkim.

An AHTU team, in follow up, conducted



intensive search operations in and around Gangtok and the minor boy was found working at a canteen in Deorali.

The guardian and a police team from Arunachal Pradesh arrived at the Crime Branch office here today and the

minor was handed over to the guardian after completing the formalities.

Officers from Arunachal Pradesh police have conveyed their sincere thanks to the officers and men of CID, Sikkim Police, it is informed.

Gyalshing MLA spends busy day on constituency visit

GYALSHING, 28 AUG:
Gyalshing-Barnyak MLA, Agriculture Minister Lok Nath Sharma, attended a series of programmes in his constituency today, an IPR Deptt press release informs.

The Minister started the day by inaugurating an Anganwadi Centre at Daragaon (Ward No. 3) under Bermiok Berthang Gram Panchayat Unit, following which he inaugurated another Anganwadi Centre at Ghaiyabari (Ward No. 5) where he was joined by BDO (Martam) Mukesh Dahal, Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Gyalshing, HB Sankar, Panchayat and local public.

He interacted with the Anganwadi workers and staff at both the centres, the release adds.

After the inauguration of AWCs, the Minister chaired a meeting at the Teyongsi Sirijunga Yuma Mangheem at Martam where a new committee for the Mangheem was formed unanimously after dissolution of the previous committee.

In his brief address, the Minister congratulated members of the previous committee for



their efforts to upgrade the Mangheem and urged the new committee members to work with renewed spirit, devotion and transparency for further development of the Mangheem complex.

Later, the Minister visited Government Senior Secondary School Bermiok Martam and chaired a coordination meeting with the Principal Pradeep Gurung and school staff. Here, he called on the school staff to work with dedication to produce skilled and well rounded students.

He called for collective effort to bring notable changes in terms of quality education and

English speaking culture within a period of one year, the release details.

He also shared his vision to transform the Government Sr. Sec School Bermiok into a model school of West District and urged the Principal and the entire school family to shoulder their responsibilities in close coordination.

The Minister is also reported to stated that indiscipline will not be excused and announced that a green house will be provided to the school and suggested that the facility be used to motivate students towards agriculture.

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Article 370: Change in J&K status comes under judicial scrutiny of SC's Constitutional bench

NEW DELHI, AUG 28 (PTI): The Centre's decision to change the Constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir came under the legal scrutiny on Wednesday with the Supreme Court referring a batch of pleas against the abrogation of Article 370 for hearing in first week of October by its five-judge bench.

The petitioners have challenged the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 and the Presidential Orders that followed.

The top court issued notices to the Centre and the state administration and sought their response on the issues raised in the petitions that the legislation and the Presidential Orders are

"illegal and violative" of the Fundamental Rights guaranteed under Article 14 and 21 of the Constitution to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi did not agree with the Centre that there was no need for issuing notices in the matter as Attorney General K K Venugopal and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta were marking their presence in the court.

"We will refer the matter to a 5-judge Constitution bench," said the bench, also comprising Justices S A Bobde and S A Nazeer. It did not accept the argument that notices would have a "cross-border repercussion".

The AG, who was of the view that the notice should not be issued while referring the matter to the Constitution bench, said deliberations here on Article 370 would be taken to the United Nations.

He was apparently hinting that the attention of the UN would be drawn to the hearings here by those who are opposing the Centre's decision, including the neighbouring country.

As the counsel appearing for both the sides were involved in arguments and counter-arguments, the bench said, "We know what to do, we have passed the order, we are not going to change."

The first petition, chal-

lenging the Presidential order on scrapping of provisions in Article 370, was filed by advocate M L Sharma who was later joined by another lawyer, Shakir Shabir, from the state.

National Conference, the state's prominent political party, filed a petition on August 10, contending that the changes had taken away the rights of J&K citizens without their mandate.

Arguing that the legislation approved by Parliament and the orders issued by the President subsequently were "unconstitutional", the petition sought they be declared "void and inoperative".

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Jal Shakti Abhiyan awareness at Namchi

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 AUG:

A day-long awareness programme on Jal Shakti Abhiyan was organised by KVK South Sikkim at BAC Namchi in the presence of BDO Namchi and farmers, as per a press release.

Sr Scientist, IP Shivakoti and Head KVK South briefed the gathering about Jal Shakti Abhiyan Phase I (01 July-15 Sept 2019).

SMS Soil Science, Wilson Rai presented a detailed PowerPoint presentation on water conservation strategies. Dr Nation Chamling, ADO Namthang highlighted about climate resilient agricultural practices, the release mentions.

Air India detects fake recruitment advt, to file FIR

NEW DELHI, AUG 28 (PTI): Air India has detected an advertisement for fake recruitment scheme wherein it is being said that there are total 120 vacant seats in the airline and if an applicant wants to apply for any position, he or she will have to deposit Rs 9,800 plus GST, according to officials.

The airline will soon file an FIR against the person or persons running this fake recruitment scheme, said one of the officials. The national carrier came to know about this fake scheme on Wednesday through social media when a person posted the advertisement and asked Air India whether it is running such a recruitment scheme or not, the official said.

Article 370...

The petition was filed by NC's Lok Sabha MPs Mohammad AKbar Lone and Justice (ret'd) Hasnain Masoodi. Lone is a former speaker of the J&K Assembly and Masoodi a retired judge of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. In 2015, he had ruled that Article 370 was a permanent feature of the Constitution.

Other pleas include the one filed by a group of former defence officers and bureaucrats. They have also sought directions declaring the presidential orders of August 5 "unconstitutional, void and inoperative".

The plea was filed by professor Radha Kumar, a former member of the Home Ministry's Group of Interlocutors for Jammu and Kashmir (2010-11), former IAS officer of J&K cadre Hindal Haidar Tyabji, Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) Kapil Kak, Major General (ret'd) Ashok Kumar Mehta, former Punjab-cadre IAS officer Amitabha Pande and former Kerala-cadre IAS officer Gopal Pillai, who retired as the Union home secretary in 2011.

A petition has also been filed by bureaucrat-turned-politician Shah Faesal, along with his party colleague and former Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) leader Shehla Rashid.

There are other petitions challenging the Centre's decision on Article 370.

The apex court on Wednesday listed 11 petitions connected with Article 370 and issues arising after its abrogation.

The NC leaders submitted that the Presidential Orders paved the way for application of entire provisions of the

CM chairs...

Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava advocated holding a meeting between the government and industries in the state to explore avenues for employing local youth.

Addl. Chief Secretary Tourism, Dr. K. Jaykumar also shared his views on various aspects in the meeting.

Secretary to Chief Minister, SD Dhakal said that Rs. 50 crore under Mission Organic Value Chain Development Project for North Eastern Region (MOVCD) Fund, meant for farmers, is not utilized by the Department, which can be given to the SHGs.

Childline Collaborative Organisation holds first advisory board meeting

GYALSHING, 28 AUG (IPR): Childline Collaborative Organisation, Gyalshing organised its first childline advisory board meeting at Zilla Bhawan, Gyalshing today. Present as the Chairperson was District Magistrate, Karma R. Bonpo along with ADC West, Karma L. Lepcha, Joint Secretary (Welfare), Bandana Rai, SDPO Gyalshing, Sonam Wangdi Bhutia and other Officials.

DC West mentioned that a Childline Helpline center needs to be established at Yuksam and Soreng at the earliest with the help of Local NGOs. He stated that the Officials need to know their roles in regards to childcare and child welfare.

He also asked all Sub Divisional Magistrates and Block Development



Officers of West Sikkim to implement and sensitize the public about the Childline Helpline at their respective offices and areas of jurisdiction. He mentioned that proper sensitization needs to be carried out in order to tackle child related problems and cases in the District hence, he urged that the lead of proper guid-

ance needs to be taken by the DCPO West.

Coordinator, childline (West), Chitrani Rai gave a power point presentation on vision and mission of the organisation, objectives of childline - 1098, actions of childline, intervention model, childline child protection activities and the notable achievements and exercises of the Childline collaborative organisation so far.

Workshop deliberates on rejuvenation of natural springs in West Sikkim

GYALSHING, 28 AUG (IPR): A workshop on the 'Jal Abhyaranya' programme for rejuvenation of natural springs in West Sikkim under the National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS), organised by GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development, was held at the Zilla Bhawan conference hall here at Kyongsa today.

The main objective of the workshop was to compile the baseline data/ information on drying mountain springs and develop at least one jal abhyaranya demon-



stration model in each aspirational district of all 12 Himalayan states.

Discussions were also held on replication of field models for rejuvenation of drying springs through technology and community-based approaches by the year 2024 in collaboration with the state agencies.

DC West, Karma R. Bonpo, directed the SDMs and BDOs to identify all the drying springs in their respective areas and work in convergence with GBPNIHESD personnel. He suggested that a detailed plan be prepared for on conservation and management options for monitoring, protection, enhancement and restoration strategies for springs.

Dr Mayank Joshi, Scientist, GBPNIHESD, delivered a power-point presentation on spring rejuvenation for water security in Himalayan region.

line logo in all official website with proper circular, demand of establishing two more childline sub-centres in Soreng and Yuksam, making of child friendly rooms in police stations, permission for conducting awareness generation program in every schools, formations of volunteers group in village level, Gram Panchayat level and block level and trainings.

The meeting also had an open discussion where the framing of future strategies and action plans for eradicating child trafficking, child labour, child abuse and other issues from the district were discussed.

The numbers of Childline West Sikkim are: 9735224481; 8158068831 and the TOLL FREE No. is 1098.

SC allows CPI(M) leader Yechury to visit J&K to meet party colleague Yousuf Tarigami

NEW DELHI, AUG 28 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury to visit Jammu and Kashmir to meet his party colleague and former MLA Mohammed Yousuf Tarigami, while brushing aside the Centre's claim that it might "endanger the situation" in the state.

"Why do you have any difficulty if a citizen of this country wants to go there and meet his friend and party colleague?" a bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was opposing Yechury's visit to the state.

"If a citizen wants to go to a part of his country, he is entitled to go," the bench, also comprising justices S A Bobde and S A Nazeer, said.

The court said this after Mehta said Yechury's visit might affect the prevailing situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the issue might become political. "This may endanger the situation. The situation is becoming normal there," Mehta told the bench, adding that the Left leader's proposed visit to the state "appears to be political".

The apex court made it clear that Yechury was allowed to visit Jammu and Kashmir to meet his party colleague only and if he was found to be "indulging in any other act of omission and commission, it will be construed to be a violation of this court order".

Yechury's counsel told the top court that he was willing to give an undertaking that he would not indulge in any other activity other than meeting Tarigami and enquiring about his well-being.

Road repair underway at 8th Mile Lower Rakdong



WANGCHUK BHUTIA MANGAN, 28 AUG:

Maintenance work is underway at 8th Mile, Lower Rakdong near Dikchu in East Sikkim on the Dikchu-Gangtok highway which has

been a trouble spot. Traffic on the road is expected resume after four days.

Meanwhile, vehicles plying between Gangtok-Mangan and Dikchu-Gangtok have been diverted to the IpsingSamdong route.

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Sikkim to host...

A selection committee headed by national player and coach, Shisil Karthak, has already been constituted to put together the Sikkim team. The committee will hold selection trials in all districts and shortlisted players will undergo a training camp under experienced coaches for at least a week in Gangtok, it is informed.

The organising committee coordi-

nator, Mr Lepcha informed that the selection trials will begin Thursday from North Sikkim at Mangan public ground at 8 AM and then will move to West Sikkim at Soreng school playground on 30 August. Selection trials for South Sikkim will be held at Namchi on 31 August and finally for East Sikkim at Paljor Stadium on 06 and 07 September.

to book advertisements in SummitTimes call 03592-208698, 9734152541, 9647102692, advertise@summittimes.com.

Gyalshing MLA...

He also interacted with the students.

The Minister also made a surprise visit to the Office of Village Level Worker and ATMA Block Office at Martam.

The Minister then visited the Gram Prashasan Kendra of Martam GPU and interacted with people gathered there from five wards - Sherpa Gaon, Martam Sirijunga, Martam Rafong, Arithang Daragaon and Martam Ghaiyabari.

He also took feedback from the people on demands to be placed before the Chief Minister during his visit to the area on 30 August for the Sanskrit Shivir to be hosted at Berniok Sanskrit Pathshala.

He also interacted with the 13 employees appointed under One Family One Job scheme at the administrative section of the GPK.

PNG girls...

give thir best in the upcoming Robotex International to be held in November at Tallinn in Estonia, Europe.

"To come second among technologically advanced countries took away our inferiority complex and filled us with new energy and confidence for our upcoming international competition," they said.

Team mentor, Ivan D Lepcha expressed that the credit for this big achievement goes fully to the team members. He mentioned that this exposure and achievement has boosted the morale of students to do better in the upcoming Robotex International.

"It was heartening to know that other advanced countries have also been using the same sensor placement which we use and this shows we are moving in the right direction. We just need to increase the speed of our robots," he said.

Coming from a school in an Indian State with limited technological exposure, ATL PNG team has made the country proud by bagging the second prize in the biggest robotics festival in Asia.

The team expressed gratitude to School Principal, Jem Pandi Targain for her constant support to ensure the best performance in the competition.

ANTHYESTI KRIYA

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



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

Daughters: Jyoti Pradhan and Preeti Pradhan. Contact 70768 53631

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

WANTED
HOUSEKEEPER/BABYSITTER.
Contact: 9933443442/9800500696.

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

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

Four & half Storied building on SALE, behind Hotel Agerwal 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

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Dissection-based workshop held at SMIMS

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 AUG:

A two-day hands-on cadaver workshop on dissection-based clinical anatomy of the pelvis, and procedures with chronic pelvic pain, as part of advanced medical training for students organised by the Department of Anatomy, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences (SMIMS), Gangtok, concluded here yesterday.



The workshop was awarded CME credit points by the Sikkim Medical Council.

Professor Dr Kumar MR Bhat, Chair of Anatomy & Director of Foundation courses, Ras A1

Khaimah College of Medical Sciences, UAE, was present as the external resource faculty.

The Internal resource faculty members were HOD Pharmacology, Professor (Dr) Supratim

Datta, HOD OBG, Professor (Dr) Anup Pradhan, HOD Surgery, Professor (Dr) Kumar Nishant, HOD Anatomy, Professor (Dr) Binod kr Tamang, Dr Polly Lama & Dr Karma Lakhi Bhutia (Anatomy). Organising Secretary for the workshop was Dr Polly Lama from Department of Anatomy, SMIMS.

The workshop was supported by Dr Ramdas Pai & Vasanthi Pai Endowment Fund.

SU hosts seminar on Hindi folk literature

GANGTOK, 28 AUG (PIB): A two-day seminar on "Lok Sahitya ki Rachnatmak Samvedna: Parampara evam Yugbodh," organized by the Department of Hindi, Sikkim University, got underway here today.

The inaugural session of the seminar was held at Cauveri Hall of SU and was presided over by Vice-Chancellor Prof. Avinash Khare.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof Chittaranjan Mishra, former Head of Department



of Hindi, Deendayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University and Convener, Sahitya Akademi Delhi.

Regional Head, Dr Rajiv Singh, Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra were also present at the National Seminar.

Head of Department, Prof Umapati Dixit, Antarashtriy Hindi Shikshan Vibhag, Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra were also present at the National Seminar.

BAS congratulates PV Sindhu

GANGTOK, 27 AUG: Badminton Association of Sikkim has congratulated PV Sindhu on winning a historic gold for the country in the BWF World championships recently. The association has also conveyed best wishes for future competitions.



CM chairs meeting with RMDD

GANGTOK, 27 AUG (IPR): Chief Minister, PS Tamang chaired a meeting with the Rural Management and Development Department (RMDD) in the conference hall of Tashiling, Secretariat today.

Minister RMDD, Sonam Lama, Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava, Secretary RMDD, CS Rao and Secretary to Chief Minister, SD Dhakal along with officers from RMDD were present in the meeting.

Swachha Sarvekshan Grameen which is to ensure the availability of toilets with sanitation facilities across the state was also launched by the Chief Minister at the outset of the meeting.

The Chief Minister during discussion mentioned the value of parking space in each nook and corner of our state, thus advised the concerned authorities to plan also for parking zone before starting the construction for any infrastructures.

Regarding garbage management plans, he remarked that unlike in towns, villages may not be suitable for the same strategy of the plans formulated for the town dwellers and thus suggested to act accordingly



keeping in mind the necessity and accessibility in the villages.

He also insisted on going ahead with proper verification of One Family One Job (OFOJ) employees so that their potential and actual qualification is collected and recorded to process further, enabling the administration to grant them suitable field for work.

In the context of network connectivity, the Chief Minister advised the department to upgrade connectivity in the GPUs upto cent percent so that there is no communication gap and convenience for all the Panchayat across the state.

It was also remarked that Zilla Panchayat members were to be given more powers, responsibilities and sig-

nificance, seeking their participation in the Gram Prasasan Kendra (GPK) at par with the other members.

The Chief Minister also suggested that the works that are initiated and allocated in the GPK to be planned in need base so that deserving people get benefitted and the grass root level is promoted.

Monitoring of each and every works to be made well and the officers and stakeholders are to be alert and strict while the government is standing behind to support the department.

All the funds are monitored perfectly so that the common people are privileged and the project pays ample dividends.

Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava informed that XVth Finance Com-

mission which is to come to our state and spend few days with us, get acknowledged about the performance and plans of RMDD. He also briefed guidelines in each and every aspects discussed in the meeting.

Director, Panchayati Raj, Prabhakar Rai elaborated on the works done and plans under GPDP and other domains of Panchayati Raj.

Director, SIRD/PR, Bishal Mukhiya elaborated the duties and performance of SIRD in collaboration with NIRD, in addition to Capacity Building for the people belonging to Gram Panchayat, Zilla Panchayat, NGO, Women Empowerment and youth based trainings were also detailed besides highlighting on Natural resources, protection, management, E Governance etc.

Additional Chief Engineer, Kewal Sharma highlighted on PMGSY Roads and many other relevant schemes works and achievements. Joint Chief Architect, Dinker Gurung displayed various plans for construction of Gareeb Awas Yojana, GPK Bhawan and BAC Bhawan.

The meeting is due to continue tomorrow.

MP calls on Governor



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

MP, Lok Sabha, Indra Hang Subba called on Governor, Ganga Prasad today. He requested the Government of India through the Governor to immediately withdraw Mount Kanchenjunga and other mountains in Sikkim from the list is-

sued by Union Ministry of Home Affairs, a press release informs.

The Governor assured the matter seriously and intimated the Central Government to withdraw permission for expedition to Mt Kanchenjunga and other mountains of Sikkim.

MYM Gangtok presents car bin to Minister



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 28 AUG:

Marwari Yuva Manch Gangtok branch presented a car bin to Transport Minister, Sanjeet kharel, DC East, Raj Yadav and SHO Sadar Thana, Bijendra Thapa today, a press release informs.

The Manch has also presented car bins to other officers and staff. Car bin is a national project of All India Mar-

wari Yuva Manch. Paschim Bengal Sikkim Prantiya Marwari Yuva Manch has also launched the project.

Paschim Bengal Sikkim Prantiya Marwari Yuva Manch president, Vipul Sharma and State general secretary, Dheeraj Nahar have congratulated Marwari Yuva Manch Gangtok team for launching the project successfully, the release mentions.

Chinmayanand case repetition of Unnao episode: Priyanka

LUCKNOW, AUG 28 (PTI): Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday said the alleged harassment of a woman student by ex-Union minister and BJP leader Swami Chinmayanand in Shahjahanpur appears to be a repetition of the Unnao case.

In a tweet, she alleged that in Uttar Pradesh, if a woman registers a complaint against a BJP leader her security is not guaranteed.

Gandhi was referring to the rape charge made by a 19-year-old woman from Unnao against MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who was expelled from the BJP recently. In Shahjahanpur, Chinmayanand was booked on Tuesday under IPC sections related to abduction in order to murder, and criminal intimidation.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's media advisor Mrityunjay Kumar was quick in his retort advising the Congress general secretary not to create confusion and the police have taken all the steps in this regard.

The Shahjahanpur police on Tuesday lodged an FIR against Chinmayanand after the student went missing fol-

lowing her allegation in a video clip that he had been harassing her.

Her father had filed a complaint with the police accusing Chinmayanand of sexually harassing her, a charge refuted by the BJP leader's lawyer who claimed it was a "conspiracy" to blackmail him.

The woman's father alleged that she has gone missing at the behest of the 72-year-old BJP leader, who heads Mumukshu ashram. She is a post-graduate student in one of the colleges run by the ashram.

"In Uttar Pradesh, this matter appears to be repetition of the Unnao case. If a woman complains against a BJP leader, then she is not guaranteed justice, even her own safety is not guaranteed," Priyanka Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi with hashtag 'EnoughIsEnough'.

The 19-year-old rape survivor from Unnao and her lawyer suffered critical injuries in a car-truck collision in Rae Bareilly district in Uttar Pradesh on July 28. Her two aunts died in the incident. The girl's family alleged that the accident was an attempt to eliminate her.

In another tweet, Gandhi said, "Not a sin-

gle day passes in Uttar Pradesh when the BJP government manages to assure women that you are safe and you will get justice if anything happens with you."

She also tagged new reports of the case involving Swami Chinmayanand in support of her tweets.

"Last year, the BJP government had withdrawn a rape case against accused (Chinmayanand). It's clear where the government is standing. UP girls are watching," Gandhi said in the microblogging site.

"The girl, who raised voice is missing or deliberately being taken away. What is happening with her nobody knows. Till when this will continue?" she posed in another tweet.

Reacting on Priyanka Gandhi's comments, Mrityunjay Kumar took to the same platform to say, "Dont create confusion Priyankaji. UP police has taken all steps."

"FIR has been registered and the family has been assured of their security. Read newspapers and know truth and stop playing politics by showing sympathy. People know all. Your veil has slipped and the real face is out," he said.

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Minister inspects road in Chandmari

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Roads & Bridges Minister, Samdup Lepcha conducted a road survey at Chandmari, Gangtok today, a press release informs. He was accompanied by Secretary Roads & Bridges Department, SDM East, Officials, Irrigation Department, GREF DE, DPO and public.

The Minister inspected the roads and submitted memorandum to concerned departments, officials and GREF. He also requested for quality roads and that the roads be completed within the stipulated time.

"CHALISWA" (PRAYER MEETING)

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

"AMEEN"

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

Time: 10:00 am onwards

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



MISSING



Hemlata Rai (63) has been missing from Namchi, South Sikkim since August 26 (Monday) at around 10am.

Please contact: 9932707969, 733358518, 9474524297

RURAL MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM GANGTOK

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

Dated: 26/08/2019

NOTICE FOR RE-TENDER

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

Sd/-

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

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

Young & Vulnerable

The wrong people appear to be catching 'em young. And we don't mean the cops

A 13-year-old finds himself among cops. The "routine checking" of vehicles which appears to the stop-and-frisk standard that passes for policing in the State allegedly found the lad in possession of Spasmo-Proxyvon, a common prescription drug of abuse.

The incident immediately raises several flags, starting with the disconcerting confirmation that it appears has become "routine" for cops to suspect even 13-year-olds to be peddlers. That has to be the case, because by a recent admission of Sikkim Police, they are mindful of differentiating between peddlers and addicts and it is unlikely they have reached such levels of mindful concern that they are pulling out minors from jeeps to counsel them. So the kid was obviously "intercepted" on suspicion of being a peddler and even interrogated to ferret out the source of his supplies. As for the supplies, in this case from a while back, he had six capsules of SP, a volume that anyone can purchase over the counter in Siliguri. There is also the possibility that these were prescriptions he had picked up for someone because six is neither enough for a peddler nor even a day's supply for a habitual user.

The incident also raises the much bigger worry on the age of initiation among the young to experimenting with substances of abuse. If the kid is indeed a user, then Sikkim better start deploying more than just cops to combats "drugs". There have been instances when much younger children have turned up in school under the influence of prescription drugs. These would earlier be dismissed as one-off incidents of a ragging gone bad or copy-cat experimentation. But, if children as young as those who have barely stepped into the teen-years are into the habit without alarm bells having gone off everywhere, one worries about how deep disinterest has seeped into societal conscience.

The police action should also have everyone shuddering at the thought that there is a very real possibility that the very young are being used as 'mules' to transship substances of abuse. Agreed, six capsules do not a consignment make, but the fact that cops picked the child out from a jeep-full of passengers suggests that this mode of smuggling is being used and that even the police are aware of it now. Maybe the teen was being used as a 'mule' because his age would not rouse suspicion among the personnel manning the check-posts who have become rather effective interceptors of substances of abuse. Maybe this was a dry run. Too much speculating? Can there be too little hyperventilating when it comes to news-reports of a 13-year-old "caught" with drugs in a vehicle coming into Sikkim?

The vehicle was stopped, the lad picked out, checked and the substances confiscated. While the fact that children as young as 13 are abusing or are being abused as couriers might come as a shock for the sanitised distance that most readers have from such incidents, but, as already mentioned, the fact that the cops thought it necessary to check, suggests that this is not a very new strategy of the peddlers or even a very young age for people to use. Given the increased policing at the check-posts, peddlers have constantly been devising new ways to ferry in contraband - from using women as couriers to filling tyres and tubes with contraband to opting for keeping it in plain sight on the dashboard, hoping that the obvious would be overlooked, they have tried everything; and the cops have learnt to expect ingenuity in how drugs are brought in. But the desperation of the peddlers is not necessarily a positive. For one, the fact that they continue bringing in stuff despite the risks [SADA is a cruel act] is proof that addiction has not gone down in Sikkim, neither have addiction levels.

The deployment of innocents as couriers or the conversion of minors into the habit is also suggestive of the depths of depravity the business is willing to fall to. This should worry everyone concerned. The children are already disadvantaged in Sikkim where an elder generation pursues different priorities and rarely makes the time or funds for the young. The underprivileged, who should be receiving more societal attention, are left exposed to the wily mechanisations of peddlers and their ilk and hence vulnerable to exploitation as couriers or initiated into addiction. Both of these are happening and a blatant abuse of what children deserve plays on. The fact that at a time when government schools across the state are having their final exams, a 13-year-old was "caught" with "drugs" at an inter-state check-post raises too many more distress flags than the State is apparently willing to even notice.

A closer inspection by the State and its people is urgently required to question how such young children are being left exposed to the temptation of drugs...

How New York's Union Square helped shape free speech in the US

JOANNA MERWOOD-SALISBURY
theconversation.com

Public space is an essential component of democratic cities. Modelled on the agora of ancient Greece, it is a marketplace for the exchange of goods and ideas, a place where public affairs are debated and disputes resolved.

But historically, access was restricted. Famously, the classical agora was open only to the "free-born" and closed to women and slaves. Throughout history, just as access to public space is contentious, so are the rights of citizenship.

Union Square in New York is an important site in American labor history. In *Design for the Crowd: Patriotism and Protest in Union Square*, published this month, I explore how the history of this square, small in size but large in political importance, illustrates the shifting meanings and inherent tensions of public space as an epicenter of civic life.

A DEMOCRATIC LANDSCAPE

Even in liberal democratic societies, the right to appear in public is mediated, dependent on local social, political and legal convention. In the U.S., for example, although freedom of speech and freedom of assembly are enshrined in the 18th-century Constitution, it wasn't until the early 20th century that those freedoms were fully recognized in law.

Nearly 150 years ago, a modest park in the middle of New York City helped effect that change.

The 19th-century American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted is best known for Central Park, often referred to as a "democratic landscape." Exploiting the natural features of its craggy site, it was designed as a city wilderness, a place of respite from the stresses of urban life intended for use by all New Yorkers.

But few know that Olmsted was also involved with the renovation of Union Square Park, two miles to the south. Smaller and more traditional in its design, this park was a democratic landscape in a different sense - a modern plaza for public meetings.

Early in the 20th century, contentious political rallies held in the plaza helped progressive social reformers argue for the legal protection of freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

A PEOPLE'S FORUM



Union Square was not planned as a public space in the political sense: enclosed by an iron fence, it was an amenity for the elite residents who lived close by.

The square gained a reputation as a site for political rallies during the Civil War. Following the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in 1861, thousands of New Yorkers gathered around the park's statue of George Washington for a demonstration urging national unity.

This statue, depicting Washington on horseback, was modelled on the classical statue of Emperor Marcus Aurelius in Rome. At the end of the war, the citizens of New York raised funds for a matching statue of Abraham Lincoln, depicting him holding a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation. As Union Square transformed from a residential neighbourhood to a busy commercial centre, these statues became popular focal points for public meetings.

In 1872, Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux redesigned Union Square. They tore down the fence, rejecting the focus on heroic figures and introducing instead a modern American version of the agora.

While the statues of Washington and Lincoln commemorated the military and political triumphs of the past, Olmsted and Vaux's plaza was designed to facilitate democracy as an ongoing and active process.

Union Square became the place where working class New Yorkers,

many of them recent immigrants, met to demand access to the benefits of American citizenship. Located between the sweatshops of Lower Manhattan and the department stores of Ladies' Mile, it was the site of boisterous labor meetings, including the first Labor Day parade in 1882. The plaza became the place where the city's emerging industrial working class demonstrated its political strength.

HOME OF DISCONTENT

The unity and common purpose that characterized the first Labor Day parade did not last. Within a decade, radical groups splintered away from the mainstream wing of the labor movement. From 1890, socialists and anarchists began a new tradition, the celebration of May Day - and as this grew, Union Square acquired a reputation as a forum for anti-American ideas.

In response, police put extreme pressure on political meetings, denying permits, infiltrating the activities of meeting organisers, censoring speeches and breaking up demonstrations by force.

By the early 1890s, the mass rallies that regularly occurred at Union Square seemed to foreshadow complete social disintegration. In 1893, the anarchist Emma Goldman was arrested and charged with inciting a riot following an address to a mass meeting of the unemployed. Her trial was a national sensation.

In his defense, her lawyer Abraham Oakey Hall argued that Goldman had committed no crime. He quoted

the section of the penal code that allowed for "peaceable assemblage of lawful purposes of protest and petition". Though unsuccessful, this defense helped promote a new interpretation of the rights to freedom of speech guaranteed in the First Amendment.

Goldman found little sympathy among the general population. However, her arrest fostered an alliance among radical political groups, labor organisations and progressive social reformers, leading to the formation of the non-partisan Free Speech League.

Prompted by Olmsted's redesign, which offered New Yorkers a new kind of forum, political meetings held at Union Square helped change judicial opinion. After the turn of the 20th century, these meetings became key tests for the free speech movement, with liberal commentators decrying the suppression of political speech as a violation of the fundamental rights of American citizens.

Influenced by a progressive municipal administration, the police and the Parks Departments were increasingly protective of peaceful political rallies in the early 1900s.

This attitude anticipated new rulings in the Supreme Court after the first world war. In this sense Olmsted's Union Square deserves to be remembered, just as much as Central Park, as a democratic landscape.

[the writer is Professor of Architecture, Victoria University of Wellington]

How male 'porn superfans' really view women

PAUL J. MAGINN, ALETA BALDWIN, BARBARA BRENTS & CRYSTAL A. JACKSON
theconversation.com

In 2007, the pornography website Pornhub averaged 1 million visits per day. By 2018 this had increased to 92 million visits per day - or 33.5 billion views over the course of a year.

As an interdisciplinary group of "sexademics," we're interested in porn's cultural role and impact. A common question we hear is whether this growth in porn consumption is good or bad for society.

Of course, the honest-but-unsatisfying answer is: It depends. But sometimes studying various aspects of porn consumption can change the way we think about it.

You might have heard, for example, that porn fuels misogynistic attitudes and sexual violence.

If this were the case, you would think that people who consumed a lot of porn would hold particularly negative views towards women.

So we decided to study a group of men whom we've dubbed "porn superfans" - those who are so enthusiastic about porn that they'll attend the AVN Adult Entertainment Expo in Las Vegas. We wanted to compare their attitudes about gender equality to those of everyday Americans.

PROFILING THE SUPERFANS

Our study was inspired, in part, by the journalists and politicians who have said that porn consumption is at epidemic levels - so much so that it constitutes a public health crisis.

They write and speak of the perils of porn addiction and objectification, how porn encourages "hatred of women" and "sexual toxicity."

Would this play out in the results of our study?

The 294 expo attendees we surveyed certainly differed from the general population in a number of ways.

Their average age was 44 years old. Almost half - 47.3% - indicated that they watched porn "less than once a day, but more than once a week." Over one-third - 36.1% - indicated they watch porn "every day." In other words, over 80% of the attendees in our sample watched porn multiple times a week. Only 34.1% of them were married,

but they were highly educated: 60.5% had a college degree or higher.

We compared these results to the results from the General Social Survey, a nationally representative survey conducted every couple of years that charts social trends.

This survey only asks whether people have seen an X-rated movie in the last year, and 37.6% of the men indicated that they had. Just over half of the men in the General Social Survey sample were married, while just 28.7% of them had a college degree or higher.

MISOGYNY UNMASKED?

But we were most interested in comparing the gender attitudes of each group. So we asked the expo attendees the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with four statements from the General Social Survey:

1. "A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work."
2. "Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women."
3. "It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family."
4. "Because of past discrimination, employers should make special efforts to hire and promote qualified women."

After parsing the results, we discovered that male porn superfans actually expressed more progressive attitudes towards gender equality on two of the questions. For two others, they indicated just as progressive - or, said another way, just as sexist - attitudes as the general population.

Over 90% of porn superfans - compared to just over 70% of the GSS sample - agreed that working mothers can have just as warm and secure relationships with their children than non-working mothers.

For the statement that men and women should hold traditional gender roles within a family, 80% of porn superfans disagreed. Nationally, 73% percent of respondents disagree with this statement.

A similar proportion - 80% - of AVN Expo at-

tendees and General Social Survey respondents disagreed with the statement that men, rather than women, were more emotionally suited for politics.

Although a majority of porn superfans and General Social Survey respondents - 72.4% and 74.5%, respectively - agreed that women, due to past discrimination, should get special preference in the workplace, this was the least supported statement we tested. Notably, however, this level of support is higher than a recent national poll indicating that 65% of Americans support affirmative action for women.

PORN CRISIS OR MORAL PANIC?

These findings challenge what porn scholars call the "negative effects paradigm," which sees porn as an inherently bad thing that cultivates harmful attitudes.

Our survey isn't the only one that upends this way of thinking. A 2016 study based on General Social Survey data found that male porn consumers held more egalitarian views on women in position of power, women working outside the home, and abortion than those who didn't view porn.

And while most porn is produced and consumed by men, a growing number of women - straight and LGBTQ - are producing porn and consuming different genres of porn, a trend that's largely been ignored.

For now, it's probably best to pump the brakes on the idea that pornography causes negative attitudes toward women. The evidence just isn't there, and much of today's rhetoric about pornography seems to be more of a moral panic than public health crisis.

[Paul J. Maginn is Associate Professor of Urban/Regional Planning, University of Western Australia; Aleta Baldwin is Assistant Professor of Kinesiology, Health and Nutrition, The University of Texas at San Antonio; Barbara Brents is Professor of Sociology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Crystal A. Jackson is Assistant Professor of Sociology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice]

Abhishek Banerjee sets target of over 250 seats for TMC in 2021 poll

KOLKATA, AUG 28 (PTI): Senior Trinamool Congress leader and MP Abhishek Banerjee on Wednesday set a target of winning 250 plus seats in the next Legislative Assembly poll.

Abhishek, who heads the youth wing of the TMC and is nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, said the BJP's thinking of winning Bengal has no basis.

"In the next assembly poll in 2021, we should fight to win 250 plus seats in the state. The BJP thinks it can win Bengal. But they are wrong.

"If our party supremo Mamata Banerjee permits, we would score 10 goals against BJP everyday and they won't stand a chance against us," Abhishek said while addressing TMC's students wing-Trinamool Chatra Parishad- foundation day rally here.

The total strength of the West Bengal assembly is 294.

They (BJP) has emptied the coffers of central government and RBI and are lecturing others on financial issues, he said.

While referring to Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s decision to give Rs 1.76 lakh crore to the Centre, Abhishek said the reserve money of the central bank has also been exhausted due to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government.

BJP's West Bengal unit president Dilip Ghosh, while reacting to Abhishek's claim, said he is living in fool's paradise.

"He is living in fool's paradise if he thinks that TMC will win 250 seats. The TMC would find it tough to get even 30 seats and acquire main opposition party status," Ghosh said. The BJP, in the general election this year, bagged 18 of the 42 seats in the state, four less than the ruling TMC. The TMC's tally came down from 34 in 2014 to 22 seats.

In the last few years, the saffron party has made deep inroads in Bengal and emerged as the main challenger to the ruling TMC by pushing the Congress and the Left Front to distant third and fourth positions respectively.

It's leaders are now asserting that their next target was to unseat Mamata Banerjee in the 2021 assembly elections.

Assam topped northeast in road accidents last year: Report

GUWAHATI, AUG 28 (PTI): Assam had topped the northeastern region in the number of road accidents last year, a report published by the state police said. A total of 2,966 people were killed and 7,375 injured in 8,248 accidents last year, according to the report titled 'An analytical glimpse on road accidents in Assam, made available to PTI on Wednesday.

The report said the state had ranked 16th in the country in the number of road accidents.

It said 30 people were killed and 89 injured in every 100 accidents in the

Officers working 24x7 for 'error-free' final NRC list in Assam

GUWAHATI, AUG 28 (PTI): With just three days left for the publication of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam, officers are working round-the-clock to ensure an "error-free" final list, official sources said on Wednesday.

Data compilation is complete and the NRC offices at the district, circle and block levels are working 24X7 to ensure no bonafide citizen is left out, they said.

The final NRC list will be published on August 31.

"Quality control checks are underway to ensure that the NRC is error-free and this would continue till the last day," sources in the NRC state coordinator's office told PTI.

Officers engaged in the exercise of updating the list are in constant touch with the government departments concerned, including the border police wing and the Foreigners Tribunals (FTs) so that name of any person against whom cases are pending in the



tribunals are not included in the NRC.

Meanwhile, the office of the NRC state coordinator issued a notice on Wednesday on how to check the names in the final list.

"Those who submitted claims as they were not included in the complete draft published on July 30, 2018 or excluded by the Additional Draft Exclusion List published on June 26, 2019, and those who had any objection filed against their inclusion, can see their

status in the supplementary list of inclusion by visiting designated NSK/office of circle officers/office of deputy commissioners," the notice said.

People can also check their status online by typing their Application Receipt Numbers (ARNs) on the NRC website from August 31 under the title 'Supplementary List of Inclusions/Exclusions Status'.

Those who were included in the complete draft and not excluded in the Additional Draft

Exclusion List, but were called for hearings from July 5, 2019 onwards, can also check their status in the same manner, it said.

In addition, people who were not called for the hearings have "no cause to worry about their inclusion status, as they continue to be included in the final NRC", the notice added.

Assam DGP Kuladhar Saikia said the police is "fully prepared" to prevent any untoward law and order situation in the run-up to the publication

of the NRC and after.

The state government had on Tuesday said it will provide free legal aid to "needy" people whose names do not figure in it, as it sought to assuage the fears of bonafide Indians who apprehend losing citizenship.

The process of updation of NRC is being conducted by the Registrar General of India. The Supreme Court is monitoring the exercise.

It is for the first time since 1951 that the NRC is being updated in Assam to identify bonafide residents and deport illegal immigrants.

When the draft NRC was published on July 30, 2018, there was a huge controversy over the exclusion of 40.7 lakh people from it. The draft NRC included the names of 2.9 crore people out of the total 3.29 crore applications.

In the list published in June 2019, over a lakh more people were excluded. Assam has seen a huge influx of people from Bangladesh since the early 20th century.

Presidency University authorities, students lock horns over screening of documentary on Babri mosque demolition

KOLKATA, AUG 28 (PTI): A section of students of Presidency University on Wednesday declared they will organise an open air screening of 'Ram Ke Naam', a 1992 documentary based on Babri Masjid demolition, on its premises after being denied permission by varsity authorities to show it in its auditorium.

The Dean of Students, Arun Maity, had told the students verbally that "such films cannot be screened" when they met him on Tuesday seeking permission to screen the documentary at the university auditorium, the

spokesman for students, Sayan Chakraborty, claimed.

He said that the students were asked to screen "a non-political film" instead.

As a result the students have vowed to screen 'Ram Ke Naam', the documentary by Anand Patwardhan, Chakraborty said.

"Nothing else will be screened," he said.

"We will now screen it on August 30, in open air, at the campus portico where several sit-ins and fasts on various issues took place in the past," Chakraborty said on be-

half of the student organising committee.

The students say they had planned to screen the documentary at the university auditorium on Monday, August 26 but were denied permission.

When they approached the dean of students for the second time on Tuesday, they were refused permission again.

Maity had said on Tuesday that the institute is yet to confirm whether the students followed proper procedure to seek permission for screening the film in the auditorium.

"The institute has a glorious past and has always stood for liberal expression of views. At the same time Presidency never supported any attempt to create division among people," a top varsity official said on Wednesday.

The organising students maintained that screening of documentaries and discussions on various contemporary issues had taken place in the university in the past without any hindrance.

The documentary, 'Ram ke Naam', explores the campaign by the

Vishva Hindu Parishad to build a Ram temple at the site of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, as well as the subsequent communal violence.

It was screened at Jadavpur University on Monday at the initiative of the students of its film studies department.

The ABVP had objected to the screening of the documentary in JU in a protest note to the Registrar.

There was no untoward incident during the screening on Monday, an official of Jadavpur University Teachers' Association had said.

NRC: parties express apprehension to confuse people, says AASU

GUWAHATI, AUG 28 (PTI): The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) on Wednesday said it has full faith in the updation process of the NRC and claimed that the apprehension expressed by various political parties is a ploy to confuse people as they want to protect their votebanks.

The AASU is a signatory of the Assam Accord, a 1985 document that provided for "detection, deletion and deportation" of illegal foreigners from Assam.

Under the monitoring of the Supreme Court, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) is being updated in the BJP-ruled state to prepare a list of genuine Indians. The final version of it is slated to be published on August 31.

"We have full faith in the process. Different political parties are trying to confuse the people by expressing apprehensions at a stage when the NRC is to be published in a few days," AASU Chief Advisor Samujjal Bhattacharya told PTI.

Eight people were killed and 20 injured on an average in road accidents in the state every day last year, it said.

"Lack of knowledge of road safety rules is one of the main causes of ac-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who was also the BJP president earlier, and Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal had earlier "hailed the publication of the draft NRC but suddenly they started criticising the process," he said.

Former Congress chief minister Tarun Gogoi who had claimed it was his government that initiated the NRC process, recently alleged that the register is going to be just a "scrap of paper", Bhattacharya claimed.

"Political parties seek to protect their vote banks involving both Hindus and Muslims and these criticisms are just a ploy to confuse people," he alleged.

The BJP government is there at the Centre since 2014 and in the state from 2016, and both have the power to resolve the foreigners' issue, the AASU leader said.

"Before both the assembly poll and recent Lok Sabha elections, the BJP promised that they

Majority of these were caused due to negligent and callous driving," state Director General of Police Kuladhar Saikia said. Saikia said many deaths and injuries due to road accidents could have

will ensure publication of a foreigner-free NRC but now they have adopted a different stand," the AASU leader said.

The BJP and the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad are claiming that a large number of foreigners have been included in the NRC drafts.

The state and central governments had moved the Supreme Court seeking permission for 20 per cent sample re-verification to find out wrongful inclusions and exclusions of persons in the NRC. The apex court rejected the plea on July 23.

The AASU leader urged political parties and the governments not to confuse people but cooperate in the process of the NRC publication.

During the last 34 years since the signing of the Assam Accord, there has been no detection or deportation or sealing of the Indo-Bangladesh border, Bhattacharya claimed.

A six-year agitation by the AASU demanding

identification and deportation of illegal immigrants culminated with the signing of the Assam Accord by the Rajiv Gandhi government and the AASU on August 15, 1985.

Successive state governments failed to take concrete steps to resolve the foreigners' issue.

The ongoing process of updating the NRC started with the setting up of the NRC State Coordinator's Office in 2013 and the actual fieldwork began in February 2015 under the monitoring of the Supreme Court.

Assam, which had faced an influx of people from Bangladesh since the early 20th century, is the only state having an NRC which was first prepared in 1951.

It is for the first time since then that the NRC is being updated.

"If genuine Indian citizens are left out, the AASU will extend all help to them," he said and requested the people to maintain peace.

Forty eight per cent of the accidents had occurred on the national highways while 26 per cent of those had taken place on the state highways and other roads.

CBI summons Sovan Chatterjee, Trinamool MP in Narada case



KOLKATA, AUG 28 (PTI): The CBI has summoned former Kolkata Mayor Sovan Chatterjee, who recently joined the BJP, in connection with the Narada sting case, sources said on Wednesday.

The investigating agency has also summoned Trinamool Congress MP Aparupa Poddar, they said.

Chatterjee has been asked to appear before the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday and Poddar in the first week of September, the sources in the probe agency said.

In Delhi, the CBI earlier in the day questioned Trinamool Congress' Rajya Sabha MP K D Singh in connection with the case in which some persons resembling party leaders were seen accepting money, officials said.

The agency has also

CBI questions TMC MP KD Singh in Narada case

NEW DELHI, AUG 28 (PTI): The CBI questioned Trinamool Congress' Rajya Sabha MP K D Singh in connection with Narada sting case in which some persons resembling party leaders were seen accepting money, officials said.

Singh arrived at the agency headquarters in the morning and his questioning is going on, they said.

The agency has also called Mathew Samuels, the editor of Narada news, who had provided the recordings purportedly showing alleged payments received by politicians and senior bureaucrats of West Bengal Government.

called Mathew Samuels, the editor of Narada news, who had provided the recordings purportedly showing alleged payments received by politicians and senior bureaucrats of West Bengal government.

In the sting operation, which was claimed to have been carried out in 2014, some persons resembling senior TMC leaders are seen accepting money from the representatives of a fictitious company in return for favours.

The CBI had booked 12 top TMC leaders, including MPs and West Bengal ministers, and an IPS officer in connection with the case.

An FIR was lodged for alleged criminal conspiracy under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act dealing with bribery and criminal misconduct.

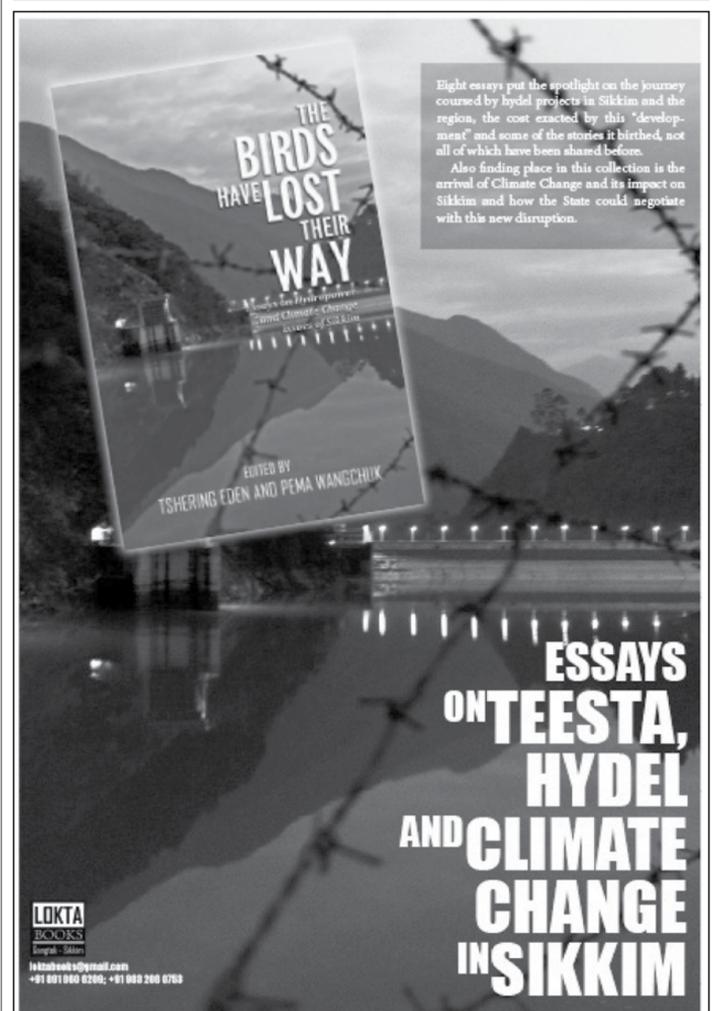
tion, which was claimed to have been carried out in 2014, some persons resembling senior TMC leaders are seen accepting money from the representatives of a fictitious company in return for favours.

The CBI had booked 12 top TMC leaders, including MPs and West Bengal ministers, and an IPS officer in connection with the case.

An FIR was lodged for alleged criminal conspiracy under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act dealing with bribery and criminal misconduct.

The maximum sentence for these crimes ranges from five to seven years of imprisonment.

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In the sting opera-

PM congratulates Indian para badminton team

NEW DELHI, AUG 28 (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday congratulated the Indian para badminton team which won 12 medals at the BWF World Championship, saying their performance is motivating. India finished with 12 medals, including three gold at the championship. "130 crore Indians are extremely proud of the Indian Para Badminton contingent... Congratulations to the entire team, whose success is extremely gladdening and motivating. Each of these players is remarkable," the prime minister wrote on Twitter.

SA T20s: Dhoni unlikely as selectors ready to persist with Pant

KUSHAN SARKAR
NEW DELHI, AUG 28 (PTI): Mahendra Singh Dhoni may have put his international retirement on hold but he is unlikely to be selected for India's three-match T20 home series against South Africa starting September 15 in Dharamsala.

The team for the series is expected to be picked on September 4. The remaining two games will be played at Mohali (September 18) and Bengaluru (September 22). In all likelihood, the squad that blanked West Indies 3-0 is likely to be retained (subject to fitness) and the selection committee wants to continue building towards World T20 in Australia in October 2020. "There are only 22 T20 Internationals before India play their first World T20 game and selectors are clear in their vision that it's time to move forward," a senior BCCI official privy to developments in selection committee told PTI on Wednesday.

"They are planning on getting a pool of three keepers ready for limited overs, especially T20s," he added.

It is still not clear whether the BCCI brass or the selection committee will speak to Dhoni to enquire about his plans like they did before the West Indies tour when the former captain informed that he would be taking a break to serve his regiment in Territorial Army.

"Retirement is an individual decision and selectors or for that matter, no one has any right to decide on that front. But they have every right to decide the roadmap for the 2020 World T20 and that's to give Rishabh Pant maximum chances," the official explained.

It is learnt that the second and third option for the selection committee is Sanju Samson, whose batting is considered to be on par with Pant and India A regular Ishan Kishan. While Pant remains the first choice across formats, the selectors are also factoring in the fitness and workload management.

Borja Bastón: how Swansea striker went from misfit to undroppable force

BEN FISHER
theGuardian

Thirty-eight days ago Borja Bastón replaced Oli McBurnie in the final throes of Swansea's third pre-season friendly. It was there at St James Park in Exeter where the Spaniard's improbable resurrection began in earnest, with his return to the first-team fold after an 805-day hiatus paving the way for an extraordinary rebirth that has led to the striker firing Swansea to second in the Championship and topping the goalscoring charts, with five goals in five games. In weeks Borja has gone from a lesser-spotted misfit to something of an undroppable force.

A £15.5m club-record signing three years ago, Borja proved a poster boy for the wrong reasons, a footnote of Swansea's sorry decline after one goal from 20 top-flight matches en route to relegation. When Borja struck on the opening day this season, it was his first Swansea goal for 1,022 days, only his fifth league start and his first 90 minutes for the club since November 2016, when Bob Bradley was in charge.

The numbers provide some perspective for a player afforded a second chance under Steve Cooper, who is yet to taste defeat as Swansea's head coach. The club have made their best start to a league campaign for 41 years and have a tasty clash at the leaders, Leeds United, on Saturday to follow Wednesday's Carabao Cup tie at home to Cambridge.



Swansea's home form has been particularly irresistible; only Manchester City have won at the Liberty Stadium since Boxing Day.

Borja's renaissance was envisaged by few fans, with the forward – who spent the past two seasons on loan in La Liga – explicitly for sale this summer and absent from the 24-man squad that travelled to Andalucía in pre-season, when he stayed at home to train with the under-23s. "He has been a bit 'out of sight, out of mind' in the last couple of years and he didn't really do anything in Spain to grab the attention," says Steve Carroll, the editor of the Swansea Oh Swansea fanzine. "No one really expected him to come back and what he has done has been a big surprise. There was

always a belief that he had that ability but you just didn't think we'd ever see it at Swansea."

When McBurnie, Swansea's talisman, was sold on the eve of the season, Borja was handed the No 9 shirt. Borja is in the final year of his contract but together with André Ayew – the club's highest-earner and also made available by the chairman, Trevor Birch, during another summer of upheaval – £33.5m-worth of talent is determined not to go quietly. Jefferson Montero and Jordan Ayew have been offloaded and it is not impossible Borja or André Ayew – or both – will depart before the European deadline on Monday, though the sales of McBurnie to Sheffield United and Daniel James, who came within minutes of signing for Leeds in January, to Manchester United have given Swan-

sea, who expect the pair to stay, some financial leeway. "We had been desperately hoping that somebody would come in and take them off our hands; now we're looking at it and thinking: 'What happens if we do let them go and if we lose them?'" says Nigel Davies, the editor of the fanzine A Touch Far Vetched.

Borja's transformation has been particularly costly for Davies, who, along with fellow season-ticket holder Aaron O'Shea, has pledged to donate £1 for every Championship point and goal Swansea score this season to the local Samaritans branch. "Every time Borja scores now, there is a bit of a cheer and then it's: 'That's another quid gone but, if he can hold off on the hat-trick until my next payday, I'd appreciate it,'" Davies says, laughing. "It will help them with some

of their training costs, which in turn may save someone's life."

Cooper, a former academy manager at Liverpool who won the Under-17 World Cup with England two years ago, has continued where Graham Potter left off, handing a core of young players responsibility and opportunity to thrive, with the Jamaica-born winger Jordan Garrick the latest youngster to follow a path from the under-23s to the first team, in the manner of James, Connor Roberts and Joe Rodon. Garrick's explosive speed and trickery helped win a penalty at QPR (where Swansea were cheered on by McBurnie in the away end) and the 21-year-old has not looked back since swapping Ossett Albion and training with the rugby league side Bradford Bulls for Swansea 18 months ago.

Keemo Paul replaces Cummins in Windies' squad for 2nd Test

ST. JOHN'S (ANTIGUA), AUG 28 (PTI): All-rounder Keemo Paul has replaced fast bowler Miguel Cummins in the West Indies' 13-member squad for the second Test against India, starting on Friday in Jamaica. Paul, who missed the first Test due to an ankle injury, is now available for selection, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) said in a statement.

Besides, West Indies' interim selection committee has also decided to keep wicket-keeper Jahmar Hamilton with the squad. Shane Dowrich,

meanwhile, has returned to Barbados to continue his rehabilitation after being ruled out of the series with an ankle injury.

India won the first Test by 318 runs in Antigua. The Virat Kohli-led visitors also emerged victorious in the limited-overs leg of the tour. West Indies squad: Jason Holder (captain), Kraigg Braithwaite, Darren Bravo, Shamarh Brooks, John Campbell, Roston Chase, Rakheem Cornwall, Jahmar Hamilton, Shannon Gabriel, Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope, Keemo Paul, Kemar Roach.

New book gives in-depth account of Obama's years in office

NEW DELHI, AUG 28 (PTI): A new book on Barack Obama will give an in-depth account of the former US President's years in office, while examining his legacy as it stands today, publishers Penguin India announced in a statement on Wednesday.

"Obama: The Call of History" written by Peter Baker, the Chief White House Correspondent for The New York Times, chronicles a period of "great hope, tumult, accomplishments, and, yes, failure". The book tells the story of a young president who "took on the worst financial disaster since the Great Depression, forged a controversial health care program, watched anxiously in the Situation Room after approving the raid that killed Osama Bin Laden

and endured mid-term election defeats".

"In a presidency buffeted by one crisis after another, he struggled with the Syrian civil war; a Russian invasion of its neighbor; the rise of the Islamic State, and, at home, often violent racial strife and recalcitrant Congress," the publishers said. The book also features new details about the final months of the Obama presidency as Russia sought to intervene in American democracy, and assesses the impact of the ongoing Donald Trump presidency on Obama's legacy.

"His first line in the history books was written the day he won office as the first African-American president, but he was determined to offer more than simply a new complexion in the Oval Office," writes Baker.

World c'ships bronze medallist Praneeth eyeing consistent show to seal Olympic berth early

AMIT KUMAR DAS
NEW DELHI, AUG 28 (PTI): Bolstered by a historic World championships bronze, Indian shuttler B Sai Praneeth is now eyeing a consistent show in the season's remaining tournaments to seal his Tokyo Olympic spot by early next year.

Last week, Praneeth became the first Indian male player in 36 years to win a medal at the BWF World Championship, emulating the legendary Prakash Padukone, who had clinched a bronze at the 1983 edition.

His historic feat saw him jump four places to World No.15 in the latest world rankings.

Only two shuttlers from one country, inside the top-16 on April 30, 2020, will qualify for the Tokyo Olympics and Praneeth said his chances are also bettered by the fact that he does not have to defend ranking points in the tournaments he will participate in from now. "...till Swiss Open next year. So there are a few tournaments where I can play well and give some good performances and maintain my rankings for the Olympics," Praneeth told PTI.

"The Swiss Open is the only tournament in the qualification period where I have to defend lot of points. Last year, I didn't play China, Korea and lost early in Denmark and French. I lost in first round at Hong Kong as well." So if I can reach

the semifinals and quarterfinals consistently or win a tournament, that will help seal my ranking," he explained.

The 27-year-old from Hyderabad, however, said he needs to work on his fitness to trouble big players such as two-time world champion Kento Momota.

"I know if I am fit I can play much better. In the last few tournaments, I have been performing well, so it gave me confidence. For me, fitness has always been the key and I still need to be more fit to beat players such as Momota," said Praneeth, who lost to the Japanese in the semifinals at Basel.

Asked where he would place Momota compared to greats such as Lee Chong Wei and Lin Dan, Praneeth said: "As of now, he is the best player. In his time, Lee Chong Wei and Lin Dan too were strong but I think it wouldn't be fair to compare."

Praneeth, who has been conferred with the Arjuna Award this year, said the news of the national award came as a massive boost for him ahead of the World Championship.

"The year has gone well for me and knowing about the Arjuna just ahead of the World Championship, naturally gave me an additional boost," he said.

"Winning the last point in the quarterfinals against Jonatan (Chris-

tie) is a moment that I will always remember. It was a big thing, I knew it would be a record for India if I win."

Asked if there has ever been any self doubt during his years of struggle, Praneeth said: "I always thought about it but sometimes even if I lost, I thought of playing a good game. I gave some bad performances because of my fitness. But whenever I had enough time for practice, I played well."

On way to the World Championship semifinals, Praneeth had stunned two Indonesians in straight games -- World No.9 Anthony Sini-suka Ginting and World No.4 Christie.

Talking about the role of the coaches -- Pulella Gopichand and Park Tae Sang, Praneeth said, "The inputs of the coaches were important for the win. Sometimes in pressure situation during matches, a player can't think anything and the coaches can provide the strategy. "So both the coaches helped me, especially Gopi sir, in the quarterfinals he gave me some inputs which I didn't even think of." Praneeth also attributed his success to the endurance training of new foreign coach Park.

"Park is very committed. He is always behind the players. He is helping us and played a role in our success. His endurance training, long sessions ahead of the tournament helped," he said.

We haven't invested in coaches: Gopichand worried about Indian badminton's future

Hyderabad, Aug 28 (PTI): India might be celebrating a world champion in P V Sindhu right now but national badminton coach Pulella Gopichand feels there are reasons to be worried about the future as the country has not "invested enough in coaches".

Sindhu, who is also an Olympic silver-medallist, became India's first world champion in the sport with a straight-game triumph over Japan's Nozomi Okuhara in the summit clash on Sunday. She returned to a frenzied welcome on Monday night.

However, Gopichand feels the country needs to wake up to the fact that there aren't enough coaches to handle the talent that is rising.

"...we have not invested enough in coaches," he said here with Sindhu by his side at a press conference on Tuesday night.

Gopichand, a Dronacharya awardee, is credited with grooming not just Sindhu but also the trail-blazing Saina Nehwal and K Srikanth among others. "We actually have a big vacuum in terms of producing coaches of quality and it's not a training program. It's an ecosystem issue. So, we need to work harder to

bridge that gap," he said. Gopichand said although there are some foreign coaches like South Korean Kim Ji-Hyun on board, more are needed to deal with the talent that is coming up.

He said more coaches are required to strategise for matches against seasoned international players like Lin Dan.

"That we have not achieved. Hopefully, when this generation of people retire, we will actually get these people. If these people get back into coaching, then we'll actually get back numbers which are required," he said.

"It's a question without an easy answer and till that time, foreign coaches need to support," he said.

The former All England champion said the hectic calendar of the sport is also the reason why a larger pool of coaches and physiotherapists is required.

"It's also our own doing. Because, we have grown too fast and the infrastructure around us hasn't grown enough.

"That's a big problem we have and we need to sort it out. We need to talk about it and collectively find an answer," Gopichand said.

I am working towards a "miracle": Narang on fifth Olympic appearance



NEW DELHI, AUG 28 (PTI): The unassuming Gagan Narang on Wednesday put down the prospects of a fifth Olympic appearance to a "miracle", one that he is relentlessly "working towards" by training on and off the range.

For one of India's finest practitioners of rifle shooting, securing a fifth Olympic berth is not beyond the bounds of possibility, but the 36-year-old was modestly personified when discussions turned to the 2020 Tokyo Games.

"I have started training, Tokyo will happen or not, only the upcoming competitions will tell me," Narang, a bronze-medallist in the 2012 London edition, said during an interaction.

"Next month we have the selection trials and if a miracle happens I will get selected for the Asian Championships. From thereon we will take a different route altogether. I am working for a miracle to happen," he added.

Narang preferred to remain practical as far as another shot at the Olympics is concerned. "There are a few things that I am working on. There are a few competitions lined up over the next few months or so. My participation at the Tokyo Games will depend on the kind of results I have at these events," he said.

He has set up many training centres across the country as part of the Gagan Narang Sports Promotion Foundation (GNSPF) to teach and promote shooting to young aspirants.

His efforts will be recognised on Thursday when President Ram Nath Kovind presents him the Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar on the National Sports Day.

He said mentoring aspiring shooters doesn't come in the way of his personal goals, rather the whole process helps him.

"I don't think that affects my personal shooting. Take for example the case of Ela (Elavelin Valarivan, one of his best trainees) or Shreya (Agarwal), sometimes they shoot 28 and tell me that 'sir I have shot 28'. Then my challenge is to shoot 29. So it kind of keeps you focussed.

"I can't be more happy when kids from the academy shoot better than me. Each day is a learning curve."

As talks turned to the Indian Olympic Association's (IOA) proposal to boycott the 2022 Commonwealth Games for excluding shooting from the roster, Narang said it would be "unfair" on other disciplines.

But he is glad that the Sports Ministry, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) and the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) are working towards getting the 'optional sport' back in the programme.

First bishop ordained in China under Vatican deal

BEIJING, AUG 28 (AFP): A Chinese Catholic bishop has been ordained with the joint approval of the Pope and Beijing for the first time under an agreement intended to encourage a rapprochement between China and the Holy See.

China's roughly 12 million Catholics have for decades been split between a government-run association, whose clergy were chosen by the atheist Communist Party, and an unofficial underground church loyal to the Vatican.

But under the terms of the deal agreed in September last year, both Beijing and the Vatican will now have a say in appointing Catholic bishops. China's official church, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, said Yao Shun was ordained as bishop of the diocese of Ulanqab in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on Monday.

The law in China requires priests and bishops to register and align with the country's official church.

But the Vatican said the bishop, who it named as Antonio Yao Shun, had also "received the Papal Mandate" at the ordina-



tion, according to a statement by Matteo Bruni of the Holy See press office.

It said the ordination was the "first to take place in the framework of the Provisional Agreement between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China", which severed diplomatic relations in 1951.

According to a report in the state-run Global Times on Wednesday, China faces a shortage of bishops, with around a third of the 98 dioceses having no bishops and

many older bishops set to retire.

State media reports said another Chinese bishop was set to be ordained Wednesday, although the official church did not confirm this.

Pope Francis recognised seven clergy appointed by China as part of the deal, despite fears the accord would be used by Beijing to further crack down on worshippers outside the official church.

Although ties have improved as China's

Catholic population grows and the Vatican intensifies efforts to restore relations, tensions remain.

The Vatican is the only European diplomatic ally of self-ruled Taiwan, which is viewed by China as a breakaway province awaiting reunification.

In June, the Vatican called for Beijing not to intimidate Catholics who were still choosing to worship at underground churches that refuse to swear allegiance to the

official state church. Recent years have also seen a clampdown on religious worship in China on multiple fronts, with churches destroyed in some regions and restrictions on the sale of Bibles.

The agreement met with fierce criticism from some quarters when it was announced last year.

Hong Kong's outspoken Cardinal Joseph Zen said at the time that the deal was "a major step toward the annihilation of the real Church in China".

Boris Johnson seeks Parliament suspension until Oct 14

LONDON, AUG 28 (PTI): The UK government led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday sought a suspension of Parliament until October 14, the Downing Street said on Wednesday.

Johnson asked Queen Elizabeth II to suspend the House of Commons sitting from around September 9 or 10, within days of it reconvening after the summer recess next Monday.

According to the timeline being considered, it would lead to a customary Queen's Speech which lays out a

new UK government's parliamentary business for the year on October 14. It is widely seen as an attempt to block MPs from tabling and debating any other major legislation, including an attempt by the Opposition to prevent a no-deal Brexit by the October 31 deadline.

"It's time a new government and new PM set out a plan for the country after we leave the EU," the BBC quoted a Downing Street source as saying.

The idea of shutting down Parliament

known as prorogation has already caused controversy, with critics saying it would stop MPs being able to use legislative measures to prevent a damaging British exit from the European Union (EU) as part of Johnson's do or die Brexit pledge.

Government to hold a Queen's Speech, just as all new governments do, said James Cleverly, the chairman of the ruling Conservative Party, indicating that the reports of a parliamentary suspension were likely to be confirmed soon.

Jaishankar holds talks with Russian counterpart

MOSCOW, AUG 28 (PTI): External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov here on Wednesday and the two leaders discussed regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Jaishankar arrived in Moscow on Tuesday on a two-day visit to Russia to finalise the preparations for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's forthcoming visit to the country.

This is his first visit to Moscow since assuming office in May. His visit comes days ahead of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok from September 4 to 6 where Prime Minister Modi will be the chief guest.

"40 years to the day I first came to Moscow. The world has changed but India-Russia relations remain steady," Jaishankar

tweeted on Tuesday. Jaishankar and Lavrov took stock of preparations for the prime minister's visit and the 20th Annual Bilateral Summit between the two countries.

He will also meet Deputy Prime Minister Yury Borisov.

Days ahead of Jaishankar's visit, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval travelled to Moscow and held talks with his Russian counterpart Nikolai Patrushev during which both sides underlined support for principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference of third parties.

Delivering a speech at the discussion platform of the Valdai Discussion Club on the issue "The prospects of India's policy in the Indo-Pacific region" on Tuesday,

Jaishankar said that the changing world had thrown up new concepts and approaches and the Indo-Pacific was one of them.

India, the US and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's rising military maneuvering in the region.

China has been trying to expand its military presence in the Indo-Pacific, which is a biogeographic region, comprising the Indian Ocean and the western and central Pacific Ocean, including the South China Sea.

China claims almost all of the South China Sea. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims over the sea.

Sikh man stabbed to death in US

WASHINGTON, AUG 28 (PTI): A 64-year-old Sikh man from India was stabbed to death by an unidentified person in the US state of California while he was on his evening walk, according to a media report.

Parmjit Singh was attacked in Gretchen Talley Park in Tracy around 9 pm on Sunday. He died from his injuries, ABC News reported.

Detectives say a passerby spotted the man bleeding on the ground and immediately called 911. Police have launched a homicide investigation.

Police don't have any clear suspects just yet. On Monday, they asked for the community's help identifying a man captured on video hopping a fence and running away from the park around the time when the incident took place, according to the report.

"We just need to figure out who that is, why they were in the area, what they may have seen and potentially any of their involvement in the incident," said Tracy Police Spokesperson Lt Trevin Freitas.

Singh was wearing a traditional Sikh turban as he always would for his walks twice a day. Some residents are worried Singh may have been attacked because he was Sikh. Police said they cannot say if it was a hate crime.

We can't say what it was right now. We're keeping all possibilities open. We have no information that would lead us to the motive of this crime. It is something that we can't disprove at this time and we're actively investigating

all possibilities," Freitas said. Harnek Singh Kang, the victim's son-in-law, said Singh immigrated to Tracy from India three years ago and was an active member of the Sikh community.

"We feel very safe in the country, so whatever happened, this is unacceptable," he said.

Singh had two kids and three grandkids.

The attack has left the neighbourhood shaken. Neighbours said they are all deeply saddened by what happened.

"Absolutely stunned. This is a very safe neighbourhood, very decent area of Tracy," neighbor Dave Roychowdhury said. "Nothing has ever happened like this here," he said. Tracy Mayor Robert Rickman in a statement said, "We take pride in our safe, close-knit community. The loss of one of our own to violence has shaken us to our core and is felt by the entire community."

"On behalf of the Tracy City Council, we offer our sincerest condolences to Mr Singh's family, friends and to the members of our Sikh community. This violence will not be tolerated and we are dedicating every available resource to ensuring that the person(s) responsible for the death of Mr Singh is brought to justice," Rickman said.

The Sikh community is in shock after the incident, CBS Local reported. In an emergency meeting on Monday, the mayor and police chief talked with the Sikh community to calm fears and answer their questions.

The community is offering a USD 1000 reward for identifying the suspect.

Malaysia ex-PM Najib 'pivotal' in 1MDB plunder, trial hears

KUALA LUMPUR, AUG 28 (AFP): Malaysia's ex-prime minister Najib Razak played a pivotal role in plundering state fund 1MDB and hundreds of millions of dollars were illicitly channelled to his bank account, a prosecutor said Wednesday at the opening of his biggest graft trial. Claims that Najib and his cronies pilfered massive sums from the fund and spent it on everything from real estate to artwork contributed to the defeat of his long-ruling coalition to a reformist alliance.

After losing power last year, the former prime minister was arrested and hit with dozens of charges related to 1MDB. He is expected to face several trials.

The first started earlier this year but Wednesday's is the biggest, with Najib accused of 21 counts of money-laundering and four of abuse of power, centring on allegations that he illicitly obtained 2.28 billion ringgit (USD 540 million) from 1MDB.

Opening the trial, lead prosecutor Gopal Sri Ram said that Najib used an "elaborate charade" in plundering 1Malaysia Development Berhad, a fund established with the ostensible aim of boosting Malaysia's economy.

"His objective was to enrich himself," the prosecutor told the packed High Court in Kuala Lumpur, as he outlined how 1MDB funds were channelled in a "circuitous route" between 2011 and 2014 to Najib.

Najib -- who was also finance minister -- put himself in "sole control" of the fund's important affairs and used his position "to exert influence



over the board of 1MDB to carry out certain abnormal transactions with undue haste", he said.

In August 2013, over two billion ringgit was sent to Najib's account at a Malaysian bank before it was quickly transferred out again, according to the prosecutor.

When news emerged of the looting, Najib sought to cover his tracks by producing "sham" documents that claimed the money was a donation from an Arab prince, Gopal said. "The accused took active steps to evade justice," he added.

The court also heard the former premier was the "mirror image" of fugitive financier Jho Low, who has been charged in both Malaysia and the United States, and the two men "acted as one" when it came to their dealings with 1MDB.

Low, a chubby, bespectacled Malaysian jet-setter known for partying with Hollywood A-listers, held no official positions at 1MDB but exerted huge influence over its operations.

The case relates to a crucial part of the 1MDB saga. When reports surfaced in 2015 that huge sums linked to the fund had flowed into Najib's bank account, it dramatically ratcheted up pressure on the leader and

he became increasingly authoritarian. The attorney-general later cleared Najib of any wrongdoing, saying the money was a personal donation from the Saudi royal family, and closed down domestic investigations.

The 66-year-old, who was in court for the start of the trial, denies all the charges. Speaking after Wednesday's proceedings, lawyer Muhammad Shafee Abdullah said Najib "has been misled. Jho Low himself has misled many people, has misled the bank and misled 1MDB".

Najib faces up to 20 years in jail for each of the abuse of power charges and five years in jail for each of the counts of money-laundering. Four witnesses testified at Wednesday's hearing, including three government officials and the former director of a digital services company paid to manage Najib's online presence.

Prosecutors wrapped up their case Tuesday in Najib's first trial, which involves the theft of 42 million ringgit from a former unit of 1MDB. The judge will rule in November whether it is strong enough to continue. The US Department of Justice, which is seizing assets in America allegedly bought with looted 1MDB money, believes that USD 4.5 billion was stolen from the fund.

Pak closes three aviation routes over Karachi

BY SAJJAD HUSSAIN ISLAMABAD, AUG 28 (PTI): Pakistan has closed three aviation routes of Karachi airspace from August 28 till August 31, the country's civil aviation authority said on Wednesday after the government's announcement that it is mulling a complete ban on the use of the country's airspace by Indian flights.

The ban will affect all international flights using the three routes above Karachi. It further provides pilots to circumnavigate Karachi airspace.

The four-day ban will expire on September 1, the aviation authority said in a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM).

The closure came at

the heels of announcement by Minister of Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry who tweeted on Tuesday that Prime Minister Imran Khan is considering a complete closure of airspace with India.

Pakistan's Cabinet on Tuesday discussed the idea of disallowing India to use the country's airspace for flight and the land route for trade with Afghanistan. The final decision will be taken by Prime Minister Khan.

Pakistan had fully closed its airspace in February after an Indian Air Force strike on a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror camp in Balakot. The country opened its airspace for all flights except for New Delhi, Bangkok and Kuala

Lumpur on March 27.

On May 15, Pakistan extended its airspace ban for flights to India till May 30. It fully opened its airspace for all civilian traffic on July 16.

Tensions between India and Pakistan spiked after India abrogated provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution to withdraw Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifurcated it into two Union Territories.

Pakistan expelled the Indian High Commissioner after it downgraded the diplomatic ties with India in protest to India's decision to end Jammu and Kashmir's special status.

Pakistan also suspended its trade with India and stopped the train and bus services.

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'Baahubali' record can be broken any Friday: Prabhas



JUSTIN RAO

MUMBAI, AUG 28 (PTI): Actor Prabhas says the kind of films that are being made across the country, the record set by "Baahubali" films can be broken any Friday.

Prabhas headlined the two-part epic-fantasy franchise -- "The Beginning" and "The Conclusion".

While it has been two years since "Baahubali 2: The Conclusion" set the record of becoming the biggest grossing blockbuster in the country, Prabhas said any filmmaker with a strong storyline can set new benchmarks today.

"That record is going to change any Friday. The record is just a start, not the end. Some filmmaker from Gujarat or West Bengal can make a film which will beat everything we have. A Kannada film 'KGF' came and did good business too," Prabhas told PTI.

The actor said post the SS Rajamouli-directed blockbuster series, everyone realised a well-made film can travel to every corner of the country.

"Now every director knows he or she can make a film and release it around the country. If the film is good, it'll work. There is such great cinema being made across (the states) and it's a good time for everyone," he added.

However, the 39-year-old actor doesn't believe it's necessary for stars to only do larg-

er-than-life films to succeed.

Case in point being Salman Khan, who can pull off an action movie as well as an emotional film with ease, Prabhas said.

"Salman Khan is an action hero who did 'Wanted' and 'Dabangg' but even a 'Bajrangi Bhaijaan', where he doesn't fight, was a blockbuster. The story should be intriguing and that's it. The audience today will accept a good story."

Post the mega success of "Baahubali", Prabhas had a few Bollywood offers but he turned them down as he had already committed to his upcoming "Saaho".

The action thriller, written and directed by Sujeeth, has been shot simultaneously in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.

Prabhas said while dialogues in Telugu and Tamil had a similar flow, the ones in Hindi were different, something he had to pay attention to.

"In Tamil and Telugu, the flow of your dialogues are largely similar. But in Hindi, it's reversed. The emphasis on how a sentence would start and end is different, so I had to keep that in mind. When that happens, your body language also changes," he said.

Produced by UV Creations and T-Series, "Saaho" marks Shradha Kapoor's debut in south Indian industry. The film is scheduled to be released Friday.

Aamir Khan's brother Faissal turns director with 'Factory'

MUMBAI, AUG 28 (PTI) Actor Faissal Khan, the brother of superstar Aamir Khan, is set to make his directorial debut with action-thriller "Factory".

Faissal has previously served as an assistant director on films such as "Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak" and "Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikander" with Mansoor Khan, and "Tum Mere Ho" with his late father Tahir Hussain.

The 53-year-old actor will also star in the film.

"My mother always kept telling me that I'll do well as a director and I am sure she will be pleasantly surprised with my decision," Faissal said in a statement.

The actor, best known for featuring alongside Aamir in 2000's "Mela", said he is excited for "Factory" as he has been involved with the project right from the scripting stage.

Also featuring Roaleey Ryan, Raj Kumar Kanojya,



Ribhu Mehra and Sharad Singh, "Factory" is slated to release early 2020.

Katy Perry to perform in Mumbai in November



MUMBAI, AUG 28 (PTI): Pop star Katy Perry on Wednesday announced she is all set to perform in the city on November 16 as part of the OnePlus Music Festival.

Perry took to Twitter to share the news of her first performance in Mumbai.

"I am so happy to be returning to India and excited to headline my first-ever performance in Mumbai.

"I am looking forward to seeing and singing with all of my Indian KatyCats at the OnePlus Music Festival," she tweeted.

The singer will perform at the DY Patil Stadium.

The festival, described as the merger between "the energy of music and the power of technology to bring out an immersive experience", is curated and designed by smartphone maker OnePlus.

This is not her first visit to the country.

The "Roar" hitmaker performed at the opening ceremony of Indian Premier League in 2012 in Chennai.

Perry married actor-comic Russell Brand in 2010 in a famous Indian ceremony in Rajasthan. They got divorced after two years.

Vidya Balan lauds BMC for keeping city clean

MUMBAI, AUG 28 (PTI): Bollywood actress Vidya Balan has praised the Mumbai civic body for keeping the city clean and suggested hefty fine for beach litterbugs.

Balan on Tuesday attended a special screening of her movie "Mission Mangal" in Dadar which was organised by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Praveen Pardeshi.

Civic officials, employees and their family members attended the screening and also interacted with the actress.

"BMC people are doing a wonderful job to keep Mumbai clean by dedicating their life to serve people. Though we have some challenges and shortcomings still we can become one of the most efficient municipal corporations in the world," said Balan.

"We face a lot of problems, but we won't be as good as we are, without BMC. As a citizen, we need to support the BMC, and we can do it," she said.

Balan appealed to the civic body to levy hefty fine on those who litter beaches in Mumbai.

"Mumbai is the heartbeat of the country. Litterbugs should realise what they are doing," she added.

Speaking on the occasion, Pardeshi sought to draw a



parallel between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the BMC, the country's richest municipal corporation.

"If ISRO can complete Mission Mangal project in tight budget, then why can't we complete the mission (to provide all amenities and services) in abundant budget?" he asked.

Starring Akshay Kumar and Vidya Balan, "Mission Mangal" is based on stupendous efforts by ISRO scientists behind the 2013 launch of the country's maiden inter-planetary expedition, Mars Orbiter Mission.

Leader of the House in BMC, Vishakha Raut, stressed the need to launch "Mission Mumbai".

"I think, we need to launch the Mission Mumbai to make the city free of potholes, ensure 24x7 water supply and provide better health services and quality education to all of us," she said.

BMC employees welcomed the special screening initiative.

Salman thanks fans, well wishers on completing 31 years in Bollywood



MUMBAI, AUG 28 (PTI): Salman Khan has completed 31 years in the film industry and the superstar has thanked his fans for playing a huge part in this journey.

The 53-year-old actor took to Twitter to mark the occasion and shared a photograph from his childhood.

"A big thank you to the Indian film industry and to every one who has been a part of this 31 year journey, especially all my fans and well wishers who have made this amazing journey possible..." Salman wrote on Twitter.

The eldest of the three sons of veteran screenwriter Salim Khan, Salman started his Bollywood journey with 1988's "Biwi Ho To Aisi", which starred Rekha and Farooq Shaikh in the lead.

But it was 1989's "Maine Pyar Kiya" that cemented his position as a lead hero in Bollywood.

He followed it up with films such as "Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!" (1994), "Karan Arjun" (1995), "Khamoshi" (1996), "Judwaa" (1997) and "Biwi No.1" (1999), among others.

In the last one decade, Salman has given blockbusters such as "Dabangg" (2010), "Ready" (2011), "Bodyguard" (2011), "Ek Tha Tiger" (2012), "Kick" (2014), "Sultan" (2016) and "Tiger Zinda Hai" (2017).

His most recent release was "Bharat" and he is currently working on "Dabangg 3".



SIGHTS AT SEA! The model, Candice Swanepoel flashes a peace sign as she arrives at the 76th Venice Film Festival.

ARIES:

There's a difference between things that are good for you and those that look good on paper. Learning to tell them apart will change your life, Aries. Connect with the wisdom within you before you make a choice. Steer clear of short-term benefits, and keep the long-term vision in mind. This will help you move forward with dignity and grace.

TAURUS:

Today brings joyous tidings on the work front. Something you've been hoping and praying for is about to take a tangible form. But you're not celebrating this victory alone. Take your co-workers to the after-party with you. Connect with them on an informal level; you could discover that you have more in common with them than you imagined.

GEMINI:

Gemini, it's okay to not have everything together. Understand the energy level of your body and work accordingly. Call in sick or stay in bed a little longer if you need to. Pushing against the flow will prove to be counterproductive. Some of you may

be recovering from a minor heartbreak or disappointment. Remember, it's not just the physical but also the emotional body that requires time to recuperate.

CANCER:

What is we said each thought is charged with a powerful intention? Would that inspire you to reroute the way you think? Stop focusing on the losses and failures, Cancer. Think of today as the first day of the rest of your life, and imagine what the next six months look like. Sow your seeds with intention, wild one, and get ready to turn your life around.

LEO:

If you feel like you have been stuck in a rut, you probably have. But there's no reason you can't turn things around—starting today. What helps you unlock the channel of creativity? This week, vow to set an hour aside for self-expression every day. Write, draw, paint, cook and jump around. You will find that vibrating at the frequency of joy helps you bring your best self to work as well.

VIRGO:

The week ahead could be challenging in more ways than one, given the chaos and commotion. Go against the voice in your head that says you are fighting a losing battle and stand your ground. It may take you a little longer to get to the desired destination, but that doesn't mean you won't eventually make your way there. Trust the process.

LIBRA:

If we didn't trip and fall every now and then, we wouldn't grow, Libra. We wouldn't progress to the next level. Don't let the failures bring you down. You have so many mountains to move along the way. Every time you feel bogged down by your current set of challenges, take a deep breath, call upon your spirit team, and remember who you are.

SCORPIO:

Everything that glitters really is gold. Somebody from your soul circle could offer you a new project or suggest a collaboration. Let both your hearts and minds meet this week, Scorpio. There's big magick coming your way. Their per-

spective could also help you revive a new project, or gain fresh insight on something that has been seeming lacklustre for a while. Just set the terms and condition from the beginning so everybody is on the same page.

SAGITTARIUS:

You are joy. You are love. You are peace. You are positivity. You are a ray of sunshine in a world of dark clouds. Continue to vibrate higher and be a source of good juju to those around. Things to do today: celebrate love in its myriad forms. When was the last time you took your mum out for cocktails, or told your best friends how special they are? Small gestures make a big difference, Sagittarius.

CAPRICORN:

Out of the darkness and into the light, Capricorn. This week promises to bring many joyous tidings with itself. Let's just say you will have more than one reason to get behind the bar today. As you do, think about the co-worker you may unintentionally have burnt bridges with. Brew them a peace

potion and make an honest attempt to get on the same page.

AQUARIUS:

Things on the business front are better than they've ever been. Some of you could be witnessing a massive increase in profits. Remember, learning to make your money work for you is just as important as making it. Resist the urge to spend it all at once. Focus on investing your wealth in the right places. What if this is the secret to living a more prosperous life?

PISCES:

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

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