



DISNEY BRINGS BACK EWAN MCGREGOR AS OBI-WAN KENOBI, UNVEILS TRAILER OF 'THE MANDALORIAN'
pg 08

THE AMAZON IS ON FIRE – HERE ARE 5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

pg 04

VIVEK OBEROI TO PRODUCE A FILM ON BALAKOT AIR STRIKES

pg 08



SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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SPYF rallies against defection in Gyalshing



RUDRA KAUSHIK GYALSHING, 24 AUG:

Sikkim Progressive Youth Forum [SPYF] organized a second protest rally in Gyalshing today demanding immediate resignation of the MLAs who have defected to other political parties from the Sikkim Democratic Front.

The first protest rally

was held in Gangtok last week. Out of 12 SDF MLAs, 10 have joined Bharatiya Janata Party and 2 have switched over to SKM.

SPYF members have decided to hold the protest rally in all districts of the state and in the constituencies of the 12 defecting MLAs.

While addressing the rally at Gyalshing bazaar,

SPYF members said that the organization would continue their protest until the defectors resign.

They maintained that defection is against the interests and aspirations of the people and it is in contempt of the people's mandate.

"The defectors must resign immediately on moral grounds else they will face an intensified protest

movement," they said.

People should raise their voice against the defectors and such practices must be stopped, they said.

They maintained that if national political parties like BJP want to form the government in the state, they must win elections and back door entry will not be accepted.

CM condoles demise of Arun Jaitley

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 AUG:

Chief Minister PS Tamang [Golay] has condoled the demise of former Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley on Saturday.

In his condolence message the CM has said, "Late Jaitley was a constitutional expert and one of the legal luminaries in the country and a renowned scholar. Former finance minister Arun Jaitley was the man at the forefront of reforms that formed the cornerstone of the first term of the NDA-led government in the Centre. He was the guiding force to bring the one tax regime in the country under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi.

I with my family and people of Sikkim deeply condole the untimely demise of a great leader who contributed in our economic growth and legal reforms in the country. In his absence, our

turn to pg02

Jaitley will be remembered for success of biggest tax reform: Gov

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 AUG:

Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad has expressed deep sadness and grief on the demise of Arun Jaitley, Former Union Minister, following relatively a short illness at All India Institute of Medical Science, New Delhi shortly after noon today.

In his condolence message, the Governor writes, "I am deeply shocked and saddened by the news of untimely demise of Shri Arun Jaitley at AIIMS, New Delhi today.

Though we were aware of his illness, it was unexpected that he would leave us so early. Having started his political career as student leader of Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad, his rise in the Indian Polity, firstly as acclaimed lawyer politician of Bharatiya Janta Party and later as Union Minister serving numerous portfolios under Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Shri Narendra Modi governments, Late Jaitley exemplified ded-



ication and diligence in discharging his responsibilities. He was known for his articulation and administrative acumen with which he served the important ministries such as Defence, Law and Justice, Information and Broadcasting, Corporate affairs and Finance, initiating much needed reforms in the governance. Besides numerous path-breaking reforms that he initiated during his term as Union Minister in various ministries, country will remember and credit him for the success and implementation of coun-

try's biggest tax reform, i.e. Goods and Services Tax in the country.

Late Jaitley Ji has set a benchmark for aspiring leaders with his dedication and persistence in keeping nation's interest above self in his illustrious public life against all odds including his health concern.

With his demise, the country has lost an exemplary leader, a nationalist and a statesman in true sense, who always worked for the larger interest of the country and especially the economy.

turn to pg02

PREMIER DIVISION SIKKIM LEAGUE GETS UNDERWAY

Tourney begins with an upset – Kumar Sporting outplays defending champs USFC

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 AUG:

Premier Division Sikkim-League 2019 kicked off here at Paljor Stadium on Saturday. And it began with an upset. Kumar Sporting Football Club outplayed defending champions, United Sikkim Football Club, 2-0.

In a well contested match, both teams maintained constant pressure on each other playing attacking games from the start.

With the help of Sanjit Subba's goal in the 27th minute, Kumar Sporting FC finished the first half

with a 1-0 lead.

Within two minutes in the second half, Titus Sewa extended the lead to 2-0. United Sikkim FC players put in their best efforts but remained unable to breach the Kumar Sporting defence and the match ended 2-0 in favour of the latter.

In the second match of the day, Sikkim Aakraman Football Club made a strong start of its campaign by humbling Unicorn Football Club 5-0 to pocket full three points.

Dewasish George Rai slammed home four goals and Dawa Sherpa packed in the fifth.

turn to pg02

BJP Sikkim opposes mountaineering in Khangchendzonga, meets Governor



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 24 AUG:

The ten legislators of Bharatiya Janata Party, Sikkim, today submitted a memorandum to the Governor requesting that the sanctity of Mt Khangchendzonga be maintained and permission for climbing the mountain be retracted, a BJP release informs.

Governor Ganga Prasad has assured that the matter will be placed before the Central Government, the

release mentions.

The delegation led by MLA, D.T. Lepcha comprised of legislators Ugen T. Gyatso Bhutia, N.K. Subba, DR Thapa, K S Lepcha, K.B. Rai, Rajkumari Thapa, Farwanti Tamang, Pintso Namgyal Lepcha and T. T Bhutia.

During the meeting with the Governor, the legislators discussed various issues and informed the Governor about the political developments of the state.

Oppn delegation sent back from Srinagar airport, leaders question govt's 'claim of normalcy'

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, AUG 24 (PTI): A delegation of opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, which wanted to visit Kashmir Valley to take stock of the situation there after the abrogation of Article 370 provisions, was not allowed to leave Srinagar airport on Saturday by the state administration and had to return to the national capital.

The development came a day after the Jammu and Kashmir government issued a statement asking political leaders not to visit the Valley as it would disturb the gradual restoration of peace and normal life.

The leaders from nine political parties, who had flown to Srinagar this afternoon but returned within hours, lashed out at the government, questioning its claim of "normalcy" in the Valley.

"The government has invited me. The governor has said that I am invited. Now that I have come, they are saying you can't come. The government is saying that everything is normal here, so if everything is normal then why are we not allowed to go in. It is surprising," Congress leader Rahul Gandhi told reporters at the Srinagar airport.

He was accompanied by leaders of CPI(M), CPI, DMK, NCP, JD(S), RJD, LJD and the TMC.

"We want to go to any area which is peaceful and talk to 10-15 people. If there is Section 144, I am ready to go in individually, we don't have to go as a group," he said.

The CPI(M) said

that the delegation had planned to visit various parts of the state over the next few days, talking to various people and sections of the populace and shades of political opinion to ascertain the situation existing on the ground and the difficulties that they are encountering as a result of the shutdown in the Kashmir valley.

"The denial of entry to well-known leaders of recognized political parties is an outright attack on the rights of political parties to meet and address their constituents. Denying entry is day light robbery of rights guaranteed by the Constitution," the CPI(M) said in a statement.

The J-K administration had on Friday night said that the visit by politicians would be a violation of restrictions that have been imposed in many areas of the Valley.

Asked about the administration's decision to not allow opposition leaders to visit the Valley, J-K Principal Secretary Rohit Kansal told reporters Saturday evening that the priority is to maintain security and law and order at a time when the threat of cross-border terrorism continues to exist.

"They had been requested to not visit the Valley," he said.

The opposition delegation, in a letter to the District Magistrate Budgam, termed as baseless the objections to the delegation's movement outside Srinagar airport and the apprehensions expressed in his order.

"We are here at the turn to pg02

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JANAMASHTAMI AT SINGTAM: Devotees gathered at the Pranami Mandir at Singtam bazaar today to offer prayers to Lord Krishna on the occasion of Janmashtami. [from YOGEN THATAL]

Janamashtami at Pranami Mandir

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 24 AUG:

Sri Krishna Pranami Dharma Seva Samiti celebrated Krishna Janamashtami here at the Pranami Mandir at Lower Pani House today.

Hundreds of devotees gathered at the temple today which was also the concluding day of the week-long Vitak Katha which had commenced on 17 August.

UD&HD Minister Arun Upreti also attended the function.

He was appraised about the construction underway at the temple and support from the state government sought by the organizing committee led by the president BL Dahal.

Bengaluru FC sign Brazilian Raphael Augusto

BENGALURU, AUG 24 (PTI):

Indian Super League champions Bengaluru FC have signed Brazilian midfielder Raphael Augusto on a two-year deal that keeps him with the Blues till the end of the 2020-21 season, the club announced on Saturday.

Augusto, a native of Rio de Janeiro, becomes the sixth foreigner on Carles Cuadrat's roster as Bengaluru begin their ISL title-defence on October 21 at home against NorthEast United.

The 28-year-old joins Bengaluru after four seasons with Chennaiyin FC, with whom he has won the league twice. He also becomes the first Brazilian to wear the blue of Bengaluru. Augusto expressed his delight on the move.

"I was amazed in the manner in which the club fought tooth and nail to win the championship last season. Bengaluru have a good coach, a good set of players and some amazing fans and I'm sure all of us can win more titles for the club."

A midfielder with his fair share of flair, Augusto has an imposing presence on the pitch and his technical nous in the middle of the park, stands out. The Blues' latest addition will only go on to strengthen an already solid midfield that comprises Erik Paartalu, Dimas Delgado and Eugene Lyngdoh.

Bengaluru boss, Cuadrat was all praise for Augusto.

"We're all aware of, and have seen the kind of talent he possesses. The onus is now on us to get the best out of an exceptional player like Raphael. We have a season that also includes Asian competition and a title-defence, and it's going to take experience, talent and hard work to make it a successful one."

Jaitley's demise irreparable damage to party: BJP Sikkim

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 24 AUG:

Bharatiya Janata Party, Sikkim has condoled the demise of former Finance Minister and senior leader of the party, Arun Jaitley.

"Thus, Indian politics, which lost former External Affairs Minister Late Sushma Swaraj recently, has lost another promis-

ing leader as Arun Jaitley. His demise has done irreparable damage to the Bharatiya Janata Party. Jaitley's untimely demise has shocked the entire political spectrum. May his sainted soul rest in peace and our prayers may give strength of forbearance to the bereaved family," a BJP release states.

I&B Ministry holds two-day regional conference at Guwahati



GANGTOK, 24 AUG [PIB]: Communication should be citizen centric and the information officer must be well aware of the government schemes, its implementing agencies so that they can provide complete information to the beneficiaries, said Vikram Sahay, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting held at Guwahati.

Mr Sahay also took review of the publicity activities of the media units of North East zone and West Bengal region and emphasized for making the offices in NE zone well organized.

Addressing the gathering the Director General North East Zone L R Vishwanath underlined the need for working of Bureau of Outreach and Communications, Press Information Bureau, All India Radio and Doordarshan in convergence so that so that it results in larger and wider outreach and received by the targeted beneficiaries.

In today's conference Satyendra Prakash, Director General, Bureau of Outreach and Communications said in his speech that the focus of government is to reach more and more people in North East and to aware them about the developmental schemes so that they can get the benefits from it.

Senior officials from the Ministry as well as head of media units in Delhi and North East deliberated on programmes and outreach strategy for the region. The Conference entailed close interaction amongst Bureau of Outreach and Communication, Press Information Bureau, All India Radio and Doordarshan for developing an integrated strategy for communication about various flagship programmes of the Central Government in the NER.

Amit Khare, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will address a special session about media strategy in the North East tomorrow in the second day of the conference.

Mangar Association of Sikkim calls on CM



SORENG, 24 AUG (IPR): The Mangar Association of Sikkim led by the State president, Santosh Alley called on the Chief Minister, PS Tamang (Golay) at Sorong today.

The members of the

community placed their grievances which was patiently heard by the Chief Minister who assured every possible support towards the welfare of the community across the state.

Bhutia Kayrap Yargay Tshogpo denounces opening of Mt Khangchendzonga

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 24 AUG:

Bhutia Kayrap Yargay Tshogpo has denounced the recent notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, opening 137 mountain peaks for mountaineering expeditions across the Himalayan states.

As per a press release, Bhutia Language Development Committee under the aegis of the BKYT (Bhutia Kayrap Yargay Tshogpo) held a meeting at its headquarter Makhim, below Sardar Thana, Gangtok, today, to appraise and discuss matters relating to the MHA notification.

Members of the Tshogpo expressed their

resentment against the defilement of the State Government notification No.70/Home/2001 under the provisions of the places of worship (Special Provisions) Act 1991, and the notification No. 59/Home/98 of identification of 12 sacred peaks out of 24, the release mentions.

It was expressed that allowing such expeditions would not only desecrate the sanctity of the mountain peaks which are considered as the Guardian deities by the Sikkimese people but also tamper with the fragile mountain eco system.

The Tshogpo has also appealed to the State Government to uphold

and honour the sentiments of the Sikkimese people associated with the sacred peaks in general and Mt. Khangchendzonga in particular.

Thanking stakeholders for attending the meeting in huge numbers, the Tshogpo has decided to approach to the State Government and the Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India to repeal the notification and plans to hold a massive signature campaign in support of the cause.

It has made an appeal to all Sikkimese including members of the Bhutia community to come forward and stand in resolution to preserve the sanctity of the sacred mountains.

Workshop on Children's Parliament held in South Sikkim



NAMCHI, 24 AUG [IPR]:

A daylong workshop on formation of district-level Child Parliament amongst the newly constituted Bal Panchayats of three child-friendly GPUs of South district was held today at the Officers Club here today.

The workshop was organized by the District Child Protection Unit, ICPS, Social Justice & Welfare Department and was presided over by DCPO, South & West, Roshni Gurung.

The program was also attended by officials and staff of DCPU, ICPS Namchi.

The objective of the workshop was to provide an advocacy platform to children to promote their right to participate and get involved in the decision-making process of issues concerning them.

The children today elected their representa-

tives in Bhaskar Rai from Barfung GPU as the Prime Minister, Anjali Jogi from Barfung GPU as Deputy Minister, Swastika Rana from Poklok Denchung as Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Nima Dorjee Sherpa from Barfung as Deputy Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Khushi Kumari Prasad from Maniram Phalidara as the Finance Minister and Sumit Chettri from Poklok Denchung as the Deputy Finance Minister.

Apart from the main body, 17 ministers were also elected with portfolios given as per the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Tezz Kumar Thapa, who is also the Zonal Coordinator of Nineismine, New Delhi, and Child Protection Officer of Anugyalaya, Darjeeling, was invited as resource person for the workshop.

West Sikkim youth protest mountaineering on Mt Khangchendzonga



NITESH PRADHAN

GANGTOK, 24 AUG:

A group of youth from West Sikkim have condemned the recently issued notification of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India regarding opening of 137 mountain peaks for mountaineering which also includes 24 peaks in Sikkim.

In a meeting held today at Soreng, the group also condemned the "undemocratic approach adopted by the central government while taking decision about peaks of Sikkim without taking the

consent of State Government and Sikkim Mountaineering Association."

Further stating that allowing expeditions to Mt. Khangchendzonga is an act of sacrilege, the group had demanded the immediate withdrawal of the notification, failing which they plan to make a strong democratic protest.

"We also appeal to all concerned citizens to strongly condemn this notification of the Central Government and save our pristine Mt. Khangchendzonga," stated the group.

Farmers in flood-hit villages along Indo-Pak border caught between devil and deep sea

FEROZEPUR, AUG 24 (PTI):

Living on the edge, the hapless farmers belonging to the villages along the India-Pakistan border here are seemingly caught between the proverbial "devil and the deep sea".

With a hostile neighbour, Pakistan, on the one side and the ravaging Sutlej on the other, these border residents are yet to taste the fruits of freedom more than seven decades after Independence.

Not only the hostilities between the two countries have a direct bearing on their well-being, the Sutlej too plays havoc with their lives almost every year.

Scores of villages like Tindiwala, Kaluwala, Chandiwala, Kassoke, Kamalewala, Khunder Gatti, situated between the Zero Line and the right flank of Dhussi "bundh", face the nightmare of floods what they have seen almost every year.

At times, like in 1988 and 2006 when their villages were totally submerged, it can be worse.

Even during the normal days, the only mode of transportation available for some of these villagers is wooden bera (indigenously built boat) which ferries them to the mainland.

However, when the river is in spate, they remain trapped inside their "kuchha" houses as even the 'bera' no longer remains an option due to the lurking danger it poses to their safety.

Only the children go to schools using this makeshift boat.

Malkit and four other students Gurpreet, Aman, Balwinder and Kulwinder, from Kaluwala, go to nearest government school in Gatti Rake using the boat daily.

"Almost every second year, the river water inundates our dwellings," said Mangal Singh of Chinniwalla village, adding that during the last five years, his fields have been wrecked by Sutlej thrice. "Every year the same story is repeated but nothing has changed here on ground," he said. Hundreds like him including Darshan Singh, Gurmit, Sukhbir and others, all doing farming in this area, echo his sentiments.

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Oppn delegation..

public invitation of the honourable Governor who asked us to visit and see for ourselves the peace and normalcy that prevails. We are responsible political leaders and elected representatives and our intentions are entirely peaceful and humanitarian," the letter signed by the delegation members said.

CPI general secretary D Raja who was part of the delegation said that the fact that they were denied entry into Srinagar showed that the government was "lying" about the "normalcy" in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We were asked to go back after we were shown an order. We had gone there on the invite of the governor and despite that we were asked to return. Where is the normalcy that the government promised?" asked Raja.

The letter stated that the "detention" of the leaders was "undemocratic" and "unconstitutional" and denial of movement in Srinagar amounted to "violation of fundamental rights".

The leaders included Congress' Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma and KC Venugopal, CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury, Tiruchi Siva (DMK), Sharad Yadav (LJD), Dinesh Trivedi (TMC), D Raja (CPI), Majeed Menon (NCP), Manoj Jha (RJD) and D Kupendra Reddy JD(S).

Jaitley will be...

I have had very close association with Late Jaitley Ji and his passing away is my personal loss as much to the country. At this time of bereavement, I join the people of Sikkim and my fellow countrymen to offer my deepest condolences. I pray to the almighty for bestowing strength to his family members to cope with this irreparable loss."

CM condoles...

country will definitely loose his counsel in the field of law, governance and finance. It is an irreversible loss to the country.

Our prayers to the almighty to give courage to Madam Sangeeta Ji, Rohan, Sonali and other family members for bearing this severe loss. We also pray for them to come out from this tough time."

Tourney begins...

Eight teams are participating in this top-tier football league of the State being organized by Sikkim Football Association.

The other participating teams are Sikkim Himalayan Sporting Club, State Sports Academy, Boys Club and Sikkim Police.

Sikkim Himalayan SC will take on the State Sports Academy in its first match on Sunday followed by Boys Club taking on Sikkim Police.

~ SummitTIMES ~ CLASSIFIEDS

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Singing contest Swar Sargam announced

SAGAR CHETTRI
GANGTOK, 24 AUG:

A Gangtok-based event management firm, Dream Works Event Management has announced a singing competition show, 'Swar Sargam' to be organized in association with Gandhar Music Academy, Gangtok. The show seeks to provide a wider platform to artists and talents in different corners of the hills to showcase their talent and motivate them.

The auditions of the competition will be starting on 28 September at Gyalshing for contestants of West Sikkim, which will be followed by auditions at Namchi for South Sikkim on 29 September. Auditions for East and North Sikkim will be held at Gangtok on 12 and 13 October. However being an open competition, interested contestants from neighboring hills can also attend these auditions, it is informed.

Addressing a press conference here this morning, CEO Dream Works Event Management, Sajal Pariyar mentioned that the main



objective of the show is to provide a platform to local talents. He added that the event is not only about providing a platform and winning prizes but it also seeks to explore and nurture talent.

The winner of the show will get cash prize of Rs 1 lakh along with other prizes. Likewise, the show also has other prizes for winners in other categories. The organizers are also working on getting the winner direct entry in singing reality show, Voice of Nepal.

The show has local singers, Pawan Rai and Nikita Cintury and music director, Deepankar Mukhia from Darjeeling as judges. Organizers have also been working

to bring celebrity judges from Nepal for the grand finale.

The auditions will be followed by piano round and track round here at Manan Kendra mini hall and the grand finale is scheduled to be held in December in the main hall of Manan Kendra. The selected contestants will also be mentored by experienced singers.

Pawan Rai of Gandhar Music Academy mentioned that Sikkim has talented and potential singers in all corners and they just need the right exposure and platform to explore. He added that the event aims to further train talented singers to polish them and prepare them for the national and international levels.

The ultimate aim of

the event is to bring out more singers and to create a healthy society in creative fields, he said.

"Swar Sargam is an event that will reach out to the youth, create awareness through music and help people through it, support them, help them get up from their low spots and emerge victorious whistle promoting talented people in the musical field," he added.

It is informed that judges will be looking for vocal and musical talent, stage performance, image, star quality and originality. Judges will be looking to spot talent who has the potential to be successfully launched in Sikkim as a major recording artist.

Bhimsen Jaatra at Rongli

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 AUG:
News celebrated Bhimsen Jaatra at Rongli Bazaar today with UD&HD Minister Arun Upreti among them as the chief guest.

The event started off with prayers being offered to Lord Bhimsen at the Bhimsen Mandir located in the centre of the town.

A procession [Jaatra] then proceeded accompanied by a Laakhey dance performance.

Lord Bhimsen, one of the five Pandavas, is the patron deity for Newar community, it is informed.

The celebration was also attended by SKM in-charge of Chujachen constituency, Dambar Pradhan, and former area MLA Bikram Pradhan.

SBISC/ST& OBC Employees' Council spends Janamashtami with Balika Niketan kids

SUMMIT REPORT
GANGTOK, 24 AUG:

Members of the SBISC/ST& OBC Employees' Council, Sikkim, visited Balika Niketan Home at 5th Mile, Tadong, and handed over items requested by the children there. This was the organisation's way of celebrating Janamashtami. A similar event was organized by the Council when they prepared momos and distributed snacks, sanitary pads and story books to the children at Balika Niketan Home. On the request of Balika Niketan, the Council also handed over stationery items, school bags, guide books for Classes IX and X, a Mixer grinder and school shoes today. The council has also installed two new doors for the washrooms at the facility. The organising secretary of the Council, Rupendra Mukhia, expressed his gratitude towards the council members, members of TYC-Gangtok and UFC for their donations towards the Home.

Salghari farmers on exposure tour to organic farm at Budang-Kamarey



SUMMIT REPORT
NAMCHI, 24 AUG:

Lower Kitam-based Lakshya Organisation, in its capacity as Producer Organisation Promoting Agency (POPI), today organized an exposure tour for farmers/ shareholders of Salghari Organic FPO to CP Bhattarai Model Integrated Organ-

ic Farm at Budang-Kamarey under Rhenock constituency. The tour was supported by NABARD's Sikkim office under its Produce Fund.

The team visited the farm and interacted with CP Bhattarai, owner of the farm, who explained various aspects of his farm where he also

planning to soon begin a Farm Stay.

He also expressed interest to visit Kitam to learn more about community-based tourism.

The visiting team was led by Roshan Kaushik, general secretary of Lakshya Organisation, and included 21 shareholders.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?
email us: news@summittimes.com

“CHALISWA”
(PRAYER MEETING)

The Holy Quran recitation (Religious Perform) after forty days of death of late Mrs. NAD-RA KHATOON, who left for heavenly abode on 24th July 2019(Wednesday), falls on 31st August 2019(Saturday) shall be held at Marut Bhawan, Namchi Bazaar, South Sikkim.

“AMEEN”

Maniul Haque Ansari(Husband), Naseema Bano & Rubina Anjum(Daughters) Mohshin Raza (son).

Time: 10:00 am onwards

Contact: 9475077786.
(Meraaj Complex, Central Park Namchi Bazaar, South Sikkim).

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

No. 451/Adm/Agri. Dated: 20/08/2019

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from local candidates (Sikkim Subject/COI holders) for the following posts on contractual basis for a period of 1 year under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Scheme under Agriculture Department as under:

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)

Sl. No.	Name of Post	No of Post	Educational Qualification	Remarks	Age	Pay Level
1.	Subject Matter Specialist (Agronomy/Soil Science) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Namthang, SouthMangan, North	02	M.Sc. (Agronomy)/ Ph.D (Agronomy) M.Sc (Soil Science) & Soil Chemistry) Ph.D (Soil Science & Soil Chemistry)		18-35	Level 9
2.	Subject Matter Specialist (Agro Meteorology) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Gyaba, Gyalshing West	01	Post Graduation in Agro Meteorology/ Meteorology/ Agronomy/ Agri Cultural Physics	Preference will be given to the candidates with Agro Meteorology/ Meteorology qualification.	18-35	Level 9
3.	Subject Matter Specialist (Agriculture Extension) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Gyaba, Gyalshing West	01	M.Sc (Agriculture Extension)		18-35	Level 9
4.	Agromet Observer Gyaba, Gyalshing West	01	12 th in Science Stream along with the basic knowledge of Computer		18-35	Level 3

The posts are purely temporary which shall cease to exist on termination of funding by the Government of India. The candidates will be selected through Walk-in-Interview. Eligible candidates may apply with the following attested documents:

- i) Educational Qualification Certificate from Class X onwards.
- ii) Valid Employment Card.
- iii) Age Certificate.
- iv) Experience Certificate.
- v) C.O.I
- vi) Resume (with contact No.)

Application should be produced in the Office of Under Secretary, Adm. Section, Agriculture Department from 26.08.2019 between 10 am to 4.30 pm on working days. The last date for submission of application is 06.09.2019.

6. The walk-in-interview will be held in the Conference Hall of Krishi Bhawan, Tadong at 11.00 am on the following dates:-

- i) Subject Matter Specialist : 23.09.2019
- ii) Agromet Observer : 24.09.2019

7. No TA/DA shall be paid for attending the interview. Original documents should be produced on the above dates.

8. The Agriculture Department reserves the right to reject an application without assigning any reason thereof. Application along with all the relevant documents should be submitted at the office of Under Secretary, Adm. Section, Agriculture Department. Application submitted after 06.09.2019 will not be accepted.

Sd/-
Under Secretary
Agriculture Department.

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

No. 452/Adm/Agri. Dated: 20/08/2019

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from local candidates (Sikkim Subject/COI holders) for the following posts on contractual basis for a period of 1 year in the Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA), SAMETI under Agriculture Department as under:-

Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA)

Bees, neither Buzzing nor Busy

At least the horticulturists should have noticed

The Baramati sub-division under Pune district in Maharashtra is a rural belt of pomegranate and onion growers. Some of the farmers, those who became part of a pilot project - Madhu Sandesh – reported their first bumper crop in a while three years ago. In fact, not only had the volume of their produce grown substantially, the quality too was markedly better. The pilot project was launched in November 2015. For farms to report a substantial turnaround within a year should have gotten everyone interested. Unfortunately, it appears that no one elsewhere has been keeping track or taking notes.

Growers in Baramati reported harvests of around 12 tonnes from farms which used to otherwise yield between 7 to 8 tonnes. Sure, these could be cyclical variations, but traditional growers would know that, Hence, when they credit the improvement in volume and quality to honey bees, everyone should sit up and take note, especially horticulturists in Sikkim who continue to struggle with failing crops and poor quality.

Under the Madhu Sandesh project, farmers were trained to rear honeybees on their farms and use them extensively for pollinating their pomegranate and onion fields. So dramatic have the improvements been that more farmers are lining up to take the training and those who already have honeybee hives in their farms, are looking around to install more, even on rented patches!

There is nothing earth-shatteringly new in the Baramati experience given that colony collapse (of bees) and the resultant effect on fruit orchards across the world have been much discussed worries in these times of climate change and ecological distress. Unfortunately, not enough people are speaking of this phenomenon in Sikkim. But if one were to look around, the warning signs are aplenty.

Farmers from Dzongu have been complaining of falling produce in their orange orchards. Local orange produce could be in decline elsewhere as well. It has been several decades since the State lost its North Sikkim apples [although one hears off and on about attempts to revive apple orchards there]. Large cardamom plantations stand devastated across the State. Between an entire Board devoted to spices and a department charged to look after Horticulture, an explanation remains awaited which makes a durable solution even more distant. Although one hears often about mischievously named crop diseases afflicting the fruits and frequent reference to the advanced age of the [large cardamom] plantations, these only explain the symptoms which are manifesting in the fields and not the overall crop failure. There have even been reports of disease-resistant strains being developed and attempts to promote improved plantation management practices. What one does not hear being discussed as often is the health of pollinators in Sikkim's fields. Agriculture does not require pollination, but horticulture, every expert will agree, is not possible without pollinators. Fruit-bearing trees flower to attract pollinators, and the number of pollinating agents is directly proportional to the number and health of fruits borne. Bees are among the most prolific and important pollinators and the role of wild bees in pollinating large cardamom, as against the damage that honey bees can wreck, has been studied and documented. The same applies to oranges and apples, which are also serviced by a host of other insects.

Studies on declining produce in orchards elsewhere in the world have flagged shortage of pollinators as the main culprit. Bee populations are in unexplained decline across the world and even casual surveys will prove this to be the case here as well. It is perhaps important then that horticultural issues facing Sikkim should start at the basics by checking first on the presence and health of pollinators in the farms. Another good place to pick up some tips would be Baramati, and a study tour to that corner of Pune could be easily managed. The Bee experiment also ties in well with Sikkim's Organic Mission. In Baramati for instance, a substantial part of the training was on how to use pesticides and fertilizers without affecting the bees. That worry does not exist in Sikkim since chemical pesticides and fertilizers which are known to wipe out bee colonies are not used in farms here anymore. These are all ideas and suggestions and would be of some consequence if there was some follow-up.

WRITE US:

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Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

Mexican women are angry about rape, murder and government neglect – and they want the world to know

LUIS GÓMEZ ROMERO & MARÍA DE LA MACARENA IRIBARNE GONZÁLEZ
theconversation.com

Wearing green bandannas and dousing police in pink glitter, Mexican women on Aug. 16 staged a furious protest in Mexico City after a 17-year-old girl reported being raped by four police officers earlier in the month.

Officials have sent mixed signals about ongoing investigations of the case, and Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum triggered fury among feminists when she said there would be no “fabrication of suspects.”

The alleged police rape has hit a nerve in Mexico, where women face extremely high rates of violence and incessant catcalling.

Another teen girl was reported being raped by a Mexico City policeman days before the women’s march, which drew an estimated 2,000 people and included both violent property destruction and wrenching tributes to Mexico’s missing women and girls.

With 1,812 women murdered between January and July this year – about 10 a day – Mexico is Latin America’s second-most dangerous country for women, after Brazil, according to the United Nations. More than 200 Mexican women have been kidnapped so far in 2019.

Yet Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador – who was elected last year in a landslide with a progressive gender agenda and promises to “transform” Mexico – has not followed through on promises to expand women’s rights. In fact, his administration has rolled back some of the few federal policies designed to protect and empower Mexican women.

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Under austerity measures meant to curb public spending, the Mexican government in February ended an internationally lauded day care program that allowed low-income families to sign up for state-subsidized child care close to their workplace or home.

Rather than pay subsidies to this network of private day care facilities, the Mexican government now gives vouchers worth about US\$80 every two months directly to families.

Each family may now decide whether to send their children to day care or pay “a sister, an aunt or a grandma,” López Obrador said in a February press conference, giving parents more choice in their child care.

The suggestion that female relatives should

care for Mexico’s children infuriated women’s groups and human rights organizations in Mexico.

In a joint statement, 17 civil society groups said the new policy would “strengthen gender stereotypes” and “promote discrimination and gender inequality.” It reminded the president that women do 70% of all domestic work in Mexico and that grandmothers already care for 50% of all young children not in their parents’ care.

Mexico’s subsidized child care network, which has served 2 million children since it was established in 2007, has been successful in enabling more women to work outside the home.

According to a 2017 government evaluation, the day care network had relieved 1,825,394 parents of child care duties for 34 hours a week over the past decade. A significant percentage of the communities served by the day care network were either very poor or home to a predominately indigenous population, according to the U.N. Women were the primary beneficiaries.

Mothers who used government subsidized day care were 18% more likely to have gotten a job between 2007 and 2017 compared to those who did not receive government-subsidized child care, according to a government program evaluation.

Even so, Mexico still has the second-lowest female participation in the workforce among developed countries, behind Turkey. Only 4 out of 10 women are employed outside the home.

DEFUNDING WOMEN’S SHELTERS

The Mexican government disappointed feminists again when the government announced in March that it would additionally slash funding for women’s shelters and instead give the money directly to victims of domestic violence.

Worldwide, women are most likely to be murdered by a male partner and may be unsafe in their own homes, making shelters a vital sanctuary.

In Mexico, the number of women stabbed or strangled at home rose 54% between 2012 and 2016. In March 2019, the same month the cuts were announced, Mexican police received 56,590 reports of domestic violence – a 16% increase over February 2019.

The plan to stop funding women’s shelters funding was met with immediate and fierce backlash. Advocates for victims of domestic violence warned that cutting shelter funding would expose women and children to even more danger.

Public uproar forced López Obrador to retreat.

“The women’s shelters will remain,” he said on March 7, announcing a new plan to expand the Mexican government’s role in the “protection, attention, punishment and eradication of violence against women and girls.”

Women’s shelters have nonetheless seen substantial budget cuts under the government’s austerity measures. News reports in June revealed that 29% of Mexico’s 81 publicly funded domestic violence shelters received no federal funding at all for the second half of the year.

WOMEN’S RIGHTS ‘NOT A PRIORITY’

López Obrador, a leftist firebrand who won the Mexican presidency in a landslide, remains very popular eight months into his six-year term.

To quell criticism that it doesn’t care about women, his administration in late May announced the launch of a European Union and United Nations program in Mexico to eliminate violence against women.

The investment of €7 million, or about \$7.7 million, is called the Spotlight Initiative. It will target three Mexican states with high rates of violence against women: Mexico state, Chihuahua and Guerrero.

The EU program’s goals are to design public spaces that are safer for women, facilitate women’s access to justice and protection services and to “fundamentally change the perception of women within their families and in society.”

A spokesperson for the European Union told the Spanish newspaper El País that López Obrador initially rejected this initiative because gender “was not a priority” for his government.

After the Mexico City women’s march, López Obrador defended his government’s dedication to women’s issues.

“That’s our main issue – to guarantee the safety of men and women,” he said.

The president also criticized demonstrators for defacing a famous monument with feminist slogans. He urged Mexican women to protest in a “responsible way, without violence,” and to “protect the cultural and artistic patrimony of Mexico.”

[Luis Gómez Romero is Senior Lecturer in Human Rights, Constitutional Law and Legal Theory, University of Wollongong; María de la Macarena Iribarne González is Lecturer, School of Law, University of Wollongong]



The Amazon is on Fire – here are 5 things you need to know

DANILO IGNACIO DE URZEDO
theconversation.com

Record fires are raging in Brazil’s Amazon rainforest, with more than 2,500 fires currently burning. They are collectively emitting huge amounts of carbon, with smoke plumes visible thousands of kilometres away.

Fires in Brazil increased by 85% in 2019, with more than half in the Amazon region, according to Brazil’s space agency.

This sudden increase is likely down to land degradation: land clearing and farming reduces the availability of water, warms the soil and intensifies drought, combining to make fires more frequent and more fierce.

1. WHY THE AMAZON IS BURNING

The growing number of fires are the result of illegal forest clearing to create land for farming. Fires are set deliberately and spread easily in the dry season.

The desire for new land for cattle farming has been the main driver of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon since the 1970s.

Ironically, farmers may not need to clear new land to graze cattle. Research has found a significant number of currently degraded and unproductive pastures that could offer new opportunities for livestock.

New technical developments also offer the possibility of transforming extensive cattle ranches into more

compact and productive farms – offering the same results while consuming less natural resources.

2. WHY THE WORLD SHOULD CARE

The devastating loss of biodiversity does not just affect Brazil. The loss of Amazonian vegetation directly reduces rain across South America and other regions of the world.

The planet is losing an important carbon sink, and the fires are directly injecting carbon into the atmosphere. If we can’t stop deforestation in the Amazon, and the associated fires, it raises real questions about our ability to reach the Paris Agreement to slow climate change.

The Brazilian government has set an ambitious target to stop illegal deforestation and restore 4.8 million hectares of degraded Amazonian land by 2030. If these goals are not carefully addressed now, it may not be possible to meaningfully mitigate climate change.

3. WHAT ROLE POLITICS HAS PLAYED

Since 2014, the rate at which Brazil has lost Amazonian forest has expanded by 60%. This is the result of economic crises and the dismantling of Brazilian environmental regulation and ministerial authority since the election of President Jair Bolsonaro in 2018.

Bolsonaro’s political program includes controversial programs that critics claim will threaten both human rights and the environment.

One of his first acts as president was to pass ministerial reforms that greatly weakened the Ministry of the Environment.

Regulations and programs for conservation and traditional communities’ rights have been threatened by economic lobbying.

Over the last months, Brazil’s government has announced the reduction and extinction of environmental agencies and commissions, including the body responsible for combating deforestation and fires.

4. HOW THE WORLD SHOULD REACT

Although Brazil’s national and state governments are obviously on the front line of Amazon protection, international actors have a key role to play.

International debates and funding, alongside local interventions and responses, have reshaped the way land is used in the tropics. This means any government attempts to further dismantle climate and conservation policies in the Amazon may have significant diplomatic and economic consequences.

For example, trade between the European Union and South American trading blocs that include Brazil is increasingly infused with an environmental agenda. Any commercial barriers to Brazil’s commodities will certainly attract attention: agribusiness is responsible for more than 20% of the country’s GDP.

Brazil’s continued inability to stop

deforestation has also reduced international funding for conservation. Norway and Germany, by far the largest donors to the Amazon Fund, have suspended their financial support.

These international commitments and organisations are likely to exert considerable influence over Brazil to maintain existing commitments and agreements, including restoration targets.

5. THERE IS A SOLUTION

Brazil has already developed a pioneering political framework to stop illegal deforestation in the Amazon. Deforestation peaked in 2004, but dramatically reduced following environmental governance, and supply change interventions aiming to end illegal deforestation.

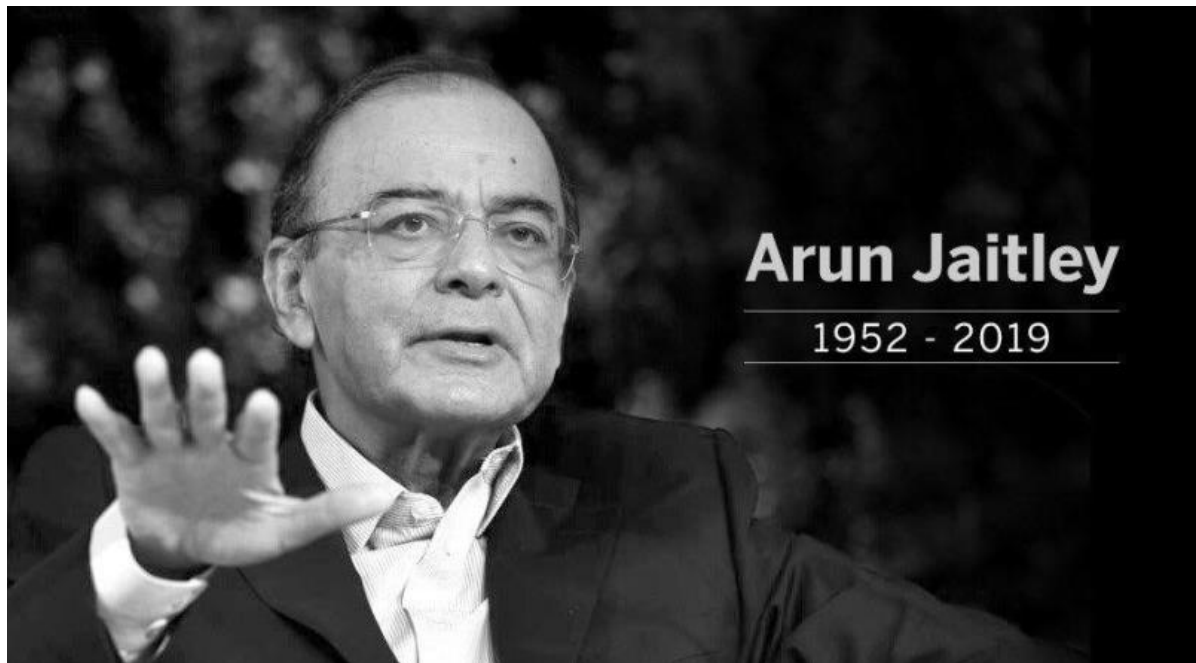
Environmental laws were passed to develop a national program to protect the Amazon, with clearing rates in the Amazon falling by more than two-thirds between 2004 and 2011.

Moreover, private global agreements like the Amazon Beef and Soy Moratorium, where companies agree not to buy soy or cattle linked to illegal deforestation, have also significantly dropped clearing rates.

We have financial, diplomatic and political tools we know will work to stop the whole-sale clearing of the Amazon, and in turn halt these devastating fires. Now it is time to use them.

[the writer is PhD candidate, University of Sydney]

Former finance minister and BJP stalwart Arun Jaitley dies



NEW DELHI, AUG 24 (PTI) Arun Jaitley, who as finance minister ushered in India's biggest tax reforms and was the chief trouble-shooter of the BJP and the Modi government, died at the AIIMS here on Saturday after battling multiple health issues for the last several months.

He was 66.

In a brief statement, the hospital said Jaitley breathed his last at 12.07 pm. He was admitted to the hospital on August 9 following complaint of breathing difficulty.

The cremation will be on Sunday afternoon at the Nigambodh Ghat.

Known as a consensus builder, Jaitley was the BJP's man for all seasons and acted as the key strategist for Narendra Modi government in its first term. He helmed the finance, defence, corporate affairs and information and broadcasting ministries.

Leaders across the political spectrum paid rich tributes to Jaitley, a quintessential moderate who was never associated with the hard edges of Hindutva politics.

He became a trusted friend of Narendra Modi

as he smoothed the path for the Gujarat leader's rise in the BJP by helping him win key allies.

Jaitley played an instrumental role in implementation of Modi's various ambitious schemes and programmes after the BJP came to power in May 2014.

His most important legacy will be rolling out of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017, the biggest tax reforms after Independence.

Prime Minister Modi, who is on a three-nation tour, said he had lost a valued friend and conveyed his condolences to Jaitley's wife and son.

"With the demise of Arun Jaitley Ji, I have lost a valued friend, whom I have had the honour of knowing for decades. His insight on issues and nuanced understanding of matters had very few parallels. He lived well, leaving us all with innumerable happy memories. We will miss him!" the prime minister said.

In his two brief stints as defence minister, Jaitley cleared the path for ushering in a raft of long-pending reforms in the armed forces and came out with key policy

initiatives with an aim to make India self reliant in defence production.

He was perhaps among the BJP bigwigs who made a smooth transition from the Atal-Advani era in the party to the one where Narendra Modi dominated, ushering in the rise of new generation leaders.

His death is another jolt to the BJP after the demise of Sushma Swaraj, a contemporary of Jaitley and one of its prominent faces, on August 6.

Party leaders mourned Jaitley's loss, remembering him as a dear colleague, mentor and guide and hailing his contribution to the growth of the party and the nation.

Jaitley, an urbane and media-savvy leader and a legal luminary, was one of the sharpest political minds not only within the BJP but also in the larger political spectrum where he made lifelong allies cutting across the ideological divide.

Paying homage to Jaitley, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and other opposition leaders said his contribution to public life will be remembered forever.

A gifted raconteur whose interest spanned from politics to Bollywood to sports, his informal gatherings were always a full house as journalists, friends and politicians enjoyed his wit, sarcasm- which singed his colleagues and adversaries alike- and grasp of issues that he delivered in his ever relaxed and warm demeanour.

Jaitley was the bridge that the BJP used to win over new allies, and also its warm, affable and persuasive face to bring opposition parties around on key issues.

JD(U) president and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was his personal friend for decades after he played a key role in ensuring that he is projected as the chief ministerial candidate of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance.

In his condolence message, L K Advani said Jaitley was known and respected for his "sharp, analytical mind and everyone in the BJP always depended on him for finding solutions to complex issues."

"He was also someone who valued and nurtured his friendship

with people across the political spectrum. As a person, Arunji will be remembered as a soft-spoken, erudite and warm hearted person," he said.

"A food lover, he never failed to recommend good restaurants to me. Also on every Deepawali, he made it a point to come with his family to our home to wish us," Advani added.

Jaitley had undergone a renal transplant on May 14 last year at AIIMS, and his health condition gradually worsened, forcing him to take frequent breaks from his work. He was also diagnosed with soft tissue cancer.

He opted out of the second term of the BJP-led NDA government as Modi led the saffron party to a landslide win in May this year.

Jaitley, who had lost the 2014 general election did not contest the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, because of his ill-health.

He was serving his fourth straight term in Rajya Sabha, where he entered in 2000 and went on to become the Leader of the Opposition and then the Leader of the House as the BJP came to power in 2014.

He stopped attending office since early April last year, but was back in the finance ministry on August 23, 2018.

In September 2014, he had undergone bariatric surgery to shed weight he had gained because of a chronic diabetic condition.

After his demise, Jaitley's body was taken to his South Delhi residence where several top leaders paid floral tributes.

On Sunday morning, his body will be taken to the BJP headquarters before the final journey.

West Bengal govt fixes menu for mid-day meal in schools



KOLKATA, AUG 24 (PTI)

After the shocking incident of boiled rice and salt served to students during mid-day meal in a school in Hooghly district came to light, the West Bengal government has suspended two teachers of the institute and has also fixed a menu for the mid-day meal, an official said.

Two teachers of the Chunchura Banimandir Balika Bidyalaya have been suspended after footage of the students being served rice and salt triggered an outrage on Monday last prompting Education minister Partha Chatterjee to order a departmental probe into the incident and promise strict action.

A School Education department official said on Saturday that the two, one former teacher-in-charge and the other present teacher-in-charge were put under suspension on Tuesday, a day after the incident was reported in tv channels and BJP MP Lock-

et Chatterjee rushed to the school demanding all those found to be involved in giving rice and salt to the children instead of the scheduled routine menu be punished. "We will take further action on the basis of probe which is still on," the official said but didn't divulge identify of the two teachers.

In the wake of the incident, the School Education department on Thursday sent notification to all District Magistrates asking them for strictly maintaining the menu and also gave a chart which specified on which date which type of menu will be served.

A copy of the notification to the DM of East Midnapore district specified - rice, dal, potato, vegetable curry will have to be served on Monday, rice, dal, egg/fish curry will be given on Tuesday, rice, dal, mixed vegetable will be given on Wednesday.

Rice, fish or egg curry, vegetables will be given on Thursday, rice dal,

potato curry (posto) for Friday and rice dal, soyabean and potato curry for children on Saturday, it said.

All officials, in-charge of midday meals have been asked "to instruct all local level officers, education supervisors to visit cent percent schools" (all the schools) from August 24 to August 31 to monitor the mid-day meal is provided in a proper manner to the students and send compiled report everyday to the School Education department.

Copies of the notifications were made available on Saturday.

The move by the department was preceded by Education minister Partha Chatterjee earlier asserting that the government will "do everything" to ensure children get the proper kind of mid-day meal and there will be "zero tolerance" to any attempt to deprive children of their prescribed midday meal menu.

Navy on high alert, strict vigil in TN

COIMBATORE/KOCHI, AUG 24 (PTI) The Indian Navy has sounded a high-alert at sea following intelligence inputs that six members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba have intruded into Tamil Nadu, as strict surveillance continued in various parts of the State for the second day on Saturday. Following intelligence inputs, "the Indian Navy continues to maintain its high alert situation at seas and in coastal areas," a defence spokesman told PTI at Kochi in Kerala.

Security was tightened in Tamil Nadu on Friday following reports that six members of the terror outfit LeT had infiltrated the state by sea from Sri Lanka and moved to different cities.

Coimbatore Police Commissioner Sumit Sharan had on Friday said the city was under a high alert following information that the terrorists were heading there. Police said on Saturday that vehicle-checks were intensified on arterial roads and highways connecting Coimbatore city with neighbouring states, and baggage thoroughly checked by armed police personnel.

JK Cong criticizes govt for not letting Oppn team in Kashmir



JAMMU, AUG 24 (PTI) The Jammu and Kashmir Congress on Saturday criticised the government for not allowing a delegation of opposition members including Rahul Gandhi to come out of Srinagar airport to take stock of the situation there after the abrogation of Article 370 provisions.

Congress state president G A Mir and other party leaders said the government action belies its "repeated claims" that the situation in the valley has largely "normalised".

"Congress criticizes the action of the government to disallow opposition delegation to visit Kashmir in view of its repeated claims that the situation in the valley has normalised to the extent that all government and other institutions are working normally and there is peace in most parts of the state," a

statement issued by J&K Pradesh Congress Committee said.

On one hand, the Centre and state government made claims about the normalcy while on the other they have declared the state out-of-bound for all mainstream leaders of the country except those of the ruling BJP, the claimed. This shows the "mindset" of the ruling party in Delhi and the "undemocratic" style of the regime, they said, adding they have not shown any respect for the main opposition leadership of the country.

The opposition is equally concerned about the overall affairs of the country and is answerable to the people, it said.

This was the fourth attempt by the opposition to reach out to the people of the state in view of the situation that emerged following the decision to scrap J&K's special

status and divide it into two union territories, the party said.

Earlier in the day, the CPI(M) said the 11-member delegation of opposition parties from Delhi was not allowed to leave Srinagar airport by the administration. The delegation representing eight political parties - the Congress, CPI(M), CPI, DMK, NCP, JD(S), RJD and the TMC -- had said that they were "responding to the invite of the the governor of Jammu and Kashmir for visiting the state".

They were not allowed despite Governor S P Malik's "invite", the Congress statement said.

On the contrary, the party said, when the Congress-led UPA was in power at the Centre and an unrest erupted in the state, the government had itself arranged an all-party, including the BJP, delegation visit, to the state, it said.

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Eight essays put the spotlight on the journey caused 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

EDITED BY
TSHERING EDEN AND PEMA WANGCHUK

LOKTA BOOKS
Imprint - Sahitya
loktabooks@gmail.com
+91 801 000 0200, +91 800 200 0700

‘A part of me is gone’: cricketers, Olympic stars mourn Jaitley’s death

NEW DELHI, AUG 24 (PTI)

Cricket administration was among the many hats Arun Jaitley wore in public life and in his death, the players remembered the man who seamlessly juggled roles, and stood by them in their hour of need.

A seasoned politician, an astute lawyer and a raconteur with innumerable friends across party lines, Jaitley passed away on Saturday after a prolonged period of illness. He was 66.

While politicians cutting across party lines were quick to mourn the death of the former union minister, the cricketers as well as athletes from Olympic disciplines also took to twitter to express their condolences.

Former India opener and BJP member of Parliament, Gautam Gambhir, who was close to Jaitley, said a part of him was gone with his demise.

“A father teaches u to speak but a father figure teaches u to talk. A father teaches u to walk but a father figure teaches u to march on. A father gives u a name but a father figure gives u an identity. A part of me is gone with my Father Figure Shri Arun Jaitley ji. RIP Sir,” Gambhir tweeted.

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju termed it a personal loss.

“Extremely saddened to learn the passing away of @arunjaitley ji. His death is a personal loss for me. Arun ji was a brilliant lawyer and a great parliamentarian. He will be missed & remembered for his warmth & wit. My heartfelt condolences to his family and supporters,” Rijiju tweeted.



As he helmed the Delhi Districts and Cricket Association (DDCA), talented players from in and around the national capital emerged and flourished in the biggest stage.

Virender Sehwag, Virat Kohli, Shikhar Dhawan and Ishant Sharma, besides Gambhir, are some of the names that shone in international cricket with him at the top.

He was a cricket fan first and then someone that every big name in BCCI would consult before zeroing in on any policy decision with regards to Indian cricket.

Indian captain Kohli recalled the day when Jaitley visited his residence following the death of his father.

“Shocked & saddened to hear about the passing away of Shri Arun Jaitley ji. He was genuinely a good person, always willing to help others. He took out his precious time back in 2006 when my father passed away to come to my home & pay his condolences. May his

soul rest in peace,” Kohli tweeted. Expressing their grief were Virender Sehwag, Shikhar Dhawan, Yuvraj Singh, Mithali Raj and R Ashwin, among others, in a series of tweets.

“Pained at the passing away of ArunJaitley ji. Apart from having served greatly in public life, he played a huge role in many players from Delhi getting an opportunity to represent India. There was a time when not many players from Delhi got a chance at the highest level,” Sehwag said on twitter.

The big-hitting former opener was not done there.

“... But under his leadership at the DDCA, many players including me got a chance to represent India. He listened to needs of the players & was a problem solver. Personally shared a very beautiful relationship with him. My thoughts & prayers are with his family & loved ones. Om Shanti.”

The BCCI said in a release: “A remarkable statesman, Mr Jaitley was

a passionate cricket follower and will always be remembered as one of the most able and respected cricket administrators.” The DDCA expressed its condolence on its official twitter page. “DDCA condoles the death of its former president Mr Arun Jaitley. DDCA and its members mourn his untimely death and feel the loss of his experience and wisdom. We pray to the Almighty for his soul to Rest In Peace.”

Cricket Association of Bengal joint secretary Avishek Dalmiya, whose father late Jagmohan Dalmiya worked closely with Jaitley during the former’s stint as BCCI president, also sent his condolences.

Athletes from other sports, including champion boxer M C Mary Kom and double Olympic medallist wrestler Sushil Kumar, also expressed their grief at the passing away of Jaitley.

“I am thinking of you #ArunJaitley during this time. My deepest and heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. May

the departed soul RIP,” Mary Kom, who is also a Member of Parliament, tweeted. Sushil said, “Deeply saddened by the passing of former Union Minister @ArunJaitley ji. My deepest condolences to the family and loved ones.”

Also sending their condolences from the sporting arena were Bajrang Punia, Vijender Singh and Bhaichung Bhutia, among others.

Hockey India president Mohd Mushtaq Ahmad condoled Jaitley’s death on behalf of his federation, thanking him for the manner in which he helped the sport.

Jaitley, a lawyer by profession, had been a key member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Cabinet in the NDA government’s first term. He held the finance and defence portfolios, and often acted as the chief troubleshooter of the government.

Jaitley did not contest the 2019 Lok Sabha election owing to ill-health and was admitted to AIIMS for treatment in May this year.

Nagal to make dream Grand Slam debut, to clash with Federer in US Open opener

NEW YORK, AUG 24 (PTI)

Earning a dream Grand Slam debut for himself, Indian tennis player Sumit Nagal sets up the US Open first round clash against one of the greatest players of all time -- the legendary Roger Federer -- on Monday.

When Nagal stepped on the court to take on Brazil’s Joao Menezes in the final qualifying round on Friday, he would not have thought a win would pit him against a global superstar, who has 20 Grand Slam titles to his name.

Nagal lost the first set but regrouped for a 5-7 6-4 6-3 win over the Brazilian in two hours and 27 minutes.

The 22-year-old Indian has become only the fifth Indian player to feature in a Grand Slam singles main draw in this decade.

Somdev Devvarman, Yuki Bhambri, Saketh Myneni and Prajnesh Gunneswaran are the only ones who have played at Tennis Majors.

Nagal had also become only the sixth Indian player to win a junior Grand Slam title in 2015 when he won Wimbledon boys doubles with Nam Hoang Ly of Vietnam. With Prajnesh also playing in this US Open, India now will have two players in the Grand Slam main draw for the first time since 1998 when legends Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi competed at the Wimbledon.

Prajnesh is set to clash with Cincinnati Masters winner and



world number five Daniil Medvedev, who conquered Novak Djokovic during his title triumph.

Nagal came into the US Open qualifiers confident, backed by terrific results during the clay court season.

Consistent results on the Challenger Circuit meant that he broke into the top-200 for the first time in his career and has now earned himself a chance to play a match which every tennis player dreams of.

He had started the year outside the 350 bracket and had to overcome a difficult period, encountering injuries but came back strong.

India’s Davis Cup captain Bhupathi, who was the first to spot Nagal’s talent and took him un-

der his wings to provide support, said it’s a career defining moment for the 22-year-old from Jhajjar in Haryana.

“Nagal has been unlucky with injuries and has worked very hard to get back to this level. Playing Roger at the US Open at night is every qualifier’s dream and nightmare and I think this experience will both be a confidence booster and a career defining moment for him,” Bhupathi told PTI, reacting to Nagal’s impending Grand Slam debut.

So what Nagal needs to do to not get overwhelmed when he finds Federer across the court?

“He needs to enjoy the moment and go for his shots,” suggested Bhupathi.

Will NDTL suspension affect samples collected in domestic events: Johri’s letter to NADA DG

NEW DELHI, AUG 24 (PTI)

Concerned with the six-month suspension of National Dope Testing Laboratory’s (NDTL) accreditation by World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the BCCI in a letter to National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has sought to know about the “chain of custody” of the samples collected at domestic events during this period.

The WADA took the decision owing to non-conformities with International Standard of Laboratories (ISL) as identified during a site visit. The suspension is a setback to India’s anti-doping movement with less than a year left for the Olympic Games.

In a letter to NADA DG Navin Agarwal (in possession of PTI), BCCI

CEO Rahul Johri wrote: “We request you to kindly let us know how this suspension will affect samples collected by NADA at BCCI domestic cricket tournaments.

“Since NDTL is unable to test the samples of all cricketers, what is the way forward to ensure a strict chain of custody and timely analysis of all samples,” Johri said.

The BCCI had for long strongly resisted coming under the ambit of NADA even though their samples collected by International Dope Tests & Management (IDTM) of Sweden was tested at the NDTL.

Johri’s letter came after sports secretary Radhey Shyam Julaniya told reporters that the agency has met its initial target of collecting 3000 sam-

ples for the year, which casts doubt on how many samples they will collect during BCCI’s domestic season. The NADA can get the samples tested at an overseas WADA accredited lab and Bangkok seems a feasible cost-effective option at the moment.

The NADA on its official facebook page had earlier issued a press release, stating that they would start sample collection during the ongoing Duleep Trophy.

The DCOs have not come for the first two Duleep Trophy matches and it is to be seen if they come for the remaining two games (including final) in Bengaluru.

Also BCCI’s domestic events will continue till March and the suspension of NDTL continues till February 20.

Twelve dead in Niger Boko Haram village attack

NIAMEY, AUG 24 (AFP)

A night raid blamed on Boko Haram has left a dozen villagers dead in southeastern Niger on the frontier with Nigeria, a local official said Saturday. The attack on Friday night in the border district of Gueskerou, is the latest to hit the Diffa region near Lake Chad, which is crisscrossed by militant groups and traffickers who murder and kidnap people in local communities as they compete for money and influence.

“Twelve villagers were killed on Friday at around 8:00pm (1900 GMT) by Boko Haram elements,” a local elected official told AFP. He said eleven of those killed had been shot, but did not give further details.

The Gueskerou area, abutting the Komadougou Yobe river that provides a natural frontier between Niger and Nigeria, has been exposed to years of killings and kidnappings at the hands of the Islamist extremist group Boko Haram. In March, two attacks in the area left eight civilians and seven police dead.

Boko Haram, loosely translated as “Western education is banned”, wants to create a hard-line Islamic state.

World Championships: Sindhu storms into 3rd successive final, Praneeth settles for bronze

BASEL (SWITZERLAND), AUG 24 (PTI)

P V Sindhu stood one win away from an elusive World Championships gold after entering a third successive final but B Sai Praneeth settled for bronze following his defeat to Kento Momota here on Saturday. Sindhu, who had claimed successive silver in the last two editions of the prestigious tournament beside two bronze, was a picture of perfection as she outclassed World No. 3 and All England Champion Chen Yu Fei of China 21-7 21-14 in a 40-minute semifinal.

The 24 year-old Olympic silver medalist will face either 2013 world champion Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand or 2017 winner Nozomi Okuhara of Japan in the summit clash on Sunday.

“I was well prepared and from the start I was in the lead and then finished it off,” Sindhu said.

“In the second game, I made some unforced errors and then I was leading again and it gave me my confidence. Overall, the game went well and I hope it goes well tomorrow.”

However, Praneeth’s impressive run ended after his attacking game couldn’t dent the defence of in-form defending champion Momota, go-

ing down to the Japanese World No. 1 13-21 8-21 in 41 minutes.

On Friday though, Praneeth achieved a rare distinction of becoming the first Indian male shuttler in 36 years to win a medal in the tournament.

Prakash Padukone was the first to win a men’s singles World Championships medal -- a bronze -- in the 1983 edition.

Sindhu, who came into the match with a 5-3 head-to-head record against Chen, grabbed the initiative quickly.

The Indian dished out a compact game, producing angled returns to push Chen to the corners. Sindhu retrieved well and punished any weak return from her rival to dominate the rallies.

Sindhu entered the first break with a 11-3 lead after the Chinese went wide.

Chen continued to find the going tough as she missed the lines, allowing the Indian to gather points at will.

Another weak return at the net by Chen gave Sindhu as many as 14 game points. The Indian sealed the opening game in her second attempt.

Chen made a better start in the second game and was neck-and-neck

at 3-3 with Sindhu, but errors again crept in her game as Sindhu moved to a 10-6 lead.

Sindhu exploited a weakness in the backhand side of Chen to lead 11-7 at the breather.

The Indian worked hard during the rallies, not giving an inch to her Chinese rival and was rewarded for her effort. A desperate Chen committed too many unforced errors as Sindhu jumped to a 17-9 lead in a jiffy.

The Indian eventually grabbed eight match points with a cross-court smash. Chen saved a couple before hitting long again as Sindhu celebrated.

In the men’s singles semifinals, Praneeth made a good start to his semifinal clash, opening up a slender 5-3 lead. However, Momota slowly found his rhythm and turned the tables by entering the interval with a small 11-10 advantage.

The left-handed Japanese stepped up after the break, reeling off four points to surge to 15-10. Praneeth couldn’t find the winners regularly and committed too many unforced errors to allow Momota widen the gap between them.

At 12-18, the Indian found the net thrice to hand over the opening

game to the Japanese.

Praneeth was more competitive initially in the second game as he was tied 2-2 with his opponent, but the Indian failed to lift the hard-hitting returns of Momota, sending the shuttle wide or at the net.

While Praneeth was erroneous, Momota was consistent and it reflected in the scoreline, as the Japanese quickly jumped to 9-2.

A precise smash from Praneeth helped him to take a point, but he misjudged a shuttle at the backline and then hit the nets, as Momota grabbed a 11-3 advantage in the mid-game interval.

Praneeth’s struggle continued after the break as he couldn’t put pressure on his fancied rival, who rode on his resolute defence to dominate the rallies.

At 15-5, Momota made a rare error when he sent the shuttle long but his quick backhand reflex near the net earned him the serve again.

A cross-court smash at Praneeth’s backhand took Momota to 19-8 and he grabbed 12 match points when the Indian hit the nets again.

Praneeth then went wide, paving the way for Momota’s march into the another final.

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Hong Kong police fire tear gas as clashes return to city streets

HONG KONG, AUG 24 (AFP)

Hong Kong riot police fired tear gas and baton-charged protesters who retaliated with a barrage of stones, bottles and bamboo poles, as a standoff in a working-class district on Saturday descended into violence, breaking an uneasy peace that had lasted several days.

Thousands of demonstrators, many wearing hard hats and gas masks, marched through the industrial Kwun Tong area, where they were blocked by dozens of officers with shields and batons outside a police station.

Frontline protesters pulled together a barricade of traffic barriers and bamboo construction poles, spray-painting walls with insults directed at the police.

As the afternoon wore on some fired stones from slingshots, prompting a charge from police wielding batons and pepper spray.

Tears gas swept across the road as protesters retreated, leaving a trail of broken bottles and at least one small fire in their wake.

Several of the black-clad protesters were detained as officers swept through, with police justifying their charge on "a large group of violent protesters" who had set fires and hurled bricks at cops.

Tension flickered throughout Saturday's



march, where dozens of the most radical demonstrators known as "braves" had gathered, battle-hardened by a three-month street campaign.

"I understand being peaceful will not solve the problem," 19-year-old student protester Ryan told AFP, giving one name.

"The government won't respond to peaceful protest. If I am arrested it is because I come out to speak for justice." The city had appeared to have pulled back from a sharp nosedive into violence, with the last serious clashes taking place a week and a half ago just after protests paralysed the financial hub's airport.

Hundreds of thou-

sands marched peacefully last Sunday, as a key protest group sought to regain the moral high ground in a city shocked at the level of violence.

But Saturday's face-off underscored the dangerous deadlock into which the city has sunk -- with the government unmoving in the face of protester demands, and demonstrators stubbornly refusing to leave the streets.

Protests started against a proposed law that would have allowed extradition to China, but have bled into wider calls for democracy and police accountability in the semi-autonomous city.

Hong Kong's police force have become the target of the protesters' ire for their per-

ceived heavy-handed response to the months of demonstrations.

As evening fell, scores of "braves" dug up bricks and tied metal barriers together a few hundred metres from the police as they appeared to dig in for more clashes.

One frontline protester explained his motivation for joining the street struggle.

"The government chose not to solve the problem through communicating with the protesters," Lueng told AFP.

"I don't see our future facing this regime, so gradually I stepped closer and closer to the front line." Protesters say Hong Kong's unique freedoms are in jeopardy as Beijing tightens its political chokehold on the city.

Soaring living costs and few job opportunities have also driven many of the mainly young protesters to the streets.

Older Hong Kongers are divided on the motivation and tactics of the movement which has brought unprecedented chaos to a city once known for its safety and stability.

"The youngsters who come out have put their future at stake... they are doing this for Hong Kong," said 65-year-old Dee Cheung told AFP earlier, before explaining why he joined the protests.

"There might be some things we don't agree with, like the 'braves' who tend to charge. But let's think about why they do that?" (AFP)

Trump, EU clash over trade at G7 opening

BIARRITZ, AUG 24 (AFP):

US President Donald Trump and EU leaders exchanged trade war threats Saturday as they arrived in France for a G7 summit of wealthy democracies overshadowed by trans-Atlantic tensions before it had even begun.

"Trade wars will lead to recession, while trade deals will boost the economy," EU Council President Donald Tusk said in Biarritz, the chic Atlantic resort chosen by French host President Emmanuel Macron to stage the annual meeting.

Trump flew into Biarritz on Air Force One hours after promising to impose punishing tariffs on French wine imports if Macron doesn't withdraw a tax on US tech giants.

And Tusk vowed that the EU "will respond in kind." "The last thing we need is a confrontation with our best ally, the United States," he said. "This is not our initiative, this trade and tariff struggle, but we have to be ready and we are ready."

It was a combative opening to the G7 summit, traditionally a forum for frank yet cordial discussions among leaders from the world's leading economies -- but much less so since Trump's election.

European leaders are also using the summit to mount a tough push for action against fires in the Amazon rainforest, despite Brazilian right wing President Jair Bolsonaro's angry response to what he sees as outside interference.

Echoing a warning from France, Tusk said Bolsonaro's response to the fires and his downplaying of climate change threw into question a major EU-South America trade deal.

"We of course stand by the EU-Mercosur agreement, which is also about protecting the climate and the environment," he said.

"But it is hard to imagine a harmonious process of ratification by the European countries as long as the Brazilian government allows for the destruction of the green lungs of planet Earth."

G7 leaders were greeted by a mass protest outside Biarritz, though 13,000 police have been



deployed to keep them far from view.

Organisers said 15,000 people rallied around 30 kilometres (20 miles) south of the G7 gathering at the border town of Hendaye for a march over the Bidasoa River toward the Spanish town of Irun.

Red, white and green Basque flags waved above a crowd that included anti-capitalists, environmental activists as well as a few dozen of France's "yellow vest" anti-government protesters, according to AFP journalists at the scene.

"It's important to show that people are mobilised and do not accept the world they're offering us," said Elise Dilet, 47, of the Basque anti-globalisation group, Bizi. The rally was peaceful so far, after police said 17 people had been arrested as of Friday night amid clashes with protesters camped out near Hendaye.

Talks in the beach resort, known for fierce rainstorms that blow in from the Atlantic, will also be dominated by the darkening clouds over the world economy.

Wall Street stocks slumped Friday after Trump escalated his trade war with China that is seen as responsible for a global slowdown.

"We don't need China and, frankly, would be far... better off without them," Trump tweeted on Friday, saying US companies were "hereby ordered to immediately start looking for an alternative to China." His outburst came after China imposed tariffs on US imports worth 75 billion in response to an earlier round of American measures.

Trump hit back immediately, raising tariffs still further. And as he left for Biarritz, Trump also

fired a salvo at France, threatening to slap heavy tariffs on its wine in response to its move to impose a sales tax on tech giants like Facebook, Apple and Google.

"Those are great American companies, and frankly, I don't want France going out and taxing our companies. Very unfair," he told reporters at the White House.

"And if they do that, we'll be taxing their wine... like they've never seen before." In a televised address ahead of the summit, Macron said his goal was "to convince all our partners that trade tensions are bad for everyone."

The G7 meeting will also be the full international debut of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who will meet Trump for the first time as leader.

They are expected to discuss the UK's impending exit from the European Union, which the US president has enthusiastically backed.

But though Johnson needs Trump's support for a free-trade deal, he is at odds with him on a range of issues including the Iran nuclear crisis, climate change and global trade.

Trump is likely to find himself under pressure from the Europeans, particularly Macron, to ease off on his policy of "maximum pressure" on Iran over its nuclear programme.

Since pulling out of the landmark 2015 nuclear agreement limiting Tehran's nuclear programme, Trump has slapped crippling sanctions on the Iranian economy.

Macron wants him to put a "pause" on the policy, an aide said recently, which would enable talks to find a new diplomatic solution to the crisis.

Bolsonaro to send army to fight huge fires in the Amazon

PORT VELHO (BRAZIL), AUG 24 (AP)

Under international pressure to contain fires sweeping parts of Brazil's Amazon, President Jair Bolsonaro has authorised use of the military to battle the huge blazes while thousands took to the streets to protest his environmental policies. Brazilian forces will deploy starting Saturday to border areas, indigenous territories and other affected regions in the Amazon to assist in putting out fires for a month, according to a presidential decree authorising use of the army on Friday.

The military will "act strongly" to control the wildfires, Bolsonaro promised as he signed the decree.

The armed forces will collaborate with public security and environmental protection agencies, the decree says.

"The protection of the forest is our duty," the president said. "We are aware of that and will act to combat deforestation and criminal activities that put people at risk in the Amazon. We are a government of zero tolerance for crime, and in the environmental field it will not be different."

Bolsonaro has previously described rainforest protections as an obstacle to Brazil's economic development, sparring with critics who note that the Amazon produces vast amounts of oxygen and is considered crucial for efforts to contain climate change.

As the president spoke, thousands of Brazilians demonstrated in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and the capital of Brasilia demanding the government announce concrete actions to curb the fires. People also banged pots from their homes, a traditional mode of protest in South America. An Associated Press journalist who travelled to the Amazon region Friday saw many already deforested areas that had been burned.

Charred trees and fallen branches were seen around Porto Velho, the capital of Rondonia state, which borders Bolivia. In some instances, the burned fields were adjacent to intact livestock ranches and other farms, suggesting the fires had been managed as part of a land-clearing policy.

A large column of smoke billowed from one fire, and smoke rose from a couple of nearby wooded areas. Life appeared normal in Porto Velho. However, visibility from the windows of an arriving airplane was poor because of smog enveloping the region.



Small numbers of demonstrators gathered outside Brazilian diplomatic missions in Paris, London, Geneva and Bogota, Colombia, to urge Brazil to do more to fight the fires. Larger protests were held in Uruguay and Argentina. Hundreds also protested in Chile, Ecuador and Peru.

Neighbouring Bolivia and Paraguay have also struggled to contain fires that swept through woods and fields, in many cases set to clear land for farming. About 7,500 square kilometers (2,900 square miles) of land has been affected in Bolivia, Defense Minister Javier Zavaleta said.

A B747-400 SuperTanker arrived in Bolivia and began flying over devastated areas to help put out the fires and protect forests. The US-based aircraft can carry nearly 76,000 liters (20,000 gallons) of retardant, a substance used to stop fires.

Some 370 square kilometers (140 square miles) have burned in northern Paraguay, near the borders with Brazil and Bolivia, said Joaquin Roa, a Paraguayan state emergency official. He said the situation had stabilised.

Close to 20 per cent of the Amazon has already been deforested, said Thomas Lovejoy, a George Mason University environmental scientist. "I worry that the current deforestation will push past the tipping point leading to massive loss of forest and biodiversity," Lovejoy wrote in an email to The Associated Press. He said Brazil is "turning its back" on past environmental achievements, including the 1992 Earth Summit, and has proposed infrastructure projects that will accelerate

the challenge of climate change.

"Fires are directly burning into the Amazon rainforest and that releases the carbon stored in those trees," said Doug Morton, a NASA scientist. "The carbon then enters the atmosphere as carbon dioxide or methane, where it contributes to the greenhouse gases that are causing climate change, bringing us a warmer and a drier planet."

Morton said there is now "an uptick in the pressure against the remaining Amazon forest, to expand agriculture production in areas that are the leading edge in the deforestation frontier." Fires are common in Brazil in the annual dry season, but they are much more widespread this year.

Brazilian state experts reported nearly 77,000 wildfires across the country so far this year, up 85 per cent over the same period in 2018.

Just over half of those fires have occurred in the Amazon region. Brazil contains about 60 per cent of the Amazon rainforest.

US President Donald Trump said Friday that he spoke with Bolsonaro.

"Our future Trade prospects are very exciting and our relationship is strong, perhaps stronger than ever before," Trump tweeted.

"I told him if the United States can help with the Amazon Rainforest fires, we stand ready to assist!" In escalating tension over the fires, France accused Bolsonaro of having lied to French leader Emmanuel Macron and threatened to block a European Union trade deal with several South American states, including Brazil. Ireland joined in the threat. (AP)

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Disney brings back Ewan McGregor as Obi-Wan Kenobi, unveils trailer of 'The Mandalorian'

BEDIKA

ANAHEIM (CALIFORNIA), AUG 24 (PTI)

Actor Ewan McGregor is set to reprise his legendary "Star Wars" role of Obi-Wan Kenobi in an new series for Disney's upcoming streaming service Disney+. The series will fulfil the long-standing demand of the fans to see a solo project based around the character, who has been one of the most pivotal figure in "Star Wars" mythology. Lucasfilm President Kathleen Kennedy announced the project during a Star Wars panel at D23 convention here, where she was joined by McGregor on stage.

"After secrets and fibs and not being able to talk about it, I'm thrilled to bring out a beloved member of the Star Wars family," Kennedy said. McGregor then came out on stage and told Kennedy, "Kathleen can you ask me in front of all these people, can you please ask me, 'Am I going to play Obi-Wan Kenobi again?'. 'Ewan, are you going to play Obi-Wan Kenobi again?'" Kennedy asked.

McGregor answered with a Yes, which was drowned in cheers from D23 fans. "It feels so nice to say yes, we are going to do it," he added. Kennedy said the show's script is ready and production will start next year.

Obi-Wan Kenobi is one of the most pivotal characters of the whole "Star Wars" mythology. He was first portrayed by legendary actor Alec Guinness in the original 1977 "A New Hope". Guinness later appeared as a force ghost in the two-follow-ups -- "The Empire Strikes Back" (1980) and "Return of the Jedi" (1983). In George Lucas' prequel tril-

ogy, McGregor succeeded Guinness as Kenobi, first portraying the character in 1999's "The Phantom Menace".

He came back for its two sequels -- "Attack of the Clones" (2002) and "Revenge of the Sith" (2005) -- with the latter marking final appearance on-screen.

Besides this, Disney also unveiled the first official trailer of the highly-anticipated series "The Mandalorian". With

of the Empire and before the emergence of the First Order. The trailer also offered glimpses of Pascal's co-stars from the show, Gina Carano, Carl Weathers and Giancarlo Esposito as well as Taika Waititi, who is portraying the droid IG-11. Earlier, Disney Chairman and CEO Bob Iger revealed at the Disney Legends Awards Ceremony that the new Disney Legend Ming-Na Wen will join the cast



names like Jon Favreau, Taika Waititi, Bryce Dallas Howard, Rick Famuyiwa and Deborah Chow attached to the project as directors, Lucasfilm hopes to create a new world around the show. Favreau, who joined Kennedy on stage along with executive producer Dave Filoni, said he has tried to recreate an experience similar to his 2008 film "Iron Man", which launched Marvel Studios money-minting Marvel Cinematic Universe.

The series features actor Pedro Pascal in the titular character, who is gun-fighter in the outer who reaches of the galaxy far, escaping from the authority of the New Republic. It is set after the fall

of the series. Apart from the Obi-Wan Kenobi series and "The Mandalorian", Disney also had news about its third Star Wars show, based around actor Diego Luna's "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" character Cassian Andor.

Kennedy said the show will start shooting next year.

Alan Tudyk will reprise his role of droid K-2SO. He was present at the stage along with Luna and Kennedy during the announcement.

The show will follow Andor's adventures as a rebel spy during the formative years of the Rebellion, before the events of "A New Hope".

Quentin Tarantino and his wife Daniella Pick are expecting their first child.

"Daniella and Quentin Tarantino are very delighted to announce that they are expecting a baby," the couple said in a statement to People.

The 56-year-old filmmaker met Pick, 35, in 2009 while promoting his movie Inglorious Basterds.

Tarantino and Pick got engaged in June 2017 and tied the knot in November 2018.

This is the first marriage for the Kill Bill filmmaker and Pick. Last month Tarantino discussed wanting a family on Jimmy Kimmel Live!

"I haven't been married, I haven't had kids, I just got married, I want to have kids," Tarantino told Kimmel.

Tarantino's appearance on the late-night talk show was to promote his latest movie, Once Upon a Time in... Hollywood.

Himesh Reshammiya gives internet singing sensation Ranu Mondal her Bollywood break

MUMBAI, AUG 23 (PTI) Internet sensation Ranu Mondal, who became popular on social media after her video crooning legendary singer Lata Mangeskar's "Ek Pyaar Ka Nagma Hai" at a railway platform went viral, is set to make a Bollywood debut as a playback singer. Mondal's video was shared on a Facebook page called 'BarpetaTown The place of peace' on July 28. The video has collected over four million till now.

Music composer-actor Himesh Reshammiya has recorded a song titled "Teri Meri Kahani" with Mondal.

He revealed that the song will feature in his upcoming film "Happy Hardy and Heer". "All your our dreams can come true if we have the courage to perseuse them. A positive attitude can really make dreams come true. Thanks for all your love and support," the composer-singer captioned the video shot during his recording session with Ranu. "Happy Hardy and Heer" is produce by EYKA Films and HR Musik Limited.

Ms. Marvel, Moon Knight and She-Hulk Shows Ordered at Disney+



Disney made the announcements Friday at the D23 Expo in Anaheim, California, during its Disney+ showcase.

The "Ms Marvel" series will focus on the Kamela Khan version of the character. Khan is notable for becoming the first Muslim character in Marvel's 80-year history to her own comic.

The series is sixth from Marvel Studios for Disney+, joining "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier", "WandaVision", "Loki", "Hawkeye" and the animated "What If..." "Falcon and the Winter Soldier", which also brings back Daniel Bruhl as Helmut Zemo from

"Captain America: Civil War," will premiere in Fall 2020. "WandaVision" and "Loki" will stream Spring 2021, with "What If..." in Summer 2021 and "Hawkeye," which will see Kate Bishop introduced, will premiere in Fall 2021.

"WandaVision" will also introduce the adult version of Monica Rambeau aka Photon played by Teyonah Parris. The character was first introduced as a child in the 1990s-set "Captain Marvel."

Disney+ is set to launch on Nov. 12 and will cost \$6.99 a month or \$69.99 for the whole year.

The Hollywood Reporter was first to report the news of "Ms Marvel's" development.

Vivek Oberoi To Produce A Film On Balakot Air Strikes

Vivek Oberoi occupied a top spot on Friday's list of trends after he announced that he is set to produce a film on the Balakot air strike. The film, which will be titled Balakot - The True Story, will be a multilingual project that will showcase the story of Indian Air Force's air strikes on terror camps in Balakot. The film will release in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu, reports news agency PTI. Speaking of his association with the project, Vivek Oberoi said that the film will act as a "powerful tool to underline the achievements of brave officers."

The 42-year-old actor added, "As a proud Indian, a patriot and a member of the film fraternity, it's my duty to highlight what our armed forces are truly capable of. This film is a powerful tool to underline the achievements of brave officers like Abhinandan, who went behind enemy lines and did what makes every Indian proud of them."

As of now, Vivek Oberoi hasn't announced the cast or the director of the film. The film is expected to go on floors by the end of this year and it will extensively be shot across

Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and Agra.

The actor revealed that the film will be based on the Balakot Air strikes as well as the release of IAF Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman in the aftermath of the terror attack in Pulwama district on February 14. "I followed everything in the news, right from the attack in Pulwama to the air strike. There



was a lot that was speculated and spoken about back then; this film will put all of that to rest, once and for all. I thank the IAF for trusting us with this story and we hope to do justice to it," PTI quoted Vivek as saying.

ARIES: "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me," said American singer, B B King. When that toxic ex shows up at your doorstep with the intention of reclaiming their place in your life, you know exactly what you need to do, Aries. Don't feel bad about being twice as assertive this time around. If you're the one struggling with letting go, watch your need for codependency. The time to kiss goodbye to your demons is now.

Tip: Let go.

TAURUS: The ebb and flow of the emotional world could get the better of you today. Clear your head, Taurus. Make a conscious effort to come back to yourself. This will help you understand whether you are operating from a space of paranoia or inner knowledge. Remember, somebody who loves you will be happy to hold your hand and put your fears to rest.

Tip: Watch your fears.

GEMINI: One step forward, two steps backwards. Aren't you getting tired of your little dance? Gemini, light a candle, connect with your spirit guides, and journal the

thoughts that are floating around in your monkey mind. This will help you decipher the subconscious patterns that are keeping you from experiencing love in its fullest form.

Tip: Break up with your demons.

CANCER: There's a term for people who prefer blaming circumstances for what's wrong, rather than taking responsibility for their lives. Don't play victim, Cancer. You know what exactly how to break free from the vicious cycle you have found yourself in. First things first, speak up. Let your side of the story be known. In this case, nothing can be achieved by maintaining silence.

Tip: Speak up for yourself.

LEO: Let's get down to business, Leo. What are the rules of this engagement? What is the kind of commitment you desire from your beloved? Don't be afraid of straight talk, especially if you want to take things to the next level. On the upside, today could bring joyous tidings with itself. You or somebody close to your heart is getting ready to tie the knot soon.

Tip: It's time to be truthful with the other.

VIRGO: This phase of your togetherness

requires a greater degree of commitment. Move beyond the textbook definition of the word, and see how you can support each other in every single way. Sometimes, this means saying "I've got your back" as they fulfil their dreams in the material reality. They may or may not be able to communicate with you in a manner that you're used to through the course of the day. What matters is that they still want to come back home to you.

Tip: Support each other's dreams.

LIBRA: "Where is everybody going to and what's the rush anyway?" You find yourself wondering as you sip on that cup of seneritea. Embrace the joy of being in the present—a place of harmony and love. If you've gone through hell and back as far as your relationships are concerned, trust that hope and healing are on their way to you.

Tip: Everything is exactly how it should be.

SCORPIO: Ask yourself this as you sit in silence: do they really want to be a part of your life, and what are they doing to consciously align themselves themselves with this intention? If their actions don't match their words, you know you've got a prob-

lem, Scorpio. What the cards are warning you about: pushing against the flow. Redirect your energy towards self-growth instead.

Tip: Beware of pushing against the flow.

SAGITTARIUS: It's okay to put your phone on flight mode and forget about the rest of the world. It's okay to disengage from conversations because you need to focus on your own growth. It's okay to allow yourself to just 'be' in a world that's constantly asking you to run. Let silence and solitude be your operative words, Sagittarius. Spend some time meditating (preferably in nature) to take the Zen levels up a notch.

Tip: Sometimes you just have to allow yourself to 'be'.

CAPRICORN: Life is too short to be in 'may be' and 'let's see' territory. If you like it, you want to put a ring on it, and scream from the rooftops about how much in love you are. What's life without a little bit of drama, anyway? Feeling the feels but not ready to commit yet? Let things progress organically. Take your time to get to know each other. What the Universe wants you to keep in mind: there are good people in this world.

Tip: Love with all your heart.

AQUARIUS: How deep is your love? Aquarius, look for actions, not words. This will give you a clear insight into their willingness to commit for the long haul. Could you be fighting off a 10/10 lover because of somebody who let you down in the past? Kiss your demons goodbye. Be aware of how you're sabotaging your own growth. "It's not the sensation of joy that we fear, of course, it's actually the fear of losing it or the fear of never feeling it again." A Brene Brown quote to help you stay woke on your soulmate journey.

Tip: This could be for the long haul.

PISCES: Now here's some internet wisdom to open your heart: "Grant me the serenity to accept the things you cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Pisces, watch the anger and resentment until it dissolves. Come back to that space of purity within you, that place or unconditional love. It is here that you will find the wisdom you need to forgive your past.

Tip: Love and only love.