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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION FOR SHYARI

# Last government pilfered, we will be austere: CM

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha president, Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] has attended the thanksgiving programme of his party for Shyari constituency at Chandmari here on Sunday. The programme was also attended by Ministers, Kunga Nima Lepcha, who also happens to be the area MLA, Sangha MLA Sonam Lama and Kabi-Lungchok MLA Karma Loday Bhutia along with other leaders, workers and supporters of SKM.

In his address, the CM alleged that the administration and finances of Sikkim have totally collapsed under the past 25 years of SDF government.

He informed that the SKM government will soon release a White Paper on the State's finances and that this would expose SDF government's misdeeds and corruption. He stressed that it was important for the people to know the truth of the earlier government.

The CM also assured that the State government would gradually fulfill all its promises and announcements.

He contended that



people have started witnessing a change in the system in the barely two weeks that SKM has been in office and assured that the people will see even more of positive change in the near future.

He stated that aus-

terity was a priority of the government and that "serious and big decisions" on this line will be announced in the coming days.

Mr Tamang said, "I have no desire to enjoy on government expendi-

ture like the last CM as I have grown up in a simple family. I will continuously work for the people by living in a simple government house and using an ordinary Scorpio vehicle."

He pointed out that

the government has declared a 5-day working week in the interest of government employees and urged them to work sincerely for the people in all working days.

He directed the Police administration not to compromise on law and order issues and maintain peace and security. He directed that strict action be taken against anyone involved in illegal activities in the name of the party.

Likewise, the area MLA expressed his deep gratitude towards the people of the constituency for returning him for the second consecutive time to the Assembly on an SKM ticket.

He also assured to continue to work sincerely for the development of the area and the welfare of the people of the constituency.

An SKM press release issued by party vice president, Birendra Tamling, informs that before the programme, the CM offered prayers for the peace and security of all Sikkimese people at Enchey monastery and also gave a patient hearing to the issues and demands of Enchey monks and assured to work on these in the coming days.

## We have to unitedly overcome threat to Sikkim's peace: Chamling

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**

Sikkim Democrat-ic Front president, former Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, in a message to the people of Sikkim released today, has rued that the State was witnessing "lawlessness and turmoil" at present and appealed on all to unitedly overcome the threat to Sikkim's peace and security.

Reminding people that peace was something every Sikkimese was proud of and some-

thing that his government of past 25 years had nurtured and ensured, Mr Chamling shares that this was now under threat.

His allusion is clearly to the incidents of post-poll violence targeting SDF supporters.

"I am with my beloved Sikkimey janta forever fighting for their rights; and you too have to be with us to protect our security and pride of being Sikkimese," he writes.

He further informs

that he was currently in New Delhi and has already met the Prime Minister and the Home Minister and has apprised them "about the situation in Sikkim."

"I happy to share with you that they gave a very positive response. I will be in Delhi for a few more days, calling on other political party leaders. Once I am back to the state, I will be visiting different constituencies, meeting and interacting with them," he concluded.

## CM inspects Rongyek Jail



**GANGTOK, 09 JUN [IPR]:** Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] made a surprise visit to the Central Jail here at Rongyek and took stock of the facilities there and also enquired after the wellbeing

of inmates there.

He was received by Jailer Vinod Tamang and accompanied by the staff and local people who warmly welcomed the Chief Minister.

The CM assured all

possible support from the state government which included discussion of urgent issues and necessary help such as for repair works, establishment of gym facilities and allowance.

## GATC album with Danish record label in April 2020

**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**

Girish 'n The Chornicles, the rock band fronted by Gangtok's Girish Pradhan, has stayed true to its hard rock credentials for nearly two decades now. And their perseverance continues to impress. The band has developed a faithful fan-base and continues to create waves and make headlines.

In the latest instance, the band has signed up with a Denmark-based record label, Lion's Pride, and while the negotiations and contract signing stretched out for months and deadlines kept getting finished, in the band's own words, "All's well that ends well."



Their album with Lion's Pride is slated for an April 2020 release.

As the band informs, it all started on 31 December, 2018 when GATC released its music video for, "Rock the Highway" on YouTube.

The song caught on and was made available on all online stores and platforms such as Spotify,

YouTube music, iTunes, Apple Music, Napster, Pandora etc. They were featured on Sleaze Roxx Magazine and Classic Rock Magazine included the song in their "Songs of The Week" section.

Soon after, Lion's Pride got in touch with the band and expressed interest to produce an

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## Samatha Sahitya Academy felicitates award-winners



**SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**

Samatha Sahitya Academy, in collaboration with DK International Research University, California, organized a felicitation ceremony here at Gangtok for national and international awardees from different fields.

SSA is an organization which honors and celebrates the noticeable and remarkable contributions of people from different walks of life.

SSA felicitated 75 national and international awardees from different part of India today while the awards were already conferred on 23 May at Dr Ambedkar Bhavan, Pune, to individuals who have professionally excelled in the fields of literature, arts, sports, social work, academics, and Shumang Leela.

Attending the occa-

sion as chief guest, Minister Loknath Sharma expressed his gratitude towards the organization and thanked the awardees for their immense contributions to society and also mentioned that the coming generation should try to learn the art of helping and contributing towards the nation and its people.

Speaking on the occasion as guest of honor, Prof Thakur S Powdye, former Education Minister of Bhutan, shared that the literature was very close to him, as being a writer himself, he can sense the flavor that literature and art give to people.

"Both men and women have made their contributions to society which proves that we all might seem different but

turn to pg02

## Shiva Hang leaves for 12-hr run in Mumbai

**SAGAR CHHETRI  
GANGTOK, 09 JUN:**

Long distance runner L Shiva Hang Limboo is leaving on Monday to participate in a 12-Hour Stadium Run at Mumbai University ground. The run, which is scheduled to be held from 5 AM to 5 PM on 15 June, is being organised by Bengaluru-based NEB Sports.

Shiva Hang is a student of the Amar "Marathon Man" Subba and is participating in this ultra marathon for the third time. On his debut appearance, he had stood



on fourth, covering 101 KMs at Bengaluru in August 2018 and then come second covering 119.70 KMs in 12 hours in his

second participation at Delhi in December last.

Shiva Hang expressed satisfaction with his

turn to pg02

## Farewells, pension processes for hundreds of CAPF personnel held up due to govt indecision

**NEELABH SRIVASTAVA**

**NEW DELHI, JUN 9 (PTI):** Hundreds of retirements and subsequent pension procedures for personnel of various Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) have been stuck since May 31 as the Ministry of Home Affairs is yet to take a final decision over fixing a benchmark superannuation age in these uniformed services.

The headquarters of the four major CAPFs -- the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Border Security Force (BSF), the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), here are continuously getting messages from their field units, seeking directions on the way forward. But they are being asked to "maintain

status quo till the government takes a final decision," multiple officials in these forces said.

A number of orders issued by these forces, which have been seen by PTI, state action on this front has to be kept on hold till "a final decision by the MHA and the Department of Personnel and Training".

The ceremonial farewells and processing of retirement papers have been halted for for hundreds of personnel from the constabulary up to the commandant level (senior superintendent of police equivalent) since May 31, the officials said.

While some forces have either asked the retirees to stay at home till a final decision is taken, others have asked them to keep coming to office but re-

frain from doing any work, they added.

The development pertains to a January order of the Delhi High Court where it had called the current policy of different age of superannuation in the four forces of CRPF, BSF, ITBP and SSB as "discriminatory and unconstitutional" and said it created two classes in the uniformed forces.

According to the present policy, all personnel in the other forces under the MHA -- the Central Industrial Security Force and the Assam Rifles -- retire at the age of 60.

However, in CRPF, BSF, ITBP and SSB, the personnel from the ranks of constable to commandant retire at the age of 57, while those above them superannuate at the age of 60.

The Supreme Court on May 10 dismissed an SLP (special leave petition) filed by the Union government in which the latter had challenged the HC order, stating that such matters were in the realm of policy decisions and not for the courts to decide.

With the apex court declining to make any intervention, it was clear that the government would have to take a final decision and make uniform the retirement age in all these forces by either fixing it at 57 or 60 years, a senior official in the security establishment said on the condition of anonymity.

As the SC order came on May 10, it was expected that the ministry would take a decision at least by May end so

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## Women's Council delegation calls on CM



**GANGTOK, 09 JUN [IPR]:** Members of Sikkim Women's Council called on Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] today.

The 14-member delegation, led by SWC president Rukmini Sharma, placed the demand for a proper office complex for the organisation.

They also briefed the CM about the various

activities being carried out by the Council and informed him about the various areas on which they focus such as women's empowerment and other social causes.

The CM also informed them about the various programmes of the state government and he assured to look into their demands.

### Farewells, pension...

that the retirees are not affected and no legal problems arise. But that did not happen, he added.

The new government was sworn in on May 30 and it was expected that a final decision would be taken in a week, but an order is overdue, the official said.

In the meantime, a number of officials who were retiring on May 31 approached the courts and got a stay against their superannuation, thereby increasing litigation, he said.

It is understood that senior officials in the MHA have sent in a file on the subject for final consideration of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who took charge last week.

Whenever the final decision comes, either farewells will be accorded and pension papers prepared or administrative arrangements will be made to accommodate the manpower in case the retirement age is enhanced to 60 years, another official said.

These four CAPFs are deployed for a variety of security operations, including guarding borders, conducting anti-Maoist operations and combating terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Delhi High Court bench of Justice Sanjeev Narula had struck down the existing rules in its January order, saying such discrimination would lead to "lowering of the morale" of the CAPF personnel.

The court had asked the government to implement its order in four months time, but the government went into appeals even as the general elections in the country kicked in in March.

The court had also noted that the Seventh Central Pay Commission, which had examined the issue, by a majority of 2:1 had favoured enhancement of the retirement age of commandant and below ranks in the four forces, on the lines of the other two.

These forces, after the conclusion of a series of meetings on the subject over the last few months, had recommended to the government that "in case retirement age is raised to 60 years, it may be explored if a system is put in place to make yearly assessment to weed out those who are not fit to continue in the force consistent with its objective."

The CRPF, thickly deployed in operations in Left Wing Extremism affected states and in the counter-terrorism grid in the Kashmir Valley, has been the lone dissenter of the proposal. It argued that it requires to keep its age profile young, keeping in mind its heavy occupation in various combat theatres within and outside the country.

### Samatha Sahitya...

we are members of human family and it's our responsibility to work towards nation and our people," he said.

The function was followed by cultural event which showcased traditional dancers and musicians from various states.

The function concluded with a degree distributing ceremony to eight individuals who have completed their academic work from DK International Research Foundation California.

### GATC album...

album with GATC. That album will now release in April next year.

Meanwhile, their music also toched Cary Hubbs, a filmmaker based out of the Czech Republic, who has since come over to Bengaluru where the band is based and shot a music video for one of the songs to be included in the upcoming album.

As they say, Rock On!

### Shiva Hang...

preparation and practice and is expecting to improve on his performance this time.

"I have prepared hard for this competition and I will give my best to cover more distance to improve my performance," he said.

In his preparation, he covered 95 KMs in 12 hours on the hilly trails of Yuksom and surrounding areas.

"Seeing his recent performances and preparation, I am very hopeful that my student, Shiva Hang, will cross 120 KMs to finish on top position this time," Amar Subba said.

He expressed his gratitude towards the organisers, Nagraj Adiga and Sunil Shetty, for extending free entry to Shiva Hang in the competition.

# OMAS meets, discusses way forward for artists



### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 9 JUNE:**

After a hiatus, the Organisation of Musicians and Artistes of Sikkim [OMAS], convened its general body meeting today in the capital. The meeting was attended by the executive body, members, artists from creative pursuits across the spectrum including music, dance, fashion, photography and films.

Sonam Gyaltsen Bhutia, one of the founders of the organization, informed that the general body meeting was meeting to discuss and deliberate on a way forward for artists including boosting the ecosystem for their future work.

Another key member of OMAS, Rinchen Shenga shared details of future plans of the organisation including membership drives, publishing an an-

nual magazine, annual events, OMAS awards and charity shows for various causes.

Pertinent issues were discussed at the meeting which touched upon many problems being faced by artists like the absence of a proper payment mechanism and construction of art infrastructure in the state.

Tshering Wangchuk Lepcha, another OMAS founder-member who is now in active politics affiliated with the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, reminisced about the early days of the organisation and the work it has done in the past, notable among which were charity shows for the Uttarakhand Flood victims, Nagaland Earthquake disaster, Nepal Earthquake victims and for North Sikkim.

The need for a Local Artists Protection Act,

which can act as a shield for artists against any injustice or exploitation was also stressed at the meeting.

"The need for issuance of artist cards by the government can also play a huge role towards boosting artist interests," said Pranay Giri, one of executive members said.

Stressing on getting paid with dignity, the members also held that entertainment and other taxes should not be levied on local Sikkimese artists which would encourage more to take up the creative arts as a career option.

They also discussed future art infrastructure projects that could come up while also underlining the various economic and tourism advantages the state can enjoy following an art boom in Sikkim.

Many artists presented the current scenario of art and culture in Sikkim and stressed the urgent need to re-energise the people, particularly the youth, to take up creative pursuits.

Proper and timely payment for artists, particularly by governmental departments featured prominently in the discussions focusing on discrepancies on the part of the government and the society.

Sanjeev Gurung, SKM's CLC president (Gangtok), journalist Yougan Tamang, entrepreneur Sonam Choden Katsop, actor Sonam Barphungpa, fashion designer Tshering Dolma, singer Pawan Rai and Karma Tempo Bhutia of Photography Club of Sikkim were among those who attended the meeting and shared suggestions.

## CJ arrives in South Sikkim



**NAMCHI, 09 JUN [IPR]:** Chief Justice, High Court of Sikkim, Mr Justice Vijai Kumar Bist, arrived at the Power Department Guest House here in Rabongla today.

Upon his arrival, the Chief Justice was given a guard of honour by Sikkim Police led by Prakash Tiwari.

The CJ was accompanied by the Registrar

General, NG Sherpa, Principal Secretary to the Chief Justice, Jyoti Kharka, OSD Subarna Rai along with District & Sessions Judge (South) Jiwani Kharga and other officials from district court, Namchi.

The Chief Justice is on a two-day tour to South and West Sikkim during which he visited various sub-division courts.

## CM prays at Enchey



**GANGTOK, 09 JUN [IPR]:** Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] today visited Enchey Monastery here. He was accompanied by Cabinet Ministers KN Lepcha,

Karma Loday Bhutia and Sonam Lama. The Chief Minister offered prayers on behalf of all Sikkimese people and assured all possible support to the Monastery.

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## Monsoon catches up in Kerala; depression over Arabian sea likely

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUN 9 (PTI):** Several parts of Kerala received moderate rainfall on Sunday, a day after the southwest monsoon set in over the state, even as a low pressure area formed over the Arabian Sea. The Meteorological Department said the low pressure was expected to intensify into a depression in the next two days and subsequently, into a cyclone.

Forecasting isolated heavy rainfall and squally weather in coastal areas of the state and in Lakshadweep islands, it advised fishermen not to venture into the sea till June 13. A bulletin issued by the department at 3 pm said the low pressure area has formed over the southeast Arabian Sea and adjoining Lakshadweep area and the east-central Arabian Sea under the influence of the cyclone circulation.

"It is very likely to concentrate into a depression during the next 48 hours over south-east and the adjoining east-central Arabian Sea. It is very likely to move north-north-westwards and intensify further into a cyclonic storm subsequently," it said.

The weather report also predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall (115.6-204.4 mm) in iso-

lated places of northern Malappuram and Kozhikode on June 12.

After a delay of a week, the monsoon hit the Kerala coast on Saturday, marking the official commencement of the four-month rainfall season in the country. The district collectors have been asked to be on alert in areas where landslides had occurred during the monsoon last year, sources in the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) said.

KSDMA Member Secretary Sekar Kuriakose said based on the India Meteorological Department inputs, arrangements have been made to face it institutionally. "This year, the incident response level is up to the taluk levels, besides the district and state level. We have designated officers for handling different scenarios up to the taluk levels," he told a television channel.

District collectors have been given a monsoon preparedness handbook which is part of the Orange book that details out all different standard operating procedures.

This is the first time that such a handbook has been prepared in which 30 different departments have been addressed specifically, indicating their roles and responsibilities.

### LOST

THILEN DORJEE TAMANG s/o BAL BIR TAMANG lost diploma certificate and mark-sheet (DCST) while travelling from Namchi to Gangtok on 02 Apr, 2019. Mobile no. 9652829763/9800394732.

## ~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

### URGENTLY REQUIRED:

**Urgent Recruitment for a waiter with atleast 3 years experience and one kitchen helper. Contact: Hotel Paramount, Dentam, West Sikkim- 9735909625 / 8348285444**

### PLOT FOR SALE:

**Vacant plot measuring 0.38 Acres for sale at Amdo Golai, Deorali. Contact: 09717191985/097474651223**

### INTERESTED TO BECOME

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**Interested candidates may contact**

**: Deepa Yoga Centre at**

**Mob: +91 7432043719/ +91 8170953919.**

### LAND FOR SALE

A vacant plot measuring 0.38 Ha. (16552.80 sq – ft) is for sale at Amdo Golai (above the main road), Gangtok. For more information please contact – 9717191985/9474651223.

### WANTED

**HOUSEKEEPER/BABYSITTER.**

**Contact: 9933443442/9800500696.**

### KUTSE SHEGU

The 49th day Kutse Shegu of Late Doma Bhutia w/o Lakpa Thendup Bhutia who left for her heavenly abode on 01.05.2019 falls on 18.6.2019 (Tuesday). All relatives, friends & well wishers are requested to join us in offering prayers for the departed soul at our residence at Below Law College, Helipad, Lower Burtuk, Gangtok, East Sikkim.

**Lakpa Thendup Bhutia(Husband), Kesseng Norbu Bhutia(son) & all family members.**

**Mob: 9800655921/ 6294186876.**





## Glam Ms Sikkim zonal auditions completed

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**SINGTAM, 09 JUN:**

The final zonal audition of Glam Miss Sikkim and Glam Miss Teen Sikkim 2019 was held here at the community hall today. 21 contestants auditioned. The event is organised by the Siana Glam

World. The Mega audition which comes next is likely to take place shortly in Gangtok, informs chairperson, Siana Glam World's Sikkim franchise, Srijana Bista.

The pageant aims to provide a platform and opportunities to girls in the fashion world.

## Integration of Brahmos missiles into Sukhoi jets fast-tracked

New Delhi, Jun 9 (PTI): In a strategically significant move, the government has decided to fast-track integration of Brahmos supersonic cruise missiles into over 40 Sukhoi fighter jets under a closely-guarded project.

Official sources said the decision to speed up implementation of the "strategic" project was taken nearly six weeks after the Balakot air strikes and subsequent Pakistani retaliation.

State-run aerospace behemoth Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) and the BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd (BAPL), an Indo-Russia joint venture, are implementing the project. Considering IAF's requirement, both HAL and BAPL were directed to expedite implementation of the project so that it can be completed much before the scheduled deadline of December 2020, sources said. The Brahmos, the world's fastest supersonic cruise missile, coupled with the superlative performance of the Sukhoi aircraft will give the IAF a strategic reach and will allow it to dominate the ocean and the battle fields in the region, according to an assessment by the IAF.

Sources said the government had carried out a review of IAF's February 26 air strikes deep inside Pakistan's Balakot and the consensus was that the adversary would not have dared to retaliate the next day if India possessed superior air defence system as well as strike capability.

"In this context, the government decided to take a series of steps to bolster the IAF's overall combat capability which included fast-tracking integration of Brahmos missiles into Sukhoi jets," said a source. Once the project to integrate the Brahmos missiles into the Sukhoi fleet is over, the IAF's capability to strike from large stand-off ranges on any target in sea or land is expected to go up manifold.

In 2016, the government had decided to integrate the air-launched variant of the Brahmos into over 40 Sukhoi fight-

er jets.

Though actual work on the project started by end of 2017, its implementation has been very slow, sources said.

The 2.5-ton missile flies almost three times the speed of sound at Mach 2.8 and has a range of 290 km.

The range of the missile can be extended up to 400 km as certain technical restrictions were lifted after India became a full member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) last year. Brahmos missile is the heaviest weapon to be deployed on India's Su-30 fighter aircraft.

There was a view in the IAF that if it possessed high levels of "technological asymmetry", then it would have been able to inflict heavy damage on Pakistan during the adversary's unsuccessful aerial raid on February 27. The government is undertaking several measures to strengthen the IAF's combat prowess, sources said, adding the HAL has been specifically told to put additional manpower and resources to fast-track the Brahmos project. The government is of the view that the planned induction of Rafale aircraft with deadly Meteor beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile (BVRAAM), procurement of S-400 air defence missile system and integration of Brahmos on Sukhoi will provide India a significant advantage over Pakistani Air Force, sources said.

The air-launched variant of the Brahmos was successfully test fired from a Sukhoi-30 combat jet on November 22, 2017, marking a major milestone to enhance the precision strike capability of the air force. A fleet of 40 Sukhoi jet are undergoing structural modifications at the state-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) for integration of the missile on them. The integration of the missile on Sukhoi aircraft is a very complex process involving mechanical, electrical and software modifications of the Su-30 jet, officials said.

## Striking Lions organize summer camp for army kids



**SUMMIT REPORT**

**KALIMPONG, 09 JUN:**

In a move to instill a spirit of adventure and love for nature, the Striking Lion Division based here is organizing a seven-day children's summer camp from 09 to 14 June 2019.

70 boys and girls from various units of the Kalimpong Military Station attended the camp.

Various events are planned for the camp to provide children with wholesome outdoor exposure, opportunities to explore nature, make new friends, develop new and diverse interests and create lasting memories.

## Will continue to serve NE people, expand NPP's base in other states: Sangma

Shillong, Jun 9 (PTI): A day after the EC granted the NPP the status of a national party, its president and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has asserted that his party would never compromise on the aspirations of northeast people, while trying to expand its base beyond the region.

Addressing the party's first northeast co-ordination committee meeting here on Saturday, Sangma said the National People's Party (NPP) aims to take part in the country's policy-making decisions and work for the voiceless and the marginalized sections.

"Our motto and mission to serve the people of northeast will always be of supreme importance, as we begin a fresh chapter to expand our footprint in new regions and strengthen our organization in the states where we already have a presence," he said.

An ally of the BJP in Meghalaya, the Sangma-led party on Friday became the first political outfit in the northeast to have earned the tag of a national party.

It has been recognised as a state party by Election Commission (EC) in four states Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

"The recognition of NPP as a national party is a great achievement for the people of northeast. I take this opportunity to congratulate each member of the party, who has worked tirelessly in different states.

"It is a moment for all of us to remember the ideals of our late leader (party's founder) Purno Sangma, whose contributions have made this possible. Though he is not among us today, his ideals will live forever," the CM said.

Talking about the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, which the BJP has promised to bring into force despite massive protests in the region, Sangma said his party would urge the Centre to hold parleys with all stakeholders and build confidence among people before making a move.

"We will never compromise on the regional aspirations of the people of northeast and engage in consultations to protect and safeguard the interest of the indigenous communities," he maintained.

The 'national party' tag is a "testimony of how every member has worked for it, brick by brick", the NPP boss said.

"It is the because of collective contribution of all states, including

candidates who contested and lost the polls and MLAs who won, that the party was accorded the status.

"The NPP is not just a party from the northeast, but a party purely created by the northeast to fulfil the aspiration of our people," Sangma added.

The NPP has 21 MLAs in the 60-member Meghalaya House, four in the Manipur House and five MLAs in Arunachal Pradesh.

It had two MLAs in Nagaland until they merged with the ruling Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party earlier this year.

Veteran leader and former chief minister D D Lapang, who was also present at the meeting, said the party will prepare a road map to take its ideologies and vision to every nook and corner of the northeast.

"It is our responsibility to carry forward the onus of representing the regional aspirations at the national level.

The NPP has remained committed and it will continue to fulfil its agenda," Lapang said.

Among others who were present at Saturday's meet were Manipur Deputy Chief Minister Joykumar Singh and legislative party leader of Arunachal Pradesh Muthu Mithi.

## Delay in monsoon pushes rainfall deficiency to 45% in first 9 days of June: IMD

**NEW DELHI, JUN 9 (PTI):**

A delay in the arrival of monsoon has pushed the country's rainfall deficiency in the first nine days of June to 45 per cent, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Monsoon made an onset over Kerala on June 8, a week after its normal arrival date. This has also delayed its arrival in different parts of the country. The country received only 17.7 millimetres of rainfall as against the normal precipitation of 32.4 millimetres, which comes to around 45 per cent, it said.

The rainfall deficiency in June could be higher due to the sluggish pace of the monsoon and a weak El-Nino, a phenomenon associated with heating of Pacific waters.

An on-going cyclonic circulation in the Arabian Sea could slow down the progress of monsoon over the next few days, it said.

"A low pressure area has formed over south-

east Arabian Sea and adjoining Lakshadweep area and east central Arabian Sea. It is very likely to concentrate into a depression during the next 48 hours over southeast and adjoining east central Arabian Sea. It is very likely to move north-northwestwards and intensify further into a cyclonic storm subsequently," the IMD data said.

Of the four meteorological divisions of the country, the deficiency was 66 per cent --- the highest in the country --- in central India that covers the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Goa, Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

Gujarat and Kutch and Saurashtra sub-divisions of central India have clocked a deficiency of 100 per cent, it said.

The situation is particularly grim in Maharashtra, especially in Vidarbha and drought-hit Marathwada where the deficiency touched 70 per cent and 50 per

cent, respectively. To add to the woes, the reservoir levels in these areas have hit low levels.

The monsoon deficiency in east and north-east India division comprising Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal and all the northeastern states was 49 per cent, the IMD said.

Deficiency in the south peninsula which covers all the south Indian states was 29 per cent, the least in the country. Monsoon has covered some parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Rainfall deficiency in northwest India division comprising all the north Indian states was 32 per cent.

On the other hand, mercury continues to soar in the north Indian plains and central India.

Heat wave to severe heat wave conditions are very likely to prevail over Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, southern parts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh during the next two days, it added.

## Will meet PM to congratulate him on reelection, report on violence not on agenda: Bengal Guv

**KOLKATA, JUN 9 (PTI):**

West Bengal Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi Sunday said he will be meeting Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday to congratulate him on his reelection, dismissing media reports that he would brief the prime minister on the post-poll situation in the state.

He, however, expressed concern about the clashes between the Trinamool Congress and the BJP on Saturday in North 24 Parganas district in which four persons were killed.

"I had sought an

appointment with the prime minister to congratulate him (on winning the Lok Sabha elections and becoming the PM again). I have come here for that," Tripathi told PTI over phone from New Delhi.

On media reports that he would be submitting a report on the violence during his meeting with Modi, the governor said, "There is no such thing scheduled. I did not have time earlier (to go to Delhi to congratulate Modi) and had sought time for a meeting with the PM. I have been given time to-

morrow." Tripathi, however, extended his condolences to the families of the deceased and victims of Saturday's clashes.

In a statement issued by Raj Bhavan, the governor appealed to all concerned to keep a check so that violence do not recur and peace and harmony prevail in the state.

"Governor Tripathi is very sad at the unfortunate loss of lives and properties of the citizens. He extends his heartfelt sympathy for the families and near and dear ones of the deceased," the statement said.

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## Noninvolvement Feeds Arrogance

*...a prescription which poisons democracy*

The dictionary defines “noninvolvement” as a lack or emotional engagement and failure or refusal to become involved.

In most contexts, this term takes a more policy/ political term in that it applies to nations in the line of “nonalignment”. When so practiced, it is mostly a good thing so long as it is about distancing from “politics” and not humanitarian situations because had it been followed, USA would not have been fighting so many wars instigating the creation of monsters like ISIS and then so overtly undermining the significance of the UN... or even ignoring the science of climate change for that matter.

The same principle, however, does not apply to the citizenry with the same merits. In fact, noninvolvement among a people has the opposite effect of what it does on nations. When a people refuse to engage, democracy gets reduced to election cycles, accountability is replaced by bombast and the sense of service among representatives is subsumed by the arrogance of “leaders”. When things come to such a pass, policy decisions become dictates, the noxious fringe crawls out from under the rocks and dances madness in the public domain. And no, the social media activity of trolls does not qualify as involvement; if anything, it is a false equivalent for public participation because what it seeks to do is abuse/ shout discourse into meek acceptance. And as this army wins more and more battles, it helps create a mob of bots programmed not to analyse but applaud the demagoguery of flag-waving chauvinists and subvert democracy so much that the idea of supreme and all-powerful leaders does not offend anymore and no one even blinks when the term in office of an elected government is referred to as rule.

A people self-assured in their ignorance make for easy pickings when it comes to seeding fears because when one refuse to get involved and hence get informed, they cannot handle complexities anymore and gravitate towards the black & whites of the alt-Right. We know we are in trouble when hate can be peddled as righteousness and not even get called out. You know democracy is being compromised when dictation replaces consultation and no one has a problem with it.

Democracy is supposed to ease people’s minds, allowing them their disagreements and differences and still providing the space where they can be themselves without having to constantly look over their shoulders. Fail to remain involved, and every expression of democracy becomes conditional and violence punctuates the lives of lay people more often than should ever be allowed. We have seen this trend gather pace in the recent past when suspicions, bans, deregulation, demonization (okay, also demonetization), forced nationalism, increased supervision bordering on surveillance and pulpit-mongering have come to define governance and gain meek acceptance. Arrogance is an undesirable quality in anyone, but when it comes to leaders, it is dangerous. And we continue feeding it with our noninvolvement.

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# Young women in Soweto say healthy living is hard. Here’s why

ALESSANDRA PRIORESCHI  
*theconversation.com*

Data from South Africa has shown that over two thirds of young women are overweight and obese. This predisposes them to non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Most women are not exercising enough, and consumption of processed and calorie-dense foods and high amounts of sugar is common.

It was this knowledge that sparked the establishment of the Health Life Trajectories Initiative. It’s being run in South Africa, India, China and Canada and aims to provide interventions that can help young women stay healthy before, during and after pregnancy. In South Africa, this randomised controlled trial will provide one-on-one support as well as peer group sessions to over 6000 young women. The idea is provide them with information, and to help them set and maintain goals for healthier lifestyles.

Researchers from the Medical Research Council and Wits University’s Developmental Pathways for Health Research Unit are running the South African arm of the study. We wanted to start by better understanding our target population – that is, young women aged between 18 and 24 living in Soweto. Soweto is a large, densely populated urban township which comprises one third of Johannesburg’s population. Soweto is becoming rapidly urbanised, but the majority of people are still very poor and struggle to provide food for their families.

We conducted a series of focus group discussions and in depth interviews to unravel health behaviours, barriers and facilitators to wellbeing and health with young women from Soweto who had not yet had a child. We also asked them about what sorts of interventions they’d prefer to support and guide them.

The women offered important insights that showed it’s not enough to simply promote healthy eating and exercise without considering the very

real environmental and structural constraints present in South Africa.

### BARRIERS TO HEALTHY CHOICES

The 29 participants spoke about many different facets of health. These included happiness and mental wellbeing, faith, social support, body image, and lifestyle behaviours.

They identified many barriers to healthy eating, among them the cost of and access to healthy food options. Some women also said they had little access to exercise facilities such as gyms and were afraid to exercise on the streets because they feared being assaulted or harassed. One woman said:

“No, I don’t feel safe because we have drug addicts, traffic, women trafficking: it’s not safe for us to walk in the streets.”

The women we interviewed painted a picture of an environment in which healthy behaviours are difficult to implement or sustain. One said:

“Small businesses that are opening up in my community and they all sell fries, literally they just all sell fries...”

Women told us that cheap and unhealthy fast foods are on every street corner: “bunny chow” – hollowed out bread stuffed with curry – vetkoek (a fried dough bread stuffed with different fillings) and fried chips are affordable and available within a few steps of most houses. As a result, women did not want to go out of their way to purchase healthier, more expensive foods.

Our interviewees also didn’t feel able to demand that healthier food be bought for their homes, because many were not contributing financially and were therefore not in a position to control food purchases. Women reported being financially dependant on relatives and male partners.

### EXERCISE

They also said that opportunities for physical activity were neither provided nor prioritised for women in Soweto. Some women said that a lack of facilities made it difficult for them to participate in any exercise, as they did not have access to gyms or

fields to exercise.

Other women told us that there were gyms, sports grounds, parks, and even free aerobics classes at community halls in their area. However these facilities often get vandalised quickly, and can no longer be used. More importantly, they didn’t feel safe enough to exercise on the streets, perhaps by jogging or running. They also felt unsafe walking around in leggings or tights. Women were fearful of human trafficking, sexual assault, and violence – very real issues in this community.

Crucially, our research found that young women did not see obesity as a sufficient reason to change their behaviour. But they said they would be motivated to exercise and eat better if they were diagnosed with a non-communicable disease like diabetes.

This suggests that obesity has become normalised in South Africa – and this needs to be addressed.

### POLICY INTERVENTIONS

These findings are now being worked into our interventions, and we are cognisant of the contextual realities that may affect young women’s ability to change their lifestyles. We hope that this research, along with whatever findings emerge from our interventions, will inform policy makers and motivate them to implement necessary changes in this community.

Women in Soweto and in South Africa in general need support to live healthier lifestyles. This support needs to come from policy makers. If South Africa does not step up and support young women by providing them with access to safe spaces and affordable healthier foods, and by controlling the oversupply of unhealthy options, the country may not be able to curb its ever increasing rise in obesity and related non-communicable diseases.

*[the writer is Associate Director and Researcher at the Developmental Pathways for Health Research Unit (DPHRU), University of the Witwatersrand]*



# How to build a business that lasts more than 200 years – lessons from Japan’s shinise companies

INNAN SASAKI  
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Japan is home to a number of the world’s oldest companies. There is even a specific Japanese term for companies that have survived for more than a century, retained ownership within the same family and continued plying the same trade for the duration. They are called “shinise” firms.

Kyoto, Japan’s ancient capital, holds the highest proportion of these century-old firms. They operate in traditional sectors such as sake brewing, sweet making and arts and crafts. The Gekkeikan sake company, for example, is nearly 400 years old and has been run by 14 consecutive generations of the Okura family. Sasaya Iori, meanwhile, is now in its 303rd year of making and selling sweets.

Colleagues and I interviewed the people who run these shinise firms and many others to understand their relationship with the local community. We found that a key part of their success was maintaining high social standing in the city amid a changing business environment characterised by loss of traditional values and practices, changing consumer tastes due to Japan’s Westernisation, and increasing competition from larger and internationally operating firms.

Their high social standing part-

ly comes through the traditional emphasis of these firms. As well as producing and selling traditional Japanese crafts, they embody and reproduce local community values. In doing so, the shinise firms are like custodians that protect local traditions. And, culturally, there is a love of tradition in Japan that gives these firms a cachet with consumers and the local community.

Shinise firms are also very much embedded in the communities where they are based. As well as maintaining family ownership and the quality of products, many of our interviewees emphasised their commitment to the welfare of the community. For example, according to a representative from Kyoto’s local government we spoke to, most of the owner-managers of shinise firms do something to help the local community, such as supporting the city’s famous Gion festival.

### LONG-TERM FOCUS

One of the reasons that shinise firms last so long is that they put a strong emphasis on longevity and tradition. This is reflected in the way the firms are organised, as the president of Unsoudou, a 128-year-old company producing wood block prints and art books, told us:

“Usually, in a firm, the CEO holds the position for two to four years, and he has the mission to satisfy the expectation of shareholders in that

short period. We do not publicly list our stocks. Our way of doing is the opposite of this. We do not want to make profit in the short term.”

Shinise firms are also cautious about swerving from their original focus and constantly balance opportunities to innovate with maintaining tradition. As the Unsoudou president said:

“I am grateful to my ancestors, because we are doing business with what they left us. I feel very strongly about this ... If there is a business opportunity, I do not reject it. However, I do not think exploiting this opportunity is always the best option, because it is just a small part of a long history. What is important is to create a business that can live for a long time.”

While the sizes of the shinise firms vary, many of them prioritise sticking to their existing commitments over seeking short-term profit or rapid growth. If they grew, they did so while maintaining these commitments.

Through these commitments, shinise firms performed a cultural function in preventing cultural erosion at the local community level. In exchange, they are endorsed with high social standing by the local community which brings them a lot of custom in the face of market pressures.

### THE DARK SIDE OF SUCCESS

We also found there to be a dark side to the success of these age-old shinise firms. At least half of the 17 companies we interviewed spoke of hardships in maintaining their high social status. They experienced peer pressure not to innovate (and solely focus on maintaining tradition) and had to make personal sacrifices to maintain their family and business continuity.

As the vice president of Shioy-oshiken, a sweets company established in 1884, told us:

“In a shinise, the firm is the same as the family. We need to sacrifice our own will and our own feelings and what we want to do ... Inheriting and continuing the household is very important ... We do not continue the business because we particularly like that industry. The fact that our family makes sweets is a coincidence. What is important is to continue the household as it is.”

Innovations were sometimes discouraged by either the earlier family generation who were keen on maintaining the tradition, or peer shinise firms who cared about maintaining the tradition of the industry as a whole. Ultimately, we found that these businesses achieve such a long life through long-term sacrifice at both the personal and organisational level.

*[the writer is Lecturer in Strategic Management, Lancaster University]*



## Queer short film contest highlights LGBTQ issues

**NEW DELHI, JUN 9 (PTI):** Taking pride in queer identities, breaking the stereotypes of gender binary, and accepting one's sexuality were some of the themes of winning entries at a queer film contest here.

As part of the celebration of the ongoing Pride Month, Blued, a social networking application for the queer community, organised 'Blued Queer Flicks' where short movies on LGBTQ topics from independent filmmakers were invited.

Five winning entries, from a total of 60, were screened at the Russian Centre of Science and Centre on Friday.

From the journey of a transgender woman towards motherhood to the ordinary lives of middle-aged men who dream to abolish concrete societal boundaries, the films portrayed a mix of emotions, trials, and tribulations of the queer.

Sumit Pawar for "Khwaish" and Shruti Kulkarni for "Outcast by Birth" jointly took home the first prize for their respective short films.

While "Khwaish" showed the life of a middle-aged man's desire to find a same-sex companion in a city that refuses public acceptance of alternate sexualities, "Outcast by Birth" attempts to reflect upon the social problems faced by the many Indians who consider themselves LGBT by birth.

The second position was held by Praveen Vinxx for "The Holy Mother", while Yadavendra Singh for "The Mirror" and Naveen Tokas for "Inaat" took home the third and fourth prize, respectively.

Speaking at the event, Anjali Gopalan of Naz Foundation acknowledged the unavailability of spaces for showcasing narratives on sensitive issues of the LGBT.

"I didn't think this was possible in India. This is the first online LGBT short film contest done in India. People should be aware of the needs of this community, which is why we need more of such events," she said.

She also added that there was an "urgent need to have anti-discriminatory laws which would empower the queer".

Apart from trying to bring queer voices to larger audience, the organisers said that the social media platform is also running a anti cyber-bullying campaign.

"The team is collaborating with Queerhythm, a support group for the LGBTQI community in organizing a anti cyber-bullying campaign, offering a 24/7 helpline to address incidents of harassments on dating platforms," Sanyam Sharma, Marketing Director, Blued, told PTI.

# Tension prevails in WB's Sandeshkhali, police looking for 'missing' persons

**KOLKATA, JUN 9 (PTI):** Tension prevailed on Sunday in strife-affected Sandeshkhali in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas, with the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Trinamool Congress accusing each other of orchestrating Saturday's violence that allegedly claimed at least four lives.

A huge contingent of police officers has been deployed in the village and its surrounding areas under the Nyajat police station in the district, where the violence broke out in the evening, to prevent the tension from escalating.

While the BJP leadership on Sunday claimed that five of its supporters were killed in the clash, the TMC said that six of its workers were missing.

The bodies of one TMC worker and two BJP supporters have been identified by family members at a local hospital.

As of Sunday morning, police are carrying out search operations to trace the persons alleged to have gone missing in what has been deemed



as the "worst political violence" following the 2019 general election.

State BJP general secretary Sayantan Basu Saturday said three of his party workers -- Sukanta Mondal, Pradip Mondal and Shankar Mondal -- have been shot dead, while state minister Jyotipriyo

Mallick maintained that TMC worker Kayoom Mollah has been killed in the clash.

In claims and counter-claims over the political fallout, both the parties have stated that several of their workers have gone missing.

Continuing his tirade against the ruling

party, BJP leader Mukul Roy, who is scheduled to lead a seven-member delegation of party MPs to the violence-hit area on Sunday, accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of instigating political strife in Bengal through her speeches and meetings.

He also maintained

that "five members of the saffron party were killed and several others went missing" during the clashes at Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district.

Speaking to reporters at the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport here on his arrival from Delhi, Roy

alleged that local TMC leader Shahjahan Sheikh has masterminded the attack on BJP workers.

The state Food and Supplies minister, on the other hand, said his party apprehended that the "missing workers" might have been killed.

Mallick, who is also leading a party delega-

tion comprising state ministers to Sandeshkhali, told PTI, "We apprehend that six TMC workers have been killed and their bodies dumped in water."

He alleged that it was the BJP workers who had attacked TMC supporters during a procession, and accused the saffron party of bringing in outsiders to foment trouble.

The minister also asserted that the BJP workers were killed from bullets fired by their "own people" and denied that TMC men were involved in their deaths.

Contending that his party wants "peace to prevail", Mallick said that he has asked his partymen not to hold any meeting or procession without the district leadership's permission.

Sources in the TMC and the BJP had claimed on Saturday that the clashes broke out over removal of saffron party flags in the area.

Local people said several shops and houses were vandalised during the violence, which broke out during a TMC procession.

## Editors Guild condemns arrest of journalists

**NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW, JUN 9 (PTI):** The Editors Guild Sunday condemned the "arrest" of a journalist, and the editor and the head of a television channel over alleged objectionable content related to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, describing the police action as an "authoritarian misuse of laws" and an effort to intimidate the press.

An FIR was registered against Noida-based journalist Prashant Kanojia at Hazratganj police station in Lucknow on Friday night in which it was alleged that the accused made "objectionable comments against the CM and tried to malign his image".

Kanojia had shared a video on Twitter and Facebook where a woman is seen speaking to reporters of various media organisations outside the CM's office, claiming that she had sent a marriage proposal to Adityanath.

"The Editors Guild of India condemns the arrest of Noida-based journalist Prashant Kanojia and the editor and the

head of a Noida-based television channel, Nation Live -- Ishita Singh and Anuj Shukla -- by the Uttar Pradesh government," the Guild said in a statement.

"Mr Kanojia has been accused of uploading a post on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on social media and the Nation Live head and editor have been charged with having aired a video on the UP chief minister," it said.

"The police action is high-handed, arbitrary and amounts to an authoritarian misuse of laws," it added.

When contacted by PTI on Saturday, a senior police official initially said that Kanojia had been arrested. But he later clarified that no arrest had been made.

The Guild sees it as an effort to intimidate the press and stifle freedom of expression, the statement said.

The FIR is based on the journalist sharing on Twitter the video of a woman claiming a "relationship" with the chief minister of Uttar

Pradesh, the Guild said, adding that the television channel had broadcast a video on the same issue.

"Whatever the accuracy of the woman's claims, to register a case of criminal defamation against the journalists for sharing it on the social media and airing it on a television channel is a brazen misuse of law," the Guild said in its statement. To give the police powers to arrest, provisions of Section 66 of the IT Act have also been added, it said.

The FIR in this case is not filed by the person allegedly affected, but suo motu by the police, the Guild noted.

"This is a condemnable misuse of law and state power," it said.

Some Lucknow-based journalist bodies, however, said Kanojia's "arrest" will act as a "deterrent" in future for those who do not bother to verify facts.

President of Lucknow unit of Uttar Pradesh Journalists' Association (UPJA), Bharat Singh, said, "People like him (Kanojia) lack basic jour-

nalistic ethics and basic knowledge of journalism. Without verifying and cross-checking facts, he has published a story against the chief minister of a state. Is this journalism? You have taken the allegations levelled by a woman on their face value and did not even bother to get these authenticated before running the story." "The arrest of the journalist will act as a deterrent for others in future," he added.

President of Lucknow Working Journalist Union, Shivsharan Singh Gaharwar, echoed similar sentiments.

"The act of the said journalist was definitely wrong, as he shared the objectionable content of the video without verifying facts. Without verifying or confirming the facts, one should refrain from publishing or broadcasting a story," he said.

According to the verified Twitter handle of Kanojia, @PJkanojia, he is alumnus of IIMC and Mumbai University and is associated with some media organisations.

## Centre sends advisory to West Bengal govt, expresses "deep concern" over continuing violence



**NEW DELHI, JUN 9 (PTI):** The Centre Sunday expressed "deep concern" over continuing violence in West Bengal, saying the "unabated violence" even after the Lok Sabha polls appears to be a failure on part of the state government.

In an advisory to the West Bengal government, the Ministry of Home Affairs also asked it to maintain law and order, peace and public tranquility.

"The unabated violence over the past weeks

appears to be a failure on the part of the law enforcement machinery of the state to maintain the rule of law and inspire confidence among people," the advisory said.

The central government expressed "deep concern" over continuing violence in West Bengal even after the general elections, an MHA official said.

It was "strongly advised" to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to maintain law and order, peace and

public tranquility, the advisory said. "It is also requested to take strict action against officials found delinquent in discharge of their duty," it said. According to the MHA, the latest reports indicated that four persons were killed on Saturday in post-poll clashes in North 24 Parganas district.

Earlier too, there have been reports of violence in which people lost lives in various parts of West Bengal, the official said, quoting the advisory.

## U'khand: IMF seeks permission to retrieve bodies from Pindari glacier side

**PITHORAGARH (U'KHAND), JUN 9 (PTI):** The Indian Mountaineering Foundation, the apex body of mountaineering organisations in the country, has sought the permission of authorities in Uttarakhand to begin an expedition from Pindari glacier side to retrieve the bodies of mountaineers spotted near Nanda Devi East peak.

Letters seeking permission in this regard were written to Uttarakhand Chief Secretary and Pithoragarh District Magistrate V K Jogdande by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), a press release by the Foundation said here.

Bodies of five of the eight-member team were spotted by IAF helicopters near an unscaled peak close to the Nanda Devi East peak on June 3.

The IMF said its team of expert mountaineers with an experience of climbing 5,500 meter-high peaks in the Himalayan region had requested the district administration on multiple occasions to allow them to run the expedition to retrieve the bodies, but they were denied permission.

"The district magistrate did not even hear out the four British who were lifted from the base camp recently," the

Foundation complained.

"Mark, the deputy leader of the expedition, wanted to get down to see if any of the eight-member team survived, but he was not permitted to get down from the helicopter," it alleged.

The IMF added as the bodies were lying towards the western ridge of Nanda Devi, they could be easily retrieved by conducting an expedition from Pindari glacier side in Bagdwar district.

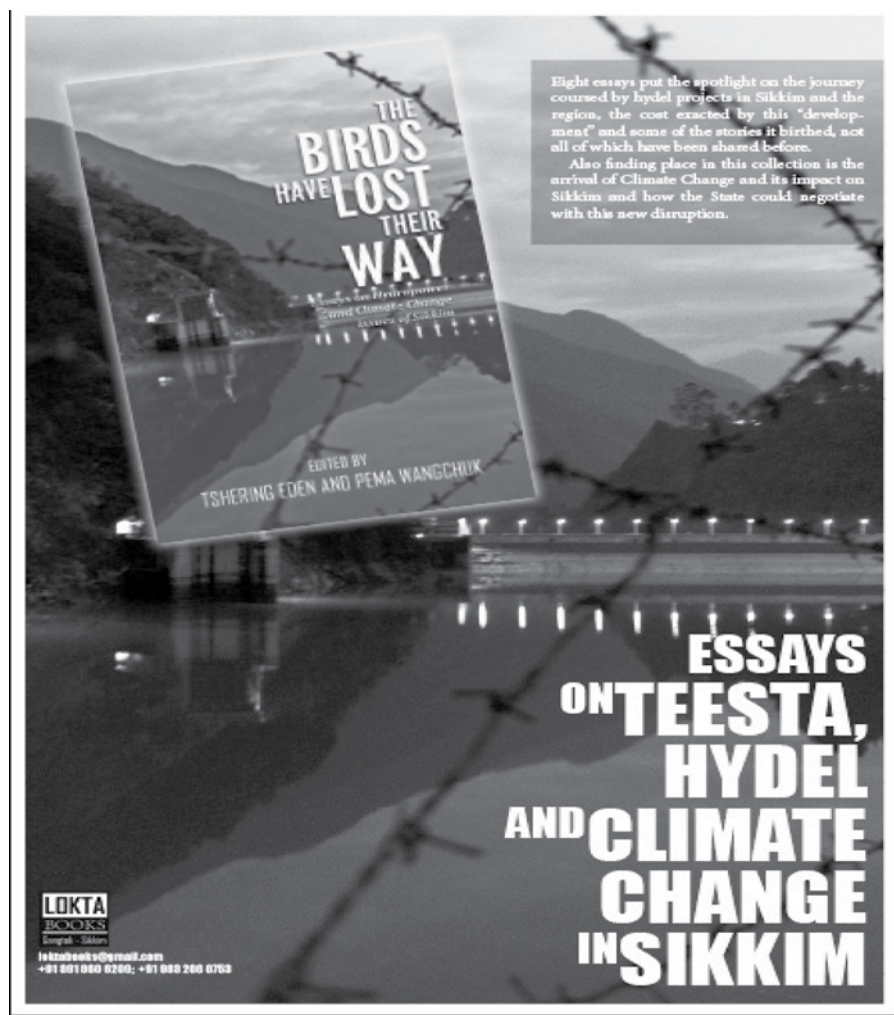
Jogdande said the administration ran an expedition to retrieve the bodies with the help of the Indian Air Force (IAF)

for three days continuously, but due to adverse weather conditions, no success was achieved.

"We have chalked out a plan to retrieve the bodies by running a manual expedition from Pindari glacier side, situated towards the western side of the spot, with the help of ITBP and SDRF mountaineers soon," he said.

When asked to comment on the IMF's request, the district magistrate said the administration cannot risk the lives of more people.

"The expedition to retrieve the bodies will be run through authorised and expert mountaineers from ITBP," he said.





# Eye on semifinal spot, India take on Uzbekistan in final pool match

**SAUMOJYOTI S CHOUDHURY**  
**BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 9 (PTI):** India will start overwhelming favourites against Uzbekistan when the hosts take on their lower-ranked rival to seal a semifinal spot in the FIH Series Finals hockey tournament, here Monday. After thrashing Russia 10-0 in their tournament-opener, world no. 5 India scrapped past 21st ranked Poland 3-1 in the second match.

India are now sitting atop Pool A with maximum points from two games and are virtually assured of a direct berth in the semi-finals because of a better goal difference.

But they cannot afford to be complacent against world no. 43 Uzbekistan in their final Pool A match as two places are up for grabs from this event for the FIH Olympic Qualifiers, to be held in October-November this year.

“World rankings do not matter at all as the gap between teams are very small. Rankings are there only for the Inter-



national Hockey Federation (FIH) to place teams in certain order,” India coach Graham Reid had said. After a clinical performance against Russia, the patchy show against Poland showed that consistency is an area, which has to be addressed at the earliest.

The Indians created numerous scoring opportunities against Poland but the forward-line lacked finishing.

“One of my main goals is to get consistency in terms of performance. Sometimes you have to

learn to play at the highest level and develop the practice of winning. With Australia that was always our goal, to play in the final of every tournament,” the coach said. With the level of opposition not the best, the Indian citadel has hardly been tested in the tournament.

Reid has shuffled his two goalkeepers PR Sreejesh and Krishan Bahadur Pathak in the four quarters in the previous two games, giving them more game time. But what is a worrying factor is that both Sreejesh and

Pathak have hardly been tested so far.

Along side Nilkanata Sharma, skipper Manpreet Singh has been one of the outstanding performers for India in the tournament so far as he not only held the midfield together but also scored goals.

But it is the form of Indian strikers which would be a cause of concern for Reid.

The likes of Akashdeep Singh, Mandeep Singh and fit-again Ramandeep Singh, who returned after almost one

year, will have to take more responsibility in India’s quest for Tokyo Olympic qualification.

As per the format of the tournament, the top two teams of each pool will directly qualify for the semifinals, while the second and third placed sides will play in the cross-overs to enter the last-four round.

Meanwhile in other matches of the day, USA will play Asian Games champions Japan in Pool B while South Africa will square off against Mexico.

# Warner using bat ‘sensor’ to counter opposition threat



**KUSHAN SARKAR**  
**LONDON, JUN 9 (PTI):** Australian opener David Warner is meticulously preparing for the tougher battles ahead in the World Cup by using a new device on his bat

a sensor that stores important data like back lift angle and maximum bat speed.

The International Cricket Council had approved the usage of bat sensor back in 2017 but save the Australian batsmen, not many have used it over the past two years.

A Bengaluru based company named ‘Smart Cricket’ has introduced its version of sensor chip device ‘Bat Sense’ which Warner has been using to collate data to counter the likes of Jasprit Bumrah.

The sensor chip is fixed on the top of bat handle. Till the time batsman is batting, the data generated on the chip

gets stored in a mobile app through ‘cloud storage’.

Warner’s bat sensor has revealed some interesting insights about how he is doing his homework against Bumrah.

For example, the optimum bat speed to counter a Bumrah Yorker, as per available data is 70-75 km but Warner is trying to lift his bat speed to 85 to 90 kmph.

For a slinger like Bumrah, the angle of backlift, is expected to be around 120-125 degrees with the bat coming down from the first slip. But for Bhuvneshwar Kumar, the backlift needs to be in line with the keeper.

For spinners, the backlift angle changes to 160 degrees minimum and can go up to 175 degrees.

“Earlier, the coaches would depend on their natural instinct about

angle of backlift or bat speed or the distance between the bat and body. I believe if accurate data can help coaches in guiding their players, then why not,” former India keeper Deep Dasgupta, who is associated with the project, told PTI.

Right now, the bat sensor usage is at a nascent stage where collating data is the primary objective.

“The data that will be available is of primary nature. Once a large chunk of data is collected across a cross section of players, it can be suitably processed by the coaches. Then players can accordingly change their game as per the available data,” said Dasgupta.

As of now, none of the current India players are using the bat sensor, which could well be another game-changer in the near future.

# Neesham, Ferguson complement each other: Williamson



**TAUNTON, JUNE 9 (PTI):** New Zealand captain Kane Williamson heaped praise on pacers James Neesham and Lockie Ferguson following a comprehensive win over Afghanistan and said their role will be crucial in the tougher battles that await the team in the World Cup.

Neesham took a career-best five for 31 while Ferguson bagged four wickets as New Zealand bowled out Afghanistan for 172 here on Saturday. Williamson led from the front in the chase with an unbeaten 79 off 99 balls, firing his team to a resounding win in 32.1 overs. “I wish I could claim some of the credit. Jimmy (Neesham) bowled beautifully. It was a different surface that perhaps suited him a little bit more someone who runs in and hit the wicket hard. We saw that the guys from both sides who did that got a bit of bounce and movement out of it,” he said.

“He bowled some beautiful deliveries and broke a crucial partnership at the top. He deserves all credit he’ll get for a five-for, which is outstanding. We know how talented Afghanistan are and I know it first-hand from guys I’ve played with. They’re very savvy, very cagey in how they operate and so it was a really good performance from us.”

Talking about the role of Neesham and Ferguson going forward in the tournament, he said: “Those two guys (Ferguson and Neesham) have been crucial in very dif-

ferent roles for us. We’ve seen examples of both thriving in last three games. “When Jimmy is bowling well, he can get good pace out of the surface. They complement each other along with the other bowlers in the attack.” Against Bangladesh last time out, New Zealand were cruising in their chase of 245 but a middle-order collapse ensured some late-night drama before a nervy two-wicket triumph.

Losing Martin Guppitt to the first ball of the innings against Afghanistan could have sparked similar events but Williamson’s unbeaten effort and Ross Taylor’s 48 paced a much more comfortable seven-wicket victory.

That’s now three successful chases in three World Cup games and the skipper is confident the Black Caps are heading in the right direction.

“The nature of having chased three times means that it’s been a little bit different each time and we’ve had to adapt to chase the total down clinically each time,” said Williamson. “This game was an improvement on the last game, which is main thing. Every day you turn up, you have different opposition at a different ground it’s about adapting to what is in front of you.

“It was nice to build a couple of partnerships that’s important when you’re chasing. With the three mid-level totals we’ve been chasing, you want to get a bit of stability going into later overs,” he added.

# Temperament one of Roy’s biggest strengths at the moment: Morgan



**CARDIFF, JUNE 9 (PTI):** England captain Eoin Morgan feels a significant improvement in temperament has led opener Jason Roy to stellar success in the last two years.

Roy smashed his sixth ODI century in the last 18 months to get England back to winning ways in the World Cup here on Saturday.

After a player of the series effort in the warm-up ODI series against Pakistan, Roy is in a rich vein of form that contrasts markedly with his efforts two years ago in the Champions Trophy.

Out of form and, by the semi-final, out of the side, Roy has had to earn his way back in at the top of the order alongside Jonny Bairstow. And after hitting 153 to set a total out of Bangladesh’s reach, his skipper paid tribute to Roy’s development on the big stage.

“Probably one of his biggest strengths at the moment is his temperament. It might surprise a lot of people, me saying that, but if you look at the guy as he’s matured from a county cricketer into the full-blown international cricketer he is now,” said Morgan.

“The temperament he shows at different stages of his innings and how he goes about picking off his

boundaries and the areas in which he scores; I think from the start of his international cricket to right now, I think there’s a considerable difference.”

Morgan explained why Roy is such a handy player for England.

“To be honest, it’s a luxury to have him, because probably particularly you guys more than anybody, and then people in the general, you know, cricket fans talk about scoring hundreds.

“He’s an exception to the rule that just goes on and gets big scores, and it can range from 140 or 180, and the rate he gets it at, just he’s so difficult to defend. He scores all the way around the ground. He takes really good bowlers down, as well. He hits good balls for boundaries.”

The only blot on England’s copybook appeared to be an injury to Jos Buttler during his majestic half-century that prevented him from taking the field in the second innings.

But Morgan allayed any fears over the wicket-keeper’s hip problem, calling the decision to remove him precautionary with England’s next game against the West Indies at the Hampshire Bowl, Southampton, not

until Friday. Morgan meanwhile added that after defeat to Pakistan at Trent Bridge, his side have turned a corner.

“It was probably an improvement on the other day. Right throughout the whole game, right from the start, just the platform we started with, obviously it changed. We continued to lose wickets throughout our innings against Pakistan.

“Today that opening stand really did lay a solid platform. I don’t think it was that easy up front. We were trying to score runs, but we didn’t go anywhere.”

Jofra Archer and Mark Wood then bowled with serious pace in Bangladesh’s reply to secure a 106-run victory, much to Morgan’s delight.

“Yeah, it’s unbelievable, and I think probably the slow nature of the pitch made it more difficult to play.

“The way Jofra finished, as well. Obviously we’ve seen him start extremely well, coming back in the middle and towards the end, not under any pressure but obviously we’d like to bowl them out to try to get our rate up for the tournament. We wanted to bowl them out. From about the 44th over, he wanted the ball,” he added.

# Black-crested Bulbul sighted in Dudhwa as experts conduct bird count

**LAKHIMPUR KHIRI, JUN 9 (PTI):** The black-crested Bulbul was spotted after several years in Dudhwa as the counting of birds during summer season was held from June 7 to June 9, an official said on Sunday.

Field director of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (DTR) Ramesh Kumar Pandey told PTI, “Experts from Katarniaghat Foundation, Ruhelkhand Nature Club and WWF-India apart from Dudhwa nature guides visited a number of locations inside Dudhwa National Park and Kishanpur wildlife sanctuary. The experts photographed the winged species and recorded their data.”

“The data collected by counting teams would be compiled and analysed in

next few days to ascertain the number of bird species found in Dudhwa,” he added.

Pandey informed that during the counting, experts sighted the black-crested Bulbul, which was sighted in Dudhwa after several years.

The black-crested Bulbul is a bird species with a black head and deep yellow body.

Notably enough, during the winter bird-count, the experts had sighted five new species of birds in Dudhwa which included Maroon Oriole, Eurasian Sparrowhawk and short-eared eagle owl.

The sighting of black-crested Bulbul after several years has come as a great joy for

the authorities and bird lovers, he said.

Renowned ornithologist Asad Rahmani, who arrived in Dudhwa on Sunday told PTI, “The summer bird count helped to discover the native bird species in Dudhwa as in winter, migratory birds also join here.”

Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, which is located on the India-Nepal border, is home to over 450 bird species, tigers, leopards, wild elephants, swamp deer, one-horned rhinos besides hundreds of other wild animals and reptiles.

Its rich wildlife, massive forest cover and fabulous flora and fauna attracts tourists and wildlife research scholars every year.

# India to help train 1,000 civil servants of Maldives

**NEW DELHI, JUN 9 (PTI):** The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), India’s leading civil services training institution, has entered into an agreement with the Maldives Civil Services Commission for capacity building of 1,000 civil servants from the Maldives over the next five years, an official statement issued on Sunday said.

The agreement was signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Male, the capital of the Maldives, on Saturday.

The agreement envisages that the NCGG will be the nodal institution for designing customised training modules and its implementation, taking into account the requirements of the Maldives

Civil Services Commission.

The subject matters of the training programme will include public administration, e-governance and service delivery, public policy and governance, information technology, best practices in fisheries in coastal areas, agro-based practices, self-help group initiatives, urban development and planning and ethics in administration, the statement said.

The Maldives will nominate suitable civil servants in the senior or executive or middle management levels as per the agreed timelines.

Further, the NCGG will assist the Civil Services Training Institute, a subsidiary of the Maldives Civil Services Commission, to develop training programmes and materials and assist

in organising exchange of experts as needed by the Civil Services Commission, it said.

The Ministry of External Affairs will bear all expenses pertaining to the training programme, the statement issued by Personnel Ministry said.

KV Eapen, Director General, NCGG and Secretary to the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, said the NCGG trained 28 civil servants from the Maldives in April and this successful engagement encouraged the two countries to take the collaboration forward.

Eapen said in 2019, the NCGG has successfully conducted training programmes for the civil servants of Bangladesh, Myanmar, the Gambia and the Maldives.



# Divided G20 admits worsening trade wars pose risk to world economy

**FUKUOKA (JAPAN) JUN 9 (AFP):** The world’s top financial policymakers admitted Sunday that trade tensions had worsened and posed a risk for the global economy, after a G20 meeting that laid bare differences between the United States and other nations.

Following 30 hours of wrangling in what one official described as a “tense” atmosphere, G20 finance minister and central bank chiefs produced a hard-fought final statement acknowledging that “growth remains low and risks remain tilted to the downside.”

“Most importantly, trade and geopolitical tensions have intensified,” the G20 said, adding they “stood ready to take further action” if required.

As a compromise pushed by Washington, the statement omitted language from a previous draft that mentioned a “pressing need to resolve trade tensions.”

The statement capped two days of talks in the western Japanese port city of Fukuoka that also tackled the thorny issue of taxing internet giants and, for the first time, the economic challenges posed by ageing.

“In our view, this is the best outcome we could deliver. Not the perfect outcome but a good outcome,” said EU Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici, who admitted that reaching agreement was “not an easy task.”

“Almost everyone in the room thinks that trade tensions are a threat to growth... It’s not always the mood in the American administration,” he said. “I wouldn’t



say it’s them against all the others but it looks like it sometimes, even if everyone also criticises some aggression from China.” -

Trade battles were front and centre of policymakers’ minds as the US and China continue to threaten each other with tariffs that economists fear could slam the brakes on global growth.

IMF chief Christine Lagarde warned the tariffs could shave global GDP by 0.5 per cent or about USD 455 billion in 2020 and said trade conflicts constituted the “principal threat” to the global economic outlook.

The G20 ministers heaved a sigh of relief just hours before the meeting when the US and Mexico clinched a deal over immigration that stopped Washington imposing five per cent tariffs on Mexican goods.

But US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Washington stood ready to impose more tariffs on China if President Donald Trump and

China’s Xi Jinping fail to strike a deal at the G20 summit later this month in Osaka.

“If China wants to come back to the table and negotiate on the basis that we were negotiating, we can get a great historic deal. If they don’t, we’ll proceed with our tariffs,” Mnuchin told reporters Saturday.

He tweeted Sunday he had had a “constructive” meeting with China’s central bank governor Yi Gang, during which there was a “candid discussion on trade issues.”

But taking a different line from the other policymakers, Mnuchin said the slowdown in some parts of the world was not due to trade difficulties and even said the friction could benefit some countries if companies relocated from China to avoid tariffs.

“There will be winners and losers,” said the treasury secretary.

The quandary of reforming the global tax system to take into ac-

count the rise of internet giants such as Google and Facebook was another issue exercising the minds of policymakers in the coastal city.

In the final statement, the G20 agreed to “redouble our efforts for a consensus-based solution with a final report by 2020.”

However, here again the Fukuoka meeting exposed a difference of opinion over what form this reform should take.

Frustrated by a lack of global action on the issue, some countries such as Britain and France have already introduced a so-called digital tax, but Mnuchin was blunt in his assessment of these policies.

He said the US had “significant concerns” and stated “I don’t like them.”

But Moscovici was more positive, saying he was “rather optimistic” the G20 would clinch agreement on a new set of international tax rules by 2020.

“It’s doable, it’s more than doable,” he told reporters.

Appropriately for a meeting held in Japan -- on track to become the world’s first “super-aged” society in which more than 28 per cent of the population is over 65 -- the G20 ministers discussed for the first time the “challenges and opportunities” posed by ageing.

They suggested getting more women and elderly people into the workforce and “promoting elderly-friendly industries”, as well as reforming the fiscal and banking systems to take into account ageing populations.

“You basically have a very large portion of mankind that is ageing and then the workforce is shrinking,” OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría told AFP in an interview.

Solving the issue will require wholesale changes to the way society is organised, added Gurría.

## China mulls technology security system to counter US pressure on its high-tech firms

**BEIJING, JUN 9 (PTI):** China has announced plans to set up a national technology security management list system in a bid to protect its high-tech firms from being arbitrarily targeted by the US in the wake of the intensified trade war between the two countries, official media here reported.

The move comes after the US issued a ban on Chinese telecom giant Huawei’s 5G services, warning other nations that the company’s systems could be manipulated by Beijing to spy on other countries and disrupt critical communications.

Some countries, including Australia and New Zealand, have blocked Huawei from supplying equipment for 5G mobile networks.

The National Development and Reform Commission, which is China’s top planning body has been tasked with organising a study on establishing a national technological security management list system, state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday.

The move, which is

taken according to the National Security Law and other related laws and regulations, aims to “more effectively forestall and defuse national security risks,” the commission said.

While the detailed measures will be unveiled in the near future, an article in the state-run Global Times- Technological security management list system is a move to counter US suppression - stated the plan is related to the recent announcement by the Ministry of Commerce to work out a non-reliable entity list of foreign companies and individuals who could harm high tech Chinese firms.

It not only is an initiative for China to strengthen its long-term institutional construction of economic security, but also has practical significance for countering the US technical restrictions and supply cut-off to some Chinese high-tech enterprises like Huawei, the Global Times report said.

The initiative, expected to protect Chinese high-tech enterprises, will provide the legal

basis for technology exports management, it said.

China has recently indicated to halt the export of rare earth metals to the US in an intensified trade war between the two countries. The metals are key components for host of advanced technologies like iPhones and hi-tech missile guidance systems.

China not only is the world’s largest producer and exporter of rare earths, but also masters rare-earth refining technology ahead of the world, the report said.

Since 2018, the US has repeatedly drawn on its domestic law to exert pressure on Chinese high-tech enterprises including Huawei, it said.

Huawei is caught in the intensifying trade war between China and the US after President Donald Trump imposed tariffs on USD 200 billion on Chinese goods, prompting Beijing to hike duties on USD 60 billion in American products. The dispute has snowballed into a tech war with the US urging nations to shun the company in 5G networks.

## Huawei obtains 46 commercial 5G contracts from 30 countries despite US ban

**KJM VARMA**

**BEIJING, JUN 9 (PTI):** Chinese telecom giant Huawei said it has obtained 46 commercial 5G contracts so far in 30 countries and shipped more than one lakh 5G stations globally, emerging as a top player in the race for setting up the super-fast telecommunications system despite the US ban on use of its 5G services.

The Shenzhen-headquartered firm, which is under immense pressure after the US issued the ban warning that Huawei systems could be manipulated by Beijing to spy on other countries and disrupt critical communications, made the announcement on Thursday in a press statement.

China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology on Thursday granted commercial-use 5G licenses to four state-owned telecom giants to start rolling out 5G services, signalling Beijing’s determination to be the global leader in setting up superfast wireless

networks. It issued licences to China Broadcasting Network and the country’s top three telecom operators -- China Telecom, China Mobile and China Unicom.

The company said it was well prepared for China’s 5G commercial use. In February last year, it made the world’s first 5G call and launched the first 5G terminal device.

Huawei is caught in the intensifying trade war between China and the US after President Donald Trump imposed tariffs on USD 200 billion on Chinese goods, prompting Beijing to hike duties on USD 60 billion in American products. The dispute has snowballed into a tech war with the US urging nations to shun the company in 5G networks.

The concerns have escalated as Huawei has risen to become the world leader in telecom networking equipment and one of the top smartphone manufacturers alongside Samsung and Apple. However, details of the countries where

the company has managed to obtain the contracts have not been revealed, official media here reported. 5G is the next generation cellular technology with download speeds stated to be 10 to 100 times faster than the current 4G LTE networks. Apart from much faster data download and upload speeds, 5G technology promises wider coverage and more stable connections.

The 5G technology will establish a high-speed, mobile, safe and widespread new-generation information infrastructure, MIT Minister Miao Wei said at the licence presentation. Some countries, including Australia and New Zealand, have blocked Huawei from supplying equipment for 5G mobile networks. However, Russian President Vladimir Putin backed Huawei saying that action against by western countries led by the US is an attempt to push it out of the global market which is beginning of the of a technological war.

## President Xi to meet PM Modi on sidelines of SCO summit

**KJM VARMA**

**BEIJING, JUN 9 (PTI):** Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit this week at Bishkek where he would also meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the first meeting between the two leaders after the BJP’s massive victory in the general elections. Xi will pay state visits to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan from June 12 to 16, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang announced here on Sunday.

The SCO summit is due to be held on June 13-14 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The SCO is a China-led eight-member economic and security bloc with India and Pakistan being admitted to the grouping in 2017.

From June 12 to 14, President Xi will pay a state visit to Kyrgyzstan and attend SCO summit, Lu said in a statement.

Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Misri said last week that the two leaders would meet on the sidelines of the SCO summit.

Recalling last year’s successful first ever informal summit between Xi and Modi at Wuhan which was widely regarded a milestone in the bilateral ties, Misri said,

“it is worth mentioning that last year, our leaders met four times on the sidelines of different multi-lateral meetings.”

They are again meeting in Bishkek on the sidelines of the SCO Summit, he said.

The April 27-28 Wuhan summit between Modi and Xi was largely credited to have turned around the bilateral relations soured by the 73-day Doklam stand-off, triggered by Chinese troops attempts to build a road close to Indian border in an area also claimed by Bhutan in 2017.

After the Wuhan summit, both the countries stepped up efforts to improve relations on different spheres including the military-to-military ties.

In December last year, Prime Minister Modi met President Xi on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Argentina and discussed joint efforts to further enhance mutual trust and friendship between the two giant neighbours. Last month, Xi extended his “heartfelt congratulations” to Prime Minister Modi for winning the general elections, in a rare gesture of greeting a foreign leader well before the official announcement of the results.

## US envoy says Israel has ‘right’ to annex West Bank land

**JERUSALEM, JUN 8 (AFP):** The US ambassador has said Israel has the right to annex at least “some” of the occupied West Bank, in comments likely to deepen Palestinian opposition to a long-awaited US peace plan.

The Palestinians have rejected the plan before it has even been unveiled, citing a string of moves by US President Donald Trump that they say show his administration is irredeemably biased.

They are likely to see the latest comments by US ambassador to Israel David Friedman as a new nail in the coffin of a peace process that is already on life support.

In the interview published by the New York Times on Saturday, Friedman said that some degree of annexation of the West Bank would be legitimate.

“Under certain circumstances, I think Israel has the right to retain some, but unlikely all, of the West Bank,” he said.

The establishment of a Palestinian state in territories, including the West Bank, that Israel occupied in the Six-Day War of 1967 has been the focus of all past Middle East peace plans.

No firm date has yet been set for the unveiling of the Trump administration’s plan although a conference is to be held in Bahrain later this month on its economic aspects.

The public comments made by administration officials so far suggest the plan will lean heavily on substantial financial support for the Palestinian economy, much of it funded by the Gulf Arab states, in return for concessions on territory and statehood.

“The absolute last thing the world needs is a failed Palestinian state between Israel and Jordan,” Friedman said in the Times interview.

“Maybe they won’t take it, maybe

it doesn’t meet their minimums. We’re relying upon the fact that the right plan, for the right time, will get the right reaction over time.”

Friedman, a staunch supporter of the Israeli settlements, told the Times that the Trump plan was aimed at improving the quality of life for Palestinians but would fall well short of a “permanent resolution to the conflict.”

He said he did not believe the plan would trigger Palestinian violence.

But he said the United States would coordinate closely with Arab ally Jordan, which could face unrest among its large Palestinian population over a plan perceived as overly favourable to Israel. Israeli settlement watchdog Peace Now said in a statement Saturday that Trump should remove Friedman from his post if he wanted to retain any credibility for his peace efforts.

“The American president, if it is his intention to be an honest broker, must instruct Friedman to pack his bags tonight,” the NGO wrote in Hebrew on Twitter. “With friends like US Ambassador David Friedman, who needs enemies?” it said.

Publication of the plan looks set to be further delayed after the Israeli parliament called a snap general election for September, the second this year.

The plan is regarded as too sensitive to release during the campaign.

During campaigning for the first general election in April, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged to annex West Bank Jewish settlements, a move long supported by nearly all lawmakers in his alliance of right-wing and religious parties.

Earlier, in February, Netanyahu told lawmakers he had been discussing with Washington a plan that would effectively annex settlements.





# Huma Qureshi-Deepa Mehta on making art in troubled times and learning from past

JUSTIN RAO

**MUMBAI, JUN 9 (PTI):** In viewing the power of art, acknowledging the troubled times and pinning hope, that art—and only that—can make the world a better place, actor Huma Qureshi and filmmaker Deepa Mehta are on the same page.

The actor-director duo have collaborated on Netflix series “Leila”, which follows Shalini (Huma), a mother in search of her daughter Leila whom she lost one tragic summer.

Shalini deals with various hardships in the course of her search, in a story of longing, faith and loss.

Using dystopian setting, the series makes a commentary about an oppressive socio-political-religious order, environmental crisis, caste and class divide. “It’s the only time to make art, absolutely,” Deepa told PTI on being asked if it is difficult to make art during troubled times.

Huma adds take any page out of the history, and it is riddled with strife.

“When has the world not been in turmoil? Pick any given time in history and there’ll always be turmoil, conflict and strife. It is through art and art alone that we try and make sense of our world,” the actor says.

Deepa, who has helmed topical films like “Fire”, “Earth” and “Water”, mentions Pablo Picasso’s iconic work ‘Guernica’, regarded by many as one of the most powerful anti-war paintings. “When was it made? Right in the middle of the chaos... There is chaos all the time and I think some of the most interesting art is done in the time of chaos.”

Drawing a parallel with times of the “unfortunate Nazi Germany”, Huma says the kind of books and films that came out from the period were incredible.

“I remember going to the Anne Frank House and reading what this little girl wrote many years ago. I was like these

could just be somebody writing about what happened yesterday.

“Have we really learnt anything? Art is the only way humans keep reminding themselves, telling us and our kids the lessons we had learnt but are now forgetting.”

When pointed out that even Iran—despite its stringent censorship and government restrictions—routinely

la” is about “totalitarian governments.”

“I can’t take it to heart what somebody’s reacting to a three minute trailer. It’s extremely premature,” the director adds.

While the series uses its dystopian setting, Deepa says it was impossible not to include what was happening around the world right now.

“We were doing a scene where the



comes up with some of the best cinema, Huma says, “May be sometimes it’s because of it, not in spite of it.”

To which, Deepa adds, “It’s survival of the spirit... I’ve always thought of art as acquired rebellion.” Co-directed by Deepa, Shanker Raman and Pawan Kumar, “Leila” is based on Prayaag Akbar’s book of the same name.

When its trailer dropped, it was flooded with comments criticising its “anti-Hindu propaganda” and for being a “Hindu phobic series.” When asked if it hurts that today the criticism of art has undertaken a serious religious tone, Huma says it’s too early to talk about that with regards to the show.

“There have been some comments, mixed comments. But the show is much more than that... Our show is about environment, the scarcity of water, and several other things.”

For the 68-year-old filmmaker, “Lei-

young child labourers are chained to their workplace. Just at that point, migration of children was happening from Mexico to the United States. They’d be kept in shelters, which were like cages.

“I absolutely insisted that we change the design of the structure into cages. So suddenly, what was happening in the migration centres got reflected here. It’s the leaking of what’s happening in different countries that affected me as a filmmaker.”

For Deepa, the curiosity on where the world is headed drives her to chronicle stories.

“What drives me as a filmmaker is curiosity. That’s what enables my work and makes me want to do films. I was very curious about Leila as it touches upon the world. I am very curious about where we are heading.”

“Leila” will start streaming from June 14.



**CHUNGHA’S BACK:** 23-year-old singer, Chungha, has finally released more details on her summer comeback! She is planning to release a new album on June 24, marking her first comeback in about five months since ‘Gotta Go.’ The announcement comes hand in hand with Chungha’s second anniversary since her solo debut. In light of her anniversary, Chungha expressed her gratitude towards fans who have stood by her and new people joining her Byulharang family.

## People moving beyond concept of no-brainer films, says Taapsee Pannu

RAVI BANSAL

**NEW DELHI, JUN 9 (PTI):** “Baby”, “Pink” and now “Badla” are validation for Taapsee Pannu who contends that Bollywood is now looking at the dawn of the new age of commercial cinema, one where the concept of “no-brainer” will not be relevant anymore.

Pannu says the success of “Badla”, which did the business of over Rs 130 crore at the box office, is a testament to the fact that audiences are moving beyond the usual tropes of commercial cinema.

“A lot of waking up has happened after ‘Badla’. I feel that audiences are now ready for something that is not done before, something unconventional. The concept of not taking your brain to the theatre is slowly going out of the window. People want to take the brain to the theatre,” the actor told PTI in an interview.

The 31-year-old actor also offers a new definition for the term ‘commercial cinema’.

“It’s a good time to release a film which will just keep you glued to the screen for two hours, will give you enough entertainment for you to be involved in the film. It will not have the usual comedy, it will not have the song and dance in it. “But yes, it will entertain you for

sure and will keep you involved for two hours. You will not feel bored or that you’re not understanding what’s happening. And that’s the definition of the new age commercial cinema.” Pannu is currently promoting her next project, “Game Over”, which is being touted as the country’s first home-invasion thriller.

In the film, the actor portrays Swapna, a wheelchair confined video game programmer who battles a home invasion. She would not call the film a “damsel in distress” story, but a concept she has consistently tried to avoid.

“I watched such roles and I couldn’t identify with them at all, or couldn’t believe the existence of such characters because in my life, yes, I’ve seen women who probably are not that vocal. Yes, there are women who are probably not obviously confident. But it’s not like they are dumb.

“They will they have their set of reasons to be a certain way, but they’re not dumb and stupid. So I couldn’t identify with most of those roles and that is why I didn’t do it. Especially now, when women are venturing out into big positions and careers,” she adds.

Pannu says women are also fed up of being portrayed as “dumb and stupid” on screen.

**LOS ANGELES, JUN 9 (PTI):**

Actor Margot Robbie has defended her decision to work with Quentin Tarantino in “Once Upon a Time in Hollywood”, saying it was her “life-long dream” to collaborate with the critically-acclaimed filmmaker.

The film, which also features Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt, is Tarantino’s first release since actor Uma Thurman revealed in February 2018 that she nearly died in a car crash on the sets of “Kill Bill”.

Thurman had said that she suffered severe injuries after she was pressured into driving a stunt car she did not feel comfortable operating on the sets of Tarantino’s film.

The director, on his part, admitted that he still blames himself for convincing Thurman to sit in the car and called the incident “one of the

biggest regrets of my life”.

In an interview with Vogue, Robbie, 28, said she

for possession.

“But the thought definitely crossed my mind. Like, will

no), and I got to do it, and it

makes me sad if people might hold that against me despite



was reassured about working with Tarantino because he helped Thurman get the footage of the crash from Harvey Weinstein after a long battle

people view this decision as conflicting with what I’m doing on the producing side?” she said. “... It was my lifelong dream (to work with Taranti-

everything else I’m doing,” she added.

“Once Upon a Time in Hollywood” is scheduled to be released next month.

**ARIES:** Your indie spirit is evident in all that you do, Aries, but today’s stars prod you to open yourself up to the power of two. If you’re struggling to keep your head above water, set aside your pride and ask for assistance. Never mind seeking out the answers online—reach out to someone whose skill set complements your own.

**TAURUS:** Tackle tasks that can be easily accomplished today, Taurus. Steer clear of those drawn-out conference calls and meetings that never seem to end. With the Libra moon in your sixth house of productivity, the day is about efficiency with a capital E. Make sure you fuel yourself with plenty of protein and keep the caffeine consumption to a minimum—it will keep you grounded and make it easier to deflect distractions. Keep conversations short and sweet, and start checking off those to-dos.

**GEMINI:** Under today’s stars, you’re more naughty than nice, so unleash your mischievous side. Let your hair down and allow your inner bad girl/guy to come out to play. Get yourself glammed up for a night on the town,

or inject some spice into your day by sending the object of your affections a suggestive message or photo.

**CANCER:** While you may be up to your ears in work today, Cancer, be sure to carve out quality time with a good friend. Putting your to-dos on hold for this person sends a strong message about how important he or she is to you. Doing so isn’t completely selfless, either. Bonding will reduce your own stress levels and remind you where your priorities lie.

**LEO:** The world’s your oyster as quicksilver Mercury makes a global entry into your ninth house of travel and adventure until May 6, sparking your wanderlust. Grab your car keys—or passport—and enjoy a spur-of-the-moment getaway. If you can’t get out of Dodge on such short notice, consider this your long-lead nudge to start planning your late-spring or summer vacay NOW.

**LIBRA:** Body language isn’t just a dialect spoken by a few—it’s the universal language of love! And today, your cosmic ruler, silver-tongued Mercury, flits into your sultry,

seductive erotic eighth house until May 6, inviting you to flirt with abandon. It’s a time to let your desires be known, directly or with more secretive subtlety.

**VIRGO:** Even someone with superhuman powers couldn’t keep up with everything you’ve got piled on your plate, Virgo. Compromise is mandatory if you hope to maintain some semblance of sanity, so find ways to scale back and streamline. In order to accomplish your most important work mission today, you’ll need to backburner each and every nonessential to-do on your list. Tune out those around you, and you’ll cross the finish line before the end of the day. Phew.

**SCORPIO:** Today’s emo moon brings out your empathetic side. Don’t fight those feelings, Scorpio! If you feel a surge of sadness or anger in response to a friend’s plight, express it! Let the tears flow and open your heart to those who mean the most to you. Go out of your way to let them know how important they are in your world. When you need a steady shoulder and a compassionate ear, they’ll be there for you with bells on.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Pull off that oversized cashmere sweater and slip into something more glamorous—or better yet, sexier. Today, messenger Mercury wings into your amorous, glamorous fifth house until May 6, turning you into an unabashed flirtaholic. Harboring a secret crush? It’s time to act on it, Archer. Plan more playful dates over the next few weeks, whether you’re single or spoken for. Think: private whisky tasting or an adventurous road trip to see Hamilton on tour. You’ll be a magnet for magnates, so don’t be shy about approaching the power players in any room!

**CAPRICORN:** Trying to make everyone happy, Capricorn? Today’s stars turn that into an exercise in futility. If you’ve piled one too many obligations on your plate, your stress levels are liable to peak. Your best bet is to graciously bow out of a few responsibilities in the name of preserving your peace of mind. Don’t worry—the people who really count will understand. And if anyone tries to send you on a guilt trip, remember that their emotions are not

your responsibility!

**AQUARIUS:** You’ve been moving at the speed of light lately, and you’re looking forward to life calming down a bit. Newsflash, Aquarius: Things will slow down when YOU decide it’s time. All this action is actually generated by your love of excitement, so it’s up to you to give yourself a much-needed breather. Today’s stars encourage you to create a space in your schedule for a bit of solitude. Unroll your yoga mat, turn to your trusty journal or simply take yourself to lunch!

**PISCES:** Ah, the irony. Today, YOU have your nose to the grindstone, but people are throwing you off your game with their texts, questions and tagged posts. While you might be tempted to shut your door, log off and silence your smartphone, the cosmos call for multitasking. The truth is, you won’t be able to get ‘er done today without getting input from others. You can only do so much, Pisces, so don’t drive yourself crazy. Take a deep breath, and let the juggling commence.