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SummitTIMES

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

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Govt notifies at par with Central Govt DA for State employees

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:**

As per a notification issued on 25 Aug, the State Government has decided, on the recommendation of the 5th Pay Committee, to provide Dearness Allowance to State Government employees at par with Central government as communicated by a circular issued by Finance, Revenue & Expenditure Department on 10 July 2018. Other allowances will be provided wef from 01 Sept, 2018.

Sikkim Govt employees posted within the State of Sikkim, Darjeel-

ing and Siliguri are eligible to get house rent as per revised pay rate of 12% of basic pay subject to a minimum of Rs. 3500 per month and government employees who are posted in Guwahati, Kolkata and New Delhi are eligible to house rent as per revised pay scale of 16 % subject to a minimum of Rs. 3500 per month.

However, those employees who have been provided Government accommodation are not eligible for house rent, the notification reads.

The government has also decided to provide Sikkim Border Compensatory Allowance at

8% of the revised pay to government employees posted in Sikkim.

Employees will be provided with High Altitude Allowance of Rs 2400 per month for Lachen, Lachung and other areas above 8000 ft and upto 12000 ft, and Rs 3000 per month for areas above 12000 ft altitude.

Similarly, Risk Allowance of Rs 500 to Rs 800 per month will be provided to Safai karmachari, Group D employees working in infectious ward of the hospital other than ward attendants, Male & Female attendants, X-Ray & Pathology Technicians, Nurses working in infec-

tious wards, Dark Room attendants, Line-men of Energy & Power Department and Fire Service personnel up to the rank of Sub-Inspector.

Conveyance allowance of Rs 12000 per month will be provided to the officers of Joint Secretary and equivalent and above in lieu of official conveyance facility. For this, separate guidelines will be issued by the Finance, Revenue & Expenditure Department.

Officers who are not eligible for official conveyance facility will be provided transport allowance of Rs 1000 per month [Level 15-18 of

icers] and Rs 500 per month [Level 14 and below officers].

Similarly, Rs 20,000 will be provided to Police personnel as uniform allowance in initial period and their after Rs 6000 as renewal grant after every three years. Ration allowance of Rs 1000 will be provided to police personnel posted within the State and those whose are posted in New Delhi [IRBns] will get ration allowance at the rate of Rs 2000 per month, the notification states.

The notification further adds that the Non-Practicing Allowance will be provided to

those doctors working in the State Government with 12% of revised pay scale per month subject to the condition that they perform clinical duties and opt not to carry out private practice. On the same lines, the Veterinary Doctors will be provided Rs 2500 per month with same condition applied to other doctors.

However, the State Government has abolished Children Education Allowance to employees working outside the state as well as the Difficult Area Allowance.

The latest DA stands at 7% wef from 01 Jan 2018.

Power Grid lines at Ranipool to shut down on 30-31 Aug

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

The Extra High Voltage [EVH] Division of Energy & Power Department, Government of Sikkim will be taking major shut down of 66KV transmission line at 132/66KV Substation of Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd and 66/11KV LLHP switchyard at Ranipool in East Sikkim for connecting/charging of newly constructed 66KV transmission line to 66/11KV Substation Sherathang, Nathula from 8.30 a.m to 4.30 p.m on 30-31 Aug. During the period of shutdown, the electricity supply to entire East and North district will be affected, a press release informs.

Workshop on Rashtriya Poshan Mahina held in Gyalshing



GYALSHING, 27 AUG [IPR]: An orientation workshop on Rashtriya Poshan Mahina was organized by Nutrition Cell, Social Justice, Empowerment & Welfare Department today here at the Community Hall in Gyalshing, West Sikkim.

The event organized on the theme 'Har Ghar Poshan Tihaar' and was attended by Zilla Adhyaksha, West District Zilla Panchayat, Devika Subba, as chief guest in the presence of Under Secretary from Ministry of Women & Development, Delhi, MK Prabhat,

Sub Divisional Magistrate, Gyalshing, Tushar Nikhare, State Nodal Officer, Poshan Abhiyaan, Bharati Basnet, and other officials.

At the outset, Under Secretary, Ministry of Women & Development, Delhi, Mr Prabath, informed that Poshan Abhiyaan [Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition] was launched in March 2018. He added that the campaign aims to ensure holistic development and adequate nutrition for pregnant women, moth-

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Army Court of Inquiry indicts Major Gogoi in Srinagar hotel case

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, AUG 27 (PTI): An Army Court of Inquiry has indicted Major Leetul Gogoi for "fraternising" with a local woman in a Srinagar hotel and being away from his place of duty, paving the way for disciplinary action, army sources said today.

Gogoi was detained by police in May following an altercation when he was allegedly trying to enter a Srinagar hotel with an 18-year-old woman.

The officer, who was at the centre of the human shield row after his decision to tie a civilian to the bonnet of his vehicle in Kashmir last year, will now face summary of evidence before court martial proceedings are initiated against him, the sources said.

The Col has held him accountable for "fraternising" with a local in spite of instructions to the contrary and "being away from the place of duty while in operational area", they said.

The Col had submitted its findings to the convening authority earlier this month following which further proceedings have been initiated, the sources said.

The Army had ordered the Col following the May 23 incident. Army chief Gen Bipin Rawat had said in Pahalgam that exemplary punishment would be given to Gogoi if he was found guilty of "any offence".

Gogoi had hit the headlines last year after he tied a man to a jeep in Kashmir purportedly as a shield against stone pelters during polling in the Srinagar Lok Sabha by-election on April 9.

Rawat had supported the young officer's action and honoured him with the Army chief's 'Commendation Card' for his 'sustained efforts' in counter-insurgency operations.

Opp ignorant over upliftment of women in State: SDF

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:**

Sikkim Democratic Front general secretary [press & publicity], Kavita Subba, has said that opposition parties in Sikkim lack courage and are intellectually weak to accept the improvement in status of women during the 25 years of the Sikkim Democratic Front government in the State. She mentioned that instead of accepting the historic and unique initiatives of SDF government towards women's empowerment, the opposition parties have only been spreading



propaganda to deceive and mislead people of Sikkim which she strongly condemns.

Addressing a press conference here today,

Ms Subba mentioned that due to the unique initiatives of the SDF government for women's empowerment these last 25 years, Sikkimese women

are presently ahead in all sectors in the State. Under the visionary leadership of party president, Pawan Chamling, women in Sikkim have been working

equally as men in all areas to serve the State.

Ms Subba mentioned that although SDF government has reserved 50% seats for women in Panchayats, more than 50% of women representatives are presently serving as Panchayats in the State.

While mentioning various initiatives of SDF government for women, SDF spokesperson, Neeru Sewa, stated that the SDF government has changed the perception of the people towards women in the State which has been helping women

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UNSUNG HERO'S UNTOLD STORY

Arjun Rai – a player, coach, manager but more importantly, always a footballer

**SAURABH RAI
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:**

Football is played and loved all across the world. Every place we go we are bound to meet those crazy football fans. For them football is everything. This beautiful game would not have been the same without the fans. It's always boring to play in an empty stadium.

Along with the fans many others have made football into the most popular game in the world. To list them out - the players themselves, coaches, support staff, media and officials. This is what came to mind while writing this piece at this ungodly hour.

Most football officials work behind the scenes and keep a low profile, but their contribution is immense. Without them a team cannot run smoothly. I have, over the years, come across many such individuals who love the game so much that they have dedicated their lives to it.

One such individual is Arjun Rai, the ever smiling Senior Manager of United Sikkim FC. Arjun has been in football for more than three decades now, first as a player and then as an official. Arjun was born on 25 April 1963 at Naya Bazar, Jorethang in South Sikkim to Late DB Rai and Late Mrs Nar Maya Rai. Now he lives in Gangtok with his wife Lalita Rai. Arjun has one daughter, Kritika Rai and a son, Rohen Rai.

Arjun loved football since a very young age and those fun games with his friends soon turned serious when he started to play for his school team, Tashi Namgyal Higher Secondary School (TNHSS) in Gangtok. This all boys school has always been known for football and during Arjun's time they had a very strong team. Arjun used to play as a striker and with TNHSS he played in a number of tournaments, the most prominent being the Subroto Cup in 1982. TNHSS had qualified for

the tournament after being the Sikkim State Champions.

He also represented the Sikkim team in Sub Junior Nationals. Arjun also remembers with pride the one time he represented his state in the Senior Nationals Tournament "Santosh Trophy". At the time, Boys Club and Zongri Club were the two best teams in Sikkim and Arjun has the distinction of playing for both the clubs.

By his own admission Arjun did not play for very long. Family matters and other things took most of his time but he could never be cut off from the game completely. People like Arjun keep the fire of football burning in the Hills. Selfless individuals, who can go to any length to support young footballers and the game as well. They open clubs, shell out money from their own pockets just so the game remains alive. They don't get anything in return but their passion keeps pushing them.

Slowly Arjun moved towards Management, he is also a very good coach and I remember here the first time I saw Arjun Rai at Paljor Stadium. He was my good friend Pranai Rai's uncle and calls him Bhai Dada. Along came a man wearing shorts and a sweatshirt from the corner and told us to keep training hard and offered us a few tips as well. What caught my attention even as a young boy was Arjun's positive energy and that infectious smile on his face. Arjun has four brothers and all of them were interested in football and every Sunday the whole gang used to be at Paljor Stadium for practice. I still remember his elder brother crossing the ball and making us head it. Being close to Pranai even I started calling him "Bhai Dada" but later again changed it to "Arjun Daju".

Arjun became a full time Manager in 2004 and took the Sikkim team to Santosh

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Auditions for Indraajatra Talent Hunt commences from Soreng

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Auditions for the Indraajatra 2018 Talent Hunt Competition has kick started from Soreng in West Sikkim on 26 Aug. The finale of the competition is scheduled to be held at MG Marg in Gangtok on 22 Sept, a press release informs.

Thirty participants, both solo and group under different categories, from Soreng and nearby areas of Tharpu, Chumbong, Kaluk, Sombarey and Daramdin auditioned for the competition. Out of the 32 participants, 13 have qualified for the quarter final which will be held in Gangtok on 08 Sept.

The judges for the day were Komal Gurung from Tapashya Dance Academy, Ganesh Dhungel of Department of Culture and Heritage, Deoraj Bagdas of Human Resource Development Department, and Sikkimese director/producer, Praja Pradhan.

The next auditions



are scheduled to be held in Gangtok and Singtam on 02 Sept and 03 Sept respectively.

It may be mentioned here, the Indraajatra Festival 2018 is being organized by Sikkim Newar

Guthi Youth Affairs [SNGYA] in coordination with Inspire Academy, Arithang from 21-13

Sept in Gangtok to showcase the rich culture and tradition of the Newars of Sikkim.

House of Champion bags 14 medals in State Karate Championship



SAGAR CHETTRI

GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

House of Champion's young karatekas shined bright in the recent 16th State Karate Championship 2018 held from 24-26 Aug at Namchi indoor stadium in South Sikkim. A 27-member team represented House of Champion in the championship and won 14 medals including three gold, three silver and eight bronze medals.

House of Champion is run by international karateka and kick-boxers,

Sushmita Rai, and is located at Tadong in East Sikkim. She expressed her happiness on the outstanding performance of her students in the State championship.

Ms Rai mentioned that in a very short time, the products of her academy have won medals in the national, regional and state levels. She assured that the academy will continue providing its best training to produce national and international karatekas and kick-boxers from Sikkim.

SKM holds youth seminar in Dentam, welcomes Golay

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

West district youth wing of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha organised a youth seminar at Dentam Bazaar under Maneybong-Dentam in West Sikkim today. On the occasion, SKM president, PS Tamang [Golay], received a grand welcome from the people of the constituency. Mr Golay also inaugurated the block-level party office before participating in the seminar.

An SKM press release mentions that in his address the SKM president stressed upon the need of discipline in the youth. He

stated that SDF runs as per the wishes of a single head but SKM should move ahead as per the wishes and aspirations of the people. He encouraged youth to work in the interest of Sikkim and its people.

Mr Golay mentioned that SKM has delivered the responsibility of the main opposition party by raising various issues of Sikkim from the State Assembly to the Centre. He alleged that the State is in huge debt and has mismanaged funds given for the affected people of 2011 earthquake.

He challenged the CM to allow the CBI to make

an enquiry in the State and to get a clean chit. He also challenged the ruling party for a debate on any issue of the State. He lambasted the SDF government and the CM on the Limboo-Tamang Assembly seat reservation and other issues.

He further stressed that no Limboo Minister or MLA has ever raised voice in the interest of the Limboo community. He informed that SKM MLA, Sonam Lama, and general secretary, Arun Uprety, will soon meet leaders at the Centre in Delhi to enquire about LT seat reservation.

The release informs

that in their addresses, youth leaders alleged that SDF government has destroyed the future of youth of Sikkim by using them as party flag carriers and that the State has more than 62,000 unemployed youths.

Likewise, former Deputy Chief Minister, PT Lucksom stressed upon the protection of old laws of Sikkim, Sikkim Subject, Parcha and Dhuri Khajana.

The release adds that 172 families of SDF including 146 families from Maneybong-Dentam, 13 from Yangthang and 13 from Daramdin joined SKM on the occasion.

Review meet on irrigation in Assam, WB and Bihar held in Kalimpong

SUMMIT REPORT

KALIMPONG, 27 AUG:

Central Standing Committee on Water Resources today organized a review meeting on irrigation of Assam, West Bengal and Bihar at Mayfair Hotel in Kalimpong which was presided over by Chairperson of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources, Rajiv Pratap Rudy.

Mr Rudy avoiding political questions asked by the reporters, managed to answer a few. When asked about BJP's support for Gorkhaland, he said that he understands the demand of the masses and the government is aware of it too.

"The time will come for the government to decide about this," he said.

He said that the sit-

ting representative, SS Ahluwalia, has been relentlessly raising the issue of Gorkhaland in the Parliament and other places.

"I have seen him persuasively take this matter in the Parliament and the Central Government," expressed Mr Rudy.

During today's meet, discussions were held on issues related to West Bengal and Bihar. Discus-

sion for Assam is scheduled to be held on 28 Aug, it is informed.

Speaking to reporters, Mr Rudy said, "West Bengal has given complete and comprehensive presentation regarding the challenges ahead along with participatory approach in minor irrigation field. The irrigation network challenges faced in the State of West Bengal have also been

mentioned."

Meanwhile, the committee has urged Bengal to create a wish list of resources and submit it to the committee. Once it is submitted, the standing committee will be holding a top committee meeting to meet the challenges of irrigation in West Bengal.

"The last mile connectivity is a major issue as farmers too need to

receive uninterrupted irrigation support," added Mr Rudy.

It was also learnt, Pradhan Mantri Sishai Yojna, an umbrella scheme of the last mile connectivity to the farmers launched by the Government of India, is under consideration where-in farmers having a small portion of land will also get irrigation benefits.

GPU level organic farming training in Soreng



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Mevedir in collaboration with Food Security & Agriculture Development and Horticulture & Cash Crops Development Departments organized GPU level training programme on 25 Aug at Soreng Panchayat Bhawan in West Sikkim, a press release informs.

The programme had the presence of Panchayat president, Chandra Kumari Tamang, vice president, Ashok Pradhan, Panchayat members, Binod Subba, Bhai John Subba and Shanker Maya Subba, Horticulture Development Officer, DP Sharma, Village Level Worker [Agriculture], Kabita Thapa, Field Assistant, Chandra B Rai, along with Mevedir master trainer, Lall Man Tamang.

Horticulture Development Officer, Mr Sharma, highlighted on sustainable features of organic farming and urged the farmers to be dedicated and consistent towards the mission. He further assured all possible support from the department in providing various certified inputs on organic farming.

The next session was addressed by VLW, Ms Thapa, who presented demonstration on preparation of Maple Termine [bio pesticide] and Tus Hume [bio fertilizer]. She also briefed on Madhyam

Compost which helps decompose biomass into good compost within a short time period of 40-45 days.

Panchayat president, Ms Tamang, in her address, emphasized on the initiatives being undertaken by the State Government to help farmers increase their income. She further urged all farmers to work cohesively along with the area Farmer Interest Groups and Farmer Producer Organizations and co-ordinate with them for planned production of cash crops as per soil suitability and topography of the area.

Ms Tamang also assured that all incentives and welfare schemes targeting farmers will be facilitated through the Panchayat office without delay.

Mevedir master trainer, Mr Tamang, extended gratitude to the farmers for their active participation in the programme.

Various farm inputs including spray machines, Madhyam composts, Jus Hume fertilizers, Maple Termine pesticides were distributed to the farmers by the Agriculture Department.

Likewise, seeds of beans, cauliflower, cabbage and lettuce were distributed by Horticulture Department.

Arjun Rai – a player, coach, manager but more importantly, always a footballer

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Trophy. They reached the quarter finals and this is still the best performance by the state in the tournament. Bhaichung was also part of that team. Arjun has been the Manager of Sikkim team in four Santosh Trophies, one women's championship, one Junior Nationals and his most recent Santosh Trophy assignment was at Bihar this year. Another feather in his cap came last year where he was appointed as the Manager of Indian Legends team which had greats like I.M. Vijayan, JO Paul Ancheri and Bhaichung Bhutia along with a host of other former and current India International Players.

Talking about Bhaichung Bhutia, Arjun recalls that in the late 80s he heard that a very good young player has joined Tashi Namgyal

Academy and he along with his friend went to see his game and they were really impressed by what they saw, this boy was special and as Boys Club was in need of some players they quickly took this boy into their fold. That little boy was none other than Bhaichung Bhutia who went on to become the Legend of Indian Football. Arjun never claims he spotted Bhaichung and quickly adds that it was his talent which took him to the pinnacle of Indian Football. After joining Boys Club in a few years' time Bhaichung was signed by East Bengal after Bhaskar Ganguly spotted him playing at the Governor's Gold Cup for the Sikkim team. It gave a lot of joy to Arjun as well. The little boy he had seen a few years back was now joining one of the top clubs of India.

Bhaichung never forgot his Arjun Daju and their bond became stronger year after year and in 2002 the two of them along with Bhaichung's good friend Sherap Lepcha decided to form a club and they named it United Sikkim Sporting Club. Within a year they were promoted to the top division in Sikkim League. By 2010 they started dreaming of taking this team to the I-League and in 2011 United Sikkim Sporting Club was renamed United Sikkim Football Club after registering it as a private limited company which is a requirement to play in the 2nd Division I-League. A few years down the line United Sikkim became the first team to qualify for the I-League from the football crazy state of Sikkim. Arjun counts this as his most memorable moment as he had always wanted top teams of the

country to come and play in Gangtok. The dream came true and within a year some of the biggest names and clubs in Indian Football started to come and play matches against United Sikkim at Paljor Stadium. It must have been surreal for Arjun.

Unfortunately United Sikkim did not survive in the I-League for long but now again work has begun for the I-League with Arjun sending the required letters and documents to All India Football Federation for entry into the 2nd Division I-League.

Arjun is a very jolly person but it was not always a very happy ride for him in football. Once he had even decided to leave the game and concentrate on his work. He is with the Sports Department, but with his family's support he continued and what a loss it would

have been if Arjun had left football. He is very popular with all the players and during my time at United Sikkim I have seen that special bond he had with the boys. Always joking and laughing with them. He would call me to his room for a chat and taking out his phone say, "Should I give a missed call to John Abraham" and we used to have a good laugh. Just recently he had met John in Mumbai along with Bhaichung so he had his number. Another thing I remember is Arjun struggling to explain things to a Japanese player who had no knowledge of English. Once he said, "This guy will make me forget whatever English I know."

Arjun's love affair with football continues till today and just recently United Sikkim FC won the Sikkim League under his guidance.

He is now also with the Sikkim Football Association as their Joint Secretary (III) and plans to put in more effort to promote football all over the state. It's somewhat sad that a person like Arjun, who has dedicated his life to football, has not got the recognition he deserves. It's not every day that you come across a person like Arjun who has served the game as a player, manager, coach and official. This shows his love and dedication for the game. We honor and award people from different walks of life for their good work. It's about time we start noticing people like Arjun as well. He is an unsung hero of Sikkim Football and it will be disappointing if he remains the same. At least for once we need to hear this Hero's song.

Gangtok on
Tuesday,
28 Aug

Temp: 27°C/17°C
Forecast: Cloudy, a
couple of showers
and a thunderstorm.
Sunrise: 05:12 AM
Sunset: 6:01 PM

Tata Motors
celebrates
roll-out
of 1500th
GS800
Safari
Storme

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

Tata Motors celebrated the rolling out of its 1500th GS800 Safari Storme 4x4 for the Indian Armed Forces today. Union Minister of State for Defence, Dr Subhash Bhamre, MoS, Defence, along with Vice-President [Defence & Government Business], Tata Motors, Vernon Noronha, flagged off the vehicle at its Pune facility, a press release informs.

It may be mentioned here, Tata Motors bagged the order to supply 3192 units of Safari Storme and has successfully delivered more than 1300 vehicles. This vehicle is designed to meet the requirements of the Indian Army. It has been customized to endure severely rugged operational conditions ranging from high-altitude drives, traversing snow-bound regions, crossing deserts to the marshy lands.

Being a fully loaded vehicle it is packed with special features such as ABS, recovery hooks, jer-ry can and fog lamps to suit army requirement during missions. As a low maintenance vehicle, it comes with bucket seats, mobile charging point, Air Conditioning [AC], heating, demisting and power windows. It can accommodate six crew members inside the cab in comfortably as it has ample space.

Awareness programme on child rights held in Lumsey

ARPAN PRADHAN
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

State Child Protection Society [SCPS] in collaboration with District Child Protection Unit [DCPU], Social Justice Empowerment & Welfare Department organised District level coordination meeting cum awareness programme on child rights and child protection issues for various stake holders of East district at the conference hall of the department in Lumsey today.

The coordination meeting was chaired by East district Zilla Adh-akshya, SS Bokhim, in the presence of District Collector, East, Kapil Meena, Mayor, Shakti Singh Chaudhary, Depu-



ty Mayor, Lashay Doma Bhutia, Special Secre-tary, SJE&WD, Dhan Jyoti Mukhia, and Chairper-

son, State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Dikila Bhutia. Programme Manager,

ICPS, Bandana Rai, high-lighted the importance of having an understanding about child rights and

child protection issues.

The DC East, in his address, urged everyone concerned to work in coordination as these issues require team work and active participation of all stakeholders.

He appreciated the works being carried out by SJE&WD and the various organizations work-ing in the field of child protection and child rights.

Speaking on the occa-sion, East district Zilla Adh-akshya, Mr Bokhim, said, "If the society is going in the wrong direction, it is not only the department or any organization to be blamed but every individual is equally responsible. Putting an end to all negative and bad influences may take a lot of time but if we work

together, the situation can be at least controlled."

Urging all to work to-wards the betterment of the society, Mr Bokhim asked for dissemination of information learnt through the meeting.

Special Secretary, SJE&WD, Ms Mukhia, while addressing the programme, said that this meeting was orga-nized to spread aware-ness on child rights and child protection issues while highlighting the works that the depart-ment has been initiating for the same.

District Child Protec-tion Officer, East, Deepak Kiran Rai, gave a Pow-erPoint presentation on ICPS and status of ICPS being implemented in

East district and present-ed various information and data related to ICPS.

Programme Officer, State Adoption Resource Agency, Peter Rai, briefed on the process and for-malities of adoption while Programme Officer, DCPU, Pema Wangmu Bhutia, made a presen-tation on Juvenile Justice Act and POCSO Act.

Likewise, Counsellor, DCPU [East], Laxana Sub-ed, highlighted methods of handling various types of cases related to Child in Need of Care and Protec-tion [CNPC] and Children in Conflict with Law [CCL].

During the course of the programme, a short documentary film pre-pared by the ICPU was also screened.

Modern School hosts sensitization on substance abuse



SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 27 AUG:

In a joint initiative un-dertaken by Sikkim against Addiction to-wards Healthy India [SAATHI] Club, Nation-al Service Scheme and Legal Literacy Club of Modern Senior Second-ary School, Gangtok, community sensitization programme on Drug Abuse, POCSO Act, Sik-kim Anti Drugs Act and Traffic Management was organised at Modern Se-nior Secondary School in Tathangchen today, a

press release informs.

Additional Director General of Police, Akshay Sachdeva, attended the event as chief guest along with Psychiatrist [STNM Hospital], Dr Bhibhusan Dahal, Panel Advocate, State Legal Services Au-thority, Gulshan Lama, and School Managing Committee chairperson, Sonam Dorjee Bhutia, as special guests.

The programme commenced with the welcome address deliv-ered by Graduate Teach-er [Arts], Yankila Lama, which was followed by

an address by Principal of Modern SSS, Mala Jig-dal Dorjee.

Addressing the gath-ering of students and teachers, Psychiatrist [STNM Hospital], Dr Dahal, gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation on adolescence and sub-stance abuse.

This was followed by an interaction session on SADA and other social is-sues conducted by ADGP, Mr Sachdeva. Thereafter, SLA Panel Advocate, Mr Lama, spoke elaborately on POCSO Act.

Workshop on Rashtriya Poshan Mahina held in Gyalshing

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ers and children. "Poshan Abhiyaan aims to reduce level of under-nutrition and oth-er health related prob-lems by ensuring con-vergence of various nu-trition related schemes. It also targets stunting, under-nutrition, anemia [among young children, women and adolescent girls] and low birth rate," said Mr Prabath.

State Nodal Officer, Poshan Abhiyaan, Ms Basnett, shared that Poshan Abhiyaan is being initiated in West Sikkim as the district is one of the aspirational districts

of the country affirmed by NITI Aayog.

"There are a num-ber of community-based events at the local level to create awareness and knowledge on malnutri-tion and also to redress the issue through effective initiatives," she added.

She expressed that malnutrition in chil-dren could be redressed if proper provisions of nutritional facilities are made available to the children. She stressed on the need of care to be given to women during pregnancy so that healthy offspring could be deliv-ered. She expressed that

regular health check up and healthy diet supple-ments to pregnant wom-en should be ensured through agencies under-taking Poshan Abhiyaan in West district.

Swasth Bharat Pre-rak [West Sikkim], Navya MS, informed that she has been tasked to moni-tor the Poshan Abhiyaan in West district and that she will be taking care of problems and hindrances that emerge during imple-mentation of the national nutrition programme.

She added that prop-er implementation of the programme depends on positive participation of

concerned agencies and people.

"Poshan Abhiyaan needs to evolve as a mass movement. From being a project of the govern-ment, it has to become a project of the people," she expressed.

The SDM, Gyalshing asserted that West dis-trict administration cen-tre will provide all help for implementation of Poshan Abhiyaan in the district to make it a suc-cessful campaign.

A pledge was also taken by the participants during the event to make West Sikkim free of mal-nutrition.

Opp ignorant over upliftment of women in State: SDF

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to work independently. She added that SDF government has also been working towards provid-ing help to women at the grassroot level thus en-couraging them to identify their skills and talents. The government has been provid-ing required training and support to make them financially empowered and independent, she said.

Responding to media queries, SDF spokesper-son, Bhim Dahal, stated that SDF will again form the government in Sik-kim for the sixth consec-utive time.

Lashing out at the opposition Sikkim Kran-tikari Morcha, Mr Dahal stated that since SKM had fought the 2014 elec-tion it has some old sup-porters and the party is taking the same support-ers to all its meetings in different parts of the State to fake a gathering and deceive people.

On the same, he said that SKM has not gained

any momentum after the release of its president, PS Tamang [Golay], from jail.

On SKM terming the day of Mr Tamang's re-lease as Jan Unmukti Di-was, Mr Dahal said, "How can it be a Jan Unmukti when the head himself has just been released from jail after complet-ing his imprisonment for conviction in a corrup-tion case."

Mr Dahal also ac-cused the SKM president of misleading drivers and other people in the trans-port sector in Sikkim with wrong information.

He also accused Ham-ro Sikkim Party of mis-leading government em-ployees on the issue of the 5th Pay Commission.

Meanwhile, he con-gratulated Shrinivas Pat-il for successfully com-pleting his tenure as the Governor of Sikkim on behalf of the SDF party and the people of Sikkim. He further expressed best wishes to him for future programmes and


for good health. He also extended best wishes to the new Governor Ganga Prasad.

The press conference was also addressed by SDF spokesperson, KT Gyaltsen, who spoke on the Land Rights Bill.

"Our leader has shown outright leader-ship and statesmanship by taking the right deci-sion for the protection of lands of Sherpa com-munity in Sikkim," he ex-pressed.

Mr Gyaltsen informed

that the Companies Act 1961 of Sikkim was never repealed but it was just amended by the previous government in year 1981. He stated that Denzong Sherpa Associ-ation has been trying to mislead people.



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PRESS RELEASE FOR GENERAL INFORMATION

It pursuance of Clause 14 under the "Guidelines for selection of books and receipt libraries in the State" of Chapter - V of the Information Manual of the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), Kolkata, the Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department, Government of Sikkim is hereby pleased to release Press Note for general information of the interested Book Publishers/Distributors/ Dealers to submit the sample copies of their recently published books (within last three years) to the Librarian, State Central Library, Manan Bhawan, 2nd Floor, Development Area, Gangtok for selection under the RRRLF scheme for the current financial year 2018-19 till 15th September, 2018 by 3.45p.m. For further details may contact the undersigned.

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State Central Library/ State Library Committee
Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department
Government of Sikkim
Gangtok.

R.O. No. 307/ipr/pub/classi./18-19
dt. 27.8.2018

Contact No. 9564478055 (M)
E-mail: scldgtk@yahoo.com



**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
TOURISM & CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT
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No. 423/DoT & CAV/. Dated: 25/08/2018

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders are invited from interested parties and local educated unemployed youth(s) for taking on lease "the following property/asset of Tourism & Civil Aviation Department". The details of the properties/ assets and additional information can be obtained from the Office of Joint Secretary (Assets), Paryatan Bhawan Tadong, East Sikkim during office hours.

Sl No.	Name of the Property	Rent per month	TDR (Security Deposit)	Cost of tender form
1.	Oasis Cafe' at Mining, East Sikkim	Rs.61,600/- pm	Rs.3,69,600/-	Rs.3,080/-

TIME SCHEDULE:

- Sale of Tender Form : 27.08.2018 to 04.09.2018 during office hours.
- Receipt of Tender form along with the relevant documents : 05.09.2018 till 1.00 pm
- Opening of Tender Documents in the Mini Conference Hall, 3rd Floor, T & CAV Department , Paryatan Bhawan, Tadong, East Sikkim. : 05.09.2018 at 2.00 pm.

The intending contractors/bidders may visit the website of Tourism & CAV Department www.sikkimtourism.gov.in for information and further details or contact office of the Joint Secretary (Assets) in Paryatan Bhawan, Tadong, East Sikkim.

Sd/-
R.O. No. 305/ipr/pub/classi./18-19
Dt. 25.8.2018

Joint Secretary,
Tourism & Civil Aviation Department

SummitTIMES

Let's Talk Gender Equality

Real women's empowerment still awaited in Sikkim

Social indicators across the board suggest that Sikkimese women enjoy a better status than women in most other parts of the country. But that should hardly be a comparison to gloat over. While the shame of female foeticide remains unheard of, and dowry related harassments have not reached worrisome levels, there still remain other issues which hamstring equality for women even in Sikkim. Given that Sikkim has had a largely peaceful and consistently stable past two decades, one would have expected it to have made stronger strides towards gender equality and empowerment. There will be those who will not agree, but let's face it, gender equality evades Sikkim. The State Government has initiated several policy decisions to bring women's issues to centre-stage and has even attempted some forward-thinking legislations within the space available to it, but the societal engagement required to see such plans through and institutionalise gender equality have unfortunately not come about yet.

Empowerments that governance can deliver on its own have made rapid strides in Sikkim. For instance, female literacy rate has nearly quadrupled in the past three decades from 22% in 1981 to 76% as of 2011, and now Sikkim is fully literate. This leap has been even more substantial in rural Sikkim where female literacy has gone up from 18% in 1981 to 73% in 2011! While literacy among women is still 11% below males (87%), the gender gap in this indicator has halved from the 22% recorded in 1981. What also bodes well for the future is that literacy levels are handsomely higher among women aged between 15 to 24 years, around 95% of whom are literate (as per State Govt records as of 2007-08). Impressively for Sikkim, the gender parity index in enrolment for higher education and professional courses on government nomination has been tilting in favour of women of late. As per data released by the Human Resource Development Department of the Government of Sikkim, 54% of the students nominated for higher studies by the State Government were women in 2005. In 2010, this share had slipped but was still higher than males at 52%.

What this improvement could help achieve for Sikkim is a stronger representation of women in the organised workforce. As things stand though, even though there is 30% job reservation for women in State Government employment, women represent only 21% of the total officers in the Groups A and B category. Even here, they are seen more in the traditionally established vocations for women in the State Agricultural Engineering Service, Health Services and Education. In recent years though, women have managed to outgrow the quota by occupying 34% of the posts in the State Civil Services. It helps their ambition to know that the first Sikkimese to clear the UPSC exams to become an IAS officer was a woman – Rinchen Ongmu, IAS batch of 1979, who retired some years ago as the Chief Secretary to the Government of Sikkim and has since been appointed the Chief Administrator of the State. And yes, she was the first lady to become CS in Sikkim, and thus far, also the only one.

This is not a condescending paean to woman power in Sikkim, but an effort to highlight that the fact that they are reaching higher despite a societal indifference to their rights. They manage all this despite a legacy of rules, old laws and practices which are regressively sexist. The linking of a woman's status and identity as a Sikkimese to her father and husband, and refusing her the right to pass on her independent identity to her children is unfair and discriminatory. Similarly, women in Sikkim are particularly discriminated against in that they do not enjoy any legal rights to family property, neither of their parents' nor of their husband's. They can acquire a share of family property only by way of a gift or through a will, but cannot otherwise make any claims to it as a matter of right under law. Yes, a small step towards ensuring some measure of equal property rights at least for unmarried daughters and surviving wives was attempted by the State Government in the year 2008 with the introduction of the Sikkim Succession Bill. Someone should ask what's happening with that and also read up on how offensive the Married Women's Property Regulation of 1962 is.

No one expects the past to be anything but regressive, but to perpetuate the same attitudes without concerted efforts to amend things, despite a governmental hint at more forward-thinking changes, is disheartening. These issues are still to receive any traction in the public domain. Perhaps the young will ask for better.

DEBBIE PUSHOR
theconversation.com

Repeated efforts to improve public school education — curricular enhancements, increased accountability, intensified literacy and numeracy initiatives — are failing to improve student achievement.

In the province of Saskatchewan, student achievement results have flatlined and only 43.2 per cent of Indigenous students are graduating on time.

Saskatchewan's results are not atypical. In her analysis of Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, Man-Wai Chu, assistant professor of education at the University of Calgary, said Canadian students have shown no improvement in science, mathematics or reading over the past decade.

So what can we do differently? We can engage parents — in ways that enable students to do better, like school more and stay in school longer.

Five decades of research evidence attest to the benefit of parent engagement. The educational and moral imperative is clear: to shift the existing student achievement trajectory, educators must intentionally and systematically use parents' untapped knowledge to enhance student learning.

As educator and family-engagement expert, Dr. Steven Constantino said in his book *Engage every Family*, "If we as educators could successfully teach all children by ourselves, then it seems to me we would have already done so."

WALKING ALONGSIDE CHILDREN

During more than 20 years of research into parent engagement, I have come to understand it as a philosophy and a pedagogy of "walking alongside."

This is both a belief system about parents and their meaningful and authentic voice in their children's schooling and education and a way of enacting those beliefs in practice.

When parents are seen to be holders of knowledge, as capable and as possessing gifts and strengths, then this can be leveraged alongside teacher knowledge to enrich programming.

Engaging parents entails assuming a new worldview in schools — in which parents are seen to be central to the work of the school, not separate or apart from it.

ELEMENTARY MATH BINS

A former graduate student of mine, Kirsten Kobylak, is now a Grade 1 teacher at Willowgrove School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. As part of my research on the impact of graduate teacher education, she shared with me how she wanted to engage parents

in their math theme, "Math is Everywhere."

In an email home to parents, she explained how important language and culture are to children's learning. She posed the question, "Where does math live in your culture?" and asked parents to share such things as game ideas, artifacts with patterns, number lines in different languages and more.

As items came in, the children created math bins — patterning, fact families, number lines, problem-solving.

Parents came in and taught games and shared materials, comparing versions of items from one country to another, simultaneously sharing culture, language, history and family stories.

Through this parent engagement, children learned and strengthened math skills such as skip

tact with every parent every day. Parents were able to engage in meaningful conversations with their children about curricular concepts in the normal course of their day — and to add their voice and knowledge to their son or daughter's teaching and learning.

Parents were always invited to respond to Jesse's email as well, sharing with him their conversations with their child and thus bringing home learning back into the classroom. Parents asked questions and offered to participate in the unfolding curriculum in other ways (sharing knowledge, stories, artifacts or suggesting potential resources and experiences).

What we see in these examples is that parent engagement can happen on the school landscape or off of it, and with all ages of students.

Critical to parent engagement is that it draws on parent knowledge, is connected to teaching and learning, honours a parent's hopes and dreams for their child, enables a parent to remain in the role of parent, is authentic and meaningful, promotes shared decision-making, is strength-based and ensures everyone benefits from the engagement — children, parents, and teacher.

The possibilities of parent engagement in education are endless when these critical attributes are embraced by teachers and lived out in ways that are contextual and culturally responsive — honouring students, parents, families and communities.

A GENTLE REVOLUTION

To shift from the current worldview in education, one which reflects schools as a domain exclusive to educators and students, to a new worldview where schools are using parent knowledge in teaching and learning will take a gentle revolution.

Notice the word "love" embedded in revolution? By working together, with mutual respect, care and concern for one another, educators at all levels of the system and parents can work together — to revolutionize schooling.

We need to establish "parent engagement offices" in ministries of education, develop core teacher education courses on parent engagement, require parent engagement coursework for teacher certification, establish school district positions for parent engagement consultants, structure parent universities and establish parent mentor programs.

The results of such a gentle revolution — creating an integral place and voice for parents in their children's teaching and learning — will positively impact the trajectory of student achievement and other educational outcomes.

[the writer is Professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies, University of Saskatchewan]



counting, memory, estimation, addition, greater than, less than.

They also deepened their relationships with one another, their knowledge of diversity and sense of social cohesion.

'WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE'

Jesse Reis, another former graduate student, is now a high school teacher in Warman, Sask. He shared with me the example of a daily email he sent to the parents of students in each of his classes.

In the email he included a concept the students and he had discussed that day, something interesting that arose, and something parents could chat with their son or daughter about that evening at home.

For example, in one email, Jesse shared with parents of students in his Social Studies class a statement they had explored that day: "We are all Treaty people." He noted that while some students saw themselves as "Treaty people," others did not. He invited parents to discuss with their teen what stance they took and why.

The daily email took Jesse less than five minutes to send per class, but gave him potential con-

Jury finds Monsanto liable in the first Roundup cancer trial – here's what could happen next

RICHARD G. "BUGS" STEVENS
theconversation.com

In the first of many pending lawsuits to go to trial, a jury in San Francisco concluded on Aug. 10 that the plaintiff had developed cancer from exposure to Roundup, Monsanto's widely used herbicide, and ordered the company to pay US\$289 million in damages.

The plaintiff, Dewayne Johnson, had used Roundup in his job as groundskeeper in a California school district. He later developed non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The jury awarded Johnson \$39 million in compensatory damages to cover pain, suffering and medical bills due to negligence by Monsanto, plus an additional \$250 million in punitive damages.

This means the jury wanted to punish Monsanto because members believed the company deliberately withheld from the public scientific knowledge that glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup, was a cancer danger. The size of the damages awarded indicates that the jury was not persuaded by Monsanto's expert witnesses.

Product liability lawsuits are an important part of American culture. There are many examples of companies knowingly adding toxic agents to their products. So there must be a process for aggrieved individuals who have been harmed to hold these companies accountable.

On the other hand, a lawsuit can be brought against any company for any reason, and some may be frivolous. It is

an unfortunate comment on our health care system that so many people are uninsured, and if struck by a dreaded disease, must seek money to deal with it somehow from somewhere.

In many instances it is simply unknown whether a product and its contents are a danger. This verdict is just the first in what could be a long legal battle over Roundup, and proving causality in such cases is not easy. But here are some observations from my own experience trying to help figure out why people get cancer.

HOW CREDIBLE IS THE SCIENTIFIC CASE AGAINST ROUNDUP?

Much of the plaintiff's case was based on a widely criticized 2015 statement by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, part of the World Health Organization, that glyphosate was a "probable human carcinogen" (Group 2A on its scale). A classification of "human carcinogen" (Group 1) means that a panel of scientists convened by the IARC believes the agent is a cancer hazard to humans, like smoking and ionizing radiation. The 2A classification is not as strong. It means that there is credible evidence, but it does not reach the standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt."

The IARC's process for determining carcinogenicity has come under heavy criticism before. In particular, in the early 2000s some observers worried that industry was actually influencing the agency to downgrade its classification of chemical agents. In the Roundup cases, the accusation against the IARC cuts the other way. According

to some accounts, it was biased against industry and sought a harsh classification for glyphosate.

The IARC has provided a detailed defense of its process in the glyphosate evaluation. It has also published a monograph on glyphosate with all the gory details of the science behind its evaluation.

I served on a monograph working group in 2007 for an IARC assessment of whether shift work was a potential cancer hazard. I have also participated in three other meetings sponsored by IARC over the years, so I have seen the agency's process up close. In my view, IARC personnel go to great lengths to ensure objectivity and scientific rigor.

This does not mean that their classifications are the last word. In fact, the agency has often changed its classification of an agent based on new evidence after initial evaluation. Sometimes it has become more certain that the agent poses a hazard, but in other cases it has downgraded the hazard.

WHAT PATH FOR GLYPHOSATE?

Glyphosate and Monsanto could follow the path of the Johns-Manville company, which started manufacturing asbestos products in the 1880s. After many epidemiological studies showed that exposure to asbestos caused very high rates of lung cancer — primarily pleural mesothelioma — and much litigation, the company went bankrupt in 1982. Its assets were reorganized to form the Manville Trust, which allocates monetary damages to people harmed by asbestos.

Some products still contain small

quantities of asbestos today, including motor vehicle parts and fireproof clothing. The Environmental Protection Agency tried to ban it in 1989, but was overturned by a federal court. Nonetheless, because asbestos is so clearly linked to cancer, most companies avoid it now for fear of liability.

Alternatively, glyphosate may follow the route of saccharin, an artificial sweetener discovered in the late 1870s. In 1970 scientists reported that saccharin caused bladder cancer in rats, which led the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to propose a ban on this extremely popular product in 1977.

However, after much more research — including toxicology in rats and epidemiologic studies in people — the IARC downgraded saccharin from a classification of "2B: possible human carcinogen" to "3: not classifiable," and the U.S. National Toxicology Program removed saccharin from a 2016 report on carcinogens. As it turned out, the mechanism for causing bladder cancer in rats did not apply to people, and epidemiological studies showed no association.

Monsanto will undoubtedly appeal this initial decision, and it could be years before the issue is settled once and for all. But with this verdict, the onus is now on Monsanto to provide compelling evidence that Roundup is safe in other trials that soon will follow.

[the writer is Professor, School of Medicine, University of Connecticut]

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

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news@summittimes.com

Burglary at election office in Mizoram

AIZAWL, AUG 27 (PTI): The voter enlistment forms duly filled in by the displaced Bru people in the relief camps of the neighbouring Tripura have gone missing following a burglary at the election office of Mizoram's Mamit district, a top police officer said here today.

The burglary comes at a time when the final phase of repatriation of

Bru families from Tripura to Mizoram is under progress.

The district administration in Mamit has filed an FIR in the matter and an investigation is being carried out to solve the case, Superintendent of Police H L Thangzuala said.

"In an FIR filed on August 24, the administration said that the election office of Mamit was bur-

gled the night before and crucial documents have gone missing," he said.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted, with Sub-Divisional Police Officer as the chief, to probe into the complaint, the SP said, adding that no arrest has been made in the case so far.

Thousands of Bru refugees from Mizoram fled to Tripura after eth-

nic clashes of 1997. The clashes broke out after a forest official was killed by Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) militants.

Over 32,000 Bru people have been living in six temporary camps in North Tripura district since then.

The Centre, in association with the governments of Mizoram and Tripura, had been repa-

triating the displaced Brus in phases.

Mizoram, the last remaining Congress bastion in the northeast, is due for polls this December.

The election officials from the state had recently visited the refugee camps in Tripura for updating the voters' list amid protests by civil societies in the state, who insisted that the revision

process be carried out after the repatriation process.

The officials, who returned from Tripura on August 19, had been working to ascertain the genuineness of the claims made in the enlistment forms, a source in the district administration said, adding that the process to update the electoral roll now hangs in balance.

Ruling MDA partners NPP and UDP win Meghalaya bypoll

SHILLONG, AUG 27 (PTI): The BJP-backed Meghalaya Democratic Alliance today consolidated its position in the 60-member Assembly with alliance partners National Peoples Party and United Democratic Party candidates winning both bypolls in the state.

With this victory, the MDA has increased its tally from 37 to 39 seats in the House of 60.

Chief Minister and National Peoples Party president Conrad K Sangma won the South Tura by-election by a margin of 8,421 votes while Pius Marwein of the UDP won the Ranikor seat by over 3,000 votes, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) F R Kharkongor said.

Now both the NPP and the Congress have a tally of 20 seats each in the assembly. The United Democratic Party has increased its tally to 8.

Conrad Sangma told PTI over phone from Tura in Western Meghalaya, "Results are in line with what we expected. I am thankful to the voters of South Tura who reposed their faith in my leadership.

"Winning this election is an indication that people have faith in this government. We will do our best to ensure that we take the state forward."

He called upon the Opposition Congress to work together and play the role they were given by the people.

The chief minister secured 13,656 votes in South Tura constituency while his closest rival Charlotte W Momin of Congress got 5,235 votes.

In Ranikor constituency, Pius Marwein of the UDP defeated Martin M Danggo, a candidate of alliance partner NPP by 2,896 votes. Marwein polled 13,183 votes while Danggo received 10,287 votes.

PDF chairman PN Syiem secured 1,978 votes and Congress candidate Jackiush Sangma polled 938 votes in Ranikor.

The by-elections to the two seats were necessitated following the resignation of former five-time Ranikor MLA Martin M Danggo, who joined the NPP from Congress and former MLA of South Tura, Agatha K Sangma.

In the Assembly, the BJP and the NCP having 2 and 1 seats respectively is backing the MDA government led by the NPP which has 20 seats. It is also supported by regional parties - the United Democratic Party having 8 seat followed by the Peoples Democratic Front -4, the Hill State Peoples Democratic Party -2 and 2 Independents.

IMPHAL, AUG 27 (PTI): Manipur government has decided to prepare a ranking of all the banks operating in the state on the basis of the services provided by them to the people, according to Chief Minister N Biren Singh.

"A circular would be issued to ask the banks to submit the details of

the services provided by them to the public soon," Singh said.

The amount of money to be deposited from the state's exchequer to these banks would be decided on the basis of ranking, he said while attending a function of the Manipur State Co-operative Bank Ltd (MSCB)

yesterday evening.

The chief minister said the state government has initiated a number of steps to encourage entrepreneurship and self employment.

Manipur Social Nemcha Kipgen said the government has decided to launch six integrated co-operative development

projects in six districts of the state.

The integrated co-operative development projects will focus on development of primary agricultural credit societies as multi-purpose self-reliant entities, allied sector cooperatives and viable functional linkages among cooperatives, the

minister said.

The projects are likely to benefit 2700 societies promoting economic activities in the field of agriculture, agro-based industries, cottage and household industries and agro-allied sector like fishery, dairy, handloom, horticulture and rural industries, Nemcha added.

Manipur govt to prepare ranking of all banks in state: CM

4 Bru refugee families return to Mizoram from Tripura

AIZAWL, AUG 27 (PTI): Altogether four Bru refugee families have returned from the relief camps in Tripura after the final repatriation process started on Saturday, a senior state home department official here said.

A total of 32,876 Brus belonging to 5,407 families living in six relief camps in North Tripura district were identified by Mizoram government during November 2016 as bona fide residents of the state and could be repatriated.

The official said two Bru families, to be resettled at Rasdali and Meidum villages in Mizoram-Assam border district of Kolasib, returned today, the second day of the repatriation.

Yesterday being Sunday, it was not an official day for repatriation but one family returned. Another family had come back to Mizoram on Friday, a day before the repatriation commenced, he said.

The official said the state government would continue to undertake the repatriation process scheduled to be conducted from August 25 till September 25 in accordance with the road map for repatriation prepared by the state government and approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

During an exercise to identify who wanted to return to Mizoram recently, 2,753 people belonging to 423 families, majority of them from

Kasakau relief camp, expressed willingness to be repatriated.

However, even these who expressed willingness to return to Mizoram earlier were most likely to stay back, Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) president A Sawibunga told PTI from Naisingpara relief camp.

The MBDPF had signed an agreement with the Centre and governments of Mizoram and Tripura on July 3 in New Delhi for repatriation of the Bru displaced people. The repatriation process is scheduled to be completed before September 25.

The agreement stipulated that Rs 4 lakh for each repatriated Bru

family would be deposited in the bank account of the head of the family which would mature after three years and payment of Rs 1.5 lakh as housing assistance.

Each repatriated Bru family would also be given Rs 5,000 through Direct Benefit Transfer every month and free ration for two years.

A section of the refugees, however, were not happy with the package and demand more.

The Brus are in Tripura since late 1997 in the wake of a communal tension triggered by the

murder of a forest guard inside the Dampa Tiger Reserve on October 21, 1997 by Bru National Liberation Front militants.

The first attempt to repatriate them in 2009 failed and triggered another wave of exodus after the killing of a youth three days before the commencement of the repatriation process.

Though some Bru families had returned to Mizoram during a number of repatriation processes and on their own, many of them refused to leave Tripura.

Nearly 50 per cent of all adults in Assam use tobacco: Survey

GUWAHATI, AUG 27 (PTI): Nearly 50 per cent of all adults in Assam are tobacco users, according to a survey.

Around 48.2 per cent of all adults in Assam, of whom 62.9 per cent are men and 32.9 per cent women, either consume smoke tobacco or use smokeless tobacco, the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2 (GATS2) said.

The survey found that 13.3 per cent of all adults in Assam currently smoke tobacco and 41.7 per cent of the adults use smokeless tobacco.

Noting that 'khaini' (chewing tobacco with lime) and betel quid with tobacco are the most commonly used tobacco products, it said 23.1 per cent of the adults use khaini and 19.0 per cent use betel quid with tobacco.

10 to 48.2 per cent now.

The prevalence of smokeless tobacco use has increased significantly by 9 percentage points, secretary of the CLPF Ajay Hazarika said.

The ascent in tobacco consumption in Assam is an indicator that government needs to strengthen tobacco control efforts and people need more awareness on the health and financial burden that tobacco use brings with it, Hazarika said.

"The rise in number of tobacco users especially smokeless is a cause of worry because it is easily accessible to children and youth. We are working in the state through our programmes to protect the public, especially youth and children from exposure to tobacco use," said Ashim Sanyal, Chief Operating Officer of Consumer VOICE, a NGO.

According to the GATS2 survey, tobacco use is the leading single preventable cause of deaths worldwide. Each year an estimated seven million deaths are attributed to the use of tobacco.

It said India is the third largest tobacco producing nation and second largest consumer of tobacco world-wide.

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'Crying, stressed' pilot caused deadly Nepal plane crash: probe

KATHMANDU/DHAKA, AUG 27 (PTI): The pilot of the US-Bangla plane that crashed in Nepal in March had cried and suffered an emotional breakdown during the flight, killing 51 people, according to a report by Nepal's investigators.

The Dhaka to Kathmandu US-Bangla Airlines flight, with 67 passengers and four crew members on board, caught fire after it careened off the runway and ploughed into a football ground near the Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport on March 12.

Captain Abid Sultan was going through tremendous personal mental stress and anxiety, and a series of erroneous decisions on his part led to the crash of the flight, according to the details of the official investigation led by the Nepal government, the Kathmandu Post reported.

Throughout the flight, Sultan was engaged in erratic behaviour that marked a departure from his usual character-signs that should have immediately raised red flags, Nepali investigators concluded in the report.

Investigators say Sultan had been smoking cig-

arettes frequently during the hour-long flight from Dhaka to Kathmandu.

"When we analysed the conversation on the Cockpit Voice Recorder, it was clear to us that the captain was harbouring severe mental stress. He also seemed to be fatigued and tired due to lack of sleep," investigators wrote in the report.

"He was crying on several occasions," the report added.

The report also shows that Sultan made multiple abusive statements toward a female colleague (another co-pilot in the company) who had questioned his reputation as an instructor, and their relationship was a major topic of discussion throughout the flight, it said.

The voice recorder has captured nearly an hour-long conversation between the captain and his co-pilot in the cockpit, further demonstrating Sultan's tensed mood throughout the flight and a complete lack of situational awareness.

"I don't f---ing care about safe flight, you f--- your duty," Sultan said at one point inside the cockpit, according to the report. It was not clear

whom the pilot was directing the statement at, as the co-pilot was the only crew member present inside the cockpit during the flight.

Nepal's only international airport lies in a narrow bowl-shaped valley with the Himalayas to the north, making it a challenging place to land.

As the flight UBG 211, a Bombardier Dash 8 Q400, approached the runway it made a last-minute change of direction, failed to sufficiently reduce its speed and did not carry out the necessary landing checks, investigators said.

Nepal has witnessed a number of accidents involving aircraft in recent years.

The accident was the deadliest since September 1992 when all 167 people aboard a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) plane were killed when it crashed near the Kathmandu airport.

In February, 2016, Tara Air's Twin Otter 400 crashed in Rupse of Myagdi, killing 23 people.

Nepal Airline's DHC-6 Twin Otter 300 (9N-ABB) crashed near Sandhikharka of Arghakhanchi, killing 18 people in February, 2014.



Sindhu to fight for gold, Saina fetches bronze in Asiads

AMANPREET SINGH
JAKARTA, AUG 27 (PTI): Olympic silver medallist PV Sindhu remained in the hunt for a historic Asian Games gold medal after a tense win but Saina Nehwal settled for a bronze following her 10th straight defeat against world number one Tai Tzu Ying, here today.

World number three Sindhu beat Akane Yamaguchi 21-17 15-21 21-10 for her second win over the Japanese at the Asian Games, having beaten her in the team championship as well.

The energy-sapping 65-minute match featured a 50-shot rally in the decider, which Sindhu won.

World number 10 and Olympic medallist Saina played with good intensity but lost 17-21 14-21 to a superior Tzu Ying, who stood out with her court coverage and retrieving in the 32-minute contest.

Coming into this match, Saina had lost last nine matches against Tzu Ying, including three in the 2018 season.



Sindhu will now fight it out with Tzu Ying to win India's first ever individual gold in badminton.

The Indian will have to punch above her weight as she has not managed to beat the Chinese Taipei shuttler in the last contests.

Syed Modi's bronze in men's singles at the 1982 Games in New Delhi was the only individual medal for India at the Asian Games.

Sindhu was sluggish at the start, making unforced errors but recovered quickly to be in control.



Yamaguchi played an attacking game but the tall Sindhu had strokes to counter her rival.

Sindhu dominated the rallies and created an 11-8 lead at first break. The Indian remained solid at the net, using a variety of stroke to force the Japanese world number 2 to make errors.

A long rally ensued at 20-17 but Yamaguchi sent a smash wide to put the Indian ahead.

In the second game too Sindhu remained the dominant player but unforced errors crept in



and she lost the lead.

Yamaguchi pulled off a stunning point, leading at 14-12 after forcing an error from Sindhu, who kept retrieving the shuttler, using one smash after another.

Sindhu struggled to contain errors from there and lost the game by hitting a forehand wide.

The Indian reeled off four points in a row to shoot to 7-3 in the deciding game, before taking the break with a 11-7 lead. She also won a sensational 50-shot rally to pull away 16-8.

With such a big lead

at hand, Sindhu finished the match in her favour with a superb smash.

Both Saina and Tzu Ying attacked each other's backhand but it was the Chinese Taipei player who scored more points. She raced to a 4-1 lead in the opening game.

Saina changed her strategy a bit by hitting more deep returns and then looked for drop shots. It worked for her and soon it was 8-8.

Tzu Ying though kept spraying smashes on Saina's backhand and took the first break with

a narrow 11-10 lead.

The Chinese Taipei shuttler took four straight points to zoom to a 15-10 cushion, leaving Saina to play the catch up game.

Tactically sound and supremely fit Tzu Ying retrieved almost everything thrown at her.

At 19-16, Tzu Ying hit another smash on Saina's backhand to grab her first game point and converted it when the Indian sailed over the baseline.

In the second game also, Saina was again playing the catch up game. Tzu Ying never looked like losing control though Saina tried hard to breach her rival's defense.

Saina led for the first time in the match when Tzu Ying left a shuttle and it fell in at 12-12. A net chord also helped Saina take a point but Tzu Ying reclaimed lead on an unforced error from Saina.

Tzu Ying cruised to win from there with Saina sending a backhand wide.

Vikas through to quarters in Asian Games



JAKARTA, AUG 27 (PTI): Chasing a third successive Asian Games medal, Indian boxer Vikas Krishan (75kg) made a strong start, out-punching Pakistan's Tanveer Ahmed in his pre-quarterfinal bout here today.

Vikas, who won a gold in 2010 and a bronze in 2014, prevailed 5-0 after a dominating performance in which his right hooks stood out.

The Indian's powerful punches were mostly met with feeble counters by the Pakistani, who received one standing eight count during the bout and was left quite shaken

at the end of it.

The Commonwealth Games gold-medallist Indian also sustained a cut above his left eye during the bout ut did not seem too affected.

He will be up against China's Tuoheta Erbieke Tanglatihan in the quarterfinals on Wednesday. Tanglatihan defeated Turkmenistan's Nursahet Pazzyyev in his last-16 stage bout.

If Vikas goes on to win a medal at the Games, he would become the first Indian boxer with a hat-trick of podium finishes at the mega-event.

India can seek extradition of Choksi without Red Corner Notice: CBI

NEW DELHI, AUG 27 (PTI): India can seek extradition of fugitive billionaire Mehul Choksi without an Interpol Red Corner Notice as it is not a mandatory requirement for the process, the CBI has told the Ministry of External Affairs.

In a communication to the ministry earlier this month, the agency said the purpose of a Red Corner Notice (RCN) is to locate an absconding accused which has already been achieved in Choksi's case after confirmation from Antigua that he is their citizen, officials said.

They also said that having an RCN is of little value now as Antigua has granted him citizenship and Choksi is now an Antiguan passport holder.

The agency has communicated to the ministry that it has already written to its counterpart agency in Antigua for the provisional arrest of Choksi, who is the alleged mastermind of the over 2 billion USD bank fraud in the Punjab National Bank.

"The contention of Antiguan authorities that the only way the movement of Choksi could be restricted is through issue a Red Corner Notice is not legally sound as primary objective of locating the subject has already been addressed," the letter said.

The subsequent steps for a provisional arrest and an extradition will have to be taken by Antigua for which an RCN is not a "prerequisite", the officials said. Choksi has appealed to the Interpol to not issue an RCN against him as the charges are politically motivated, they said.

He also said the conditions of jails in India are not good and staying there would violate his human rights, the officials said.

Choksi, the uncle of his alleged partner in crime Nirav Modi, also said the charges against him have been hyped by the media and he might not get a fair trial in India as courts may be influenced by news reports, they said.

Neeraj wins first javelin throw gold in Asian Games



JAKARTA, AUG 27 (PTI): Neeraj Chopra today became the first Indian javelin thrower to win an Asian Games gold medal as he shattered his own national record by clearing a distance of 88.06m here today.

Chopra's gold is India's only second medal in javelin throw in Asian Games history after Gurtej Singh won a bronze in 1982 in New Delhi.

The 20-year-old's wining threw came in his third attempt. He began with 83.46m and fouled the second attempt.

Liu Qizhen of China was a distance second with a best throw of 82.22m while Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem won the bronze with a 80.75 effort.

The Commonwealth Games and reigning Asian champion completely dominated the

competition as he bettered his own national record of 87.43 which he had come up with in Doha during the first leg of the Diamond League series in May. None of the competitors in the field had a 85-plus throw this

season.

Chopra's biggest rival was expected to be Chao Tsun Cheng, who last year recorded a throw of 91.36m but the Chinese Taipei thrower could manage a best of 79.81 to finish fifth.

Chopra, the world junior record holder of 86.48, has been in tremendous form this season as has consistently crossed the 85m mark.

He won the Federation Cup in March with 85.94m, clinched a gold

in the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games with a throw of 86.47m, before the 87.43 effort in Doha. Before coming here, he had 85.17 and 85.69 in France and Finland during his preparations for the Asian Games.

You need to have complete game to beat Tzu-Ying: Saina



JAKARTA, AUG 27 (PTI): Saina Nehwal says Tai Tzu-Ying's repertoire of shots and the ability to not restrict her game to a set pattern makes the World No. 1 from Chinese Taipei a very difficult player to beat at the moment.

The Indian ace settled for a bronze medal at the Asian Games after losing 17-21 14-21 to Tai Tzu-Ying. This was the Indian ace's 10th straight defeat to the Taipei shuttler.

"I need to be quicker and have smooth movements, lot more shots as well, to finish the rallies. Somewhere she will catch you. Every rally is a different rally with her. Most players have set pattern but she has got a variety of shots," Saina said.

"I definitely (need) the hand speed, bit more movement and not give her the chance to play her

shots. There's a special quality. She is someone who is not easy to read. Not all the coaches can read her. As a player I have tried to read but she always comes up with a new shot."

Summing up the match, Saina said, "She has a complete game where you don't know where to play her and where to get the points, I was really confused there.

"I played well, she played ever better. She tries to be very quick in

the last few points, she is someone who has got very smooth movement with quick shots and she tries to execute them in the last points, so you have to be alert there. I tried to do but she has all kind of shots, even if you put her in difficult position, she comes out of it."

Now that Saina has played numerous matches against Tai Tzu-Ying's, what's the way to that elusive win against her?

"You have to have that

game to beat her, to properly plan. World Championship and the Games were quite close, so we did not have enough time to prepare but I tried. It's not like that you cant beat her. It's not impossible. You have to have a complete game because she has those deceptive shots to come out of difficult situations."

Asked why Tzu Yin is such a dominant player, the Commonwealth Games gold medallist

said, "Her net is quite strong, she has variety of shots from the net, so you have the chance to play at the back and open up the court, that's why I thought at the start I could play deep back initially.

"She definitely she cracks, but you need to stick on with her till the end." Saina said she is pleased to have won her maiden Asian Games medal in her third attempt.

"I had two chances (2010, 2014) and both quarters (lost), this time being unseeded I could have faced anyone but the draw was favourable. I am happy I could get a medal. But the point is to fight with each and every player, it's not about medal but to win it.

"This tournament is as good as Olympics, just that we do not have Carolina here.

Dharun misses late father, dedicates Asiad silver to stoic mother



BHARAT SHARMA
JAKARTA, AUG 27 (PTI): India's Dharun Ayyasamy hopes that his Asian Games silver medal in 400m hurdles will be enough to get him a job so that he can support his stoic mother, who raised him single-handedly after the death of his father.

"My father passed away when I was eight years old. My mother has made a lot of sacrifices for me. I owe her this. She is still earning just Rs 14,000 per month as a teacher," said the 21-year-old from Tirupur in Tamil Nadu.

He now wants to support his mother and is hoping to get a job after his best ever performance. Dharun produced his personal best timing of 48.96 after he pushed pace in the last 100 metres to clinch a silver.

The soft-spoken athlete gave an insight to his state of mind during the race. "I just wanted to run my race. I did not give importance to others. My pace in the first half was not very different to the pace in second half. Really

happy to better my national record," said Dharun, who had clocked a then Personal Best of 49.45 in the Federation Cup in March earlier this year.

He trained for six months before the Asian Games in Poland and Czech Republic.

"That helped a lot," said Dharun, who is a second year college student.

The seasoned Sudha Singh, who won a silver in the women's 3000m steeplechase, was relieved to win a medal after the disappointment in Incheon four year ago.

"I gave my personal best time in Incheon but that was not good enough for a medal. So it did not mean much," said the 32-year-old from Amethi.

She had won a gold at the 2010 edition in Guangzhou.

She has been around for a while but will take a call on her future after the 2020 Olympics.

"Lots of new girls are coming up in steeplechase, which is heartening to see. It was not the case earlier. Hope this silver inspires more youngsters," she added.

Videogamer shoots 2 dead, kills self at tournament

MIAMI, AUG 27 (AFP): Two people were killed and 11 others wounded when a video game tournament competitor went on a shooting rampage before turning the gun on himself in the northern Florida city of Jacksonville, local police said.

Sheriff Mike Williams named the suspect of the shooting at a Madden 19 American football eSports tournament on Sunday as 24-year-old David Katz from Baltimore, Maryland.

“There were three deceased individuals at the scene, one of those being the suspect, who took his own life,” Williams told reporters.

He said local fire and rescue transported nine victims -- seven of whom had gunshot wounds -- to local hospitals, while another two people who were shot took their own transportation to hospital.

Williams said Katz was a competitor in the eSports tournament and used “at least one handgun” to carry out the shooting.

Madden is a hugely popular multi-player video game based on the National Football League, which in a statement said it was “shocked and deeply saddened by the horrific tragedy.”

The tournament at The Landing entertainment and shopping complex -- a regional qualifier for finals in Las Vegas with a USD 25,000 prize -- took place at the GLHF Game Bar.

Sheriff Williams said the shooting occurred inside the Chicago Pizza restaurant in the complex around 1:30 pm (1730 GMT).

Earlier on Twitter, the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office had urged people hiding in locked areas of The Landing to stay in place and call 911 to make their location known.

In disturbing footage apparently captured as part of a livestream on video gaming website Twitch, several gunshots could be heard in the background, before the stream disconnected.

Twitch removed the video, but it remained available on social media. Police said they were in possession of footage capturing the incident.

“This is a horrible situation, and our deepest sympathies go out to all involved,” Madden’s creator, EA Sports, said in a statement.

Complexity Gaming, one of the gaming teams, said its player Drini Gjoka was grazed on the hand.

“We’re obviously shocked and saddened by this afternoon’s events. Our player, Drini, was hit in the thumb but is going to be fine. He managed to escape and run down the street to a nearby gym,” director Jason Lake told AFP.

UN team: Myanmar military chiefs should face “genocide” case

GENEVA, AUG 27 (AP): Investigators working for the UN’s top human rights body said today that top Myanmar military leaders should be prosecuted for genocide against Rohingya Muslims.

The call, accompanying a first report by the investigators, amounts to some of the strongest language yet from UN officials who have denounced alleged human rights violations in Myanmar since a bloody crackdown began last August.

The three-member “fact-finding mission” working under a mandate from the UN-backed Human Rights Council meticulously assembled hundreds of accounts by expatriate Rohingya, satellite

footage and other information to assemble the report.

The UN-backed Human Rights Council created the mission six months before a rebel attack on security posts set off the crackdown that drove hundreds of thousands of Rohingya fleeing to neighbouring Bangladesh.

Through hundreds of interviews with expatriate Rohingya and use of satellite footage, the team compiled accounts of crimes including gang rape, the torching of hundreds of villages, enslavement, and killings of children some before their eyes of their own parents.

The team was not granted access to Myanmar and has decried a lack of cooperation or even response from the government, which received an early copy of the report.

The team cited a “conservative” estimate that some 10,000 people were killed in the violence, but outside investigators have had no access to the affected regions making a precise accounting elusive, if not impossible.

Above all, the investigators said the situation in Myanmar should be referred to the International Criminal Court, and if not, to a special tribunal. Last week, Myanmar’s government rejected any cooperation with the ICC, to which it is not a party. China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council with veto power over whether the issue will be brought before the ICC, has been reticent about condemning Myanmar’s government during the crisis.

UN officials and human rights watchers have for months pointed to evidence of genocide in Myanmar, and the United States late last year said that “ethnic cleansing” was occurring in Myanmar. But few experts have studied the issue as in-depth and in such an official way as the fact-finding team, with a mandate from a body that has Myanmar’s approval: The country is among the 47 members of the Human Rights Council.

The United Nations does not apply the word “genocide” lightly. The fact-finding team’s assessment suggests the crimes against the Rohingya could meet the strict legal definition which was last met over crimes in Bosnia and Rwanda nearly a quarter-century ago.

Human rights watchers say determining “genocidal intent” is perhaps the most difficult criteria to meet: In essence, it’s the task of assessing the mindsets of perpetrators to determine if ethnicity, race, religion or another attribute had motivated them.

“The crimes in Rakhine state, and the manner in which they were perpetrated, are similar in nature, gravity and scope to those that have allowed genocidal intent to be established in other contexts,” the report said, alluding to a region of Myanmar that is home for many Rohingya.

Adding into their assessment: The extreme brutality of the crimes; “hate rhetoric” and specific speech by perpetrators and military commanders; policies of exclusion against Rohingya people; an “oppressive context”; and the “level of organization indicating a plan for destruction.”

The investigators cited six Myanmar military leaders by name as “priority subjects” for possible prosecution, led by

the commander-in-chief, Min Aung Hlaing. A longer list of names is to be kept in the office of the UN human rights chief for possible use in future judicial proceedings. The United States and European Union have already slapped sanctions on some Myanmar military leaders, though Min Aung Hlaing is not among them.

The authors called for the creation of a special body, or “mechanism,” to keep watch on the still-evolving human rights situation in Myanmar. They said the United Nations’ own role in the country since 2011 should be reviewed to see if the world body did all it could to prevent such a crisis.

China hails first-time participation of India, Pakistan in SCO counter-terror drill

KJM VARMA BEIJING, AUG 27 (PTT): China today welcomed the participation of militaries of India and Pakistan for the first time in a mega anti-terror drill of the SCO and hoped that the two countries could enhance dialogue and cooperation both bilaterally and within multilateral mechanisms to maintain regional peace and stability.

The anti-terror exercise of the Beijing-based Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) being held at Chebarkul town in Chelyabinsk region in Russia from August 22 to August 29 aimed at expanding cooperation among the member countries to deal with the growing menace of terrorism and extremism.

India and Pakistan are participating in the drill for the first time since becoming full members of the SCO in June 2017.

The joint exercise titled Peaceful Mission 2018 being conducted by the Central Military Commission of Russia involve tactical level operations in an international counter-insurgency or counter-terrorism environment under the SCO Charter.

“We welcome India and Pakistan’s joint participation in this counter-terrorism exercise under the SCO framework,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing.

“These two countries are important ones in South Asia,” she said, adding that stable relationship between the two countries is “significant to the peace and development of the region and the whole world.”

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“These two countries are important ones in South Asia,” she said, adding that stable relationship between the two countries is “significant to the peace and development of the region and the whole world.”

“We sincerely hope that they could enhance their dialogue and cooperation both bilaterally and within multilateral mechanisms like the SCO, work together to improve their ties and jointly maintain regional peace and stability,” she said

At least 3,000 soldiers from China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan are participating in the drill.

The Indian contingent of 200 personnel is

primarily composed of troops from infantry and affiliated arms and services along with the Indian Air Force.

Chinese military experts also welcomed the participation of India and Pakistan in the counter-terrorism drill.

The previous SCO counter-terrorism drills were mainly limited to the Central Asian nations. But

due to the entry of India and Pakistan, the SCO’s counter-terrorism mission has expanded to South Asia, Li Wei, a counter-terrorism expert at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations in Beijing, told state-run Global Times.

“The effective counter-terrorism cooperation among SCO countries has greatly undermined terrorist groups in Central Asia in recent years, and it’s expected that this effective cooperation will also boost stability in South Asia, a region facing a more complicated counter-terrorism situation with a variety of active terrorist groups,” Li said.

Sun Zhuangzhi, a professor at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences said Peace Mission 2018 will also greatly improve military and political mutual trust among SCO countries, especially between India and Pakistan.

“It’s a rare opportunity for Pakistan and India, which have long been involved in military conflict, to enhance military exchanges and trust. This could improve regional stability,” Sun said.

Li said future counter-terrorism drills among SCO countries have to come up with new drills on targeting terrorist groups in South Asia.

He suggested that the SCO further expand to include Afghanistan, which is currently an observer country, to strengthen counter-terrorism efforts in South Asia.

The SCO was established in Shanghai in 2001, with China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as founding members.

It expanded to include India and Pakistan in 2017.

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Iran lawsuit against US sanctions opens at UN court

THE HAGUE, AUG 27 (AFP): Iran opened a lawsuit today demanding the UN’s top court order the suspension of renewed US sanctions which it says are devastating its economy.

The Islamic Republic says US President Donald Trump’s decision to reimpose sanctions over its nuclear programme aim to bring it “to its knees” and are in breach of a 1955 treaty.

Sanctions had been lifted under a 2015 multilateral agreement in return for Iran committing not to pursue nuclear weapons. But Trump reimposed unilateral sanctions three weeks ago. He said they were needed to ensure Iran never builds a nuclear bomb.

A second wave of punitive measures are due to hit Iran in early November, targeting its vital energy sector including oil exports.

Judges at the International Court of Justice in the Hague opened hearings with the Islamic Republic’s lawyers due to make their opening arguments.

The US measures have added to Iran’s economic woes, helping to fuel strikes and protests from across the country and political spectrum.

In the latest blow, Iran’s parliament impeached Economy Minister Masoud Karbasian yesterday.

Tehran filed its case before the ICJ in late July, calling on the Hague-based tribunal’s judges to order the immediate lifting

ing of sanctions pending a definitive ruling.

It said the sanctions would cause it “irreparable prejudice”. It argues they breach the 1955 Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations between Iran and the United States.

“The current US Administration is pushing the sanctions to their maximum with the sole aim of bringing Iran to its knees,” Iran’s lawyers said in the court filing.

“The USA is besieging Iran economically, with all the dramatic consequences that a siege implies for the besieged population.” - ‘One-sided deal’ -

The ICJ is expected to take a couple of months to decide whether to grant Tehran’s request for a provisional ruling. A final decision in the case may take years.

The 2015 deal was signed by Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany.

Trump, who took office in 2016, called it a “horrible one-sided deal.” He said it “failed to achieve the fundamental objective of blocking all paths to a Iranian nuclear bomb.” To the horror of the other signatories, Trump pulled out and announced he would reinstate sanctions.

Tehran says that the new sanctions are already hurting its economy. Iran’s currency the rial has lost around half its

value since April.

In a court filing at the ICJ, Iran’s lawyers said the US sanctions threaten tens of billions of dollars’ worth of business deals with foreign companies.

International companies including France’s Total, Peugeot and Renault, and Germany’s Siemens and Daimler, have suspended operations in Iran since Trump announced the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal in May.

Air France and British Airways announced Thursday they would halt flights to Tehran next month, saying they were not commercially viable. The British carrier added however that the decision was unrelated to the fresh sanctions.

Trump said the sanctions would turn up the financial pressure on Tehran to come to a “comprehensive and lasting solution” regarding its activities such as its “ballistic missile programme and its support for terrorism.”

Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei this month appeared to rule out any immediate prospect of talks, saying “there will be neither war, nor negotiations,” with the US.

Washington’s lawyers will present their case on Tuesday. Experts expect them to challenge the ICJ’s jurisdiction.

The ICJ was set up in 1946 to rule in disputes between countries.

Swaraj opens ‘Jaipur Foot’ camp in Vietnam

HANOI, AUG 27 (PTI): External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj today inaugurated the ‘Jaipur Foot’ camp here and met with 500 Vietnamese beneficiaries of the free India-made prosthetic limb.

Swaraj is in Vietnam on the first leg of her four-day two-nation tour which aims at deepening India’s strategic cooperation with Vietnam and Cambodia -- the key countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region.

The minister met with the beneficiaries and encouraged a girl to walk with the newly-fitted artificial limb.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Ravish Kumar said in a tweet: “Together with you when

ation with Vietnam and Cambodia -- the key countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region.

The minister met with the beneficiaries and encouraged a girl to walk with the newly-fitted artificial limb.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Ravish Kumar said in a tweet: “Together with you when

you take those small steps! EAM @SushmaSwaraj inaugurated the Jaipur foot camp and encouraged a girl to walk with the newly fitted artificial limb. 500 Vietnamese beneficiaries were present at the Camp organised in the Phu Tho province of Vietnam”.

Meanwhile, Swaraj lauded the role played by the Indian community in Vietnam

in consolidating cultural connect between the two countries. She praised the Indian diaspora in Vietnam for strengthening people to people connect between the two nations.

“Hailing the role played by Indian community in Vietnam in consolidating cultural connect between India and Vietnam! EAM @SushmaSwaraj praised

the Indian Diaspora in Vietnam for strengthening people to people bond between two nations,” Kumar said in another tweet.

Last month, it was announced in Jaipur that about 1,000 differently-abled people in Myanmar and Vietnam would be provided free Indian-made prosthetic ‘Jaipur Foot’.

The Jaipur-based

Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS) has started an artificial limb fitment camp in association with the central government at Myanmar’s Yangon city.

The camp is being organised as per an agreement between BMVSS and the Ministry of External Affairs for providing 5,000 ‘Jaipur Foot’ to the needy amputees

of various countries.

Last month, the BMVSS organised camps in Vietnam.

“In both Myanmar and Vietnam, 1,000 disabled people will be provided with ‘Jaipur Foot’. This is a humanitarian effort of the Union government where BMVSS is the implementing agency,” an official statement said last month.

India, Pak to resume talks on Indus Waters Treaty in Lahore this week

SAJJAD HUSSAIN ISLAMABAD, AUG 27 (PTI): India and Pakistan will resume their talks on various aspects of the crucial Indus Waters Treaty in Lahore on Wednesday, the first bilateral engagement since Prime Minister Imran Khan took office.

India’s Indus Water Commissioner P K Saxena is expected to reach here today to begin the two-day discussions with his Pakistani counterpart Syed Mehr Ali Shah on Wednesday.

day, Dawn quoted a government official as saying.

The last meeting of the Pakistan-India Permanent Indus Commission was held in New Delhi in March during which both the sides had shared details of the water flow and the quantum of water being used under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty.

The talks will be the first official engagement between India and Pakistan since Khan became Pakistan’s 22nd prime

minister on August 18.

In a letter to Khan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had expressed India’s resolve to build good neighbourly relations between the two countries.

India and Pakistan would also finalise the schedule of future meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission and visits of the teams of the Indus commissioners, the official said.

He said the water commissioners of both the countries are required

to meet twice a year and arrange technical visits to projects’ sites and critical river head works, but Pakistan had been facing a lot of problems in timely meetings and visits.

The meeting is also expected to discuss ways and means for timely and smooth sharing of hydrological data on shared rivers.

On July 30, Modi telephoned Khan to congratulate him on his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party’s victory in the general

elections and expressed hope that both countries will work to open a new chapter in bilateral ties.

The report said that the Pakistani side will reiterate its objections over two water storage and hydropower projects being built by India during the two-day talks scheduled for August 29-30.

The World Bank, a signatory to the Indus Waters Treaty, said in May that it could not reach an agreement with Pakistan

to address its concerns after two-days of talks in Washington, days after India inaugurated the 330 MW Kishanganga hydroelectric project in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan had protested the inauguration of the project by Prime Minister Modi, claiming it will disrupt water supplies to Pakistan.

As a signatory to the treaty, the World Bank’s role is limited and procedural, the Bank had said.

The 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, brokered by the World Bank and signed by then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan’s president Ayub Khan, administers how the water of the Indus river and its tributaries that flow in both the countries will be utilised.

Under the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty 1960, waters of the eastern rivers Sutlej, Beas and Ravi had been allocated to India and the

western rivers the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab to Pakistan, except for certain non-consumptive uses for India.

Islamabad had been raising objections over the design of the Kishanganga hydroelectric project, saying it is not in line with the criteria laid down under the Indus Waters Treaty between the two countries. However, India said that the project design was well within the treaty’s parameters.



MOM & ME TIME! Angelina Jolie stepped out with son Pax, 14, in Los Angeles as the two enjoyed lunch together and a spot of shopping.

Game of Thrones S-08 FIRST LOOK!

Game of Thrones S8 has been an extremely long time coming. But fans can finally catch a glimpse of what's in store in HBO's 2019 teaser released over the weekend as it teases brand new scenes with Daenerys Targaryen, Jon Snow, Cersei Lannister, Tyrion Lannister and a VERY vengeful dragon.

Featuring snippets from other series - such as Big Little Lies and Veep - the trailer gives GoT enthusiasts clips of Daenerys Targaryen, Jon Snow and Cersei Lannister going about their business following the collapse of The Wall.

Having been seen disappearing into Daenerys' cabin at the end of season 7, Jon is seen engrossed in various intense exchanges with the dragon queen, before taking a trip to confront Cersei Lannister.

He is also seen reuniting with Sansa Stark, his half sister - in a moment that will please hardcore fanatics.

There's sweeping shots of dramatic cliff-edge castles and a scene with a dragon, unleashing its fiery breath on a crew of armour-clad men.

In another clip, a soldier falls backwards from some battlements, plunging into a field of fighters.

Cersei kicks off the entire trailer for HBO by asking Tyri-



on: "Shall we begin?"

Jon is seen asking Daenerys "what happens now?" to which she responds: "Something extraordinary."

"There is only one war that matters," Jon says as he paces before Cersei. "We will face it together," she responds.

At which Daenerys is seen simply uttering the word "dragons" - suggesting she's set to unleash all manner of hell via her beloved dragons, following the death and transformation to a Night of Viserion.

Game of Thrones is expected to return to screens in early 2019 - although it's still not clear precisely when.

In the past, the show has been back in March or April, but all bets seem to be off for the last ever run.

But fans may have to wait even longer to see the return of the fantasy drama, after visual effects supervisor Joe Bauer revealed that the crew has just now started working on the Emmy-nominated series.

"In two years we'll be eligible for the season 8 work," he said during an interview with Huffington Post, "which we're just beginning now."

Bauer was referring to Emmy consideration, with a 31 May cut-off date to be eligible for an award at the 2019 telecast.

"We're going to be toiling away on season 8 until May of 2019, so it's eight or nine months away," he added.

It's noted that the Emmy's have made exceptions for 'hanging episodes' which air after the time frame which can still be considered for an award. In more promising news, Bauer admitted "he's blocked off his schedule until next May" for Game of Thrones work, which will include filming a prequel.

Season 7 premiered on HBO on 16 July, 2017 with seven episodes, three shy of its usual format.

The eighth and final season of the hit show based on George RR Martin writings will have only six episodes.

GEMINI: Keep your mind open to any and all possibilities today, Gemini. It's likely that you'll encounter someone who imparts valuable information. You may not realize right away just how important this information is, but it could have a dramatic impact on your life. Be prepared for anything. This is likely to be a most interesting day.

CANCER: Your ship could come in today, Cancer. It will happen unexpectedly, and it may take you some time to adjust to this sudden financial windfall. This is a day of big changes, because you may also decide to use this money to completely alter your way of life. It could be that you make a move to another part of the country or decide to change professions. Trust your instincts, Cancer.

LEO: You're likely aware of your writing abilities, Leo, but you may not realize the extent of your talent. It would be worthwhile to devote more time to your craft. You can't improve much if writing time is interrupted by other obligations. Take some time to produce something of value. Why not give it a try, even if just for a week or so, to see what you can do?

VIRGO: Tact isn't necessarily your strong suit, Virgo. No one would accuse you of being overly sensitive to other people's emotions, but today you turn over a new leaf. This "new and improved" you tunes in to the thoughts and feelings of others and responds in thoughtful, caring ways. You may be surprised at how effective this gentler touch can be.

LIBRA: If you aren't getting on a

plane today, Libra, expect to in the near future. Your wanderlust is back and you're bound for the wild blue yonder yet again, most likely to someplace exotic. Enjoy the time away, but do come back. It seems that sometimes your spirit of adventure dampens your enjoyment of the more mundane but more real daily life.

SCORPIO: Positive change rarely happens without effort. Keep this in mind as transformation occurs quickly. You may feel as though you're in the middle of a whirlpool and getting sucked deeper and deeper, unsure of where you'll ultimately end up. This is merely the "nose to the grindstone" phase. Trust that your efforts will ultimately be rewarded.

SAGITTARIUS: You have natural leadership abilities, and today would

be an ideal day to make use of this talent. In the past you may have hesitated to step forward and implement your ideas. But recent successes have given you the necessary confidence to pursue your objectives. You'll likely find that the higher-ups support your efforts. Make the most of today's auspicious circumstances, Sagittarius.

CAPRICORN: Today you feel in control and on top of the world. You can do anything, Capricorn. This would be an auspicious time to begin a new project or creative endeavor. You can't help but succeed, but take care not to get in your own way. Sometimes you can be your own worst enemy. Believe in yourself and move confidently in the direction of your dreams in order to make them come true.

AQUARIUS: Friendship could turn into romance if you aren't careful, Aquarius. A platonic relationship could turn passionate, and no one would be more surprised than you. Think carefully about where you'd like this to go. While it can't go back to the way it was, you can stop it from progressing further if you're uncomfortable with the new dynamic. You can only make this decision once.

PISCES: Today you wake up feeling reinvigorated and renewed, Pisces. You feel as though you can accomplish anything. And very likely, today you can. Anything you set your mind and attention to works out beautifully. Take care that you don't gloat too much, though. Just because you feel invincible doesn't necessarily mean that you are.

Tom Hardy says he is signed on for two more 'Venom' films

Tom Hardy has said that he is ready to play Marvel antihero Venom in more than one film as he is contracted with Sony for three movies.

The 40-year-old actor is all set to debut as the character in Ruben Fleischer's "Venom", which also stars Riz Ahmed and Michelle Williams.

In an interview with Total Film Magazine, Hardy said he would be open to reprising his role as Eddie Brock and his alter-ego, Venom, should the film be a success.

"I'm open to whatever you want to do with it. We've signed up for three of them. So it's very much an open case. We'll see what people's responses are to it," Hardy said.

"I think it's an awesome



character. I love playing both of them. It's an amusement-bouche, and for Sony, it's the Venom-verse launched in isolation, as it were," he added.

The British star also hint-

ed that the Spider-Man spin-off will serve as a standalone trilogy.

"We all prepped for it to be a standalone universe. So whatever Sony want to at-

tach to it at a later date, it's a fulcrum piece. But let's see what happens when it lands," Hardy said.

Chrissy Teigen praises Crazy Rich Asians after family night with John and Luna

Chrissy Teigen is the latest person to jump on the Crazy Rich Asians train. The 32-year-old and her husband John Legend, 39, took their daughter Luna to see the film on Sunday and subsequently posted an absolutely glowing review on social media.

The Cravings author shared a few sweet photos of Luna, 2, checking out the film at the theater as well as a precious video of John and Luna dancing during the credits.

Chrissy was expecting to enjoy the movie but wasn't prepared for how overwhelmed she would be at the experience of seeing that magnitude of Asian representation on the silver screen.

"I've been excited to see this since production was announced but I could have never imagined how wonderful it would be," Teigen wrote



on Instagram. "The feeling I got during the credits, watching John dance with my little black asian mashup baby bear luna tunes, was a feeling I haven't had at the end of any other movies."

In one touching moment, Chrissy explained that Luna who was "blown away by the general movie-going experience" shouted out "yāy!" which means grandma in Thai "be-

cause she saw someone who looked like her yāy. Someone beautiful and aspirational."

I loved it all," Chrissy gushed. "You never know how much you miss being represented on screen until you actually see what it's like to be represented. And represented by all different types of characters with all different types of personalities, just like any other great movie."

The romantic comedy earned the top spot for the second weekend running, taking in \$25million, according to industry estimates on Sunday.

The Warner Bros. adaptation of Kevin Kwan's best-selling novel almost matched its \$26.5 million debut last week, box office tracker Exhibitor Relations said, and a sequel to the crazy successful flick is already in the works.

Starring veteran actress Michelle Yeoh, British-Malaysian former BBC host Henry Golding and American sitcom star Constance Wu, the film tells the story of a American economics professor who meets her super-wealthy boyfriend's family in Singapore.

It is the first major studio release with a mostly Asian cast since "The Joy Luck Club" in 1993.

Shah Rukh Khan talks about pay disparity in Bollywood

"No individual should burden the film's expense by charging an amount beyond the film's opening weekend": SRK

Pay parity or rather disparity in Bollywood has been a raging topic of discussion. Women in this industry don't get paid as per as the actors in the films despite having meatier roles in them. In fact, there is hardly any film which doesn't need an actress to add meat to the proceedings in whatever capacity.

Finally, Shah Rukh Khan has spoken up about it. The actor in his interview with the Economic Times discusses whether or not females are getting their due.

SRK says, "It's a male-dominated industry. You can't shirk it away or ignore it. I would love it to be different. There should be no disparity. A male actor and a female actor should get the same fees — why is it different, I don't know. But I would also add that no actor — male or female — should over-estimate their

performance. No individual — be it director or actor — should burden the film's expense by charging an amount that goes beyond the performance of the film's opening weekend."

This quote of Shah Rukh Khan reminds us of something that Salman Khan had said when it was heard that Madhuri Dixit was paid more than him in Hum Aapke Hain Koun!

He had said, "See, it's all about what people want to see. The busier you get, the more the peo-

ple want to see you, that's how your price increases. So, if you can pull off a film on your own and the producer/distributors make that money, then they have no problem sharing that money with you. You can't demand, you need to command that."

Clearly, they want talent to govern the pay cheque. If the box office return is supposed to be the yardstick, why don't their pay cheques reflect the same when their films are working pretty well.

Akshay Kumar's Gold is all set to enter the Rs 100 crore club!

Akshay Kumar and Mouni Roy starrer Gold has ended its second weekend on an average note. The period sports drama witnessed a decline in the business due to the good performance of Sonakshi Sinha's Happy Phirr Bhag Jayegi at the box office.

Gold raked in Rs 9.75 crore in the last weekend and currently stands with the grand

total of Rs 99 crore. It is set to enter the Rs 100 crore club today at the box office.

Gold will be Akshay Kumar's eighth Rs 100 crore film after Housefull 2, Housefull 3, Airlift, Rustom, Jolly LLB 2, Holiday and Rowdy Rathore. Though we must say that Gold has performed below expectations especially after earning Rs

25.25 crore on its opening day. Talking about the film, it showcases the journey of India's first Olympic gold win as a free nation.

Gold is directed by Talaash and Honeymoon Travels Pvt Ltd helmer Reema Kagti. It is produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani under the banner of Excel Entertainment

and also stars Mouni Roy, Kunal Kapoor, Vineet Kumar Singh, Amit Sadh and Sunny Kaushal in pivotal roles.

Apparently, Gold has faced a stiff competition from John Abraham's Satyameva Jayate, which dominated the Akshay Kumar starrer in the single screens and mass centers.

ARIES: People often see you as shy and reserved, Aries, but of course you know that you're really very friendly once you relax. Today you find it unusually easy to interact with others. In fact, you feel downright gregarious as you chat and joke along with the best of them. This new, sociable you does wonders for your image. You've needed to loosen up for some time.

TAURUS: All things domestic are highlighted, Taurus. It could be that you've finally called the plumber or set out to do those household repairs yourself. New people are likely to come into your life. In fact, they may appear at your doorstep to finagle an invitation for dinner. All you can expect today is the unexpected. Have some extra food on hand and see what happens.