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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Centre will grant L-T Assembly seats in one or two months: CM

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 07 JUL: Chief Minister Pawan Chamling today said that the Centre will pass the proposal to grant Assembly seat reservation to Limboo Tamang communities of the State in the next 1-2 months. In the upcoming Assembly

election, the Limboo Tamang communities will get tribal seats, he added. The CM said this during his address at the finals of the inter-constituency football tournament organized by SDF's West district committee at Kyongsa ground in Gyalshing, West Sikkim.

"Every bit is ready at the Centre and they will pass it soon. It will take one or two months. The Centre will pass L-T seats in the cabinet. After this, a Presidential ordinance will be passed in the Parliament. Nobody can stop the process now as it is a Constitutional right. The

opposition has been trying to make it a political issue to instigate the L-T people on the seat issue for political gains," he stated.

On the Sherpa land rights issue, the CM said that the government is framing a law that prohibits other communities

from buying land belonging to members of the Sherpa community.

"The sale and purchase of Sherpa land will be within the Sherpa community. This will be passed in the coming Assembly and has already been passed in the cabinet meeting," he said.

Acting CJ lays foundation stone of De-Addiction Centre at Kitchu Dumra

NAMCHI, 07 JUL [IPR]:

Acting Chief Justice, High Court of Sikkim, Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai, who is also the Executive Chairperson of Sikkim State Legal Services Authority [SLSA], laid the foundation stone of the upcoming De-Addiction cum Rehabilitation Centre for Substance Abuse with Livelihood School today at Kitchu Dumra in Namchi, South Sikkim.

It may be mentioned here, the proposed area for the centre is 4198.23 square feet and will include boys and girls rehabilitation hostel, livelihood school, staff quarter for male and female, boundary fencing, approach road and a walkway. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 9,40,62,000 and will be completed in 18 months time.

Organized by Social Justice, Empowerment & Welfare Department, the programme had the presence of Area MLA



cum SLA Speaker, KN Rai, accompanied by Minister of SJE&WD, Tulsi Devi Rai, as guest of honour along with other dignitaries, students, representatives from various NGOs and local gentry.

Addressing the gathering, Justice Rai spoke in detail about the aim and objective of the centre which is to assist substance abuse victims to transform their life through various treatment programmes available at the centre thereby equipping the victims to reclaim their lives in obtaining better health

and a productive future.

She also highlighted about "legal services to the victims of drug abuse and eradication of drug menace scheme, 2015" which is under the action plan of National Legal Services Authority [NALSA] and urged the attendees to understand the particulars as the scheme ensures to disseminate awareness to the general masses regarding the substantial legal provisions, various programmes and schemes of the government and to secure es-

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2nd batch completes Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

Gangtok, 07 Jul [IPR]: The second batch yatri of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2018 via Nathula, who had crossed over on 25 Jun, completed their

pilgrimage and returned to Gangtok on 06 Jul.

The batch comprised of 45 pilgrims including two liaison officers. However, two yatri could not

complete the pilgrimage because of health and medical conditions.

The 43 pilgrims who managed to successfully complete the yatra were

felicitated at hotel Mount Siniolchu in Gangtok with mementos on their arrival by Mayor, Shakti Singh Chaudhary.

Online electricity bill payment facility launched in Jorethang

BIKASH CHETTRI

JORETHANG, 07 JUL: Jorethang in South Sikkim has become the second town in the State after Gangtok where people will now be able to pay their electricity bills online through the Energy & Power Department's website. The facility of E-service portal and release of computerized electricity bill was launched today by Power Minister, DD Bhutia, here at the office of Power & Energy Department in Jorethang.

Addressing the inaugural function, Power Minister, Mr Bhutia, congratulated the general public of Jorethang for the initiative undertaken by the State Government. He said that with the provi-

sion of the E-service facility, people will enjoy convenient payment of their electricity bills.

He urged officials to generate awareness on the same in order to ensure that consumers do not face problems while using the portal.

"The State Government under the leadership of Chief Minister Pawan Chamling has always based its objectives keeping in view the development of the State. It is now the responsibility of people to assist the government in keeping up with developmental temperament of the State," he expressed.

Principal Chief Engineer cum Secretary, E&P Department, NT Bhutia, informed that the E-service

portal and release of computerized electricity bill is an effort of the department towards providing maximum service with easy process of billing for the consumers of Jorethang.

"The system will also provide accurate billing and avoid errors in the billing. It is a tool of consumer empowerment and the most convenient method of making payments and the facility will be operational from today," he added.

Similarly, Nodal Officer, Sunil Rai, informed that one can visit the website, sikkimpower.co.in, and register by using the ID mentioned in the bill of the month of July and a password. A registered consumer can log in with the details, view the

monthly bill and make the payment. One can use net banking, debit and credit cards of all banks to pay the bills through the website and the transaction process will be free of cost, he added.

Power Minister, Mr Bhutia, extended gratitude to the departmental officers and proprietor of SDS Solution, Sikkim, Bhawesh Pradhan, for timely implementation of the project.

On the occasion, the general public of Jorethang thanked the State Government and the Power Department for facilitating the town with the E-service and assured cooperation in spreading awareness among the general public for proper use of the portal.

DARAMDIN WINS WEST SIKKIM INTER-CONSTITUENCY FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

Gyalshing to get football academy in 2019



REBYNA RANA

GYALSHING, 07 JUL:

The final of the inter-constituency football tournament [men's open] organized by Sikkim Democratic Front's West district committee was played at Kyongsa ground in Gyalshing, West Sikkim wherein Daramdin secured a win over Yuk-som-Tashiding in a tie-breaker 4-3.

The programme today had the presence of Chief Minister Pawan

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

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

ESSAYS ON TEESTA, HYDEL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN SIKKIM

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East DC clamps down on NHIDCL for dismal road conditions

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 JUL:

East District Collector-ate has issued a "Conditional Order [U/S 133 CrPc]" today directing the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited [NHIDCL] to commence the maintenance work of NH 10 and Indira Bye Pass immediately. NHIDCL has also been directed to appear

before the East DC on 23 July to show cause in writing as to why this order should not be made absolute under provisions of Section 138 of CrPC.

NHIDCL has been entrusted with the responsibility of repair, maintenance and management of NH 10 and Indira Bye Pass by the Government of India.

The East DC has passed the order in view

of the dismal condition of roads along NH 10 and Indira Bye Pass. The order states that a detailed report has also been received from the Sub Divisional Magistrate, Rangpo after inspecting the highway between Rangpo and Singtam.

"It has been found that in several places potholes as deep as one foot have developed in the Highway causing great inconvenience to

the public and vehicular traffic as well as posing a serious threat to the lives of the people. The pathetic condition of the Highway is also due to the blocked and choked drains long the road which has caused the rainwater to flow over the surface of the road," the order mentions.

Despite instructions being given to NHIDCL in several meetings held in the past few months,

the DC notes that the response has been "far from satisfactory and no proper action has been taken till now by your organisation."

The order further reads "failure to comply with this conditional order, action shall be taken under the relevant provisions of law including registering of an FIR for negligence in duty and for violation of this order, etc."



Training for NERLP lead farmers of South district

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 JUL:

Krishni Vigyan Kendra, South Sikkim in convergence with North East Rural Livelihood Project [NERLP], South conducted an exposure cum training programme today for lead farmers of vegetable clusters

formed by NERLP. These lead farmers will be training fellow farmers of their village, a press release informs.

The lead farmers were trained on value addition of jackfruit by Subject Matter Specialist [Horticulture], KVK South, Yangchenla Bhutia.

Likewise, training on preparation of Bordeaux mixture for management of fungal diseases was conducted by SMS [Plant Protection], Praveesh Shivakoty while SMS [Agronomy], Dr Nation Chamling, demonstrated various methods of composting.

ASSCWA condemns reduction in SC reservation percentage in State

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 JUL:

Strongly condemning the State Cabinet's resolution to provide 5% reservation to the Scheduled Caste community in Sikkim, All Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Association [ASSCWA] has given an ultimatum to SC representatives in

the State Assembly to raise objection to the reduction in SC reservation in the upcoming Assembly session, an ASSCWA press release informs.

"Failing to raise objection will amount to betrayal and we will be forced to stand up for the protection of our rights on our own. We are deeply hurt by such oppressive

move of the State Government. The illogical and illegal resolution depriving the safeguard provided for the SC under the Constitution is highly offensive. Government must not forget that it is beyond their jurisdiction to reduce the rights of SCs," expresses the ASSCWA in the release.

Holding the State

Cabinet's resolution as an unconstitutional advancement of Sikkim Democratic Front led Government, the association has appealed to all MLAs, political parties, organisations and Sikkimese people to oppose such suppressive and unconstitutional move of the State Government.

They have also re-

quested the SC community of the State to keep calm as the association has assured that it will leave no stone unturned to fight this injustice.

The release further informs that ASSCWA will be holding a State level Anushuchit Jati Chetna Karyakaram in the coming days.

ISRO to prepare document under Human Spaceflight Programme in month's time

BENGALURU, JUL 7 (PTI):

Days after it successfully carried out a flight test for a new system, meant for saving lives of astronauts in an emergency, ISRO today said it would approve in a month's time an 'internal document' on developing crucial technologies under its Human Spaceflight Programme.

"No human spaceflight programme has been approved in India yet. We had prepared the document to develop crucial technologies in 2004.

Now we are in the process of revising it. In a month's time, we will approve our internal document," ISRO Chairman Dr K Sivan told reporters after the 11th annual Katre Memorial Lecture here.

Only Russia, the US and China have the human spaceflight programme.

Sivan said the central government is yet to give its formal approval for the human spaceflight mission which was on the drawing board of the space agency for quite a long time now.

Sivan said the document, which was being

worked on for over a decade, is being revised for review and interactions with stakeholders, including Indian Air Force and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.

The space agency had successfully carried out a flight test for the newly-designed Crew Escape System on Thursday.

According to ISRO, the system is an emergency measure designed to quickly pull away the crew module along with the astronauts to a safe distance from the launch vehicle if the mission gets aborted.

The first 'Pad Abort Test (PAT)' demonstrated the safe recovery of the crew module in case of any emergency at the launch pad, it said.

Replying to a query, Sivan said in addition to 'Pad Abort Test', ISRO has validated five critical technologies for various future space missions.

"We and the government work on a three-year plan, with a seven-year strategy and a 15-year vision," he said.

The technologies

validated are wireless communication, digital telemetry and Ka-band altimeter, he said.

The wireless communication would ensure transfer of data without the use of cables and digital telemetry would enable less use of power, he said.

Ka-band would enable highly accurate landing information when the module is descending, Sivan added.

The PAT technology is very essential for manned missions in future, he said.

Sivan said ISRO works on government-approved programmes and others for the agency's research and development.

"The pad abort test for the crew escape system is part of our R&D work," he said.

On space tourism, Sivan said it would take at least 15 years to develop the vehicle to go to space and return to earth.

"We are not close to that. We need to work a lot towards achieving the dream of putting a man into space," he said.

Organic farming awareness progs held in West Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 JUL:

Mevedir organized Ward level awareness programmes on organic farming for farmers of Serbong, Durpinay and Raigaon Ward of West Sikkim at Chakung on 03 Jul and at Khaniserbong on 06 Jul, a press release informs.

In Chakung, Mevedir master trainer, Renuka Sharma, conducted the training and informed farmers about the State Government's policies favoring certified farmers. She outlined the importance of updation and



maintenance of Farmers Diary and other documents that recorded all the activities of the cer-

tified farms. Further, the farmers were also encouraged to cultivate different crops in their cer-

tified land and enhance crop production to meet the demand in the State. Likewise, in Khaniser-

bong, the farmers were trained on soil nutrient management through preparation of Amrit Jal. The training was conducted in the presence of Ward Panchayat, Serbong, Binod Subba, and Mevedir master trainers, Ganga Ram Chettri & Sanita Mangar.

Extending gratitude to the State Government and Mevedir, Ward Panchayat, Mr Subba, assured to give full support to progressive farmers for their livelihood and income generation.

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

informed, inquisitive, relevant

JNU to hold convocation next month after 46 years

NEW DELHI, JUL 7 (PTI): Almost 46 years after it held its first convocation, the Jawaharlal Nehru University will be hosting its second convocation next month for awarding degrees to PhD scholars, the varsity said.

In a notification posted on its website, the university said that the second convocation will be held on August 8 at its Convention Centre.

"All research scholars, who have completed the requirements for the Ph.D. degree, between January 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018 are eligible for the conferment of Ph.D. degree at the convocation," it said.

The first convocation of the university was held in 1972, when G Parthasarathi was the vice chancellor.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

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Unnao rape case: CBI files charge sheet against 5 accused, including BJP MLA Sengar's brother

NEW DELHI, JUL 7 (PTI):

The CBI filed its first charge sheet today against the brother of Unnao BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar and four others in connection with the killing of a person, whose daughter was allegedly raped by the lawmaker, in prison, officials said.

The agency has filed charge sheet against Jai Deep Singh alias Atul Singh Sengar, a brother of the MLA, and his accomplices Vineet Mishra alias Vinay Mishra; Birendra Singh alias Bauwa, Ram Sharan Singh alias Sonu Singh and Shashi Pratap Singh alias Suman Singh, all residents of Makh village in Unnao District of the state.

The agency has

charged the accused of murder and other related offences, a CBI spokesperson said here.

A 17-year-old girl has alleged that she was raped by Bangermau MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar of the BJP at his residence when she had gone to meet him with a relative seeking a job last year.

She had been running from pillar to post and even tried self-immolation in front of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's official residence alleging police inaction.

Her father had come from Delhi to attend the court hearing on April 3 for registration of a case related to rape of her minor daughter against the MLA.

In the evening, he was allegedly abused and beaten up by the accused in front of his house during which he sustained serious injuries. He was also slapped with arms act by the local police and put in jail where he succumbed to injuries in the absence of treatment on April 8.

During investigation, all the FIR accused named in the FIR were arrested and they are presently in judicial custody, the spokesperson said.

"Further investigation in this case to look into the roles of others including an MLA, officials is continuing," he said.

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Gangtok on Sunday, 08 July

Temp: 26°C/19°C
Forecast: Cloudy, a thundershower in spots; not as warm.
Sunrise: 04:47 AM
Sunset: 6:34 PM

Acting CJ lays foundation stone of De-Addiction Centre at Kitchu Dumra

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sential legal services to the victims of drug trafficking and drug abuse. Additionally, she elaborated that a range of effective treatment is available for victims of substance abuse and informed that it is imperative that the victims are motivated to seek help for their addiction related problems and aid them in their recovery and after care. She also brought to light that authorities should not criminalize substance abuse victims and that they should focus on recovery of these victims.

Speaking on the occasion, Speaker, Mr Rai, explained in brief the importance of the centre and added that these kinds of centres are responsible in creating necessary awareness of drug abuse in our society along with providing substantial treatment and imparting a variety of skill development training for the victims to be economically productive. He spoke about the Sikkim Anti Drugs Act which has been formulated by the State Government to combat substance abuse in the State and advocated that the general public need to be informed about this Act.

Similarly, SJE&W Minister, Tulsi Devi Rai, assured that the concerned department will facilitate necessary support in order to run the centre smoothly. She expressed her concern on the rising number of substance abuse victims in the State and implored on the various provisions available for the aid and rehabilitation of these victims. She also informed that the department is in the process to retrieve data on the total number of drug abuse victims existing in the State.

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SCA representatives attend curators' orientation programme in Assam

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 JUL:

Assam Cricket Association [ACA] hosted a Curators' Orientation Programme organised by Board of Control for Cricket in India [BCCI] at Barsapara Stadium in Guwahati from 03-07 Jul wherein Karma Namgyal Bhutia and P Dungal from Sikkim represented Sikkim Cricket Association.

An SCA press release informs that the faculty curators conducted theory and practical sessions on three-layer pitch construction, pitch soil selection, pitch preparation, outfield construction and ground equipments. Preparation and standard infrastructure requirements for hosting first class Ranji matches at North-East grounds were also discussed during the programme.

The orientation programme had Taposh



Chatterjee [BCCI zonal curator, Central], Ashish Bhowmik [BCCI Zonal curator, East] and Dr SB Singh [BCCI Curator, Northeast & Bihar] as faculty curators.

Vietnam expecting 1,70,000 visitors from India

KOLKATA, JUL 7 (PTI): Ambassador of Vietnam Ton Sinh Thanh today said the number of Indian tourists to his country has increased "very fast" and it is expecting 1,70,000 visitors this year.

The number of Indian tourists to Vietnam has risen from 16,000 in 2010 to an estimated 1,10,000 last year, he said and called for promoting India as a destination for Vietnamese.

The ambassador, who was addressing the 30th Travel and Tourism Fair event here said, "Vietnam has a safe environment and is a stable and peaceful country. People are very friendly and we have lots of cultural and historic heritage."

Listing the tourist attractions, Thanh said "Vietnam has several UNESCO-recognised world heritage sites, lot of relics including Hindu relics and long seaside beaches. And we have a tourist season spanning all round the year," he said.

From seven million global visitors in 2012 there were 20 million foreign visitors to Vietnam last year, he said adding the majority of them were from the Asian countries of China, Japan, South Korea and India.

The percentage of global tourists from Europe and US were 13 per cent and 5-6 per cent respectively last year, the diplomat said.

July 20 truckers strike to hit West Bengal hard: Truckers body

KOLKATA, JUL 7 (PTI): The proposed indefinite truckers strike in the country from July 20 is set to hit West Bengal hard as it is a consuming state, a goods transporters' body said here today. All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) has called the nationwide strike after the government failed to address its long pending issues and concerns.

Truck owners in West Bengal have said they will join the strike.

"The repressive and retrograde policies of the government are not tuned with the ground realities and are tram-

pling the transport sector which is now on the verge of imminent collapse impacting 15 crore people associated with the sector," AIMTC president S K Mittal said here.

The association has demanded reduction in diesel prices by including it into Goods and Services Tax (GST) list, uniform pricing, quarterly revision of fuel prices, toll barrier free movement for trucks across the country to prevent loss.

Other issues include reduction in third party motor insurance and abolition of tax deducted at source.

Calcutta Goods Transport Association VP Santosh Saraf said there are about three lakh trucks in the state who will be part of the strike.

He said West Bengal being a consuming state there will be impact owing to the strike.

West Bengal imports fish, eggs, fruits, spices among other consumer products from other states.

Some 1,000 trucks, big and small, enter West Bengal from other states, he said.

AIMTC had observed strike in October last year.

Gangtok preps for I-Day 2018

GANGTOK, 07 JUL [IPR]: A preparedness meeting for the upcoming Independence Day 2018 was held at the conference hall of Manan Kendra in Gangtok today. The meeting was chaired by Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava, in the presence of officials and representatives from all the line departments.

Mr Shrivastava allocated various roles and responsibilities to respective departments and laid down the list of events scheduled for the celebration. Important issues pertaining to invitation and vehicle passes, drinking water provi-

sions, law and order, traffic, security and magisterial arrangements, programmes to be included, book releases, etc were also discussed in detail.

He urged for active participation of all the concerned departments and allocated individual responsibilities to them. Clarifications on work allocation to particular departments was also done while assigning various activities respectively.

The officials and representatives committed themselves towards guaranteeing the grand success of the Independence Day 2018.

Rangpo to host I-Day Open Football Tournament

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 07 JUL:

The 72nd Independence Day celebration in Rangpo this year will feature grand I-Day Open Football Tournament.

An 11-member football organising committee has been formed for the same today in Rangpo with Laal Kumar Rai, Sudhir Chettri, Santosh Gurung, Bhim Rai, Rakesh Tamang, Madhav Pradhan, Binoy Thapa, Mani Rai, Buddha Tamang and Dhiren Chettri as members, a press release informs.

The Rangpo I-Day Open Football Tournament will carry cash prize of Rs 1,50,000 and Rs 1,00,000 for the winner and runner up respectively along with trophies.

The committee has fixed the entry fee for the tournament at Rs 3000. Local teams from all over the State except Rangpo area will be provided with TA of Rs 5000 per match while the TA for teams participating from outside Sikkim has been fixed at Rs 10000 per match, the release adds.

WB govt accepts Raj Kanojia's VR plea

KOLKATA, JUL 7 (PTI): The West Bengal Government has accepted the plea for voluntary retirement by Raj Kanojia, the Director General of Police and Commandant General, Home Guards, with effect from September 30 next, according to a state government notification.

Kanojia, who is also the Director General of Police, Coastal Security, West Bengal and an 1982 batch IPS officer, had prayed for voluntary retirement from the Indian Police Service.

Since Kanojia has completed more than 30 years of service and has attained 50 years of age he is eligible for seeking voluntary retirement under Rule 16(2) of AIS (DCRB) Rules, 1958 and the state government is competent to accept his prayer, the notification said.

Gyalshing to get football academy in 2019

Contd from pg01

Chamling as chief guest. In his speech, the CM appreciated the initiative of the SDF West district committee in conducting the tournament and suggested that other SDF district committees should take similar steps.

He also informed about the State Government's decision to provide 5% reservation in government jobs for sportspersons along with provision of annual grant of Rs 10 lakh to 'A' grade sports clubs and Rs 5 lakh to 'B' grade sports clubs of Sikkim. He also announced the opening of a football academy in Gyalshing next year.

The CM further informed that football playgrounds and volleyball & badminton courts will be set up by the State Government in every GPU. For the same, he asked the Panchayats and MLAs to take the initiative for procurement of appropriate land.

"We will try to set them up on government land. If government lands are not available, we will acquire private land for the play-

ground," he said.

The CM also announced annual grants to literary associations, dance, music and art academies registered with the government. The 'A' grade associations and academies will receive annual grant of Rs 5 lakh while 'B' grade academies will get annual grant of Rs 3 lakh from the State Government, he added.

He informed that works for new roads have been sanctioned based on demands received during his 32-day tour of Sikkim.

"For West Sikkim, we have sanctioned 35 km road for each constituency. By Aug this year, works worth Rs 1,000 crore will be sanctioned and the works will be tendered at village level. The contract works will have to be done by a person from the area where the work is to be undertaken. Persons from other areas cannot bid for works of other areas," he added.

Highlighting on the Mega Start Up Mela scheduled to be held in Gangtok on 17 Jul, the CM urged the youth to focus

on being self-reliant for which the State Government has made available various schemes.

During the programme, the SDF West district committee felicitated international and ISL footballers, Nirmal Chettri, Sanju Pradhan, Bikash Jai-ru, Robin Gurung and Uttam Rai, along with international women football players namely Nim Lhamu Bhutia and Lhako Phuti Bhutia. Mementos were handed over to them by the CM on the occasion.

Further, 15 ex-footballers from eight constituencies of the district were also felicitated during the programme.

It may be mentioned here, the inter-constituency football tournament [men's open] that had commenced on 01 Jun had been organized in U-14, U-19 and open categories for both girls and boys of West district. Best 25 football players spotted in U-14 category and 25 more in U-19 category will be selected for admission in the upcoming Gyalshing Football Academy.



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DT. 02/07/18

NOTICE

The date for conducting the written examinations for the post of Live Stock Assistant as published vide Advertisement No: 08/SPSC/EXAM/2018 DATED:14/05/2018 in the Sikkim State Sub-ordinate Para Veterinary Service AH,LF & VS Department, Government of Sikkim through Direct Recruitment is hereby fixed as per details given below:-

Papers	Mode of Examination	Date	Time	Venue
Paper – I	MCQ	05.08.2018	10:00 am to 12:00 noon	Will be intimated in the ADMIT CARD
Paper – II	MCQ	06.08.2018	10:00 pm to 1:00 pm	

The eligible candidates may download their admit cards **from 24.07.2018(after noon) to 02.08.2018(midnight)** from the official website of Sikkim Public Service Commission i.e. www.spscskm.gov.in.

Admission to all the stages of examination for which candidates are admitted by the Commission viz: Written Examination and Viva-Voce will be purely provisional, subject to their satisfying the prescribed eligibility conditions. If on verification at any point of time before or after the Written Examination and Viva-Voce, it is found that the candidates do not fulfil any of the eligibility conditions; their candidature for the examination/post will be cancelled by the Commission.

Sd/-
CONTROLLER OF EXAMINATION
SIKKIM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

R.O. No. 181/ipr/pub/classi./18-19 dt. 5.7.2018

SummitTIMES

ON TOP OF THE NEWS

Reticence in These Times of RTI

Instead of seeking applications, volunteer information

When we, the world's largest democracy, passed the Right to Information Act long years back, it was not necessarily a moment to celebrate. In fact, it was a moment of acute embarrassment because it was a public admission that 60 years (at the time, it is 71 now) since winning Independence, India was still run by a bureaucracy that had to be told that in a government of, for and by the people, information necessary to them should be made readily accessible. It is unfortunate enough that the Right to Information has been consciously sabotaged by the red tape that it seeks to cut away, but what is worse is that the message of openness that RTI seeks to institutionalise is lost on a babudom groomed on the irrationality of things like the Official Secrets Act. In fact, there are many offices and officers who now clam up claiming they are not the authorized information officers or ask queries to be written out and submitted as an application under RTI Act.

RTI is not just about submitting requisitions and receiving information; it is more a signal for officials to proactively share information, explain developments and become more forthright. This, as a behavioural change, and not necessarily making photocopies of files under the threat of disciplinary action that the RTI Act carries. RTI is not about "exposing" malpractices [although it does that too], but more about explaining governmental/ departmental processes. It seeks a maturity where people can just ask for information and get it, without having to file applications and waiting a month; it seeks a work culture where people with doubts and confusions can approach an officer and get their clarifications and explanations, not hit a wall that confounds them even more, makes them more suspicious. This is the message that needs to go out from the corridors of power into the offices of the executive. The reticence with which government offices respond to queries which would help clear confusions that could develop into embarrassments later, is confounding.

It is important that the concerned agencies understand that when they hesitate, they create doubts, and once suspicion has been seeded, the task to clear the air becomes extremely difficult. Reticence also leaves the field open for speculations and conspiracy theories to proliferate. It fact, it is advisable to always get ahead of a potential "situation" by volunteering information because that suggests openness and that inspires confidence even when the issues are complicated and even potentially divisive. Most times, there could be valid explanations for failures and mistakes and even blunders, but the people won't know unless they are told.

Swedish intellectuals form new literature prize in Nobel protest

STOCKHOLM, JUL 7 (AFP): What do you do when this year's Nobel Literature Prize, the world's most prestigious accolade of its kind, is postponed because of a sexual assault scandal? You create your own award.

More than 100 Swedish intellectuals have joined forces to form a new prize-giving body in protest after the Swedish Academy, which selects Nobel laureates, was plunged into crisis over its long-standing ties to a man accused of assaulting several women.

The alternative honour serves to denounce "bias, arrogance and sexism", according to its founders The New Academy, whose members include authors, artists and journalists.

It is meant to "remind people that literature and culture at large should promote democracy, transparency, empathy and respect, without privilege", the 107 intellectuals wrote in a joint statement.

As the #MeToo movement has made waves globally, the Swedish Academy descended into turmoil in November when local media published the testimonies of 18 women claiming to have been raped, sexually assaulted or harassed by an influential French cultural figure who has long been connected to the institution.

The revelations led the Academy to announce in May there will be no Nobel Literature Prize this year, as disagreements on how to deal with the scandal sowed deep discord among its 18 members and prompted six to quit - in-

cluding the first woman permanent secretary Sara Danius.

But for some the lack of a Nobel literature award for the first time in almost 70 years was unacceptable.

"Sweden is one of the world's most democratic, transparent and gender-equal countries... it needs a great literary prize," Swedish columnist and one of the founders of the new prize, Alexandra Pascalidou, told AFP.

The Swedish Academy's members used to be appointed for life before its patron, Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf, was forced to change the statutes, making it possible for members to resign and be replaced. Resigning member Kjell Espmark told the Dagens Nyheter newspaper that the institution had "given way to nepotism, attempts to cover up serious violations, stale macho values and arrogant bullying".

Seen as the bearer of high culture, the Swedish Academy, founded in 1786, is traditionally known for its integrity and discretion, with meetings and decisions on prizes kept secret.

But the New Academy plans to make its prize-awarding process transparent.

"We want to create something which is open and inclusive and which allows people to contribute," said Pascalidou. The new literature award -- which carries a prize of one million kronor (around 97,000 euros, USD 113,000) raised from crowdfunding and donations - will be handed out at a December 10 ceremony.

IAN MUSGRAVE
theconversation.com

There's only one thing better than a hot cup of coffee in the morning: a new research paper telling you your daily habit is good for your health. Headlines this week presented the good news from the journal JAMA Internal Medicine:

Like many previous studies, the JAMA paper found people who drank coffee had a lower risk of dying of any cause - and specifically, of dying from heart disease and cancer - over the course of the study.

But this study only shows a correlation between drinking coffee and a lower risk of early death. It doesn't show coffee was the cause of the lower risk.

The research is important, however, because it overturns the theory that people who drink six or more cups of coffee a day are at greater risk of early death. This issue had not been effectively addressed in previous studies.

HOW WAS THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED?

This was a prospective trial, which tracked almost half a million British residents over ten years as part of the UK Biobank study.

In a prospective trial, subjects are recruited, then their health and illness are followed over time. We have a good idea of how healthy they were to start off with. We also have a good idea of other factors that could impact their health from the start, rather than trying to reconstruct them after they have developed a disease.

In a baseline questionnaire, subjects gave detailed responses to coffee consumption (how much, how often, what types of coffee and whether it was caffeinated or decaffeinated), as well as other factors such as alcohol, tea, race, education, physical activity, body mass index (BMI) and smoking (including intensity, type of tobacco and time since quitting).

The volunteers were all genotyped to determine their genetic variations of major caffeine metabolising enzymes.

The participants' health status was monitored during the study and, if they died, their cause of death was determined by the National Health Service using internationally recognised criteria.

WHAT DID THEY FIND?

After taking into account factors such as smoking and alcohol intake, the researchers found fewer coffee drinkers died than those who didn't drink coffee over the ten-year study period.

Depending on the amount consumed, coffee drinkers were around 5-10% less likely to die from heart disease, cancer and other causes during the study period than non-coffee drinkers.

Compared to non-coffee drinkers, those who consumed one cup of coffee a day had an 8% lower risk of

Research Check: Does drinking coffee help you live longer?



premature death; this increased to a 16% lower risk for those who drank six cups a day. People who drank up to eight cups of coffee a day were 14% less likely to die prematurely than non-coffee drinkers.

This pattern was seen for all types of coffee, including instant and decaffeinated coffee.

The researchers found drinking six or more cups of coffee a day was not associated with an increased risk of death. While some previous studies had hinted at this (see here and here) the relationship was still uncertain. The current study is the most extensive exploration of high coffee intake to date.

They also found people who had a history of cancer, diabetes, heart attack or stroke were not at a higher risk of death from drinking a moderate amount of coffee.

Finally, and most importantly, the researchers found people who were less able to break down caffeine were not at higher risk of death.

Previously, researchers had thought people who broke down caffeine more slowly would have higher risks of heart disease because they had higher levels of caffeine in the blood than the average person. This turns out not to be so.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

As with the previous studies, this is a correlation study. So, while there was an association between coffee consumption and a lower risk of death, we still can't say coffee was the cause of the lower risk of death.

There may be some other environmental variable that was not accounted for. Coffee consumption may entail more walking, for instance, which was not captured in the lifestyle questionnaires.

But it is still plausible coffee causes the lowered death risk. While coffee is most notable for its caffeine content, it also contains a host of antioxidants such as a caffeic acid and chlorogenic acid, which

might have health benefits.

This may be why the risk of death in the JAMA study was also lower for those who drank decaffeinated coffee. Decaf has been similarly effective in reducing the risk of heart disease in other studies.

Despite a recent US court ruling coffee companies in California must carry cancer warning labels, this study supports previous research that coffee consumption is protective against cancer, particularly of the colon and liver.

Coffee consumption is also thought to be protective against type two diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. However, the effect of coffee consumption is modest, and should not replace other factors such as diet and exercise.

On the other hand, women who drink coffee may have an increased fracture risk, and may wish to reduce coffee consumption during pregnancy.

This week's JAMA study might not be reason enough to start drinking coffee, but if you love the drink, you needn't worry about having another cup. - Ian Musgrave

BLIND PEER REVIEW

This is a fair and accurate assessment. Although an observational study, it is still good news for coffee drinkers. We're unlikely to ever have a large, randomised controlled trial that can truly answer this question of causation.

One limitation of the study, which is described in the paper, is that the researchers just asked participants to tick which type of coffee they predominantly drink. So there may be some misclassification of people who regularly drank more than one type of coffee. - Clare Collins

[the writer is Senior lecturer in Pharmacology, University of Adelaide]

What's next for Najib Razak, Malaysia's disgraced former prime minister?

JAMES CHIN
theconversation.com

The arrest of Najib Razak, the former prime minister of Malaysia, on Tuesday was widely expected. In fact, many Malaysians were hoping he would be arrested immediately after the ruling party, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), was defeated in the May 9 election.

Najib was the main reason why UMNO lost - he was widely seen as corrupt and the main person behind the scandal at 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), a state investment fund.

US prosecutors have accused Najib of diverting US\$731 million from 1MDB into his personal bank account. Many people assume Najib's arrest is connected to this fund, but legally speaking, he faces charges relating to a company called SRC international, a one-time subsidiary of 1MDB.

SRC took a loan of about US\$1 billion from a state-run retirement fund and Najib is alleged to have siphoned off about US\$10.5 million from the top. The money allegedly ended up in his bank account, the same account that was implicated in the 1MDB affair.

Najib has denied any wrongdoing, and on Wednesday pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Why was Najib not charged in the 1MDB probe? The simple answer is that the 1MDB investigation covers multiple jurisdictions. At the last count, money involved in the 1MDB affair is believed to have passed through the following financial systems: the United States, United Kingdom, Singapore, Switzerland, Australia, Luxembourg, Hong Kong, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, among others.

It is simply not possible to put



such a complex case together in such a short amount of time following the election of opposition leader Mahathir Mohamad two months ago.

The good news is that, under the new Mahathir administration, foreign governments will now have access to Malaysian documents related to the 1MDB probe. The US, Singapore and Switzerland are among the countries investigating the scandal. When Najib was in power, all financial institutions in Malaysia refused to cooperate with these foreign probes.

Why is SRC International different? The key factor here is a star witness, a former director of SRC International who decided to come forward to testify for the prosecution. This individual was too afraid to come forward when Najib was prime minister. That is no longer the case.

There are several key witnesses in the 1MDB scandal who may be thinking along the same lines as the former SRC director. With Najib no longer in control, some of these witnesses may now turn against him, as well.

Top of the list is Jho Low, the accused mastermind of the 1MDB scam. He is believed to be dividing his time between Macau and Taiwan, both places where extradition to Malaysia is not possible.

Another important witness under tremendous pressure to come forward is Tim Leissner, the former Southeast Asia chairman for Goldman Sachs, the bank that handled most of the 1MDB bond sales. He was pushed to resign from Goldman Sachs in February 2016, and both Singapore and US securities regulators have banned him from working again in the financial industry.

An interesting side note is that he is better known in the US as the husband of Kimora Lee Simmons, an American model and fashion designer and the former wife of hip hop mogul Russell Simmons.

What's next in the Najib case? By charging Najib, the Mahathir administration is keeping an electoral promise to take action against the former leader. But more importantly,

the new government is also sending a strong message to Malaysians and the international community that it is serious about cleaning up the mess left by Najib's government, especially when it comes to corruption.

For Najib, this will likely be the first of many trials he will face, as more charges are expected in the 1MDB case. It's also likely that Najib's family members, including his wife, stepson and son-in-law will face charges, as they are alleged to be direct beneficiaries of the stolen funds.

And this will likely bring an end to the Razak political dynasty in Malaysia for the time being. Najib's father was Malaysia's second prime minister and many of his immediate relations used to hold political office. Until the election in May, Najib's cousin, Hishammuddin Hussein, had been Malaysia's defence minister.

UMNO will also need to shed its associations with Najib in order to rehabilitate its image among the Malaysian people. Last weekend, the party elected a new president, former Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

All in all, Najib's arrest represents a clean break from the past for all of Malaysia. The end of one-party rule has opened up the possibility of a new era of good governance in the country, which was unthinkable just three months ago. In today's "new" Malaysia, anything is possible - even calling to account a former prime minister who was just defeated.

More importantly, going forward, the Malaysian public will demand full accountability from their leaders, both past and present.

[the writer is Director, Asia Institute Tasmania, University of Tasmania]

All stranded Indian Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims evacuated from Nepal

SHIRISH B PRADHAN
KATHMANDU, JUL 7 (PTI): All the 1,430 stranded Indian pilgrims who were stranded while returning from the Kailash Mansarovar in Tibet have been airlifted to safety with the evacuation of the last batch of 160 people from Nepal's mountainous regions today, the Indian embassy here said.

Those rescued from Hilsa and Simikot districts have been moved to Nepalgunj and Surkhet, the two towns with better health care and infrastructure facilities close to the Indian border.

"The evacuation process completed after 160 stranded pilgrims were



evacuated today from Simikot and Hilsa. Embassy's team continues to be stationed to monitor the situation," the Indian mission tweeted.

"As of today, 1,430 stranded pilgrims were

airlifted from Simikot/Hilsa to Nepalgunj/Surkhet and have achieved a zero in both these places," it said.

The pilgrims were stuck for the past five-six days as continued down-

pour in western Nepal had blocked the transportation.

The Indian embassy took initiatives to evacuate them and provide necessary medicine and other essential items as

soon as they got information, an official said. Commercial flights and Nepal Army helicopters were also deployed for the task over the past few days.

"All of them have been airlifted from Hilsa and Simikot to Surkhet and Nepalgunj, border towns of Nepal. Two embassy staff were also deployed at the site for facilitating evacuation and establishing communication with the family members of the victims," embassy spokesperson Roshan Lepcha said.

"They were evacuated from Hilsa and brought to Simikot from where they were airlifted to Nepalgunj and Surkhet, border towns,"

he said.

He said the embassy had coordinated with local tour operators and security people to carry out the rescue works.

In view of the situation, the Indian embassy had on Thursday issued a revised advisory for prospective pilgrims, suggesting medical examination before taking up the yatra.

The pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar in Tibetan region of China is considered holy by Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. Every year, hundreds of Indians undertake the 'yatra' which involves trekking under inhospitable conditions.



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Reference No: 38/EXAM/SPSC/2018 Date: 05/07/2018

NOTICE

On the basis of the marks obtained in the Written Examination and Viva-Voce/ Interview as Advertisement vide no: 01/SPSC/EXAM/2018 DATED : 16/01/2018 & subsequent Notice no: 25/SPSC/EXAM/18 dt: 15/05/2018 for recruitment to the post of General Duty Medical Officer (Junior Grade) on temporary regular basis under the Sikkim State Health Service, through Direct Recruitment, the candidates bearing the following Roll Numbers are hereby declared qualified in order of merit and the names are recommended for appointment.

Sl. No.	ROLL NO	CANDIDATE NAME
1.	128	Dr. Bishal Gurung
2.	98	Dr. Suman Gurung
3.	89	Dr. Nirmal Kumar Gurung.
4.	49	Dr. Tsewang Donka Bhutia
5.	187	Dr. Shetal Chettri.
6.	156	Dr. Tsephel Eden Bhutia.
7.	62	Dr. Rojesh Kumar Gurung
8.	74	Dr. Sachika Rai.
9.	6	Dr. Deepak Dahal.
10	126	Dr. Balkrishna Chauhan.
11.	63	Dr. Shyamaldip Gurung.
12.	52	Dr. Suraj Adhikari.
13.	82	Dr. Anita Gurung.
14	85	Dr. Udit Pradhan.
15	45	Dr. Bidhya Sharma.
16	27	Dr. Pranay Kishore Chhetri.
17	124	Dr. Hari Krishna Rai.
18.	48	Dr. Dichen Doma Bhutia
19	73	Dr. Prabriti Rai.
20	184	Dr.Sanjay Rai
21.	117	Dr. Chita Subba
22.	112	Dr. Subarna Khatiwara
23	84	Dr. Uma Adhakari
24	55	Dr. Kanupriya Rai.
25.	18	Dr. Raju Singh.
26.	14	Dr. Srijana Subba
27	174	Dr. Meenakshi Dahal.
28	21	Dr. Prasana Rai.
29	15	Dr. Nima Dolma Sherpa
30	94	Dr. Rinzing Ongmu Bhutia
31.	186	Dr. Sherry Rinzin Phen-chungpa
32.	30	Dr. Prashant Rasaily Kami.
33.	7	Dr. Prabhat Moktan.
34.	25	Dr. Deepika Gurung.
35.	106	Dr. Tenzing Yanghcen
36.	65	Dr. Taneesha Subba.
37	2	Dr. Dichen Ongmu Bhutia.
38.	17	Dr. Lok Bahadur Limboo.
39	64	Dr. Kunzang Ongmoo Bhutia
40	185	Dr. Mingyur Dicky Lassopa.
41.	88	Dr. Bunnu Pakimo Lepcha.
42.	158	Dr.Rojana Tamang.
43.	107	Dr. Chedup Lepcha
44.	36	Dr.Salina Tamang.
45.	19	Dr. Kanchan Gurung.
46.	32	Dr. Pallavi Pariyar.
47	22	Dr. Mayel Pandi Lepcha.

The candidature of the candidates as shown in the list of provisional, subject to the police verification, medical fitness and verification of all required documents by the State Government.

Sd/-
(Bimla Rai. Smt)
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Not averse to working with Congress: Mamata

KOLKATA, JULY 7 (PTI): West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has said that she is not averse to working with the Congress to oust the BJP government at the centre which is behaving like "a hundred Hitlers".

The TMC president, in an interview to a magazine, said she shares very good relations with UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi but has never worked with Congress President Rahul Gandhi, whom she described as "much junior".

To questions about prime ministerial ambitions, Banerjee said she has "no intent". However, she was ambivalent when asked if she was not ruling herself out of the race.

"Instead of preparing

for PM candidature, let us work together," she said in the interview to India Today which was posted on its website.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief said she has no problems working with anybody as long as their intentions and philosophy are clear

On her ties with the Congress leadership, Banerjee said, "What I can say about Rajivji or Soniaji I cannot say about Rahul because he is much junior."

"I don't have any problem. My intention will be to unite with all. But it is not my decision alone. It has to be the decision of all the regional parties. I have no problem working with anybody as long as they are efficient, and their inten-

tions, their philosophy, their ideology are clear," she said when asked if she is not averse to dealing with the Congress or having an understanding with the party.

Banerjee, while speaking on the issue of some Opposition parties wanting to forge a federal front without the Congress, noted that some parties don't support the Congress as they have their own regional compulsions.

"I don't blame them. I say let's work against the BJP together. If the Congress is strong and gets more seats in some places, let it take the lead. If the regional parties are together somewhere else, they can be the decision-makers," she said.

Congress President

Rahul Gandhi had yesterday held individual meetings with senior party leaders from West Bengal in the national capital to know their views on strengthening the state unit and on the way forward ahead of the Lok Sabha elections next year.

A section of Congress leaders has shown inclination to have a tie-up with the TMC in West Bengal which has a total of 42 Lok Sabha seats. PCC chief Adhir Ranjan Choudhary, however, is not in favour of party having any truck with Mamata Banerjee's party.

The TMC chief expressed confidence that a grand alliance of opposition parties is possible.

On her idea of fielding a common candidate

against the BJP, she said, "I am not saying that. If it is done for 75 seats, then the game will be over. If (BSP supremo) Mayawati and (SP chief) Akhilesh (Yadav) work together in Uttar Pradesh, the game will be over. Then after the elections, a common minimum agenda can be prepared. It is a big family, let it be a collective decision."

Asked about the possibility of becoming the prime minister, she said, "Me? It is a very silly question. First I will say I have no intent. I told you, I am a simple person and happy with my job. But we want to help everybody as members of a collective family. Instead of preparing for PM candidature, let us work together."

On whether she is not ruling herself out, she said, "Who am I to rule out anything? I know I am a seasoned politician, a very senior politician now, after my struggles. I have been MP seven times, MLA twice and a CM twice. So I cannot say anything that others may not like".

Banerjee, who has floated the idea of federal front, has been meeting several influential leaders to cobble up a strong opposition alliance against the BJP.

"They are committing atrocities, inflicting torture. Even some BJP people are not supporting them. They are behaving like a hundred Hitlers," she said in a blistering attack on the BJP-led government at the centre.

Communicative English course for WBCS officers held

KOLKATA, JUL 7 (PTI): Twentyfive probationary officers of the West Bengal Civil Services have undergone a communicative English course training conducted by the British Council, sources in it said today.

The course was part of the long-term objective of creating an international education hub in West Bengal, Director, British Council, East and Northeast India, Debanjan Chakrabarti said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had in the past stressed on the need for all civil services officers in West Bengal to acquire a sufficient level of command over English.

The three-week train-

ing was held under the personnel and administrative reforms and e-governance department of the government, a British Council statement said here today.

It focussed on developing both spoken and written forms of communication of the participants to suit the needs of the 21st century workplace, it said.

The course materials were developed by British Council tailored to the needs of the participants and lessons were task-driven as the participants took part in group-based role-plays and discussions, as well as undertaking individual activities.

Chakrabarti said the

course is the beginning of a fruitful partnership between the West Bengal government and the British Council Kolkata as envisaged by the chief minister.

"This is the British Councils 70th year in India and we are committed to create opportunities for learners with our internationally recognised assessments," he said.

The British Council and the Administrative Training Institute here have been holding the training course since 2017 and around 200 WBCS officers, including 25 officers of the latest batch, have received certificates so far, ATI Director General Sanjeev Chopra said.

Unrest over shifting of border pillar in Moreh, prohibitory orders imposed

IMPHAL, JUL 7 (PTI): Prohibitory orders were imposed today in some areas in Moreh sub-division after unrest over the alleged shifting of an India-Myanmar border pillar well into the Indian territory.

Tengnoupal District Magistrate A Tombikanta ordered imposition of prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC during the night hours for the next six months in some parts of the sub-division.

The orders prohibit assembly of five or more people from 7 pm to 4 am and carrying any weapon.

It was imposed after rising tension in the area over "shifting" of border

pillar No 81 three kilometres inside the Indian territory, officials said.

The move comes a day after a visit by the Manipur Revenue Minister Karam Shyam to the area where he said a high power committee on border pillars would submit a detailed report to the government on the contested pillar.

The border pillar was erected in 1969-70, the minister had said.

The residents of Kwatha Khunou had flagged the issue last month, alleging encroachment. Their claim was supported by several social bodies and political parties.

CID registers fresh murder case into Nandigram violence

KOLKATA, JUL 6 (PTI): The West Bengal CID has started a fresh murder case related to the violence during the Nandigram movement of 2007 and named former CPI(M) MP Lakshman Seth and 15 others as accused in the case, a statement said today.

The move was initiated after family members of two victims moved a local court seeking re-investigation into the missing cases, it said adding that the court has

directed the CID to register murder cases, the CID statement said.

"We have taken up investigation of the abduction and murder cases of Durgapada Maity and Subrata Samanta in 2007.

Lakshman Seth and 15 others were named accused in the FIR in this case," it said.

Seth, who had switched over to the BJP in 2016, was named as the main accused in the case.

Digital empowerment of police will lead to a safer Assam: CM

GUWAHATI, JUL 7 (PTI): Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said today said digital empowerment of the police will lead to better policing and make the state safer.

Sonowal also urged Internet users of the state to strengthen the age old amity and bonhomie existing in Assam.

He was addressing a gathering while inaugurating the office building of Assam Police Cyberdome Project here.

The Cyberdome Project, which was promised in the state budget, aims at empowering the force to use information and communication technology (ICT) for better service delivery, create digital repository of its available databases on crime, insurgency, terrorism and related cases.

"Crimes perpetrated in digital era have assumed digital significance and all cyber-users must take responsibility to use Internet for creating harmony in our society," Sonowal said.

He hailed the Assam Police for its intervention from time to time to prevent any situation from snowballing into a major problem and urged them to use ICT to fight against various evils from corruption to superstition.

The project was conceptualised to provide an advanced platform for addressing cyber crime and related issues.

Belgium stun Brazil to reach World Cup semis

KAZAN ARENA, JULY 7 (AFP): A superb first half display by Belgium ended Brazil's hopes of a record sixth World Cup crown as a Fernandinho own goal and a superb Kevin De Bruyne strike proved enough to win 2-1 and seal a semi-final spot.

Although Brazil roared back in the second half with a headed goal from Renato Augusto, it is the Belgians who will face France in Saint Petersburg on Tuesday.

Unbeaten in their last 15 games, Brazil's bid for a second consecutive place in the semi-finals looked in safe hands.

But after an energetic start that saw Thiago Silva come close and Neymar show early promise, Brazil heads went down following Fernandinho's own goal before De Bruyne's superb strike from distance put the Red Devils in control on 31 minutes.

Late changes by Brazil coach Tite paid off as Renato Augusto's superb head-



er 14 minutes from time dragged the south Americans back into contention.

But as Belgian legs tired, Brazil spurned several great chances to push the match into extra-time, Augusto drilling inches wide and Coutinho skewing his effort off target from Neymar's pass.

Courtois produced a great save in the dying minutes, tipping over a curling drive from Neymar as the Belgians ensured they will make just their second visit to the last four, 32 years after their surge to semis in Mexico.

- RED SURGE -
On eight minutes Courtois was flapping when Ney-

mar's corner was flicked on by Joao Miranda, came off the thigh of Thiago Silva and then off the post.

Tite had replaced suspended holding midfielder Casemiro with Fernandinho in his starting line-up, handing the Manchester City player his first World Cup start since he was hauled off at half-time on Brazil's way to the humiliating 7-1 semi-final defeat to Germany in 2014.

Fernandinho's World Cup woes continued, Hazard's corner coming off the midfielder's arm to glide past Alisson and into the net as he rose to block.

Brazil almost equal-

ised immediately, Neymar dribbling down the left and finding Gabriel, only for his effort to go amiss.

But Belgium's early opener showed the Red Devils were oozing confidence, Hazard and De Bruyne linking incisively to carve open the Selecao's well-oiled defence with surprising ease.

On 21 minutes De Bruyne set up Hazard on a free run inside to set up Thomas Meunier, only for Miranda to block his intended cross for Lukaku.

A minute later De Bruyne found Lukaku in acres of space, the big striker coolly nutmegging Miranda before seeing the



ball frantically cleared into the stands.

Superb control from Marcelo saw the Real Madrid defender chest down, cut inside and unleash a low drive that Courtois did well to block.

But when Belgium countered on the half hour, it was with devastating effect.

Lukaku looked invincible as he powered through Brazil's midfield before finding De Bruyne in space on the right.

The Manchester City ace had time to pick his spot before unleashing a right-footed drive that screamed past Alisson and inside the 'keeper's

far post.

Tite replaced the ineffective Willian with Roberto Firmino at half-time and soon after changed Jesus for Douglas Costa.

But it took the arrival of China-based Augusto 17 minutes from time that sparked Brazil into life.

Brazil saw two penalty claims in quick succession waved away by Serbian referee Milorad Mazic after Neymar tumbled following contact with Fellaini and Gabriel went to ground after a challenge from Vincent Kompany.

De Bruyne released Hazard down the left but he firing narrowly wide of Alisson's far post as Lukaku waited to pounce.

Minutes later Augusto hung in the air to meet Coutinho's perfectly-weighted cross and direct it past Courtois to spark celebrations among the Brazilian fans in Kazan.

But he drilled inches wide minutes later, one of several misses that Brazil were made to regret.

'Bitter' Brazil boss Tite keeps quiet on future



KAZAN ARENA (RUSSIA), JULY 7 (AFP): Brazil coach Tite left questions hanging over his future but refused to point the finger as the five-time champions crashed out of the World Cup after a 2-1 quarter-final defeat to Belgium.

Four years after the drama of Neymar's injury and a humiliating 7-1 semi-final defeat to Germany on home soil, Brazil were forced back to the drawing board as they followed neighbours Argentina, Uruguay and Colombia in exiting the tournament earlier than hoped.

Brazil had been undefeated in their last 15 games under Tite, a streak in which a resurgent Selecao had conceded only three goals.

Their World Cup hopes were turned upside down in 31 first-half minutes when Fernandinho's 13th minute own goal put Belgium ahead before a superb strike from Kevin De Bruyne left Brazil, and Neymar, staring at a spectacular defeat.

Tite admitted it was a "bitter" defeat, but he brushed aside suggestions he could resign. "I'm not going to talk about the future, I'm not thinking about the future," said the 56-year-old. "I will do a general assessment of the match and our campaign, but I won't be making any comments on individuals.

"This is not very human. And we also have to look at the global context. "We played a match in which we had lots of pos-

session, a lot of opportunities, but in terms of effectiveness... Belgium managed to turn their opportunities into goals.

"They weren't superior to us on the pitch, but more efficient. That's certain." Neymar, who appeared in great form when scoring once and setting up another in a 2-0 last 16 win over Mexico, failed to spark on the night despite testing Belgium 'keeper Thibaut Courtois at the death.

The Paris Saint-Germain star, left in tears at the final whistle, refused to talk to waiting media.

Real Madrid defender Marcelo, who was a threat to Belgium throughout thanks to his marauding runs down the left flank, summed up feelings when he said: "It was a horrible night." Tite could only concur.

"It's a heavy, bitter feeling. This was very hard for us to swallow," he said.

"I'm not going to say we were unlucky. Belgium have top quality players like De Bruyne, (Romelu) Lukaku, (Eden) Hazard and even (Vincent) Kompany and Courtois.

"They're top players." As Brazil's dream of a record-extending sixth World Cup ended, Roberto Martinez's Belgium ended a 32-year wait to reach the final four of the tournament.

The Red Devils will now play France, who eliminated Uruguay 2-0 earlier in the day, in an enticing all-European semi-final.

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Kuldeep, Chahal under pressure after England fight back

Chetan Narula

BRISTOL, JULY 7 (PTT):

Rendered ineffective in the previous match, India's wrist spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal would look to bounce back against 'well-prepared' England batsmen as the two teams clash in the series-deciding third Twenty20 International, here on Sunday.

The Indian spin duo faces its first real challenge in more than a year with England batsmen biting back immediately after drubbing in Manchester. From Sri Lanka, to Australia, to New Zealand, and to South Africa, none of the opponents could easily contend with Chahal-Kuldeep in such quick time.

With Kuldeep returning wicket-less in Cardiff after a sensational five-wicket show in the series-opener and Chahal too taken for runs last night, they need to find ways to trouble the opponents.

India missed injured Jasprit Bumrah's services on Friday during the death overs as England hit three sixes. His replacement Umesh Yadav has provided wickets (four in two matches) in the powerplays, but he has also



been taken for runs at the same time.

Despite the disappointment on Friday, the visitors are still in contention for their sixth consecutive T20I series' win, which is part of an unbeaten run stretching back to September 2017.

The last time India lost a bilateral T20I contest was against West Indies in July 2017, albeit that was a one-off game. In fact, India's last series' loss with more one T20I game also came against the same opposition, at Florida in August 2016.

In between those two losses to West Indies, India beat England 2-1 in a

three-match T20I series at home in January 2017. That contest is notable because India were 1-0 down, and came back to win the series with Chahal taking career-best 6-25 in the series' decider at Bengaluru.

Wrist spin continues to be a deciding factor in the current series as well. Kuldeep brought the shock-value to the mix of things at Manchester and duly bamboozled England. The hosts, in turn, prepared well for the second game, despite the short turn-around time, and with a little aid from the pitch, played more selectively against both

wrist spinners.

A little change in the England batting line-up also worked wonders. Joe Root was sent up at number four, with skipper Eoin Morgan dropping down to allow the former more time at the crease. While it didn't help Root in particular as he failed to read the googly for a second match running, it did allow Alex Hales to build partnerships and anchor their win.

Hales was included in the side in place of injured all-rounder Ben Stokes, but on current form, it will be tough to leave him out. Stokes returns to the England squad for the

third match and bolsters their confidence being yet another key member to have played in the IPL.

In the current scenario, he could walk into the playing eleven in place of the struggling Root, based alone on the fact that he has played enough against both Chahal and Kuldeep in the last two IPL seasons.

Stokes will also provide another seam-bowling option, and thus it remains to be seen if Moeen Ali will return to the eleven. It will depend on pitch conditions. A similar wicket to the one in Cardiff will see the all-rounder sitting out again, for the boundaries at the Gloucestershire County Club will be short once again. That India played spin well in both matches will also be a factor.

The conditions concern India as well. Thanks to the last layer of grass remaining on the surface, England used the short ball tactic against the top-order. Both Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul struggled to get going against the short deliveries, while Shikhar Dhawan and Suresh Raina looked ill at ease. Even Virat Kohli was out caught pulling a short one straight to fine leg, albeit in the death overs.

Thai coach apologises to parents as boys write they're OK

MAE SAI (THAILAND), JUL 7 (AP):

The soccer coach trapped in a cave with 12 Thai boys apologised to their parents in the first letter he and the team have sent out through divers, in which the boys say they're doing well and missing their families.

Rescuers said they won't immediately attempt an underwater evacuation because the boys have not yet learned adequate diving skills. But if heavy rains start again, divers will try to take the boys out right away, Chiang Rai Gov.

Narongsak Osatanakorn said at a midnight news conference on Friday. The same day saw a disheartening setback with the death of a former Thai navy SEAL diving in flooded passageways to deliver oxygen supplies.



"To the parents of all the kids, right now the kids are all fine, the crew are taking good care. I promise I will care for the kids as best as possible. I want to say thanks for all the support and I want to apologize to the parents," wrote 25-year-old Ekapol Chanthawong, the coach of the Wild Boars

soccer team.

One boy writes: "I'm doing fine, but the air is a little cold but don't worry.

Although, don't forget to set up my birthday party." Another, identified as Tun, writes: "Mom and Dad, please don't worry, I am fine. I've told Yod to get ready to take me out for fried chicken.

With love." The name reference could be of a waiting relative.

The rest of the scribbled letters on pages from a notebook struck a similar message of love for parents and telling them not to worry.

One boy named Mick wrote: "Don't be worried, I miss everyone. Grand-

pa, uncle, mom dad, and siblings I love you all. I'm happy being here inside, the navy SEALS have taken good care. Love you all." The boys, 11 to 16, and their coach went exploring in the cave after a soccer game June 23. Monsoon flooding cut off their escape and prevented rescuers from finding them for almost 10 days.

The only way to reach them was by navigating dark and tight passageways filled with muddy water and strong currents and in oxygen-depleted air.

Asked at his news conference about bringing the boys out underwater, the governor replied, "Not today because they cannot dive at this time." Narongsak said the boys were still healthy and have practiced wearing diving masks and

breathing in preparation for the diving possibility.

Thai officials had been suggesting in public statements that a quick underwater evacuation of the boys and their coach was needed because of the possibility that access to the cave could soon close again due to seasonal monsoon rains expected this weekend.

Earlier efforts to pump out water from the cave have been set back every time there has been a heavy rain.

Cave rescue specialists have cautioned against that approach except as a last resort, because of the dangers posed by inexperienced people using diving gear. The path out is considered especially complicated because of twists and turns in narrow

flooded passages.

The suggestion that the trapped team might have to wait months inside until a safe way out is available as was the case in 2010 with Chilean miners trapped underground has met with little enthusiasm.

Authorities continue to pursue a third option, which is finding a shaft or drilling into the mountain in which the cave is located to find a sort of back door entrance.

The death of the Thai diver, Saman Gunan, underscored the risks of making the underwater journey. The diver, the first fatality of the rescue effort, was working in a volunteer capacity and died on a mission to place oxygen canisters along the route to where the boys and others are shel-

tered, Thai SEAL commander Rear Adm. Arpakorn Yookongkaew said.

The strategically placed canisters allow divers to stay underwater longer during the five-hour trip to reach the stranded team.

Elon Musk, the entrepreneur behind the Tesla automobile and the SpaceX rocket company, said he would send engineers to help. One of his enterprises is Boring Co., which digs tunnels for advanced transport systems and has advanced ground-penetrating radar.

Musk also brainstormed on Twitter about possible technology for a safe evacuation, suggesting that an air tunnel constructed with soft tubing like a Bouncy Castle could provide flexible passage out.

New IDs to deliver recognition, protection to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh: UN

YOSHITA SINGH
UNITED NATIONS, JUL 7 (PTI): About 900,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh will soon get credit card-sized plastic IDs that will help provide them another level of protection and preserve their right to voluntarily return to Myanmar in conducive conditions, according to the UN refugee agency.

As per the UN estimates, nearly 700,000 minority Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh to escape violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State since August 25 last year when the army launched a military crackdown.

Myanmar does not recognise Rohingya as an ethnic group and insists that they are Bangladeshi migrants living illegally in



the country.

The exercise, which began at the end of June, is expected to take up to six months to complete.

It "will help consolidate a unified database for the purposes of protection, identity management, documentation, provision of assistance, population statistics and ultimately solutions for an estimated 900,000 refugees who have fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh in successive waves of forced displacement," Charlie Yaxley, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UN-

HCR) said in Geneva.

Since August last year, more than 720,000 have fled in what was one of the world's largest and fastest growing refugee emergencies in decades.

"The verification will play a key role in establishing refugees' identities and their declared places of origin in Myanmar," Yaxley said.

"It will help preserve their right to voluntarily return home, if and when they decide that the conditions are right to do so," he said.

The exercise will also help boost accurate refugee data supporting of the government and humanitarian partners to better understand their specific needs; plan, target and deliver protection and assistance; and avoid duplicating services.

"Biometric data, including iris scans and fingerprints as well as photographs, are used in the exercise to confirm individual identities for all refugees over the age of 12," Yaxley said.

The credit card-sized plastic IDs, issued jointly by the Bangladesh Government and the UNHCR, contain a number of anti-fraud features.

Since the start of the exercise on June 21, some 4,200 refugees have been verified. Despite heavy monsoon rains in recent days, most refugees attended their verification appointments, aware of the significance of having an identity card.

In addition to providing laptops, servers,

wireless routers, biometric hardware and printing equipment, the UNHCR is also making available a special biometric registration software.

"Following his visit to Bangladesh this week, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said greater resources must be found to develop education, healthcare and infrastructure to build a more sustainable life for Rohingya refugees and their hosts," the spokesperson said.

Ten months into the Rohingya refugee crisis, the response continues to remain focused on addressing the massive humanitarian needs, and on mitigating the impact of monsoon rains in refugee settlements.

To date, the UN's Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya refugee situation in Bangladesh is only 26 per cent funded.

"Additional international support is needed to step up the assistance from purely humanitarian and day-to-day support towards medium-term and developmental assistance," said Yaxley.

The UN has described the atrocities by the Myanmar military on Rohingya refugees as a textbook example of ethnic cleansing while the rights groups called it a genocide.

Buddhist-majority Myanmar, however, rejects the charge, saying its security forces launched a counter-insurgency operation on August 25 in response to Rohingya militant attacks.

UK launches new visas open to Indian scientists, academics

LONDON, JUL 7 (PTI): The UK has launched new visas that will be open to overseas scientists and researchers, including Indians, to encourage the growth of the country's research sector.

The new UKRI Science, Research and Academia scheme, which is being added to the already existing Tier 5 (Temporary Worker Government Authorised Exchange) visa route, opened from yesterday for researchers, scientists and academics from outside the European Union (EU) to come to the UK for up to two years.

"The UK is a world leader in research and innovation and these changes will make it easier for international researchers to work and train in the UK," said UK immigration minister Caroline Nokes in a statement announcing the launch.

"We must have an immigration system that makes sure we can attract leading international talent and benefit from their knowledge and expertise.

"I recognise the crucial contribution science makes to the UK economy and society and I am determined that the UK will continue to welcome leading scientific and research talent from around the world," she said.

The scheme will be operated by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which brings together the country's seven research councils, Innovate UK and Research England.



Over 100 'chimneys' drilled into mountain in bid to reach trapped boys

MAE SAI (THAILAND), JUL 7 (AFP): More than 100 chimneys are being drilled into the mountainside in a frantic bid to reach a Thai youth football team trapped in a cave complex below, the head of the rescue mission said today.

The unprecedented rescue effort is attempting to establish new ways to extract the boys from above, if the underground chambers flood and it is deemed too risky to evacuate the team by diving out through the submerged passageways.

"Some (of the chimneys) are as deep as 400 metres... but they

still cannot find their location yet," Narongsak Osottanakorn told reporters, adding the mission lacked the technology "to pinpoint where they are staying".

"We estimate that (they) are 600 metres down, but we don't know the (exact) target," he said.

On the question of dipping oxygen levels in the cave, he said rescuers had managed to establish a line to pump in fresh air and had also withdrawn non-essential workers from chamber three -- where the rescue base is -- to preserve levels inside the cave.

The "Wild Boar" team have been trapped inside the Tham Luang cave complex for two weeks.

'Religious ultra-right candidates in Pak polls can be disturbing'

KARACHI, JUL 7 (PTI): Several religious ultra-right and right-wing extremist groups have fielded their candidates for the July 25 general election in Pakistan, raising the stakes for democratic and liberal forces in the country, a leading newspaper said in an editorial.

Two newly-formed ultra-right religious parties, the Tehreek-i-Labaik Pakistan and the Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek have fielded

more than 200 candidates for the National Assembly seats from all four provinces in the country.

The Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek (AAT), said to be the latest incarnation of the Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group, has filed nominations for 50 National Assembly seats in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed-linked Milli Muslim League is also contesting

the election under the banner of AAT after the election commission dismissed a plea to register it as a political party.

The Dawn newspaper in its editorial has noted that while several mainstream political parties have been subjected to exceptional scrutiny and several mainstream politicians have struggled to get their names on a ballot paper, the new ultra-right religious crop has virtually faced no public scrutiny.

The mainstream religious parties have formed the Mutthahida Majlis Amal (MMA) platform from will be contesting election.

The 'Dawn' editorial says the normalisation of the religious far-right and right-wing extremist groups in national politics ought to be of a great concern to all right-thinking and democratic citizens of Pakistan.

"It is not clear if a so-called policy of mainstreaming of militant groups is being surreptitiously foisted on a largely unsuspecting electorate or if the religious far-right and militant groups have themselves identified a political opening of a lifetime," the editorial said.

The editorial said that the right of individuals to participate in an election, as candidates or voters, must not be limited or infringed upon unless there is a compelling legal reason.

Iran executes 8 over 2017 Islamic State attack on Tehran

TEHRAN, JUL 7 (AP): Iran said today it executed eight people convicted in the 2017 Islamic State group attack on parliament and the shrine of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Tehran.

The June 7, 2017 attack has so far been the only assault by the Sunni extremists inside of Shiite Iran, which has been deeply involved in the wars in Iraq and Syria where the militants once held vast territory.

The judiciary's official Mizan news agency and semi-official news agencies in Iran acknowledged the executions Saturday, but did not say when they took place. Executions in Iran are carried out by hangings.

While Iran is one of the world's top enforcers of the death penalty, such mass executions are rare. The last mass execution reported in August 2007 saw Iran hang seven men convicted of rape in Mashhad at the same time.

The news agencies on Saturday named those executed as Soleiman Mozafari, Esmail Sufi, Rahman Behrouz, Majed Mortezaei, Siros Azizi, Ayoub Esmaili, Khosro Ramezani and Osman Behrouz.

The Islamic State attack killed at least 18 people and wounded more than 50.

Over a dozen others remain on trial over the attack. Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard responded to the attack by launching six missiles into eastern Syria targeting IS militants.

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UK town to be Amritsar's twin city in memory of Maharaja Duleep Singh

LONDON, JUL 7 (PTI): A small UK town in the East Anglia region of England will become the twin city of Amritsar as it celebrates the 125th death anniversary of Maharaja Duleep Singh, the last Maharaja of the Sikh Empire, with a two-week-long Punjabi festival.

Thetford in Norfolk was home to Duleep Singh and the organisers of the Festival of Thetford & Punjab believe the town has strong resonance with the lush fields, intense farming activity and livestock grazing of the Indian state.

"Elveden Manor in Thetford was home to the last Maharaja of Punjab for many years and Thet-

fordians are extremely proud of their unusual resident," explains Seema Anand, a historian and storyteller behind a special 'Punjab to Thetford' film, which will be screened on the last day of the festival on July 21.

"But perhaps Duleep Singh coming to live in Thetford was not just mere coincidence. From his statue in the town centre, which is almost an exact replica of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's statue in Company Bagh in Amritsar, to the landscape of Norfolk, there seems to be an almost karmic connection between the two places," she said.

The festival, a partner-

ship project between Essex Cultural Diversity Project (ECDP) and Thetford Town Council, is planned as a cultural celebration as well as an exploration of the story of Duleep Singh and his cultural legacy. This includes his family, the political and cultural context of the time he was living in, and how this influenced Thetford and the surrounding area today.

Peter Bance, historian and author of 'Sovereign, Squire & Rebel: Maharajah Duleep Singh & the Heirs of a Lost Kingdom', explains: "Thetford and Elveden was where the Maharaja had his most cherished memories, from the birth of his chil-

dren to the extravagant shooting parties that were once held here.

"It was a place where he was most at home and at peace, away from the politics of Punjab and the puppeteers of Whitehall [British government]. This place was in fact, where he was at his happiest.

The festival will involve a procession through the town centre as a collaboration between Bhangra and Morris dancers and Dhol Drummers and will include Punjabi food stalls, Sikh martial arts Gatka, henna painting and storytelling activities along the River Ouse, encompassing the town's annual River Festival.

"The cultural lega-

cy of Duleep Singh is as significant for Thetford as it is for Punjab. The festival provides an opportunity for audiences to learn more about his fascinating story, and get involved in a range of activities, talks and events.

It is also a chance for us all to further explore the under-appreciated links between Thetford and Punjab due to this shared heritage," says Festival Director Indi Sandhu.

The organisers believe that the story of Duleep Singh, the youngest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who arrived in Britain in forced exile in 1849 during the British Raj, is complex and requires

a degree of critical engagement which can be achieved through poetry, readings and talks.

"For the rest of the world, the name of Duleep Singh conjures up the 'Koh-i-Noor', 'British Empire', stories of imperial occupation. It is imbedded with negative connotations. But for the people of Thetford, he holds wonderful memories," adds Anand, who will also be coordinating some of the talks at the festival.

Duleep Singh's former home, Elveden Estate, has an Indian-inspired hall and a churchyard where he is buried with his wife and teenage son.

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ON THE MOVE! Shakira, 41, puts on a raunchy performance as she writhes in sheer leggings during Barcelona show of her El Dorado World Tour.

Ariana Grande responds to Pete Davidson's Manchester joke

Last fall, before Pete Davidson and Ariana Grande were even dating, the comedian made a joke about the bombing that happened at Grande's Manchester concert in May 2017.

According to The Mirror, Davidson told his audience at a Puerto Rico benefit show that Grande must have realized how famous she was after the bombing because "Britney Spears didn't have a terrorist attack at her concert".

His comments, of course, have sparked some backlash. A mother of one of the Manchester victims told The Mirror she found the joke "heartbreaking and outrageous", and many of Grande's fans feel the same way—especially now that she's engaged to Davidson.

"I respect Ariana and I want



her to be happy and everything, but she was just broken after the Manchester bombing, so I don't know why she is still with Pete, like yeah he made that joke a while ago, but like it's not funny, it's just rude. This is my opinion," one fan, who goes by @ariislegend on Twitter, posted on July 4. The message racked up 786 retweets and over 6,000 favorites.

It didn't take long for Grande to see this message and reply. The next day, she wrote a lengthy response explaining her feelings about the joke—which is the first time she's talked about it.

"this has been v tough & conflicting on my heart. he uses comedy to help ppl feel better ab how f-ed up things in this world are. we all deal

w trauma differently. I of course didn't find it funny. it was months ago & his intention wasn't/ is never malicious but it was unfortunate," the "No Tears Left to Cry" singer, 25, tweeted, later adding: "i hear and respect you all always."

Grande's tweet appeased some of her fans. @ariislegend dropped the subject, responding to Grande, "I love u and I respect u in so many ways! Forever grateful to have u in my life! And thank u for sharing light on the situation! I'm now understanding it more."

Some of her followers, however, aren't here for this justification.

"parents lost their child, some people lost their friends, sisters, etc so HE

CANNOT do a joke about that," one person tweeted. "This 'joke' didn't help them in anyway but instead it has upset them. He should be called out and he should apologize bc he doesn't get to joke about that, no one does."

A source close to Davidson told PEOPLE: "The joke was taken out of context. He lost his dad in 9/11 and is close with other victims of violent tragedies. As a way of coping he turns to humor. ...He's obviously sensitive to tragedy as he lost his own father and his intention is to just make people laugh."

On May 21, PEOPLE confirmed Grande and Davidson were dating casually; on June 11, a source confirmed the pair had gotten engaged after only weeks together.

Marathi cinema is bolder than Hindi films, says Akshay Kumar

Akshay Kumar, who has returned as presenter for "Chumbak", believes Marathi cinema is way ahead of Bollywood when it comes exploring complex stories.

"The content of Marathi cinema is no doubt better than Hindi cinema. Also, they [Marathi cinema] are much bolder. I have seen 'Balak Palak' and I have enjoyed watching it. It is a bold film, they [Marathi cinema] create [good] content and that too bold," Akshay told reporters here at the trailer launch of "Chumbak".

The film, directed by Sandeep Modi, stars Swanand Kirkire and teen actors



Sangram Desai and Sahil Jadhav.

"This film has travelled to

several film festivals and got lot of acclaim. That has not happened with my films. My

films have not gone to festivals and I felt I should give my name to this film as the content is really good. I have been acting for 28 years but I haven't seen such a beautiful and real performance like that of Swanand Kirkire."

Swanand, known for crooning hits such as "Monta Re" and "Bawara Mann", plays a man who is conned by two Mumbai teens dreaming to set up a juice shop.

"It is big as there is validation and people think it is good cinema. It is great for Marathi cinema," Swanand said.

Akshay, on his part, be-

lieves the market for regional cinema is growing.

"Sairat" has done great business. Even Ritesh Deshmukh's last Marathi film did well. I am not looking for business in this film ["Chumbak"].

The actor said he is keen to be a part of meaningful films.

"I could have done 'Rowdy Rathore' and earned three times the money, I earned for 'Padman'. The idea is not about earning but I thought of talking about women's problem. I can earn money by doing other kind of films but I want to do these kind of films."

SAIF ALI KHAN & CO RETURNING FOR GO GOA GONE SEQUEL!



Saif Ali Khan, Kunal Kemmu and Vir Das are all confirmed to return for the sequel to their hit zombie comedy Go Goa Gone. The film will be once again helmed by director duo Raj Nidimoru, and Krishna DK, and Dinesh Vijan will produce it via his banner, Maddock films.

"It's been quite a journey from 2013, and I'm so excited we are back again with this crazy ride! Go Goa Gone re-defined many things, and we are gunning to do that again. Saif's character has stayed with me all this while and we are thrilled to bring it back to life! I have had a great partnership with Raj & DK and I'm excited to be back with the original gang!" Vijan said in a statement.

The original film followed the story of three friends -- Hardik [Kemmu], Luv [Das] and Bunny [Anand Tiwari] -- whose holiday to Goa turns out to be a zombie nightmare. Saif played the role of Boris, a Russian mobster-turned-zombie hunter in the film.

"DK and I are brainstorming on how to explore the five-year gap between both films. We are bringing Saif back as Boris, the zombie slayer, but will be adding an extra element to the character. We are retaining the entire cast as they were the core of the film, be it humour, camaraderie or bromance," Nidimoru said.

The film is expected to go on floors in February next year.

Alexandra Shipp calls out critics of 'X-Men' Storm casting



Alexandra Shipp, actor who plays young Storm in the "X-Men" film franchise, has addressed the criticism surrounding her casting in the role, saying people have no right to tell her that her skintone "doesn't match a Crayola from 1970".

Shipp first starred as the character in 2016's "X-Men: Apocalypse" and was slammed for not having a dark enough skin. Halle Berry played the adult version of the role in "X-Men" [2000], "X2" [2003] "X-Men: The Last Stand" [2006] and "X-Men: Days of Future Past" [2014].

Shipp, 26, who reprises her role in the upcoming "Dark Phoenix", said as a child devouring the Marvel Comics, she could always relate with the weather-controlling mutant.

"[I tweeted back] at people who criticised me for not having dark enough skin for my role in X-Men because we're not going to have this conversation about a cartoon character. You're not going to tell me that my skin colour doesn't

match a Crayola from 1970.

"Growing up, when I was reading the comics, I pictured her looking like me. For any black girl, for there to be a black superhero, we picture them looking like us," Shipp told Glamour magazine.

Following criticisms that her skin was too light to play Storm in the X-Men franchise, she tweeted, "This conversation about Storm is so stupid, I'm out... If I lose my job to another actress, I hope it's for her talent and grace, not her skin [colour]."

The actor further explains she seized the opportunity of playing the iconic character the moment it came knocking, never doubting herself.

"When I auditioned for the role, I wasn't like, 'Oh man, I'm not dark enough.' I was like, 'Finally, this is my moment.' I'm not playing Harriet Tubman with a prosthetic nose and darkening my skin tone. I would never do that," Shipp said.

"Dark Phoenix" releases February 14 next year.

ARIES: You might come across strong opposition today from someone who seems to want to cut straight through to your heart, Aries. In reality, this is a message reminding you to think about things in terms of the collective - the oneness of us all. Be aware of a greater perspective in which you see more than just your side of the issue. Talk to people you trust before making any major decisions.

TAURUS: Act on your instincts today, Taurus, and you won't go wrong. You may need to give up a bit of control and put logical thinking aside for the day. Let the wind take you where it wants you to go. Explore your mind and its interactions with others. You'll find that it will be just about impossible to solidify any plans. You're better off exploring options and comparing notes with others. Don't pigeonhole yourself into one way of thinking.

GEMINI: Today you'll find that you're the missing puzzle piece that people need in every situation, Gemini. Engage in light conversation in social arenas and feel free to turn your charm up full blast. You have the ability to make favorable impressions on just about everyone, so get the day off on the right foot. Get out of bed earlier than normal and get your blood pumping with a brisk walk or workout.

CANCER: You may find that people want to do a great deal of talking but not a great deal of feeling today. Cancer. Go ahead and put your emotions on the back burner and let your mind take over. Deal with facts and make sure your emotions don't interfere with the information you receive. Things can get clouded if you don't stay true to the communication that's taking place. Be conscious of your words.

LEO: You should be able to evaluate your emotions from a very neutral, detached perspective today, Leo. Use this opportunity to take action based on what you feel. Make sure your actions aren't reactionary and that you aren't simply acting rashly in response to someone else's hasty maneuvers. Think before you make any sudden moves. You'll be amazed at what incredible things can develop if you simply use your head a bit first.

VIRGO: If you're talking about another person today, Virgo, make sure you aren't saying anything that would be upsetting if they were standing right there. Gossip may be running rampant, but that's no excuse for you to contribute to it. Be aware that what you say has a strong impact on the people around you and is likely to reach many more ears than you may think.

LIBRA: It's important for you to take action on a day like today, Libra. Trust yourself and your instincts. Oftentimes you'll have the perfect advice for every situation and every other person except yourself. Remember that you might have to consult others in order to find the best counsel for yourself. Talk things out and take definitive action. Hesitation causes delay. You have all the facts you need.

SCORPIO: You might find yourself a bit unfocused and confused about which way to go, Scorpio. The baffled look on your face isn't helping anyone else figure out how to help you. Don't feel obliged to remain in an unhealthy situation. It may be time to let go and break some ties to things that no longer work for you. Feel good about extricating yourself from old habits that no longer serve you.

SAGITTARIUS: It's important for you to get outside and feel the wind blowing, Sagittarius. Reconnect with nature and be aware of the four elements. Take deep breaths and fill your lungs with this energizing life force. Imagine yourself on a mountaintop looking over a vast ocean below. Expand your awareness so that nothing escapes your attention. Keep your head clear of clutter and be open to new adventures.

CAPRICORN: Make practical use of the thoughts you have synthesized over the last few days, Capricorn. Stretch your boundaries and extend your wisdom to the people around you. This is a day to take action. Connect with your heart and move forward with your plans. We normally think of our hearts as being soft, tender, and vulnerable. Today think of your heart as being tough, strong, and adventurous.

AQUARIUS: This is an important day for you to make valuable connections with others, Aquarius. You'll find yourself engaged in fast-paced, witty conversations and debates from which you can learn a great deal. You're good at seeing both sides of an issue, but the problem is that this can lead to indecisiveness and an inability to commit to anything. Choose a path today and stick to it.

PISCES: It could be hard for you to get a handle on things today, Pisces, as your focus seems to jump from one subject to the next without finding resolution for any. This isn't a day to find solutions. You're better off researching, asking questions, and gathering facts. Keep the channels of communication open, and don't try to pin anyone down for a solid answer. You'll accomplish a great deal by keeping things active and light.