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# Summit **T**IMES

Vol 03 | Issue 197 | Gangtok | Friday | 27 July 2018

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

RNI No. SIKENG/2016/69420

Pages 8 | ₹ 5

## Golay will contest 2019 elections, have done our homework says SKM

**WILL PEACEFULLY  
TAKE HIM TO  
SINGTAM: KN LEPCHA**

**SAGAR CHETTRI  
GANGTOK, 26 JUL:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party spokesperson, Jacob Khaling, has expressed his confidence that PS Tamang [Golay] will be able to contest the upcoming 2019 assembly election in the State as the Chief Ministerial candidate and the people of Sikkim will make him victorious. He said that the party has done its homework and all necessary paperwork to ensure that Mr Tamang will be able to contest the 2019 election.

Convicted in a corruption case, the SKM president, PS Tamang [Golay], will be released from the State Prison at Rongyel, East Sikkim on 10 Aug after having served a term of one year.

Addressing a press conference here today, Mr Khaling suggested that Sikkim Democratic Front refrain from interfering in the internal matters of SKM.

"The ruling party should fo-



on problems and pending issues of the State," he said.

Mr Khaling strongly refuted SDF's allegations about SKM making false claims of SDF members joining the party. SDF has no other option but to make such allegations, he added.

"We would like to urge them not to panic at this stage but to wait for more mass inductions into SKM after 10 August," he stated.

Mr Khaling also rejected the claims of SDF spokesperson, Bhim Dahal that it was Nuk Tshering Bhutia who had filed

the case against Mr Tamang and SDF did not have any role to play in the case.

Mr Bhutia filed the case in the State Vigilance Department but it was suppressed as Pawan Chamling was also one of the accused in that case, he counter alleged.

He further added that the order sheet and other related documents related to the case does not have the name Nuk Tshering Bhutia mentioned anywhere. Instead, it clearly mentions the State government and it was represented by the

Advocate General of the State, he said.

Meanwhile, the SKM acting president, KN Lepcha, informed today that the party has been preparing to receive the party president on 10 Aug.

SKM is a law-abiding party and we will take the party president to Singtam peacefully on the day of his release, said Mr Lepcha.

He alleged that the ruling party has been spreading rumours and indulging in propaganda on social media to obstruct the programme.

## Health Minister launches CATCH 2018-19 for West district

**GYALSHING, 26 JUL [IPR]:** Chief Minister's Comprehensive Annual and Total Check Up for Healthy Sikkim Programme [CATCH] for the year 2018-19, under Health Care, Human Services & Family Welfare Department, was formally inaugurated by Health Minister, AK Ghatani, today at the Community Hall in Gyalshing, West Sikkim.

Zilla Adhakshya, West District Zilla Panchayat, Devika Subba, attended the event as guest of honour along with Secretary, Vishal Chauhan, and Principal Director, Dr Pempa T Bhutia.

Addressing the inaugural function, Mr Ghatani urged the public to come forward and undergo proper health checkup. He underlined the vision of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling to encourage healthy population in the State.

He mentioned about significant improvement in development of infrastructure, man-power and facilities provided in Sikkim since 1994.

"The State of Sikkim has come a long way since then and still more improvements are being planned and are being initiated by the State Government for its people in health and education sectors," Mr Ghatani added.



He further informed that long term pending demand for provision of doctors in health centres have been resolved through recent recruitment of Medical Officers and nurses. They will be deployed in West district after required criteria and formalities are fulfilled by the selected candidates. Moreover, four specialist doctors including a Dermatologist, Orthopedist, MD Biochemistry and Medicine have already joined Gyalshing District Hospital, he added.

Zilla Adhakshya, WDZP, Ms Subba, re-

quested all to work in coordination towards achieving the vision of the CM to make Sikkim Tuberculosis free by 2022.

Health Secretary, Mr Chauhan, while addressing the gathering advised the doctors of the CATCH programme to conduct regular follow ups of patients in the district.

"The goal is to make all the districts in the State well-equipped so that patients can be treated in their own respective districts," he added.

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The 8th batch of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2018 reached Bagdogra Airport this afternoon. Officials from Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation [STDC] were at the airport to receive the yatri. [ARPAN PRADHAN]

## Italian sportswear brand Lotto sponsors United Sikkim FC

**REBYNA RANA  
GANGTOK, 26 JUL:**

Renowned Italian sportswear manufacturer, Lotto, will be sponsoring Sikkim's United Sikkim Football Club [USFC] and will be providing clothing kit and footwear to the players of the club and officials.

Speaking to media persons this morning, USFC owner, Bhaichung Bhutia, said, "Italian brand Lotto is sponsoring United Sikkim FC. We are happy to have a global brand sponsoring the club. It can inspire our players to be more active and dedicated towards the sport."

He mentioned that USFC has been working for the past 16 years for the development of local footballers and the football scenario in the State.

"We have produced many players who have played in major tournaments including I-League. In the past 12 years we have been providing salaries to the players. We will continue



working to promote Sikkim footballers," expressed Mr Bhutia.

USFC coach and player, Mayal Dok Lepcha, also expressed happiness on the Lotto sponsorship.

"The team members are very happy to be sponsored by a prominent brand like Lotto. We are excited and motivated to perform better," he said.

USFC senior manager, Arjun

Rai, said, "Our players are in high spirits after lifting the Akkar Summer Cup this year. We want to be in the I-League second division this year," said Mr Rai.

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## Not enough reservation for Sikkimese in Sikkim University: Ugen T Gyatso

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 JUL:

Fifty members of Sikkim Democratic Front party's student wing for East district including Tumin-Lingee Constituency received their official appointment orders as convenor, vice-convenor and executive members. The appointment orders were handed over to them during the SDF Students Front coordination meeting held today here at the conference hall of Tourism Department in Tadong.

The orders were handed over by Tourism Minister-cum-SDF Students' Front in-charge, Ugen T Gyatso.

Addressing the gathering, Mr Gyatso expressed that students need to carry positive energy in order to shine in their future.

"This meeting is a not a political meeting. It is meant to provide career



counseling for the youth," he added.

Stressing on issues related to Sikkim University, the Minister expressed disappointment on the University failing to cater to the interests and requirements of the local Sikkimese students.

He slammed the SU authorities for providing low

reservation for Sikkimese students in the University.

"I am against the policies of SU and the share our students are getting is not right. We understand the rules but the interest of the State and local students must be a priority," said Mr Gyatso.

He accused the SU authorities of misusing their

powers and alleged of certain authorities playing politics in the University.

The Minister further extended his best wishes to the office-bearers of the SDF Students' Front who received their appointment orders today and urged them to work diligently for the betterment of the State.

Vice president, SDF Students' Front, Bhim Dhungel, highlighted the education sector in the State and the efforts made by the SDF government to cater to the youth of Sikkim.

He called upon students to imbibe proper cultural values to become good citizens of the State.

## HSP to hold first public meeting for East & North

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 JUL:

Hamro Sikkim Party will be organising its first public meeting for East and North districts at Singtam in East Sikkim on 03 Aug. This was informed by HSP vice president, Bhaichung Bhutia, today.

"We are expecting much bigger crowd than the launch event held at Darmadin in West Sikkim earlier. Preparations are going on for the Singtam meeting. It will focus on East and North districts," said Mr Bhutia.

## Health Minister launches CATCH...

contd from pg01

During the event, the Health Minister, Zilla Adhakshya, Health Secretary and Principal Director distributed health cards to the public.

Later, the Minister along with Health officials visited Gyalshing District Hospital and interacted with the patients and doctors. They also visited the construction site of the 50-bedded Ayush Hospital at Kyongsa.

## SDF holds co-ordination meet for North district in Mangan

### WANGCHUK BHUTIA

MANGAN, 26 JUL:

Sikkim Democratic Front today held its coordination meeting with Pipons, Zilla/Gram Panchayats and Councillors of North district at Zilla Bhawan in Mangan. The meeting was chaired by MP Rajya Sabha, Hishey Lachungpa, in the presence of Deputy Speaker SLA cum Dzongu MLA, Sonam Gyatso Lepcha, Forest Minister, TW Lepcha, Kabi-Lungtsok MLA, Ugen Nedup Bhutia, Zilla Adhyaksha, North, Namdey Lepcha, and other party functionaries.

General secretary, Administrative Affairs [HQ], Dev Gurung, delivered the message and direction of party president, Pawan Chamling, and highlighted the rules and responsibilities of party workers.

Likewise, general secretary, Publicity [North], Krishna Lepcha,

urged party workers to work in coordination and stand strong for the party while Kabi-Lungtsok MLA, Ugen Nedup Bhutia, appealed to party supporters and officials to be vigilant.

Forest Minister, Mr Lepcha, suggested conducting membership drives and also appealed to all the beneficiaries to take the benefit of the start-up loan.

Highlighting on the issue of Land Revenue Order No. 1, he clarified, "We are not against Sherpa community but we do not want to dilute Revenue Order No.1."

He further accused Sikkim Bhutia Lepcha Apex Committee [SIBLAC] of remaining silent when Sikkim Krantikari Morcha leader, Kunga Nima, raised the issue of diluting it in the Assembly.

Deputy Speaker, SLA, Mr Lepcha, stressed on maintaining discipline in the party and requested all to abide by the rules and norms of

the party.

Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, Mr Lachungpa, appealed to all the youth to come forward and work for the party.

"All the communities of the State need to work together for the betterment of Sikkim and the Sikkimese. Your contribution will speak for your dedication to the party," he stated.

Reiterating the scheduled release of SKM president, PS Tamang [Golay], on 10 Aug, the MP urged people to be vigilant and asked all to inform the Police or the administration immediately if the oppositions were found creating nuisance in the area.

During the meeting, Anil Lachenpa who has been nominated as vice president along with newly nominated party workers of North district was awarded nomination papers by MP, Rajya Sabha, Mr Lachungpa.



## KVK SOUTH CONDUCTS TRAINING ON KHARIF PULSES

GANGTOK, 26 JUL: Krishi Vigyan Kendra, South conducted daylong training cum input distribution programme of Kharif pulses at Sombarey Ward, under Sumbuk Block, in South Sikkim today. Subject Matter Specialist [Agronomy], Dr Nation Chamling, informed farmers about the packaging practices of Rajmash. Farmers were provided with Rajmash var. Arun breeder seeds along with hermetic storage grain bag, a press release informs.



## SKM continues to induct new members

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 JUL:

In continuation of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha's mass induction programmes, 21 families from Palak Bermiok under Palak Bermiok Constituency in South Sikkim quit Sikkim Democratic Front and joined SKM today, ac-

ording to an SKM release.

General secretary in-charge [South], Lalit Sharma, welcomed them to the party in the presence of South district co-ordinator [Youth], Gopal Chettri, and other party functionaries in Palak Bermiok.

Similarly in East Sikkim,

17 families from Assam Lingzey under Namcheybung Constituency also left SDF and joined SKM in the presence of vice president [Frontal Organization], Nakul Das Rai, president [Zone II], Danish Saran Rai, and CLC president, Ganja Bhutia.



## SP West counsels Sombaria SSS students on UPSC exams

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 JUL:

Superintendent of Police, West, Tenzing Loden Lepcha, delivered a career counseling session on Union Public Service Commission [UPSC] exams at Sombaria Government Senior Secondary School in West Sikkim on 25 Jul, a press release informs.

The counseling programme held under the banner of National Service Scheme unit of Sombaria SSS also had the presence of teachers and students of various schools of the district namely Woodstock High School, Sunrise Academy High School, Pratap International School and others.

Addressing the students, Mr Lepcha, briefed about his success story

and his struggles and hard work before reaching the current position in his career today.

Stressing on the saying "Where there is a will, there is a way", Mr Lepcha encouraged students to work towards achieving their goals with proper planning and added that through hard work and dedication, one can reach the peak of success.

He further said that today's students are privileged and fortunate to have access to internet and mobile phones unlike the yesteryears. He advised pupils to make good use of these facilities for learning purposes and preparing for higher level exams.

"Students should download useful news apps like the Hindu,

NDTV, etc., and keep themselves updated with latest news which will come in handy for competitive exams," said Mr Lepcha.

He also extended gratitude to District Collector, North for inspiring him to appear for UPSC exams.

The SP, West later made a Power Point Presentation wherein he illustrated techniques that will be helpful in preparing for the UPSC exams and detailed on various aspects of the civil service exam including question pattern, aptitude tests, marks allocation, etc.

The event also featured an interactive session wherein students and teachers put forward their queries to Mr Lepcha.



## Rangpo Lions Club welcomes District Governor

### SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 26 JUL:

Lions Club of Rangpo Gateway welcomed Lions Club International 322 F District Governor, Srawan Chaudhary, at Rangpo in East Sikkim today. The DG is on a two-day tour of the State, a press release informs.

The DG, in his address, appreciated the activities of the club and assured support from his side. He further appealed to all members to work for the development of the society and the State as a whole.

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**Gangtok on Friday, 27 July**

**Temp:** 25°C/18°C  
**Forecast:** A couple of morning thundershowers, then a thundershower in parts of the area.  
**Sunrise:** 04:56 AM  
**Sunset:** 6:28 PM

### WB Assembly passes resolution to rename the state as Bangla

**KOLKATA, JUL 26 (PTI):** The West Bengal Assembly today passed a resolution to rename the state as 'Bangla'. The state will now have to wait for a nod from the Union home ministry for the resolution's final approval. The move was aimed at climbing the alphabetical sequence of state names in which West Bengal appears last in the list now, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had earlier said.

# SILTAC's Jan Sampark programme continues

**40-SEAT FORMULA CORRECT SAYS KT GYALTSEN**

**NITESH R PRADHAN**

**GANGTOK, 26 JUL:** Sikkim Limboo Tamang Apex Committee [SILTAC] held its second day of Jan Sampark programme for Syari Constituency, East Sikkim in the capital today.

Sikkim Democratic Front spokesperson, KT Gyaltsen, attended the event as chief guest in the presence of SILTAC Chairperson, CB Subba, Advisor, Kalawati Subba, along with SILTAC members.

Mr Gyaltsen stated that SDF is firmly supporting the Limboo Tamang community in their journey to secure their seats in the Assembly.

"The 40-seat formula of the SDF government is the correct formula



and the State has always forwarded these constitutional demands to the centre," he added.

He also stated that Bhutia, Lepcha and the Nepalis of the State must support each other on securing the historic and constitutional rights of all Sikkim.

Adding further, he said that there are some

misguided elements in some organizations who are stirring up trouble regarding this issue for their vested interests.

"This is not just a demand but a promise made by the Government of India to the people of Sikkim at the time of merger," he said.

Securing tribal status to 11 left out communi-

ties and no disturbance or dilution of any rights of the BL community were also stated as the prime agenda of the party.

Lashing out against the opposition and other groups opposing the 40-seat formula of the government, he stated that the oppositions themselves do not have any plans or programmes.

He also congratulated SILTAC for supporting the government's reports and taking their own delegation from the community to the centre.

Similarly, SILTAC Chairperson, CB Subba, said that all Sikkim must stay informed and updated on the LT seat issue and added that, it is for this very purpose that

today's programme has been held.

He further urged other parties and organisations to be responsible and to avoid sticking to a single point agenda of maligning the government.

SILTAC Advisor, Ms Subba, informed the audience of the process they went through fixing appointments with all

leaders and ministers at the centre.

She further added that there was confusion in the centre as many stated that various delegations from Sikkim came with different versions of the LT seat reservation issues.

However, she said that now an authentic formula has been provided by the State Government and they are hopeful that soon there will be LT seats in the Assembly, preferably through Presidential ordinance.

Vice chairperson, SILTAC, Sushil Tamang, stated, "It is the anti LT people who will keep abusing the State Government." The members were unanimous in their praise for the State Government's 40-seat formula in line with social justice and equal rights to all Sikkim.



## Aakraman FC beats SHSC in Premier Div League

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 26 JUL:**

Sikkim Aakraman Football Club edged past Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club 3-2 in the ongoing Sikkim Football Association Premier Division Sikkim-League 2018 here at Paljor Stadium today. A brace by Dewashish Rai helped Sikkim Aakraman FC to register its second consecutive victory in the league and to get three more

points.

Roman Subba scored the lead for Sikkim Himalayan in the 22nd minute but soon Tenzing Tshapel scored the equaliser for Sikkim Aakraman in the 32nd minute.

As both teams struggled to take the lead in the second half, Roman Subba scored his brace in the 54th minute to take the lead for Sikkim Himalayan to 2-1.

In return, Sikkim Aakraman

put their best efforts to bounce back into the match. Their hard work paid off with the equaliser goal by Dewashish Rai in the 72nd minute.

In the dying minutes, Dewashish Rai completed his brace to seal the 3-2 victory for Sikkim Himalayan FC.

On 27 Jul, Boys Club, Gangtok will take on SAI Namchi in another match of the league.



## Health Dept officials pay surprise visit to Namchi Hospital

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 26 JUL:**

Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Health Department, Vishal Chauhan, along with Principal Director, Dr Pempa Bhutia, conducted a surprise visit to Namchi District Hospital in South Sikkim today wherein cleanliness in the hospital toilets and wards were

found to be satisfactory.

A press release informs that the Commissioner has directed the concerned staff to clean the bathrooms every 2 hours for which three additional safai karmacharis will be provided to Namchi District Hospital. Water will also be provided by tanker/fire brigade if necessary, the release adds.

Further, the hospital has also been directed to restrict the number of visitors for each patient during visiting hours.

For security of the hospital, four home guards are to be deployed in addition to its existing security guards.

## Fifth KMY batch completes pilgrimage successfully

**ARPAN PRADHAN**

**GANGTOK, 26 JUL:**

The fifth batch of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2018 has successfully completed the pilgrimage and reached Gangtok on 25 Jul.

Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation [STDC] organised a special felicitation programme in honour of the KMY pilgrims on their arrival at a local hotel in Gangtok.

The function had the presence of Secretary, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Shankar Deo Dhalk, as chief guest accompanied by Chief Executive Officer, STDC, Suman Thapa.

The chief guest con-



gratulated all the yatris for successfully completing the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage. The yatris were also felicitated and honoured with a memento.

The function also

featured cultural performances presented by Tapashree Dance Academy of Arithang, Gangtok.

It may be mentioned here, the fifth batch of the KMY included 40 pil-

grims along with two Liaison Officers. The sixth and seventh batches are covering their pilgrimage while the eighth batch will be arriving in Gangtok this evening.

## Dancing Star Dharmesh Yelande to judge Sikkim Dancing Icon 2 finale

**YOUGAN TAMANG**

**GANGTOK, 26 JUL:**

Sikkim Dancing Icon Season 1 was celebrated and appreciated by many in Sikkim last year. It was the first dancing reality show in Sikkim organized by Creative Dexterity Illusion Studio [CID], Ranipool and judged by celebrity judges of Dance Plus Season 2 Fame, Sushant Khatri and Mingma D Lepcha.

The winner of the Sikkim Dancing Icon Season 1 was Deenay Sunar who after winning the title has become quite popular and a recognized face in the State. He has also been felicitated by different organizations and associations in Sikkim for his contribution towards art and culture.

Creative Dexterity Illusion Studio is back with the new season of Sikkim Dancing Icon with a different format. This year the competition is not just confined to dancers from Sikkim but dancers from Darjeeling Hills, Kalimpong and Siliguri can also participate in the competition.

"Season 2 is different than the

previous season. It's a dance battle between warriors of Sikkim and Challengers from Darjeeling hills and Siliguri. This year we have tried to make it bigger and better. Celebrated dancer and one of the dancing icons of India, Dharmesh Yelande, will be present during the finale to judge our finalists," said Director, CID Studio, Shristi Pariyar.

"If it was Sushant Khatri and Mingma D Lepcha as the judges last year, then this year would be Dharmesh Yelande judging the finale of Sikkim Dancing Icon Season 2 to be held in Gangtok in the month of Sept," added Creative Head, CID Studio, Sangeet Pariyar.

The auditions of the competition were held in different parts of Sikkim like Namchi, Singtam, Gangtok and also in Darjeeling and Siliguri. A total of 513 dancers had auditioned for the same. After rigorous quarter finals held on 14 Jul and semi finals on 21 Jul in Singtam, judged by Mingma D Lepcha, Sushma Yonzon, and Shristi Pariyar, six dancers in the senior category and six in the junior category

have been selected for the finale.

The finalists in the senior category are Aditya Subba, Abhishek Thapa, RDJ Crew, Sadhna Sharma, Deena Paswan and Simplicity Squad while finalists in the junior category are PPS Crew, Reshma Rai, Sai Binayak, Aarna Vashist, Parthiv Barman and Sai Saruwpa Rout.

The winners of the senior category and junior category will be rewarded with a cash prize, citation and also an opportunity to be featured in a music video.

"The main intention of organizing such a dancing competition is not just to provide a platform to our dancers from the State but also to nurture, nourish and support their passion for dance. The organizing team is giving its best to help them reach out to different national level dancing reality shows of the country," said secretary, CID, Martish Rai.

Shristi Pariyar, Sangeet Pariyar, Joel Tshering Sherpa and Martish Rai are the people behind the grand event of Sikkim Dancing Icon.

## SAATHI conducts 9th off-site training camp in Chemchey

**SUMMIT REPORT**

**GANGTOK, 26 JUL:**

Sikkim against Addiction towards Healthy India [SAATHI] conducted their 9th offsite training camp for 91 students from Government Senior Secondary Schools of Singtam, Sombaria, Jorethang, Daramdin, Gyalshing and Legship from 23-26 Jul at Indian Himalayan Centre for Adventure and

Eco-Tourism [IHCAE] in Chemchey, South Sikkim, a press release informs.

Over the three-day camp, various motivational and technical sessions on drugs along with learning based fun and physical activities were conducted with the students.

Session on basics of counseling was conducted by Counsellor from Namchi, Prayan Dewan,

while session on medical aspects of substance abuse was conducted by Psychologist from Singtam District Hospital, Dr Devendra Singh.

Likewise, session on life skills was taken by motivational speaker from Gangtok, Ashish Bangdel, while Sub Inspector, Namchi PS, Joy Gurung, took a session on legal aspects of drugs.

Similarly, counselor from Jorethang, Bikash Bista, held a session on the social stigma and discrimination associated with substance abuse and addiction.

Other activities during the camp included team building sessions, planning sessions, meditation, nature walk/physical training and talent hunt.

# SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE SIX\*

## Politics Stuck in Rerun Season

...and one still blames people for being disinterested?

The political space is hosting a rerun, again; playing out the same contest of allegations, counter-allegations, mudslinging and condemnations. The nature of the allegations and the quality of repartees, have remained underdeveloped ever since Sikkim made space for political disagreements. And now an election is coming up, so begin expecting much more of the same.

Allegations of corruption, dilution of Sikkim's special status, 'victimisation' of supporters and well-wishers and compromises in local protection make up the grist of all attacks from the Opposition camp, and reminders of the people's mandate and pointers to go over its track-record and achievements form the basis of all retorts from the ruling front.

While reiterations of the same allegations and counters might draw applause and sniggers from supporters and detractors respectively, for an unattached receiver of these exchanges, the content and approach arrive as reaffirmations of the lazy politics that Sikkim continues to receive. The same issues have been endlessly regurgitated, repackaged and redeployed, and while political game-plans are for the respective players to chart out, having appropriated a public life for themselves, politicians owe more to the people by way of the quality of debate they bring to the public space. Corruption, protection of local laws and local people are not non-issues, and because they are important, they deserve stronger homework and more convincing arguments... and the practical solutions. Just screaming that there is a problem is not enough, and neither is just claiming things could improve without sharing even a hint of how. Rhetoric works well for speeches, but when people weigh the options, public-speaking skills are not enough. And yet, this remains the approach. And then some wonder why Sikkim won't vote differently or allow change. Simply put, for change to be considered an option, the electorate needs to be told about more than what needs to be changed; they need to be told of how (and it will take more than just voting different for anything to really change).

The ongoing exchange on these issues, it is obvious, is playing out to a bored audience since neither side has been able to excite passionate support among the lay people. The endorsement of supporters is automatic for each side, but as far as the general masses are concerned, they read, some even follow developments, many get confused, and none are really "informed" well enough to take a public stand on these issues. That is the failure of both, the ruling as well as the Opposition camps, because the lack of public engagement on these matters is not a manifestation of an informed choice, but a disinterest imposed by muddled polemics.

The argument that people in Sikkim do not get excited into participation easily is too superficial and one needs to only recall the thousands who poured into the streets on the call of the '27 Nov Committee' some years back and later in the support received by the protesting students from the lay people [until the more violently inclined hijacked everything and destroyed it], to realize how, with the right approach, public participation can become overwhelming in Sikkim.

Where the people might be failing though is in their active involvement to take democracy further by demanding more accountability, transparency and decency [accept it, language is turning increasingly unparliamentary], all virtues one would expect from people in public life, from their leaders.

Politics is universally dismissed as "dirty", and this is primarily because the "virtues" mentioned earlier have become almost alien to political culture at the national level and its influence is rubbing off strong on Sikkim as well. But when was the last time one heard of an electorate standing its leaders against the wall and demanding accountability? Mudslinging, unrestrained criticism of opponents and the total lack of accountability for what one does or says, not just in private but also in public, have become routine. Rhetoric is entertaining and rehashing attracts fewer risks than deploying creativity to introduce something new to the public political discourse, but that demands complete immersion in ideology and a clear idea on how to promote it.

Such commitment, unfortunately, is now seen as a distraction from the pursuits which have made politics "dirty" in the people's eyes.

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# Why you shouldn't be a 'straw-man' environmentalist

RILEY SCHNURR & TONY ROBERT WALKER  
*theconversation.com*

The "straw bubble" has burst.

We're midway through 2018, and we have seen an explosion of efforts and local action to eliminate plastic straws. Some of the world's largest companies, including McDonald's and Starbucks, have banned them from some of their operations.

McDonald's announced recently that it would replace plastic straws with paper ones in all restaurants in the U.K. and Ireland by September 2018. Similarly, Starbucks will eliminate plastic straws from all of its stores globally by 2020.

Airlines, hotel chains and local restaurants in droves are all removing the ubiquitous plastic from their consumer services.

Dramatic and evocative statements and statistics, including the infamous "plastic will outweigh fish in the ocean by 2050" prophecy, are inciting some incredible interventions from governments, large multinationals and individual citizens. Although these kinds of statements may not be entirely accurate, the overwhelming response has been the removal of straws from day-to-day society.

### ANTI-STRAW BACKLASH

Along with these recent "anti-straw" endeavours, there comes an accompanying "anti-anti-straw" rhetoric that opposes such interventions on various grounds.

For instance, disability rights activists have weighed in on the plastic-straw ban. Some people with disabilities need straws to drink because they have trouble swallowing or cannot lift or hold a cup.

A plethora of alternatives to plastic straws exist to provide practical solutions, including silicone, paper and stainless steel. Ultimately, this means all consumers have an ethical choice to make: planet or plastic?



We don't contest the importance of accessibility, which is why we do not argue in favour of an absolute outright ban on straws. Rather, we believe that "having a disability and doing your part to help the environment are not mutually exclusive."

The anti-anti-straw arguments we take issue with are often either libertarian (hands off my straws) or pessimistic (this does not address the root cause of the problem) in nature. Some of these arguments are a mix of both.

A slew of journalists and writers have recently put forward counter-arguments to interventions seeking to reduce ocean plastics. They write that targeting straws specifically will not make a significant difference to the ocean.

Quantitatively, sure, straws make up a small portion of the plastics that enter and contaminate the ocean (roughly four per cent of litter). This does not mean, however, that straws aren't worth addressing.

Why is a targeted effort towards four per cent of marine litter being attacked as useless or ineffective, when the posited alternative is no effort at all?

### TARGET "GATEWAY PLASTIC"

Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup's annual Dirty Dozen list highlights the items most commonly found on marine and freshwater shores. Straws rank ninth, below cigarette butts, food packaging, bottle caps and plas-

tic bags.

Other studies have found similar contributions to marine litter from plastic straws. The UNEP 2018 State of Plastics report also ranks straws and stirrers in seventh place for plastics found in the environment.

However, these other plastics require an entirely different approach to mitigating their entry into the environment.

Should we focus on an outright ban on cigarettes with the same vigour as we have straws? Can we vilify single-use plastic bottle beverage industry players in the same manner?

Presumably, those who are anti-anti-straw would respond accordingly, if not an order of magnitude greater, to these kinds of petitions.

### WAR ON STRAWS

Dune Ives, the executive director of the Lonely Whale Foundation, has called straws "the gateway plastic" for those on the verge of environmentalism. For example, something as mundane or "playful" as a straw can open up a larger, more serious conversation about plastic pollution, or global mass consumption even more broadly.

This point is both the crux of the "war on straws" and the crucial piece moving forward in the overall endeavour to reduce marine plastic pollution: changing the norm.

Comparisons may also be made with plastic bag bans. For example, many countries and jurisdictions

around the world have successfully implemented plastic bag bans or taxes to reduce plastic environmental pollution.

Like plastic straws, some groups suggest that because plastic bags are ultra-lightweight, they likely make negligible contributions to municipal waste. These groups also claim that banning plastic bags is more about appearances and idealism than about protecting the environment. However, like plastic bag bans, the concept of eliminating or replacing

single-use plastic (SUP) straws requires a revolution in consumer mentality.

### CHANGING HABITS

There is no radical extreme call to immediately stop the production of plastic products. Indeed, shaming plastic use has been seen as an ineffective way to get more people on board.

Plastics are imperative in many contexts, including sterile packaging and disposable tools in medicine, reducing food spoilage and increasing food safety. The movement to remove SUP straws, or even bags, should consider these nuances, but it is far from destroying the foundation of modern society.

With about eight million to 12 million metric tonnes of plastic entering our oceans each year, there is an urgent need to address our pervasive plastic problem.

We need a broad-scale and widespread approach that questions our throw-away culture, and the overwhelming trend to buy more, buy bigger and buy more often. Avoiding the use of a plastic straw may seem trivial, but it counts.

It may seem like a drop in the ocean, but what is an ocean anyway but many, many, drops?

*[Riley Schnurr is Graduate Student, Dalhousie University; Tony Robert Walker is Assistant Professor, Dalhousie University]*

# It's a savage summer in the Northern Hemisphere – and climate change is slashing the odds of more heatwaves

ANDREW KING & BEN HENLEY

*theconversation.com*

Extreme heat has hit locations throughout the Northern Hemisphere, in places as far apart as Montreal, Glasgow, Tokyo and Lapland. In the past few weeks heat records have tumbled in a wide range of places, most notably:

- a new record high temperature for Africa of 51.3°C in Algeria
- a record high temperature in Japan of 41.1°C near Tokyo
- a world record hottest overnight minimum of 42.6°C in Oman.

Heat has not been the only problem. Much of northern Europe is experiencing a very persistent drought, with little to no measurable rainfall in months. This has caused the normally lush green fields of England and other European countries to turn brown and even reveal previously hidden archaeological monuments.

There have also been major wildfires in northern England, Sweden and, most recently and devastatingly, Greece. The Greek wildfires came off the back of a very dry winter and spring.

### WHAT'S BEHIND THE WIDESPREAD EXTREME HEAT?

The jet stream, a high-altitude band of air that pushes weather systems around at lower altitudes, has been weaker than normal. It has also been positioned unusually far to the north, particularly over Europe. This has kept the low-pressure systems that often drive wind and rain over northern Europe at bay.

The jet stream has remained locked in roughly the same position over the Atlantic Ocean and northern Europe for the past couple of months. This has meant that the same weather types have remained over the same locations most of the time.

Weather is typically more transient than it has been recently. Even when we do have blocking high-pressure systems associated with high temperatures in northern Europe, they don't normally linger as long as this.



### IS IT DRIVEN BY CLIMATE CHANGE?

Although climatologists have made great strides in recent years in the field of event attribution – identifying the human climate fingerprint on particular extreme weather events – it is hard to quantify the role of climate change in an event that is still unfolding.

Until the final numbers are in we won't be able to tell just how much climate change has altered the likelihood or intensity of these particular heat extremes.

Having said that, we can use past analyses of extreme heat events, together with future climate change projections, to infer whether climate change is playing a role in these events.

We also know that increasing numbers of hot temperature records are being set, and that the increased probability of hot temperature records can indeed be attributed to the human influence on the climate.

In Europe especially, there is already a large body of literature that has looked at the role of human-caused climate change in heat extremes. In fact, the very first event attribution study, led by Peter Stott from the UK Met Office, found that human-caused climate change had at least doubled the likelihood of the infamous European heatwave of 2003.

For all manner of heat extremes in Europe and elsewhere, including in Japan, a clear and discernible link with climate change has been made.

Research has also shown that heat extremes similar to those witnessed over the past month

or two are expected to become more common as global temperatures continue to climb. The world has so far had around 1°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, but at the global warming limits proposed in the Paris climate agreement, hot summers like that of 2003 in central Europe would be a common occurrence.

At 2°C of global warming, the higher of the two Paris targets, 2003-like hot summers would very likely happen in most years. Similarly, we know that heat

exposure and heat-induced deaths in Europe will increase with global warming, even if we can limit this warming to the levels agreed in Paris.

### BUT SUMMERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HOT, HAVEN'T THEY?

For most parts of the world summers have got warmer, and the hottest summer on record is relatively recent – such as 2003 in parts of central Europe and 2010 in much of eastern Europe. One exception is central England, where the hottest summer remains 1976, although it may be challenged this year.

While extreme hot summers and heatwaves did happen in the past, they were less common. One big difference as far as England is concerned is that its extreme 1976 heatwave was a global outlier, whereas this year's isn't.

In 1976 northwestern Europe had higher temperature anomalies than almost anywhere else on the globe. In June 2018 the same region was unusually warm, but so was most of the rest of the Northern Hemisphere.

So while the persistent weather patterns are driving much of the extreme heat we're seeing across the Northern Hemisphere, we know that human-caused climate change is nudging the temperatures up and increasing the odds of new heat extremes.

*[Andrew King is ARC DECRA fellow, University of Melbourne; Ben Henley is Research Fellow in Climate and Water Resources, University of Melbourne]*

**Prohibitory order imposed in Manipur district for 2 months**

**IMPHAL, JUL 26 (PTI):** Prohibitory order under Section 144 CrPC was today clamped in Imphal West district for two months, a statement issued by the district magistrate said.

The move followed the unrest over demand for removal of Manipur University Vice-Chancellor Prof AP Pandey.

The capital city of Imphal is located both in Imphal East and Imphal West districts.

The Raj Bhavan, the Manipur University, the state secretariat and other prominent buildings are located in the high security zone of Imphal West district.

The district witnessed violence in the past few weeks over demand to remove Prof Pandey by a various students' and teachers' bodies.

A 48-hour general strike called by these organisations passed off peacefully even as violence broke out at the fag end of the agitation. There had also been attempts to enter the Raj Bhavan forcefully.



**Incessant rain affects normal life in Kolkata**

**KOLKATA, JUL 26 (PTI):** Incessant rain affected normal life in the metropolis and adjoining districts today, as the Met department forecast continuous downpour till tomorrow morning.

Continuous rain and waterlogging at different places in the city caused traffic snarls during morning rush hours.

The Met department has forecast "continuous rainfall

over the districts of Gangetic West Bengal with one or two spells of heavy shower in coastal districts, including Kolkata for next 24 hours."

With the intensity of rain being higher in the northern outskirts of the city compared to the south, many low lying areas in Dum Dum, IT hub at Salt Lake's Sector V and Rajarhat New Town were affected by wa-

terlogging. Dum Dum recorded the highest rainfall of 118 mm till 11.30 am today from 8.30 am yesterday, the weatherman said.

Alipore in the southern part of the city recorded 60 mm rainfall during the same period.

Some of the important thoroughfares in the city, including Central Avenue, College Street and Park Street were waterlogged

owing to the overnight rain. The continuous rain that caused waterlogging inconvenienced office-goers and students with traffic snarls delaying their movement.

The weatherman has forecast that the intensity of rain in Gangetic West Bengal may reduce from tomorrow morning, but is likely to increase again from Saturday.

**DRI busts multi-crore imported garment smuggling racket; arrests four**

**KOLKATA, JUL 26 (PTI):** A syndicate that smuggled undervalued and mis-declared readymade garments from China and Hong Kong SAR into India has been busted with the arrest of four people, the DRI said today.

The accused were part of a Kolkata-based syndicate operating through different ports in the country and involved in importing goods valued at over Rs 130 crore by under-valuing the price and evading customs duty of at least Rs 25 crore, a statement issued by the agency said.

Giving details, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) said a consignment imported by a local firm was examined. "On examination, mis-declared items such as ladies fancy top, girls fancy night wear, fancy swim wear, ladies waist accessories etc, in commercial quantities were found against declared items like girls slips, ladies stocking, girls night dress, washing bag etc, valued at Rs 4.62 crore against the declared value of Rs 35 lakh, and subsequently seized," it said.

The firm is part of the syndicate engaged in mis-declared imports through the Kolkata and Haldia ports. Four other firms are also part of this illegal activity.

The DRI also intercepted another mis-declared consignment of ready made garments imported by the syndicate in the name of one of these firms. The goods were

found to be mis-declared in terms of description, value and quantity.

Upon examination, the value was found to be Rs 6.62 crore against the declared value of Rs 36 lakh, the DRI said.

Three other consignments of three different firms of the syndicate were also intercepted and examined, and found to be mis-declared in terms of description, value and quantity.

"Thus, a total of five live consignments pertaining to the syndicate, having total market value of about Rs 20 crore against the total declared value of Rs 1.5 crore, have been seized," it said.

The DRI said a follow-up inquiry was conducted in Mumbai at certain premises, owned by one of the accused. The officials found Rs 77 lakh from these premises, which admittedly was the sale proceeds of such mis-declared goods, which were seized, the agency said.

Besides cash, original invoices revealing the correct and much higher values of 86 consignments imported in the past by the syndicate with respect to the five companies were also recovered.

The accused have admitted that they were involved in the fraudulent import of mis-declared goods in respect of 130 consignments, the differential value of which is more than Rs 100 crore and which involves evasion of customs duty of about Rs 25 crore, the probe agency said.

**Pema Khandu govt to launch new health insurance scheme**

**ITANAGAR, JUL 26 (PTI):** The Pema Khandu led Arunachal Pradesh government has said it would soon replace the health insurance scheme conceived by the previous regime with a new one, an official release said today.



The new Chief Minister's Arogya Arunachal Yojana (CMAAY) will enable citizens to avail cashless health services in empanelled hospitals.

"Please work overtime and ensure that the scheme is launched on August 15," Khandu was quoted as saying during the soft launch of the CMAAY yesterday.

Once launched, the scheme will offer healthcare services of up to Rs 5 lakh per

family per year.

"Launching a scheme is not difficult but successfully running it is difficult. Therefore, everything should be well studied from the very beginning and all scopes for hurdles to creep in should be nipped at the bud," Khandu said. The vision is to accord quality and cashless healthcare services to the people of the state envisaging universal health care to all by 2020, the release said.

The CMAAY will be dovetailed with the Centre's Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission and implemented by the Chief Minister Arogya Arunachal Society through its web portal by the same name.

**No one to be treated as foreigner if name not in final NRC draft: Assam CM**

**GUWAHATI, JUL 26 (PTI):** Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today sought to allay fears among people on their names missing from the NRC, saying no one will be treated as a foreigner if his or her name does not appear in the final draft of the state's citizens list.

Chairing a high-level security review meeting here, he asked officials to guide people, whose names do not figure in the National Register of Citizens (NRC), through the procedure of claims and objections.

"If someone's name does not appear in the complete draft, he or she is not to be considered a foreigner. Public should be clearly explained the process of claims and objections after publication of the NRC," Sonowal was quoted as saying by one of the officials present at the meeting. The chief minister also directed the officials not to refer any case to the Foreigners Tribunal based on the NRC final draft, the official said.

The Home Ministry had yesterday asked the Assam government not to take any action against those whose names do not figure in the NRC.

**NRC: Nagaland deploys addl troops on Assam border to check immigrants influx**



**KOHIMA, JUL 26 (PTI):** The Nagaland government was deploying additional forces along the border with Assam as preventive measure to thwart a possible influx of illegal immigrants after the final draft of NRC is published on July 30, official sources said.

The state government has also decided to form special task forces (STFs) in every district to "prevent lynching," according to a bulletin.

Home and Police Departments under the chairmanship of Nagaland Chief Secretary Temjen Toy held a meeting yesterday to decide on the preventive measures to be adopted, the state government said in the bulletin.

The state police was deploying additional forces including units of the India Reserve Battalion (IRB) along the Nagaland-Assam border, they said.

The Centre has already sent over 22,000 central paramilitary troops in order to beef up security in Assam and adjoining states in view of the publication of the final draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

"The state government is also writing to village councils to remain vigilant and not allow the illegal immigrants to enter their jurisdictions or employ them in any manner," the bulletin said.

The deputy commissioners have also been instructed to take appropriate measures and issue necessary advisories to house owners to verify the identity of tenants from the authorities concerned and not let out their premises to doubtful and suspicious people, the bulletin said.

Several areas of Assam such as Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Uriamghat and Karbi Anglong are located on the Assam-Nagaland border.

"All the districts will have Special Task Forces under their respective Superintendents of Police to prevent lynching," the bulletin said. The Centre has also asked the governments of Assam and neighbouring states to ensure peace and maintain law and order following the publication of the NRC final draft.

The NRC part draft was published on the intervening night

of December 31 and January 1, wherein the names of 1.9 crore of the 3.29 crore applicants were incorporated. On July 30, the NRC will be published.

Meanwhile, the apex students' body in the state - Naga Students Federation (NSF) -- has appealed the general public not to entertain illegal immigrants and also asked the Nagaland government to place strict mechanism to monitor the entry and exit of people.

In a release, the NSF said with the publication of the final draft of the NRC, it is being viewed that "massive migration of illegal immigrants is bound to happen if the state government does not take necessary measures to monitor their flow".

It claimed the final draft of the NRC poses the biggest demographic threat to the Assam's neighbouring states, particularly Nagaland.

Saying that the NSF would conduct spot verification in the entry and exit points of the state, the students' body further urged everyone to remain vigilant and monitor the situation closely.

## States to reach out to traders, industry to list out GST grievances

**NEW DELHI, JUL 26 (PTI):** Tax officers in states and union territories will reach out to trade and industry bodies, MSMEs, to understand their issues and grievances relating to GST and would place them before the Council on August 4.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) had earlier this week written to the GST Council secretariat asking them to write to states and UTs asking them to contact MSME taxpayers and their trade and industry associations in their respective states and UTs, collect their grievances/issues related to GST along with suggestions thereof for mitigating the issues.

The GST Council secretariat has been tasked to compile the suggestions and responses and send to the CBIC, which is the apex body for Indirect taxes in the country, by tomorrow.

Also Director General GST in the CBIC has been asked to collect information from Goods and Services Tax (GST) zones across the country and report to the GST policy wing in the board.

The 29th GST Council meeting, to be held on August 4, will discuss issues faced by the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) and ways to solve their problems.

Finance Minister Piyush Goyal had last week said that the next meeting of the Council will focus on simplification, rationalisation and relief to small tax payers.

The Council has already allowed companies with turnover of up to Rs 5 crore to file GST returns quarterly. This was hiked from Rs 1.5 crore decided earlier.

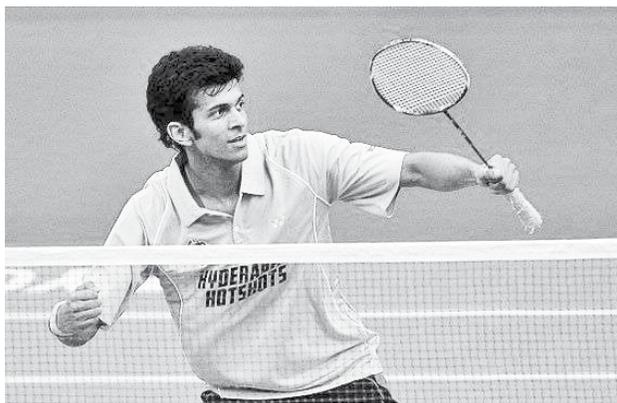
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## Indian shuttlers continue good run at Russia Open

**VLADIVOSTOCK (RUSSIA), JUL 26 (PTI):** Former national champions Sourabh Verma and Rituparna Das continued their impressive run as they progressed to the quarterfinals of the USD 75,000 Russia Open BWF Tour Super 100 tournament here today.

Also making it to the final eight were Mithun Manjunath, Subhankar Dey and Vrushali Gummadi in singles, while the men's doubles pair of Arun George and Sanyam Shukla and the two mixed doubles combination of Rohan Kapoor and Kuhoo Garg and Saurabh Sharma and Anoushka Parikh also entered the quarterfinals.

Coming back after recovering from an injury, Sourabh, who made the cut for the Asian Games after proving his worth at the selection tournaments, trounced Russia's Sergey Sirant 21-11 21-9 in a lop-sided contest. The eighth seeded Indian



will face Israel's Misha Zilberman, seeded third.

Rituparna, who won the India International Series and Polish International in 2016, had to dig deep into her reservoir to eke out a 13-21 21-17 21-19 win over second seed Ying Ying Lee of Malaysia.

The 21-year-old from Haldia, who recovered from an injury-laden 2017 to clinch her first title this season at the

All India Senior Ranking Badminton tournament in Bangalore, will square off against American qualifier Iris Wang next.

Mithun, who had won the men's singles title at the All India Senior Ranking Badminton tournament in Bangalore, defeated Japan's Koji Naito 21-16 21-13 to set up a meeting with Malaysia's Sathesitharan Ramachandran tomorrow.

The fifth seeded Subhankar, who had won titles at Iceland and Portugal last year and registered a win at the KaBaL International this year, saw off compatriot Siddharth Pratap Singh 21-11 21-19. The 25-year-old will meet second seed Russian Vladimir Malkov in the quarterfinals.

Vrushali Gummadi dumped Korea's Byeol Lim Lee 21-11 21-13 in 24 minutes. The 20-year-old will meet Malaysia's

Yen Mei Ho.

In doubles, Rohan and Kuhoo, who had won Iceland International and finished runners-up at the Lagos International last week, defeated local pair of Alexey Panov and Polina Makkoveeva 21-10 21-14. The duo will cross swords with local combo of Andrej Loginov and Liliia Abibulaeva at the Sport Hall Olympic tomorrow.

Arun and Sanyam, who won the Dutch International this season, defeated Canada's Jeffrey Lam and England's Hin Shun Wong 21-12 21-13 in men's doubles.

The mixed pair of Saurabh and Anoushka also notched up a 21-6 21-12 win over Russian combo of Artem Serpionov and Anastasiia Pustinskaia.

However, it was curtains for the seventh seeded Mugdha Agrey, as she lost to Iris Wang 4-21 13-21 in a one-sided women's singles clash.



## Arsenal's Ramsey says contract news in 'next few weeks'

**SINGAPORE, JULY 26 (AFP):** Arsenal's Aaron Ramsey says he is excited about playing under new boss Unai Emery and expects movement on a fresh contract "in the next few weeks".

Ramsey is considered key to Emery's rebuilding project at the London club after the 22-year Arsenal Wenger era but, with his contract expiring next year, the Wales international raised hopes he could agree a new deal.

Ramsey said he was encouraged by the ideas and philosophy of Emery, the former Paris Saint-Germain coach, as his agent pursues talks with the Arsenal hierarchy.

"We've yet to come to an agreement. I still have a year left and I'm really happy playing here," the 27-year-old midfielder said during Arsenal's pre-season trip to Singapore.

"There's a great opportunity this season under the new manager to go on and hopefully compete for things, so I'm looking forward to that and if something's to happen we'll see in the next few weeks or so."

Ramsey said his discussions with Emery had been "purely football" as Arsenal attempt to return to trophy-winning ways and Champions League football after finishing sixth in the Premier League last season.

The 27-year-old said there was a buzz about the team as the players take on the Spanish

coach's tactics, most notably a high-tempo, pressing game.

"I'm looking forward to playing the way that he wants to play. It's very exciting," Ramsey said.

"I think all the players are really looking forward to this season and hopefully we can hit the ground running right from the off.

"It's always difficult when a new manager comes in, for him to get his ideas across to the team and for it to just click straight away, but hopefully that will be the case. But yeah, I am encouraged by the way he wants to play and his ideas."

Fellow midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan said Ramsey, a dynamic central player who can create and defend in equal measure, was well-suited to Arsenal's new tactical blueprint.

"We're going to be very happy if Aaron stays because he's a very important player for Arsenal and obviously he's a huge player for the philosophy of Unai Emery," he said.

Goalkeeper Petr Cech added: "Obviously we would like to keep all the best players with us. Hopefully his situation will be resolved as quickly as possible."

Emery's new-look Arsenal will be put to the test when they play Atletico Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain in the International Champions Cup in Singapore on Thursday and Sunday.



## Burari deaths: Delhi Police asks CBI to conduct psychological autopsy

**NEW DELHI, JUL 26 (PTI):** The Delhi Police has written to the CBI for conducting a psychological autopsy of the 11 members of the Chundawat family, who were found dead at their residence in north Delhi's Burari, officials said today.

The police have approached the CBI's Central Forensic Science Laboratory to form a panel

of psychologists to analyse the psyche of the deceased.

A psychological autopsy attempts to study a deceased person's mental state by analysing medical records, interviewing friends and family and conducting research into their state of mind prior to death, the police said.

Ten of the 11 members of

the deceased family were found hanging from an iron-mesh in the ceiling of the house, while the body of 77-year-old Narayan Devi, the head of the family, was lying on the floor in another room of the house.

Her daughter Pratibha (57) and her two sons - Bhavnesh (50) and Lalit (45) - were among the deceased.

Bhavnesh's wife Savita (48) and their three children - Maneeka (23), Neetu (25), and Dhirendra (15) were also found dead.

Others who were found hanging were Lalit's wife Tina (42), their 15-year-old son Dushyant and Pratibha's daughter Priyanka, who was engaged last month and was to marry by the year-end.



## Salah, Mane on target as Liverpool down City

**EAST RUTHERFORD (USA), JULY 26 (AFP):** Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane made an instant impact as Liverpool came from behind to beat Premier League champions Manchester City 2-1 in their International Champions Cup friendly match.

Mane stroked home Liverpool's winner from the penalty spot deep into stoppage time to give Jurgen Klopp's

men a morale-boosting victory over an under-strength City team.

Both Liverpool and City's pre-season preparations in the United States have been disrupted by the absence of several key players who starred in the World Cup.

Salah and Mane, however, both reported for duty for Liverpool in time for Wednesday's clash at the

MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Nonetheless, it was City who took the lead just after half-time when German international Leroy Sane caught Liverpool's defence napping and burst clear to slot past Caoimhin Kelleher on 57 minutes.

Egypt star Salah however was quick to make his mark after coming on for

Curtis Jones in the 62nd minute, scoring a header with virtually his first touch of the game to level it at 1-1.

The game appeared to be heading for a draw until Tosin Adarabioyo crashed into Dominic Solanke in the area for a certain penalty.

Mane stepped up to send Joe Hart the wrong way to give Klopp's team the win.

## Steyn backs England to win Test series against India

**MUMBAI, JUL 26 (PTI):** In spite of terming the Indian team led by Virat Kohli as capable of pulling off anything, veteran South Africa paceman Dale Steyn backed hosts England to come out victors in the upcoming five-Test series because of their slightly superior seam bowling attack.

"Led by Virat this Indian team is capable of anything. I know Virat pretty well; he's quite a determined character.

Five Test matches is going to be good for one team and if one team gets on a roll the other team will be blown away," said Steyn here today.

"(But) if I know Virat it's going to be a hard fought Test series. The England bowlers

are a little bit more skilled and that's where the difference will be; that will be the tipping point," the 35-year-old fast bowler told reporters at a promotional event for 'GoPro' here today.

He also felt that with the Indian attack likely to miss Jasprit Bumrah (for the first Test) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (for at least the first three), things will not be easy for them.

"India do rely heavily on their spinners and they do a great job in one-day cricket. At the moment the wickets are pretty flat (in England) and there hasn't been a lot of turn, especially in the four-dayers in county cricket.



et. So they're going to rely on their fast bowlers. And if they don't have them, then they're in trouble," said Steyn.

"I don't like any predic-

tions. The advantage probably lies with England, obviously being at home and with such a long tour (in offing). It tends to become very long.

They (India) have been there for ODIs and are a very good touring team now. (But) if I put my money, I will probably put it on England. But it (contest) is going to be tight," he added.

Steyn, who drew level with Shaun Pollock as the highest wicket taker in Tests (421) for South Africa during the first Test of the recent two-match series in Sri Lanka, also expected a high-scoring rubber.

"I think it's (weather in England) massively dry. It's going to be a lot of runs. But they are conditions that England are used to. Home series generally goes away with home sides," he pointed out.

Steyn also felt that England will rely on their main bowlers James Anderson and Stuart Broad for wickets and if the conditions suit them in swinging the ball, India could be in trouble, but if the opposite is the case the home team will struggle to take out the strong visitors' line-up.

"If ball swings they are going to play a massive role but if it doesn't swing then how are they going to get someone like Kohli or Shikhar (Dhawan), who opens the batting, and K L Rahul (out)? They treated themselves in South Africa, which I consider is the hardest place to play cricket. They came to South Africa and

just got better. It could be true in England too.

"It's going to be a high scoring series but England's bowlers are probably just a little bit better than the Indians and that will be the difference," he explained.

On Cheteshwar Pujara's poor run, Steyn said that if the pitches are flat England will find it difficult to dismiss the Saurashtra batsman.

"One thing I know about Pujara is that he likes to bat for long hours. If the wickets are flat in England, India are going to have that source on whom they can rely on. He can bat long for them and it will be tough for England to get him out.

# Imran Khan's PTI emerges as single largest party amid allegations of vote rigging

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, JUL 26 (PTI): Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf emerged as the single largest party in the National Assembly today with its candidates winning 76 seats and leading in 43 others according to the latest unofficial results and trends in the parliamentary polls, amid rival political parties' claim of "blatant" rigging.

Jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) won 43 seats and was leading in 20 constituencies while Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by former president Asif Ali Zardari won 18 seats and its candidates were leading in 19 seats.

A single party will need at least 137 of the directly elected seats to be able to form the government on its own.

The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) -- an alliance of traditional religious parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl, Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan and Tehreek-e-Jafaria -- and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) were leading in eight seats each.



In the eastern city of Lahore, capital of Punjab province and the country's political heartland, PTI supporters rejoiced by waving flags and raising party slogans as results trickled in after the voting yesterday.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) officially announced the first result at 4.00am.

While final results are expected in the coming hours, initial outcomes show that the PTI was emerging as the single largest party in the National Assembly.

Pakistan's National As-

sembly comprises a total of 342 members, of which 272 are directly elected whereas the rest - 60 seats reserved for women and 10 for religious minorities - are selected later through proportional representation among parties with more than five per cent of the vote.

A party can only form the government if it manages to clinch 172 seats in total.

The two main parties - PML-N and PPP - have raised questions on the transparency of the vote counting process, alleging their polling agents were not allowed to

verify vote counts as is mandated by law.

PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif, who is hoping to become the next prime minister after the jailing of his brother and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a corruption case, rejected the election results, alleging "blatant" rigging.

He did not say who he believes could have rigged the polls, but allegations of manipulating the elections have been made against the country's influential military.

Awami National Party, Muttahida Qaumi Move-

ment-Pakistan, Pak-Sar-zameen Party, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan also alleged that their polling agents were either ousted of the polling stations at the time of counting or denied certified results by the polling staff.

"Some five other parties including the PPP have raised the rigging issue in polls. After consulting them, I will announce the future course of action. Pakistan has suffered today," Sharif told journalists.

He has convened a meeting with other parties this evening to discuss the issue and formulate a common strategy.

"We will fight this injustice and use all options," he said, adding that there has been a "blatant violation" of the mandate.

The ECP rejected the "blatant" rigging allegations.

In an unusual press conference early today, Chief Election Commissioner Muhammad Raza Khan congratulated the people of Pakistan for participating in the election process.

He, however, acknowledged that the delay in an-

nouncement of election results has "caused some annoyance". He stressed the delay was on account of a new system - Results Transmission System - introduced by it.

Asked about the doubts and the allegations, he said: "We will prove ourselves that we did our job right."

"These elections were fair and we have not received any complaint. If anyone has proof, we will take action," he asserted.

Elections were also held yesterday for four provincial assemblies - Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

The provincial trends showed that the PTI was leading in 120 seats in Punjab followed by the PML-N with 119 seats in the provincial assembly of 299 members.

In Sindh, the PPP was heading towards a two-thirds majority in its traditional bastion. The party was leading in 72 seats according to the latest trends available for 113 of the provincial assembly's 131 seats.

In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the PTI was heading towards a two-thirds majority with

its candidates leading in 67 seats. The KP assembly has 99 seats.

Balochistan was heading towards a hung assembly. Balochistan Awami Party was ahead in 12 seats while MMA was leading in 9. Balochistan National Party was leading in 8 seats.

The election marks the second democratic transition of power in the nation's 70-year history. The military has ruled Pakistan through various coups for nearly half of the country's history since independence in 1947.

The run up to the elections had seen a massive crackdown on the media and allegations that the military has secretly backed the campaign of Khan while targeting his political opponents.

The ECP was also criticised for deploying the Army both inside and outside of polling stations.

Controversy has also arisen over allowing militant groups to participate in the election. The leading among them are Mumbai-terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed-led banned Jamat-ud-Dawa's candidates who suffered humiliating defeats.

## Extremist, banned groups fail miserably in Pak elections



ISLAMABAD, JUL 26 (PTI): Extremist and banned groups, including Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed-backed Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek, have failed miserably in Pakistan's general elections despite their massive campaign.

Hundreds of individuals linked with hardline and banned groups were competing in the polls but so far, according to the unofficial results, none of them was seen as winning a seat in the national or provincial assemblies.

Only few could garner a respectable number of votes including Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Ludhianvi whose name was removed from a banned list called Fourth Schedule ahead of election and allowed to contest, inviting international backlash.

Geo TV reported that Ludhianvi received more than 45,000 votes but was nowhere close to the victory.

Before the elections, concerns have been raised in the country over the participation of hardline Islamist groups in large numbers.

Mili Muslim League linked with Saeed fielded dozens of candidates from the Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek as it was denied recognition by the Election Commission of Pakistan. Saeed himself led the campaign by addressing several rallies but his candidates were not seen anywhere near victory.

Hafiz Talha Saeed, the son of Saeed, contested from NA-91 seat from Sargodha (about 200-km from Lahore), the home town of the Jamaat-ud Dawa leader. Saeed's son-in-law, Khalid Waleed, was a candidate in PP-167.

Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), a Sunni sectarian group, fielded more than 100 candidates but none of them came closer to victory, according to unofficial results so far.

Muttahida Majlis-e-Aml (MMA) was the biggest religious alliance of several leading parties was leading on only eight seats of national assembly despite massive campaign by its leader which included influential Maulana Fazlur Rehman.



## Nearly 250 dead in IS attacks on south Syria: New toll

BEIRUT, JUL 26 (AFP): The death toll in coordinated Islamic State group suicide bombings and shootings in southern Syria rose to nearly 250 overnight, more than half of them civilians, a monitor said today.

Yesterday's attacks hit Sweida, a Druze-majority province mostly held by the government which had remained relatively insulated from the country's seven-year civil war.

The death toll climbed steadily throughout the day and into the night, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group, said.

"The toll is now 246 people dead, including 135 civilians," said Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman.

The others killed were pro-government fighters or residents who had taken up arms to

defend their villages.

"The toll keeps rising as civilians who were wounded are dying and people who were unaccounted for are found dead," Abdel Rahman told AFP.

The onslaught began with a triple suicide bombing in the city of Sweida, which was followed by attacks with guns and explosives on villages to its north and east. A fourth blast hit the provincial capital later in the

day.

IS claimed the assault hours later.

At least 45 jihadists died carrying it out, the Observatory said.

It was the worst bloodshed to hit Sweida province since the civil war began in 2011.

Syrian state media reported deadly attacks on Sweida and surrounding villages but did not give a specific toll.

## Acting New Zealand Prime Minister tells Australia to change its flag

WELLINGTON, JUL 26 (AFP): New Zealand's Acting Prime Minister Winston Peters today called on neighbouring Australia to change its flag, saying it had pinched the Kiwi banner's design and was causing confusion.

"We designed it and they borrowed it and if we wanted to clear the matter up they should change their flag," Peters told reporters.

"It must be patently obvious that all over the world people are confused. I've been in places like Turkey and elsewhere where they've confused our countries on the basis of those flags. It's not helpful."

Both the New Zealand and Australian flags are dark blue with the Union Jack emblem of former colonial power Britain in the top right corner. The only major difference is that the Australian version has six white stars, five representing the Southern Cross, while New



Zealand depicts the constellation with four red stars.

Peters, who is temporarily leading the country while Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is on maternity leave, feels

strongly about the flag issue.

The 73-year-old also raised it earlier this week, complaining "we got there first with this design".

Opposition leader Simon Bridges

ridiculed Peters' flag preoccupation, accusing him of populism and labelling him "a poor man's Donald Trump".

Bridges said New Zealanders he had spoken to were concerned about topics such as the economy and healthcare. "They never raised with me changing the Australian flag. That's weird by even his (Peters') standards," he told parliament.

New Zealand adopted its flag in 1902, while Australia's was not officially recognised until 1954.

However, the Australian version had been used informally since 1901 and both countries say similar designs were common throughout the late 1800s. New Zealand held a referendum on changing its flag to a silver fern design in 2016, with the proposal defeated 43 per cent to 57 per cent.

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## FIRST LOOK of Natalie Portman as she suits up for NASA love triangle film!

It's the first look at the upcoming NASA film 'Pale Blue Dot' starring Natalie Portman. The Academy Award-winning actress, 37, wore a blue spacesuit in a newly-released promotional still for her upcoming film Pale Blue Dot, in which she plays an astronaut named Lucy Cola.

The Israel-born actress looked barely recognisable from her usual glamorous self, sporting a brown bob and minimal make-up.

Natalie was sporting a lanyard necklace with identification badges attached while standing in a conference room.

She posted the shot on



her Instagram account, writing, 'In character as Lucy Cola. @hilstill #sneakpeek.'

The mother-of-two - who raises son Aleph, seven and daughter Amalia, one, with husband Benjamin Millepied, 41 - leads an all-star cast in

the motion picture, including Jon Hamm, Zazie Beetz, Dan Stevens and Ellen Burstyn.

The plot sees Cola return home after a space mission and begin an affair with her colleague Mark Goodwin (Hamm). Stevens plays the role of Cole's husband Drew, while Beetz is cast as a NASA trainee.

While the characters in the movie are fictional, the storyline is inspired by a NASA affair that captivated the media's attention in 2007.

NASA Capt. Lisa Nowak was famously arrested in connection with attempted murder and kidnapping charges.

Investigators said Nowak traveled from Houston to Orlando - wearing a diaper to save time on bathroom breaks - in pursuit of an Air Force captain named Colleen Shipman, who was dating her former lover, astronaut Bill Oefelein.

She carried items including a pepper spray, a wig, a mallet, a BB gun and a four-inch knife. Nowak confronted Shipman while she was sitting in her vehicle and pepper sprayed her, officials said.

Nowak would later enter a guilty plea to burglary and misdemeanor battery, serving two days in custody and staying on probation for a year.

## Ryan Reynolds at center of 'Home Alone' revise!

Home Alone is to become the latest film franchise to get a reboot - but with a twist. Ryan Reynolds is developing a new stoner version of the holiday classic, titled 'Stoned Alone'.

According to Deadline, it centers on a 20-something year-old 'weed-growing loser' who misses the plane for a family ski trip.

Left home alone, he makes the most of his free time by getting high. But paranoia sets in, and he starts to imagine people breaking into his house.

Meanwhile, a gang of thieves actually does break in, forcing the hero to defend his house while stoned out of his mind. Reynolds will produce the comedy, via his Fox-based production company Maximum Effort.

The original Home Alone, starring a then-ten-year-old Macaulay Culkin, was released in



1990. It grossed more than \$476million of a budget of just \$18million.

It held the record for highest grossing live-action comedy in the US for 21 years, until it was finally surpassed by The Hangover Part II in 2011. John Hughes wrote and produced the original, with Chris Columbus directing.

Augustine Frizzell is set to direct the new version, with Kevin Burrows and Matt Mider penning the script.



**DOUBLE TROUBLE!** Mila Kunis and Kate McKinnon oozed glamour as they attended the premiere for their highly anticipated new comedy, The Spy Who Dumped Me, in Los Angeles.

## Josh Duhamel and Eiza Gonzalez split over 'bad timing'...

Josh Duhamel and Eiza Gonzalez split because of bad 'timing'. The 45-year-old actor began dating the actress five months ago, following his split from his estranged wife Fergie - with whom he has four-year-old son Axl - last year.

But he decided to call time on their romance recently after realizing they were on 'different pages' when it came to the future of their relationship.

A source said: "Josh Duhamel and Eiza Gonzalez have ended their relationship. Josh truly enjoyed Eiza's company but is ready to move on. Eiza was very busy with work and so was Josh. She was willing to do whatever it took to make it last, but Josh just isn't in that place at the moment."

While they did end things partially because of their work schedules, they also called it quits because they truly are on different pages and the timing just wasn't right. She was looking for a serious relationship and wanted a life partner. He wasn't at that point. Josh is highly independent and he values his space and free time. It was hard for Eiza to deal with being apart so much."

The insider claims the 'Love, Simon'



actor is still mourning the his split from Fergie, and 'didn't have the same goals' as Eiza, 28, who was looking to settle down.

They added: "Josh and Fergie's break up is still very raw and painful for him. He worked hard to move on from his eight-year marriage and Eiza was a wonderful companion for him during a very difficult time."

After Josh and Fergie split, he wasn't expecting to get involved with anyone so soon and, in the end, Josh didn't have the same goals as Eiza. Josh and Fergie have been talking often. He has done everything to keep their parenting relationship intact, but he also misses her"



## Lower Prices Under GST

The Government has reduced the GST rates on more than 100 products on the recommendation of the GST Council w.e.f. 27.07.2018. List of products is available at URLs: [goo.gl/9kTw7Y](http://goo.gl/9kTw7Y) and [goo.gl/hvA6iy](http://goo.gl/hvA6iy).

### GST Rates Slashed



## Anti-profiteering Measures To



## Consumers

The Government is committed to ensure that the consumers enjoy the benefit of lower prices of goods and services under GST.

Consumer's interest is protected by the National Anti-profiteering Authority, which may order:

Reduction in prices

Imposition of penalty

Return of the amount not passed on with interest @ 18% to the recipient

Cancellation of registration of the supplier

Affected consumers may file an application, before the **Standing Committee on Anti-profiteering** if the profiteering has all-India character OR before the **State level Screening Committees**, if the profiteering is of local nature.

### Contact Details

**Standing Committee on Anti-profiteering**  
Second Floor, Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, Bhai Vir Singh Marg, Gole Market, New Delhi - 110001.  
Tel No.: 011-23741537, Fax No.: 011-23741542  
Email: anti-profiteering@gov.in

**State Screening Committees on Anti-profiteering**  
Contact details of State Screening Committees on Anti-profiteering are available at URL: [goo.gl/aLPqma](http://goo.gl/aLPqma)



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Tweet us at @askGST\_GoI for any GST related query