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Summit **TIMES**

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Governor underlines Govt's commitment to health and youth in 1-Day message

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 15 AUG:

The State Government is committed to revamp health services in Sikkim "with a view to provide the least basic services at the grass root level," shared Governor Ganga Prasad in his Independence Message to the State.

"Besides the primary health centres and the district hospitals, the new STNM Hospital at Sochakgang is being provided with adequate resources and manpower to meet the growing requirements of the people," he details, while adding that a Health Insurance Support Scheme will be floated on a pilot basis soon to ensure that the senior citizens have at least the minimum health insurance support.

The Governor also recognizes that the youth of

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SDF-2 legislators officially join SKM

**SAGAR CHHETRI
GANGTOK, 14 AUG:**

After ten Sikkim Democratic Front legislators joined Bharatiya Janata Party on Tuesday, two more SDF legislators joined the ruling Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party today.

Upper Tadong MLA, GT Dhungel and Namcheybong MLA, Em Prasad Sharma, who had attended the budget session as SDF-2, officially joined SKM in the presence of SKM president, Chief Minister PS Tamang, this afternoon.

With this, SKM now has 18 MLAs in the State Assembly [which currently has 29 MLAs], while former CM, Pawan Chamling is the only SDF legislator left in the Assembly.

The two MLAs, the first to openly challenge the SDF high command when they went against the diktat to boycott assembly sessions until Mr



Tamang remained CM, could formalize their SKM crossover after ten of their colleagues joined BJP and brought the SDF legislator strength to three. This way, they no longer attracted anti-defection laws [which leads to defections of below 70% of the party strength leading to disqualification] and could join SKM without risking disqualification.

Addressing a press conference here today, Namcheybong MLA, Mr Sharma expressed that only a regional party can work effectively for the

State and its people.

"We are here to work for the people, so we have joined the regional SKM party in the interest of Sikkim and its people," he stated.

"We were ready to deliver our role of opposition in the State so we even participated in the recent assembly session. We even went against the decision of senior party leaders to join the national party as we wanted to work for the people effectively with regional sentiments," Mr Sharma said.

Upper Tadong MLA, Mr Dhungel mentioned



that 10 SDF MLAs joined a national party so they decided to work for the people by joining the ruling party.

On their reasons for joining SKM, he said that the people of Sikkim prefer a regional party and only a regional party can understand local sentiments and work effectively for the people.

"With mass exodus of SDF MLAs to BJP, we decided to work for the people by sitting in the regional party by respecting their mandate," he said.

Responding to media

queries, Mr Sharma said, "We wanted to work for the people as a strong opposition but after 10 MLAs joined BJP we were left with no option but to work with the ruling party for the people."

He also added that SDF had become undemocratic and they could no longer voice their views openly within the party.

On whether this would affect SKM's relations with the centre, SKM spokesperson, Jacob Khaling stated that the state government always works in coordination

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CM announces special agency to eradicate corruption

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 15 AUG:**

Chief Minister, PS Tamang [Golay], in his Independence Day message, has said that the state government is "committed to set up an exclusive Agency with modern

cation of Corruption in the State."

He also announced the setting up of "Chief Minister's Task Force" to make firm policies and widely consulted strategies for crucial sectors like agriculture, education, health,

Other announcements:

- An inter-disciplinary team of experts to write a full volume on Sikkim's Contributions in India's Freedom Struggle.
- An inter-disciplinary Climate Change Commission to work further on the issues of setting up of a state of the art Centre on Climate Change Studies for the entire Himalayan region.
- A Youth Development Commission to examine all aspects of youth development including educational, skill capacity, training and employment aspects.
- Cultural Heritage Trust under which the sites of pilgrimage and worship and related lands and other tangible and intangible assets developed through the governmental

turn to pg02

intelligence techniques, technology and human capability that will be exclusively devoted to Prevention and Eradi-

employment, tourism, culture, water, environment, energy, youths, roads, industry and disasters.
turn to pg02

Independence Day Greetings to All Fellow Citizens

All Indians salute the sacrifices made by our freedom fighters
to ensure freedom of our country

Jai Hind



**Independence Day
15 August 2019**



Capacity building for substance abuse prevention for panchayats



SUMMIT REPORT TEMI, 14 AUG:

A 3-day capacity building programme on Drug Abuse Prevention for Panchayati Raj functionaries was organized at Temi from 12 to 14 August by State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in collaboration with the National Institute of Social De-

fense [NISD].

Held as per guidelines provided by National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction, the training was attended by the panchayats from different Gram Panchayat Units under Temi Block - Temi, Tarku-Tanak, Ben-Namprick, Namphing and Bermiok-Tokal, a press release informs.

Donating blood to save lives



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 14 AUG:

Like every year the employees of Alkem Laboratories Limited organised two-day blood donation camp at its Alkem Health Science Unit this year also at Samardung, South Sikkim, on 12 and 13 August.

The camp commemorated the occasion of 94th birthday of Chairman Emeritus, Late Samprada Singh in collaboration with Lion's Club of Rangpo, a press release informs.

The employees of Alkem Health Science, Cachet Pharmaceutical Pvt Ltd, and members of Lion's Club of Rangpo took part in the blood donation mission with full enthusiasm.

A comprehensive registration process started with donors' medical

history and current state of health by the team of competitive Doctors and qualified technicians of Central referral Hospital Tadong, Gangtok and Siliguri Terai Lions Blood Bank.

On this occasion 175 units of blood were donated to raise awareness on the importance of blood donation.

A donor's certificate of appreciation for Voluntary blood donation will be issued to all donors. The certificate of appreciation is presented by CRH, Tadong and Terai Blood Bank, Siliguri.

Further, Alkem Laboratories Limited is also organizing Blood Donation Camp at its Kumrek manufacturing unit on 21 Aug, 2019 on the occasion of the 80th birthday of Chairman, BN Singh.

Man found dead in Yuksam

RUDRA KAUSHIK YUKSAM, 14 AUG:

A man in his early 30s, Arpan Gurung, was found dead this morning near Gufadara in Yuksam, West Sikkim. A team led by SP West, Tenzing Loden Lepcha reached Yuksam at

around 10 AM today to investigate the case.

Police have arrested a teenage boy in connection with the case and investigation is underway, it is learnt. Meanwhile, the body has been sent to Gangtok for post-mortem.

SDF-2 legislators...

and harmony with the centre in a federal system.

"We are working with BJP for the people of Sikkim but the 10 SDF MLAs joined BJP just to save themselves," he said.

Mr Khaling further alleged that Pawan Chamling was behind all this.

Responding to queries on upcoming by-elections in the State, Mr Khaling stated that the move of 10 SDF MLAs will only increase the winning margin of SKM in the by-elections.

Other announcements...

funds in the last 25 years will now be brought to shape. This will be jointly managed by the Government, Civil Society and august religious bodies.

v) Project Development Agency that will search for various viable and potential projects across the sectors and develop projects for funding and implementation.

vi) Our government is also committed to look into the matter of temporary employees in regard to their reimbursement and many other medical insurance and facilities. Employees of all categories will be given maximum privileges, who were deprived of such medical facilities earlier.

Weeklong Tendong Lho Rum Faat celebration this year

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 14 AUG:

Tendong Lho Rum Faat, 2019 was celebrated all over the state with the state level celebration being held at Kyongsa, Gyalshing in West Sikkim. Simultaneous events were held at Tendong hill and Namchi, South Sikkim, Ringhim in Mangan, North Sikkim, Gor in Lower Dzongu, Rey and Marchak in East Sikkim and other locations, a press release informs.

This year's celebration started in Gangtok with the Tendong Knowledge series on 28 Jul, 2019; a program to sensitize the students about the existing system of job reservation, admission criteria in central universities, different types of scholarships available within the state etc. The officials of DOP, SPSC, HRDD and other resource persons shared information on different issues.

The idea of having a weeklong celebration was to have proper time for every event like the puja, literary and cultural events, the release mentions.

During the State Level Tendong

Lho Rum Faat celebration held at Gyalshing on 07-08 Aug, 93-year-old Tenzing Lepcha [Rey Mondal], was felicitated as an 'Amazing Sikkimese'.

Chief Minister, PS Tamang was present on the occasion as chief guest.

Various awards were also presented on the occasion. The list of awardees is as follows:

1. Tendong Award (Highest) - Padmashree Keepu Tshering Lepcha, Lepcha Cottage, Chandmari
2. Thikung Mun Solong Award (Art & Culture): Dawa Lepcha, Lingdong, Dzongu (Social Activist and Film maker)
3. Thikung General G B Mainwaring Literary Award: Norbu Tshering Lepcha, Associate Professor, Sikkim University.
4. Lha Tshering Kunchudyangmu Literary Award (Post Graduate Merit): Pushpa Choden Thomas, Assistant Professor (NBBDC).

Karma R Bonpo [District Collector], Tshering Wangchuk [social

service], Sherab Lepcha [football], Azing Lepcha [progressive farmer], Passang Lepcha [sportsman], Tshering Ongmu Lepcha [cricketer] and Pur Tshering Lepcha [social work] were felicitated on the day.

In a presentation, Tseten Lepcha [president, Renjong Mutanchi Rong Tarzom Sikkim Lepcha Association] highlighted some issues. Appeal for provision of infrastructure development at Mt Tendong to facilitate pilgrims and other visitors at the holy site; appeal for comprehensive management plan for areas affected by Mantam landslide, in upper Dzongu, North Sikkim; appeal for constitution of High Level Committee to look in to all issues related to the Lepchas and then suggest appropriate measures.

Chief Minister PS Tamang in his address said that Tendong Lho Fum Faat should be celebrated as a festival by all communities of Sikkim and that there should be no political interference in the functioning of social organizations. He assured that the issues of the Lepcha communities will be taken up by the Government.

SPYF condemns SDF MLAs' crossover to BJP

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 14 AUG:

Sikkim Progressive Youth Forum (SPYF) has condemned news of 10 SDF legislators joining BJP terming it "a clear betrayal of people's mandate".

People of Sikkim were never in favour of BJP is clear from the fact that BJP received only 1.63% of the total vote share in the recently held general and assembly elections in the state, an SPYF press release mentions.

Accusing BJP of rigging elections, buying opposition MLAs and many other anti-democratic

and foul tactics, SPYF has said that the SDF MLAs joining BJP has only given strength to the latter to foment instability in the State.

"We have also seen what followed in Jammu and Kashmir after the BJP formed an alliance government with PDP there," the release mentions.

"We appeal to all the democratic loving people to stand firm and united, keeping aside political and individual differences to protect democracy and people's mandate in the state," SPYF urges.

PWD Minister attends I-Day tourney at Manul



SUMMIT REPORT MANUL, 14 AUG:

Government Secondary School Manul, North Sikkim is organizing 73rd Independence Challenge Cup football tournament in memory of Late Laymu Lepcha.

In the semi-final today, PWD Minister cum MLA Lachen Mangan, Samdup Lepcha was present as chief guest and was welcomed by the celebration committee and public of Manul,

North Sikkim.

The semi-final match was played between Taxi Driver Manul and Dzongu Boys. Taxi Driver Manul won the match by 6-5 goals and will now play the finals on 15 Aug.

Headmaster Manul School placed various demands like extension of ground, school fencing, school gate and construction of stage. Mr Lepcha urged the Headmaster to give him 2-3 years for the demands to be fulfilled.

Sikkim Sisters and VHP tie rakhi to SSB and SAP personnel



RUDHRA KAUSHIK GYALSHING, 14 AUG:

Members of Dentam based NGO, Sikkim Sisters and Vishwa Hindu Parishad reached out to Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Sikkim Armed Police (SAP) personnel serving in the frontier region of Chewa Bhanjyang and Chitrey.

Members of the NGOs tied rakhi on the wrists of SSB and SAP personnel, prayed for their long and blissful life in a short ceremonial function.

The women walked uphill for more than six hours to the SSB camp (E company), SAP camped near Indo-Nepal border region of Chewa Bhanjyang and the SSB (2nd company) personnel based at Chitrey below Chewa Bhanjyang.

President of Sikkim Sisters, Jangmu Sherpa

informed that the two NGOs' objective of offering Rakhi to the armed forces personnel was a small gesture of gratitude to the armed forces who have been serving and protecting the country with utmost dedication and also to spread the message that the Sikkimese sisters stand with them.

"Our aim was to share the message of unity and togetherness with Jawans (soldiers) and I thank them for their support," Ms Sherpa said.

"It was a rare, beautiful and emotional moment for us to receive the sisters who travelled all the way from Dentam to Chewa Bhanjyang to share the bond of togetherness, affection and support prior to Raksha Bandhan. We thank them for their noble gesture," said an SSB official.

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IAF's Abhinandan Varthaman gets Vir Chakra

NEW DELHI, AUG 14 (PTI):

Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, who downed an enemy jet during an aerial combat with Pakistan in February and was held captive for three days, has been conferred the Vir Chakra, India's third-highest war time gallantry medal.

The defence ministry announced the military awards on the eve of Independence Day celebrations. From the Army, Sapper Prakash Jadhav of the Rashtriya Rifles will be posthumously awarded Kirti Chakra, the second highest peacetime gallantry award.

Squadron Leader

Minty Agarwal, who played a key role as flight controller during the aerial combat between India and Pakistan on February 27, has been awarded Yudh Seva medal.

The IAF received a total of 13 awards including five Yudh Seva Medals and seven Vayu Sena Medal.

At least five Mirage fighter pilots, who were part of the operation to strike a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp deep inside Pakistan's Balakot on February 27, were among the awardees.

The Army also got eight Shaurya Chakra

awards and 98 Sena medals. The Navy got one Shaurya Chakra award.

"We are very happy that Wing Comm Varthaman has been conferred with Vir Chakra," said an IAF official.

Varthaman, 36, was captured by the Pakistani Army on February 27 after his MiG-21 Bison jet was shot down in a dogfight with Pakistani jets during aerial combat.

Before his jet was hit, he downed an F-16 fighter of Pakistan. Varthaman was released on the night of March 1 by Pakistan.

Varthaman had suffered injuries while

ejecting from his MiG-21 Bison during the aerial combat. A high-level medical board of the Indian Air Force has already cleared Varthaman to return to the fighter cockpit. Days after he returned from Pakistan, Varthaman conveyed to the IAF brass his wish to resume flying at the earliest.

IAF fighter jets bombed a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot on February 26, nearly two weeks after the Pulwama terror attack.

Pakistan retaliated on February 27 by attempting to target Indian military installations.

CM announces...

Mr Tamang has welcomed the creation of the two union territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution.

At the same time, the CM said that Article 371F of the Constitution that provides special privileges to Sikkim will be protected, conserved and consolidated by both the Government of India and the State.

"We have received an assurance from the Union Home Minister in the matter on 6th of August 2019," he mentions.

Lauding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the CM has said, "We could see and feel how in the last five years the North East region is steadily getting connected within themselves, with the rest of India and also with the neighbouring countries."

He stated that in the coming months his government's focus will be national security and national interest.

"We are soon going to start the national security curriculum in schools and universities that could be useful for all the 17 border states of India," said the CM.

Further, Mr Tamang mentions that his government has started the long journey of repositioning Sikkim as the Green Capital of India.

"Our prosperity will be loaded with equality. Our youth will be drivers of change and progress. We shall use our cultural heritage, music and literary fountains, traditional wisdom, creativity of youth, positive attitude and natural resources for peace and harmony as our Soft Power.

That is why in our first budget we have introduced the concept of "Smile Always" Gift of Rs 10 by all the tourists visiting Sikkim," the CM has said.

In his message, Mr Tamang has also reiterated allegations against the previous government and states, "It was a state of chaos and anarchy in the name of the slogans of peace and development."

Governor underlines...

Sikkim are "highly talented" and "need to have institutions that are competitive, inclusive and globally oriented" for their talents to flourish and reach greater heights at the national and global level.

These institutions could be related to education, music, theatres, health, sports, cinema and technology, he adds, while sharing that the State Government "would like to ensure that all the institutions grow freely, inclusively and bring competitive atmosphere for the children and youth of Sikkim."

Before The LD Oath Commissioner South Sikkim At Namchi

AFFIDAVIT

I, MALA CHRISTINA RAI, aged about 52 years, wife of Shri Mahesh Chandra Rai, resident of Upper Singithang, Tharpu Namchi, Post Office and Police Station Namchi, South District, Sikkim do hereby solemnly affirm and declare on oath as follows.

1. That I am the natural daughter of Shri "DHAN KUMAR SINGH" AND Late Mrs. "MAYA KUMARI SINGH" and my maiden surname/Case is "SINGH"
2. THAT AFTER MY MARRIAGE WITH MY HUSBAND Shri Mahesh Chandra Rai, I adopted the surname of my husband "RAI" and the surname has been found recorded in my entire Official documents which I had obtained after my marriage.
3. That I have sworn this affidavit to declare on Oath that my maiden surname is "SINGH" and post-maiden surname is "RAI" and the names "MALA CHRISTINA RAI" and "Mala CHRISTINA SINGH" are the names of one and the same person i.e. none other than Deponent.

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WANTED

HOUSEKEEPER/BABYSITTER .

Contact: 9933443442/9800500696.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This is for general information of all concerned that Hotel Parasol Residency, Panihouse, Deorali East Sikkim shall remain closed for a period of six months for carrying out necessary repairs. All concerned tour operators and clients are requested to refrain from booking or deal with any sort with regard to Hotel Parasol Residency, Panihouse, Deorali, East Sikkim.

Mr. Subash Lama
Proprietor
Hotel Parasol Residency,
Panihouse, Deorali, East Sikkim

Four & half Storied building on SALE, behind Hotel Agarwal at Pani House, Gangtok, East Sikkim. Interested parties may also buy flats - 2 flats - 1650 sq.ft, 1 Flat - 1186 sq.ft & 1 Flat on top (1 & half)- 3000 sq.ft. Contact: -9434751150

“Voice” installs bio-degradable trash bags at Paljor Stadium

**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 14 AUG:**

Team “Voice”, an organization of volunteers, installed bio-degradable trash bags at Paljor Stadium, Gangtok, today. “Voice” is also working in Namchi to spread the message of conserving our environment.

Sovan Chatterjee joins BJP, severe jolt for TMC

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, AUG 14 (PTI): In a severe jolt to the ruling Trinamool Congress, its four-time MLA and former Kolkata Mayor Sovan Chatterjee joined BJP in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Efforts were on in TMC to bring Chatterjee, who was on a sabbatical, to active politics again.

“We never thought Sovan would ultimately join BJP. It is true that BJP leaders were in touch with him but we never believed that he could betray Mamata Banerjee, whom he used to describe as Maa (mother),” a senior TMC leader said.

“His joining will have a bearing on TMC’s organisation in South 24 Paraganas district and also on Kolkata Municipal Corporation elections slated to be held next year. The party missed his political and organisation acumen during the Lok Sabha polls,” said another TMC leader. Known for his organisational capabilities and his ability to manage finances, Chatterjee was in the top echelons of TMC and was a trusted lieutenant of TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee.

He had been a councillor of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation for three decades, served as mayor of Kolkata twice besides being a minister before going on a sabbatical since 2018. Chatterjee’s joining the BJP is the latest in the flight of TMC MLAs to the saffron party since the deceleration of the Lok Sabha results. It comes at a time when TMC is having a tough time in state politics post its dismal performance in Lok Sabha polls. Six TMC MLAs, besides one each from the Congress and the CPI-M had also joined the BJP with the saffron party wooing rival party leaders to bolster its strength ahead of the 2021 West Bengal assembly polls.

According to TMC oldtimers, Banerjee had played a key role in shaping his political career, which like her had begun as a Youth Congress activist. Banerjee used to publicly call him by his pet name ‘Kanon’.

After the party’s stupendous victory in the 2016 assembly polls, Chatterjee, who was then the Kolkata mayor, was rewarded the most and given the charge of three crucial departments. But due to problems in his personal life he was asked to step down both as minister and mayor by Banerjee herself in November last year. Since then he was on sabbatical from active politics. On Wednesday seated beside top BJP leaders in New Delhi at the party’s headquarters, Chatterjee criticised the “violence and undemocratic atmosphere” in which the 2018 panchayat polls were conducted in the state.

Awareness on Jal Shakti Abhiyan at SMU



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 14 AUG:**

A presentation cum talk was given by the Head of General Services, Sikkim Manipal University (SMU), Col Uma Kant Singh (Retd) to top officials of SMU on “Jal Shakti Abhiyan”, a water conservation campaign, at the Conference Hall of Sikkim Manipal Univer-

sity of Medical Sciences (SMIMS) on 12 Aug. 2019.

A press release informs that various initiatives taken by the Central Government and the state Government was discussed including importance, requirement and availability of fresh water. Data and details given by Niti Aayog on the subject were highlighted.

It was highlighted that we are heading towards becoming a water stressed country, and if suitable steps for water conservation and tree plantation is not taken now, it will be too late.

A pledge was taken by all individuals present during the presentation to conserve water and plant more trees.

The presentation was attended by Lt Gen (Dr), VC, MD Venkatesh, SMU, Registrar, Dr KS Sherpa, SMU, Dean, Dr VK Mehta, SMIMS, Director, Dr Ashis Sharma, SMIT, MS, Dr Gautam Dey, CRH and many other senior officials of Sikkim Manipal University.

Addressing the gathering, the Vice Chancellor, SMU said that SMU has rain water harvesting systems in both the Medical Campus (SMIMS) as well as in Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT) in Majthar.

He also directed Head of Institutions to conduct Poster Making Competition at University and College level on the theme of Water Conservation and tree plantation to spread awareness amongst the students.

Drug awareness rally in Singtam



YOGEN THATAL: SINGTAM, 14 AUG:

In a move to combat substance abuse, Government Senior Secondary School, Singtam, took out a rally through Singtam bazaar today.

The rally included the bagpiper band of the school setting the march

for the students. Students of Sirwani Secondary School also joined the rally along with representatives from Singtam Drivers Association.

The rally was flagged off from the school by area MLA, Dr MK Sharma, accompanied by the Chief Medical Officer, Dr T Laden.

Rotarians hold blood donation camp at IHM



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 14 AUG:**

Rotary Club of Gangtok South, in collaboration with Institute of Hotel Management, organized a blood donation camp at the IHM campus today. 43 units of blood were collected at the camp. Rotary Club

of Gangtok South has thanked Dr CM Sharma and technicians from Central Blood Bank, New STNM Multi Specialty Hospital, for extending technical support and IHM for allowing the voluntary blood donation camp to be held in its campus at Sajong, Rumtek.

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After crucial manoeuvre, Chandrayaan-2 leaves earth orbit, heads to Moon

BENGALURU, AUG 14 (PTI): Three weeks after its launch, India’s Chandrayaan-2 left the earth’s orbit and moved towards the Moon after a crucial manoeuvre carried out by ISRO scientists in the dark hours of Wednesday.

The spacecraft, now on “Lunar Transfer Trajectory”, is expected to reach the moon’s orbit on August 20 with the soft landing of rover on the lunar surface planned on September 7.

The Bengaluru-headquartered Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said it carried out the Trans Lunar Insertion (TLI) manoeuvre at 02:21 am IST as planned, following which the Chandrayaan-2 has successfully entered the “Lunar Transfer Trajectory”.

“Today (August 14, 2019) after the Trans Lunar Insertion (TLI) manoeuvre operation, #Chandrayaan2 will depart from Earth’s orbit and move towards the Moon,” ISRO tweeted along with a photo of its Chairman K Sivan and other top officials at the Control Centre in ISRO Telemetry Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) here.

During the orbit raising manoeuvre on Wednesday, the spacecraft’s liquid engine was fired for about 1,203 seconds. “With this, Chandrayaan-2 entered the Lunar Transfer Trajectory,” ISRO said in an update about the mission.

The health of the spacecraft is being “con-

tinuously monitored” from the Mission Operations Complex (MOX) at ISTRAC with support from Indian Deep Space Network (IDSN) antennas at Byalalu, near Bengaluru, it said, adding “Since its launch on July 22 all systems on-board Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft are performing normal.”

In the most complex mission ever taken up by ISRO, the agency had launched India’s second moon mission Chandrayaan-2 in earth orbit on July 22, aimed at landing a rover on the unexplored Lunar south pole.

The mission, if successful, will also make India the fourth country after Russia, the US and China to pull off a soft landing on the moon.

Earlier, the spacecraft’s orbit was progressively increased five times during July 23 to August 6, by performing earth-bound orbit raising manoeuvres, aimed at placing it in the Lunar Transfer Trajectory.

The fifth earth-bound orbit raising manoeuvre for Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft was performed successfully on August 6 using the onboard propulsion system for a firing duration of 1,041 seconds.

Chandrayaan-2, a three-component module comprising an orbiter, lander and rover, will approach Moon on August 20 and the spacecraft’s liquid engine will be fired again to insert the spacecraft into a lunar orbit, ISRO said.

Plantation drive at Raj Bhavan



**SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 14 AUG:**

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad, initiated a special plantation drive at Raj Bhavan today, a press release informs.

The drive had the participation of Chief Secretary, AK Shrivastava, Additional Chief Secretary to Governor, Dr K Jayakumar, Director General of Police, A Shankar Rao, PCCF cum Secretary Forest, ML Shrivastava, officers and

staff of Raj Bhavan, officials from Forest Department and jawans of Indo Tibetan Border Police among others. The plantation was an expression of commitment towards Mother Earth and green initiatives of the State Government, the release mentions.

A total of 120 saplings of various species of plant, especially of wild fruits and flowers from temperate vegetation found in higher reaches

of Sikkim, were planted on the occasion.

The Governor in his brief message has urged every citizen to commit to Mother Nature and plant trees to ensure better future for coming generation.

Plantation is the most effective tool in fighting environmental degradation, climate change and prevent calamities borne out of human apathy towards environment, the Governor added.

Meghshala Trust to train Sikkim teachers in e-lessons

GANGTOK, 14 AUG (IPR): Meghshala Trust, an ed-tech NGO from Bangalore has joined hands with CISCO CSR to impact teacher training in Sikkim. They will be introducing the Meghshala e-lessons to help teachers teaching students of Classes 1-8.

Through this e-lesson app, teachers can design their class room teaching more effectively and share the same with other teachers in online mode. With the help of the SCERT & DIETs of Sikkim, 400 teachers will be introduced to Meghshala e-lessons in the initial phase of training.

The said project is financed by CISCO CSR, an exemplary generous step by them to help change the learning outcomes in schools in the



NE States. Meghshala and CISCO have already implemented similar program in Manipur and plan to implement in other States too.

The implementation of the use of Meghshala e-lessons was formalised by the signing of a tripartite MoU between the Education Department, Meghshala Trust and CISCO CSR. Jyoti Thyagarajan, the Founder Trustee

of Meghshala Trust and Rohini Kamath, CISCO CSR were in Gangtok for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on 14 Aug, 2019 with Additional Chief Secretary, GP Upadhyaya, Government of Sikkim.

The occasion was attended by Secretary, Directors and Joint Directors of different sections of the Education Department.

All 6 accused in Pehlu Khan lynching case acquitted

JAIPUR, AUG 14 (PTI): An Alwar court on Wednesday acquitted all six accused in the lynching of Pehlu Khan, killed two years ago by a mob that set upon him while he was transporting cows.

The Additional Judicial Magistrate acquitted the six men, giving them benefit of the doubt, according to a lawyer.

Pehlu Khan (55), his two sons and a few others were transporting cows when they were allegedly stopped and thrashed by a mob near Behror in Alwar district on April 1, 2017.

Khan died in hospital on April 3, triggering

outrage over the murder and focusing attention on attacks by cow vigilantes.

“The court gave benefit of the doubt to all six accused and acquitted them of lynching charges. We have not received the court order copy and will wait for it to study it and appeal in the higher court,” Additional Public Prosecutor Yogendra Khatana told reporters.

The six accused let off by the court are Vipin Yadav, Ravindra Kumar, Kaluram, Dayanand, Yogesh Kumar and Bheem Rathi.

Police had also named three minors in

the case. They are facing facing trial in a juvenile justice court.

The court of Additional District Judge Sarita Swami completed the trial proceedings on August 7 and reserved the case for judgment on Wednesday.

The then BJP government in Rajasthan under Vasundhara Raje came under flak over the killing, with the incident escalating the debate over Muslims facing attacks from cow vigilantes.

Recently, the Rajasthan Assembly passed a bill introduced by the current Congress government in the state to tackle mob lynching.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

The State Level Celebration of Independence Day, 2019 will be held at Paljor Stadium on 15th August, 2019. Being a national function, the programme will be attended by Honourable Chief Minister of Sikkim along with other high ranking dignitaries.

Due to security reasons, carrying of water bottles are strictly forbidden at the venue. Further, all Govt. employees, PSUs and members of public representatives are requested to carry their a respective identity cards to gain access to the venue.

IPR Department
Government of Sikkim.

While You Were Nodding

Fluid politics of itinerant politicians

The 2019 election results in Sikkim were already “historic” in that not only did it effect a change in government after 25 years, it also revealed an electorate that was divided right down the middle, so much so that the party which received the highest number of votes was voted out of office and the runner-up in the ballot got the seats to form the government. With the house divided 17/15, and after three constituencies had to be released for by-elections, 16/13, politics was expected to be fluid and murky. And it has lived up to the billing. Barely three months into the current term and the equations have changed with a frequency which has left the people dizzy. And confused.

When SKM formed the government, it had 17 constituencies in the bag, a number which climbed down to 16 after Gangtok was picked for a by-election. From a simple majority, the party was down to the halfway mark. SDF moved two rungs lower from 15 to 13. With by-elections slated for three constituencies, there was a chance that the final tally could end up even at 16/16. And even as the delicious possibilities of what the by-elections could throw up were being speculated upon, 13 August happened and ten MLAs from SDF decamped into BJP and the equation changed. BJP was served a gift-wrapped presence in the legislative assembly, pushing past SDF to become the largest party after SKM in the Assembly. This, despite the party not even having made a serious play in the assembly elections, contesting from only 13 of the 32 assembly constituencies, a number too low to be considered an option by the voters. No surprise then that not only did all the BJP candidates lose the elections, but also their security deposits. All that is in the past now because the next time the assembly convenes, it will be opening its doors for 10 BJP MLAs. SDF meanwhile has become this tree which keeps on giving. With BJP having taken a lion’s share of the SDF legislators, SKM too received some crumbs in the form of two MLAs who formalized their Krantikari credentials by joining the party on Wednesday. SKM now has 18 MLAs, a strength one better than what the voters had given it. SDF meanwhile has shrunk to just one MLA in its party president Pawan Chamling. Political realignments have ensured that what was a head-on clash between two parties has delivered a Legislative Assembly [with a current strength of 29] which has three parties represented – SKM [18], BJP [10] and SDF [1].

Does it matter that the voters did not want it so? Not to the elected representatives, it does not.

That said, the upcoming by-elections will be interesting to watch. BJP is expected to make a serious play and SKM too has a lot riding on it to consolidate its government. SDF, in its reactions so far, appears to be uncertain about its role but will need to stand up and get counted to remain relevant and rebuild. A three-cornered fight for three constituencies, at least one of which is considered an SDF bastion [Poklok Kamrang] and one an SKM stronghold [Gangtok], will give a strong indication of the politics and politicking to expect in the coming months and years.

Yes, the whole shifting and moving raises many questions about ethics and reliability, but such niceties were never delivered by politicians here. What confounds is the quickness with which they appear to have forgotten that the electorate no longer wastes its votes on opportunist “leaders.” What is a worrying sign though is the cowering that BJP’s central leadership commands even from leaders who wear their locals-first commitment on their sleeves. Neither SDF, nor SKM has found the spine to call out the latest development and if the same attitude continues into the by-elections, the voters might wonder why they should waste their votes on local outfits if the representative is eventually going to flow into the nationalistic bluster of BJP. Yes, that is unlikely to happen, but the chances of it playing out so have gone up substantially thanks to what just transpired. SDF’s chances have gone down dramatically since even if it wins all three by-elections, it will grow to only 4 MLAs which does not excite anyone especially since the party does not appear too keen to play the role of an Opposition in the Assembly. That leaves only SKM and BJP in the fray. BJP’s track-record of forcing its way into government in other states and obsession with making states saffron should get SKM worried enough to watch its back and become earnest about governance. That might be the only positive that the latest situation can deliver. The voters too are receiving an opportunity to register their opinion about what has transpired in Sikkim over the past few days. Opportunities by themselves do not, however, complete any picture until they are seized.



Hong Kong Protests: History Lessons for Beijing From British Colonial Era Uprising

NICHOLAS ROSS SMITH & MARK BOYD
theconversation.com

Beijing has made no secret that it is weighing up the option of using force – either through deploying the People’s Liberation Army or People’s Armed Police – to quell the increasingly disruptive protests in Hong Kong. On August 12, Chinese state-media published footage of troops amassing in Shenzhen, near the border with Hong Kong.

At this stage, it’s still likely that Beijing is sabre-rattling to intimidate the Hong Kong government and the protesters. But the longer the demonstrations continue – and especially if the protesters become emboldened and more disruptive – the more Beijing will be tempted to use force.

This would be a mistake. Beijing would probably be able to easily quell the protests through intervening, but the costs of doing so would be high, both in Hong Kong and further afield.

As the Soviet Union’s interventions in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 demonstrated, putting protests down is the easy part. The hard part is managing the long-term implications of doing so.

While the Soviet Union managed to impose relative stability in Hungary and Czechoslovakia until the late 1980s, the international costs of both interventions were large. Many left-leaning groups in the West which had been pro-Soviet up to that point, split over whether to support the intervention in Hungary. The issue caused a serious rift and cost the Soviet Union useful support behind “enemy” lines.

The Czechoslovakian intervention further eroded the Soviet Union’s moral standing, at a time when support in Western Europe for socialist ideals was at its height.

Given that Beijing has painstakingly attempted to choreograph its ongoing rise as a “peaceful” one under the leadership of Xi Jinping, presiding over a forceful crackdown in Hong Kong would severely

undermine that narrative.

It would also hurt Beijing’s potential to emerge as an international leader, something Xi Jinping has targeted in the wake of the Trump administration’s recalibration of its international goals.

1967 RIOTS

But there is a model at hand for how Beijing might handle the Hong Kong protests, and it, ironically, comes from Hong Kong itself. In 1967 Britain that was the domineering power and it was Chinese ideas that were the driver of protests in the territory.

At the time, Hong Kong was officially a British Crown colony and although Hong Kongers had certain civil liberties not available to those in mainland China, it was a colony and there were restrictions of freedoms. The 1967 riots were not so much a manifestation of discontent in Hong Kong at the time but more a spill-over from the turmoil occurring in China – namely the cultural revolution.

When a relatively minor labour dispute in a Hong Kong factory producing artificial flowers occurred in May 1967, pro-Communist trade unions – backed by Beijing and overtly helped the Red Guards – seized the opportunity and organised demonstrations which eventually snowballed into full on riots and terrorist attacks against British colonial rule.

The 1967 riots were much more violent than what has occurred so far this year. Running for eight months in total, by the end of the unrest, 51 people had been killed.

It’s important not to make any equivalence between the groups behind the 1967 riots and those behind the demonstrations now, as the majority of the current protesters have largely maintained a non-violent approach. But, there is the potential for violent tactics to become more common as tensions worsen.

Beijing can learn some lessons from the British response to the 1967 riots. Given the scale of violence back then, it would not have been shock-

ing if the British had taken extra steps to try and forcibly quell the rioting, especially given the role of instigators from outside the territory in stoking the flames.

Instead, the British government allowed the Hong Kong administration and police to treat the riots as an internal matter. This removed any opportunity for the rioters to cite heavy-handed British tactics to legitimise their actions.

As the demonstrations turned more violent, the British and the Hong Kong government won in the court of public opinion, a crucial step to ending the riots.

THE BENEFITS OF NON-INTERVENTION

Beijing’s problem right now in Hong Kong is that few people among the population there believe that Beijing is willing to honour the terms of the One Country Two Systems agreement – namely to allow Hong Kong to have significant autonomy, until at least 2047.

Conversely, many Hong Kongers have become nostalgic for the days of British rule because not only in the 1967 riots did Britain act with caution and sense, they worked to improve conditions for Hong Kongers in the 1970s and beyond.

For Beijing to reap the benefits of having Hong Kong within its gravitational field – and the benefits are many, but only if stability can be ensured – it needs to somehow build confidence with Hong Kongers.

Resisting the urge for a heavy-handed intervention and allowing the Hong Kong government to independently deal with the protests would have some short-term costs for Beijing, especially domestically in mainland China.

But, at the same time, non-intervention would have significant long term pay-offs for China, not only for its relationship with Hong Kong but more broadly its international image.

[Nicholas Ross Smith is Assistant Professor of International Studies, University of Nottingham; Mark Boyd is PhD Candidate, University of Auckland]

Gaslighting: From partners to politicians – how to avoid becoming a victim

STEPHAN LEWANDOWSKY
theconversation.com

President Donald Trump’s statement on the horrific mass shooting in El Paso on August 3 that killed 22 people and injured 24 covered a lot of ground. From video games and mental illness to the death penalty, the president drew attention to many variables – but not to the semi-automatic guns that are often used in mass shootings. Instead, he claimed that “mental illness and hatred pulls the trigger, not the gun”.

The response angered many people who see tighter gun control as the only way to prevent such tragic events. Some even accused Trump of “gaslighting” – a psychological manipulation to erode someone’s sense of self and sanity – something that’s happened many times before.

Gaslighting typically refers to intimate relationships. It’s a way of controlling someone by creating false narratives – for example, that they are irrational or crazy. If such lies are repeated constantly, victims may get confused and start believing there really is something wrong with them. Confusion, diversion, distraction and disinformation can similarly be used to gaslight an entire society. So how can you tell if you are being gaslighted, and how do you avoid it in the first place?

Most people around us act in good faith. We cooperate with each other in conversations by conforming to norms such as honesty and relevance. We tell the truth and we do not mention irrelevancies without good reason. When people violate those maxims, we normally doubt

their sincerity or honesty. But in gaslighting, lying is used in combination with persistent denial, misdirection and contradiction in a way that can make us doubt ourselves instead.

While politicians have always tried to divert attention from issues they consider threatening or uncomfortable, more than 10,000 claims during the Trump presidency have been judged to be false or misleading. This puts Trump – and many other leaders – in conflict with the cooperative norms that make society work.

When confusion, diversion, distraction and disinformation are ramped up so they become an omnipresent pollutant of public debate, we may end up losing faith in the very possibility of truthful discussion – or in our own views.

Take the Russian-made Buk missile which downed Malaysian Airlines MH17 in 2014. Pro-Kremlin websites engaged in massive gaslighting by first denying it was a Russian missile, then saying it was an Ukrainian attack. Later on, they claimed the pilot had deliberately crashed the plane, and finally they said it was all part of a vast conspiracy to turn the world against Russia.

Most of those claims don’t fit together and each is implausible. But the cumulative effect is one of confusion and distraction from the Russian involvement.

CLEAR SIGNS

So how can you know if you’re being gaslighted? In a close relationship, such as that with a partner or a boss, it will involve feeling confused and depressed. You may also be spending a lot of time apologising or making excuses for the gaslighter

– even if you deep down know something is wrong.

If you complain about your experience to the gaslighter, you’d most likely be told it’s not real – you could even be scolded for making false accusations or for being too sensitive.

When it comes to politics, the signs are similar. You may feel confused and alone in the world, assuming nobody understands your point of view and that it must therefore be wrong. Take racism. You may have known exactly what it is. But when Trump accused US Congresswomen of colour of “racist hatred” in response to himself being criticised for racist remarks against them, this could have sown confusion about what racism actually means.

It is similarly hard to complain to a gaslighting leader. Several journalists who have questioned Trump have simply been banned from his conferences and told they do fake news.

PREVENTION

By the time you notice you are being gaslighted, a lot of damage may have already been done. There is evidence that prevention is actually better than cure – even in the context of pure disinformation. My colleagues and I have repeatedly shown that people can be “inoculated” against being misled if they are taught to recognise misleading rhetorical techniques.

For gaslighting, such techniques include open disbelief in facts or evidence and persistent denial of having done or said something, no matter what evidence points to the contrary.

Gaslighting also involves diversion, typically by triggering an emo-

tional response. When Trump repeatedly criticised the cast of a Broadway play via Twitter after the actors pleaded for a “diverse America” at the end of a show, many people felt outraged and some rose to defend the actors.

But most people missed the fact that this Twitter event coincided with Trump agreeing to a US\$25m settlement (including a US\$1m penalty) of lawsuits against his defunct Trump University. An analysis of Google Trends confirmed the success of this diversion, because the public showed far greater interest in the Broadway controversy than the Trump University settlement.

So the next time a politician says something outrageous, do not just be outraged – look for the real event that this shiny object is trying to distract you from. My colleagues and I have recently shown, in an as-yet unpublished paper, that Trump masterfully diverts the media and the public from information that is threatening to him. Knowing that is a first step in preventing gaslighting. You can’t be gaslighted if you don’t get confused and you won’t get confused if you are not misled in the first place.

In her incisive analysis of totalitarianism, the philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt warned that in an incomprehensible world created by gaslighting, people “at the same time, believe everything and nothing, think that everything was possible and that nothing was true”.

Truth is at the heart of liberal democracy. No amount of gaslighting should divert us from that.

[the writer is Chair of Cognitive Psychology, University of Bristol]

73rd Independence Day



Shri Ganga Prasad
Hon'ble Governor



Shri Prem Singh Tamang
Hon'ble Chief Minister

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Let us Salute the Nation !



Department of Information & Public Relations
Government of Sikkim

9-year-old boy from Pune scales Mt Kilimanjaro



NEW DELHI, AUG 14 (PTI): Most nine-year-olds would find it difficult to even put a finger on Mount Kilimanjaro on a map, but not Advait Bhartia, who recently scaled the the highest free-standing mountain in the world.

Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, at 19,341 feet above sea level, is also the highest in Africa.

Fondly called ‘Sim-bum ToTo’ (Little Simba),

Advait reached the top of mountain on July 31, under the supervision of his expedition leader Samir Patham. To successfully accomplish the hike, the nine-year-old from Pune took the most recommended Machame route that begins at the southern base of the mountain.

Advait, who also successfully trekked to the Everest base camp as a boy of six in 2016, finished the summit in sev-

en days. “This trek was really difficult but fun at the same time. When I was submitting (sic) the Everest Base Camp, we were living in wooden houses but during the Kilimanjaro trek, we stayed in tents and it was a good experience being exposed to snow and the surroundings.

“I could have completed the trek faster but the mountains were very beautiful and I took

a lot of breaks to take in the beauty,” Advait, who has Europe’s highest peak Mount Elbrus on his bucket list for next year, said.

He added that thin air, reducing atmospheric oxygen by approximately 50 per cent, and sub-zero temperatures ranging between minus 21 and 25 degrees Celsius at higher altitudes were some of the challenges he braved during his expedition.

According to his mother Payal Bhartia, Advait underwent stringent training over a period of two months to gear up for the climb.

“His routine included swimming for an hour, cardiovascular training like playing football, cricket and tennis in the second hour and climbing 100 floors and practising Parkour (military obstacle training) was a regular part of the training during the third hour,” she added.

Payal, who accompanied her son during the hike, had to cut short her journey by 1000 ft on the way up as she was unable to acclimatise to the increasing altitude.

“I am very proud of Advait and his dedication towards completing this trek. On the last day, Advait got emotional and he individually thanked the porters, the tent pitchers and the catering team for all their efforts,” she said.

The trek was organized by Pune-based adventure and trekking company Adventure Pulse.

‘Deshbhakti’ curriculum to start in Delhi govt school from next year: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, AUG 14 (PTI): The Delhi government will introduce a ‘Deshbhakti’ curriculum in its schools from the next academic year to inculcate in students love for the country and make them aware of their responsibilities, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced on the eve of Independence Day.

Speaking at the launch of the ‘Constitution at 70’ campaign on Wednesday, Kejriwal said the decision to introduce the curriculum was taken at a meeting on Tuesday between him and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the education portfolio.

The campaign, which will end on November 26 the day in 1949 when the Constitution of India was adopted, is being held in all government schools. Students of Class 6-9 and Class 11 will be part of the campaign.

Ordinarily we are reminded of our love for the country either when there is an India-Pakistan match or when there is tensions on the border. In our day-to-day lives we forget about our country. The ‘Deshbhakti’ curriculum is being introduced so that each and every citizen of this country truly loves their country,” Kejriwal said at the event.

He said the objective of the curriculum will be to inculcate a feeling of love for the country, respect towards it and respect for guests.

“When our children grow older and start working, and at any point if they accept a bribe, then they must feel from within that they are betraying ‘Bharat Mata’. When they jump a traffic light, they must feel they’ve wronged their country,” Kejriwal said.

“We hear of so many incidents where foreign

nationals come to India, they are faced with loot, assault, rape. When we hear stories of Indians returning from Japan, we only hear praises for the Japanese and their hospitality. We have to love our country to the extent that we respect it and respect our guests,” he said.

The ‘Deshbhakti’ curriculum is aimed at achieving three important goals-- each and every child must feel proud of the nation, making children aware of their responsibility and duty towards the country, and instill a feeling of passion to sacrifice anything for the nation, the chief minister said. “Children must be taught about the glories of the country. Each child must be made aware of their responsibility and duty towards the country. India has a hundred problems. We are poor, our farmers commit suicide. But who will solve these problems? It is us who will have to find solutions,” he said. Children have to realise that the problems, the country is facing, will have to be solved by all, Kejriwal stressed.

“We have to create a sense of ownership among all children that they have to take on the challenges we are facing as a country head on and address them. Third, we have to instill among children the passion and commitment to be prepared to sacrifice anything for the nation,” he said. The curriculum will be the “biggest gift to the nation” on the special occasion of the 73rd Independence Day, Kejriwal said.

Deputy Chief Minister Sisodia said teachers and principals of Delhi government schools will be at the forefront of the designing of this curriculum, similar to the way the ‘Happiness’ and ‘Entrepreneurship Mindset’ curriculums were designed.

Snooker: Gurbaxani, Shrikrishna to clash for place in final



MUMBAI, AUG 14 (PTI): Maharashtra’s Kreishh Gurbaxani, India junior number two, and Tamil Nadus top seed S Shrikrishna, advanced to a semi-final meeting in the Bombay Gymkhana Youth Snooker Open here on Wednesday.

The Mumbai-based Kreish drubbed Khar Gymkhana club-mate Harmehr Mago 4-0 in the best-of-seven frame quarter-final contest.

On an adjacent table, the Chennai-based

Shrikrishna, who is the current national billiards champion, constructed a century effort of 101 to outclass Railways cueist Mohd. Hussain Khan 4-1.

Second seed Ishpreet Singh Chaddha, a former junior national snooker and billiards champion, recorded an authoritative 4-0 win against Taaha Khan of Railways in another last eight encounter.

Ishpreet faces Asutosh Padhy, who defeated Hritik Jain 4-1 in another

quarter final, in the other semi-final.

Results (Quarter-finals): S Shrikrishna beat Mohd Hussain Khan 4-1 (67-44, 101(101)-0, 88(47)-12, 39-62, 65-12); Kreishh Gurbaxani beat Harmehr Mago 4-0 (62(51)-31, 81(75)-10, 83(77)-1, 64(32)-25); Asutosh Padhy beat Hritik Jain 4-1 (66 (34,32)-9, 71-51, 56-8, 19-62, 56(42)-27); Ishpreet Singh Chaddha beat Taaha Khan 4-0 (73(32)-22, 109(74)-7, 73-29, 76-9).

Australia vows to deepen defence ties with India, increase engagement in Indian Ocean

BY NATASHA CHAKU

MELBOURNE, AUG 14 (PTI): Australia has said that it will work towards forging deeper defence ties with India and focus on the strategic Indian Ocean, where China is “rapidly” expanding its footprints. Addressing the Western Australian Indo-Pacific Conference in Perth on Monday, Australian Defence Minister Linda Reynolds said, “The Indian Ocean has not always received the same level of attention in our strategic thinking as the Pacific Ocean. Australia has tended to see itself as a Pacific Ocean state.”

Like the Pacific, the Indian Ocean was increasingly characterised by “rising strategic competition” and “intensifying great power rivalries”, she said.

The minister said there is a proliferation of naval activity and a race to secure access to strategic ports right across the Indian Ocean rim, which afford both economic and strategic advantage. “India has emerged as an economic powerhouse and is demonstrating leadership in a way that reflects its size and democratic values. China has rapidly expanded its Indian Ocean footprint establishing its first overseas military base in Djibouti in 2017,” Reynolds

said. “So amid this back drop of rising opportunity and increasing risk, what are Australia’s defence interests in the Indian Ocean?” she questioned.

Reynolds said Australia was “committed to work more closely in the Indian Ocean by cooperating with key regional partners, including India and Indonesia.”

She said Australia’s relationship with India has “flourished” over the past 10 years. “In 2014, we conducted 11 defence activities together. By 2018 this had more than tripled to 38 bilateral activities,” she said. “There is scope to further increase the depth and complexity of our (defence) co-operation on land, at sea and in the air domain,” the minister said, adding that she has extended an invitation to her Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh to visit Australia later this year to “advance these discussions” and to ink new agreements.

Pointing to the disappearance of Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 to signify how little is known about the Indian Ocean, Reynolds said, “We cannot moderate behaviour in our region, without being able to monitor and track what is occurring above and below its surface.”

Breathtaking Biles ‘unbeatable’ rivals say



LOS ANGELES, AUG 14 (AFP): Simone Biles continues to push the boundaries of her sport to the point even the American gymnast’s rivals can only watch in admiration.

Sunisa Lee said she was “super happy” to take the all-around silver medal at the US championships this weekend, where Biles capped her record-tying sixth national all-around title with a never-before-seen “triple-double” floor exercise landing -- a finale featuring two flips and three twists. Even Biles admitted she couldn’t wait to see the replay of the move, whipping out her phone between rotations to check out the video.

“I didn’t want to be the last person to see it,” she said. Biles -- who already has a vault skill and a

floor exercise maneuver named for her as their originator -- pressed the limits in balance beam in Kansas City, too, with a double-flip, double-twist beam dismount.

Lee was more than content with her silver, while Morgan Hurd, who finished fourth, called Biles “superhuman.”

“I do consider it a win, just because she’s unbeatable,” Lee said.

Biles’ performance in Kansas City was a glimpse of what she has in store for the World Championships, which are being held in Stuttgart over October 4-13.

The German event is a forerunner to the 2020 Tokyo Games, where Biles will be aiming to add to the five medals -- four of them gold -- that she won at the Rio de Ja-

neiro Olympics in 2016. Even as Biles continues to astonish in competition, she admitted as the national championships began that it was “not easy coming back to the sport, coming back to the organization that has failed you.”

She was among more than 200 athletes abused by former US gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar and has been an outspoken critic of how US Gymnastics and the US Olympic Committee failed to protect athletes.

While she continues to wrestle with the aftermath, Biles’s joy was evident on Sunday when she posted a picture of herself on Instagram.

“That feeling when you make history ... twice,” the beaming gymnast wrote.

Stosur, Gauff headline US Open wildcards

NEW YORK, AUG 14 (AFP): Former champion Samantha Stosur and teenage Wimbledon sensation Coco Gauff highlight the list of US Open wildcards announced on Tuesday.

Gauff, 15, reached the Wimbledon main draw through qualifying then upset five-time champion Venus Williams in the first round before falling to eventual champion Simona Halep in the fourth round.

Gauff is joined by four other teenagers among eight wildcard invitees: a trio of 17-year-old

Americans in Caty McNally, Whitney Osuigwe and Katie Volynets and 16-year-old French player Diane Parry.

Stosur, meanwhile, brings a veteran presence. The 35-year-old Aussie won the title in Flushing Meadows in 2011 and has reached the quarter-finals on two other occasions.

Other women’s wildcards went to former US collegiate champion Francesca Di Lorenzo and three-time Stanford University All-American and New Jersey native Kristie

Ahn. On the men’s side, Americans Bjorn Fratangelo, Marcos Giron, Denis Kudla and Jack Sock join US Open Wild Card Challenge winner Ernesto Escobedo and 2019 US Tennis Association Boys’ 18s National Champion Zachary Svajda as main draw wild card recipients.

Antoine Hoang was awarded a main draw wildcard by the French Tennis Federation as part of its reciprocal agreement with the USTA, and Tennis Australia’s reciprocal agreement main draw wild card will go to a player to be announced.

Online commenter supported mass shootings, stockpiled weapons: FBI

WASHINGTON, AUG 14 (AFP): FBI agents in the United States have discovered a cache of some 25 guns and 10,000 bullets after arresting a teenager who made online comments supporting mass shootings.



In a complaint filed Monday, the FBI charged Boardman, Ohio resident Justin Olsen with threatening to assault a federal law enforcement officer after he posted on an online forum: “In conclusion, shoot every federal agent on sight”. The 18-year-old’s account on the ifunny website -- a forum where users share memes -- had approximately 4,400 subscribers.

He had previously made posts supporting mass shootings and targeting family planning and reproductive rights group Planned Parenthood, the complaint said.

After searching his father’s house, agents found around 15 assault rifles and shotguns and 10 semi-automatic pistols inside the bedroom of Olsen’s father, along

with the ammunition.

Agents also found “camouflage clothing and camouflaged backpacks,” according to the complaint. Olsen admitted to making the online comments, the complaint said, but insisted they were “only a joke” and were made in regards to the controversial 1993 standoff in Waco, Texas.

The Branch Davidians religious sect held off federal authorities attempting to arrest their members on weapons charges, until the FBI eventually launched an assault and used tear gas. A fire engulfed the sect’s compound and 76 people died.

Olsen’s arrest came a week after back-to-back massacres killed 31 people in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio, sparking calls for lawmakers to

limit the availability of firearms and reduce the carnage from gun violence in the United States.

President Donald Trump has said his fellow Republicans will set aside their longstanding resistance to restricting access to firearms by supporting background checks for people buying weapons, but his Democratic challengers in the 2020 presidential election have called for stronger measures.

Days after the killings in Texas and Ohio, a 20-year-old man wearing body armor, fatigues and armed with an assault rifle was arrested at a Missouri Walmart store -- the chain that was the site of the shooting in El Paso -- and charged with making a terrorist threat.

42 people killed in heavy monsoon rains in Karachi

KARACHI, AUG 14 (PTI): Heavy monsoon rains have wreaked havoc in Pakistan's biggest metropolis Karachi, killing at least 42 people and triggering flash floods in several parts of the city, officials said on Wednesday. In the second monsoon spell, incessant rains have been lashing the city since Saturday, claiming at least 24 lives with 46 others injured in rain-related accidents, police officials said.

According to government officials, a total of 28 people have died in the southern Sindh province since Saturday.

At least 42 people have lost their lives in rain-related incidents since the monsoon rains started in the last week of July, they said.

Mayor of Karachi Wasim Akhtar told the media on Tuesday that the rains had wreaked havoc in the city.

"We are moving to file FIRs with the police on behalf of victims who were killed due to electrocution incidents in the city," he said.

Akhtar said the Karachi Electric (KE), which provided the power supply to the city, were directly responsible for the electrocution because of their faulty system.

Three friends were electrocuted after touching an electric pole two days ago in Karachi Defence Housing Authority.

An official of the Edhi welfare trust said four brothers died after inhaling diesel fumes from a generator.

Power breakdowns - some even lasting for more than 24 hours in some areas - have affected most parts of Karachi. The flooding caused by overflowing drains have added to people's misery.

The heavy rains which continued on Sunday and Monday also made it difficult for people to sacrifice animals in the open on Eid ul Azha on Monday.

The met office has warned of more heavy to moderate rain in the city from Thursday with thunderstorms entering Sindh from Rajasthan.

The met office has recorded over 158-mm of rainfall in Karachi and at some places even as high as 200-mm.

Asia markets rise as Trump tariff delay boosts trade war hopes



HONG KONG, AUG 14 (AFP): Asian equities rose Wednesday as investors breathed a collective sigh of relief at news the US had delayed tariffs on a swathe of Chinese goods, easing tensions in their bitter trade war. Donald Trump also said top-level negotiators for both sides had held "very productive" talks by phone, while an official told AFP the president's top trade representative would speak again to his opposite number in two weeks. Trump said the decision was made to protect consumers heading into the holiday shopping season, with 10 per cent levies on electronics goods - which were due on September 1 - put off until December 15.

"By the time December comes around the US will be less than one year away from the next presidential election, and Trump won't want to be remembered as the Grinch," said David Madden, market analyst at CMC Markets UK.

The news provided some much-needed respite for investors, who have come under intense pressure from a range of issues including concerns about the global economy, Hong Kong's protests, the trade war and Brexit.

Wall Street's three main indexes surged on the announcement, with the tech-rich Nasdaq up two per cent, and the Dow and S&P 500 more than one percent higher.

However, National Australia Bank's Tapas Strickland offered a note of caution. "Markets have rallied hard on the notion of Trump blinking, but overall a high degree of scepticism should remain and an imminent deal is unlikely given Trump has foreshadowed he is going to be campaigning hard on the issue in the 2020 election," he said in a note. The US gains filtered through to Asia where Hong Kong added 0.1 per cent. The rise helped reverse some of the more than two percent lost in the previous two days from concerns about rising political tension that saw the city's airport -- a major international hub -- shut down for two days.

The increasingly violent demonstrations have also been referred to as "terrorism" by Beijing, stoking fears China will take a tougher line, with observers still concerned about the outlook for further unrest. Shanghai added 0.4 per cent but early big gains there and in Hong Kong were pared after data showed Chinese factory

output expanded last month at its slowest pace in 17 years as the economy struggles with the impact of the trade war and a weakening global demand.

Tokyo ended one percent higher and Seoul added 0.7 per cent, Sydney put on 0.4 per cent and Taipei put on 0.6 per cent. There were also gains in Mumbai, Jakarta, Manila and Bangkok though Wellington and Singapore dipped.

High-yielding, riskier currencies also enjoyed some gains with the Mexican peso and South African rand, South Korea's won and the Indonesian rupiah all posting strong gains. In morning trade London was flat, while Paris and Frankfurt edged down 0.2 per cent. China's yuan, which has plunged in the past two weeks on worries about the trade stand-off -- sparking accusations Beijing is a currency manipulator -- also bounced. The euro held its ground despite data showing the economy in Germany, the eurozone's biggest economy, shrank in the second quarter.

However, gold -- a key solace in times of turmoil and uncertainty -- only fell slightly, which OANDA Asia-Pacific senior market analyst Jeffrey Halley said was telling.

"Given the stampede out of defensive positioning we saw everywhere else, this performance is doubly impressive and suggests that calmer heads will need a lot more evidence that a collision between the two supertankers of the world economy will be avoided," he wrote. Data showing US inflation rising more than expected also tempered hopes for another interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve this year. On oil markets, Brent retreated more than one per cent after surging 4.7 per cent Tuesday on the tariffs news, while WTI was down 0.7 per cent following a four per cent rise.

Twitter to let users follow interests as well as people

SAN FRANCISCO, AUG 14 (AFP): Twitter users will be able to follow a small number of interests by the end of the year in the same way they follow people, the company said on Tuesday.

The feature will be rolled out internationally as the one-to-many messaging platform prioritizes being an online venue for conversations rather than a pulpit for one-way broadcasting to the masses.

"We are basically rewriting the entire conversation service," Twitter product team leader Kayvon Beykpour told reporters during a briefing at the company's San Francisco headquarters.

"We are rebuilding that infrastructure, and it is nearly complete." The company also highlighted ongoing efforts to make sharing thoughts on the platform safe and easy.

Twitter has always let users follow accounts but a new feature, set to debut by the end of this year, will let users opt into following certain sports teams or categories on a curated list.

For example, sending or interacting with tweets about a team might prompt a query over whether the user wants to "follow" that



team or be kept in the know about what is being said on Twitter on the topics. "We are going to let you directly follow topics on Twitter," said product manager Rob Bishop. "Rather than replacing following people, we actually think this will help you find new people to follow." There will be an ability to "mute" topics to avoid seeing the score of a sporting match, for example. Topics people follow will show up in their profiles as long as they are signed up for the interest.

Twitter is starting slowly, offering just a few sports options, to hone the feature before expanding to other topics, according to the teams.

Subjects designated "interests" by Twitter are meant to be lasting -- such as football or cricket -- rather than passing hot topics, according to Bishop.

"It is important for us to come up with a rigorous set of principles

when it comes to defining topics," Beykpour said. "We are taking this superpower very seriously." A conversations team at Twitter has been working on ways to get people more enthusiastically engaged in meaningful exchanges, dabbling with changes while being mindful not to disrupt the lives of people who rely on the service.

"We know that Twitter is at its best with it is not just you tweeting something out as a broadcast, but really engaging in that conversation or being a host for others to engage in a conversation about what you are talking about," said conversations product team member Sara Haider.

Twitter has no plans for an often requested "edit" button that would let users change posts already fire off, saying it raised complex issues and was "not anywhere near the top of our list" of things to do.

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM SOCIAL JUSTICE EMPOWERMENT AND WELFARE DEPARTMENT (WELFARE DIVISION)

KALYAN BHAWAN, TADONG, LUMSAY.
projectsjewd@gmail.com

Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India
ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP: 2019-20
(Pre-Matric, Post-Matric and Merit-cum-Means) at
www.scholarships.gov.in portal

TIMELINE:

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|---|---|-------------------------------|
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Additional Secretary (scholarships)
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GLAM GIRL! The singer, Nicole Scherzinger looks gorgeous while stepping out in a black and white dress in Sydney, Australia.

Big B said yes to 'KBC' three months after he was approached: Book

NEW DELHI, AUG 14 (PTI): Getting Amitabh Bachchan on board "Kaun Banega Crorepati" was difficult and its team had to take him to London to illustrate what the show was about before he finally signed the deal, three months after he was first approached, says a new book. After the Star team geared up for KBC in early 2000, it approached Bachchan to host the show but the megastar was ambivalent. He was the only choice. India's biggest superstar at that time was 57 and most of his films were not doing well but still, his was a name almost every Indian knew.

In the process of convincing Bachchan, Sameer Nair, Siddhartha Basu, the actor's agent Sunil Doshi, Deepak Sehgal, Ravi Menon (part of the programming team) and Sumantra Dutta took him to London to illustrate what the show was about. This episode finds mention in a new book titled "The Making of Star India: The Amazing Story of Rupert Murdoch's India Adventure" by Vanita Kohli-Khandekar.

The book tells the story of the company that shaped the Indian media and entertainment business. When Rupert Murdoch, executive chairman of News Corporation, blew up more than USD 870 million buying Star TV from Richard Li in the early 1990s, analysts were dismayed. More than 25 years later, with revenues of over USD 2 billion, Star India has emerged as one of the country's three largest media firms.

The narrative in the book, published by

Penguin Random House India, is peppered with anecdotes and a cast of characters that include the likes of Rathikant Basu, Peter Mukerjee, Uday Shankar, Sameer Nair and the Murdochs. The author says that in London, Bachchan spent a full day in Elstree Studios on the sets of the UK version of "Who Wants to Be A Millionaire", which was being hosted by Chris Tarrant. He saw for himself the drama, the scale and the involvement the show created.

Siddhartha Basu, who went on to become KBC's producer and director, says Bachchan was quiet for some time. "Then he turned to Nair and asked, 'Can you do it exactly like the Brits?' Nair turned to Siddhartha. 'My worry was whether the stakeholders would wrap their heads around what was involved. The technology, the telephone issues and the participants - those were my problems. We used to handle very complex shoots on shoestring budgets. So we could do it but 'if you give me the resources, I told Sameer,' the book says.

And Star pulled out all the stops.

Before shooting for the show began at a specially-constructed set at Mumbai's Film City in June 2000, an estimated 1.2 million calls were received. "When Bachchan entered the set on the first day of the shoot, all the lights went off. There had been a big technical fault somewhere and all of Mumbai was on the blink. After a wait of three hours the shoot was cancelled. Amitabh thought it was a bad omen," the book says.

Awkwafina to star in 'The Last Adventure of Constance Verity' adaptation

LOS ANGELES, AUG 14 (PTI): Awkwafina is set to feature in the big screen adaptation of urban fantasy novel "The Last Adventure of Constance Verity".

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the actor-rapper will headline the project from Legendary Entertainment. Based on the book by A Lee Martinez, the story revolves around Constance who has been battling with the supernatural and saving the world since her birth.

Now exhausted, she wants to have a life - a boyfriend, a normal job, best friends. How she balances her responsibilities as the chosen one and her dreams is the plot.

John Raffo has developed the screenplay.

Jon Shestack of "Dan in Real Life" and "Before I Fall" fame will produce.

Soumitra Chatterjee admitted to hospital; condition stable

KOLKATA, AUG 14 (PTI): Veteran actor Soumitra Chatterjee was admitted to a private hospital here on Wednesday after he complained of breathing problems. Chatterjee was admitted to the hospital around 9.30 am with respiratory tract infection, a statement issued by the south Kolkata hospital said.

Our doctors are monitoring him from time to time. At the moment, Mr Chatterjee is out of danger and we are keeping a close watch on him, a hospital source said. "He is being treated in ICU under close supervision," the statement said. Initial tests said that the actor was suffering from some age-related health issues such as potassium and sodium imbalance.

The 84-year old actor's daughter Poulami Basu told PTI that his present condition was stable. "There is no threat to his life," his daughter said. The 'Apu Sansar' actor, who has six-decade long illustrious film career, had attended shootings till Monday, apart from gracing events, industry sources said.

Chatterjee was bestowed with the Legion of Honour from the French government in 2018, and Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2011.

Reese Witherspoon to star in 'Pyros' set at Netflix

LOS ANGELES, AUG 14 (PTI): Reese Witherspoon is set to make her Netflix debut with sci-fi project "Pyros". According to Variety, the deal comes a day after Apple released a teaser trailer for "The Morning Show", starring Witherspoon and Jennifer Aniston.

It was announced on Tuesday that Netflix has acquired the rights to "Pyros". It will be co-produced by Witherspoon, Simon Kinberg and Audrey Chon. Thomas Pierce will adapt the film from his short story "Tardy Man", which first published last year in the New Yorker.

It follows people who are fitted with indestructible fire suits fused to their spines. They are employed by a corporation that recovers objects for wealthy people when their houses are burning but are only allowed to help people whose policies align with the corporation.

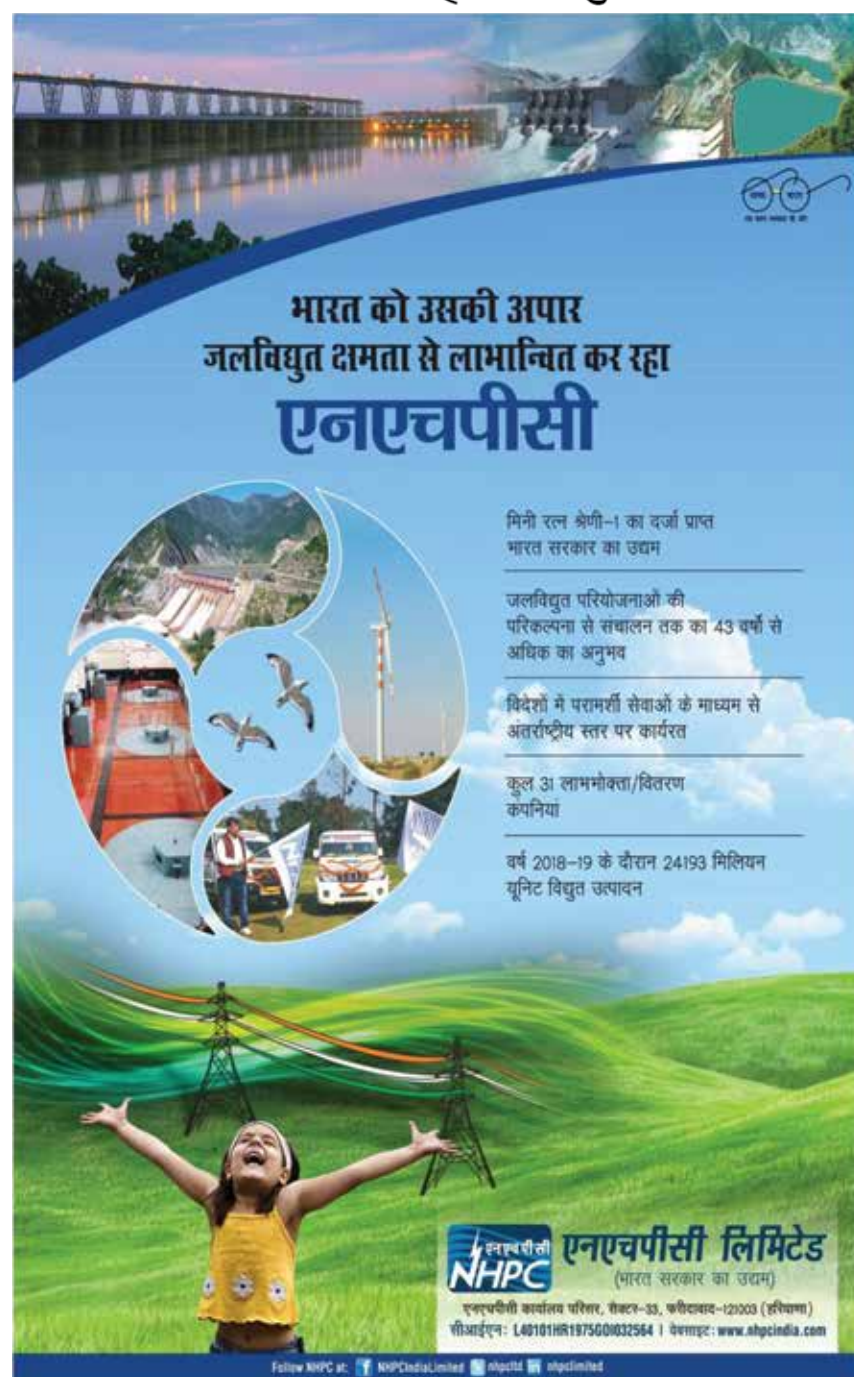
focus on savings and investments, but don't put your needs on the backburner. Today you're being asked to indulge in a few worldly pleasures—sans the guilt associated with expenditure. Rigidity versus flow is another thing you're likely to think about. How and where are you holding yourself back from being you? Control is an illusion, wild one. Tip: Allow yourself to indulge in a few worldly pleasures.

LIBRA: Money's got you on her mind, Libra, and she wants you to live a life that's both creatively and financially satisfying. Open yourself to wealth and abundance. Allow the Universe to take care of both your needs and wants. You will find that this is a time of fruition and completion. The pay cheques that have been 'stuck in the mail' are also likely to come around.

Tip: The Universe wants you to live a life that's both creatively and financially satisfying.

SCORPIO: This week, you have that Midas touch—one that instantly transforms everything you come into contact with into gold. Continue to pursue that which is sacred to

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ARIES: When you hit rock bottom, the only way to go is up. This time, trust your instinct. Do what's right for you and the collective. Turning inwards will help you find all the answers you need. Is there somebody you are hesitant about joining hands with? Ask yourself if this guidance is coming from a higher place of consciousness before you make any decisions.

Tip: Trust your instincts. Always.

TAURUS: Taurus, there's an unstoppable force about you—one that's making you alluring to big opportunities. To make the most of your energy, consider setting some big goals this week. As Robin Sharma puts it, "Goals breathe life and energy into your days. Goals inspire you and give you something to get out of bed each morning." PS: Having a routine in place will help you execute your plan to the T. Tip: There's nothing you cannot do.

GEMINI: Let's talk about physical strength, Gemini. What makes you feel like the most indomitable version of yourself? Channel you inner Lara Croft in the gym today. But what is the point of any of this and how can this aid you in becoming a stronger person.

PS: Don't forget the inherent mind-body-soul connection.

Tip: Work on your physical strength.

CANCER: This is the turning point, Cancer. It all gets better from here. Both money and opportunities are knocking at your door. Plus, the chance to build something solid for yourself as far as your finances are concerned. What you need to embrace in order to make the most of this phase: focus, discipline and persistence. Know that all your big dreams are within your reach now.

Tip: You are manifesting your best life.

LEO: How much power is too much power, and are you using what has been entrusted upon you for the greater good? Beware of the trappings of the ego, Leo. It will lead you to make questionable decisions. Every time you're likely to do something that could potentially harm another, step back, breathe, and count backwards from ten. There's always a gentler way of putting your point across.

Tip: Use your power for the greater good.

VIRGO: What are you going to do with all that money in the bank, Virgo? Continue to