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SummitTIMES

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SDF CONVENES CEC MEET TO REVIEW ELECTION RESULTS

Now is the time to give Sikkim the Opposition the people want: Chamling

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 JUN:

A review meeting of Sikkim Democratic Front party was held at the party head-office here at Indira Bypass today. The meeting, which was chaired by the SDF President, former Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, thoroughly reviewed various weakness and issues of the party related to the recently held elections in the State, informs an SDF press release issued by its general secretary [press & publicity], Amber Rai.

Earlier, the party president was accorded a warm welcome by SDF party workers and office bearers who had come in from all over the State for the first meeting of the party since it lost out to Sikkim Krantikari Morcha in the elections.

The release informs that in his address, the SDF president stressed that the people of Sik-



kim have not rejected the party but given the responsibility of delivering Sikkim an effective opposition after 25 years.

He added that because the SDF received the highest number of

votes among all parties in the recently held election [even though these resulted in fewer seats], the responsibility shouldered on the party was even more onerous.

The party and its

workers and office bearers need to realize the uniqueness of having been voted into Opposition with a mandate higher than even the winning party and stand firm and effective in the

new role given to it by the people of Sikkim.

He remarked that the future of the State will always remember the tireless efforts of the SDF government of 25 years in leading Sikkim firmly on the path of the development.

"Like the Gupta era is considered the golden age of India, the history of Sikkim will take the 25 years of our governance as the golden age for Sikkim as the people got respect and found the path to prosperity due to continuous works of SDF," he said.

He added that Sikkim earned a prominent place in the world due to the contributions of SDF government and added that the peace and security in the State has been possible only due to the positive and innovative leadership of SDF party.

On the same, he said, "We have to feel proud on being the workers of SDF party,"

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CM meets Heavenly Path members, assures to lift ban on entry of God Angel



In meeting with dist officials, CM directs strict crackdown on post-poll violence

JORETHANG, 02 JUN [IPR]: Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] visited and attended a meeting at the Healing Centre of Nirvanic Bhawan, Nanduguan, here today.

The CM interacted with the devotees and ex-

ecutive members of Sikkim State Heavenly Path Organisation and took stock of their grievances and demands.

He also interacted with the 24 patients who are currently receiving care and attention at the Healing Centre.

The CM, after giving a patient hearing to all the demands placed before him, assured to appoint Doctors and Physiotherapists at the centre for the larger good and benefit of the sick and the ailing.

He also affirmed to lift the State ban on the

entry of spiritual leader, God Angel, to Sikkim within 100 days.

In the latter half of the day, the CM chaired a meeting with South District officials in Namchi.

The meeting was attended by DC South Ragul K, ADC South Satyen Pradhan, SDM (HQ) Hemant Rai, SDM Jorethang, Tshering Bhutia and SDPO Namchi Roshan Gurung along with other South District officials.

Following incidents of sporadic violence in and

turn to pg02

Indian arrested for running international call bypass racket in Nepal

SHIRISH B PRADHAN

KATHMANDU, JUN 2 (PTI):

A 36-year-old Indian man has been arrested in Nepal for illegally operating international calls that caused millions of rupees loss to the Himalayan nation's telecom department, police said on Sunday.

Khursed Ansari, a resident of Sunauli in Uttar Pradesh, was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation of Nepal Police from Kathmandu on charges of operating call bypass, a statement issued by the Nepal Police said.

The police also recovered a laptop, airtel 4G device, routers and 16 simcards from the accused, the statement said.

The police have initiated further investigation into the matter after taking Ansari in custody.

Meanwhile, a 69-year-old Canadian national was arrested from the Tribhuvan International Airport on Sunday as she was about to board a Hong Kong bound aircraft carrying illegal foreign currency.

The police seized USD 20,630, 1,400 Hong Kong dollars and 10,000 Nepali currency from Jeannia Gaw during a security check at the airport, the statement said.

As per Nepal's law, a foreign tourist cannot carry more than USD 5,000 without special permission while travelling.

First-timers make up 65% of the new Assembly

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 02 JUN:

5% of the Legislators who are scheduled to be sworn into office at the Sikkim Legislative Assembly on Monday are first-time MLAs, making up a bigger majority of the House than how the seats have been divvied up between the two parties which found favour with the voters this time.

Although the Sikkim Legislative Assembly accommodates 32 MLAs, in effect it currently has only 29 legislators since three MLAs – SDF's Pawan Chamling and DT Lepcha and SKM's Kunga Nima Lepcha - have won from two constituencies each. With 19 new faces in the house, Assembly debutantes make up 65% of the current batch

FIRST TIME MLAS	
SIKKIM KRANTIKARI MORCHA	
1.	Sangay Lepcha, SKM, Yoksum Tashiding;
2.	Bhim Hang Limboo, SKM, Yangthang;
3.	Lok Nath Sharma, SKM, Gyalshing Barnyak;
4.	Mingma N Sherpa, SKM, Daramdin
5.	Aditya Golay, SKM, Soreong-Chakung
6.	Sunita Gajmer, SKM, Salghari-Zoom
7.	Sanjeet Kharel, SKM, Namthang-Rateypani
8.	M.K. Sharma, SKM, Khamdong-Singtam
9.	LB Das, SKM, West Pendam
10.	Bishnu Kr Sharma, SKM, Rhenock
11.	Arun Kr Upreti, SKM, Arithang
12.	Karma Loday Bhutia, SKM, Kabi Lungchok
13.	Samdup Lepcha, SKM, Lachen-Mangan
SIKKIM DEMOCRATIC FRONT	
1.	Tashi Thendup Bhutia, SDF, Barfung
2.	Farwanti Tamang, SDF, Melli
3.	Raj Kumari Thapa, SDF, Rangang-Yangang
4.	Em Prasad Sharma, SDF, Namcheybung
5.	GT Dhungel, SDF, Upper Tadong
6.	Pintso Namgyal Lepcha, SDF, Dzongu

of the MLAs.

Understandably, SKM commands a lion's share of the first-timers at 13

while the remaining six wear SDF colours.

Three of the 19 are women.

HRD panel recommends 4-year undergraduate degree prog on lines of scrapped FYUP

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI):

The controversial Four Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP), which was scrapped in 2014, may make a come back as a panel constituted by the HRD Ministry has recommended the programme among undergraduate courses reforms for the new National Education Policy.

The ministry officials, however, maintained that the committee has submitted its draft and no final decision has been taken yet.

The draft of the new National Education Policy (NEP), formulated by a panel led by former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan,

was handed over to HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. He took charge as the Union Human Resource Development minister on Friday.

The panel has recommended reintroduction of the four-year course as part of the undergraduate reforms.

"Both three-year and four-year courses will be allowed to co-exist, but with multiple exit and entry options. The four-year programme will provide for greater rigour and allow students to conduct research optionally," the draft said.

"Students will grad-

uate with a four-year Liberal Arts Science Education degree with Honours, or may graduate with a B Sc, BA, B Com or B Voc after completing three years with a suitable completion of credits within their subject," it said.

The four-year programme, the BLA or BLE in the chosen major and minors, will provide students the opportunity to experience the full range of liberal arts education. The three-year programme will lead to a Bachelors degree.

Both programmes may lead to a degree

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GST cut on auto, incentive to scrap old vehicles on SIAM's budget wish list

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI):

Passing through one of the longest sales slowdowns, the auto industry has sought reduction of GST on all vehicles to 18 per cent from the current rate of 28 per cent.

Spelling out its Budget wish list, the Society of Automobile Industry (SIAM) has also asked the government an incentive based vehicle scrappage scheme in order to get polluting, unsafe and old vehicles off the road and help them replace with new ones.

During a pre-Budget meeting with finance ministry officials earlier this month, SIAM stated the GST rate on all categories of vehicles be "brought down to 18 per cent

turn to pg02

13 goals in two matches at C-Div Sunday



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 01 JUN:

Namthang Football Club and Queen Valley Football Club shared a point each after playing out a draw on Sunday in the ongoing Sikkim Football Association [SFA] C-Division Sikkim League here at Paljor Stadium.

The contesting match

ended 4-4.

Deepan Ranpal scored a brace for Namthang, while his teammates Silesh Bhujel and Prabin Mangar scored a goal each.

For Queen Valley FC, Tenzing Norbu Bhutia scored a hattrick and one more goal was added by his teammate, Ram Pradhan.

In the second match of the day, Sikkim Boys registered an easy victory against Ranipool Football Club 5-0.

For Sikkim Boys, Kinga Lepcha scored a brace and his teammates Passang Tamang, Surag Chettri and Ritik Rai contributed a goal each in the team victory.

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Now is the...

He encouraged the party workers not to get intimidated by the vandalism targeted on them by the ruling party and to strongly oppose it.

He mentioned that SDF, which has provided peace and security to the people of Sikkim for 25 years, also has the power to check the post-poll violence which is trying to break the peace and security of the State.

He stressed that SDF should unite the people to give real meaning to people's power.

He added that police stations and courts were for the people and would always remain open to them. He urged the gram and zilla panchayats and councillors to continuously work in the interest of the people of Sikkim by following the principles of SDF party.

He also commented that the recently elected government in Sikkim was a weak government and the alternative to SDF was not SKM but SDF itself.

He asserted that people's rule, progress and peace of Sikkim and democracy should be maintained in the State.

He also reassured that he will remain in active politics for another 15 years in the interest of people of Sikkim and called upon party workers to move ahead with more energy and dedication.

Media reports also quote Mr Chamling as commenting that the party lost the recently held Assembly elections due to "complacency".

The release informs that the meeting was also addressed by former Minister and MLA, DT Lepcha. The meeting was conducted by general secretary [administration] Amos R Lepcha and concluded with vote of thanks by CEC secretary, Aruna Mangar.

CM meets...

around Namchi, the CM assessed the Law & Order situation in the district and emphasized that peace and harmony to be maintained by the authorities.

He also issued orders to the Police Department to take the stern action against individuals found guilty irrespective of their party affiliation.

The CM also took a comprehensive review of the monsoon preparedness by the concerned stakeholders of the district and underlined the implications and hazards of monsoons and urged the officials to ensure public safety and convenience.

It may be mentioned here that the CM made several halts along the way to Namchi where he greeted and interacted with the general public.

GST cut on...

from the current rate of 28 per cent".

Bringing down the tax rate will reduce vehicle prices, which will help in spurring demand that has been sluggish for the last 11 months, said an industry executive.

In April, passenger vehicles sales witnessed the steepest decline in nearly 8 years with sales dropping by 17.07 per cent -- the biggest fall since October 2011 -- as weak customer sentiment led by liquidity crunch, uncertainty before elections and high product prices hit sales.

During the meeting with the ministry officials, SIAM also proposed an incentive based vehicle scrap-age scheme to get polluting, unsafe and old vehicles off the road.

With an aim to support local manufacturing, SIAM has asked for applied customs duty on fully imported commercial vehicles (CV) to be increased to 40 per cent from 25 per cent.

Moreover, customs duty on semi-knocked down CVs should be reduced to 20 per cent from 25 per cent to promote local value addition, SIAM said in its recommendation.

The auto industry body also pitched for customs duty on CKDs (completely knocked down units) of all form of vehicles to be reduced to 10 per cent from 15 per cent, as it was earlier.

HRD panel...

"with Research", if the student completes a rigorous research project as specified by the Higher Education Institute (HEI). HEIs may choose to call their three-year undergraduate degree a Bachelor of Arts, or Science, or Vocation, or the appropriate professional field, the draft report suggested.

The Four Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) introduced by the Delhi University under the regime of previous Vice Chancellor Dinesh Singh was scrapped by former HRD minister Smriti Irani.

The panel has also recommended an overhaul of the teacher education system with the introduction of the four year programme.

"Teacher preparation for all school stages will be offered only in multidisciplinary universities through a four year programme, with the curricula and processes being revamped to address current issues with teacher preparation.

"Institutions currently offering the two year programme will either transition to this mode or be phased out; no new two year programmes will be given recognition," it said.

The existing NEP was framed in 1986 and revised in 1992.

A new education policy was part of the Bharatiya Janata Party's manifesto ahead of the 2014 general election.

Apart from Kasturirangan, the committee had eight members, including mathematician Manjul Bhargava. The experts also took into account the report of a panel formed by former HRD minister Smriti Irani and headed by ex-cabinet secretary TSR Subramanian.

VISAKHAPATNAM (AP), JUNE 2 (PTI): Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu Sunday appealed to people to study, analyse and debate the Draft New Education Policy and not to come to hasty conclusions.

Noting that core issues of education were very important and deserve the attention of all stakeholders, he said reducing the load of school bags, promoting sports, inculcating morals, scientific and rationale temperament, history among others should become part of the curriculum.

His comments come in the backdrop of a controversy over the recommendation of a HRD ministry panel to teach Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states.

The draft of the new National Education Policy, proposed by the panel constituted by Prakash Javadekar when he was HRD minister in the previous Modi government, had suggested teaching of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states.

The DMK and other parties in Tamil Nadu



have strongly opposed the three language formula's continuation with add-on features proposed in the draft National Education Policy alleging it was tantamount to "thrusting" Hindi and wanted it junked.

Inaugurating a two-day conference on 'Industry Academy Interaction for Improvement of Quality of Academics' organized by the Indian

Institute of Petroleum and Energy (IIPPE), Naidu called for establishing a symbiotic relationship between academia and the industry to create an ecosystem for innovation to thrive and generate employment for the youth.

For this to be achieved, he wanted the industry to play a more pro-active role and establish a strong organic link

with the academic institutions. The Vice-President tasked the Industry and academia to look at long-term collaborations rather than join hands for limited purposes and one-off projects to promote the culture of research in a big way in our universities and other important academic institutions.

Naidu suggested to the corporate entities

to identify specific areas of interest and fund doctoral and post-doctoral research connected to them. He also urged them to set up a special corpus or fund for financing research projects that would lead to innovations, benefit the society and economy of the country.

Pointing out that many students passing out of the portals of high-

er education institutions were lacking employable skills, Naidu said organisations hiring young graduates were forced to impart further on-the-job training from six months to one year.

Calling for a revamp of the education system, the Vice President said students must not only be employable but also possess life skills, language skills, technological skills and entrepreneurial skills to enable them to be gainfully employed or self-employed.

Expressing concern over instances of atrocities against women and gender discrimination, he said the education system should produce socially responsible citizens and called for bringing about a change in the mindset.

Programmes like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' and Swachh Bharat should become people's movements, he added.

Observing that India was once known as 'Vishwaguru,' Naidu said the country must once again become the global hub for knowledge and innovation.

RBI policy, macro data key for markets in holiday-shortened week: Analysts

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI): The RBI's interest rate decision, key macro-economic data points and global trends would drive the market in a holiday-shortened week ahead, say analysts.

Markets would remain closed on Wednesday for Id-Ul-Fitr. Meanwhile, official data released after market hours Friday showed that India's economic growth rate slowed to a five-year low of 5.8 per cent in January-March 2018-19 due to poor performance of agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

The eight core sector industries too witnessed a slowdown in April, with growth rate slipping to 2.6 per cent. There was, however, some relief on the government finances front, as the fiscal deficit for 2018-19 remained within the revised Budget target of 3.4 per cent of the GDP.

Markets may react to these numbers Monday, but slowing GDP growth has increased the chances of a rate cut by the RBI on June 6, which will be welcomed by participants,



pants, analysts said.

"On global front, US-China trade wars along with rise in oil price will determine further trend. We continue to remain optimistic on equity markets," said Hemang Jani, Head - Advisory, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Post the announcement of key portfolios in the newly-elected government, focus will shift towards various economic reforms and policies, experts added.

"Finance Ministry is now lead by Nirmala Sitharaman and there are many hopes now.

First is liquidity, followed by banks recapitalisation and improvement in demand in the economy," said Mustafa Nadeem, CEO, Epic Research.

According to Jimeet Modi, Founder and CEO, SAMCO Securities & StockNote, "This week is crucial for a mid-term direction of the market."

PMI data for the manufacturing and services sectors as well as auto sales numbers for the month of May are scheduled to be released this week.

"The ambiguity of portfolio allocation is now removed, so this is

good for the market in a sense. Emergence of clarity is what was important, and now narrative in markets will be about the economic policies that will be adopted to revive and stimulate the slowing economy," said Jagannadham Thunuguntla, Sr VP and Head of Research (Wealth), Centrum Broking Limited.

In a highly volatile session on Friday, the benchmark BSE Sensex ended 118 points lower at 39,714.20. However, on a weekly basis, the 30-share index finished with a gain of 279.4 points.

Rajasthan to enact a 'right to health' law: Gehlot

Jaipur, Jun 2 (PTI): Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot Sunday said his government will soon enact a law on "right to health" to ensure good health services to everyone in the state.

Our government is working on a right to health bill which will be introduced soon.

The aim of our government is to provide good health services to everyone, Gehlot said at a function here.

He said the free medical scheme launched by his earlier government was appreciated worldwide and nearly 17 states of the country introduced similar schemes on this pattern.

The chief minister also called upon private players in the medical field to serve the society instead making health care a business.

Right to health was promised by the Congress in its election manifesto during the December 2018 assembly elections in the state. The congress had promised quality health services to citizens through a law right to health.

Gehlot was speaking at a free medical camp for heart diseases at Shree Satya Sai College here. Health minister Raghu Sharma and others were also present on the occasion.

The CM said that the government was working on the bill so that all the people can have access to quality health care services in the state.

Gehlot said it should be the responsibility of the government to en-

sure quality healthcare services to all the citizens and his government was working in that direction.

However, he also said the government alone cannot do everything and private sector players should also play active role in serving the society.

"Former UPA government had started the era of Rights in the country by giving the right to information, right to education, food security, MGNREGA. We now want that people get right to health in the state," Gehlot told reporters after the event.

"The government should take care of the people's health. A lot of money is spent on treatment," he said.

Gehlot said that the free medicine scheme launched in the state during his earlier term (2008-13) was appreciated at various level, including by the WHO.

"We have now increased the number of the medicines under the scheme and next we want to enact the right to health law to strengthen (the healthcare system)," he added.

Under the free medicine scheme launched by the Congress government in its earlier term, generic medicines of common diseases are given free in the hospitals. The number of medicines has been increased and medicines for treatment of cancer, kidney and heart diseases are also being provided free under the scheme in government hospitals of the state.

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3-language formula will lead to linguistic chauvinism: CPI(M)

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI):

In the wake of a controversy over the draft National Education Policy recommending to teach Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states, the CPI(M) Sunday said such forcible imposition will lead to feelings of "linguistic chauvinism" detrimental for the unity of the country.

The draft of the new National Education Policy (NEP)- proposed by a panel constituted by Union Human Resources Development Minister Prakash Javadekar during his previous term under the Modi government - was released on Friday and it suggested imposition of a three-language formula.

In a statement, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) said, "The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) is unequivocally opposed to the imposition of the three-language formula from primary level of school education as proposed in the Draft National Education Policy released by the HRD ministry."

The party said it is of the "firm opinion" that the "opposition is not to any particular language but for ensuring the opportunity for all Indian languages to develop and thrive". The CPI(M)'s reaction comes after parties in Tamil Nadu, including the DMK, Saturday strongly opposed the three-language formula's continuation with addition features - as proposed in the draft National Education Policy - alleging it was tantamount to "thrusting" Hindi.

The DMK said since 1968, Tamil Nadu has been following the two language formula only, wherein English and Tamil is taught to students in schools.

Reiterating the demand of parties based out of Tamil Nadu about junking this draft of the policy, the CPI(M) said, "Given the extremely sensitive nature of the issue, the government must withdraw the current draft and come out with a fresh one setting the controversy to rest."

"The CPI(M) strongly feels that such forcible imposition will only lead to feelings of linguistic chauvinism detrimental for the unity of our people and the country," it said. Meanwhile, the party also commented on the recent US decision to end special trade status for India, calling it "unwarranted and uncalled for". "This is part of a series of measures on US-India trade initiated by the Trump administration, to coerce India into accepting favourable trade terms for the United States," the CPI(M) said.

President Donald Trump on Saturday terminated India's designation as a beneficiary developing nation under the key Generalised System of Preference (GSP) trade programme after determining that it has not assured the US that it will provide "equitable and reasonable access to its markets".

A marathon so someone could learn



NITESH R PRADHAN GANGTOK, 2 JUNE:

A marathon themed, "Run so that someone could learn" was held here today with 43 runners racing from MG Marg to Bakthang Falls.

Keshav Chettri, Dipen Pradhan and Kiran Subba stood first, second and third among the male runner, while Lhamu Sherpa, Srijana Bhandari and Nisha Hangma Subba were the winner, first runner-up and second

runner-up respectively in the females category.

Journalist Nirmal Mangar, advocate Pragya Satpathy, members of the Bar Association of Sikkim, students from Government Law College, and runners from various walks of life took part in the program.

The marathon was organised by IDIA [Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access], Sikkim Chapter, featured a strong participation of

lawyers. The event was supported by The Accelerator Coaching Academy which provided the logistical support.

Forest Minister Karma Loday Bhutia flagged off the marathon.

Before flagging off the race, Mr Bhutia, while congratulating the organizers, stressed on the need for outdoor activities and also appreciated the efforts of IDIA towards raising awareness about the need for edu-

cation and legal rights.

Further, he held that new government will work earnestly for the weaker sections and economically underprivileged citizens.

Mingma Lhamu Sherpa, Consultant, IDIA Sikkim, while delivering the welcome address, highlighted the need for awareness and action on the Right To Education and legal rights of children.

She added that IDIA-Sikkim was dedicated

to raising awareness and helping spread the message of legal rights and diversity across to the people.

IDIA helps students from underprivileged and marginalised communities secure admission into the leading law colleges in India. They have been actively involved among law students in guiding them access education to increase diversity in higher centers of learning in the discipline of law.

Khandu extends leave benefits for women contingency and contractual employees

ITANAGAR, JUN 2 (PTI):

On his first day at office in his second term, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu Sunday extended maternity leave and child care leave benefits to women contingency and contractual employees of the state government.

Khandu was sworn in as chief minister of the state for the second term on May 29 along with 11 cabinet ministers.

He signed the first file for the benefit of women

contingency and contractual employees, an official release said here.

Earlier, the maternity and child care leave was given only to regular government employees in Arunachal Pradesh.

Now, the women contingency and contractual employees will also get 180 days of maternity leave and 60 days of child care leave in the service period, the release said adding that the decision will benefit around 20,000 women.

Odisha CM resigns from Bijepur constituency, retains Hinjili



BHUBANESWAR, JUN 2 (PTI): Odisha Chief Minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik Sunday resigned from Bijepur Assembly constituency and retained the Hinjili seat. Patnaik sent his resignation as legislator from Bijepur constituency in Bargarh district to Assembly Speaker S N Patro, Biju Janata Dal (BJD) general secretary Bijay Nayak said.

The BJD supremo had contested the recent Assembly elections, held along with Lok Sabha polls, from Hinjili in Ganjam district as well as Bijepur in west Odisha and emerged victorious from both the constituencies.

The chief minister had contested from two assembly constituencies for the first time.

While retaining his membership from Hinjili, where he tasted electoral victory for the fifth consecutive time, Patnaik conveyed gratitude to the people of Bijepur for extending support to him.

Patnaik, who steered the BJD to a landslide

victory in the assembly polls, had defeated his nearest BJP nominee Pitambar Acharya in Hinjili constituency by 60,160 votes. In Bijepur, the BJD chief had defeated his BJP rival Sanat Kumar Gartia by 57,122 votes.

The BJD had won 112 seats in the 147-member House. The chief minister has been winning from Hinjili in Ganjam district since 2000 when he entered state politics after serving as a Union Minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.

In 2014 Assembly elections, Patnaik had won from Hinjili defeating his Congress rival Sibaram Patra by a margin of 76,586 votes. The BJD chief had secured 73.14 per cent of the votes polled.

Patnaik's resignation from Bijepur seat comes three days after he announced a Rs 1,330 crore package, including plans to provide pucca houses to 34,000 households having kutcha houses, for Bijepur Assembly constituency.

Philatelic and Numismatic Workshop in Kalimpong



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 02 JUN:

Philatelic and Numismatic workshop was organised at Vrindavan School, 12th Mile, Kalimpong, on 31 May. The workshop was meant for students of classes VI and above.

Conducted with the help of Alpine Philatelic and Numismatic Society (APNS), Darjeeling, the Secretary of the Society, Vivek Yonzon, conducted the hour-long workshop which covered details of Stamp and Coin collecting and also delved on Hobby Development and its importance.

The students were

also handed out packets of stamps, Stamp brochures, First Day Covers.

The workshop was followed by an exhibition of Stamps and Coins put together by students of the Philatelic and Numismatic Club of Vrindavan School. The Post Master, Kalimpong, was invited as a guest to the event. The club is an initiative of Siddhant Sharma of Class 9 of the school.

Various district, state and national award winning exhibits from APNS and the collection of the Director of the School, Lawan Pradhan, were also displayed.

APNS, started in Feb-

ruary 2018 and based in Darjeeling, has been working to promote Philately and Numismatics in the Hills.

Mr Yonzon said, "It's a very proud moment for the Society as Sidhant Sharma is a product of APNS. He had attended Protsahan - 2018, an exhibition and workshop organised by APNS in Kalimpong last year, got initiated into it. He joined the Society and since then he has done a lot for its promotion at the student and School level."

The exhibition was open for all the students and the parents later in the day.

Over 1.63 lakh students have registered on DU's admission portal

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI):

Over 1.63 lakh aspirants have registered on the Delhi University's (DU) admission portal so far, university officials said on Sunday.

The DU had commenced the online registration process at 8 pm on May 30. It will conclude on June 14 and the first cut-off list is likely to be released on June 20.

The DU is holding "open days" for students and parents to clear their doubts. The first "Open Day" was held on May 31 and the second will be held in the North Campus on Monday.

Till now, 1,63,597 students have registered and 78,066 have made



payments, the university said. Of the total number of registrations, 50,057 aspirants are in the unreserved category, 13,028 in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category, 11,269 in the Scheduled Caste (SC) category, 2,361 in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category and 1,357 in the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)

category. This year, the DU has effected a 10-per cent seat increase in the EWS category and there will be a rise of close to 6,000 seats, taking the total number of seats for undergraduate courses to 62,000.

There will be separate cut-offs for the students in the EWS category.

Eight climbers still missing, four others from UK rescued

PITHORAGARH, JUN 2 (PTI): Eight mountaineers including seven foreigners, reported missing since May 25, continued to be traceless on Sunday, when authorities managed to rescue four other climbers from UK, stuck up near base camp of Nanda Devi East peak in Pithoragarh.

Pithoragarh District Magistrate V K Jogdande said the four UK climbers were spotted 21 kilometers beyond the base camp and rescued during a sortie undertaken to locate the missing eight-member team led by well-known UK climber Martin Moran.

Two sorties were conducted Sunday to locate Moran's team, said Jogdande, adding more sorties will be held tomorrow to search them.

The four UK mountaineers rescued Sunday told authorities that when they last got in touch with Moran's team on May 24, they were heading for some peak other than Nanda Devi East.

Moran's eight-member

team went missing on way to the 7,434-metre-high Nanda Devi East peak in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district.

Moran's team includes three climbers from the UK, two from the US and one from Australia, besides an officer from the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, New Delhi.

The eight missing climbers are Martin Moran, John McLaren, Richard Payne and Rupert Havel from the UK, Anthony Sudecam and Rachel Bimmel from the US, Ruth Macrain from Australia and IMF's Chetan Pandey.

The district administration launched the search operation after people at the base camp alerted authorities late Friday night.

The team is said to have been missing since May 25 when it was supposed to return to the base camp, Jogdande told reporters Saturday.

The route to the peak begins from Munsiyari about 132 km from the district headquarters.

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The Power of an Idea

The Tiananmen moment was about courage and conviction

On 04 June, thirty years ago, China completed its crackdown on what remains one of the most inspiring, brave and momentous occasions in recent world history. Much Before Wall Street was occupied or pro-democracy people took over Tahrir Square, there was the aspiration of the Chinese youth which crested with the nearly month and half long 'dharna' at Tianenmen Square in Beijing. The desire for democracy was so strong that China had to deploy its army and tanks to quell it. We now know the episode as the Tianenmen Square Massacre, and that the iconic image of the protest - that of a solitary man standing up to an armoured tank - continues to radiate courage and inspire movements.

News broadcasts on this day in 1989 were filled with the images of tanks, blood and death on the streets of Beijing. As night fell on 03 June, 1989, 40,000 soldiers of the 27th Peoples Liberation Army moved into China's capital with orders to crush the six weeks of demonstrations and protests by the country's students and workers, and end their demands for political change. In the preceding weeks, China, and Beijing in particular, had witnessed extraordinary events. A student occupation of Tiananmen Square became the focus for a rising working class movement. Independent Workers' Autonomous Federations were active in numbers of cities. From 20 May the movement continued in defiance of martial law and the central government was divided and paralysed. The paralysis was short-lived though and eventually the gloves came off. Accounts of witnesses testify to the calculated terror employed by the military as it reclaimed the capital.

Even though the 'uprising' was quelled. Tiananmen continues to inspire movements around the world. Who can forget that compelling image of the heroic Power of One mentioned earlier? Tiananmen cannot be dismissed as a freak development. It was the culmination of a decade of simmering discontent which exploded in the hands of students and workers. Countless were killed in the crackdown, some 40,000 arrested and dozens later sentenced to public executions. And yet, that one episode changed China. The last bastion of communism was ironically co-opted by demands of market forces and became the powerhouse dragon that the West is eyeing as much as a market as the backroom manufacturer. Even as the students inspired youth around the world, the iron fist of the government attracted those driven solely by profit. There are those who believe that Tiananmen did trigger investments into China, but for the wrong reasons. Tiananmen Square was like a global advertisement for investment - in China, no opposition to exploitation and oppression is tolerated. From 1990 on, investment flowed into China at exponential levels. In 1994 more investment entered the country than in the entire decade from 1979-1989. The crocodile tears that the rest of world shed after Tiananmen suggest that the latter interpretation is more correct.

But nothing in life is in pure black and white and the truth in this case also perhaps rests in a grey zone. Be that as it may, fact remains that Tiananmen was about courage and conviction. Since it was spear-headed by the young, it is something that every youth should learn from. Tiananmen is not just about taking on the establishment [that was just the medium of expression]; it is about harbouring convictions so strong that no adversary appears invincible. It is about finding a common cause and then living by it. We should ensure that this underpinning of the Tiananmen Moment is conveyed to all the young so that they take inspiration from the courage of the Chinese youth who put everything on the line 30 years ago.

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Champions League final: how money buys success on the pitch

ELISAVET ARGYRO MANOLI
theconversation.com

Following Chelsea's victory over London rivals Arsenal in the UEFA Europa League final in Azerbaijan, attention has now turned to the upcoming UEFA Champions League final, which is taking place on June 1 in Madrid. This final will see yet another two English teams battling for the trophy, in a country where European competition trophies tend to stay.

It's the first time that all four teams in the European finals have been English. And the English Premier League's commercial success begs the question of whether money has been the driving force for the success of these teams on the pitch.

In terms of overall league success, the English Premier League dominates European football when it comes to income, leaving the rest of the leagues far behind. According to the latest Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance, the English top league had a total revenue of €5.44 billion in the 2017-18 season. This is almost the same as the next two leagues in the rankings put together, Germany's Bundesliga (€3.17 billion) and Spain's La Liga (€3.1 billion).

But the EPL's astonishing commercial success is an older phenomenon. It has topped football finance rankings for the last decade. Seeing this translate to success on the pitch in European competitions is relatively new. After all, historically, it has been Spanish clubs that have dominated the European competitions, winning trophy after trophy since the early 2000s.

When we look at the revenue of specific clubs, the picture becomes a bit more complex. The most financially successful English club has always been Manchester United, which also historically topped Europe's money rankings and only made it to the quarter-finals of the Champions League this season, while failing to qualify for it in 2020.

According to Deloitte's detailed breakdown of

club financial performance, the Football Money League, the best performing European team was Real Madrid, followed by Barcelona and then Manchester United. The revenue generated by the two Champions League finalists, Liverpool and Tottenham in the 2017-18 season ranks them seventh and tenth respectively.

While both clubs increased their income and subsequent ranking from the season before (2016-17), they still rank well behind Spain's Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, and England's Manchester United. Tottenham's revenue of €428.3m was nearly half that of top ranking Real Madrid's €750.9m.

In fact, the clubs that appeared in the top six



positions in this year's revenue table did not participate in either UEFA competition final. So it seems that money does not automatically equal success.

A COMPETITIVE ECOSYSTEM

Nevertheless, money clearly plays a role in today's competitive sport ecosystem. While this relationship might not be a direct analogy of "money equals automatic victory", with a number of the clubs appearing on the Deloitte list having not won a European trophy for years, it does suggest that the two are related. Liverpool and Tottenham may

not top the financial league tables, but they still rank fairly high.

It's also useful to look at how clubs spend their revenues and the extent that they can buy success through buying top players. Tottenham did not spend any money on new players in 2018-19, but did spend €123.4m in 2017-18 including €28.9m on player Lucas Moura who was instrumental in getting them to the final.

Liverpool on the other hand spent €185.7m on new players in the 2018-19 season and €177.2m the year before. This included more than €60m on a much-needed new goalkeeper and more than €40m on star striker Mo Salah. So arguably their success has come at greater cost. In 2018-19, only Chelsea outspent Liverpool in terms of transfer market activity. Of course, buying top players can only get you so far. They need to play well together and there is also the role of luck when it comes to whether or not players get injured – something Tottenham have struggled with this season, with top striker Harry Kane and others out for much of the season.

Looking at it from a non-football perspective, research I've carried out into sport governing bodies underlines the challenges that sports bodies are faced with in terms of securing profitable revenue streams. Colleagues and I found that there is a virtuous (or vicious) circle in sport where money leads to success and then success to more money, and vice versa. We found that a number of sport governing bodies have been hit by the government's austerity policies. These cuts mean a lack of secure funding which led to an unavoidable and dangerous vicious circle of less success.

So Tottenham – the underdog in terms of historic financial performance and on the pitch – will be hoping to develop a more virtuous cycle in the club's first ever Champions League final. Meanwhile, Liverpool will hope to build on their experience and past successes in Europe's top flight. Money may not be the only key to sporting success, but it is certainly an important ingredient to it nonetheless.

[the writer is Lecturer in Sports Marketing and Communications, Loughborough University]



How floating homes will help people in flood-prone countries

NANDAN MUKHERJEE
theconversation.com

Around 40% of the global population live in coastal areas less than 100km from the ocean, facing climate challenges such as rising sea levels, heavy rainfall and extreme flooding. This causes loss and damage of US\$40 billion annually. According to the UN's Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, between 2002 and 2012, 700,000 people died, more than 1.4m were injured and about 23m were made homeless as a result of such disasters.

In Bangladesh, some 45m people live in areas where extreme cyclones frequently destroy homes and livelihoods. After interviewing a woman there who lost a child in a flood and was then abandoned by her husband, I wanted to address the problem practically. And that is how Dream Homes, the Dundee University project that has just won the UN's prestigious Risk Award, was born.

In communities that are vulnerable to storm disasters, people have few choices. They are not willing to abandon their homes and move to emergency shelters because they risk losing their livelihood, although often they have no choice if everything is destroyed. Disasters also restrict access to food, water, electricity, and other necessities.

So our plan was to design resilient floating homes that would enable families to survive in the aftermath of extreme flooding while producing food, water and energy, and also provide sustainable ways to make a living.

PROTOTYPES AND PARTNERSHIPS

We designed and built three 196m² prototype homes for US\$12,000 each in the pilot phase of the project, which was funded by the Global Resilience Partnership in conjunction with the Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER) at BRAC University in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Crucially, the homes were co-designed by local people in an inclusive effort to empower disadvantaged families. All through the design and construction process we held workshops to find out what people needed most in home that would not sit on land. For adults this included a central "courtyard" space, for example, and for children, a space to play in. Through close collaboration we were able to make the best use of local materials and integrate traditional building methods with our own technologies and innovations. This input not only improved the structural designs but ensured a sense of ownership of the project in local people afterwards.

Each home was built over a 40-tonne buoyant platform which

acts as a raft, allowing the house to rise vertically above floodwater by sliding on two guideposts. The structure can withstand category three cyclones, medium-level earthquakes and riverbank erosion.

The homes have the capacity to hold 17,000 litres of fresh drinking water harvested from rainwater which can supply the domestic water demands of a family for six months. There is room to keep chickens in an enclosure and vegetables can be grown vertically in soil pouches, and in an aquaponic system without soil, so that an income can be earned through selling eggs and produce.

An innovative sanitation system called a bio-digester converts all the waste from the kitchen, toilet and chicken coop to generate methane gas that can be used for cooking fuel. So the home doesn't pollute the surrounding environment, and good standards of hygiene can be maintained.

POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY

The desolate woman who lost her child made me understand how risk evolves from multiple climate disasters and extends suffering through a series of knock on effects. But the problem is not actually risk, but rather the inability to manage risk.

Poverty erodes people's ability to adapt to multiple risks in their lives.

Plus diminishing natural resources and social and economic inequalities all serve to increase their vulnerability. Our flood-resilient homes are designed to help people find ways to manage the risks of sea-level rise, storm surge and salinisation (when saltwater intrudes on inland water and soil).

These homes will allow people to continue making a living after a flood with adequate access to food, water and energy – the things that enable communities to think beyond immediate survival, continue to make a living and utilise resources to improve their situation.

Above all we understood from our discussions with local people that this should be a home – not a house. Home equals safety, family, the place that provides security, a sense of identity and belonging, and a feeling of pride. For the future we plan to use the €100,000 prize money to bring project to scale in the flood-prone river basins and deltas of Bangladesh. And we will continue our research to bring the cost down by half, making these sustainable and affordable homes even more accessible to rural communities all around the world.

[the writer is PhD Candidate, Geography and Environmental Science, University of Dundee]

Centre to help Assam govt set up 1,000 foreigners tribunals

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI): The Centre will help the Assam government in setting up 1,000 foreigners tribunals by July 31 when the final list of National Register of Citizens (NRC) will be published, officials said Sunday.

Those left out in the final NRC can challenge their exclusion in these tribunals to be set up across Assam.

Secretary (Border Management) in the Home Ministry B R Sharma recently held a meeting to discuss the proposal of the government of Assam for creation of e-Foreigners Tribunals and creation of 1,000 additional Foreigners Tribunals, a home ministry official.

The central government is also in the process of giving its approval to the state government's proposal to set up e-Foreigners Tribunals for those who were declared illegal immigrants.

The tribunals will be required after the publication of the final NRC, a list of Assam's residents, on July 31.

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.



The home ministry will help the Assam government in setting up the 1,000 foreigners tribunals, the official said.

The move came after the Supreme Court recently questioned the state government's plan to set up 1,000 foreigners' tribunals, pointing out it would be difficult to find 1,000 legal officers to preside over them.

The state government, along with the home ministry and other agencies, have been tasked to identify retired judicial officers for the purpose. The tribunals will require nearly 12,000 personnel including judicial officers.

The new tribunals would ease the burden of 100 existing tribunals as cases of those languishing in detention centre will be disposed of faster.

Some 30 lakh of the 40.7 lakh people, left out of the draft NRC, filed for inclusion of their names in the document. Around 600 objections were submitted by individuals who suspect the citizenship of others who made it to the list.

The Supreme Court, which is monitoring the NRC update process, has made it clear that the final NRC has to be published on July 31, 2019.

Of the 40.7 lakh people whose names did not figure in the draft

NRC, 37.59 lakh names were rejected and the remaining 2,48,077 were on hold.

However, they were given an opportunity to prove their Indian citizenship with 1971 as the cut-off year. The verification process is being carried out for these people who had submitted documents afresh.

The Supreme Court-monitored NRC exercise, aimed at identifying illegal immigrants in the state that borders Bangladesh, was carried out only in Assam, which faced an influx of people from Bangladesh since the early 20th century.

When the NRC was first prepared in As-

sam way back in 1951, the state had 80 lakh citizens.

According to the 2011 census, Assam's total population is over 3.11 crore.

The process of identification of illegal immigrants in the state has been widely debated and is a contentious issue in state politics.

A six-year agitation demanding identification and deportation of illegal immigrants was launched by the All Assam Students Union in 1979. It culminated with the signing of the Assam Accord on August 15, 1985, in presence of the then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Nagaland takes measures to save maize crop from pest attack



KOHIMA, JUN 2 (PTI): With the Fall Armyworm (FAW) affecting maize cultivation in Nagaland, the horticulture department has started taking measures to mitigate the problem, officials said.

The department has also decided to carry out a survey to estimate the quantum of damage caused by the pest attack, they said. Out of the 11 districts in the state, the crop has been affected in Kohima, Dimapur and Phek, the Deputy Director of Department of Horticulture, Dr Moa Walling, told reporters here on Saturday, on the sidelines of an awareness campaign and training for mitigation of FAW.

As an allied agriculture department, the horticulture department is concerned about the effects of FAW on maize cultivation throughout the state, he said.

The district horticulture officers, field staff and farmers are being trained to control the menace by using Nimbecidine EC, an insecticide, he said.

They are also being trained to use pheromone traps to fight the pest, he added. He said preventive measures

have to be taken after dark since the pest can travel a distance of 100 km in a single night.

"This pest infestation has devastated the maize fields in the neighbouring states and Nagaland is also not far from suffering the same fate, if we do not take immediate action against it," the Deputy Director of the horticulture department, S Senka Jamir, said.

The advisor for the horticulture department, MLA Mhathung Yanthan, while addressing the trainees asked the respective district officials not to remain insensitive to the menace as the pest is affecting not only maize but other plants, including the cash crops.

Maintaining that FAW has the potential of causing widespread damage, Yanthan asked all to take the responsibility to curb the spread of the pest for the general welfare of the maize farmers in the state.

Farmers, facing problems due to the pest attack, can contact the district horticulture offices for support, the Principal Secretary to the Government of Nagaland, MK Mero, said.

Pvt school not allowing poor kids to leave over unpaid dues: HC initiates PIL

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI): The Delhi High Court has initiated a PIL to look into a private unaided school's decision not to grant school-leaving certificates to two of its students, who could no longer afford to study there due to their family's poor financial condition.

A bench of Chief Justice Rajendra Menon and Justice Brijesh Sethi has issued notice to the Delhi government and the school, seeking their response, after the court

received a letter bringing to its attention the plight of the two brothers -- aged nine and five years.

The letter, sent through a lawyer, said the two boys, whose father was a labourer, could no longer afford to study in the school and when their parents tried to get them admitted elsewhere, the school management refused to grant them school-leaving certificates over unpaid dues.

Without the certi-

icates, the children could not be admitted in another school, the letter said and sought the court's intervention.

The communication was received by the high court's PIL committee in May and it decided to take up the issue as a public interest litigation (PIL).

The bench has made lawyer Ashok Agarwal an amicus curiae -- friend of the court -- to assist it in the matter which is listed for hearing on July 2.

Woman accuses Neymar of rape, player says he was set up

RIO DE JANEIRO, JUN 2 (AP): A Brazilian police document says an unidentified woman has accused soccer star Neymar of raping her in Paris last month. After the revelation, the player used Instagram to publish a 7-minute video that includes WhatsApp messages he says he exchanged with the accuser in a friendly way days later. Neymar calls the incident "a setup" and insists it is an attempt of extortion against him.

The document obtained by The Associated Press on Saturday says the incident took place May 15 at 8:20 p.m. in a hotel. The woman went to police Friday in Sao Paulo. Sao Paulo state's Public Security Secretariat, which oversees police, confirmed in a statement that the complaint was registered, but did not offer details.

Once more involved in an incident off the pitch, Neymar said he fell in a trap and will learn from the incident.

"There was a relationship between a man and a woman between four walls. On the next day nothing happened," the striker said. "I hope investigators read the messages and see what happened."

The first messages in Neymar's video are dated March 11. The video includes multiple erotic photos and messages he said he exchanged with the accuser. The last date that appears on the video is of May 16, with no reference to the alleged crime.

Earlier his father and agent, Neymar da Silva Santos, said his son had con-

sensual sexual relations with the accuser and was blackmailed by her lawyer after they broke up. "This is a tough moment. If we can't show the truth quickly it will be a snowball. If we have to show Neymar's WhatsApp messages and the conversations with this lady, we will," Santos told TV Band.

Neymar's father said he has evidence that his son was blackmailed, including pictures and witnesses, but did not show either in the interview.

He also said his son is already preparing his defense for a legal case if needed. The Paris police and the city's prosecutors' office said through spokesmen that they were unaware of any complaint. The woman says she and the Brazil star met in France after exchanging Instagram messages.

She told police a representative of the Paris Saint-Germain player named Gallo allegedly bought her tickets to Paris and booked her a hotel room. She said Neymar arrived apparently drunk at the hotel.

The woman described to police that they "touched each other, but in a given moment Neymar became aggressive and, with violence, had sexual intercourse against the victim's will."

The text also says the woman left Paris two days later and said she did not file her complaint in Paris because she was shaken. The police document says the woman will go through medical exams as part of an investigation.

Finance Commission team to visit Meghalaya

SHILLONG, JUNE 2 (PTI): The Fifteenth Finance Commission will visit Meghalaya on Monday and will hold meeting with state government officials and representatives of urban and rural local bodies, officials said Sunday.

Commission's chairman N K Singh and members A N Jha, Ashok Lahiri, Anoop Singh, Ramesh Chand besides senior officers will also meet Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma and his cabinet during the course of their three-day stay here, they said.

The Commission will also separately meet representatives of rural local bodies, representatives of urban local bodies, representatives of trade and industry bodies of Meghalaya, according to an official statement.

The Commission will also meet the representatives of the political parties of the state besides separate meeting with the Women Self Help Groups and the Aqua Entrepreneurs supported by the Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission (MSAM), it said.

The Commission will

also inspect MNREGS works in the state and interact with members of the Village Employment Councils (VECs).

The Commission is scheduled to visit the Hortihub of Meghalaya among other itineraries outside of their meetings.

Meghalaya Government had submitted its memorandum to the Fifteenth Finance Commission.

The Commission had also received a detailed presentation from the Principal Accountant General (Audit) of Meghalaya on the Finances of the State Government.

Ex-SC staffer posted 'wrong' information on court website to see daughter working in BSES: Police



New Delhi, Jun 2 (PTI): The desire to see his daughter working at the BSES prompted a former Supreme Court staffer to allegedly post wrong information related to a case involving Reliance Communications Chairman Anil Ambani on the apex court's website, a senior police official said.

Tapan Kumar Chakraborty and his associate Manav Sharma, who worked as court masters, had allegedly uploaded an order on the Supreme Court's website that said Ambani's presence in a case was dispensed with, despite the court ordering that he be present for the next hearing.

Chakraborty and Sharma were arrested in April. During inter-

rogation, police found out that Chakraborty, who was nearing retirement, wanted to get his 23-year-old daughter placed in the BSES power discom, the official said.

He was due to retire next year and when someone assured him that his daughter would get a job in the BSES, Chakraborty agreed to tamper with the information, he added.

However, the official said the police were yet to get any clue about the person who made this offer to Chakraborty as it was done verbally. Sharma, who is in his 40s, had followed Chakraborty's instructions as the latter was senior to him.

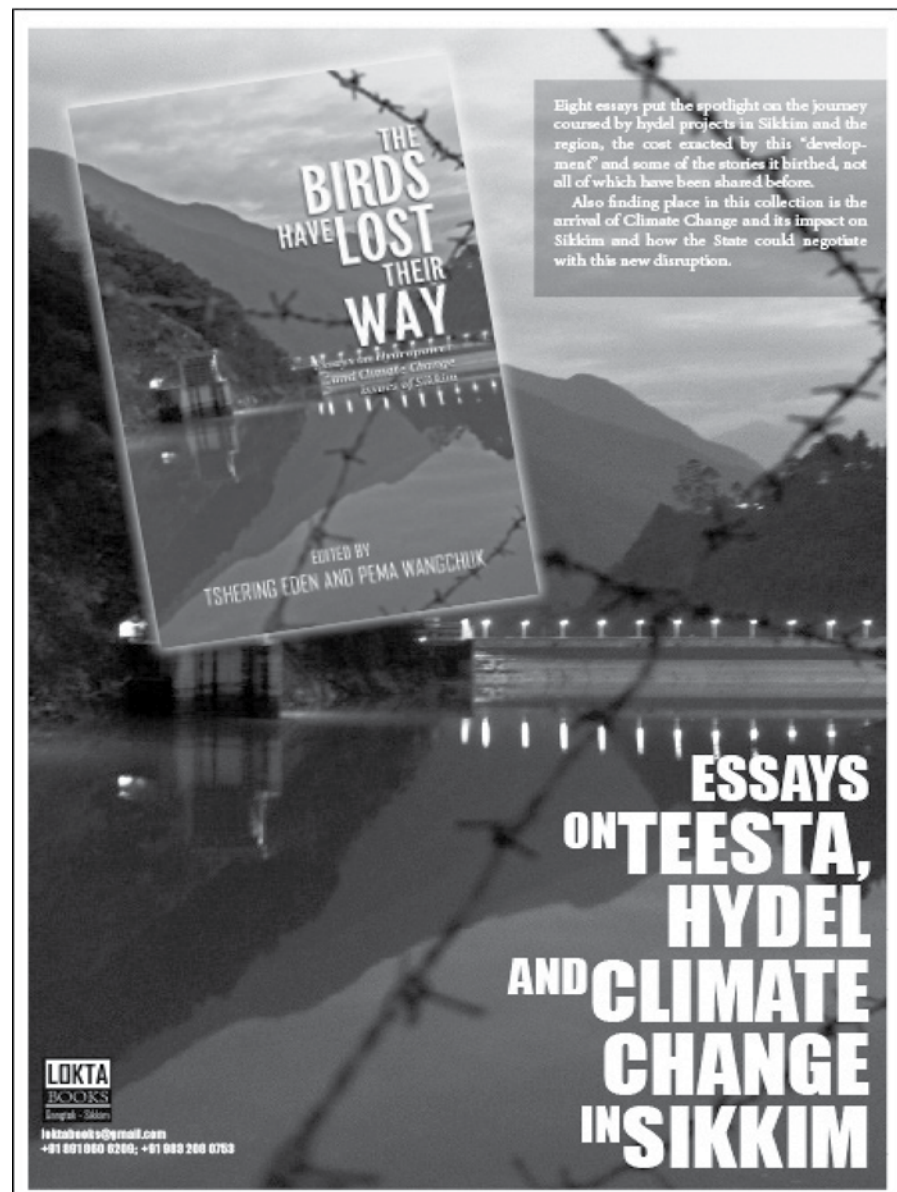
The BSES is a joint venture of the Reliance Infrastructure Limited

and the Delhi government.

The Crime Branch, which is probing the case, is trying to ascertain the identity of the person who directed Chakraborty to post the "wrong information", the official said.

A case of cheating and forgery was registered on March 1 after a complaint was received from the additional registrar of the Supreme Court.

The top court sacked Chakraborty and Sharma for tampering with its January 7 order on the issue of Ambani's personal appearance in connection with a contempt case against him. The two were arrested by the police and subsequently granted bail by a city court.



Skipper Kohli hurts thumb during nets but “doing fine”

SOUTHAMPTON, JUN 2 (PTI): India captain Virat Kohli “is doing fine” despite being hit on his thumb while batting in the nets ahead of the team’s World Cup opener against South Africa here on Wednesday.

“He got hit while batting but is doing fine. There is nothing to worry as of now,” team sources told PTI.

Kohli hurt his thumb during a training session at the Ageas Bowl here on Saturday, prompting physiotherapist Patrick Farhat to attend to the Indian skipper.

Farhat was first seen using magic spray on the injured finger and then applied tape on it. Later Kohli was seen leaving the field with his thumb dipped in a glass of ice.

India, one of the favourites for the title, were hit by injuries in the run up to the World Cup.

While all-rounder Vijay Shankar had to sit out of the warm-up game against New Zealand after hurting his elbow, Kedar Jadhav is still recovering from a shoulder injury he picked up during IPL and missed India’s both warm-up games against the Kiwis and Bangladesh.

Jadhav, a key figure in India’s middle-order, batted in the nets on Saturday, an indication that he could be fit in time for the game against South Africa. The Indian team has an off day on Sunday.

West Indies can upset a few of the big boys, says Lloyd

LONDON, JUN 2 (PTI): The current West Indies team is not laggard and has the firepower to cause a few upsets in the ongoing ICC World Cup, said legendary Clive Lloyd.

Lloyd, who captained West Indies in three World Cups, said he was mighty impressed with the Caribbean side’s “clinical” performance against Pakistan in its World Cup opener at Nottingham on Friday.

West Indies dished out a hostile bowling effort to bundle out Pakistan for a paltry 106 and then chased down the target in 13.4 overs with seven wickets in hand.

“I thought the West Indies were quite clinical against Pakistan. They used the pitch to their advantage in the sense that it had a bit of life and they put pressure on Pakistan. They now have to keep things going and should be looking now to try and qualify,” Lloyd wrote in a column for the ICC website. “I’m sure they will upset a few of the big boys if they play like that. This game has proven that we have some firepower and that means we can match anybody in this competition,” he added.

Lloyd, who captained West Indies to World Cup victories in 1975 and 1979, feels the game against defending champions Australia would give a fair bit of idea where the Caribbeans’ stand. “I was proud to see them really perform - not that I didn’t expect them to do well.

Australia shutting out World Cup boo-boys

BRISTOL, JUN 2 (AFP): Australia launched their World Cup campaign with an efficient victory over Afghanistan -- and appeared totally unfazed by the hostile reception given to Steve Smith and David Warner.

A seven-wicket win in Bristol against the 10th-ranked nation in one-day international cricket on Saturday set the reigning champions on their way in the competition, though they know there will be tougher tests ahead.

Australia had their opponents on the ropes at five for two but the Afghans rallied and reached 207, even though they failed to bat out their 50 overs.

David Warner top-scored for Australia with 89 not out in his first official international match after completing a one-year ball-tampering ban as they reached their target with more than 15 overs to spare.

But both Warner and Smith, also banned over the “sandpapergate” scandal, were subjected to jeers from the crowd after suffering a similar fate during last week’s warm-up match against England.

Two fans even watched the game in Bristol from a balcony dressed as sandpaper in reference to the scandal



last year in which Australia hatched a plot to use the material to alter the condition of the ball during a Test match in South Africa.

Leg-spinner Adam Zampa, who took three wickets, said Australia were prepared for barracking from spectators throughout the tournament.

“We have spoken a bit how we are going to handle that situation,” he said. “Obviously, we copped it in the warm-up game against England, too.

“But I think we are expecting it. And to be fair, I think everyone’s

handling it really well.”

- FOCUS -

Zampa said he did not think Warner and Smith would necessarily feed off the negative vibes from the crowd, but instead were shutting them out, praising them for the way they were handling themselves.

“Personally, I don’t really hear the crowd to be honest,” he said. “So I think if you can block it out, you don’t really hear it. As I say, the guys are handling themselves really well.

“We spoke about it during our camp in Brisbane, about how we are going to react to it and

how we are going to handle it and we haven’t spoken about it since.

“I think we expected that we were going to cop it and I think all of us, to our credit, are just getting on with the job. You heard the boos today when Smithy went out there.

“Call it what you want, disrespectful, or just a part of the game. Either way, I think the way that us as players are handling it has been great. If you let it get to you, I suppose that is when something will happen.”

Seamer Marcus Stoinis, who took two wickets,

said both Smith and Warner would shut out the booing, adding that the situation was “out of our control”.

“They’re professionals,” he said. “They don’t need any more motivation and they will just go about their business.” Australia, who next face the West Indies at Trent Bridge on Thursday, endured a torrid 2018 in one-day internationals but appear to be peaking at the right time as they chase a sixth World Cup.

They came out on top in their series in India earlier this year before humbling Pakistan 5-0 in the United Arab Emirates.

Coulter-Nile warns Windies, says be ready for chin music

BRISTOL, JUN 2 (PTI): Australia has warned Chris Gayle and company to be ready for ‘chin music’ when it takes on West Indies in its second ICC World Cup game at Trent Bridge, Nottingham on Thursday.

Australia pacer Nathan Coulter-Nile said they are ready to give West Indies a taste of its own medicine -- bouncers -- to keep Gayle and company in check.

“You’ve got to give it (bowl bouncers) to the Windies, otherwise they just get on the front foot

and pogo you everywhere,” said the right-arm quick after Australia’s seven-wicket win over Afghanistan in its World Cup opener here on Saturday.

“We’ll definitely give it to them - we give it to every team. You’ve got to use your two (permitted bouncers per over).

“The grounds are so small and the wickets are generally pretty flat, so you’ve got to use bouncers when you can,” he added.

In Coulter-Nile, Mitchel Starc and Pat

Cummins, Australia boast of a fiery pace battery.

Coulter-Nile’s statement came close on the heels of West Indies’ devastating fast-bowling display against Pakistan, bundling out the opposition for just 105 in 21.4 overs.

Coulter-Nile said Australian bowlers need to be aggressive upfront against a batsman of Gayle’s calibre.

“Oh Starcy (Mitchell Starc) will knock his off pole out. It will be easy,” he said jokingly about

the 39-year-old Gayle.

“You know he’s going to hit your good balls for four and hit your bad balls for six. Just keep as bowling as many good balls as you can we’ll stick a few up him.

“I think you just need to be aggressive at him. He’s still smacking them but he is getting older. I don’t know if he’s faced too much of Starcy and Paddy (Pat Cummins) recently but they’re bowling quick. So we’ll see how he handles that early,” Coulter-Nile added.

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Karol Bagh budget hotels severely hit after kitchen ban

**KUNAL DUTT
NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI):** From shrinking occupancy to losing loyal customers, budget hotels in north Delhi’s Karol Bagh have been severely hit after the new safety norms kicked in banning kitchens on the premises, the hotel managers say.

Officially designated as guest houses, a number of these economy hotels in the vicinity of the famous Karol Bagh Market were shut after a massive fire in February at the five-storeyed Hotel Arpit Palace in the area killed 17 people.

For Swati Hotel, which is adjacent to Hotel Arpit Palace on Gurudwara Road, it’s not business as usual.

“We reopened about two months ago. But kitchen is not allowed on hotel premises. So our guests, who are used to order food through room service, are now looking out for restaurants. This has really affected our business,” said an employee on the condition of anonymity.

Pointing to a nearby restaurant, he said, “Most of our guests dine there now, it’s a big loss for us.”

Madhurendra Singh, the manager of Royal Holidays, a four-storeyed hotel on a narrow lane between Ajmal Khan Road and Gurudwara Road, said he has lost his loyal customers because of the “kitchen factor”.

“Our customers would prefer to order food through room service as it helped them get a consolidated bill. Because of the inconvenience, they are choosing to stay at other places, so our occupancy rate has dropped,” Singh told PTI.

The manager at Hotel Intercity, opposite Royal Holidays, has a similar story. “Of course, we are losing loyal customers. People have read about kitchen closure in newspapers and are not coming to Karol Bagh for budget hotel stay. We can’t even keep catering utensils,” he said.

“While our hotel was shut, we suffered a huge loss. The kitchen staff and waiters had to be laid off,” he said.

Hotel Intercity re-

opened about a month and a half ago, after complying with all safety requirements mentioned by the fire department, including provision of battery-operated emergency lighting in case of power outage during a fire incident, the manager added.

Days after the fire at Arpit Palace, the Delhi government approved amendments to its building bylaws banning rooftop as well as basement kitchens and stopping issuance of fire safety certificates to guest houses having more than four floors.

While giant neon light signages are back on the buildings of most of the hotels in what is called the “West Extension Area” of Karol Bagh, Arpit Palace sinks into darkness after the twilight, the property sealed by authorities after the incident still shut.

A board of Crossroads Resto & Bar hung ingloriously on the facade in darkness, evoking the horrors of the tragedy.

At Hotel White House, its manager Sarabjeet Singh said, “Besides fall in occupancy, our rooftop restaurant is now shut. It is a big financial loss for us”.

Neeraj Sharma, manager at four-storeyed Hotel Paradise Inn, on a lane off Ajmal Khan Road, said occupancy has reduced by nearly 50 per cent.

“We have 24 rooms, six on each floors, and currently the occupancy is about 12 guests. Our business has been severely hit, and the kitchen ban has compounded our problem,” Sharma said.

At times, guests order online or “we arrange it for them from nearby restaurants” but it “feels very unprofessional”, he rued.

The loss for these budget hotels has turned into a gain for restaurants and eateries.

“Our restaurant is getting a lot more people in the last two months than previously. Our business has gone up,” said Radha Krishnan of Om Saravana Bhavan, which has a speciality for south Indian dishes.

Ramzan - fasting, family, food and much more

MANISH SAIN

NEW DELHI, JUN 2 (PTI): Two cannon shots ring out across the vast courtyard of the Jama Masjid and the crowded streets beyond, signalling an end to a long, hot day of fasting and the beginning of some feasting with family and friends. But Ramzan means a lot more for those who don’t drink or eat from sunrise to sunset, observing the ‘roza’ for the entire month until Eid. As the day ends and dusk falls over the area, there’s a momentary silence as thousands of ‘rozedaar’ gathered in the courtyard of one of Asia’s biggest mosques begin the ritual of the evening namaz.

And then it’s time to open the sherbet bottles, to ladle out fruit salad and hand out plates of dates, the chatter building up as plans for Eid just a few days away this week get firmed up. After the namaz of Maghrib, the crowd starts to trickle out in the streets, famous for its kababs, roasted chicken, biryani and other Indian-Mughlai delicacies.

Family, friends and food make for essential parts of the holy month of Ramzan but the underlying principles and reasons behind observing the fast are never far from the mind, said Abid Ali Khan from Ghaziabad.

Sitting in the Jama Masjid courtyard, surrounded by his family, the 55-year-old businessman told PTI that organising a feast for

family and neighbours during Ramzan not only gives one a chance to get together, but an opportunity to have great food too. But keeping a ‘roza’ is more importantly about practising a moral way of life.

“This one month is like a rehearsal for the next 11 months. It’s not just about going fasting, it is about avoiding everything wrong and taking the path of what’s right. Not thinking bad for anyone, not stealing, harming others, keeping away from immoral thoughts, that is the real ‘roza,’” he explained.

One would think that fasting devotees would eat great portions of food, he added, but when it comes to ‘iftar’, breaking the fast, only water matters the most.

“You would feel like I want to eat this tonight, or that special dish. But at ‘iftar’ all I want is water, we have a lot of liquid through sherbet and other drinks,” Khan said.

Sitting by the southern colonnades of the mosque, Mohammad Sameer from Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, gently offers people around him a bottle full of Rooh Afza, the famed rose flavoured squash, to break the fast.

After a long day in the market selling ‘arbi’ (colocasia) from his farms back home, Sameer said he isn’t really bothered about either the heat or hunger. “I have fasted regularly since I was seven through sun and rain. The first few

times I felt uncomfortable, but now it does not take any effort,” the 38-year old said. The farmer-scrap dealer has a train to catch in the night, so how will he have his ‘sehari’, the pre-fast meal taken at dawn?

“I will buy something on the train, tea and biscuits usually. We don’t feel the need to pack especially for ‘sehari’, since it has become a routine to be travelling during the early hours. We manage,” he answered, a confident smile appearing on his face. Dikhra, a PG student at AIIMS from Kerala, was also fasting far from home and missed it as being around the family made the fasting month more comforting. “It’s difficult to keep rozas alone. When with family or in a group you feel motivated and will have the whole Ramzan feel. Here I just feel like keeping the fast, I can’t deny that it is not tiring. At times, it is very tiring,” she said.

Matia Mahal, a colourful, crowded market in front of Gate no 1 of Jama Masjid, welcomes a continuous stream of those wanting to have some more before heading home for dinner.

Sitting with a large platter full of ‘halwa’ made with desi ghee, Mohammad Rashid comes to the market outside the mosque and sets up his shop around 4 pm in the afternoon.

Cooking and carrying the dry fruits-laden halwa to the market could make anyone salivate, but not devoted rozedaar Rashid. For

Rashid, it is just another day. “It has been 40 years since I have been fasting during Ramzan. Preparing this halwa does not interfere with the fast. And the hardship, well, when Allah is there to take care of everything we don’t have to worry about such trivialities,” he said.

It may not be a matter of concern for Rashid, but a few meters down the road Mohammad Shakir does not observe the fast.

“I used to keep the fast till I was a young boy, but now my work involves standing for hours and roasting kababs. I don’t think that would be an honest fast,” the 37-year-old vendor said while slow-roasting kababs dripping with spicy juices on an open barbecue.

Another famous food item during Ramzan is ‘shahi kheer’ or ‘firni’ and Mohammed Mustafa’s shop is particularly known for the quality of the sweet, made of slowly cooked milk and mixed with almonds and pistachios. No matter how tempting, Mustafa does not feel a thing when he fasts. “It is work for us, have been doing it for generations. It’s only Allah’s blessing that it does not even feel we are doing anything extraordinary. There are times when I don’t even remember I am fasting,” Mustafa said. Between those who cook to sell and those who eat, the sentiment of all ‘rozedaar’ remains. As Sameer said, “Allah has given us this month. It has his divine mercy and beneficence. And he only gets us through”.

Pak-origin London Mayor brands Donald Trump a fascist

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, JUN 2 (PTI): Pakistani-origin London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who has been a vocal critic of Donald Trump, on Sunday branded the US President as one of the "fascists of the 20th century" and said Britain should not be rolling out a red carpet to a leader like him for a state visit to the UK.

Trump, along with his wife Melania and his adult children, will be a guest of Queen Elizabeth II during his three-day official visit to the UK starting Monday. The visit is expected to provoke massive protests in London on Tuesday.

"President Donald Trump is just one of the most egregious examples of a growing global threat. The far right is on the rise around the world, threatening our hard-won rights and freedoms and the values that have defined our liberal, democratic societies for more than 70 years," Khan writes in the 'Observer'.

"Viktor Orban in Hungary, Matteo Salvini in Italy, Marine Le Pen in France and



Nigel Farage here in the UK are using the same divisive tropes of the fascists of the 20th century to garner support, but with new sinister methods to deliver their message. And they are gaining ground and winning power and influence in places that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago," he says.

When asked whether the president should have been invited to London, he replied: "Not on a state visit, no."

Khan likened the US to a best friend who

needed to be "called out".

He said: "I think it's important for us to have good relations with our closest ally, and important for our allies to be here for the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings; we've got to have good relations with the US - but I don't think we should be rolling out the red carpet.

"Our closest ally is akin to a best friend - and the thing about a best friend is that you stand shoulder to shoulder with them in times of adversity, but you've got to call them out when you

think they're wrong."

In an interview with the 'Sun' on Saturday, Trump defied diplomatic convention -- which dictates that leaders do not weigh in to the domestic politics of other nations, particularly ahead of visits -- by backing Boris Johnson to succeed Theresa May as British Prime Minister.

In the same interview, he described Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, as "nasty". The American-born former actress has previously referred to Trump as a

divisive figure in 2016, threatening to move to Canada if Trump won the presidency.

Markle, who is still on maternity leave after giving birth to her and Prince Harry's first child Archie, will not be joining the rest of the royal family during a series of events planned during Trump's state visit.

Over the three days, the US president will be hosted by British royalty and politicians. He will also take part in commemorations to mark the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

Israel confirms attacked Syria over rockets fired at Mount Hermon

JERUSALEM, JUN 2 (AFP): The Israeli military confirmed Sunday it had attacked Syrian military positions in response to rockets fired from Syria at Mount Hermon in the occupied Golan Heights.

A statement from the military said it held the Syrian regime accountable "for every action taken against Israel," with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiter-

ating Israel's policy to "respond forcefully to any aggression against us."

Two rockets were fired at Mount Hermon late Saturday, with the army saying on Sunday that one of them was "located within Israeli territory."

In response the army attacked "two Syrian artillery batteries, a number of observation and intelligence posts on the Golan Heights, and an

SA-2 aerial defense battery," the Sunday statement said.

"During the strikes, an Israeli aerial defense system was activated due to Syrian anti-aircraft shooting. None of the rockets exploded in Israel," Netanyahu said he had ordered the attack following the rockets.

"We won't tolerate fire at our territory," he said.

Trial in Kathua rape-and-murder case nearing completion



JAMMU, JUN 2 (PTI): The trial in the case of rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir is nearing completion nearly a year after it began at a court in Punjab's Pathankot, officials said Sunday.

Defence lawyers are likely to complete their final arguments on Monday, followed by a brief concluding statement from the prosecution team led by J K Chopra, they said, adding that the verdict is expected thereafter.

The day-to-day in-camera trial began in the first week of June last year at the district and session court in Pathankot after the Supreme Court directed that the case be shifted out of Jammu and Kashmir after lawyers in Kathua had prevented crime branch officials from filing the charge sheet in the case.

A political turmoil was witnessed in the Jammu region last January after the Jammu and Kashmir Police's crime branch took over the case and arrested eight people, including a juvenile and two police officials who were accused of destruction of evidence.

The case became a bone of contention between then ruling alliance partners PDP and BJP. The BJP had to sack two of its ministers, Chowdhury Lal Singh and Chander Prakash Ganga, for participating in a rally of Hindu Ekta Manch in support of those arrested by the crime branch in the case.

The crime branch arrested village head Sanji Ram, his son Vishal, juvenile nephew and his friend Anand Dutta, and two special police officers Deepak Khajuria and Surender Verma. Head constable Tilak Raj and sub-inspector Anand Dutta, who allegedly took Rs 4 lakh from Sanji Ram and destroyed crucial evidence, were also arrested by the crime branch.

Charges of rape and murder were framed by the district and sessions judge against seven out of the eight accused. The trial against the juvenile is yet to begin as his pe-

tition regarding his age is to be heard by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

In its May 7 order, the apex court said "the pivotal fact around which the controversy centres, is abduction, rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl. An FIR was lodged at Hiranagar Police Station, Kathua... The investigating agency, namely, the Crime Branch, which took over the investigation on 22nd January, 2018 from the local police has already filed the charge-sheet on 9th April, 2018, in the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Kathua in the State of Jammu and Kashmir".

However, the country's top most court did not say anything about handing over the case to the CBI and rather transferred the trial to the District and Sessions judge in Pathankot in Punjab, 30 km from Kathua.

"The learned district and sessions judge, Pathankot, shall himself take up the trial and not assign it to any additional sessions judge and shall fast-track the trial and take it up on day-to-day basis so that there is no delay in trial," the three-judge bench of the Supreme Court had said in April last year.

All the accused, barring the juvenile, have been shifted to Gurdaspur jail following an intervention by the Supreme Court which also restricted appearance of the defence lawyers and limited it to one or maximum of two per accused.

The crime branch had submitted the charge sheet in the crime on April 9 before the Kathua court. The case hit the headlines after lawyers tried to prevent the police from filing the charge sheet.

According to the charge sheet, the eight-year-old girl, who was kidnapped on January 10 this year, was allegedly raped by in captivity in a small village temple in Kathua district after having been kept sedated for four days before she was bludgeoned to death.

The abduction, rape and killing of the child was part of a carefully

planned strategy to remove the minority nomadic community from the area, the 15-page charge sheet says.

During trial, the prosecution presented opinions of doctors to suggest that an overdose of sedatives, forcibly administered to the victim before murder, could have led her into "coma" (loss of consciousness).

The crime branch of the Jammu and Kashmir Police had sent a sample of viscera to examine the effect of "mannar" candies (believed to be local cannabinoids) and "Epitril 0.5 mg" tablets for further opinion to a forensic laboratory.

The crime branch had decided to seek further medical opinion after it was claimed by the accused people and their lawyers in the court as well as on social media through their supporters that it was virtually impossible that the eight-year-old girl could not have cried for help when such an alleged brutal attack was happening on her.

The doctors after examining the viscera, which contains internal organs of the body, specifically those within the chest (as the heart or lungs) or abdomen (as the liver, pancreas or intestines), opined that medicine administered to the victim contains Clonazepam salt and has to be administered under medical supervision keeping in mind the age and weight of the patient.

"Considering her (victim) of 30 Kgs body weight, the therapeutic dose of 0.1 to 0.2 mgs per day divided in three dose for patient (is recommended)," it said.

"She was forcefully administered five tablets of Clonazepam 0.5 mg each on January 11, 2018 which is higher than the safe therapeutic dose. Subsequently more tablets were given...the signs and symptoms of an overdose may include drowsiness, confusion, impaired coordination, slow reflexes, slowed or stopped breathing, coma (loss of consciousness) and death," the opinion of the doctor had said.

S Korea urges restraint after North's missile test

SINGAPORE, JUN 1 (AP): South Korea's Defense Minister Jeong Kyeeong-doo on Saturday fended off calls to step up pressure on North Korea after it test-fired missiles last month.

Jeong told an annual security conference in Singapore that the tests were being investigated and a conclusion is within reach.

"There are discussions whether or not it is a short-range ballistic missile. There is a perspective that it is a Russian Iskander missile, or it is a new tactical ballistic missile," he said.

"There are data that we can verify, and we are working off those data to make sure we have a verification," Jeong was responding to a question on whether the tests were a violation of a military agreement between South and North Korea last September to halt acts of aggression against each other.

He said the North was "in fact acting within the boundaries" of the agreement and tensions between their militaries "have been lowered to a significant extent." "So currently the actions done by the North Korean regime have the intent to carry out the peace process through dialogue and talks. And I believe that's the hidden intent behind the lines in terms of their missile launches," Jeong called on the international community to "assure North Korea that the decision to denuclearize is indeed the

right decision."

He said that South Korea sees humanitarian aid and the lowering of military tensions as ways "to lead North Korea into conversation and away from ... the ways of the past." North Korea itself has defended the launches, saying it was exercising its right to self-defence.

The U.S. and Japan say the short-range ballistic missile tests on May 4 and 9 were a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. The tests ended a pause in launches that began in late 2017, and came amid deadlocked negotiations to rid North Korea of nuclear weapons.

Japanese Defense Minister Takeshi Iwaya, who spoke at the same session on Korean security, stressed that a strict implementation of sanctions against North Korea was necessary.

He specifically directed his comments at South Korea, China and Russia.

"We need to enhance surveillance on a global scale while strengthening effort locally to ensure the full implementation of sanctions," Iwaya said.

Earlier Saturday, U.S. Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan told the Shangri-La Dialogue conference that North Korea "remains an extraordinary threat" and has "neared a point where it could credibly strike regional allies, U.S. territory, and our forward-deployed forces."

Sri Lankan presidential polls to be held between Nov 15 and Dec 7



COLOMBO, JUN 2 (PTI): The presidential elections in Sri Lanka would be held between November 15 and December 7, Election Commission Chairman Mahinda Deshapriya has said, clarifying that according to constitutional provisions the polls must be held one month before the end of the current president's term. Deshapriya's clarification on the constitutional provisions regarding the date for the next presidential elections came after President Maithripala Sirisena told reporters last week in New Delhi that the presidential polls is likely to take place on December 7.

President Sirisena's five-year term is scheduled to end on January 8, 2020.

"The election must be held one month before the end of the current president's term," Deshapriya said, addressing the Voters' Day events held at the south

Colombo suburb of Moratuwa Saturday.

"The nearest date the election can be held is November 15 as the November 10 is a Sunday and November 12 is a Poya Day (a Buddhist holy day). December 7 is the furthest day the election can be held," Deshapriya said, adding the Election Commission would be permitted to hold the election on any day between November 15 and December 7.

Sirisena was elected for a 5 year-term on January 8, 2015 when he challenged the incumbent Mahinda Rajapaksa. The former strongman had called snap elections two years ahead of the end of his second term.

Sirisena backed by the then main Opposition United National Party (UNP) became the common Opposition candidate against his former boss Rajapaksa.

Although Sirisena has not so far declared his intention for a re-run, his

souring of relationship with the UNP of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has indicated that the UNP would be fielding its own candidate.

Sirisena in October last year sacked Wickremesinghe, who elevated him to the presidency, and replaced him with Rajapaksa. The move led to a constitutional impasse which lasted over 50 days. After the interpellation by the Supreme Court court, Wickremesinghe was restored as the prime minister.

Sirisena speaking to reporters in New Delhi after attending Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swearing-in ceremony said he had not decided on seeking another term in the election that is due by year-end.

"I am not in a hurry to decide whether to stand," Sirisena said. Sirisena has faced criticism over his leadership after a series of suicide bombings killed 258 people in the island nation on April 21.

Tiananmen crackdown 'correct' policy: China defence minister

SINGAPORE, JUN 2 (AFP): The 1989 crackdown on protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square was the correct policy, China's defence minister said Sunday.

"That incident was a political turbulence and the central government took measures to stop the turbulence which is a correct policy," Gener-

al Wei Fenghe told a regional security forum in Singapore.

Speaking to fellow defence ministers, top military officers and academics from all over the world, Wei questioned why people still say that China "did not handle the incident properly".

"The 30 years have proven that China has

undergone major changes," he said, adding that because of the government's action "China has enjoyed stability and development".

Beijing was the epicentre of student-led protests 30 years ago, with hundreds or possibly more than 1,000 killed by soldiers at the square on June 4, 1989.

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Japan PM to meet Iran's Khamenei to mediate with US: report



TOKYO, JUN 2 (AFP): Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will meet Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei later this month with Tokyo hoping to mediate between Washington and Tehran, a report said Sunday.

As tensions intensify between Iran and Japan's key ally the United States, Abe has reportedly proposed serving as a go-between and is said to be weighing up a state visit to Iran. According to the Mainichi Shimbun report, Abe's planned meeting with influential Khamenei will be the first such talks between a Japanese premier and Tehran's supreme leader.

US President Donald Trump said last week he remained open to talks with Tehran during his state visit to Tokyo, appearing to have given the green light to Abe's plan. Abe will also meet Iran's president Hassan Rouhani before meeting Khamenei during his tour to Iran from June 12 to 14, the newspaper said, citing unnamed government sources.

Before Trump flew to Japan, the United States had announced it was sending 1,500 extra troops to the region, adding to the aircraft carrier group and nuclear-capable

bomber planes already dispatched.

Trump himself threatened "the official end" of the country if Tehran ever attacked US interests.

But last Monday in Tokyo, Trump offered assurances that he can live with the Islamic republic's government, whose toppling has long been a dream for Washington hardliners.

"We're not looking for regime change," Trump said, explaining that he only cared about Iran not achieving nuclear power status. "I do believe that Iran would like to talk, and if they'd like to talk, we'd like to talk also," Trump added, striking a relatively dovish tone on Iran.

Khamenei has likened negotiations with the Trump administration to "poison" since "they don't stand by anything", referring to Washington's withdrawal from the landmark 2015 nuclear deal signed by Tehran and world powers.

Japan and Iran have kept a good relationship as resource-poor Japan relies heavily on imports of oil from the Middle East, though crude from Iran accounted for just 5.3 percent of the country's total imports last year.

Fergie files for divorce from Josh Duhamel

LOS ANGELES, JUN 2 (PTI): Former Black Eyed Peas singer Fergie has filed for divorce from actor Josh Duhamel almost two years after their separation.

The former couple announced their split in September 2017 after eight years of marriage.

According to a court docket acquired by Entertainment Weekly, Fergie, 44, filed for divorce from Duhamel on Friday at a courthouse in Pasadena, California.

"With absolute love and respect we decided to separate as a couple earlier this year. To give our family the best opportunity to adjust, we wanted to keep this a private matter before sharing it with the public.

"We are and will always be united in our support of each other and our family," they said in a statement on September 14, 2017.

Despite their separation, Fergie and Duhamel, 46, have been dedicated to co-parenting their son, Axl Duhamel (five).



ARYA WHO?! The Game of Thrones star, Maisie Williams, switches up her style (and hair color) during Paris Fashion Week.

Katrina Kaif spills beans on past relationship with Ranbir Kapoor

Bollywood actress Katrina Kaif is currently busy promoting her upcoming film Bharat. The actress is giving interviews after interviews during some of which she even opened up about her personal life. While talking to Neha Dhupia on BFFs with Vogue Season 3, she spilled beans on how she sidelined her work because of her relationship with Ranbir Kapoor. Katrina says there was a phase in her life when she was consumed by something else instead of work, and she has no regrets about it. Katrina expressed her views when she appeared on BFFs with Vogue - Season 3 along with Anaita Shroff Adajania. The show is aired on Colors Infinity, read a statement. "There has been a major shift in a way that I have started approaching my work and characters. I think I have worked very hard, been very passionate and very focused, in certain ways and about certain things.

"I think the kind of way I worked in 'Raanjeeti', 'Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara' and in 'New York' was a different me and I love those films," Katrina said. But there was a phase where she was "taken over by something else".

"There was another phase which came, which was also great and it was a phase where I think I kind of let go a bit and I was really consumed and taken over by something

else in my life which was not my work.

"Basically the relationship that was in my life became my focus and I was happy. I don't say that in a regretful way. What I did in that, maybe which in retrospect you learn from is I probably let a lot of things in the way I was working slide a bit," added the actress, without



taking any names. Katrina, who refrains from talking about her personal life in public, was in a relationship with actor Ranbir Kapoor in the past. They reportedly dated for a couple of years before parting ways in the beginning of 2016.

During the signature BFFs game round, 'Say it or Strip it', when host Neha Dhupia asked Katrina to name a co-star from all her co-stars who she cannot trust with a major secret, she took Ranbir's name. The episode will air on Saturday.

'GLOW' season 3 sets Netflix premiere date

LOS ANGELES, JUN 2 (PTI): The third season of "GLOW" is set to hit Netflix on August 9.

According to Variety, the upcoming installment follows the women's wrestling troupe as they arrive at a new venue in Las Vegas.

"GLOW", featuring Alison Brie in the lead, is set in 1985 Hollywood and was inspired by the Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling syndicated series of the 1980s.

It tells the fictional story

of Brie's Ruth Wilder, an out-of-work actor who finds herself in an upstart women's wrestling circuit.

Marc Maron and Betty Gilpin also star.

The series is created by Liz Flahive and Carly Mensch.

Jenji Kohan, Tara Herrmann and Mark Burley serve as executive producers alongside showrunners Flahive and Mensch.

It was renewed for a third run last August.

This is the Favourite Fashion Item among Korean Girl groups



The easiest way to make your legs look longer than they are? A mini skirt. And Korean girl groups know this very well, whether they're performing on stage or starring in their latest music video.

Though they're more adventurous with very mini

lengths, for more practical reasons, a good length is one that hits just slightly above where your fingertips end along your thighs.

To avoid looking too school girl or too sexy, strike the perfect balance with a slouchy sweater, asymmetrical top or chic boots.

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ARIES: Stop and smell the antique roses, Aries. Saturday's sensuous alignment of the moon and Venus encourages you to be powerfully present. Romance lives in the here and now, not the elusive fantasy of "someday." If you want to capitalize on the heart-expanding vibes, do less, not more.

TAURUS: Look at all the pretty, shiny things! Saturday's beauty-boosting alignment of the moon and Venus makes you restless, mercurial and bubbling over with curiosity. Who you, unreliable? Inconceivable, Taurus! But don't forget that you still own the prerogative to change your mind. Variety is the spice of your day. Flit from brunch and a matinee to a gallery opening, then shopping before a night of dancing.

GEMINI: Letting go is shockingly easy Saturday, whether you're saying goodbye to a dying romance or simply giving up control of where you'll meet a friend for brunch. Although it's your preference to play cultural curator, surrender and go with the flow. Surprise! You'll have a far

better time when you stop trying to direct the universe and let spontaneity lead. Pay attention to synchronicities.

CANCER: Ask, believe, receive. Today, the soulful moon unites with intuitive Neptune in Pisces and your broad-minded ninth house. This is the day to imagine what you want, because you can magnetize your dreams to you through creative visualization. The ninth house is all about expansion, so don't just aim for the "safe," low-hanging fruit. Go bigger, Cancer! Feeling out of touch with your power to manifest? Try writing up a gratitude list. When you recall all the things you're thankful for, you'll begin to attract more abundance.

LEO: You SAY that you want happiness, love and freedom, but do you actually believe that your desires are possible, Leo? Today's moon-Neptune conjunction in your mystical eighth house encourages you to examine your own limiting beliefs. Since you may need tangible proof to REALLY change your mind, hunt for people who are living

the life you want for yourself.

VIRGO: Relationships can be hard work, we know, we know. But they can also be a haven from stress and struggle so stop telling yourself that you don't need people. Today, the moon and compassionate Neptune align in Pisces and your partnership house. The tranquilizing effect can be beneficial to your bonds with the ones who matter most. Soften your stance with your partner, and be gentler in your interactions with close friends.

LIBRA: Arm candy can be fun to play with, but you need more than empty calories to satisfy your romantic appetite. On Saturday, reserve your final rose for someone with style AND substance. It's a lot easier to teach someone the finer points of fashion than it is to imbue them with a great character. With the right raw materials—a caring heart, a sense of integrity, compatible interests—you'll have more than enough to work with.

SCORPIO: Still musing over the weekend's romantic escapades? Don't rush to "back to business" mode. Today, the moon

and quixotic Neptune embrace in your fifth house of passion, adding a sensual spin to your agenda. An attraction could spark, or you could be feeling especially amorous. Nobody to side up to (yet)? Get glamorous for yourself, Scorpio.

SAGITTARIUS: Home is where your heart is today, as the moon conjoints with sensual Neptune in your domestic fourth house. If you must trek into the office, bring the cozy vibes with you. Keep an open-door policy so coworkers can plop down and share tales of their weekends. (That expense report can wait).

CAPRICORN: Straight to the point? Not today, Capricorn. The reflective moon and compassionate Neptune meet in Pisces, your communication house. Doling out tough love and stern reprimands will get you nowhere. Validating the other person's emotions and experience? That will help you feel connected. Sometimes, a person just needs to be heard before you rush them into problem-solving mode. Instead of being emphatic, be empathetic. Catch yourself if you're being too hardcore, and dial back the intensity.

AQUARIUS: Bring more intimacy to your exchanges Saturday and don't be afraid to bare your soul. Thanks to a cozy alignment between the moon and Venus, conversations could quickly accelerate from weather talk to tales from your recent vacation and latest dating escapades. Don't just entertain; investigate! People will be warmed by your interest in what's bubbling below the surface in their lives. Plan for a languid movie night or a dinner date with a favorite plus-one.

PISCES: A beautiful mind is the ultimate turn-on this Saturday, as the moon and Venus mesh in your mentally agile third house. Go deeper in discussions, Pisces. The sparks of an intellectual connection could fan the flames of romance. A word to the wise: You don't have to impress anyone by interjecting your own stories into the mix. Let others hold the talking stick a little longer. Then, allow your journalistic curiosities to take hold. The more interested you are, the more interesting you'll become. Hand the wheel to your poetic side on Sunday, as artsy Venus and seductive Pluto align in your communication houses.