



LIONS CLUB OF RANGPO INSTALLS NEW PRESIDENT
pg02

JAC VISIT ECI ON MLA DISQUALIFICATION APPEAL
Pg02



LAND COMPENSATION AND ALLOTMENT ORDER FOR LANDLESS DISTRIBUTED IN WEST
pg03

SummitTIMES

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O N T O P O F T H E N E W S

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Detailed study to determine cause behind vibrations felt in Chungthang

WANGCHUK BHUTIA

MANGAN, 17 JUL:

The vibration felt by residents of Chungthang have stopped since the morning of 14 Jul. A team of experts who visited the area have submitted their second report on the incident today to the North District Administration.

Residents had reported some kind of vibration shaking windows, curtains and doors of houses situated along the Lachen River on 13 Jul.

Team of experts from Mines & Geology Department, Government of Sikkim arrived at the scene on 14 Jul at around 4.30 p.m. and visited all the houses where

vibrations were reported. The said team along with sub divisional officials, Police, local Panchayats and officials from Teesta Urja Ltd conducted a detailed survey of the entire dam area on both sides of Lachen and Lachung on 15 Jul.

The experts suggested finding out possible reasons behind such vibrations through study of the entire area. Studies such as geo physics, river morphology, hydrology, sound studies and other related methods are to be done. The team will also visit Chungthang along with equipments and instruments to conduct these studies. Based on the initial observations and studies, the team of experts from the

department will be submitting another report.

District Collector, North, has directed Teesta Urja Ltd to install geo phones along the Lachen and Lachung axis with provision of various data and readings as required for the aforesaid studies.

Another team of multidisciplinary experts [to be brought by Teesta Uja Ltd] will also be in Chungthang conduct to their studies on similar lines.

All necessary preparations in case of any emergency have been done. A joint monitoring team of Teesta Urja Ltd, Police and QRT will also be continuously monitoring the entire area.



Journalist Khagendra M Pradhan conferred Khangchendzonga Kalam Puraskar



NITESH R PRADHAN

GANGTOK, 17 JUL:

Senior journalist, Khagendra Mani Pradhan, was today conferred the prestigious Khangchendzonga Kalam Puraskar during the 16th Foundation Day celebration of the Press Club of Sikkim at Janta Bhawan in Gangtok.

Minister for Agriculture, Somnath Pouyal, attended the function as chief guest along with Min-

ister for Health & IPR, AK Ghatani, as guest of honour.

Journalist, Nirmal Mangar, was also awarded the Lagansheel Yuva Patrakar award while journalists, Dil Bahadur Chettri and Hema Sharma, were felicitated for their contributions to Sikkimese media.

Speaking at the event, Mr Ghatani congratulated the awardees and praised senior journalist, Khagendra Mani Pradhan, for being an

inspiration. He also urged all the concerned stakeholders to take the recognition to the next level and not limit themselves.

"Freedom of expression is one of the prime pillars of a democratic society. However, some have been abusing this freedom in Sikkim," expressed Mr Ghatani.

Mr Ghatani also announced a grant of Rs 1.5 lakh for PCS.

Addressing the gathering, chief

Guidelines issued for TB and Proud Mother schemes

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 JUL:

The Health Department has issued guidelines for grant of financial assistance under State TB Programme for elimination of TB by 2022 in the State and for the Proud Mother Scheme.

Under the TB programme, patients from Sikkim will be provided Rs 3000 per month till the completion of treatment while patients from outside will be provided Rs 500 per month as per Gov-

ernment of India norms.

For Sikkimese patients, Rs 2500 will be provided by the state government and the remaining Rs 500 from the Government of India.

The financial assistance will be provided only to TB patients registered under the State RNTCP programme and having valid Sikkim Subject Certificate or Certificate of Identification or Voters ID.

As per the terms and conditions, patients

whose family income is less than Rs 5 lakh per annum will be eligible for financial assistance. Group A and B government employees and their dependents will not be eligible for the scheme. Class 1 or 1A government contractors and their dependents are also not eligible for the scheme.

Under the Proud Mother scheme, a woman will be provided Rs 7000 at the birth of the first child and Rs 10000 for the second child. Rs

500 will also be provided per month for six years.

Payments under both schemes will be made through Direct Benefit Transfer [DBT] mode.



SC reserves verdict on challenge to constitutional validity of section 377 of IPC

NEW DELHI, JUL 17 (PTI): The Supreme Court today reserved its verdict on a clutch of pleas challenging the constitutional validity of section 377 of Indian Penal Court which criminalises consensual gay sex.

A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra concluded hearing the arguments on the contentious issue after detailed hearing of four days, which had commenced on July 10.

The bench, also comprising Justices R F Nariman, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra, asked the parties to file written submissions in support of their claims by July 20.

The verdict is likely to be pronounced before October 2 this year as Justice Misra would be retiring as CJI on that day.

Section 377 refers to 'unnatural offences' and says whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment

for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 10 years, and shall also be liable to pay a fine.

The apex court heard the writ petitions filed by dancer Navtej Jauhar, journalist Sunil Mehra, chef Ritu Dalmia, hoteliers Aman Nath, Keshav Suri and business executive Ayesha Kapur and 20 former and current students of the IITs.

They have sought decriminalisation of consensual sex between two consenting adults of the same sex by declaring section 377 of IPC as illegal and unconstitutional.

The issue of section 377 was first raised by an NGO, Naaz Foundation, which had in 2001 approached the Delhi High Court which had decriminalised sex between consenting adults of the same gender by holding the penal provision as "illegal".

This 2009 judgement of the high court was overturned in 2013 by the apex court which had also dismissed the review plea against which the curative petitions were

filed which are pending.

The apex court had commenced the hearing on the fresh writ petitions challenging re-criminalisation of consensual gay sex between two adults, rejecting the Centre's plea seeking postponement of the proceedings for four weeks.

It had in 2013 restored the criminality of the sexual relationship between persons of the same sex, after the Delhi High Court had decriminalised it in 2009.

At the outset of the hearing, the five-judge bench on July 10 had made it clear that it was not going into the curative petitions and would adjudicate on the fresh writ petitions in the matter.

The writ petitions were opposed by Apostolic Alliance of Churches and Utkal Christian Association and some other NGOs and individuals including Suresh Kumar Kaushal.

Kaushal had also challenged the 2009 verdict of the high court in the apex court which had restored section 377 of IPC.

THE BIRDS HAVE LOST THEIR WAY
Essays on Hydropower and Climate Change Issues of Sikkim
EDITED BY
TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey coursed by hydel projects in Sikkim and the region, the cost exacted by this "development" and some of the stories it birthed, not all of which have been shared before.

Also finding place in this collection is the arrival of Climate Change and its impact on Sikkim and how the State could negotiate with this new disruption.

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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7-yr-old dies after being hit by utility vehicle

GANGTOK, 17 JUL: One 7-year-old boy was killed after a utility vehicle hit him on SPWD road near Yangang in South Sikkim on Monday. The utility vehicle was going towards Singtam from Yangang when it hit the boy who was playing on the road. The boy succumbed to his injuries on the way to Yangang PHC. The driver of the vehicle has been arrested and the case is under investigation.

Two-month ban on Pravin Togadia from public events in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, JUL 17 (PTI): The Guwahati Police today barred former VHP leader Pravin Togadia from attending any public function in the state capital for the next two months, fearing that his "inflammatory speeches" could disrupt peace.

The prohibitory order under Section 144 of the CrPC by Guwahati Police Commissioner Hiren Chandra Nath was issued following Togadia's plans to visit the city and attend a series of programmes from today to July 19, organised by his newly-formed group - Antarashtriy Hindu Parishad (AHP).

Journalist Khagendra M Pradhan conferred...

contd from pg01

guest Mr Poudyal praised the Sikkimese media for being a medium that has delivered important public related information for the greater good of the society.

Congratulating all the awardees, he stated that there is pertinent danger to democracy emanating from ignorance, excessive individualism and materialism.

"Democracy stresses on collective idea of greater good for greater number of individuals so the Fourth Estate needs to continue delivering the best in the interest of the State," he added.

He further made an appeal through the media to start a revolution through one's conscience and opt for local organic produce which will have multiple benefits including health benefits, support for farmers and inflow and retention of money within Sikkim. Due to ill health of senior journalist, Khagendra Mani Pradhan, his award was received by his son and younger brother.

Journalist Nirmal Mangar in his address termed senior journalist, Khagendra Mani Pradhan, as an inspiration and urged the media fraternity to work for the betterment of public at large.



Akkar football tourney quarter final round underway

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 JUL: Sikkim United, Gangtok thrashed South & West Taxi Driver Association [SWTDA], Jorethang 2-0 today at the quarter final match of the ongoing Akkar Cup Open Football Tournament in Jorethang, South Sikkim.

Pujan Rai of SWTDA, Jorethang has been adjudged man of the match, a press release informs.

Advisor, Urban Development & Housing Department, Sher Hang Subba, attended the programme as chief guest accompanied by government contractor, Dawa

Bhutia, as special guest.

Addressing the event, Mr Subba congratulated the organizing committee for holding the event in Jorethang and extended best wishes to the participating teams. He further announced cash prize of Rs 3,000 for the first goal scorer of today's match, Rs

10,000 for the winner and Rs 5,000 for the runner up.

In the semi final of the tourney on 18 Jul, Dynamo FC, Darjeeling will take on United Brothers, Kalimpong followed by a girls' exhibition match between Jorethang and Ravangla.

It may be mentioned here, the Akkar Cup

Open Football Tournament is being organised by Jorethang FC on the theme "Say No to Drugs". The winner and runner up of the tourney will be awarded cash prizes of Rs 1, 25,000 and Rs 75,000 respectively. The final match is scheduled to be held on 21 Jul.



Lions Club of Rangpo installs new president

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 JUL: The Lions Club of Rangpo organized their PST Installation Ceremony for the year 2018-19 at the Mayfair Hotel & Resort at Ranipool today. Along with the installation, new members were also inducted to the club in the program, informs a press release.

Minister for Agriculture, Somnath Poudyal attended the occasion as the chief guest while the installation ceremony was conducted by outgoing District Governor, Kedar Gajmer.

In the presence of members from the Lions Club of Rangpo, Singtam, Ranipool and Gangtok, seven more members were added to the Lion family of about 15 lakh members around the world. Six members were inducted to Rangpo and one into Lions Club

of Singtam, the release mentions.

Kedar Gajmer handed over the reins of the Club to the newly elected president, Hem Kumar Gurung. Special pins were also presented to some members of the club for their continuous and dedicated service.

Hem Kumar Gurung thanked the members and also vowed to surpass the benchmark of service set by previous presidents.

A token of love was presented to the chief guest, Somnath Poudyal who in his address spoke of the love he has received from the people of Rangpo. He appreciated the efforts by such clubs towards social service and termed them an important element in society.

The program ended with Rajen Gurung presenting the vote of thanks.

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District Planning Committee held in Mangan

MANGAN, 17 JUL [IPR]: District Planning Committee was held today at Zilla Bhavan in Mangan under the chairmanship of Adhakshya, North, Nemday Lepcha. The meeting was attended by Zilla members and District Collector, North, Karma R Bonpo, who is also the Sachiva of North District Zilla Panchayat [NDZP].

The committee discussed on the Annual Action Plan to be executed during the current financial year. The Zilla members proposed various works to be undertaken in the Gram Panchayat which was later passed by the committee.

JAC visit ECI on MLA disqualification appeal

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 JUL:

A team of representatives of Joint Action Committee [JAC] today visited the Election Commission of India in New Delhi to place a submission before the Commission with regard to the disqualification of MLA Bikram Pradhan on office of profit grounds, a JAC press release informs.

It may be recalled here, after the High Court of Sikkim's judgment on the Parliamentary Secretary case, Mr Pradhan was also removed as Government Chief Whip on 28 Aug 2017.

"After that we had filed a disqualification petition against 14 MLAs before Governor Shrinivas Patil. The Governor had forwarded the petition to the ECI for an opinion. Out of 14 MLAs, it was confirmed to us by the Commission that Mr Pradhan's matter is still pend-

ing before the Commission and it was very recently that he had filed a reply to the Commission. In this matter, we requested the Commission to give us an opportunity to file a rejoinder to the reply under the doctrine of Audi Alteram Partem," the JAC informs in the release.

It is further informed that the JAC team has also met different officials of the ECI and has submitted various petitions related to election matters.

"We also met some Constitutional experts and discussed the case of 13 MLAs to file a Judicial Review Writ against the Order of the Governor regarding the 13 MLAs. However, at present we have decided to presently focus on Mr Pradhan's case and the case of other 07 MLAs is pending before the Speaker under the Anti Defection Law," the release adds.

BJP-Sikkim tours Lower Maneydara



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 JUL:

A team of the Bharatiya Janata Party Sikkim Pradesh interacted with residents of Lower Maneydara ward under Namthang Rateypani constituency on Tuesday.

The team was led by south district president, LB Chauhan, and other leaders and workers of the party and noted the various issues and grievances of the people of the area, informs a BJP press release.

The release states

that the team noticed that announcements of various achievements of the State Government by the SDF party were limited only to speeches since the situation on ground was totally contradictory to the claims.

BCCI's task force team for NE visit SMIT to check ground facilities



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 JUL:

The Board of Control for Cricket in India [BCCI] has set up a task force for the development of cricket in the North Eastern States during its recent meeting held on 09 Jul at the BCCI headquarter in Mumbai.

A Sikkim Cricket Association official informed that the task force has been set up to help nine States who are playing against each other under a new zone comprising of six North Eastern States along with Bihar, Uttarakhand and Pondicherry.

Regarding the same, a member of North East Task Force, Rajib Datta, arrived in the State on 16 Jul, who was warmly welcomed by SCA general secretary, Sonam Palden Bhutia, and other executive members at Mining Ground.

The SCA officials informed that the main

purpose of his visit was to prepare an Action Plan/Budget for the forthcoming BCCI tournaments 2018-19 Season and also to assess ground and other facilities needed to conduct such BCCI matches in the State.

It is further informed that the visiting team also went to Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology [SMIT] at Majhitar, East Sikkim to check ground availability and whether the same facility can be used to hold coaching camps.

The team has received a positive response from the SMIT Director and the BCCI has also assured the management to help uplift the present facility which would be helpful for both the institute and the BCCI in the near future, it is informed.

The SCA body has expressed its deep gratitude to BCCI for their support for the development of cricket in the State.



SCA members to represent State in U-15 National Chess Tournament

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 17 JUL:

An eight-member Sikkim Chess Association team has left on 16 Jul to represent the State in the Under-15 National Chess Tournament to be held from 17-25 Jul at Kolkata in West Bengal.

The young State team includes Rick Gupta, Chawang Dorjee Bhutia, Prashant Nepal and Priyansh Jainik in the boys' team while the girls' team has Anusha Chettri, Emtina Limboo, Jenisha Gurung and Amisha Kumari.

The SCA has expressed its best wishes to the team for the tournament.



A discussion on the Annual Budget of NDZP was also held wherein Zilla members discussed ways and means to increase sources of revenue of NDZP.

A proposal was also received from Hee Gyathang Zilla member, Ugen Palzor Lepcha, wherein he has highlighted the vital role of NDZP in organic farming.

The DC North stated that NDZP could play

a vital role in the marketing of organic vegetables if desired by the members. The District Task Force headed by the DC is currently working on a proposal of setting up supply chain for organic products, he added.

He further suggested forming co-operatives in each GPU for organizing farmers and their produce which will be collected at Zilla Level.

"NDZP could play a role in the marketing of the produce so collected in important towns like Mangan and Gangtok. The cold storage and organic marketing centre at Mangan could be operated by NDZP," said Mr Bonpo.

While the proposal found acceptance among many Zilla members, it is informed that the DPC has decided to first put in place a concrete plan before final approval by the members.

Adhakshya, Ms Lepcha also stressed on the vital role of Zilla members in the development of their GPUs and urged for new ideas to increase source of revenue of NDZP.

She further informed that she will be taking up the proposal for improving road connectivity in Navey Shotak GPU with the concerned department.

The District Planning Committee also reviewed the various works being executed by the Engineering Cell of NDZP.

Gangtok on Wednesday, 18 July

Temp: 25°C/18°C
Forecast: Mostly cloudy, a thunder shower.
Sunrise: 04:49 AM
Sunset: 6:33 PM

Centre committed to Bru pact: Home Ministry

NEW DELHI, JUL 17 (PTI): The Union Home Ministry is committed to implement the agreement signed to repatriate nearly 33,000 Bru refugees, currently living in camps in Tripura, to Mizoram notwithstanding the community leader's decision to walk out of the pact, officials said.

The ministry representative, former Special Secretary (internal security) M K Singla, is visiting Tripura to assess the situation in the wake of the decision of the leader of the Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF), who signed the July-3 agreement in the presence of Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Chief Ministers of Tripura and Mizoram - Biplab Kumar Deb and Lal Thanhawla respectively.

The central government is committed to implement the agreement and all the benefits, including cash assistance, would be given to the refugees who abide by it, a senior official said.

A group of Bru refugees in Tripura yesterday forced MBDPF president A Sawibunga to withdraw his signature from the agreement. The refugees were unhappy with the outcome of the agreement and demanded a better deal. They also ransacked the outfit's office.

As per the agreement, signed by the central government and the governments of Tripura and Mizoram besides MBDPF leadership, each of the 5,407 families will get Rs 5,000 per month along with free ration for two years, besides house-building assistance of Rs 1.5 lakh.

An one-time financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh will also be given to each of the family but the amount will be kept as fixed deposit in the name of the family head.

There are a total 32,876 people belonging to the Bru community who are in relief camps in Tripura. The Bru people fled Mizoram in 1997 following an unrest and multiple efforts have been made since then to repatriate them.

Around 8,000 Bru refugees have gone back to Mizoram since 1997 in six batches and they have been living peacefully in the state, another official said.



Sikkim Police beat Dzongri club 10-1 in SFA 2nd Div League

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 JUL: Sikkim Police has registered an easy victory in another match

at the ongoing Sikkim Football Association Second Division Sikkim League 2018 here at Paljor Stadium in Gang-

tok today. Sikkim Police humbled Dzongri Football Club 10-01 to secure full three points from the match.

Saawaney Sankranti celebrated at Timberbong



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 JUL: 'SAAWANEY SANKRANTI' was celebrated today at Timberbong under Soreng Chakung constituency in West Sikkim. A press release informs that the festival was organized by Milan

Sangh, a local non-governmental organization. Advisor, Health Department, Dr AD Subba, attended the event as chief guest in the presence of government contractor, Sukman Subba, eminent litterateur duo, Prakash Bhattarai and Dr BL Sub-

ba, Panchayat members and the general public. Dr Subba, in his address, appreciated the initiative of Milan Sangh towards promotion and preservation of cultural heritage of Nepali community. Stating that distinct cultural practices are the

identity of various communities inhabiting the State, Dr Subba stressed on the need for their protection and preservation. "We should not forget our cultural values and we should safeguard our distinct cultural identity," he added.

Land compensation and allotment order for landless distributed in West



RIBDI, 17 JUL (IPR): MLA (Daramdin), DN Sherpa along with DC West, Dr. AB Karki, distributed cheques to the beneficiaries of Ribdi Bhareng GPU at the Village Administration Center, Ribdi. The cheques were handed over to 51 beneficiaries whose land has been utilized under the PMGSY scheme. The SDM and RO/AD along with other officials were also present at the program.

MLA, Mr Sherpa, expressed his gratitude for the initiative of the District Collector for his vision of Easy Administration Policy in West District. He acknowledged the efforts of the DC to have taken the time out for visiting the place and for his initiative to interact with the public and the Panchayats as well.

The MLA stated in his address that the DC has indeed become a bridge between the government and the public where he is ready to help them in every way. He also expressed his gratitude for

the initiation of the 'Land Bank policy' of the CM which is becoming a reality in West Sikkim under the DC's supervision and leadership.

The DC Collector addressing the public congratulated the beneficiaries and the allotment order holders who will be given lands as per the 'Land Bank Policy' meant for landless citizens of Sikkim.

He stated that the motive of his visit was to learn about the problems faced by the public and be able to find possible solutions regarding problems of man-animal conflict, Certificate of Identification, lack of School staff and other similar problems. He also expressed his desire to visit the area once again to see the results of the ongoing works.

During the program, cheques to land donors were also distributed along with allotment orders to the landless beneficiaries by the MLA and DC.



DSA calls on Governor, urges review of Land Transfer Bill

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 JUL:

Representatives of Denzong Sherpa Association called on Governor Shrinivas Patil at Raj Bhawan in Gangtok today. The

DSA representatives apprised the Governor about the Regulation of Transfer of Land [Amendment] Bill 2018 calling it "violation of Article 46 of the Constitution of India", a DSA press release informs.

"The Governor being the Con-

stitutional guardian of the State we have requested him for review of the Regulation of Transfer of Land [Amendment] Bill 2018 evoking clause [g] of Article 371F," the DSA adds in the release.

South school heads association forms new committee

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 17 JUL:

Association of Heads of Government Secondary & Senior Secondary Schools [AHGS&SSS], South Sikkim held a meeting at the auditorium of Namchi Senior Secondary School today wherein a new committee was formed owing to transfers and promotions of some of the office bearers, a press release informs.

The meeting unanimously selected Pema Yolmo as president, Mamta Subba and Lakpa Gyalpo Sherpa as vice presidents and Pushpa Raj Dhungel as general secretary.

It is informed that a coordination meeting



will be held on 04 Aug for induction of new members

while bidding farewell to the outgoing mem-

bers. The committee has also decided to discuss

future course of action during the meet.

Kerala rains: Over 34,000 people housed in relief camps

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/KOTTAYAM, JUL 17 (PTI): Nearly 34,000 people have been shifted to relief camps after flood water inundated low-lying areas due to heavy rains that have lashed Kerala for the past one week.

A total of 34,693 people from 8,033 families were shifted to 265 relief camps across the state, the control room monitoring rain-related incidents said.

At least 12 people have died and six reported missing in rain-related incidents after the monsoon became active on July 9.

In the second spell of rains, around 36 houses were destroyed while 1,214 suffered partial damage, officials said.

Control room officials said the flood water has not yet receded in several places.

Many parts of Kottayam and Alappuzha districts were still under flood water.

Rains wreaked havoc in many parts of Kottayam district.

People living in low lying areas have been shifted to relief camps. District authorities said 8577 persons from 2300 families have been shifted to 104 relief camps in the district.

A 45-member National Disaster Response Force team has been deployed to carry out relief operations.

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Memo No: CHSO/237/2018

Dated: 14/07/2018

Sealed quotations are invited from the reputed manufactures, authorised distributors/ dealers/ representatives for supply of CR 100 MA X-Ray machine and Ultrasound machine for various health institutions for the year 2018-19. The details of the NIT can be obtained from Sikkim Government website : www.sikkim.gov.in w.e.f 18/07/2018.

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SummitTIMES

So, Sikkim Can Plant

Now to make the young connect and care

So, now even Himachal Pradesh is making a big splash with focused statewide tree plantation drives and Haryana too has adopted the practice. Like some other ideas born in Sikkim that have caught on, this too was first attempted here with the Smriti-Van and 10 Minutes to Earth initiatives and now the mith-mithini concept.

Given that so many are taking the cue from Sikkim, the State would have set up a better template for others to emulate if it had invested professional follow-up and a third-party audit of the programmes to refine them further and improve its success rate. Such an evaluation was undertaken once in the earlier years, but these initiatives have been underway for around a decade now and more detailed data should have been collated by now. But there is none, save a count of how many trees were planted. One does not still know how many survived or what change they brought to the environment beyond the photo-ops it managed for the VIPs and the organizations. Be that as it may, given the continuing ferocity with which press releases continue to pour in about plantation drives, and the details of the number of saplings planted and the dignitaries who participated, it is established yet again that Sikkim can be inspired to care for the environment. What is also obvious is that saplings were indeed planted. Even children from junior schools still return home excited, bearing news that they had planted little ones of big trees who will now grow up with them.

In a world where countries are building arguments about why they should be allowed to pollute more, this earnestness comes as welcome relief. There is nothing new about plantation drives; that is a tokenism that the world community evolved long back as a fig leaf for World Environment Day to cover the abuse that it subjects the environment all year round. What is new however is that the 10-Minute dedication has been reasonably successful. What Sikkim needed to have done was build up on this introduction and help a generation rediscover the close understanding that the people here had evolved of the land they lived in. The river clean-up drive was welcome initiative earlier this year.

Environment Studies is now a compulsory part of the syllabus, but it is woefully alien and too generalized. The text books are little more than repackaged Geography lessons. Environmental Studies is more than that, it includes cultural relationships with the land and should be more about learning to live with the environment than a sanitized introduction to environment per se. Sikkim is perfectly positioned to make EVS [as Environmental Studies is known in schools], relevant and fruitful. Students, say in Delhi, might need textbooks because they have only concrete and tarmac around them, but depending on textbooks alone in Sikkim only distance students here from nature that surrounds them.

What is more, the State already has a rich tradition of sustainable dependence on the environment, aspects of which form an integral part of traditional lifestyles here. That knowledge base is only one generation distance in the past. It can still be reclaimed. As part of Environmental Studies, students in Sikkim should be learning about the concept of sacred groves maintained by village communities, learn of the stories of mythical powers of its water bodies and understand how people effectively protected them from pollution [and eventual loss] - by reinforcing their surroundings by presenting them as abodes of easily angered nymphs or protecting deities. The young need to also learn of the traditional hunting practices in which animals were killed only for food, and never as game or in retribution.

If the environment has to be protected and conserved, people need to go back to tradition, not turn to more rules and penalties. Tradition needs to be invoked, not as blind faith, but as the only pragmatic and practicable option. The falsehood perpetuated by babus that forests and wildlife need to be 'protected' from the lay people needs to be demolished. Wildlife was not wiped out by hunter-gatherers, they were pushed into extinction by city dwellers on indiscriminate weekend hunts. The forests were not lost to the need of villagers, but were consumed by the greed of the cities - that insensitive obsession for silver-fir paneled rooms in concrete jungles. The young need to understand this, and then learn of how their own respective communities connected with nature and lived with it, how they adjusted their lifestyles around it and how they worked their belief structures into it to weave conservation and sustainable practices as part of that one aspect that no one can argue with - Faith.

WRITE US: Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/ indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence. Mail us at: letters@summittimes.com

The disgrace of detaining asylum seekers and other migrants

STEPHANIE J SILVERMAN
theconversation.com

The Donald Trump administration is continuing its "zero tolerance" approach to Central Americans seeking asylum at the southern border of the United States.

Despite no evidence that it deters asylum-seekers, the administration is prioritizing the use of immigrant prisons or detention centres in their attack.

As a detention expert, I argue that we must not lose sight of how the administration is steadily expanding its detention arsenal under the cover of massive changes to its immigration and asylum architecture.

The mind boggles at the scale and speed of the rollbacks to accessing asylum, humanitarian protection and residence rights, among them:

- Withdrawing "temporary protected status" protections against deportation for 200,000 Salvadoreans, plus Haitians, Sudanese and Nicaraguans, living in the United States.
- Intervening to undermine asylum protections for women and others fleeing persecution at the hands of non-state individuals, including abusive spouses.
- Stepping up prosecutions of unlawful entries across the U.S.-Mexico border.
- Turning back asylum-seekers at ports of entry.
- Hollowing out protections for children not at immediate risk of human trafficking for sexual, forced labour or other forms of exploitation.
- Prosecuting parents who pay agents to bring their children to the U.S.
- Prosecuting everyone who enters the U.S. without preauthorization.

The most shocking of these recent changes is perhaps the Trump administration's now-revoked order to deliberately remove children from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border. Again, this action was enabled through expanding the uses — and moral and legal thresholds — of immigration detention.

LONG-LASTING TRAUMA



Javier Garrido Martinez holds his four-year-old son during a news conference in New York on July 11, 2018. The pair were reunited after being separated for almost two months when authorities stopped them at the U.S. southern border.

How did this work? U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agents arrested the parents and transferred them to detention centres operated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.).

Their approximately 3,000 kids became "unaccompanied minors" in the custody of the already under-resourced Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement. This ripping apart and subsequent detention of family members in separate facilities has caused long-lasting trauma and anguish, the depths of which we are only beginning to grasp. Psychologists are flagging the lifelong "toxic stress" that has now infected these children's minds and bodies.

White House Chief of Staff John Kelly memorably waved off the outcry and moral culpability for this pointless and needless trauma: The parent-less babies, toddlers, children and youth would "be taken care of — put into foster care or whatever."

The HHS has found the "whatever" for these asylum-seeking children: facilities ranging from foster homes to blacked-out floors of cor-

porate buildings, a disused Walmart, a Texan tent city, "icebox" cages and plans to detain children and families on military bases, among them.

The breadth of the Trump administration's recent expansion of its detention architecture is stunning: The federal government is operating at least 100 detention sites with or without the local cooperation of municipalities.

Detention has flown under the public radar for too long. Warnings and protests from current and former detainees, civil society and researchers have not been widely heeded.

The U.S. is flouting international and domestic rules on detention. It engages in co-mingling of children and adults in detention and prisons, and won't reunite all of the "tender age" kids — those under five years old — with their parents outside of detention.

The American immigration detention system must be called what it is: Abusive, racist, sexist and haphazardly implemented with a dysfunctional but financially profitable bail system. The system is designed not to administer asylum claims, but to punish and even terrorize people attempting to

realize their rights.

Pilot projects show that asylum seekers with proper legal, social, health and other supports will appear for their court hearings; there is no need to detain them or, as we do in Canada too, shackle them with remotely controlled surveillance tools.

Let us not forget that the Trump administration ended the Family Case Management Program, an alternative that would have kept families together, and for less money.

The Trump administration is now working to exploit a legal loophole to keep children and their parents in detention together past the 20-day limit set by the 1997 Flores Settlement Agreement. They are asking for "consent" for indefinite detention together and offering deportation to parents as the alternative.

Under cover of massive curtailment of protections extended to asylum-seekers and other migrants, the Trump administration is trying to normalize detention for children and adults alike, a truly reprehensible agenda.

[the writer is Adjunct professor, University of Toronto]

How ideas of 'adulthood', its rights and responsibilities, are changing around the world

JAMES MCCUE
theconversation.com

Around the world, the idea of adulthood - when it happens and how it is defined - is being challenged.

In Australia, the Greens' Jordan Steele-John introduced a bill to give 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote; Malaysian minister Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman announced the country may lower the voting age to 18 before the next elections; and Japan recently lowered its voting age from 20 to 18 for referendums, following the 2016 decision to lower the voting age in general elections.

Japan's decision was in part to address voter apathy and help young people feel more engaged in politics. But it may also signal that social views regarding the commencement of adulthood have shifted.

THE SHIFTING DEFINITIONS OF ADULTHOOD Adulthood has traditionally been defined by a combination of age and the achievement of social milestones. Most countries have a legally defined age to determine when a person is considered an adult - the age of majority.

In Australia, most states consider a person to be an adult in court at 18. The age of 18 is also consistent with other adult privileges, such as the right to purchase alcohol and to marry.

However, 17-year-olds can enlist for military service and obtain a driver's licence, whilst 16-year-olds can give sexual consent (in most states). The law confers adulthood on the basis of age, but also recognises the process of becoming an adult as involving gradual increases in social responsibility.

This legally defined approach to adulthood is mirrored in other countries, where there are differences between the age of majority and social responsibilities granted to young people.

Socially, determinants of adulthood traditionally focus on a person taking increasing responsibility for their lives in various ways. Completing school, commencing full-time employment, getting



married and parenthood - these are all observable indicators used to determine when a person is viewed as adult (Zacares, Serra, & Torres, 2015).

Since the 1980s, however, some of these observable milestones are being achieved at later ages. Increased access to tertiary education has delayed young people leaving home and developing romantic relationships. The increased acceptance of de facto relationships has also reduced the need to leave home and marry in some Western cultures.

Economic changes have also resulted in unstable employment markets and increases in costs of living in some countries, prompting many young people to remain at home and dependent on parents.

In 2017, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia report indicated that home ownership among 18-to-39-year-olds has declined from 36% to 25% since 2001. Among young people aged 22 to 25, meanwhile, 60% of males and 48% of females were found to still be living with their parents in 2015, up from 43% and 27% respectively since 2001.

Due to these social changes, our expectations of young people and their level of social responsibility has also changed.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES: AN EMERGING ADULTHOOD

Psychologically, age alone is an unreliable determinant

of adulthood, as each individual varies in their rate of biological, cognitive and emotional development.

The recognition of a new life stage - emerging adulthood - has been recommended by developmental psychologists to account for the changes to social milestones that have traditionally represented adulthood. The concept of "emerging adulthood" acknowledges the varied levels of independence exhibited by young people and reflects the process of personal development and "finding oneself".

A subjective definition of adulthood is linked with positive-identity formation and well-being. Young people who perceive them-

selves to be adults are closer to reaching adult benchmarks, exhibit fewer signs of depression and hold a robust sense of self.

WHAT SHOULD SOCIETY EXPECT OF ADULTS? If a more dynamic definition of adulthood is adopted, at what age is it reasonable to assign social responsibility to young people?

Young people in high-arousal situations are at risk of making impulsive decisions up until their mid-20s. However, during times of low-emotional arousal, the reasoning abilities of young people are equivalent to adults.

The psychological evidence suggests the current approach in law of gradually increasing social responsibility for young people is prudent and accurately reflects the transitional nature of development to adulthood.

Increasing social responsibility among emerging adults, via civic engagement, has also been linked with their improved well-being. Civic engagement refers to involvement in one's community and social and political systems. Therefore, Japan's decision to lower its voting age is an example of law reflecting the contemporary emerging nature of adulthood.

[the writer is Lecturer in Psychology and Criminology, Edith Cowan University]

Manipur University impasse: Heavy security deployed in Imphal

IMPHAL, JUL 17 (PTI): Security personnel in riot gear were deployed to-day across the "high-security zone" in Imphal, a day after the protesting members of a Manipur university students' union tried to storm the Raj Bhavan and the BJP main office at Nityaipat Chuthek area here, officials said.

The academic activities at the central university have been under suspension for the past 47 days as teachers, students and staff associations are agitating here for the removal of Vice Chancellor Adya Prasad Pandey over alleged financial irregularities and administrative negligence.

At least seven agitators, most of them affiliated to the Democratic Students Alliance of Manipur (DESAM), were reportedly injured in yesterday's commotion.

At the Governor's House, guarded by CRPF personnel, iron barricades wrapped with barbed wires have been set up at the entrance gate, police sources said.

Dozens of state police commandos have been posted around the Raj Bhavan, they said.

A senior police officer said security officers have also been deployed at the Sanjenthong, Keisampat, Singjamei areas, following reports that the agitators will take out a rally and form a human chain to protest against yesterday's crackdown on volunteers of DESAM.

The rally, however, was called off, he said.

DESAM president S Akash, who was allowed to meet Governor Najma Heptulla today, told reporters that he wanted to apprise the Centre of the situation at the university.

"We urged the governor to request the Centre to resolve the university crisis, failing which the agitation will be intensified," he said.

Six deans and 29 heads of departments have resigned in the past 47 days, in protest against the VC's style of functioning, said professor Ranjit Singh of the Manipur University Teachers' Association (MUTA).

The Manipur University Students' Union (MUSU), which had been spearheading the protest along with MUTA and a staff association, asserted that their "democratic agitations have been ignored" so far.

"Our first demand is the removal of VC Pandey and the second is the formation of an independent committee, headed by a retired high court judge, to probe into the allegations against him," MUSU president M Dayamand Singh said.

The Centre, on July 12, formed a fact-finding committee, comprising a representative of the University Grants Commission and the HRD ministry, to investigate into the allegations against Pandey, but the agitators refused to cooperate with the panel and called the move "ploy to undermine their democratic movement".

Awareness key to tackle menace of witch hunting: Activists

GUWAHATI, JUL 17 (PTI): Activists campaigning against superstition have welcomed the Presidential nod to the Assam Anti-Witch Hunting Bill but say policing alone cannot deal with the problem which has to overcome by creating awareness in society.

The Assam Assembly had unanimously passed the Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2015 on August 13, 2015 and had forwarded it to the Centre for final approval. The President of India gave his assent only last month.

Birubala Rabha, who has been crusading against witch hunting, said it is was very good step but the most important thing was to make people aware and strict enforcement of laws.

"We have been working our whole life against all odds without any support from law. But now because of this Act, those involved in

killing people by branding them as witches will think twice before committing the crime," she told PTI.

Rabha and her NGO 'Mission Birubala' have been working in severe hostile situations in remote places where villagers have tried to kill the 'iron lady' by branding her as a witch on several occasions.

Assam Additional Director General of Police (CID) Anil Kumar Jha said between 2001 and 2017, 193 people -- 114 women and 79 men -- have been branded as witches and killed across Assam.

"Police have registered 202 cases during this period. The worst is Kokrajhar district, where 56 cases were reported. It is followed by Chirang with 24, Udalguri with 15 and Baksa with 11 cases," he added.

All the four districts comprise the Bodoland Territorial Area districts.

Jha said, "The new Act is of course a positive step for society to tackle the witch-hunting menace. But the

solution of witch hunting problem lies in the active participation of all stakeholders of society."

Renowned theatre personality and film maker Sitanath Lahkar said it will not be so easy to eliminate the heinous crime.

"This is an ugliest form of superstition and has been continuing for thousands of years. Enacting this Act is a real welcome step, but we cannot eliminate witch hunting only by police method. Witch hunting has no reason at all and is shrouded with darkness of superstition, which has to be overcome by society itself," he added.

Lahkar's widely-appreciated 'Aei Maatite' is the first Assamese full-length feature film on this burning problem and is being screened at various rural places with the help of local groups.

He has also written a few stage and street plays on the witch hunting menace and staged them across

the state with the help of his group -- Samahar Natya Gosthee.

Welcoming the President's move, Lurinjoyoti Gogoi, the General Secretary of the powerful All Assam Students' Union (AASU), which has been working for creating awareness among the people, said providing basic infrastructure in remote areas is essential to eliminate this menace from society.

"It is really unfortunate that even in the 21st Century, such incidents are taking place. It is a shame on our civilisation. Only law cannot eradicate such a practice, which is so deep rooted. People must be given education and government must launch a massive awareness drive," he added.

Gogoi also demanded the government provide facilities such as healthcare, drinking water and schools in areas where witch hunting menace is rampant.

The Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection)

Act, 2015 makes every offence related to witch hunting as cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable, making provisions for imprisonment up to seven years along with a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh for identifying and calling a person a witch.

This will come with Section 302 of the IPC if someone is killed after branding as a witch.

The punishment for leading a person to commit suicide after intimidating, stigmatising, defaming and accusing as witch may be extended to life imprisonment and a fine up to Rs 5 lakh.

The Act also talks about various measures that the administration and police need to initiate along with NGOs and civil society to educate people about witch hunting.

Besides, the Act said the fine realised as punishment for an offence shall be paid to the victim or his/her next of kin as compensation by following due procedures.

Case filed against organiser, decorator for tent collapse

KOLKATA/NEW DELHI, JUL 17 (PTI): A case was registered against an organiser and a decorator, who erected a makeshift tent at the venue of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally in Midnapore, for negligence of duty, police said today.

Ninety people were injured when the tent collapsed during Modi's rally yesterday.

Superintendent of Police (West Midnapore) Alok Rajoria told PTI that the police had registered a case against the organiser and the decorator for "extreme negligence".

State BJP general secretary Sayantan Basu, on the other hand, alleged that the police resorted to baton charge on BJP activists at the venue to control them and it led to the accident.

"Lakhs of people had come



to see Narendra Modi. The police could have controlled the crowd in a proper way but

instead, they resorted to baton charge which resulted in many BJP supporters climb-

ing on the makeshift marquee," Basu claimed.

"The poles of the tent fell

as the ground was completely wet after the rain. Also, many people climbed atop the tent, which could not withstand their weight and it collapsed," he said.

He said that PWD engineers were present when the tent was being erected and wondered what were they doing. He also questioned the attitude of the police and the state towards the incident.

District police sources said a high-level team led by ADG(IB) Siddhinath Gupta and Rajoria visited the spot during the day and spoke to several people involved in erecting the marquee.

Initial investigations revealed that some of the iron frames used for setting up the makeshift tent were rusty, and most of the iron poles were not inserted in the ground

properly, a senior police officer said.

"The iron rods should have been placed in the ground much deeper, as the ground was wet due to rains," he said.

A senior Union Home Ministry official said a team of top security officials would be visiting West Bengal to assess the circumstances leading to the collapse of the tent.

The team comprising top officials of the Special Protection Group (SPG) will examine whether there was any lapse in the security measures, lack of coordination among different agencies and other shortcomings in organising the rally, he said.

The Centre had yesterday sought a report from the West Bengal government on the incident.

China builds unmanned weather station in Tibet near India border

BEIJING, JUL 17 (PTI): China has set up an unmanned automatic weather observation station in Tibet near Arunachal Pradesh border to provide meteorological support to its military and assist operations of aircraft and missiles in case of "regional live-fire conflicts", a media report said today.

The station in Yumai township under Lhunze county of Shannan Prefecture in Tibet will eliminate a blind area of meteorological services, state-run Global Times reported.

It will also provide strong meteorological support for national defence and further promote border development as well as military-civilian integration, according to a statement by the Tibet weather bureau.

"The station can observe six factors, including air temperature, air pressure, wind speed, wind direction, humidity and precipitation, with more accuracy than before," Tashi Norbu, a technician in charge of the station, was quoted as saying by the daily.

"Yumai is at the border. The station could provide data to help with transportation and communication in national defence. It could also offer support during regional live-fire conflicts," Tashi said.



Regional weather is an important factor that could influence the take-off and landing of aircraft and the launch of missiles during a battle, Song Zhongping, a military expert, told the Global Times.

The small weather observation station could provide such information, Song said.

Grasping accurate weather information could help seize good opportunities in the battles, Song added.

The Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China covered 3488 kms which includes Arunachal Pradesh, claimed by China as part of southern Tibet.

With nine households and 32 residents, Yumai is China's smallest township in terms of population.

Yumai is located in the southern foothills of the Himalayas and affected by the monsoon climate of the Indian Ocean.

"We are now receiving accurate information sent by meteorological departments every day. The station is necessary as it fills the gaps in meteorological and hydrological information, which could support our development," Dawa, the secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China's Yumai committee, told the daily, noting that the station would help a lot in local pasture and road construction.

The only road linking Yumai and the outside world has been under construction since 2017. More weather stations will be set up when the road is completed, Dawa said.

The construction of the station began in early 2018. However, due to bad weather in the area, the construction could be completed in June. The first weather data was transmitted from the station on June 22, the report said.



Iceland coach steps down after 7 years in charge

REYKJAVIK (ICELAND), JUL 17 (AP): The coach that led Iceland to its first World Cup has stepped down.

The Icelandic Football Association says Heimir Hallgrímsson has decided to leave at his own request, ending seven years in the role.

Hallgrímsson was the co-coach with Lars Lagerback of Sweden at the European Championship in 2016, when Iceland reached the quarterfinals after beating England.

After Lagerback left, Hallgrímsson assumed sole control of the national team, which became the least populous team to ever play at a World Cup. Iceland drew with Argentina in its opening group game but failed to advance to the knockout stage.

Bolt poised for surprise trial with Aussie football club

SYDNEY, JUL 17 (AFP): Usain Bolt is on the verge of sealing a deal to trial with the A-League's Central Coast Mariners, the Australian club said today, as the sprint legend pursues his dream of playing professional football.

Eight-time Olympic champion Bolt, 31, who retired from athletics after August's World Championships in London, is an avid Manchester United fan who has long dreamt of playing top-flight football.

The 100m and 200m world record-holder trained with Norwegian club Strømsgodset last month and Bundesliga club Borussia Dortmund in March.

The planned arrangement will see him take part in a six-week trial starting next month at the Mariners' base in Gosford, some 75 kilometres (47



miles) north of Sydney, chief executive Shaun Mielekamp said.

A season-long deal could

follow if it goes well, he told commercial broadcaster Channel Seven.

Football agent Tony Rallis,

who has been working on the deal, told Sky Sports Radio's Big Sports Breakfast today it has been agreed "in prin-

ciple... subject to a couple of benchmarks".

"Mainly, a trial, and of course marquee funds support from (governing body Football Federation Australia)," he said, adding that the arrangement was not a gimmick.

"Once the FFA comes back and says that they'll be part of the process, we're going to the trial... This bloke's an ambitious athlete. The A-League needed a hero, and we got Superman."

Mielekamp said his club had been working on the agreement for four to five months, and there was still "some work to do".

"But fingers crossed things might play out, but the most important thing is we wait to find out and see how good a footballer he is first.

"If all goes well, who

knows? He may be playing in the A-League this season."

Mielekamp said reports of Bolt's performance at the European clubs he has trialled with have been "pretty good", and that "every time he trains, he improves significantly".

"He has a very good left foot, and time will tell at what level he is at and if it fits the A-League... it would only be big if he could play and go really well," he said.

"If he comes in and he is not up to the level, it could have a detrimental effect."

Bolt has dominated sprinting since taking double individual gold at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

The charismatic sportsman went on to win a further six Olympic golds and pick up 11 world titles.

The A-League season starts in October.

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Hima to be sports ambassador of Assam: Sonowal

KANDULIMARI (ASSAM), JUL 17 (PTI): Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today met the parents of ace sprinter Hima Das and said that she would be appointed the sports ambassador of Assam.

Hima, who created history by winning gold at IAAF World Under-20 Championships at Tampere in Finland recently, would be the first sports ambassador of the state, officials said.

The state government, he said, would felicitate the sprint queen at a state-level programme after her return to Assam, Sonowal told Hima's parents Ranjit and Junali Das at their



home.

He visited Hima's home at No 3 Kandulimari village in Dhing area of Nagaon district and interacted with her parents as well as other members of her family.

Sonowal congratulat-

ed Hima's parents on the success of their daughter in the world of sports. He lavishly praised her "stunning success" saying that her achievement has "raised the stature of the people of the state globally".

Hima would be made the sports ambassador of the state and a reward of Rs 50 lakh would be given to her as per the government's earlier announcement, he said.

Sonowal also felicitated Hima's parents

with the traditional 'gamosa' (Assamese scarf of honour), 'sarai' (brass metal offering tray with a stand) and a citation.

"Hima's feat inspires Indians and the gold won by her proves that hard work, commitment and sincerity are the cornerstones of success", he said adding that her feat would inspire the young generation.

Hima's victory has given renewed momentum to women empowerment in the country, he added.

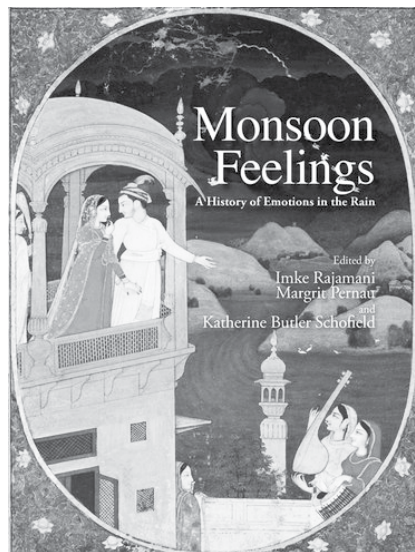
The chief minister also told Hima's parents that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was very elated with her success and has expressed his

sentiments at a public programme recently.

During the interaction Ranjit Das requested the chief minister for steps to improve the condition of the playground, library and Naamghar (prayer hall) of their village.

Sonowal assured him that necessary support would be extended by the government in this regard and directed the Nagaon district deputy commissioner to immediately submit a proposal.

The chief minister also directed the Nagaon superintendent of police to take necessary steps to reopen the erstwhile police outpost at Sologuri as asked for by Hima's father.



Book explores monsoon feelings

NEW DELHI, JUL 17 (PTI): A new book explores rain-drenched worlds of poetry, songs, paintings, architecture, films, gardens and festivals, and also examines the history of monsoon feelings in South Asia from the 12th century to the present.

"Monsoon Feelings: A History of Emotions in the Rain" is a collection of evocative essays edited by Imke Rajamani, Margrit Pernau and Katherine Butler Schofield.

The history of the monsoon in South Asia is one of various connected longings and fulfilments.

"In the monsoon and its arts, beauty and ugliness, life and death, joy and sorrow, hope and despair, gentleness and excess, relief and threat are closely intertwined. Monsoon feelings are at the core of the rainy season: they are rich, diverse, ambiguous and compelling," the book says.

The first three chapters of the book, published by Niyogi, concentrate on monsoon feelings in different genres of poetry.

Sunil Sharma explains the meanings of love and war in Indo-Persian poetry from the 12th to the 14th century, analysing a spectrum of monsoon feelings. Richard Williams discloses the foregrounding of gentleness and beauty in the verses composed in the

Brajbhassha language. Francesca Orsini analyses the voice of the love-lorn princess in the sung poems of the 'barahmasa' (12 months) genre.

Molly Aitken argues through monsoon paintings that the artistic and emotional cultures and the Mughal and the Rajput courts were not opposed spheres. Catherine Asher explores in her essay which bhavas or embodied feelings could be experienced in two gardens from the 17th and the 18th centuries.

Schofield and David Lunn reconstruct the almost-forgotten Rag Gaund, a musical mode closely associated with the monsoon, through its poetical, sonic and visual forms. Laura Leante discusses imagery and monsoon ragas in her essay by observing present-day musicians.

Rachel Dwyer explains how monsoon love has been translated in Hindi films. Rajamani addresses the political implications of monsoon feelings in Hindi movies.

Claudia Preckel describes a rather unbalanced relation between people and the rainy season.

Pernau provides a historical account of Delhi's famous Phulwalon ki sair. Vidya Rao concludes the book by sharing her own experiences of monsoon feelings as a performer of thumri.

Record scorer Cahill retires from Australia duty

SYDNEY, JUL 17 (AFP): Australia's all-time leading goal-scorer Tim Cahill retired from international football today, ending an illustrious career that has taken him to four World Cups.

The 38-year-old, who scored 50 international goals in 107 appearances, last played for the Socceroos when he came off the bench for their final group game against Peru at the World Cup in Russia.

"Today's the day that I'm officially hanging up my boots on my international career with the Socceroos," Cahill tweeted.

"No words can describe what it has meant to represent my country. Massive thank you to everyone for the support throughout all my years wearing the Australian badge."

The former Everton striker, one of the finest players to come out of Australia, did not say if he would continue playing club football.

He joined his former club Millwall in the English Championship on a short-term deal in January after quitting Australia's Melbourne City in a bid to secure more game time before the World Cup.

Cahill, born in Sydney to a Samoan mother, started his international career



playing for Western Samoa under-20s and only became a Socceroo in 2004 after an intense lobbying campaign to world body FIFA.

Two years later in Germany, he became the first Australian to net a goal at the World Cup, going to score in two further tournaments in 2010 and 2014.

In 2007, he also became the first Australian to score at an Asian Cup, and he helped the Socceroos win the Asian title for the first time in 2015.

Before his stint at City, Cahill spent 14 years in England with Millwall and top-flight outfit Everton, scoring more than 100 goals, before signing for the

New York Red Bulls.

Cahill, known for his prodigious leap and trademark goal celebration, when he uses the corner flag as a punching bag, also played for China's Shanghai Shenhua and Hangzhou Greentown.

Amendment to JJ Act in offing; DMs, collectors to be competent officers for approving adoptions: Maneka



NEW DELHI, JUL 17 (PTI): The Women and Child Development Ministry is going to amend the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act to make the district magistrates and collectors "competent officers" for approving adoptions, instead of courts, Union minister Maneka Gandhi said today, days after cases of alleged illegal adoptions came to light in Jharkhand.

Gandhi was speaking at a national conference of the ministers in-charge of the women and child development departments in all the states and Union territories here.

"We are bringing in an amendment to the JJ Act for

making District Magistrate/Collector as the competent officer for approving adoptions, instead of courts: Maneka Gandhi," the ministry said in a tweet.

Gandhi, the Union Women and Child Development Minister, had yesterday directed the state governments to inspect all the child-care homes run by the Mother Teresa-founded Missionaries of Charity (MoC), after cases of alleged illegal adoptions carried out by one such homes in Ranchi came to light.

On July 5, the Jharkhand police had arrested a nun and an employee of the Ranchi-based

organisation, run by the MoC, for allegedly "selling" a baby for Rs 1.2 lakh.

Gandhi has also directed the states to ensure that all the child-care institutions (CCIs) are registered and linked to the country's apex adoption body within a month.

According to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, registration of CCIs and their linking with the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is mandatory, but some orphanages have challenged the validity of the clause, an official in the Women and Child Development Ministry said.

Trump faces outrage back home after Putin summit

WASHINGTON, JUL 17 (PTI): President Donald Trump today faced political outrage in the US for not backing the American intelligence community's claim that Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election, following the Helsinki summit with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

From describing his comments at the joint press conference as disgraceful, shameful to treacherous, even some of his closest supporters described Trump's statements as the most serious mistake of his presidency.

Trump, who arrived at the White House after his week-long trip to Europe, has defended his comments.

As I said today and many times before, 'I have GREAT confidence in MY intelligence people'. However, I also recognise that in order to build a brighter future, we cannot exclusively focus on the past as the world's two largest nuclear powers, we must get along! Trump said in a tweet aboard Air Force One on his



way back home.

I would rather take a political risk in pursuit of peace, than to risk peace in pursuit of politics, he said, adding that a productive dialogue is not only good for the US and Russia, but is also good for the world.

US analysts said Trump refused to convincingly state that the Russians interfered in the 2016 presidential election at his press conference with Putin after their first summit meeting.

They said they think it's Russia. I have President Putin he just said it's not Russia," Trump said, adding that he does not "see any reason why it would be" Russia. Putin too has rejected the allegations.

Today's press conference in Helsinki was one of the most disgraceful performances by an American president in memory. The damage inflicted by President Trump's naiveté, egotism, false equivalence, and sympathy for au-

toocrats is difficult to calculate. But it is clear that the summit in Helsinki was a tragic mistake, said Republican Senator John McCain, who chairs the powerful Senate Armed Services Committee.

President Trump proved not only unable, but unwilling to stand up to Putin. He and Putin seemed to be speaking from the same script as the president made a conscious choice to defend a tyrant against the fair questions of a free press, and to grant Putin an uncontested platform to spew propaganda and lies to the world, he said.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and one of the president's closest supporters too criticised him.

President Trump must clarify his statements in Helsinki on our intelligence system and Putin. It is the most serious mistake of his presidency and must be corrected - immediately, Gingrich tweeted.

Soon the head of the US intelligence agencies and a Trump appointee issued a statement reiterating that

Russians interfered in the 2016 presidential elections. We have been clear in our assessments of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and their ongoing, pervasive efforts to undermine our democracy, and we will continue to provide unvarnished and objective intelligence in support of our national security, Dan Coats, Director of National Intelligence said.

Donald Trump's press conference performance in Helsinki rises to & exceeds the threshold of 'high crimes & misdemeanors'. It was nothing short of treasonous. Not only were Trump's comments imbecilic, he is wholly in the pocket of Putin. Republican Patriots: Where are you??? tweeted John Brennan, said former CIA director John Brennan.

Today, in a disgusting, disturbing and deeply dangerous appearance seen around the world, Donald Trump sided with an authoritarian leader of another country over our own intelligence agencies, said Indian American Con-

gresswoman Pramila Jayapal.

What we saw today was the President of the United States belittling our country's own men and women in the intelligence community, refusing to acknowledge or hold accountable Putin for Russian hacking in our elections, and standing in the most servile way next to Putin, advancing Russia's interests in spite of what that means for America," she said.

Indian American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi said Trump failed to confront Putin on Russian interference in US elections and placed more trust in the Russian dictator's denials than in the assessments of US intelligence.

President Trump did not carry out his responsibility as a global leader, and he should have done much more than simply asking the question of whether interference occurred. President Trump's failure to stand up to the Kremlin has given it carte blanche to interfere in our upcoming elections, and that should frighten us all, he said.

The mainstream US media also expressed outrage.

Putin's poodle: Trump sells out US intelligence agencies with the world watching, said The New York Daily News.

Why Won't Donald Trump Speak for America? The president lays himself at Vladimir Putin's feet, The New York Times said in an editorial.

Trump just colluded with Russia. Openly, wrote the Washington Post's editorial board. Mr Trump appeared to align himself with the Kremlin against American law enforcement before the Russian ruler and a global audience, the daily said.

The world hasn't seen a US president like this in modern times, and as ever in Trump World everyone else will have to adapt. Let's navigate between the critics who predict the end of the world order and the cheerleaders who see only genius, and try to offer a realistic assessment of the fallout from a troubling week, The Wall Street Journal said in its editorial.

Europe, Japan sign massive free trade deal

TOKYO, JUL 17 (AFP): The EU and Japan today signed a sweeping free trade deal that officials called a "clear message" against protectionism, as Washington imposes controversial tariffs and threatens a trade war.

The deal signed in Tokyo by the EU's top officials and Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is the biggest ever negotiated by the EU and creates a free trade zone covering nearly a third of the world's GDP.

"We are sending a clear message that we stand together against protectionism," EU Council President Donald Tusk said.

"Together we are making -- by signing this agreement -- a statement about free and fair trade, we are showing that we are stronger and better off when we work together," added Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker.

The huge deal was signed as President Donald Trump unsettles allies and provokes rivals with his aggressive "America First" trade policy.

Both the EU and Japan have been hit with new US tariffs despite their longstanding alliances with Washington. Juncker said the deal sent a message that "trade is about more than tariffs and barriers, it is about values".

"There is no protection in protectionism," he said.

Abe, standing alongside the two EU officials, said the agreement, "shows the world the unshaken political will of Japan and the EU to lead the world as the champions of free trade at a time when protectionism has spread".

Pak judge who had convicted Sharif, recuses from hearing 2 other graft cases

SAJJAD HUSSAIN ISLAMABAD, JUL 17 (PTI): A Pakistani anti-corruption court judge who had sentenced Nawaz Sharif to 10 years in jail in a graft case, has recused himself from hearing two other corruption cases against the former prime minister.

Justice Muhammad Bashir of the Islamabad Accountability Court, in a letter addressed to Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Anwar Khan Kasi, said that the Al-Azizia steel mills and the Flagship corruption cases should be transferred to some other judge, according to the IHC sources.

In the letter, the judge said that he had no objection if the cases were transferred as he could not hear these cases, they said.

The move came on the heels of filing of separate appeals by Sharif, 68, his daughter Maryam, 44, and son-in-law Capt (ret'd) Muhammad Safdar, challenging the verdict.

Earlier, Sharif's lawyer Khawaja Haris had objected to Justice Bashir



hearing the two other corruption cases.

The Islamabad Accountability Court had on July 6 found Sharif, his daughter and his son-in-law guilty over the family's ownership of four luxury flats in London.

The court sentenced Sharif to a total of 10 years in prison and imposed a fine of 8 million pounds (USD 10 million)

in the Avenfield corruption case. Maryam was sentenced to seven years in prison along with a 2 million pounds (USD 2.6 million) fine.

Sharif and Maryam were arrested in Lahore on July 13 on their arrival from London. They were later taken to Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi.

Sharif's son-in-law, Safdar, who was arrested

on July 8, is also lodged in the same Adiala Jail.

Three-time prime minister Sharif resigned last year after the Supreme Court disqualified him from holding public office and ruled that graft cases be filed against the beleaguered leader and his children over the Panama Papers scandal.

Last week, Sharif's

lawyer Khawaja Haris had objected to Justice Bashir hearing the two other corruption cases when the judge resumed hearing.

Harris said how Judge Bashir can hear the two cases when he had already given verdict in Avenfield case.

He further said that evidence and charges in all cases are almost similar.

UK's Brexit campaign group fined for overspending, referred to Scotland Yard

LONDON, JUL 17 (PTI): The official group that campaigned for Brexit has been fined 61,000 pounds for breaking spending limits in the 2016 EU membership referendum and the case has been reported to Scotland Yard, the UK's Electoral Commission said today.

Vote Leave, which proved victorious at the end of its campaign with 51.9 per cent voting for Brexit as against 48.1 per cent to Remain, was found guilty of funneling cash with the help of a smaller pro-Brexit group called 'BeLeave' to get around campaign finance rules.

Darren Grimes, the founder of 'BeLeave' has been fined 20,000 pounds and reported to the Metropolitan Police, along with 'Vote Leave' official David Halsall.

The UK, on June 23, 2016, had voted in favour of leaving the 28-member European Union. It is scheduled to quit the bloc on March 29, 2019.

"The Electoral Commission

has followed the evidence and conducted a thorough investigation into spending and campaigning carried out by 'Vote Leave' and 'BeLeave'," said Bob Posner, the commission's director of political finance and regulation.

"We found substantial evidence that the two groups worked to a common plan, did not declare their joint working and did not adhere to the legal spending limits," he said.

However, the findings of the Electoral Commission do not provide a legal basis to overturn the referendum results.

'Vote Leave' and the official Remain campaign group, 'Britain Stronger in Europe', were allowed to spend 7 million pounds each on campaigning in the run up to the referendum on June 23, 2016. 'Vote Leave' exceeded its legal spending limit by almost 500,000 pounds, the election watchdog found.

It concluded that spending carried out through small-

er campaign groups towards companies like Canadian digital marketing firm Aggregate IQ were under the direction of 'Vote Leave' but not declared.

"These are serious breaches of the laws put in place by Parliament to ensure fairness and transparency at elections and referendums," said Posner.

'Vote Leave' also returned an "incomplete and inaccurate spending report", with almost 234,501 pounds reported incorrectly, and invoices missing for 12,849.99 pounds of spending, the watchdog said.

'Vote Leave' has said it was considering its options because the investigation's findings were "wholly inaccurate" and claimed they were politically motivated.

A 'Vote Leave' spokesperson said: "The Electoral Commission's report contains a number of false accusations and incorrect assertions that are wholly inaccurate and do not stand up to scrutiny.

"It is astonishing that no-

body from 'Vote Leave' has been interviewed by the commission in the production of this report, nor indeed at any point in the past two years. Yet the commission has interviewed the so-called 'whistleblowers' who have no knowledge of how 'Vote Leave' operated and whose credibility has been seriously called into question."

The group, led by Brexiters like former UK foreign secretary Boris Johnson and environment minister Michael Gove, said it had provided evidence to the Electoral Commission proving there was no wrongdoing and claimed that despite "clear evidence of wrongdoing by the Remain campaign", the commission has chosen to ignore this and refused to launch an investigation.

"All this suggests that the supposedly impartial commission is motivated by a political agenda rather than uncovering the facts," the 'Vote Leave' spokesperson said.



Putin: US-Russia ties should not be held hostage to Mueller probe

WASHINGTON, JUL 17 (AFP): Russian President Vladimir Putin has described the probe by Special Counsel Robert Mueller into Moscow's election meddling as "political games" that should not be permitted to interfere with US-Russia relations.

Asked in a Fox News interview about Mueller's indictment Friday of 12 Russian intelligence agents for hacking Democratic Party computers in 2016, just three days before his summit with President Donald Trump, Putin said it was not his concern, but rather part of an "internal political struggle." "I'm not interested in this issue a single bit," he said, speaking through a translator.

"It's the internal political games of the United States." "Don't make the relationship between Russia and the United States, don't hold it hostage of this internal political struggle," Putin said.

Putin was speaking shortly after his summit with Trump in Helsinki, Finland on Monday,

where the question of alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential race loomed large.

His response echoed Trump's stance on the Mueller probe, which is digging into possible collusion between Trump's campaign and Moscow.

Trump has repeatedly branded the Mueller probe a "witch hunt".

And in a press conference Monday with Putin at his side, Trump dismissed his own intelligence chiefs' conclusion that Putin himself oversaw the effort to damage Trump's Democratic election rival Hillary Clinton.

Putin suggested Monday, like Trump has done repeatedly, that Mueller's appointment as an independent prosecutor to pursue the investigation lacks legitimacy.

"It's quite clear to me that this is just an internal political struggle and it's nothing to be proud of for American democracy to use such dirty methods and political rivalry," Putin told Fox.

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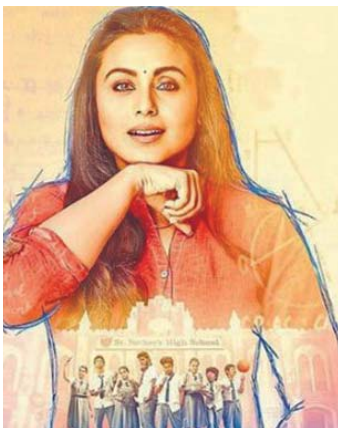
BLONDE BOMBSHELL! Gigi Hadid, 23, dressed in a Reebok classic crop top and skin-tight white leggings, flaunted her fit frame in #bemorehuman Reebok campaign.

'Hichki' to release in Russia on Teachers Day

MUMBAI, JUL 17 (PTI): Bollywood star Rani Mukerji's "Hichki" is set to release in Russia on Teachers Day.

The film, directed by Siddharth P Malhotra, will be dubbed in Russian and is scheduled to hit the theatres on September 6.

"Hichki" is a universal film and the response that it is getting in the overseas territories is validating that the film's subject is an extremely relevant one. It's really heartening that 'Hichki' will now release in Russia. It professes the message of the fact of making your worst obstacle within you and convert it into your biggest strength by embracing it and working each day to win over it.



"It has a beautiful message that nothing is impossible and life can be beautiful even with our inherent complications. I'm really excited to see the reaction of audiences on Russia," Malhotra said in a statement.

The Yash Raj Films project, produced by Maneesh Sharma, is a story of an aspiring teacher played by Rani, who suffers from Tourette syndrome. The film recently received a standing ovation at the Shanghai International Film Festival (SIFF).

"Hichki" has touched the hearts of audiences across age-groups, across countries. The film moved audiences at the Shanghai Film Festival where it was screened recently and we got a standing ovation there. It was an overwhelming reaction from a non-Hindi speaking market and now that the film is releasing in Russia, we expect audiences to feel the same emotions that people across the world are feeling after seeing the movie," Sharma said.

ARIES: Today is a great day to move forward, Aries. Your emotions are stable, leaving your heart free to take off to the clouds. Daydream. Now might be a good time to make plans with a romantic partner. Solidify your relationship and confirm your commitment to one another. If you're single, this is a good time to set a plan in motion to put you one step closer to your greatest fantasy.

TAURUS: There's a conservative feeling to the day that asks you to get serious and take care of business. This may not be such a bad idea. This grounded atmosphere can help you move into a deeper relationship with someone special. Let your creativity shine, and try to do more listening than talking. Make your dreams a reality.

GEMINI: There is a conflicting push/pull aspect to today that may leave you feeling unsure about how to proceed. On the one hand, you may feel like you want to plan things out and get your emotions stabilized so you can function at full capacity. On the other hand, something may be pulling you into the clouds. This is your heart talking. Listen. Find a compromise between these two energies.

CANCER: Get your chores done early, Cancer, so you have time to play tonight. Plan a romantic getaway with a loved one. Let your imagination carry you to a whole new realm of pleasure. This is a great day to explore your artistic nature and begin to manifest some of the ideas that have been rattling around in your head for a while.

LEO: This is an excellent day to tell people exactly how you feel, Leo. Your emotions are more stable than usual, so open up and speak from the heart. Listen. What you learn will be valuable for the future, so pay attention. Keep an eye on what is real, but let your heart explore all the possibilities. Follow your emotions and trust your instincts.

VIRGO: Today may be tough, Virgo. Does it seem like nothing fits into place? Are you trying to be someone you're not? If things don't seem to be working out, don't press the issue. You're better off waiting for a time when you feel more confident about who you are and where you're going. Meanwhile, have some tea and relax. Releasing stress can clear some energy for doing other things.

LIBRA: Enjoy yourself, Libra. You have a lot to be grateful for, so give thanks. Take pride in all you've accomplished so far and share your joy with others. Let go of the reins and sit back comfortably for a while. You've worked hard for a reason - to enjoy life. If you don't do it now, then when? Take time out and be with loved ones tonight.

SCORPIO: This may be one of those days when you don't know which way to turn. For some reason, you just can't make a decision, so you keep going around and around. Stop and rest. Get out and walk for a while until your head stops spinning. Wait until your mind clears before you make your next major move.

SAGITTARIUS: Romance is coming your way as long as you stay level-

headed about the situation. Take care of the daily tasks and then let your heart soar. You have a strong connection to your emotions. Trust your instincts and let your heart take control. Be realistic about your relationships with others, but push the boundaries once they've been established.

CAPRICORN: Your emotions may be reserved, Capricorn. Take a break from the punk and fire and simply lay low. This is a good time to sit back and receive. Don't make any sudden moves. Just let the energy of the day take you where it will. The closer you can get to your inner nature and feminine energy, the closer you will become to a romantic partner or family member.

AQUARIUS: Family issues play an important role in your day, Aquarius.

Speak from the heart and tell your kin how much they mean to you. In general, you might feel reserved with your energy. Don't feel like you have to make any great strides right now. It's more a time in which you can enjoy what you've worked for. Kick back and reap the rewards of all your hard work.

PISCES: You may be undecided about a loved one today, Pisces. Something may urge you to act yet you want to lay low. There's an important next step that you must take now. Carefully think the situation through before you make a move. In fact, this day would best be spent gathering data on the issue. It seems you should wait a bit before actually doing anything about it.

A LIGHT HAS BEEN TURNED ON: ANGELA BASSETT ON POST #METOO WORLD

Women are at the centre of "real changes" in Hollywood after the #MeToo movement, says Angela Bassett, the actor who is all about challenging stereotypes with her roles as a formidable mother in "Black Panther" and now a no-nonsense CIA boss in "Mission: Impossible - Fallout".

It is time for women to break open the door and change things, says the actor, whose character Erica Sloane replaces Alec Baldwin's Hunley in the action franchise, led by Hollywood star Tom Cruise.

Bassett believes a lot has changed post the #MeToo movement, which began with allegations of sexual harassment and rape against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein and triggered a global movement.

"There is something gaining and something afoot. There is a light that has been turned on. An awareness has been sparked. Voices are speaking out.

"Once you unlock the door or the closets and we peak in and we see and (when) we don't like what we see, we can break it open and make some real changes. So I think it's a great thing that's going on," Bassett told PTI in an interview.

The actor, 59, believes when women play strong roles in films, it inspires people all over the world.

This is why she has followed her standout performance as Ramonda, queen of the fictional African nation Wakanda in "Black Panther", with her "Fallout" role.



"It ('Black Panther') was, and still is (a cultural movement)... When women play incredible roles, it is a great inspiration all over the world, not just in America... I hope there is a sort of strength and inspiration that people are gaining from roles like these, the confidence to do any and all things," she said.

The #MeToo movement eventually led to structural changes in Hollywood and the launch of the Time's Up campaign.

Bassett is hopeful that change is here to stay. She believes the older generation has to hold fast to the hope for a better future.

"You know, hope is the expectation of something good. We have to never lose hope. Never let your spirit die because change may happen slowly, or it does happen slowly. We become aware and we become emboldened.

"At times, it happens not from the top but from the bottom. From those who have least to lose and most to gain,

our young people. They are the most hopeful. So, I think it is common that we who have experienced it and seen how slow it takes, hold on to our hope and offer our help."

The actor believes "Fallout" was a perfect follow-up to her "Black Panther" role. Having seen other films in the franchise, she knew it would be a fun ride.

Also, she loved the way her character is introduced in the film, striding down an airstrip with intent and purpose.

"It was one of the first scenes that I shot and I loved how it went. You get her determination and her drive. It was like she is going to get something done," the actor said.

"It's exciting, thrilling and fun. When I was asked to come aboard, I could hardly believe it. For a split second, I didn't think that it was THE 'Mission: Impossible'. I thought it was some other version of it. I am thrilled to be on this journey."

The Paramount Pictures

film has not one but three strong women characters and Bassett is particularly impressed by Rebecca Ferguson's Ilsa, (an MI6 agent and Ethan Hunt's friend) who she believes is as strong as Cruise's Hunt or Henry Cavill's August Walker.

"Women have great roles in this film. The character of Ilsa, I mean, she is as formidable as Hunt and Walker, my field agent that I sent in to keep an eye on Hunt. She is as formidable and physical as either of the two of them. She may even, perhaps, be a little bit better. Also, Erica Sloane is brilliant and she is a tactician. She is thinking steps ahead of these guys," she said.

Also starring Simon Pegg, Ving Rhames, Sean Harris, Michelle Monaghan and Vanessa Kirby, Viacom18 Motion Pictures will distribute the film in India.

Directed by Christopher McQuarrie, the film is slated to be released in India on July 27.

Priyanka and Nick enjoy double date with Joe Jonas, Sophie Turner

LOS ANGELES, JUL 17 (PTI): Indian star Priyanka Chopra and singer Nick Jonas were spotted enjoying a dinner date in London.

Priyanka, who turns a year older tomorrow, was spotted spending some quality time with Nick and his brothers Joe and Kevin.

Joe's fiancée, "Game of Thrones" star Sophie Turner, was also present.

According to E! online the group dined at the 34 Mayfair in London before heading over to the Ritz Casino to top the night off.

Priyanka first met the "jealous" singer's family when she attended his cousin's wedding as his date in June and two celebrities have since grown inseparable.

Two weeks ago Nick, 25, also met Priyanka's family while on a trip to India.

