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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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*Financial obligation on state exchequer stands at Rs 5,605 cr: White Paper*

## SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 JUL:

Sikkim's overall financial obligation for the financial year 2019-20 stands at Rs 5,605 crores with a handful of departments commanding a lion's share of the liabilities, informs the White Paper on Expenditure Commitments, Borrowings and Revenue Potential tabled in the Legislative Assembly today.

The White Paper has been prepared by the Department of Planning, Economic Reforms & NEC Affairs and follows from a Cabinet decision taken on 27 May, 2019.

Of the liabilities, State schemes, comprising of state-earmarked projects and programmes, constitute 79% of the share.

Such documentation is expected, even advised, when a new dispensation takes office in a State to put on record the fiscal health it has inherited. As per the White Paper, the balance of funds required for the current year is Rs 4,953 crore.

In terms of department-wise share of the liabilities, Roads & Bridges Department tops the list with a balance requirement of Rs 1,048 cr followed by another engineering-driven department, Buildings & Housing. Between the two, they account for 40% of the total balance of funds required.

When it comes to pending bills, the aggressively prone to mounting dues are Roads & Bridges, Energy & Power and Rural Management & Development departments which account for 80% of pending bills.

Even as there are some departments which have gone overboard with accumulating dues, there are others which are hesitant to spend leading the White Paper to observe that some components of some schemes could be delinked from the main programme since there has been no significant progress.

30% of the liabilities are in connection with projects and programmes in which little expenditure has so far been incurred and no physical progress achieved. In such cases, there is a possibility to relook at these projects and possibility of reconsideration, rescheduling or even change of location, the White Paper recommends. The liabilities reported where there is no progress of work on ground has been calculated at Rs 2,102.57 cr by the Department of Planning.

Interestingly, during the process of compiling the White Paper, the Department

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## SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 JUL:

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang [Golay] presented the Annual Budget 2019-20 on the first day of the Budget Session 2019 here at Sikkim Legislative Assembly on Monday.

In his budget speech, the CM stated that the focus of the government in the current budget will be to review and take stock of the current situation of State finances in view of large committed liabilities of the State and address the immediate and urgent requirements only.

He added that the government will review the continuance of some of the major schemes that have been sanctioned earlier.

He informed that after forming the government on 27 May the State government decided to prepare a White Paper outlining the present level of burden of loans and liabilities, on account of the commitments and pending bills that the government has inherited,



ed, vis-a-vis the revenue potential of the State.

On the same, he informed that the total accumulated liabilities under various schemes amounts to Rs 5605 crores. The State's budgetary Debt consists of all liabilities that require payment of interest and or principal by the State government and it includes internal debt, loans and advances from the Centre and all public account liabilities, such

as provident funds, reserve funds and deposits, he said.

In addition to budgetary debt, the State has also increasingly reported to off budget borrowings through guarantees, he added.

The CM mentioned that in 2019-20 the State government was expected to spend Rs 1079.72 crores on servicing its debt including payment of interest for loan contracted on behalf of PSUs,

which was 12.46% of the overall estimated expenditure. This expenditure includes Rs 414.10 crore towards repayment of loans and Rs 665.62 crore towards interest payments, he informed.

The public debt and other liabilities during the beginning of the fiscal year 1994-95 was Rs 214.93 crore and thereafter there has been sharp spike over the years and the closing balance as on 31 March 2019 was Rs

6261.15 crore without accounting the borrowings contracted through the PSUs, said the CM. He mentioned that the present government has inherited a whopping liability.

Finance shows that Sikkim has Rs 2.98 lakh as per capita income in 2017-18 and this is the second highest in the country.

However, this high per capita income be-

income is 10 to 20 times more than Rs 2.98 lakh, he added that there is a big gap between the rich and the poor in today's Sikkim.

"We shall have to attack, address and resolve

## Highlights

- **SIKKIM SOCIAL ENDOWMENT FUND:** Public-private initiative to address inequality.
- **SIKKIM DEVELOPMENT AND REFORMS COMMISSION:** Creating a new process of mobilizing and managing financial resources.
- **FOREIGN WORKERS RECRUITMENT INSTITUTE:** Collaboration with Foreign Embassies to open employment opportunities abroad.
- **SCHOOL OF NURSES:** To prepare human resource for global opportunities.
- **CLIMATE CHANGE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE:** Make Sikkim the centre for climate change research, policy and strategies in the Himalayas.
- **MEDIA TEAM DEVELOPMENT REVIEW FUND:** Make media more vibrant, innovate and competitive.

## ADDRESSING POVERTY & INEQUALITY

Speaking on development inequality, the CM mentioned that the latest Economic Survey of India published by Ministry of

comes meaningful only if the income was equitably distributed among all sections of the people in the State, he said.

Stating that there are many whose per capita

this poverty-disparity-inequality issue with a range of instruments," said the CM.

He proposed a thorough study on development

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## Three bills placed on first day of Budget Session 2019-20

### SAGAR CHHETRI GANGTOK, 29 JUL:

Three bills were placed on the first day of the Budget Session 2019-20 here at Sikkim Legislative Assembly on Monday.

The Sikkim Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was introduced by the Minister for Transport Department, Sanjeet Kharel. The discussion and voting on the bill will be taken up on 31 July.

The statement of objects and reasons of the bill states that in order to facilitate the general public of Sikkim, the State Government has deemed it expedient to bring about an amendment in the Sikkim Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1982 to introduce the online payment of taxes and a onetime tax consisting of single/lump sum amount payable to the existing annual tax for five years at a time for all categories of vehicles.

It is further stated that this amendment would spare the public from the trouble of coming to Motor Vehicle Office every year and this would also reduce the workload of Motor Vehicle Offices and mitigate the inconvenience caused by the annual collection of road tax.

The amendment also provides flexible option of paying the tax for one or more quarterly periods, or annually or onetime tax@ five times of the annual tax either directly at the Regional Transport Office or through online payment, it states.

Chief Minister, PS Tamang, who is also the Minister-In-Charge of Finance Revenue and Expenditure Department, placed the Sikkim Court Fees and Stamps on Documents (Amendment) Bill, 2019 in the House. The discussion and voting on the bill will be held on Tuesday.

The statement of objects and reasons says, "Whereas the State Government has deemed it expedient to amend rule (7) of the Sikkim Court Fees and Documents Rules, 1928 and insertion of new rule (7)(a) with a view to introduce e-payment for collection of court fees. With this object in view, the Bill has been framed."

Likewise, the Minister for Law, Legal, Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Department introduced the Sikkim Lokayukta (Amendment) Bill, 2019 in the House. The discussion and voting on the Bill would be taken up on 01 August.

The statement of objects and reasons of the bill mentions that whereas, after review of the Sikkim Lokayukta Act, 2014, it has been considered

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## SKM Govt tables its maiden budget

### GANGTOK, 29 JUL [IPR]:

The First Session [Part II] of the Tenth Assembly, Budget Session 2019-20 of Sikkim Legislative Assembly commenced today with Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang [Golay], who is also the Minister In-charge of Finance Revenue and Expenditure Department, presenting the Estimate of Receipts, Annual Financial Statement, Demands for Grants and Explanatory Memorandum to the Annual Budget 2019-20.

While presenting the budgetary profile for the financial year 2019-20, he stated that against gross expenditure provision of Rs 8,888 crore,



the net outgo comes to Rs 8,665.36 crore after taking into account recoveries amounting to Rs 222.64 crores.

The Fiscal deficit, he highlighted, remains in adherence to the fiscal management targets set in the Sikkim Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Man-

agement Act 2010, i.e. not more than 3% of GSDP.

The contribution from own tax Revenue is of the order of Rs 1,220.21 crore and that of Non-Tax revenue Rs 704.54 crore.

The Total Gross Expenditure includes allocations amounting to Rs

51.49 crore under the dispensation of the North Eastern Council, Rs 181.39 crore under Non-Lapsable Pool of Central Resources and Rs 2,056.25 under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

The general discussion on the budget will be held tomorrow on the

## Measles Rubella Vaccination Campaign launched in Sikkim

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 JUL:

The Measles Rubella Vaccination Campaign (MRCV) was launched in all four districts of Sikkim today with the East District launch held at Tashi Namgyal Senior Secondary School, Gangtok.

The five-week campaign will cover all schools including anganwadi centers, ICDS, etc at the village level. The campaign which is mandated by Government Of India aims to rapidly build up population immunity by reaching out to all target of children with the vac-



cine knocking out susceptible cohort and eventually reducing the associated morbidity and mortality.

The launch in Gangtok was attended by Health Minister, Mani Kumar Sharma, accompanied by HRD Minister, Kunga Nima Lepcha along with Principal

Secretary Health & Family Welfare Department, Vishal Chauhan, Director General Health, Dr Pemba Tshering Bhutia and other dignitaries.

Chief guest, Kunga Nima Lepcha, expressed his gratitude for being invited to the launch of the

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## CM seeks disqualification waiver from EC

**NEW DELHI, JUL 29 (PTI):** Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang has requested the Election Commission to waive off his disqualification from contesting polls, sources said on Monday.

Tamang, whose Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party won in the recently held assembly elections, took over as chief minister on May 27 but cannot contest elections as he was convicted in a corruption case and stands disqualified.

He has to contest assembly polls within six months of becoming the chief minister to hold the office.

In a letter, Tamang has requested the poll panel to use Section 11 of the Representation of the People Act to waive off his disqualification, sources said.

Under the provisions, the EC can reduce or remove a person's disqualification.

Tamang was convicted in a corruption case and jailed for one year, a conviction which leaves him disqualified from contesting elections for six years since the date of his release.

An EC official said the matter is under consideration and no decision has been taken as yet.



*Awareness prog  
on scholarships  
available*

*through Social  
Justice Deptt*

#### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 29 JUL:**

Social Justice Department organised an awareness programme on various scholarships under the department at Rabongla Gram Vikash Kendra in South Sikkim today. The programme had Additional Secretary Benu Gurung as the main resource person, an official press communiqué informs.

The officer detailed the various scholarships offered to scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, OBCs, minority, students and others. She also highlighted how these can be availed and urged heads of schools to help students take full benefit of these scholarships.

Social Welfare Officer, Nakul Rawat, also spoke about other schemes and processes.

*Opposition  
members  
protest  
against  
Dam Safety  
bill in LS*

**NEW DELHI, JUL 29**

**(PTI):** Opposition members on Monday protest-

ed against introduction of a bill on dam safety in Lok Sabha, alleging that the Centre was appropriating powers of states.

Seeking to assure agitated members, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat -- who introduced the Dam Safety Bill, 2019 -- said the central government has not done anything to take away control from the states.

Congress members -- Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Tarun Gogoi, Shashi Tharoor and Manish Tewari -- as well as BJD leader B Mahtab, Trinamool Congress member Saugata Roy and DMK's A Raja opposed the bill.

RSP leader N K Premachandran also voiced concerns over the proposed legislation.

Members said there was no legislative competence for the bill as they emphasised that water is a state subject.

Mahtab, who is from Odisha, said the Union was trying to appropriate powers of the states through the bill and urged the government to reconsider the legislation.

The basic concern is dam safety, he added.

MPs from Kerala -- Tharoor and Premachandran -- voiced concerns about the legislation. Flagging concerns about certain provisions, Tharoor said the bill does not define who are 'stakeholders'. Chowdhury, leader of Congress in the Lok Sabha, said the bill was too focused on structural safety and not on operational safety as he called for a detailed discussion.

Roy wanted to know why the Centre was "interfering in the realm of states?"

Opposing the bill, he said it was clearly outside the purview of the central government.

Raja demanded that the bill be sent to a Parliamentary committee.

## MR vaccination campaign kicks off in North

**MANGAN, 29 JUL (IPR):** A month-long District level Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccination campaign commenced in North Sikkim from today under Health Care, Human Services and Family Welfare Department.

Inaugural session of the District level Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccination campaign took place here at the auditorium of Mangan Senior Secondary School, wherein District Collector, North, Rinzing Chewang Bhutia, inaugurated the District level MR vaccination campaign by cutting the ribbon of the Cold chain.

The inaugural session had the presence of Chief Medical Officer, North, DC Sharma, District Reproductive and Child Health



Officer, North, Purna Bassett, Health Educator, Rinchen Bhutia, Roshan Poudyal, HRDD Officials, representatives from Integrated Child Development Services, teachers, district health officials and students.

During the campaign, children aged 9 months to 15 years will be given

MR vaccine in a total 381 sessions in 17 different schools and ICDS centre of the District. The campaign will conclude in the first week of September.

The campaign will be carried out in two phases - i) School phase - Students will be vaccinated at school and ii) Community phase - children

who have been left behind are vaccinated at District Hospitals and ICDS centers in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, DC/N, Mr Bhutia, urged to the CMO and his team that the children who do not go to school should not be left behind during this campaign in order to achieve 100 percent coverage.

He also urged the students to encourage their friends who were not present to get the vaccination. In case of any left out children, they can come to district hospital, ICDS centers or they can contact Anganwadi workers to get vaccinated.

CMO/N, Sharma, said that the sole objective of MR campaign is to eliminate Measles and controlling diseases like Rubella. Sharing his concern, he said that a mild disease like Rubella can affect the pregnant woman resulting in defective physical health of child. Additionally, he also drew light on the fact that around 30 crore children in India have already received MR vaccination and it was completely safe.

## MR vaccination at Singtam



#### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 29 JUL:**

Measles Rubella (MR) vaccination program was held at East Point Secondary School under District Hospital Singtam today. The chief guest of the program was former CMO, Government of Sikkim, Dr M Sutradhar. Principal Singtam Senior Secondary School, KB

Chettri and Principal East Point Secondary School, Nishant Subba were also present.

The program included brief introduction on MR vaccine and its importance. All children from nursery to Class X were vaccinated today and those who have missed the vaccination can get vaccinated at District Hospital Singtam.

## Safai Abhiyan by Prashanti Youth Club

#### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 28 JUL:**

The Prashanti Youth Club, a youth club affiliated to NYK Namchi organised a Safai Abhiyan under Swachh Bharat Summer Internship Program (SBSI) of NYKS Sikkim, a press release informs.

The Safai Abhiyan was

led by president of the club, Sabnam Rai along with club members.

The activity was carried out to create awareness and make the area free from plastics and garbage disposed in the area.

They also plan to organise similar activities every Saturday in coming days.

## Doordarshan team meets Chief Secretary

**GANGTOK, 29 JUL (IPR):** The Doordarshan team from Delhi headquarters called on the Chief Secretary, A. K. Shrivastava today.

Secretary Department of IPR, Sherap Shenga and Secretary for Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Namrata Thapa were present in the meeting along with the team.

The Doordarshan Team comprised of Supriya Sahu [Director General], Srinivasan Sreeram [Officer on Special Duty], Ashok Kumar [Asst. Director, DDK Gangtok], Hari Gopal Sharma [Asst. Engineer, DDK Gangtok] and Suman Gazmir [Broadcast Executive].

The purpose of their visit was to showcase and collaborate with the Government of Sikkim, in an effective way, to launch a Doordarshan channel for Sikkim, wherein the State Government's involvement, events that take place regionally and nationally and tourism of Sikkim would be highlighted.

The Director Gener-

al, Supriya Sahu showed her concern that the entire North East need to be highlighted in the national media and thus the meeting with the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary of Sikkim was to better the concept of effective and engaging coverage.

The Chief Secretary told the Doordarshan team about the various aspects that could be covered by Doordarshan Sikkim Channel like eco-tourism, pilgrimage sites, flora and fauna, local communities and to promote local talents such as beauty pageants, etc which would place Sikkim in the global map.

The Chief Secretary also gave brief introduction and shed light on the importance and significance of Samdrupste, Guru Padmasambhava and Char Dham at Solophok Namchi, to the Doordarshan team.

Secretaries of Department of IPR and Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation gifted various books on Sikkim to the Doordarshan team.

## MR Vaccination Campaign launched in South

**NAMCHI, 29 JUL (IPR):**

Corresponding to the statewide launch of Measles and Rubella Vaccination Campaign (MRVC), South District also launched this ambitious programme at New Secondary School Namchi today.

Around 318 children from the age group of 9 months to 15 years were provided the vaccination on the first day. A total of 40943 children in the district are also targeted for vaccination under this programme at different schools and outreach centres.

The left out children will also be provided with MR vaccination at community based centres like Aaganwadi and NGOs in the district.

The programme was attended by District Collector South, Ragul K as the chief guest and was headed by the Chief Medical Officer South, Dr Sharada Rai alongside DRCHO South, Dr Junita Yonzon.

Present amongst other were Deputy Director Human Resource Development Department South,



Headmistress of the School, Rukmani Rai and other line departments officials. The programme was also participated by the staff of Health Department Namchi, guardians and health workers from various Non-Governmental Organisations.

Addressing the gathering, the District Collector said that the nation has resolved to eliminate Measles and Rubella in the years to come. He stated that this statewide campaign commencing from today aims to rapidly build up immunity for both Measles and Rubella disease among the children.

[This initiative is expected to surely reach

the targeted age group, with constant and active participation of the society along with the generation of mass awareness among the general public, he added. Mr Ragul also urged the gathering to come forth and avail the benefit provided by the state government.

The CMO South in her brief address highlighted the importance of MR vaccination and also motivated the children to receive the doses. Simultaneously, the vaccination programme was carried out at different government schools, Primary Health Centres, Primary Health Sub Centres and Community Health Centre in the district.

## Gyalshing hosts national-level arm-wrestling tournament



**GYALSHING, 29 JUL [IPR]:**

The 38th National Arm Wrestling Championship kicked off here at the Government Girls' Senior Secondary School auditorium today.

The two day championship is being organized by the All Sikkim Arm Wrestling Association (ASAWA) under the aegis of Arm Wrestling Federation of India (AWFI). This is for the first time that the State is hosting a national level arm wrestling championship.

Chairperson, State Bank of Sikkim, DB Gurung, was present as the chief guest today accompanied by a galaxy of officials and association members.

A large numbers of participants from Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Sikkim are participating in the tournament.

AWFI president ER Prahlad Sankar Bahagawati, in his brief address, appreciated ASAWA's efforts towards promoting arm wrestling in the State and informed that the sports' popularity was growing everywhere.

Mr Bhagawati praised the interest shown by the Sikkimese arm wrestlers and the effort invested by the State for promotion of the sport.

ASAWA president,

Lhendup Dorjee Bhutia, commented that although the interest was strong, arm wrestling was in a nascent stage in Sikkim and there was need to further develop technique and knowledge among Sikkimese participants.

"It is good to see Sikkimese arm-wrestlers who are new to arm wrestling but still giving a tough competition to already established and skilled arm wrestlers from other states. I am confident that Sikkim has a bright future in arm wrestling," he said.

The final matches of the championship will be played on Tuesday.

## HSP demands permission for CBI and seriousness on fake SSC issue

#### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 29 JUL:**

Hamro Sikkim Party today demanded that the State Government "immediately" grant permission to the Central Bureau of Investigation to open investigations in Sikkim.

An HSP press release alleges that opportunities for the young have shriveled in Sikkim due to rampant corruption and claims that this was noticed even by CBI which requested permis-

sion to investigate corruption allegations here.

The party has demanded that this request be granted and "corrupt people in our society are exposed as a deterrence to such behavior."

The party has also demanded that the case of fake Sikkim Subject Certificates and Certificates of Identification be taken up "with the seriousness it deserves so that our future generations are not usurped by people with fake identity papers."

## Jal Shakti Abhiyan program held at Pakyong



**GANGTOK, 29 JUL (PIB):**

Jal Shakti Abhiyan programme was held at ICAR-National Research Centre for Orchids, Pakyong Sikkim on 27 and 29 Jul, 2019. Principal Scientist (Horti), Dr LC De and Nodal Officer, Jal Sakti Abhiyan of ICAR-NRC (O) Pakyong welcomed the Chairman as well as all as other staff of the institute.

During the inaugura-

tion of the programme, Director, Dr DR Singh mentioned the importance of water and their sustainable utilization of the water resources. He emphasized on rain harvesting methods and possibilities to explore conservation of water in the farm and office premises.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Dr LC De (Pr Scientist) and Nodal officer of the programme.

## MUSS Atma Jagriti session in Namchi



#### SUMMIT REPORT

**GANGTOK, 29 JUL:**

A daylong Atma Jagriti session was conducted by Manav Utthan Seva Samiti, Namchi, on 28 July.

The program featured competitions related to

reading skills and recitation of poems.

Flutist Pritam Chettri and Miss and Mrs Global India 2019 top ten contestant Kripa Chettri were felicitated by the Youth Cell of MUSS South Sikkim on the occasion.

## SSS Pipalay preps for I-Day with cleanliness drive

#### SUMMIT REPORT

**JORETHANG, 29 JUL:**

Samajik Sadvawana Samiti of Pipalay in West Sikkim undertook a cleanliness drive at Jorethang Public Ground and its premises in preparation for Independence Day celebrations to be hosted there starting with the knockout foot-

ball tourney which kicks off on Tuesday.

The cleanliness drive was held under the guidance of SSS president, Kiran Kumar Rai, who is also the Vice President of Jorethang IDCC 2019.

SSS members cleaned up the playground galleries and also painted them today.

~ SummitTIMES ~  
CLASSIFIEDS

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

**WANTED**  
HOUSEKEEPER/BABYSITTER .  
Contact: 9933443442/9800500696.

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

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

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

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## Workshop on research methodology at SRM



### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 JUL:

A five-day workshop on Research Methodology and Data Analysis Using Advanced Statistical Software and Techniques concluded at SRM University, Sikkim, today. 45 scholars and faculty members participated in the workshop, a press release informs.

Dr Shtrajit Goswami, Dr Arif Hasan and Dr Praveen Rizal from the University were present as resource persons

and oversaw a vigorous workshop.

Vice Chancellor, SRM Univ, Prof Satish Kumar, speaking at the valedictory function, remarked that research would be fruitful when research methodology and objectives are clearly defined and research questions aptly framed.

He also encouraged the participants to engage in more research projects and continue to enhance their research skills.

## OMAS thanks CM for “pro artistes budget”

### NITESH PRADHAN GANGTOK, 29 JUL:

Organisation of Musicians and Artistes of Sikkim (OMAS) has thanked Chief Minister, PS Tamang for delivering a pro artistes budget.

The four points presented by the government in the budget session today is a historic step towards giving a positive direction towards emancipation and protection of Sikkimese artistes, the organization has said.

“We welcome the government’s decision to form Sikkim Creative’s Forum and we urge all artists and groups to work together in the forum for collective growth

and chart the future course of action through deliberations on policies for Sikkimese artistes,” OMAS states.

OMAS has also appreciated the government’s plans to connect Sikkimese artists with leading national institutes of arts and creativity.

“OMAS has a talented pool of such creative talents and we see it as a big opportunity for our artists to shine and hone their skills,” the organisation has expressed. They also informed that they will soon be seeking an appointment with the Chief Minister and will be submitting a memorandum based on these principles.

## Director General of Doordarshan meets CM



**GANGTOK, 29 JUL (IPR):** Director General of Doordarshan, Supriya Sahu and her team from Delhi called on the Chief Minister, Prem Singh Tamang (Golay) at his residence today.

The Director General informed the Chief Minister that she is visiting the state to take stock of the situation with regards to the functioning of DDK at Gangtok. She said that the main aim was to make the DDK fully functioning with satellite

broadcasting and equip it with all the modern technologies.

The Chief Minister thanked the Director General and requested that Sikkim be connected to the mainstream National media so that the state gets proper coverage.

He also stated that the state has lot of unique things to present to the rest of the world through its different culture, traditions, sports which needs to be showcased and thus the functioning

of the DKK at Gangtok would be a great step towards achieving the goal.

He also elucidated that recruitment of local people who hold expertise in mass media would motivate the youth to give in their best. At the end he extended all support possible towards the common goal.

The Director General also informed about the launch ‘Hello Sikkim’ series which will highlight local events and have informative slots.

## USFC to field new set of local footballers for premier div Sikkim League

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 JUL:

United Sikkim Football Club has announced plans to put together a team of young local footballers for the upcoming Sikkim Football Association Premier Division Sikkim League 2019. The club, it is informed, will prioritise footballers from rural parts of the State.

For the same, USFC, the defending champions of the premier division, has announced a state-level selection trial on 03 August here at Paljor Stadium.

The club has invited footballers aged above 17 years from all corners of the State to attend the trials.

Speaking to media persons here today, USFC senior manager, Arjun Rai, informed that the club has released all its senior players since they re-



ceived better contracts from other clubs.

He added that even the coach, Mayal Dok Lepcha, under whom USFC won the premier division for the past two years, has also moved to another club on getting a

better contract.

“So, we have decided to make a new comprising of young footballers from different corners of the State. Bhaichung has desired to give place especially to talented footballers from rural parts of the State in the United Sikkim FC for the upcoming premier division league 2019,” Mr Rai said.

He mentioned that the selection trial will be held on 03 Aug, 2019 at Paljor Stadium and the club will start training immediately from 04 August.

He mentioned that the club would also provide exposure to the new team at tournaments within and outside the State.



## Sensitization on Child Rights by East DCPU

### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 JUL:

Sensitization cum Awareness program on Child Rights, Child Abuse, POCSO Act, 2012, Adoption and Other Child Related Issues was organised by District Child Protection Unit, East at Janta Bhawan today, a press release informs.

The program was mainly organised for the functionaries of ICDS and Anganwadi Workers of Gangtok Urban Project.

The program started with welcome speech by Social Worker (East), Bandana Rai followed by

Introduction on ICPS by District Child Protection Officer, East, Deepak Kiran Rai. Social Worker (East), Amrit Sharma briefed the audience on the POCSO Act, 2012 and Child Rights.

ASP, Police Head Quarter, Dhan Maya Subba spoke on issues related to child trafficking and other child related issues.

Program Officer, Peter Rai (SARA) addressed the gathering on Adoption process.

The program ended with interactive session with the participants.

## Roads & Bridges Department Government of Sikkim

### NOTICE

The Roads & Bridges Department hereby invites enlisted Contractors of Category I-AA excluding Joint Venture enlisted with the Sikkim PWD for submission of their work details along with financial credibility supported by authentic documents as prescribed below within 15 (Fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice.

1. Work executed in the last 10(ten) years and work under execution.
2. Tools & Plants details with ownership (Hiring certificate shall not be entertained).
3. Hot mix plant ownership mandatory.
4. Annual turnover for the last 3 (Three) years not less than Rs.6.00 Crore (Rupees Six Crore) only.
5. Solvency Certificate.
6. Profit and loss statement for the financial year ending March 2019.
7. Fixed deposit details with not less than an amount of Rs.2.00 Crore (Rupees Two Crore) only.

This is to enable the Department to establish credential with respect to their performance as of now for empanelment after evaluation with regard to invoking Clause I of the Notification No. 515/R&B/PWD/Secy. Dt: 12/06/2018 for emergency/ urgent works.

Sd/-

(Chief Engineer)

R.O. No. 116/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20  
Date: 26.7.19

Roads & Bridges Department  
Govt. of Sikkim. Gangtok.

## Interact and Rotaract Clubs host Joint Installation



### SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 29 JUL:

A joint Installation and Leadership Training Seminar was organised by Interact Clubs of Gangtok and Rotaract Club of Gangtok Hills supported by Rotary Club of Gangtok South and Rotary Club of Gangtok on 28 Jul, a press release informs.

This Installation ceremony is the first ever joint Installation with Seven Interact Clubs and One Rotaract Club being installed altogether.

President Rotary Club of Gangtok South,

Mohanlal Sarda along with Geeta Sapkota and Geeta Chhetri collared the president, secretary and treasurer of the 7 Interact Clubs. Meanwhile, Prakash Sundas, RCC and the Co - DICC (North East India) collared the new president and the team.

Deeden Bhutia took over the office as the president of Rotaract Club of Gangtok Hills.

From the Interact Clubs, the presidents are: Tshering Pinto, Sir Tashi Namgyal Sen Sr School; Aditi Thapa, Tashi Namgyal Academy; Hishay Choden Bhu-

tia, Palzor Namgyal Girls Sen Sr School; Chewang Gyaltzen Bhutia, West Point Sen Sr School; Harsh Bardhan, Kyi De Khang.

Itr Kundan Thakur- Bojoghari School; abd Mohammad Sahil, Tathangchen Secondary School.

After the installation a Training Seminar was conducted by Prakash Sundas wherein he informed Interactors and Rotaractors on the responsibilities of their respective posts and the organization as a whole.

**GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM**  
**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**TASHILING, GANGTOK - 737103**  
No. GOS/DTE/2019/861 Dated: 22/07/2019

**Counseling Notice**

It is for information of all concerned that the counseling for allotment of the following State quota seats for the academic session 2019-20 will be held in the Conference Hall of HRDD, Gangtok as per the schedule indicated below:-

Sl. NO.	Date and Time	Course
1	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2019	M.Tech (10:00 am) MBA, MCA (12:00 noon)
2.	2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2019 (10:00 am)	M.Sc. (Agriculture, Forestry, Horticulture), M.Sc Economics, M.Sc Nursing, M.Sc Biotechnology, M.Sc Microbiology, M.Pharm M.P.H.
3.	5 <sup>th</sup> August 2019 (10:00 am)	M.A, M.Com, M.Sc (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics).
4.	6 <sup>th</sup> August 2019	B.Tech (Spot round-admission of Sikkim Institute of Science and Technology, Chisopani, South Sikkim).

Following information is available on the department's portal [www.sikkimhrdd.org](http://www.sikkimhrdd.org). All concerned are advised to log on to the above site on regular basis.

(i) The notification relating to reservation policy of the State Government for different categories of people of Sikkim for allotment of State quota seats.

(ii) Guidelines relating to procedure for allotment of State quota seats.

(iii) List of institutions, fee structure and number of seats available for allotment and,

(iv) Instruction for counseling.

All candidates are directed to be seated in the Conference Hall of HRDD, Gangtok thirty minutes prior to start of counseling.

Sd/-  
Sonam Denzongpa  
Director (I/C)  
Technical Education, HRDD

R.O. No. 108/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20  
Date: 23.7.19

## GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM Office of the Superintendent of Police State Reserves Lines

Gangtok (737101) Ph. (03592) 202933/202055

### TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders are invited from reputed reliable and experienced firm for stitching of uniform items in respect of civil police, sikkim armed police and Indian reserve battalions for the year 2018-2019. Tender form may be obtained from the office of the Superintendent of Police, State Reserve Lines, Composite Building, Below Palzor Stadium, Gangtok on production of the Bank Challan of Rs.5000/- (Five Thousand) only on the State Bank of Sikkim under receipt Head 0055-Police, Minor Head 103 Fees Fines and Forfeitures.

The Tender Form may be collected during working hours from 22/07/2019 to 31/07/2019 tender form duly filled in and sealed alongwith the certified copy of license, Tax Clearance Certificate alongwith the T.D.R of Rs.50,000/- (Fifty Thousand) only as Earnest money (refundable) should reach the Office of undersigned on 02/08/2019 before 1100 hours which will be opened on 02/08/2019 at 1400 hours by the committee in presence of the tenderers or their representatives, if any.

The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender with or without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-

Superintendent of Police

R.O. No. 113/IPR/Pub/Classi./19-20  
Date: 25.7.2019

State Reserve Lines  
Gangtok.



## Crime is Never Petty

### *Social bankruptcy feeds antisocial tendencies*

Speak to the old-timers, or leaf through a vintage edition of the Guinness Book of World Records, and chances are that you will learn that Sikkim, at one time, figured in the book under the enviable entry of a state with “zero crime rate.” The data that earned Sikkim this status is obviously suspect since not reporting or documenting crimes is not the same as not having any but no one can deny that Sikkim has been a safe place for a long time. Of course there have always been crimes committed; that, after all, is something every society has to live with. Of late, however, the nature of crimes has been showing a disturbing trend. Not only is violence entering the crime roll in higher numbers, but an increasing number of petty-burglaries with big hauls have become common, again, not all of them get reported to the police. News-reports arrive often about the nature of crimes now becoming increasingly common in the State – a planned burglary in which specific items are lifted, then a drug bust which occurs too routinely only because addiction rates are climbing, and then the rare murder which occurred over a minor issue. The other worrying statistic is the involvement of juveniles and the very young in too many crimes. One needs to only look at the criminal graph of the notorious “spiderman” of Sikkim to realize how minds and hearts, once inured to minor crimes can graduate to the more dangerous crimes. “Spiderman” started off as a petty burglar who climbed into hotel rooms and stole from tourists. He has since be involved in murders and violent jail-breaks. There have been other instances when masked gangs have carried out dacoities in villages and attempted heists, although that trend has thankfully subsided.

What continues to occur too often, and what should worry everyone, are the opportunist crimes. Ask anyone who lives in the urban sprawls of Gangtok and Namchi, and they will know of a neighbor who had stepped out for a brief errand only to return to find the house burgled. This has happened often and have rarely been solved. It was obviously someone who has noticed habits and patterns and is familiar with the place, perhaps even the target persons, to pull off a quick job like that.

For a state already grappling with a host of social challenges ranging from runaway substance abuse to growing number suicides to a high school drop-out rate, crime has clearly become the latest cause for distress. Although each of these challenges will require individual attention, they should not be seen in isolation because they are essentially interconnected in that they result from the socio-cultural and socioeconomic changes that have visited the State as part of ‘development’, modernity and mainstreaming. None of these are essentially negative influences but have collaborated to change lifestyles in Sikkim and while this change could have been eased with a more responsive society, fact remains that people at large were left to their own devices to ‘adjust’. The spurt in crimes and the involvement of kids too young to be held responsible for their deeds is possibly a product of imitative consumption which is too disquietingly common, especially among the younger generation. The obvious income inequality does not help matters and this situation, when catalysed by a largely absent civil society, eases the path leading to crime.

The inference made above is admittedly speculative, and it should be a worrying sign when journalists end up speculating on social trends when these are better handled by professionals trained in making sense of such issues. But that is not happening in Sikkim, is it? And that is where the main problem lies. For all the profusion of NGOs in the State, there is none of any consistent commitment to issues of the youth. It is important that the people and their representative organisations notice the trend and arrest the slide by first understanding what it is that drives some of its young to such easy delinquency and then setting the aberrations right. The situation demands a collective response, which, if not addressed soon, will snowball into a presence that cannot be erased as easily later. The cops will obviously do their job of rounding up suspects and finding the culprits, but until the root cause is not corrected, the problem will persist. What is worse, disinterest will from a hardened crop of anti-socials, because juveniles in obvious need of compassionate counseling would have received only ‘police action’ and derision. Antisocial tendencies are not fed by economic poverty, it is social bankruptcy that cements it.

# Why parents should fear measles, not the vaccine

DAVID W SCHEIFELE  
*theconversation.com*

The oxygen flow was at maximum but it wasn't enough to keep Aliyah alive. Her measles-damaged lungs failed in the night.

Aliyah was one of hundreds of children with measles that I looked after in a special ward of Kenya's national hospital in 1972, before the measles vaccine was available. I saw all of the possible complications of measles, many of them life-threatening. They left me with a deep respect for this once-common viral infection of childhood.

As an infection specialist, I celebrated the gradual disappearance of measles cases in Canada following the introduction of the routine measles vaccination in the mid-1970s. Today, most physicians have never seen a case. Parents too are unfamiliar with measles, with some doubting the need to avoid it, even viewing it as a trivial illness.

Given the recent measles outbreaks in Canada, the United States and globally, it is a good idea to remind ourselves what this illness is really like.

### NAUSEA, VOMITING AND FEVER

Measles is not trivial. It is the most severe of the once-common childhood infections. It is highly contagious and difficult to recognize until the rash appears later in the illness.

Six decades later, I remember having measles myself as a child: the fever that lasted for days, the headache, shaking chills and drenching sweats. I recall lying on the floor beside my bed, too sick to sit in a chair, while my mother changed the sheets.

This is the normal progress of measles, which

causes considerable distress to a sick child and their parents for seven to 10 days, even in the absence of complications. No antiviral drug is available to treat the illness or its complications.

The infection begins in the respiratory tract, with nasal congestion, sore throat, red eyes and increasing cough. Unlike common colds, measles gets worse over several days, causing increasingly high fever (often to 40 C or 104 F) and putting children in bed with nausea, vomiting, chills and headache.

This pre-rash phase lasts about four days, during which the infected person sheds huge numbers of viruses into their surroundings, accounting for measles being highly contagious. One person with measles can infect 75 to 90 per cent of susceptible members of a household by coughing and sneezing viruses into the air.

Communicability is especially high in group settings such as daycares and school classrooms but can also occur with just brief exposure to an infected person.

### CONTAGIOUS BEFORE SYMPTOMS SHOW

Measles hides its identity. It is often not until the fifth day of illness that the distinctive rash covers the body, revealing the diagnosis of measles. Children are contagious, however, from three to four days before the rash onset, when symptoms mimic a cold or flu infection.

Unlike colds and influenza, measles infection extends beyond the respiratory tract, spreading through the bloodstream to the skin and other organs. The rash of measles results from the child's immune system “catching up” and attacking viruses in the skin.

Any delay in immune activation, as may occur with malnutrition or immune disorders, prolongs the virus infection and increases tissue injury. When the rash appears, this marks the peak of illness and signals the beginning of recovery. The fever will soon subside although the child will still be contagious for several more days, and cough for **another one to two weeks.**

### ENCEPHALITIS AND BRAIN DAMAGE

Hospitalization rates for measles are highest for children under five years old — ranging from nine per cent to 25 per cent in Western countries.

Complications occur in about one in three young children with measles.

Common complications in the United States include middle-ear infection (otitis media) in 14 per cent of reported cases, diarrhoea with risk of dehydration in eight per cent and pneumonia in nine per cent, the latter caused by the virus or invading bacteria.

Brain inflammation or encephalitis with convulsions and coma is the most feared complication, occurring in one per 1000 cases. One in three survivors of encephalitis has residual brain damage. A fatal outcome was reported in two per 1,000 measles cases in the U.S., mainly in children with impaired immunity.

In short, measles is not trivial. It is distressing at best and life-threatening at worst. Parents should fear it. The sensible alternative is to ensure children are fully immunized against measles, given the excellent safety record and protection that the measles vaccine offers.

*[the writer is Emeritus Professor of Pediatrics, University of British Columbia]*



## ARV breakthrough: trial in South Africa confirms effectiveness of new drug

MICHELLE MOORHOUSE & WILLEM DANIEL FRANCOIS VENTER  
*theconversation.com*

A new antiretroviral drug regimen has been given the go-ahead by the World Health Organisation. This follows the preliminary results from studies that include an ongoing trial in South Africa.

The ADVANCE study, conducted by a Johannesburg-based research group from the University of the Witwatersrand, will only be completed next year. But early results show that dolutegravir is an effective and well-tolerated antiretroviral drug. ADVANCE, which will continue for 96 weeks, presented its 48-week results at the International AIDS conference in Mexico City.

The results are important because the Johannesburg trial includes a population much more representative of the real-world populations being treated for HIV across lower- and middle-income countries. Study participants are black, and almost 60% female with an average age of 32 years.

Previous studies of dolutegravir involved around 3000 participants, most of whom were middle-aged white men from high-income countries in the US and Europe. They obviously aren't reflective of the global and South African HIV epidemic, which is comprised of mainly black (more than 70%) and women (more than 52%), many of whom are under 40 years of age.

The drug efavirenz has been used in South Africa's public sector antiretroviral therapy (ART) programme for many years and has served the country well. But it has drawbacks. HIV easily becomes resistant to it; it's relatively expensive and it causes side

effects in some people. This explains why dolutegravir is being introduced into many HIV programmes across the world, based on recent guidance from the World Health Organisation. Efavirenz will nevertheless continue to be used, too.

There were other gaps as well, including little to no data regarding the use of dolutegravir in those with advanced disease; pregnant or breast-feeding women; people with HIV and tuberculosis coinfection; infants and children; and the elderly.

### THE STUDY

All the participants (over 1000) in the ADVANCE study were recruited from inner-city Johannesburg. Only 60% were South African, with the remaining 40% from other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, mainly Zimbabwe.

ADVANCE was designed to be as inclusive as possible. This was in an attempt to fill some of the evidence gaps left by the dolutegravir development programme. These included:

- placing no restriction on CD4 counts;
- allowing participants who developed TB or became pregnant during the study to remain in the study;
- recruiting from age 12 years and above; and
- keeping the exclusion criteria to enter the study to a minimum.

Another unique feature of ADVANCE is the fact that it was designed by a consortium of leading international HIV clinicians and researchers. There were also inputs from global bodies such as the World Health Organisation, Clinton Health Access Initiative, as well as treatment advocates and activist groups.

It was funded by USAID, Unitaaid, the South African Medical Research Council. Study drugs were donated

by Gilead Sciences and ViiV Healthcare.

### WHAT'S BEEN FOUND SO FAR

The ADVANCE study is comparing two dolutegravir-based ART regimens with an efavirenz-based regimen in people starting ART. It is also comparing the currently used ART backbone containing tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) to the newer tenofovir alafenamide fumarate (TAF).

The early studies in Europe showed that dolutegravir didn't have many side effects. The most marked of the side effects was insomnia. In addition, both dolutegravir and TAF are cheaper to manufacture at scale and can be easily made into a single, much lower dose pill than the current fixed-dose combination used in the public sector.

The study showed that people starting ART with a dolutegravir-based regimen achieved the same high rates of viral suppression as those starting with efavirenz. We also saw very little treatment failure and in most cases, even those individuals who had a high viral load subsequently had an undetectable viral load after adherence counselling.

Very few people stopped the study because of side effects, although more people on efavirenz experienced side effects.

Hardly any ADVANCE participants developed TB – a common co-infection in people living with HIV – as nearly all received tuberculosis preventative medication.

But there are some concerns. One finding was that we saw weight gain in participants receiving dolutegravir-based ART, which was worse in women and in those who received both dolutegravir and TAF. Obesity carries many health risks in terms of developing high blood pressure, risk of diabetes and other problems. Because of this, we are monitoring obe-

sity levels in ADVANCE participants.

We are not sure what the wider implications of this finding may be. But similar findings of weight gain associated with the use of integrase inhibitors, including dolutegravir, were presented at the retroviruses and opportunistic infections conference in March 2019. The finding highlights the importance of including screening for co-morbidities and appropriate lifestyle interventions when treating people with HIV. More research is needed to understand the cause and implications of weight gain seen with integrase inhibitors.

The number of pregnancies in ADVANCE are too small to draw meaningful conclusions from about the risk of neural tube defects. We have not seen any neural tube defects in the study.

### WHY IT MATTERS

ADVANCE is an important study. It confirms that dolutegravir is an effective and well-tolerated ARV for people initiating ART.

This is reassuring as South Africa is planning to roll it out as part of its antiretroviral programme.

Because ADVANCE included a diverse African population and was much more representative of the demographics of the HIV epidemic, its results are important both to people living with HIV in South Africa, as well as globally.

The results have been shared with the World Health Organisation to inform guideline discussions and with regulatory bodies across the globe.

*[Michelle Moorhouse is Senior Research Clinician, University of the Witwatersrand; Willem Daniel Francois Venter is Deputy Executive Director, Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute, University of the Witwatersrand]*



# Vernacular newspaper scribe shot dead in Bihar

**MADHUBANI, JUL 29 (PTI):**

A journalist working for a national hindi daily was shot dead by two motor-cycle borne miscreants at Sarsopahi bazar under Pandaul police station area of Bihar's Madhubani district late Sunday evening, police said on Monday. The deceased has been identified as Pradeep Mandal (36), Pandaul police station SHO- Anuj Kumar- said.

The bike borne criminals identified as- Sushil Sah and Ashok Kamat- fled from the spot after pumping two bullets in the scribe's stomach, the SHO said.

Mandal, who was associated with a national Hindi daily (Dainik Jagran) as its Pandaul block stringer, was rushed to Sarsopahi primary health centre where doctors declared him brought dead, the police official said.

Prima facie it seems to be the case of an old



enmity between the slain mediaperson and the attackers, the SHO said.

The two miscreants have criminal antecedents as both have been named in a criminal case lodged with Bhairav Asthan police station of

the district. The body has been sent to Madhubani sadar hospital for autopsy, the SHO said.

Condemning the murder of the journalist, opposition RJD demanded immediate arrest of the criminals. "I strongly con-

demn the killing of the journalist in Madhubani. This is the glaring example of deteriorating law and order situation in the state. Democracy will be in perils if people, who work as a watchman of democracy, are shot dead by criminals.

Journalists are the mirror of the society and it is the first and foremost duty of the government to protect them. The administration arrest criminals immediately," RJD legislator and spokesman Shakti Singh Yadav said.

## Budget to focus...

inequality and imbalance by an eminent institution in India. Rich individuals in the State and others may inspire and incentivize he poorer sections mainly the younger generation through making philanthropic contributions for various micro and macro level activities and their names will be highlighted for their affirmative action, he stated.

"We propose a formula of 5:1 i.e. if a philanthropist contributes Rs 5,000, government of Sikkim will contribute Rs 1000 in this fund. The pool of funds will be managed, operated and evaluated by a team of State, Civil Society and Private Sector. I name this institution Sikkim Social Endowment Fund," he said.

Speaking on more practical and accurate ways to identify poverty as done in Sri Lanka's Jansaviya Programme, he stated that each Zilla Panchayat will be empowered and resources will be made available to start this exercise of scientifically identifying households below poverty line and thus effectively alleviate poverty.

CM announced the formation of Sikkim Development and Reforms Commission which will be headed by the CM and will have a noted Development Economist as the Vice Chairman and will have experts, Ministers, civil society, private sector, NGOs and community and representatives from opposition party. The commission will function under the aegis of the Office of the Chief Minister.

Speaking on the Commission, he stressed upon the need to rethink on the planning and development machinery in the State.

"We shall have to negotiate a new planned development process, a new paradigm of mobilizing and managing financial resources and also examine how international and multilateral institutions could be attracted to fund development projects and other programmes in Sikkim," he said.

### EDUCATION & YOUTH

CM made various announcements in the education sector from primary level to higher levels in the maiden budget of the government. He said that the youth of Sikkim are highly talented and for their talent to flourish and reach greater heights at the national and global level, the state needs to have institutions that are competitive, inclusive and globally oriented.

Speaking on suicide and substance abuse, he announced that the government will commission an inter-disciplinary team of experts to examine the reason behind both these perilous dimensions of the society and the ways to effectively end this.

He further announced financial support to NGOs to work and address these two crucial areas, technological interventions in both supply intelligence modules and also demand side detections and all forces and institutions dealing with psychotropic substance will be given a major technological upgradation. He also announced to appoint two psychiatrists and two psychologists each in all four district hospitals as both preventive and curative measures.

CM announced to set up Foreign Workers Recruitment Institute in cooperation with various Foreign Embassies in India

and other international job recruitment agencies to provide ample employment scope for the youth of Sikkim in and outside the country. He further announced to provide training to youths in various professional areas.

While speaking on high demand of nurses and other health workers in other big countries, he talked of harnessing these markets by providing professionally well trained female and male nurses from Sikkim. He also mentioned a serious endeavour to send and recruit 50 nurses in Japan by 2025, 50 nurses in Europe and USA by 2025 and 50 nurses in Canada and other countries by 2025.

On the same, the CM announced to set up a modern School of Nurses with all world class facilities and technologies with the premises of the existing hospital and this school will also have house language training centres such as English, French, Japanese, Chinese and Korean.

He also announced to set up Climate Change Centre of Excellence in Sikkim with a view to make Sikkim as the core geography on climate change research, policy and strategies in the Himalayas. He also mentioned that the State government will soon start revamping the health services in the State with a view to providing at least basic services at the grassroot level.

He informed that besides the primary health centres and district hospitals, the new STNM Hospital will be given adequate resources to meet the requirements of the people.

CM mentioned that the State government will now set up a special cell in the Department of Social Welfare to sensitize and make people aware on large numbers of welfare, development, professional and financials schemes of the Central government and the State government for SC and ST communities and OBCs through various mediums.

### DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA

Speaking on Media Team Development Review Fund, he mentioned that the government intends to make media more vibrant, innovate and competitive.

"This could be done by providing the media persons to see for themselves what is happening in and around the country. These exposure trips will re-skill our media persons, make them evaluate more objectively and nurture spirit of competitive professional in them," he said.

On the same, he added that the government will provide the scheme which will allow the journalists to visit any development project in the country to evaluate the same, write series of reports from the field and submit the full report of the State government.

"The amount of Fellowship proposed is Rs 1 lakh per Fellowship every year and the number of Fellowship offered is 10 per year. The eligibility criteria for the Fellowship will be for all Accredited Journalists and media persons," he said.

CM also made announcements in literature, art, music and film productions. On the same, he also announced that efforts will be made to reactivate the Doordarshan Kendra in Gangtok which will have fully operational programme and tele-casting facilities.

## 312 pigs and piglets, including 6 infected with PRRS, seized in Mizoram

**AIZAWL, JUL 29 (PTI):**

Mizoram minister Dr K Beichhua on Monday said 312 pigs and piglets, including six infected with the PRRS disease, were seized after being sourced from Myanmar violating the ban on its import.

Of the seized animals, six were found to be infected with the Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS), the outbreak of which in the state was the reason for the ban on the import, Beichhua said.

Deputy Commissioners of all the eight districts of the state have issued orders on February 1 banning import of pigs and piglets from other countries in view of possible outbreak of the PRRS.

"The authorities have seized 312 pigs and 121 of them are grown-up ones last week. Six of these 121 were found to be in-

fectured with the PRRS. Twenty people were arrested in this connection," Beichhua told reporters.

He said the PRRS outbreak in 2013, 2016 and 2018 resulted in the death of a total of over 10,000 pigs and piglets in the state.

It was suspected that the PRRS outbreak was due to illegal and even legal import of pigs and piglets from Myanmar where there was reported prevalence of the porcine disease, official sources said.

"We are afraid that a porcine disease, more dangerous than the African Swine Fever (ASF), would reach Mizoram," the minister said.

The ASF is prevalent in countries like China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Hongkong this year. A technical committee on preparedness of the AFS was set up by the state veterinary department.

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### Three bills...

expedient to bring in amendments in various sections with regard to appointment of Chairperson, appointment of Secretary, officers and staffs of the Lokayukta for the smooth functioning of Lokayukta.

It is also deemed necessary to insert a new clause (d) of Section 30 regarding removal of Chairperson on the ground of proven misbehaviour and also to confer power on the State Government to transfer to the Lokayukta any allegation of corruption pending inquiry before the Vigilance wing of the State Government, it is added.

### Financial obligation...

also discovered that the State Government extended guarantees on loans without the proposals getting referred to the loan division of the Finance, Revenue & Expenditure Department and nor were its accounts recorded in the books of accounts maintained by the loan division of FRED. The outstanding amount on such loans stands at Rs 3,455.04 cr.

The White Paper also makes a series of recommendation on how the State Government to increase its revenue.

The State Government has to take policy decision and even amend the Sikkim Financial Rules if necessary to ensure seamless deduction of tax at source, the White Paper recommends.

Deduction of GST at source is hampered by supply of construction material to contractors from departmental stores and delay in release of payment beyond the time period specified for filing of returns.

The hotel and hospitality sector is seen as a "green pasture of revenue" in the White Paper, but due to absence of data with the licensing authority, the Commercial Taxes Division has not been able to administer this sector properly and a committee of officers has been formed to remove this discrepancy.

The White Paper also holds up the

### SKM Govt...

Governor took the occasion to condole the demise of Sudarshan Agarwal, who served as the Governor of Sikkim from 25 October 2007 to 08 July 2008. He passed away on 03 July 2019 in New Delhi.

He also congratulated the Bharatiya Janata Party and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for recording a second historical win, which he said was special in many ways. He also congratulated the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha Party led by Prem Singh Tamang on winning the elections in Sikkim and forming the Government.

He said that this was the beginning of a new era, which would fulfil the expectation and aspirations of the people of the State.

The Governor stated that the thrust of the Government would be to take a review of the total committed liabilities of the State while also addressing the immediate requirements of the State and the people.

"Sikkim has evolved as a progressive state with marked improvements in socio-economic indicators, despite facing disadvantages of inadequate connectivity, high cost of infrastructure building and maintenance and difficulties in delivering services to dispersed populations in hilly areas. This budget marks a major milestone in delivering our commitments which are firmly based on prudent public finance management for achieving overall socio-economic development in Sikkim," stated the Governor in his address.

While highlighting some of the notable achievements of the State in various sectors, the Governor outlined the priority areas incorporated in the Budget.

He elaborated on the Government's vision in the area of skill development & entrepreneurship, education, innovative and high value tourism, and promotion of non-polluting Green Industry. He explained that "Green Industry" is a term which recognizes that in a world of increasing resource scarcity, climate change, pollution and depletion of natural capital, eco-

### Measles Rubella...

campaign and said that the campaign once again has to demonstrate Sikkim's commitment to improve health and the well being of its people by protecting children against preventable diseases.

Health Minister, Dr Mani Kumar Sharma cheered the enthusiastic crowd of students present there and urged them to receive MR vaccine and to be a part of the global effort to reduce illness and deaths due to measles and rubella/ CRS in the State.

Earlier there was a brief slide presentation by Dr Phumsey, AD HS-RCH cum State Immunization Officer about the Measles and Rubella Vaccination.

The programme concluded with vote of thanks given by Mission Director (NHM), PM Pradhan and the campaign continued with the immunization of the students there.

India having successfully overcome the challenges of many diseases in the recent past it is now making a confident

"service of supply of accommodation on rent and lease" as a "new area for revenue collection" and informs that base work has begun to prepare a master data of taxpayers in this sector.

The Land Revenue & Disaster Management Department has, in turn, proposed revision of fees to augment the revenue of the State. Fee taken for a range of services like mutation after registration, khatian copy, proper certificate, income certificate, ST Certificate, Unmarried Certificate etc are proposed to be doubled.

The Excise Department has proposed to hike Education Cess on foreign liquor from Rs 2.70 per bulk litre to Rs 6 and Education Cess on beer from Rs 1.60 per bulk litre to Rs 4.

The Forest Department too has "identified certain areas where there is potential of additional revenue generation."

Apart from suggesting that distribution of free saplings for plantation drives be curtailed to the extent that more than 50 saplings be priced at Rs 10 per sapling, the Department has also suggested that the practice of supplying timber for CMRHM and REDRH constructions free of cost could be stopped.

It has also proposed that muck dumping at designated sites be charged by the truckload and fee be levied on hot mix plants.

nomie growth must rely on clean and efficient production processes.

He also spoke extensively on farmer-centric plans and policies envisaged by the government. He said that the Government of India is according high priority for welfare of the farmers and is implementing several farmer's welfare schemes to revitalize agriculture sector and to improve their economic conditions.

He added that the Government has rolled out several new initiatives for the benefit of farmers like Soil Health Card Scheme, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), National Agriculture Market (e-NAM), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Interest Subvention Scheme etc. He added that the Sikkim Organic Mission must be taken to its logical conclusion with all out financial, technical and marketing initiatives.

Governor also expressed concern on the high suicide rate and a considerably high degree of substance abuse in the state. Though this has acutely affected families and has been a widely discussed issue, expected remedial measures have not been taken, he added.

He shared that the Government will devise concrete steps to counter these challenges. He further said that more concerted efforts are required to put the State into a higher growth trajectory. He called upon everyone to pledge to build a better future and take the State towards greater heights.

"Though our problems are unique due to our geographical limitations and limited availability of resources, it is our duty to ensure that the fruits of development reach each household in the State. I hope that the deliberations of this budget session will be fruitful towards this end," he said.

During the Motion of the Thanks, the CM expressed his gratitude to the Governor on behalf of the members of the House for his address, which was seconded by the Member of the House, AK Upreti.

stride to triumph over measles and rubella. India along with ten other WHO South East Asia Region members countries have resolved to eliminate measles and control rubella/ congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) by 2020.

More than 30 crore children in the country have been vaccinated with MR vaccine during the ongoing MR campaign. Children in the age group of nine months to less than fifteen years should get the MR vaccine shot, it was informed.

Also present were Additional Director HS-RCH cum State Immunization Officer, Dr Phumsey Bhutia, Director of Health Department, KG Togyay, Medical Superintendent CHR, Dr Dey, representatives of WHO, Dr Mishra, Dr Mehta, Dr Subhendu, representative of UNICEF, Dr Meenakshi, dignitaries, Senior Officials, Principal of Tashi Namgyal Senior Secondary School, teachers and students.



## Iran's Rouhani seeks closer UK ties with Johnson

**VIENNA, JUL 29 (AP):** Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has penned an open letter to Britain's new prime minister, saying he hopes the countries' diplomatic ties will be stronger under Boris Johnson's leadership.

In the letter published Sunday on Rouhani's website, the Iranian president congratulated Johnson on becoming prime minister Wednesday.

Rouhani said he hoped Johnson's "only one visit to Tehran" while serving as U.K.

foreign secretary in 2017 and now his tenure as prime minister lead to a "further deepening of bilateral and multilateral relations."

Johnson took office on Wednesday amid a spike in tensions in the Persian Gulf and a diplomatic standoff between Britain and Iran. Iran seized a British-flagged tanker in the Strait of Hormuz this month after the British navy helped seize an Iranian super-tanker loaded with crude oil near Gibraltar.

## Anjum Moudgil shoots above world record at Masters Meet

**NEW DELHI, JULY 29 (PTI):** Anjum Moudgil, representing Punjab, shot well above the finals world record to win the women's 10m Air Rifle gold on day one of the XII Sardar Sajjan Singh Sethi Memorial Masters shooting competition here on Monday.

Top 15 leading shooters of the country in each discipline by scores are eligible to compete at this elite competition at Karni Singh Range.

World number eight Anjum, who has already won a Tokyo 2020 Olympic quota in the event, shot 253.9 in the fi-

nals, a full point ahead of India teammate and world number one Apurvi Chandel's mark of 252.9, set at the New Delhi World Cup stage earlier this year.

Silver medallist Mehuli Ghosh of West Bengal missed Apurvi's mark in the women's final by 0.7 but made sure to go past it in the junior women's final, which she won with a score of 253. Elavenil Valarivan won silver in junior section with a score of 252.4.

India regular Ravi Kumar of the Air Force won the men's 10m Air Rifle event.

## Oz coach Langer reveals how job pressure caused emotional turmoil at home



**SYDNEY, JUL 29 (PTI):** Australia coach Justin Langer has revealed that the first six months of his job were so stressful that his wife Sue was left in tears during the time Virat Kohli's India were on course for their maiden Test and ODI series triumphs here.

Speaking to 'ESPNCricinfo' ahead of the Ashes starting August 1, Langer said taking charge of the team, which was reeling in the aftermath of the ball-tampering scandal last year, took its toll on him especially during the drawn fourth Test against India here.

"I've known my wife since I was 14 years old, so she knows everything about me, and they were leaving. They were leaving that day, and we were at breakfast at 8 o'clock and my wife started crying at the breakfast table in front of my daughters," Langer recalled.

"I said what's going on, I had never seen my wife cry - we know everything about each other. She said 'I just don't like what's happening here, I don't like what it's doing to you, I don't like what it's doing to us, people are so mean, what people are saying about you and the team and Australian cricket'. That was a real

eye opener for me, that it was affecting my family," he said.

India won both the Test and ODI series by a 2-1 margin.

A tense exchange with a journalist on all-rounder Glenn Maxwell's Test future was another instance which made Langer feel that perhaps the pressure of the job was a bit too much.

"I got, I'd say two out of 10 grumpy with the journalist in Sydney, and I was also amazed at the backlash of that as well," Langer said.

"I apologised straight after the event, that's me, but I realised then and the way people said 'he's getting angry, he's losing it'. I didn't feel that but my wife was getting upset, that was a real moment."

"I've said privately and publicly a few times if I look back to my career, 1993 when I got dropped for the first time, really tough time, but pivotal in my life. "I got dropped in 2001, a really, really tough time, but pivotal in my life. I look to January 2019 in Sydney, really tough time, but I've got no doubt it'll be a massive part of my evolution as a coach," he added.

# Gareth Bale left in limbo after Real Madrid board blocks China move

**PAUL MacINES**  
*theGuardian*

**G**areth Bale looks set to remain at Real Madrid, a club that does not want him, after the board blocked his lucrative transfer to China.

The Wales winger had been expected to join the Chinese Super League side Jiangsu Suning on a three-year deal this week with a contract worth more than £1m a week. That move is now off after the Real's board reportedly decided they want a transfer fee for the player who joined from Tottenham in 2013 for a then world-record fee of £85m.

The Real president, Florentino Pérez, is believed to have requested an extra payment to sign the 30-year-old, who has three years remaining on the contract he signed in 2016, which is worth around £600,000 a week.

With the Chinese transfer window closing on Wednesday, Bale's hopes of sealing a move away from the Santiago Bernabéu this summer could now rest on him finding another club in Europe, with Real said to be prepared to let him join a Champions League rival for the right price.

The English transfer window shuts on 8



August – the day before the start of the new season – but no Premier League clubs have expressed an interest in signing one of the world's best-paid players.

Despite coming off the bench for the second successive match as Real were thrashed 7-3 by Atlético Madrid in New Jersey on Saturday as well as Marco Asensio's extended absence due to a knee injury, Bale's prospects of being reintegrated into Zinedine Zidane's first team still appear

slim after the Frenchman's sustained a very public campaign to move him out of the club.

After leaving Bale out of a pre-season game against Bayern Munich last week, which Real lost, Zidane said he hoped the player would be sold. "We hope he leaves soon," he said. "It would be best for everyone. We are working on his transfer to a new team. I have nothing personal against him but there comes a time where things are done because they must

be done."

Bale's representatives are understood to be disappointed with Real's stance after negotiating the deal with Jiangsu over the past fortnight and with time running out to secure an alternative destination for next season. He has won four Champions League titles with the club but has been sidelined by Zidane since he returned to Madrid this spring for a second spell as manager – a decision described as bad news by Bale's agent,

Jonathan Barnett.

According to the Spanish newspaper Marca, often a mouthpiece for the Real board and Pérez in particular, the breakdown in negotiations with Jiangsu – whose owners Suning also own Internazionale – was caused by a request from Bale's own family, who would reportedly prefer to stay in Europe.

Zidane remains keen to have the situation resolved quickly, with a potential move for Manchester United's Paul

Pogba possibly dependent on finding a buyer for Bale. Real have already spent close to £300m on recruits this summer but they must balance the books with player sales if they are to finance a move for the France midfielder who will cost in excess of £100m.

Bale has made 79 La Liga starts in the past four years but with Barnett having ruled out a loan move this summer he could find himself left in limbo this season.

## Sindhu continues title quest in Thailand Open

**BANGKOK, JUL 29 (PTI):** The successive losses to Japan's Akane Yamaguchi have been disappointing but Indian ace P V Sindhu will have to put it all behind when she renews her chase for a maiden title this year in the Thailand Open badminton tournament, starting here on Tuesday.

The last two weeks have been an emotional roller-coaster ride for Sindhu as after finishing second-best at the Indonesia Open, she was shown the door in the quarterfinals of the Japan Open last week.

On both occasions, familiar foe Yamaguchi turned out to be Sindhu's nemesis. The Indian would be desperate to break her seven-month long title jinx.

Seeded fourth, Sindhu will open her women's singles campaign against unseeded Chinese Han Yue, whom she easily overcame in the first round of Japan Open. If all goes well, Sindhu might face her first real test in the quarterfinals with a possible clash against sixth seed Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand.

The other Indian in fray, Saina Nehwal has been seeded seventh here, but she has been hampered by several injuries of late.

Saina was forced to withdraw from both the Indonesia and Japan Open on medical grounds as she is focussing on getting into shape for next month's World Championships. She has been pitted against a qualifier in the opening round.

In men's singles, Shubhankar Dey has got a tough opening round against top seed Kento

Momota of Japan, while B Sai Pranneth, who lost in the semifinals last week, is up against Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen. If both the Indians manage to get past the first hurdle, they will face each other next.

Fifth seed Kidambi Srikanth will take on a qualifier, while H S Pranoy will be up against Wong Wing Ki Vincent of Hong Kong in the opening round.

Sameer Verma, seeded eighth, will face Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia while Parupalli Kashyap will take on France's Brice Leverdez.

Sourabh Verma and Ajay Jayaram will have to go through the qualifiers.

While Sourabh will play top seed Shesar Hiren Rhustavito of Indonesia in the first qualifying round, Jayaram will face Chinese Zhou Ze Qi.

In men's doubles, two Indian pairs feature but only one among them will progress to the next round. The combinations of Satwiksairaj Rankiredy and Chirag Shetty and Manu Attri and B Sumeth Reddy will face each other in the opening round.

The lone Indian pair in women's doubles -- Ashwini Ponappa and N Sikki Reddy -- will be up against the Chinese duo of Li Wen Mei and Zheng Yu in the opening round.

In mixed doubles, Pranaav Jerry Chopra and N Sikki Reddy are drawn against the Japanese combination of Kohei Gondo and Ayane Kurihara while the pair of Satwiksairaj Rankiredy and Ponnappa have a tough task at hand as they are pitted against fifth seed Chan Peng Soon and Goh Liu Ying of Malaysia.

## ICC World Test Championship will add context to five-day game: Kohli



**DUBAI, JUL 29 (PTI):** India captain Virat Kohli on Monday said the ICC World Test Championship (WTC), that gets underway on August 1, will add context to the longest format of the game.

The inaugural edition will see top nine Test teams -- Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and the West Indies -- fight for the top honours in 71 Test matches across 27 series over the next two years.

The top two teams will then play the final scheduled to be held in June 2021 in the United Kingdom.

"We are awaiting the ICC World Test Championship with great enthusiasm as it adds context to the longest format of the game," Kohli said in an ICC media release.

"Test cricket is very challenging and coming out on top in the traditional form is always highly satisfying. The Indian team has done really well in recent years

and will be fancying its chances in the championship," he added.

Each team will play three home and three away series and will be awarded points for every game.

Each series will count for 120 points, distributed over the number of matches in a series. For example, a two-match series will mean 60 points for each Test while a three-match series will give 40 points to each match. A tie will be 50 percent of the points available, whilst a draw will be a 3:1 points ratio.

"Test cricket is the pinnacle of our sport. It is the very essence of cricket and the majority of players want to strive to play the purist form of the game," England's leading Test wicket taker, James Anderson, said.

"The ICC World Test Championship is another brilliant initiative for the sport, adding context and relevance to every Test series. Every Test matters, but even more so now," he added.

Organised by the Member Boards, the matches will be played just like any bilateral series, but with the added context of a competition and one champion team.

Opponents were scheduled by collective agreement of the competing members, with a number of the fixtures already committed within existing member rights agreements.

"The ICC Men's Cricket World Cup this summer showed just how important it is for every game to count and for the world's best teams to go head-to-head," said Geoff Allardice, ICC General Manager - Cricket Operations.

"The World Test Championship will bring relevance and context to bilateral Test cricket over the next two years, creating a pinnacle event for the five-day format, just as the World Cups for men and women do in the ODI and T20I formats," he added.

The number of matches in each series

can vary between a minimum of two matches, to a maximum of five matches. The first cycle of the WTC consists of only five-day matches and will include day-night matches, subject to bilateral and mutual agreement between the opponents.

Only matches identified as part of the WTC will count towards the championship.

"The World Test Championship is a fantastic initiative. We love playing Test cricket, it's the pinnacle for us, remains hugely popular in Australia and we're fortunate that it enjoys great support at home among players, the media and the public," Australia Test captain, Tim Paine, said.

"To wear the baggy green is the ultimate for all Australian cricketers and if the World Test Championship helps to ensure that all countries make Tests a high priority then that has to be good news for the game in general and the continuing health of the format in particular.



## Asia markets down as US-China trade talks loom

**HONG KONG, JUL 29 (AFP):** Asia markets were mostly down Monday, with investors cautious ahead of US-China talks in Shanghai this week and amid more civil unrest in Hong Kong.

Two-day discussions begin on Tuesday with a Washington delegation led by White House Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.

But analysts are pessimistic about a resolution to the year-long trade dispute between the world's top two economies that has seen USD 360 billion in tariffs imposed on bilateral trade.

"Hoping for the best but preparing for the worst best describes my view," said Vanguard Markets managing partner Stephen Innes.

"We are not overly optimistic about a positive Shanghai surprise."

Hong Kong was among the biggest downward movers on Tuesday with the Hang Seng falling more than two per cent after a fresh round of violent protests over the weekend, before paring losses to close one per cent lower.

Pro-democracy demonstrators in the financial hub fought a second consecutive day of running battles with police on Sunday evening in a well-heeled residential district, a day after clashes at a banned rally in a town near the border with mainland China.

Real estate shares were among the biggest losers from the political uncertainty, with commercial property developer Swire down three per cent and subway operator MTR down 3.4 per cent at the close.

The weekend protests were "factoring quite negatively into the overall risk equation", Innes said, with traders concerned that Washington may speak in support of the demonstrators.

"If they do, it would not only throw this week's trade discussion into disarray but could jeopardise bilateral trade negotiations going forward," he added.

The city's American Chamber of Commerce on Monday urged officials to address grievances fuelling the protests -- which have carried on for nearly two months -- and "restore confidence" in the city's reputation as an international business and financial centre.

"A clear majority of our membership surveyed over the past week said the government needs to address the underlying causes of the protests and not simply to paper over the cracks of social instability with a short-term law-and-order fix," said AmCham president Tara Joseph.

Seoul fell 1.8 per cent amid an ongoing trade spat with Tokyo, which restricted export of materials key to South Korean tech firms earlier this month. The Nikkei closed down 0.2 per cent ahead of a long slate of earnings figures this week, while Shanghai finished 0.2 per cent lower.

London was 0.8 per cent higher in morning trade.

# 20 dead as violence mars Afghan election season

**KABUL, JUL 29 (AFP):** Deadly violence marred the start of Afghanistan's election season on the weekend, after President Ashraf Ghani insisted "peace is coming" to the war-torn nation.

At least 20 people were killed and 50 others wounded on Sunday in an attack targeting the Kabul office of Ghani's running mate, Amrullah Saleh.

The violence came on the first day of campaigning for the upcoming presidential elections, serving as a grim reminder of Afghanistan's woeful security situation and the sort of mayhem and murder that have beset previous polls.

The attack began around 4:40 pm (1210 GMT), when a huge blast struck near the office of Green Trend, a youth and reform-focused civil society organisation Saleh heads. He escaped without serious injury, his office said.

The interior ministry said the assault began when a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-packed car at the entrance to the building, then three attackers ran inside.

After about six hours the siege ended with all attackers killed and the rescue of about 150 people who had been trapped in the building, according to the interior ministry, which also provided the toll of 20 dead and 50 wounded.

No group immediately claimed responsibility.

Earlier on Sunday, a buoyant Ghani kicked off his campaign by insisting "peace is coming," after nearly 18 years of conflict, and that pivotal talks with the Islamist extremist



Taliban would take place.

He is hoping to fend off challenges from 17 other candidates to score a second term at twice-postponed presidential elections now slated for September 28.

On Saturday Ghani's peace minister, Abdul Salam Rahimi, said direct talks would take place with the Taliban within two weeks as part of a larger, US-led push for peace.

Such a development could be crucial, as the Taliban -- who now control or influence about half of Afghanistan -- have so far refused to speak to Ghani's government.

They consider the Kabul administration illegitimate. War aside, the country faces a host of major issues ahead of the election, including rocketing crime, a lacklustre economy, soaring unemployment, and crumbling infrastructure.

Voters are despondent about the prospects of a fair election. Many worry about a repeat of violent attacks on previous polling stations by the Taliban and other insurgent groups trying to undermine Afghanistan's fragile democracy.

Ghani insisted this year's vote would be "clean", but distrust is rife.

Sayed Jan, a 27-year-old student, said he won't be voting as he has lost faith since the 2014 election that was mired in allegations of fraud and ballot stuffing.

"We have been betrayed by the candidates in the past. We cannot trust them this time," he told AFP.

"We need peace in Afghanistan instead of elections. Even if I vote, the election will be fraudulent."

In Kabul, security forces fanned out across the city as leading candidates held rallies.

Ghani's top rival is Abdullah Abdullah, who currently serves as the

president's chief executive under an awkward power-sharing arrangement brokered by the US after the 2014 election.

"It is our national and religious duty to take advantage of any opportunities for peace," Abdullah told a campaign rally.

One crucial issue is that the elections happen at all: they were postponed twice this year and further delays could lead to more distrust.

Despite Ghani's claim that a summit between his government and the Taliban would take place shortly, the insurgents said they would only talk to Kabul after the US had announced a timeline for a withdrawal of foreign forces -- a major part of any deal.

"The Kabul administration will be considered a political side, just like others, and not a government," Taliban political spokesman Suhail Shaheen wrote in Pashto on Twitter.

Diplomatic sources have told AFP the Afghan-Taliban talks are scheduled to begin in Oslo on August 7.

US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad said Saturday that new "intra-Afghan" negotiations would only take place after the US and Taliban had concluded their own agreements.

Washington is hoping for a political agreement with the insurgents ahead of the September presidential election.

Other presidential candidates include Ghani's former national security advisor Hanif Atmar and former warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, nicknamed the "Butcher of Kabul" for his alleged role in the killing of thousands of people in the capital in the 1990s.

## Three killed in US festival shooting, suspected gunman dead



**LOS ANGELES, JUL 29 (AFP):** Three people were killed and at least 15 others injured in a shooting at a major food festival in California on Sunday, police said. Officers confronted and shot dead the suspect "in less than a minute," said Scot Smithee, police chief of the city of Gilroy, 30 miles (48 kilometers) southeast of San Jose.

Police said it was "still an active crime scene" at the site of the three-day Gilroy Garlic Festival, one of the largest food festivals in the country.

A search for a possible second suspect was ongoing, Smithee said.

"We believe based on witness statements that there was a second individual involved in some way, we just don't know in what way," he told journalists.

Footage showed people fleeing in terror as shots rang out.

A witness named Julissa Contreras told NBC a white man in his 30s armed with a rifle opened fire indiscriminately. "I could see him shooting in just every direction. He wasn't aim-

ing at anyone specifically. It was just left to right, right to left," Contreras said, according to NBC.

"He definitely was prepared for what he was doing," she said.

Smithee said the suspect appeared to have entered the 50-acre festival site via a creek, using cutting equipment to breach the event's perimeter. Metal detectors and bag searches were in place as part of "very tight security" at the festival, he said.

No motive was known but the suspect's shooting appeared "somewhat random," Smithee added. The suspect used "some sort of a rifle," he said.

US President Donald Trump earlier tweeted that law enforcement officers were at "the scene of shootings" in Gilroy, urging members of the public to "Be careful and safe!"

The Gilroy Garlic Festival features live entertainment including bands and cooking competitions as well as food and drink, and draws nearly 100,000 people over three days each

year, according to organizers. The family event is a major focal point for the small city of around 50,000. California governor Gavin Newsom said the incident was "nothing short of horrific." "Tonight, (California) stands with the Gilroy community. My office is monitoring the situation closely," he tweeted.

"Grateful for the law enforcement's efforts and their continued work as this situation develops." The Mercury News reported that the shooting took place as the festival was winding down.

Stage hand Shawn Viaggi hit the ground after hearing "loud pops," it said.

"I called out, 'It's a real gun, let's get out of here,' and we hid under the stage," Viaggi said, according to the newspaper.

Thirteen-year-old Evenny Reyes told the paper that "we were just leaving and we saw a guy with a bandana wrapped around his leg because he got shot. And there were people on the

ground, crying." "There was a little kid hurt on the ground. People were throwing tables and cutting fences to get out," said Reyes. "The hearts of Gilroy PD and entire community go out to the victims of today's shooting at the Garlic Festival," the local police department tweeted.

"Grateful to first responders who are on the scene in Gilroy and keeping those injured by such senseless violence in my thoughts," Senator Kamala Harris, who is running for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, wrote on Twitter.

San Jose mayor Sam Liccardo tweeted: "Praying for lives and recoveries of each of the shooting victims at #GilroyGarlicFestival. We will continue to support our neighbors in any way we can." Shootings are a frequent occurrence in the United States, but despite the scale of the gun violence problem in the country, efforts to address it legislatively have long been largely deadlocked at the federal level.

## Pak summons senior Indian diplomat over 'ceasefire violations'

**BY SAJJAD HUSSAIN**

**ISLAMABAD, JUL 29 (PTI):**

Pakistan on Monday summoned India's Deputy High Commissioner and condemned the alleged "unprovoked ceasefire violations" by Indian troops across the Line of Control which resulted in the death of a woman.

Director General (South Asia and SAARC) Mohammad Faisal, who is also the foreign ministry spokesman, summoned Gaurav Ahluwalia and "condemned the unprovoked ceasefire violations by the Indian forces along the Line of Control," the Foreign Office (FO) said in a statement.

On Sunday, firing in the Nezapir Sector, killed the woman in Mandhar village and injured three others. On the same day,



another civilian was injured due to firing in the Kailer Sector along the LoC, it said.

Faisal said that the Indian forces along the LoC and the Working boundary are "continuously targeting civilian populated areas with heavy weapons." "This unprecedented escalation in ceasefire violations by India is continuing from the year 2017 when the Indian forces committed 1970 ceasefire violation,"

it alleged. "The ceasefire violations by India are a threat to regional peace and security and may lead to a strategic miscalculation," the statement said.

Faisal urged the Indian side to respect the 2003 Ceasefire arrangement; investigate this and other incidents of ceasefire violations; instruct the Indian forces to respect the ceasefire, in letter and spirit and maintain peace on the LoC and the Working Boundary.







**ROOFTOP CHILLING!** The Farewell actress, Awkwafina lounges at the HotelTonight Party in Brooklyn, NY.

## PM Narendra Modi to feature in Discovery's 'Man Vs Wild'

**MUMBAI, JUL 29 (PTI)** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will feature in a special episode of Discovery's "Man Vs Wild" which will highlight "issues related to environmental change." According to a statement from the channel, the special episode, featuring survivalist and adventurer Bear Grylls and shot in the India's Jim Corbett National Park, will be a "frank and freewheeling journey" which will throw light on wildlife conservation.

The episode will premiere on August 12 and will be showcased in more than 180 countries across the world on Discovery network of channels.

"For years, I have lived among nature, in the mountains and the forests. These years have a lasting impact on my life. So when I was asked about a special programme focussing on life beyond politics and that too in the midst of nature I was both intrigued and inclined to take part in it," the PM said in a statement.

"For me, this show presents a great opportunity to showcase to the world India's rich environmental heritage and stress on the importance of environment conservation and living in harmony with nature. It was a great experience spending time in the jungle once again, this time with Bear, who is blessed with indefatigable energy and quest to experience nature at its purest," he added.

## Difficult tall order to match up to: Ghaywan on taking over reins from Motwane for "Sacred Games 2"



**MUMBAI, JUL 29 (PTI)** National Award-winning director Neeraj Ghaywan is making his debut on the web with season two of Netflix's "Sacred Games" and he says it was a challenge for him to direct the popular series.

He returns to direction after his 2015 debut film "Masaan" that received wide acclaim from critics and audiences alike across the globe. "I was wallowing that when I should direct my second film. And this happened. From indie, zone to suddenly do this... This is not my kind of thing, this is not my language. But I took that as a challenge. I saw a lot of series. Now, I am a chronic binge-watcher.

"I usually get too much into details, too much into research. For this series, I was only wanting to do my best. There is no other thing (directing) than this that I want to do," Ghaywan told PTI. Filmmaker Vikramaditya Motwane returns as showrunner but has handed over his directorial reins to Ghaywan for Sartaj Singh's portions. Anurag Kashyap will again don the director's hat for Nawazuddin Siddiqui's track.

Ghaywan calls his turn as a director on the series a big opportunity.

"It is a different medium and it was difficult for me because of the pressure (referring to the expectations from 'Sacred Games 2'), the external pressure. For me, it was a challenge. It is a difficult tall order to match up to.

"There is no option that you try and match

up to the craftsmanship that he (Motwane) brings in. Anurag and he are my mentors and suddenly I have to match up to that standard and you have to live up to it exactly that way," the director, who has worked as an AD on "Gangs of Wasseyapur," added.

The "Masaan" helmer said Motwane had set a certain template in season one and he not only had to get that right but also had to add his own signature touch to it.

"There is a certain tone that is set and you have to follow that, you need to bring the same kind of visual language and energy and that was a huge challenge for me.

"However, I had brought a bit of myself also because I need to up my game as it is season two. What comes intrinsically to me is emotion, trying to tell interpersonal relationships that I try to get in deep," he said.

Ghaywan said Motwane's presence as the showrunner helped him a lot.

"He is a lovely producer to have around. For me, it was quite a solace."

Saif Ali Khan as Sartaj Singh will continue to make efforts to save Mumbai from an impending disaster. The second part of the series which premieres on August 15 will pick up from the nail biting climax of season one.

"Sacred Games" based on Vikram Chandra's novel of the same name will have new actors on board like Kalki Koechlin, Ranvir Shorey and others.

## I am platform agnostic now: Saif Ali Khan



**BY KOMAL PANCHAMATIA**

**MUMBAI, JUL 29 (PTI)** Saif Ali Khan is excited for the sophomore season of Netflix India Original "Sacred Games" and the actor says the cleverest thing he has done in his career is making foray into the digital world.

The actor will reprise his part of cop Sartaj Singh in season two of "Sacred Games", which follows his chase for the truth behind gangster Ganesh Gaitonde's (Nawazuddin Siddiqui) warning to save the city.

"Here (in digital medium) there is a difference in pace, tone and even with acting, like they try to bring it down a bit. You have to trust the camera that the emotion will be captured correctly if you feel it within.

"The approach is different, sometimes a Gaiety (single-screen theatre) crowd, although it is changing, might feel that you are not doing anything but you are. They (films and web) are both different platforms. I am platform agnostic now. It is the cleverest thing I have been part of," Saif told PTI in an interview. The 48-year-old actor said season two is much twisted than the first one and the team is confident about it.

"It (season two) is so cleverly done. It goes back to the past and future and everything ties up. Season one is quite basic compared to season two. Season two is where we change gears. In season one you know about them, but in season two you are up to it."

Sartaj appeared as an under-confident cop in season one and Saif said though there aren't many changes internally, there are some in terms of his look.

He defines his character as "wonderfully human but imperfect and flawed".

"I played this character longer than any other character. I think he is the same guy. He is not going to sort out any issue, in fact, it might just get worse. There is no time for wallowing and pity.

"He is still very imperfect, flawed character and has got addictive nature to alcohol, drugs and pills. He is very under-confident in many ways. He is wonderfully human but a big mess," he added.

Earlier the actor had to alter his physique, put on weight to get a burly, tough physique but this time he had to get into shape for a leaner look.

Elaborating on the same, Saif said, "There is a lot of drama and action happening. He has a lost a lot of blood, he is not eating much, he is running around a lot and he is not happy.

"In the book, he is a very lean and well-dressed sardar. But in the show when we introduced him he is unhappy and unfit. Then as we progress at a certain point he looks like what Sartaj Singh is in the book, which is fitter and leaner." Asked if it will be easy for him to leave the character behind, Saif said, "These characters are not like you are becoming somebody else. It is not that you are tapping into certain energy.

"But it will be sad to say goodbye one day as you have been getting up and tying this turban for many days. It is like 16 hours of filming. It will be sad." A bungalow in the interi-

ors of suburban Mumbai served as an ashram for season two of "Sacred Games" where Saif was interacting in between shots and takes.

Without revealing the scene that he shot with new addition to the cast, Kalki Koechlin, Saif said, "We are shooting the interior portion of the ashram the exterior part is done in Delhi. The sacred part of 'Sacred Games' wasn't there so much in season one, it comes in now. "I have always thought it is the best thing to make a show that you could export. Because it is very Indian, it has got mafia and cops, who are unique and their equations are unique. Then there is politics and Bollywood, it also has got religion, godman, it has drugs, etc. The show is pretty interesting"

In 2018 when season one was released it garnered a lot of praise but it did invite some controversy.

Indian National Congress party member Rajeev Kumar Sinha lodged a first information report against Netflix, the showrunners and Nawazuddin Siddiqui, for allegedly insulting former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in one of the scenes.

The "Bazaar" actor said this time the team has been "cautious" in their approach. "I think we are being cautious...Even though my track doesn't have much sex and bad language. Sadly. It (referring to political stuff) does have a bit but we were quite careful.

"... But (if) there is an issue during election time Netflix or Amazon might get banned. I hope it never gets banned because a lot of directors and art makers whose cinematic releases are not the most popular ones can find a space that is so clever and lovely," he said.

In reference to his show, Saif said the makers are being sensitive and careful.

"...We don't want to get banned. We don't want the show to not run. We are not really interested in controversy. Our content is good. We would like more people to come and watch rather than create some kind of sensation." Like season one, there are two directors on board this time as well.

"Masaan" fame Neeraj Ghaywan will direct Saif, while earlier it was Vikramaditya Motwane who directed his portions.

The actor said both Ghaywan and Motwane are creatively different people but they brought the best out of him as an artist.

"Neeraj is little easier going than Vikram. Vikram is more serious and concerned about the fact that he is doing something international. He shows the seriousness of that while Neeraj is more relaxed. That is the only difference. "Both of them brought out the best in me in different ways. For directors like Vikram and Neeraj this is the ultimate space."

As the show gears up for an August 15 premiere, Saif said he is not sure if the series will return with a third season.

"This story ends at the end of this season. So I don't know if they will extend it. This is a fairly solid conclusion. (But) There is always scope for more." The new season will see Pankaj Tripathi in a full-fledged role as the mysterious Guruji, while Kalki and Ranvir Shorey are the latest additions to the series.

**ARIES:** This is a period of gestation. Let go of your idea of what productivity looks like. Instead, move slowly into the yin state and allow yourself to be seduced by the brilliant ideas. A certain degree of detachment will enable you to channel them better. What you want to be cautious of: who and what you let into your space. You may not find yourself surrounded by well-wishers this week.

Tip: This is the time to channel and develop some of your best ideas.

**TAURUS:** Ready to join the league of the power players? This week, you are a force to reckon with. You're supported by the kind of people who not only applaud your growth but also inspire you to achieve the impossible. The abundance you deserve will find its way to you as well. Focus on building a solid reserve. Yes, that means resisting the urge to splurge and being mindful of what you are putting your pennies on.

Tip: Focus on building your financial reserves.

**GEMINI:** This is not the week to take major risks. Chances are, things may not go as planned. Yet you will find that chaos leads to cosmos. Oh, the adrenaline rush you will experience from channeling your inner Monica Gellar and putting plan B into action! The best news: you'll have Rachel, Phoebe, Chandler and the rest assisting you with the damage control too. Ready to make magic with your motley crew?

Tip: Damage control has never been this fun.

**CANCER:** This week finds you exactly where you belong—on the top of your game! Expect many a breakthrough moment, but don't get complacent about your long-term goals. You are in charge of manifesting those larger-than-life ideas in your reality. Remember, not everybody you work with is going to be as driven and motivated.

Tip: This is the week to manifest those larger-than-life ideas in your reality.

**LEO:** A 'find what you love and let it kill you' kind of week awaits, Leo. Allow yourself to be intoxicated by what you are creating. Immerse yourself in your art. You will find that there is no greater joy than the joy of expressing your innermost thoughts. But does that mean you are compromising on wealth and financial stability in the bargain? Tip: Allow yourself to be intoxicated by your art.

**VIRGO:** This week brings with itself the lesson that patience is indeed a virtue. Continue to nurture your garden and take pride in watching it bear fruit. If there's one thing you can be sure of, it's that the abundance you deserve will find its way to you. Your entrepreneurship skills are also coming to the fore. Tap into them to give those larger-than-life ideas a tangible form.

Tip: Take pride in watching your garden bloom.

**LIBRA:** This is the week to block out the distractions, hustle hard, and make your career your sole focus. Stay cognizant of the doors that are opening for you. You are one step closer to hitting the jackpot. Serendipitous encounters are also on the cards. For instance, being introduced to someone in the field you have been yearning to learn from. If there is anything your past experiences have taught you, it's the importance of striking while the iron is hot.

Tip: Walk through the golden door.

**SCORPIO:** This week finds you exactly where you need to be: perched pretty on your throne. Your career is witnessing immense growth—and bringing you the kind of financial stability that was once a distant dream.

Continue to create from a space of authenticity. Do what's right for you and the crew. You will discover that nurturing talent is what takes the quality of your work a notch higher.

Tip: Your career is witnessing immense growth.

**SAGITTARIUS:** If you don't know where you are going, no road will take you there. This phase of your career calls for a greater degree of clarity. Sag, make time to define both your short and long-term goals. Are the opportunities you have attracted at the moment helping you move closer to your best life? Are the people you are co-creating with supporting you in your mission? Learn to be accountable for your time and energy from now on.

Tip: Redefine both your short and long-term goals.

**CAPRICORN:** "And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it." The most skeptic Capricorns will find themselves inspired by Roald Dahl's words. This phase is awakening you to your lost sense of purpose, and subsequently helping you attract the kind of opportunities that

are in alignment with your soul.

Tip: You are attracting opportunities that are in alignment with your soul growth.

**AQUARIUS:**

We are responsible for the life we curate for ourselves. If the energy that surrounds us is that of joy and celebration, we are the reason for it. If we find ourselves in a war zone, it is our actions (or lack thereof) that have led us to this point. This chapter of your career requires a greater degree of compassion and empathy. Remember, the only way to create an environment that uplifts you is by being centred yourself.

Tip: Embrace the qualities of compassion and empathy.

**PISCES:** You know that feeling of doing exactly what you were sent here to do? This is the week to discover the true meaning of alignment. Continue to vibrate higher, Pisces. You are a magical being attracting magical opportunities. As a warrior of light, you realise that you didn't get here by bringing others down. Having the right crew walking by your side promises to be your biggest asset on this journey.

Tip: This is the week to discover the true meaning of alignment.