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SummitTIMES

Former UD&HD Minister accused of graft, Minister rejects allegations



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:

An audio recording, purportedly of a conversation between former UD&HD Minister NK Subba and a local businessman, has been circulating on social media for a few days now, and today, Suresh Prasad, the other voice in the recording, alleged at a press conference that the

Minister had pocketed around Rs 1.20 cr in graft from Lall Bazaar shopkeepers on promises of providing them shopfronts of their choice. The phone conversation which has since gone viral, was a discussion about the same deal, he alleged. The Minister, he added, did not deliver on his assurances and was

not returning the money either. The Minister, meanwhile, has countered that the allegations were baseless and politically motivated. Pointing out that his accuser has proffered no proof to back his allegations, he has countered that a proper investigation be launched into his motivations and intent.

Governor addresses NEC Plenary, wants infrastructural projects expedited



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:

Governor Ganga Prasad today addressed the 68th Plenary Session of the North Eastern Council held at Assam Administrative College, Guwahati, a press communiqué from Raj Bhawan informs. The two-day Plenary Session of the Council which got underway today is being chaired by Union Home Minister

Amit Shah and is being attended by Governors and Chief Ministers of all the eight North Eastern states, Minister of State for DoNER Dr Jitendra Singh, officers of various Ministries of the Central Government and State government departments including the North Eastern Council. The Governor participated in the deliberations on various issues concerning the develop-

ment of North Eastern States with special focus on the role of DoNER and North Eastern Council in the region. Issues including action taken on the previous resolutions of the NEC Plenary and vision put forward by the Prime Minister for the development of North Eastern Region were also discussed. Addressing the session, the Governor remarked

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Modi government fully respect Art 371 and there will be no change in it: Amit Shah

GUWAHATI, 08 SEPT [PIB]: Union Home Minister Amit Shah today addressed the opening session of the 68th Plenary of the North Eastern Council in Guwahati today. The Minister began his address by paying tribute to Bharat Ratna Late Bhupen Hazarika. He said that this day also assumes importance for the fact that today is also the Birth Anniversary of the late Bhupen Hazarika who introduced to the world the entire Northeast through his art and music.

Shah referred to the PM's remark where he said that Northeast can be the new engine for India's growth and the contribution from this region towards the progress and development of the country should be the highest among other states. Northeast is a mini India in itself which consists of the mighty Himalaya range in the one hand and on the other hand there is the most beautiful landscapes of the world - Barak, Brahmaputra and Imphal valley.



Hinting at the immense potential of the region, Shah said that Northeast comprises of around 9 percent of the total area of the country with a population of around 5 crore which comprises of 3.78 percent of the total population. The region also bears strategic importance for the fact that it shares

International border for around 5,300 km referring to the diverse culture of the Northeast region, Shah said that there are around 270 ethnic group and around 150 dialects in the region and all development activities and initiative should be directed towards preserving and enriching the rich heritage of this region.

He said that the identity of India was never geo-political rather it was geo-cultural and if this principle is accepted by all India and Northeast will be never be treated separate. He said the cultural and linguistic identity of the North East Region should be preserved and maintained even as fast development is tak-

ing place under the leadership of Narendra Modi. Quoting from the Mahabharata, the Home Minister said North East and rest of India are connected since mythological era and this will never be separated under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. North East Region will develop, prosper and become a pride of India, Shah asserted. He also said that the growth of Northeast during the last 5 years is much more in comparison to that of the 70 years after independence. The development process which was started in 2014 will be expected to be accomplished in 2022. Shah said the 8 North Eastern states are like Astalakhmi and they will play a vital role in the development of the country. Shah announced that the North East Council will earmark 30 per cent of its fund for focussed funding of priority areas and deprived sections of society in the North East. Shah said that every state will identify those villages or regions which are

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A mental hospital with a difference

TSHERING EDEN

As you enter through the gates of San-ker Hospital in Shillong, it is difficult to believe that it is a hospital you are walking into. Small but well maintained garden area, a wooden cottage style structure housing the reception area, wooden huts for waiting sheds, a pond are things you do not expect in a hospital. At the day-care facility for people with chronic mental illness, music is playing while the space is being cleaned. All the patients are lounging under the bright sun on the lawn outside. Some of the patients smile and offer greetings as you walk past. Families bring their loved ones here in the morning and collect them in the evening. "Here they learn how to take care of themselves, get therapy and get to socialize as well. Once a week they are all taken for an outing to a park," informs sister in-charge, Lawanpli Wallang Pahsyntiew. As we are talking, a patient

comes up to us smiling and says, 'Dosti, Dosti'. Founded in 1990 by Psychiatrist Dr Sandy Syiem, San-ker Hospital is the only private mental health facility in Meghalaya and among the few in Eastern India. The hospital was established on a 6 acre spread that was previously a farm. What began from a cowshed converted into a 10-bed room, San-ker is now a 100-bedded mental hospital with a day-care facility for the chronic mentally ill and provides services like detoxification, rehabilitation and after-care for substance dependence. Dr Syiem worked with the government for a while but felt the need to do more. He quit his government job in 1988-89. "I then approached non-government organizations but nobody was interested. In 1987-88 I formed a mental health society but people quickly lost interest in it. I came to the conclusion that I can't depend on anybody else. I have to do it myself," he shares. In the late 80s when local sentiment against Bengalis was on a

high, the farm which was owned by a Khasi-Bengali family came under attack. "The family was looking to sell the land and move away so I bought the land. It was in the middle of nowhere. There was no electricity, no roads or water supply. People were convinced I was crazy," says Dr Syiem. He bought the land with a loan of Rs 18 lakh from Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation which eventually took him 17 years to repay. A cowshed was converted into a room with 10 beds. "In two weeks' time we had to convert another cowshed into a 10-bed room," says Dr Syiem. Over the years, donations from organizations and individuals helped the hospital expand. According to Dr Syiem, the hospital caters mostly to people from underprivileged families. "We charge Rs 50-80 per bed per day and some struggle to pay even that. But they come back after 2-3 years and give whatever

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Let's work Together to Prevent Suicide

WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY
10 SEPT, 2019
MG MARG, GANGTOK

at 7AM

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Free HIV & TB Screening

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a collaborative effort of
San-ker Hospital, Shillong | Freedom Facility, Gangtok | SummitTimes

supported by: Department of Health & Family Welfare, Govt of Sikkim; The Royal Plaza; 24x7 Suicide Helpline; Hub Outdoor; State AIDS Control Society, Sikkim; State TB Cell, Sikkim

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Jethmalani- an icon who worked for causes, not money: Lawyers

MUMBAI, SEP 8 (PTI): Former Union Minister and eminent lawyer Ram Jethmalani was a mentor to juniors and someone who fought for various causes and not money, lawyers said on Sunday while condoling his demise. Some of the lawyers, who in the past worked with Jethmalani, described him as an “icon and legend of the law”, and said his humility touched all the sections of society.

They described him as not just a versatile counsel, but someone who was patient and modest with everyone.

Jethmalani, 95, died in New Delhi on Sunday morning.

“In Jethmalani’s demise, the judiciary has lost a great jurist and a courageous lawyer. A truly versatile and multifaceted lawyer who excelled in all branches of law and navigated seamlessly from judicial magistrates court to the Supreme Court,” advocate Birendra Saraf said on behalf of the Bombay Bar Association “His (Jethmalani) struggle and rise will always inspire the future generation of lawyers. It is a matter of great pride for the Bombay Bar Association that he was a member of our association and he even attended our sesquicentenary event recently,” he said.

Special Public Prosecutor Raja Thakare, who appeared in some matters against Jethmalani, said the senior counsel had a sharp mind and his legal acumen shall remain unmatched. Advocate Laxman Kanai, who worked under Jethmalani in 1989, said he was bold, courageous and had a great grasping power.

“He shaped the lives and careers of several

young lawyers. We, as juniors, could easily approach him for guidance. He was also involved in several charity works but rarely spoke about them or publicised them,” Kanai said.

Advocate Dinesh Tiwari, who worked under Jethmalani from 1997 to 2008, said he was not only a great lawyer but also a mentor to junior lawyers.

“His absence is going to be felt in the legal field.

He was always calm and composed while arguing cases and had also done several cases pro bono (for free),” Tiwari said.

Advocate Pranav Badheka, who also worked with Jethmalani, said he was a legend and an eminent jurist who was motivated and inspired by the causes and not money.

“His best quality was to patiently hear views of others and openly discuss any issue, legal or political. In court, he would never lose his patience and was extremely witty,” Badheka said.

Senior counsel Amit Desai said Jethmalani was an expert who straddled criminal and constitutional law like no other.

“The history of Indian criminal law is intricately intertwined with his contributions. The maverick and gentleman, whose humility touched all stratas of society, will be remembered as an icon and legend of the law,” Desai said.

“He was a role model and inspiration for all. I was fortunate to meet him in August this year. Even in his illness he was well dressed, reflecting his zest for life, and greeted me with a strong handshake which showed his warmth and vigour,” he said.

A mental...

they can. Ultimately it is the goodwill of people that works,” he shares.

In the initial years, his private practice also helped sustain the hospital, he mentions.

There are no private rooms in the hospital and Dr Syiem explains it to his belief that people need to see themselves as who they are in order to heal.

“We’ve had politicians, engineers, doctors, all living in the same room, eating the same food. If we give you TV, telephone, internet, then what are you lacking? You can’t see yourself as you are,” he says while highlighting the importance of community living at San-ker.

He is critical of government interventions in mental health and believes that since the time he quit his government job, little has changed.

“Only 100 out of 600 districts have full-fledged mental hospitals in the country at present. That means there is something wrong. 4% of budget is earmarked for health and out of that, 0.3-4 % is for mental health,” says Dr Syiem.

In the open courtyard patients are enjoying the afternoon sun and on the verandah of a building next to it, sit Dr Lahiri and Dr Rani monitoring the patients.

“San-ker is one of a kind, I would say, in the Eastern part of India. Mental hospitals are usually barricaded, closed, with a lot of restrictions but you can see here it is not like that. The approach we take is holistic,” explains Dr Lahiri who has worked in San-ker for around 15 years.

She says that most patients who are brought to San-ker are severely ill which offers many challenges for the hospital staff.

“Working with families is a big challenge. Families are usually not very aware about mental illness or are not ready to accept that their loved one is suffering from a mental illness. The overall challenge for the society is the stigma attached to mental illness,” she says.

However, it is worth facing these challenges, she adds.

“The treatment here is different from other hospitals. Here we treat patients like our children. The patients abuse us, scream at us but we just laugh it off,” says Dr Rami who has been with San-ker for the last 5 years.

The hospital also offers short courses in counseling for addiction and mental health. The duration of these courses range from one to three months.

San-ker in the Khasi language means ‘growth within protection’ and for the mentally ill, this is what it offers.

NK Subba confident that BJP will form Govt in Sikkim in 2024

RUDRA KAUSHIK GYALSHING, 08 SEPT:

Former Minister NK Subba, who, along with nine of his fellow SDF MLAs recently joined the Bharatiya Janta Party, announced with confidence today that the BJP will form the government in Sikkim 2024.

“BJP will be in power for more than 20 years and we will form BJP’s government in Sikkim at any cost in 2024. We will work actively to bring BJP to power”, he said while addressing a BJP membership drive at the party office here today.

Mr Subba further claimed that the SKM has agreed to an alliance government with BJP and that the political secretary of Chief Minister, Jacob Khaling, and SKM



general secretary Navraj Gurung have given statements to this effect.

He, however, added that the SKM should announce this officially, something that it has not done yet.

He also explained today that the 10 SDF MLAs who switched over to BJP recent did

so in the larger interest of the Sikkimese people so that they could work properly in their respective constituencies.

He also tore into the SKM Government, accusing it of keeping busy with vendetta politics instead of working for the people.

He added that SKM

has been rattled by the 10 MLAs shifting to BJP and that its politics of threats, vengeance and victimization have decreased a bit now.

More than 30 families from Gyalshing-Bermiok, Yangthang and Yuksam-Tashiding constituencies joined BJP today.

BJP begins prepping for Sewa Saptaha

YOGEN THATAL SINGTAM, 08 SEPT:

Bharatiya Janta Party convened a preparatory meeting here today in preparation for the weeklong Sewa Saptaha drive of the party.

The meeting, held at the BJP head office at Golitar was chaired by Avinash Rai Khanna, the National BJP vice president, Sudip Pradhan, Coordinator for the Sewa Saptaha Sikkim, GD Agrawal, Bharat Dulal and Sik-

kim State BJP vice-president SB Karki.

The initiative, it is informed, will be focusing on blood donation camps, medical checkup camps, eye camps and operation, reaching aid to old age homes and orphanages and hospitals.

It was also informed at the meeting that BJP’s national leaders like Amit Shah and Ram Kumar Madhav are expected to visit Sikkim although the dates have not been finalized yet.

Curfew-like restrictions reimposed in several parts of Kashmir



SRINAGAR, SEP 8 (PTI): Curfew-like restrictions were reimposed on Sunday in several parts of Kashmir, including the city, to foil any plans on taking out Muharram processions in the Valley as authorities apprehended that large congregations might lead to violence.

Commercial hub of Lal Chowk and adjoining areas were completely sealed off by placing concertina wires at all entry points where large number of security force personnel were deployed, officials said.

Restrictions have been in several parts of Kashmir as a precautionary measure for maintaining law and order in the Valley, they said.

The officials did not cite any reasons for reimposing restrictions but it is believed that the step was taken to prevent Muharram processions in the city and elsewhere in the Valley.

Only people with medical emergencies were being allowed to pass the barricade as the security force personnel refused to entertain curfew passes issued by concerned authorities.

Restrictions were first imposed across

Kashmir on August 5 when the Centre announced its decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370 and bifurcate the state into union territories. The restrictions were lifted in phases from many parts of the Valley as the situation improved with passage of time.

The authorities have been imposing restrictions in vulnerable areas of the Valley every Friday, apprehending that vested interests might exploit the large gatherings at big mosques and shrines to fuel protests.

Meanwhile, normal life remained severely affected in Kashmir due to shutdown in the Valley which entered 35th day on Sunday.

Markets and other business establishments remained closed while public transport was off the roads across the Valley, the officials said.

Most of the top-level and second-rung separatist politicians have been taken into preventive custody while mainstream leaders, including three former chief ministers -- Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti -- have also been either detained or placed under house arrest.

Organic farming training at Rai Gaon



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 08 SEPT:

A training and demonstration program on Organic Farming, Internal Control System and Certification programme was organized by International Panaacea Ltd and Sikkim Organic Mission for farmers of

Rai Gaon ward under Namcheybong GPU on 07 Sept.

Field Executive of IPL, Sita Bhusak urged farmers to learn and apply Indigenous Technical Knowledge on their farms and suggested that locally available resources be used.

Governor addresses...

that the vision of a developed India can be realised only through a developed North East and that in order to achieve the goal of a developed North East, the North East Council should be financially strengthened and empowered.

He also underlined Sikkim’s strength as the most peaceful and stable State with impressive growth rate despite being surrounded by three international borders.

The Governor further sought early resolution of some issues impacting the growth and accelerated development of Sikkim.

He mentioned how the Pakyong Greenfield Airport which has remained non-operational since 01 June due to technical reasons related with Instrument Landing System and Radar which are yet to be installed for smooth operation of flight across all seasons.

Drawing the attention of the Central Government and Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Governor pressed for early settlement of the matter and appointing the only airport in the State with all required technical equipment for the smooth operation of flights throughout the year.

He also sought the intervention of the Central Government to expedited the much delayed railway link to Sikkim. He called on the centre to resolve the issue of forest clearance and land issues on the West Bengal side which have often stalled the construction of the project.

The Governor also drew the attention of the NEC forum to reduction in release of funds for various NEC projects in the State. He pressed for enhanced financial assistance from NEC for ultra modern equipment and facilities for the Multi Speciality Hospital in Gangtok.

He also sought financial assistance from the Central Government for the State Medical College to be made operational at the Multi Speciality Hospital in Gangtok.

In addition to these, the Governor also drew the attention of NEC seeking early release of funds for pending projects such as the District Hospital at Mangan and Inter State Bus Terminus sanctioned earlier by NEC.

Seeking the continuing patronage of the Central Government and special financial assistance to North Eastern States to bridge regional imbalances in development arising out of geographical difficulties, extreme weather conditions and connectivity bottlenecks, he stressed that Focus North East as envisaged in Centre’s Act East Policy must be complimented with enhanced investments towards strengthening road, railway, air and broadband connectivity in the region for ushering new era of growth and prosperity.

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Modi government...

backward in various indicators and will work to bring those regions at par with the rest of the country. The growth story shall never be complete until the entire state progresses at par with the other part, he added.

Shah said that after abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, there was some misinformation that there will be also changes to Article 371. He however asserted that the Centre respects Article 371 and it will not touch the Article which grants special provisions to the North East.

He explained the difference between Article 370 which was temporary in nature and Article 371 which is about special provisions in the North East. “I have clarified in Parliament that this is not going to happen and I am saying it again today in Assam in presence of the eight Chief Minister”, Shah added.

Commenting on the commitment of the Central Government for the development of the Northeastern region, Shah said that there has been a 1.5 time increase of budget of NEC from 13th Finance Commission to 14th Finance Commission from Rs 3376 crore to Rs 5053 crore.

Enumerating the various development schemes directed towards the progress of the region Shah listed some of the schemes and said that from the projected 558 projects 352 projects have been completed, construction of 997 km roads have been completed, 2480 km transmission lines have been completed, APJ Abdul Kamal Centre for Policy and Research has been set up, Bogibeel Bridge has been completed and Rs 1400 crore under the North East Road Sector Development scheme under DoNER has been sanctioned.

Speaking on the recent publication of NRC in Assam, Shah expressed his satisfaction over the timely completion of the process and also added that the government will not allow a single illegal immigrant to stay back in the country.

Shah said that the Northeast is progressing steadily on the road to development under the leadership of Narendra Modi as a result of which Northeast which was identified with negative labels such as bandhs, blockades, extremism, arm trafficking and corruption is now known for infrastructure development, organic farming, sports, connectivity and Act East Policy.

Shah concluded his address with an appeal to all the states to invest more on Bamboo Mission and added that if it is developed to its full potential it can restrict 1 lakh crore imports.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Dr. Jitendra Singh while acknowledged the uniqueness of the Northeastern region, said that as far as the region is concerned there is much more to learn from Northeast for rest of India than Northeast has to learn from the rest of the country.

Reiterating the commitment of the Government for the development of the Northeast, Dr Singh said that North East Council has been given its highest budgetary allotment of 1476 crore rupees for the year 2019-20.

DOCUMENT LOST

I, Racheal Pegha Limboo daughter of Lt. K.D. Peghu(father) & Lt. U.M. Pegha(mother) of Upper Chumlok, Vok, South Sikkim has lost my Mark-sheet & Certificate issued from Carmel Teachers Training Institute, Pakyong, East Sikkim. Contact: 9609246366.

ANTHYESTI KRIYA

The anthyesthi Kriya of Nar Bdr Gurung , rtd , Record Officer Health deptt and also Vice President in Paramedical who left for her heavenly abode falls on 5th of September 2019 at Ahley ,Namthang south Sikkim. All relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to join us in offering our prayers for the departed soul on 18.09.2019 at Ahley ,Namthang south Sikkim



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Awareness on skill development at Mellidara Paiyong



SUMMIT REPORT

MELLI, 08 SEPT: Mellidara Paiyong GPU organised an awareness programme on Skill Development at Kerabari JHS Hall here in South Sikkim on 07 September for members of SHG groups, unemployed youth and school drop outs.

The programme had ex-National Youth Volunteer, NYK Namchi, Suyog Pradhan, as resource person and was also attended by Diwas Gurung, Ward Panchayat, AC NERLP, PAA.

Mr Pradhan spoke on how the skill development programme can be brought to the village level and provided brief introductions to service pro-

viders like NSDC, SICB, Livelihood Schools etc.

He also spoke on government schemes like Prime Minister Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and other flagship programmes.

Area Coordinator, NERLP, Balaram Sharma, in turn, highlighted the various training programmes under NERLP and other projects and requested SHG members to strive for excellence and professionalism.

Ward Panchayat Diwas Gurung shared that he was worried for the youth of the area and their future and underlined the benefits of such programmes.

Shooting underway for Mandira's Yatra



SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 SEPT: Yatra, a Nepali short film about love and brotherhood, directed by Mandira Chettri, an independent filmmaker from Sikkim, is currently being shot at Gangtok and Siliguri.

Starring Sherab Chopel Bhutia as Aditya Raj Pradhan, Anisha Rasaily as Nisha Shresta, Nikhil Chettri as Nikhil Pradhan, Rupa Tamang as Nim Doma Sherpa, Sajal CP as Dr Sajal, Chitish Chettri and Samridh as Ward Boy, the

film has Lewang Gishing as Assistant Director and Sishir Ghatani as Cameraperson.

The director inform that the film is set to be released by the end of Fall on most of the social media platforms and film festivals.

Mandira started working in the film industry in 2010, starting her journey as Assistant Director on Prashant Rasaily's "Acharya."

The latest venture is produced by Mandira's production house, Maark Pictures.

Capt Pawar to represent India in international balloon fiesta

PUNE, SEP 8 (PTI): Captain Sangram Pawar will be representing India for the first time at the 48th Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta (AIBF) in the US.

The event is scheduled to take place from October 5 to 13 at Albuquerque in New Mexico.

AIBF is the world's biggest 'hot air balloon' gathering where over 650 pilots from 25 countries are participating, according to a statement issued here.

On August 10, Capt

Sangram Pawar became the first pilot to fly the first hot air balloon in the history of Oman, the statement said.

He also happens to be the first balloon pilot from Pune and 24th in India since 1947, it said.

The Army officer is the son of former Additional Director General of Police Prakash Pawar and grandson of late Shrirang Jadhav, who represented India in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics as a wrestler in the heavy weight category.

Gangtok and Shillong come together for suicide prevention

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 08 SEPT: Shillong and Gangtok are coming together to explore the "working together to prevent suicide" principle of suicide prevention.

Shillong-based San Ker charitable trust which provides quality mental healthcare for all and Gangtok's Freedom Facility, a rehabilitation centre of established credentials, are joining hands to organize a series of events on World Suicide Prevention Day, 10 September, 2019, at MG Marg, Gangtok, in a bid to generate awareness on suicides and try and trigger wider collaborations to address the challenge.

The programme is also supported by the State Health Department, SSACS, TB Cell, Hub Outdoor and The Royal Plaza.

The day will begin with a cycle rally taking off from MG Marg at 7AM which will be followed by an awareness programme at MG Marg starting 10:30AM. Health Minister, Govt of Sikkim,

LN Sharma, has accepted the invitation to attend the programme as the chief guest.

The cycle rally, which has already generated wide interest, is part of International Association for Suicide Prevention's "Cycle Around the Globe" initiative organized across the world to mark the day to raise awareness of the risks of suicide and to fund suicide prevention activities. The idea is to encourage us to engage with each other and to join together to spread awareness on suicide prevention which is why this is not a race but a ride to register support.

The cycle rally will be flagged off by former Indian football skipper, Bhaichung Bhutia who will also be participating in the ride.

The awareness programme which will follow, apart from talks by subject experts and counselors who work with those at risk on a regular basis, will also include a panel discussion to deliberate on how wider collaborations can

be shaped to address the problem. A suicide survivor has also agreed to speak on the occasion to share the trauma he went through, what interventions he thinks would have helped and what eventually helped him embrace life.

Free screening for Depression, HIV and TB will also be provided at MG Marg on the day.

The collaboration, coordinated by SummitTimes, is born from the realization that suicide has been suffered and addressed for far too long in isolation and it was time that deliberations on it were expanded wider and more disciplines included in devising interventions. This approach has informed the manner in which the awareness programme has been structured.

A highlight of the awareness programme will be the panel discussion which will include mental health professionals, government functionaries, first responders and counselors. The discussions are

expected to range from establishing how big the problem is, ground realities for victims and the families they leave behind, the often overlooked aspect of what first-responders go through when deputized so often to the disturbing task of recovering dead bodies of suicide victims and what must be equal parts disturbing and rewarding task of manning the suicide helplines.

The organizers are hoping that the event will provide a clearer picture on what needs to be done next to prevent suicides.

An address by a suicide survivor and the release of interviews with suicide survivors and families which have lost relatives to suicide are also expected to help the society at large and pol-

icy-makers in particular realize the scale of the problem and the urgent need to start working together.

Lungsigang family of Gangtok has come forward with the offer to facilitate the 24x7 Suicide Helpline team in a welcome move to recognize their efforts to pull people back from the brink and for being the comforting hands which are always available when someone in distress reaches out.

Gestures such as this and readiness with which some of the capital's business houses have extended support to the effort radiate the hope that the challenge of suicides may still be met.

Specials thanks have also been extended to

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The books received will be distributed on need basis to various institutions and centers as identified by the library.

Academic test books may not be donated.

It is also for the information of the general public that the State Central Library, Manan Bhawan, Gangtok will be open from 11.00 am to 3.00 pm every Saturday and Sunday for reading services w.e.f. 12th August 2019 onwards.

Point of contact for query:
9564443999 / 8945812727

R.O. No. 143/IPR/Pub./Classi./19-20
Date: 19.8.19

OSD/ State Central Library.
Gangtok.

STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD- SIKKIM DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS & ENVIRONMENT GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM DEORALI, GANGTOK – 737102

APPEAL

All the stakeholders are aware that Biswakarma Puja, Durga Puja, Deepawali celebration are performed in the month of September – October every year and after performing pujas traditionally idols are immersed in water bodies leading to deterioration of water quality especially during the aforesaid period. "Sikkim Idol immersion Rules 2019" has also been notified vide no 167 dated 16/04/2019 by the State Pollution Control Board.

Therefore the State Pollution Control Board – Sikkim hereby appeals all the concerned authorities/citizens to follow the guidelines given below for the safeguard of Environment.

- a) Use of eco-friendly idols with herbal colours or biodegradable chemical dyes;
- b) Immersion of idols only at designated idol immersion spots;
- c) Prohibition of burning of solid wastes at the idol immersion areas;
- d) Arrangements for construction of temporary confined ponds with necessary provisions and
- e) Organizing mass awareness campaigns among the stakeholders etc.

The State Pollution Control Board – Sikkim further appeals and solicits kind cooperation of all the people of Sikkim for strict compliance of the above guidelines.

STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD- SIKKIM
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS, Env. & W/L Management.
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
DEORALI, GANGTOK – 737102

R.O. No. 175/IPR/Pub./Classi./19-20
Dated: 05.09.2019

GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM STATE MEDICINAL PLANTS BOARDS FOREST & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Ref No. 241/SMPB/FED

Dated: 02.09.2019

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited from the eligible local candidates for filling up of following posts in the State Medicinal Plant Board under Forest and Environment Department through viva voce, purely on contractual basis for a period of 01 (one) year:

Sl. No.	Name of Post	Minimum Educational Qualification	No. of posts	Consolidated Pay per month
1	Consultant Specialist in Botany	M. Sc. Botany with specialization in Taxonomy	01	R.30,000/-per month.
2	Data Entry Operator	Class XII pass	01	Rs.12,000/- per month.

Candidates must submit the application in the format given along with the following documents:

1. Copy of Certificate of Identification /Sikkim Subject.
2. Attested copies of educational qualification from Class X onwards.
3. Work experience certificate, if any.
4. Copy of valid employment card.
5. All other relevant supporting documents.

Received applications will be scrutinized, and short listed candidates will be called to appear before the selection committee. No A/DA will be paid for attending the interview.

The application along with attested photocopies of all requisite documents should reach the office of the Joint Director-cum-Nodal Officer, State Medicinal Plants Boards, Forest & Environment Department, Block B, Room no. B-305, Forest Secretariat Building, Deorali, Gangtok – 737102 on or before 18th September 2019. Detailed advertisement and application form can be downloaded from the website: sikenvis.nic.in, sikkimforest.gov.in

For further details, please contact:- 9609980931, 7076336042.

R.O. No. 172/IPR/Pub./Classi./19-20
Dated: 03.9.2019

Sd/-
Director-cum-CEO,
State Medicinal Plants Boards,
Forest and Environment Department
Government of Sikkim.

Foreign coach's changes helped improve my game: Sindhu

MUMBAI, SEP 8 (PTI): World champion P V Sindhu on Sunday said that working on the changes suggested by India's foreign badminton coach Kim Ji Hyun helped her a lot. Olympic silver medalist Sindhu defeated Japan's Nozomi Okuhara in the final of the BWF World Championship recently.

Asked how Kim Ji Hyun's advice has impacted her game, she said, "Well it definitely had a lot (of impact) because she has been here for a few months.

"She had few changes in her mind and I think that really helped me. We worked on that, of course under the guidance of Gopi (P Gopichand) sir and it went very well. I have really improved a lot on skills and a lot more still to improve."

Sindhu was speaking after being felicitated by the Sahara India Pariwar at a suburban hotel for her recent achievement.

Asked whether the loss of the 2017 final (to Okuhara) played in her mind when she entered the court this time, the 24-year-old Sindhu replied in the negative.

"No I don't think it was playing (in my mind) and also I was very positive. It was just a fresh game for me. We have played a couple of times later as well so it was one of the fresh matches."

According to Sindhu, being more aggressive and being fast on her feat did the trick for her in the World Championship.

"I was very much alert and I was very prepared for this tournament (World Championship) and playing against (Chinese) Chen Yufei and Okuhara, even though it was a different style of the game I was more aggressive and fast on my feet which was much needed.

"So, I was ready for every point and not just thinking about the game. Every point was equally important for me," the ace shuttler said.

MISSING



Name : Ritika Sahani
Age : 13 years
D/O : Raju Sahani
Height : 4'apprx
Complexion : Fair
Wearing apparels : Jacket, Blue jeans, red-T shirt, Black sport shoe.

CID PS FIR No. 0007 dated 25/07/2019
U/S 363 IPC missing since 28/12/2018 from MG Marg near Life Line Medical store, Gangtok, East Sikkim. **Contact: 9734964031**

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

email us: news@summittimes.com

Working Together to Prevent Suicides

If only it was so simple. And maybe it is

10 September is World Suicide Prevention Day and this section returns to this frequently visited theme again. As per the World Health Organisation, as many as 8 lakh people commit suicide every year [that's one suicide every 40 seconds around the world] and around 25-times more attempt suicide.

The numbers paint a scary picture and make this a challenge requiring the world's attention. Remember, apart from the 8,00,000 lives lost to avoidable reasons, there are 2 crore others who have tied a noose for themselves or attempted some other form of ending their lives! If their triggers are left unattended, they will be among the statistics of those who 'successfully' self-destructed in the coming years. They are also clearly grappling with serious issues and even if those around them do not notice (or choose to ignore) the suicidal tendencies, they cannot be left untouched by the deep trauma of such conditions. When one takes this aspect also into consideration, then the impact of suicides and suicidal tendencies multiplies many times over because each victim and person at risk is part of a family, belongs to a circle of friends, goes to school, college or office and touches many lives on a daily basis and no matter how consciously one tries to camouflage the condition, it does get out and affect others; and with every death to a suicide, everyone associated with the person is hit by a sense of guilt at not having intervened in time. Hence, as much for the lives that can be saved through some timely intervention as also to save those left behind from wracking guilt, the theme for WSPD this year needs to be taken to heart. World Suicide Prevention Day is being observed across the world today reflecting the sentiment - 'Working together to prevent suicide.'

What is being underlined through this theme is our collective responsibility as a community to look out for those struggling with suicidal thoughts, notice their condition and engage with them in a non-judgmental way, hear them out, offer sound counsel if we can and help them access professional assistance. Suicide is a vexed problem facing Sikkim which is why more people here need to spare a minute to muster the resolve to get engaged. Studies across the world have borne out that most times, all that it takes to pull a person back from the brink is a gentle word of support, even a gesture conveying that they need not suffer in isolation.

This section has spoken often about how Sikkim is seeking to address the challenge of suicides without having figured out why so many here ending their own lives. That is an important data analysis to undertake and should be done soon, but today, let's also focus on the need to remove the stigma still associated with suicides and suicide attempts, not just on the victims but also on their families. This stigma stops many from seeking help and also denies the community the opportunity to learn and prepare for the challenge. It is important that people who have lived through a suicide attempt to be able to share their experience more widely and teach others about the value of human engagement. Societies which have sought the assistance of survivors to inform the suicide prevention programmes have learned that words and actions of others are important mediums of saving lives. Those who have overcome suicidal tendencies have often spoken movingly about reaching the point where they could see no alternative but to take their own life, and about the days, hours and minutes leading up to this. They often describe realising that they did not want to die but instead wanted someone to intervene and stop them. Many say that they actively sought someone who would sense their despair and ask them whether they were okay. That is where the investment of a minute to notice these signals becomes important. The agencies engaged in addressing the problem of suicides can help by informing people at large about how they should respond and act when they notice someone around them struggling with such dark thoughts, because, let's also accept that most of us do not know how to face such situations. And because we do not know, we choose to ignore.

Every suicide awareness brochure will tell you that taking a minute to reach out to someone in your community - a family member, friend, colleague or even a stranger - could change the course of another's life. Another factor that prevents individuals from intervening is the worry of making the situation worse. This hesitance is understandable as suicide is a difficult issue to address, accompanied by a myth that suggests talking about it may instigate vulnerable individuals to contemplate the idea or trigger the act. Evidence suggests that this is not the case. The offer of support and a listening ear are more likely to reduce distress, as opposed to exacerbating it.

Data also reveals that in the wake of every suicide, 135 people suffer intense grief or are otherwise affected. Given the number of suicides Sikkim has suffered, it would be safe to vouch that just everyone here has been affected by a death due to suicide. That, in itself, should be reason enough for everyone here to work together to prevent suicides. The theme for this day has been carefully chosen. After all, it highlights the most essential ingredient for effective suicide prevention - collaboration. We all have a role to play and together we can collectively address the challenges presented by suicidal behaviour in society today.

Hong Kong: how the police trained for riots - and why their response to protesters has been so violent

CAROL ANNE GOODWIN JONES
theconversation.com

Hong Kong's controversial extradition bill, the catalyst for three months of protests, was officially withdrawn on September 3 by Carrie Lam, Hong Kong's beleaguered chief executive. Its withdrawal was a key demand of protesters, concerned it could lead to extraditions to mainland China.

But in her recorded television address, Lam refused to give way on the protesters' other demands - notably for an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality. However, she did appoint two new members to the government's Independent Police Complaints Council panel which is currently investigating the violence.

The violence in Hong Kong in recent weeks has led to fears that Beijing is gearing up for a crack-down against the protesters. Direct intervention by Chinese forces is permitted under the Basic Law, Hong Kong's "mini-constitution", if Hong Kong declares a state of emergency - which it hasn't yet done. The garrison of China's People's Liberation Army stationed in central Hong Kong was recently reinforced and the People's Armed Police has been seen massing and drilling just over the border in Shenzhen. This lends credence to what the protestors see as a "last stand" to save the city they call home.

Hong Kongers are used to a home where the rule of law, rather than the law of the ruler, prevails. This is a legacy of riots in 1956, 1966 and 1967, when the Hong Kong police force adopted an increasingly paramilitary character.

Following the 1967 riots, however, the rule of law, human rights and liberalism became the touchstone of government legitimacy. From the 1970s onwards, it engaged in a swathe of welfare, educational, and legal reforms designed to rebuild links with the community and trust in the police. As I've outlined in my own research, the strategy worked. Hong Kong came to be regarded as a stable, peaceful, prosperous and orderly society, its 30,000-strong police force a trusted and friendly guardian.

READY FOR RIOTS

Behind the scenes, however, the police force strengthened its anti-riot capability. Since 1958, it has invested in a specially trained paramilitary unit, the Police Tactical Unit, based in Fanling - whose training ground was shared with mainland forces just before 1997. Besides such specialist squads, all members of the Hong Kong police are trained to kit-up and be riot-ready within 11 minutes, giving the police an extraordinary force-wide public order capability.

The classified Hong Kong Riot Training Manual - copied by the UK's Metropolitan Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police - sets out the sequence of public order policing. Traditionally, tear gas has been the weapon of first choice, the intention being to encourage the crowd to disperse along routes deliberately left open by the police. A visual and audible warning is given in Chinese and English. In order to prevent individual officers from being captured by the crowd, going into the

crowd to effect an arrest was discouraged. Regular riot training instilled such practices across the entire force.

But the 2019 protests have taken the police response to another level. Though China blames "foreign forces" for fomenting the 2019 protests, they are grounded in domestic issues. A wiser government might have adopted a more hands-off approach from the start, but instead, the government



deployed the police in paramilitary formation, using tear gas, water cannon, rubber bullets, and pepper spray to deter the demonstrators.

Predictably, this hasn't worked: a cycle of protest, repression and further protest developed. The return to a hardline approach stems from police handling of the 2014 mass protest known as the Occupy Central or Umbrella Movement. Under pressure to end weeks of peaceful protest, the then-commissioner of police, Andy Tsang Wai-hung, and his deputy, Alan Lau, sanctioned the use of tear gas against the protesters. Hong Kong was in shock. A generation brought up to respect the police could not believe that "their" police force was now using such repressive tactics against them.

Nicknamed the "vulture", Tsang already had a reputation as a hardliner. Said to be held in high regard within the police force, he nevertheless became a highly divisive figure. His retirement in 2015 was an opportunity for the government to appoint a more conciliatory police commissioner, Stephen Lo, to heal the divisions between police and society.

But in an unprecedented move, the force brought Tsang's former deputy Lau out of retirement on a temporary contract specifically to handle the 2019 protests. Lau has continued Tsang's "gloves off" approach.

As a force with its origins in colonial days, the Hong Kong police is an arm of the state: individual officers have no individual constabulary power. They must obey orders even when they think they are unjustified. In 2019, this has meant obeying orders to fire tear gas while deliberately blocking routes of dispersal. They have also fired tear gas in closed or confined spaces, contrary to international

standards which only permit its use in open spaces.

Police have also fired rubber bullets at close range, and gone into crowds with batons raised. In two incidents, officers have fired live ammunition in the air as warning shots. A special unit - the "raptor squad" - has been designated to work undercover to target high-profile activists and detain them at a special detention centre at San Uk Ling, near the mainland border.

The capture of police violence on mobile phone video and social media has not reined in the violence. Instead, the fact that the police are prepared to be filmed using such brutal tactics shows they understand they are immune from redress.

HARD TO REGAIN TRUST

However, the protesters remain resilient and undeterred. They too have learned lessons from 2014 - they are leaderless by design, both to prevent the police picking off the movement's leaders and any falling out among different factions. They regularly outwit the police with their "like water" approach, inspired by Bruce Lee, dissolving away before the police arrive only to pop-up unexpectedly elsewhere. Their ingenuity and creativity have captured the public's imagination.

The government's repressive approach, by contrast, is backfiring. Many who might otherwise stay at home have been so angered by the government's policing tactics that they too now come out in protest. They scan all walks of life, from housewives to lawyers, accountants and businesspeople, and school and university students - and their orderly conduct undermines Beijing's depiction of them as a violent, radical mob.

Frontline police officers not only face fatigue but doubts about the wisdom of exposing their families to public antagonism, as they continue to follow orders to fire tear gas into crowds which may contain neighbours, friends and relatives. The trust in police and rulers painstakingly built up in the aftermath of 1967 is being undone, and it is hard to see how it can be regained.

[the writer is Reader, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham]

3 ways insecticides can be counterproductive in agriculture

JULIEN LE ROY
theconversation.com

Pesticides are not new and are definitely not a human invention. Plants and other microorganisms have used chemicals to defend themselves from other organisms for hundred thousands of years.

Take, for example, walnut trees. Their roots produce a chemical called juglone that is secreted into the soil and inhibits nearby plant growth. This ensures the walnut tree has all the nearby nutrients and water for itself.

Plants also produce insecticides. Nicotine is the most famous example, produced by plants in the solanaceae family, including tomatoes, potatoes and, of course, tobacco. Many plant-eating insects avoid tobacco plants because nicotine is a powerful neurotoxin that can kill them.

Humans have replicated this natural chemical warfare to produce pesticides that have become essential for agriculture. But insecticide use also raises concerns about their impact on non-target species such as bees, or their indirect effect on birds, which eat a lot of insects.

Scientists who study insects and how they adapt to pesticides are discovering that some insecticides can make pests stronger or that the plant itself might even become under greater attack from other pests. Finding solutions is important both for preserving biodiversity and agriculture.

When a farmer uses insecticides, they are aware of beneficial effects on their fields but they need also be aware

of the potential negative impacts.

WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU MAKES YOU STRONGER

A pesticide can provoke a resurgence of the target pest in the days, weeks or months that follow its application. Insecticides must be applied at lethal concentrations and sometimes several times during the pest's lifecycle to be fully effective.

At sub-lethal concentrations, a pesticide can, in fact, increase the fecundity or the longevity of some pests. For example, when imidacloprid (an insect neurotoxin from the neonicotinoid family) is applied at sub-lethal concentrations, it can double the reproduction rate of the green peach aphid.

Even worse, a sub-lethal pesticide application can rapidly lead to the emergence of insecticide resistance. Pesticide resistance makes these chemicals useless or even detrimental. This is the case for the insecticide-resistant strain of maize weevil, which increased its population 5.4-fold when treated by a pyrethroid insecticide called deltamethrin.

OUTBREAKS ON REPEAT

Insecticides can be selective - targeting a particular insect - or act on a range of pests (broad spectrum). Broad-spectrum insecticides are widely used, but can have detrimental adverse effects such as disrupting a pest's natural enemies.

In these cases, a few weeks after the pesticide is applied, the same pest will re-appear in the field (primary pest resurgence) or an outbreak of another pest will occur (secondary pest resurgence). These phenomena

have been identified on many crops, including soybean, potato and more, but they're difficult to study because there are so many different factors involved.

Some researchers have estimated that an early season pesticide treatment on cotton for lygus bugs can add US\$6 per acre for a subsequent late-season pesticide application because the pest's natural enemies are depleted.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

Some pesticide manufacturers now coat the plant seeds with pesticide, so that the plants take up the pesticide in their organs and become toxic to agricultural pests. This has become a very popular way to protect annuals such as wheat, soybean or corn.

But when a plant becomes resistant to some pests, it can also become more sensitive to others. The best documented example is the use of neonicotinoids on cotton, corn and tomato, and the rise of two-spotted spider mite outbreaks. Spider mites are not susceptible to neonicotinoids and thrive on these crops much more compared to the untreated ones.

Without a doubt, pesticides contribute positively to high and stable crop production in our current agricultural model and therefore in our lives. On the other hand, there are non-chemical options that can be used as alternatives or in addition to pesticides.

INSECTICIDE ALTERNATIVES

There are opportunities to reduce pesticide use, and scientists, like myself, work on many sustainable alternatives. A recent study highlighted that 78 per cent of the neonicotinoids

used in agriculture could be replaced by non-chemical pest management. Among many others, an amazing initiative in Germany called Jena is gathering researchers to see if bringing more plant diversity to the field increases resilience when compared to our mono-cultural agricultural systems.

Several new technologies are under development that could help reduce pesticide use. For example, cameras can detect the volatile chemicals released by plants during a pest outbreak. These warning signals can help farmers detect pests sooner and lead to a better, more efficient treatment.

Biotechnology can also help. Genetically modified crops have not been broadly accepted by the public, but new techniques such as CRISPR-Cas9 - a precise genetic tool able to change small parts of the genome - can, if used wisely, be invaluable to a more sustainable, less pesticide-dependent, agriculture. For example, a plant can be designed to attract natural enemies by emitting volatile compounds, therefore protecting against some pests.

Under the current agricultural model, pesticides are almost essential to provide sufficient food to the global population. But there are alternatives, and buying food from farmers that have stopped or limited pesticide use is one way to support an agricultural transition away from pesticides.

[the writer is Postdoctoral associate, Department of Biology, Western University]

Home, law, tribal ministries broadly agree on recommending tribal area status for Ladakh: NCST

NEW DELHI, SEP 8 (PTI): The ministries of home, law and tribal affairs and the National Commission of Scheduled Tribes have “broadly” agreed to a proposal to recommend “tribal area” status for Ladakh, a senior official of the NCST has said.

Internal discussions took place among representatives of the ministries and the commission on September 4 to understand the issue, the official said.

“Broadly, everyone has agreed to the proposal of recommending tribal area status for Ladakh. A discussion on various provisions of the Fifth and the Sixth Schedule took place during the meeting. A final call will be taken on the matter on September 11,” the official said.

The meeting came amid a growing demand from leaders in Ladakh for according “tribal area” status to the region.

The Sixth Schedule provides for the administration of tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram after setting up autonomous district and regional councils.



Though Ladakhis welcomed the Centre's decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, and make Ladakh a Union territory, they fear an influx of outsiders would lead to a change in the region's demography, jeopardising their culture and identity.

The commission had earlier said it was also seeking to know why none of the Union territories with a predominantly tribal population, be it Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lak-

shadweep or Dadra and Nagar Haveli, has been declared tribal area.

The case of Lakshadweep, where tribals make up around 95 per cent of the population, could be taken up later, the official said.

In a memorandum to Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda in August, BJP MP from Ladakh, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, had said the region is a predominantly tribal area with tribals making up to 98 per cent of its population.

“After the Centre announced its decision to make Ladakh a Union Territory, the biggest concern of the tribal population here is to protect its identity, culture, land and economy,” he had said.

Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Chairman Gyal P Wangyal had also told the minister that “now their only demand is that Ladakh be brought under the Sixth Schedule so that their land remains protected”.

According to Article 244 and the sixth schedule, tribal-dominated areas in four states - Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram - are called “tribal areas”, which are technically different from the “scheduled areas” under the Fifth Schedule.

While executive powers of the Union extend in scheduled areas with respect to their administration in the Fifth Schedule, the Sixth Schedule areas remain within the executive authority of the state.

Book to discuss LGBTQ inclusion in corporate India

NEW DELHI, SEP 8 (PTI): A new book on the story of corporate India's tryst with LGBTQ inclusion will hit the stands next year, Westland Publications has announced.

The announcement of the book, “Queeristan: LGBTQ Inclusion in Corporate India”, comes at a time when India celebrates the first anniversary of historic Supreme Court verdict decriminalising homosexuality.

On September 6, 2018, a five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court unanimously decriminalised part of the 158-year-old colonial law under Section 377 of the IPC.

Written by Parmesh Shahani, founder of the Godrej India Culture Lab and vice-president at Godrej Industries, the book traces the author's eventful journey from the high-powered boardrooms of corporate India to the Pride marches in the streets while amplifying the voices of the brave young Indians fighting for LGBTQ inclusion.

“Being LGBTQ inclusive is a very Indian thing to do. It is very much a part of our Indian culture and heritage and in this book I am writing about

how so many enlightened companies have understood this and are benefiting from it.

“Remember, when you are inclusive, you are not doing a favour to LGBTQ people, you are actually doing a favour to your own selves. How? Wait till the book's release and you will know,” said Sahani, who is also author of “Gay Bombay: Globalization, Love and (Be)Longing in Contemporary India”.

The book, the publisher said, is a must-read for anyone that wants to understand the pulse of modern India.

“Parmesh's story sets context to the struggle that the LGBTQ community witnesses in the corporate world as well as the many victories and losses in court around the draconian section 377 that was finally read down in 2018.

“The timing of the book serves as a reminder to the landmark verdict made a year ago that spelt joy and united thousands in the country. We hope this book sparks more conversations on why inclusivity is a way forward in society,” Gautam Padmanabhan, CEO, Westland Publishing, said.

KIIT to invest Rs 200cr to promote multi-disciplinary research

BHUBANESWAR, SEP 8 (PTI): Buoyed by the Institution of Eminence (IoE) status, KIIT University is all set to inject Rs 200 crore to promote multi-disciplinary research, a senior official of the institute.

The university plans to set up a Central Research Centre to focus on areas such as environment and water, the official said.

Union Human Resource Development Ministry has issued a Letter of Intent (LoI) for ‘Institution of Eminence’ (IoE) tag to KIIT University recently, said Dr Achyuta Samanta, Founder of KIIT and KISS.

The institute is among the 10 private universities in the country and the youngest of all to be selected for the coveted IoE status, he claimed.

“KIIT will spend Rs 200 crore to set up a Central Research Centre in order to promote multi-disciplinary research,” said a senior official of the institute.

While promoting research work, the university will focus on areas such as environment and water and issues like healthcare, energy, medical and material sciences will also be accorded special attention, the official said.

Noting that the IoE status has brought greater responsibility for the institute to ensure high standard of education, research and innovations and transform itself into a world class educational hub, said Samanta, also a Lok Sabha MP.

Around 1,000 students from 53 foreign countries are presently pursuing undergradu-

ate and post-graduate courses in the university, Samanta said adding that efforts would be made to attract more overseas students to study in the 22-year-old institute.

Highlighting the advantages of IoE tag, the Lok Sabha member said it gives complete autonomy to KIIT to enter into collaborations with foreign and Indian educational institutes for the benefit of students and researchers.

It will also enable the institute to design its own course curriculum and carry out recruitment of faculty members.

Recalling that the institute had started its journey from a small rented house with a seed capital Rs 5,000, he said, “We have faced many challenges and hurdles but we have never compromised on quality.”

Tripura Tourism dept to construct replicas of 51 Shaktipeeths

AGARTALA, SEP 8 (PTI): To boost tourism in Tripura, the state government has decided to construct 51 temples, which would be replicas of the 51 Shaktipeeths and has also started a helicopter service to Devatamura and Unnakoti hills, famous for huge-rock cut sculptures, an official said on Sunday.

The state government has already allocated 14.22 acres of land for construction of replicas of Shaktipeeths at Fulkumari in Gomati district, about 3-km away from the Tripuresari temple, a famous temple and one of the 51 Shaktipeeths, the official said.

Shaktipeeths are significant shrines and pilgrimage destinations in shaktism.

“There are 51 Shaktipeeths. Of the 51 Shaktipeeths, 38 are in India, six in Bangladesh, three in Nepal, two in Pakistan

and one each in Tibet and in Sri Lanka. For common people, it is not possible to visit all the 51 Shaktipeeths. So Tripura Tourism department has decided to construct the exact replicas of the Shaktipeeths near Tripuresari temple at Udaipur”, an official of the Chief Ministers office said.

The official said, “The Tourism department has prepared a preliminary project report of Rs 44 crore for construction of the replicas of the 51 Shaktipeeths and has sent the proposal to the 15th Finance Commission for consideration for funding the project.”

The state Tourism department has also started a helicopter service for tourists to get an aerial view of rock-cut carvings at Devatamura in Gomati district and Unakoti at Unakoti district.

Deputy Director of Tripura Tourism, Abhi-

jit Chakraborty said, “The state government has introduced a helicopter service from September 1, named as ‘Tripura Hawai Safari’, which would be available on Sunday's only.

He said the Tripura Hawai Safari is a one day programme in which the traveller would visit Devatamura in Gomati district and Unnakoti hills in Unnakoti district.

Devatamura or Debtamura is a hill range, known for its rock sculptures, a panel of carved images, on the bank of Gomati river.

The stone images are reported to mark the revival of Brahmanism during the 15 and 16th century.

Unakoti literally means one less than a crore. The place is a pilgrimage of shaivites and famous for its 8th century rock-cut sculptures made of sandstone.

No light at the end of the tunnel for Metro victims

KOLKATA, SEP 8 (PTI): It has been a week since the people were evacuated hastily after their houses were damaged during underground work by Metro railway in Bowbazar area here, but they return daily near their residences, now cordoned off for safety.

They had to leave behind their all while rushing out of their central Kolkata houses on September 1 - from documents such as Aadhaar card and bank papers to family heirlooms like mahogany period furniture and Belgian glass mirrors.

Several houses at Durga Pituri Lane and Syakrapara Lane in Bowbazar area have either collapsed or developed huge cracks during tunnel boring work by the Metro rail.

Bowbazar, one of Kolkata's most congested areas where there are many century-old buildings, is known as the city's jewellery hub. Most of the shops lining the arterial B B Ganguly Street are showrooms of jewellers.

Among the over 500 people who have been rendered homeless all of a sudden are persons whose residences were not affected till now, but have become unsafe for living as they are close to the spot where the damage had taken place.

“I lost my husband only last year and just when I was picking up the pieces, there is this blow. Our building has not been damaged, but the Metro engineers

marked it unsafe and asked us to evacuate,” said Mala Dutta.

“One of my two daughters will appear for the Higher Secondary examination next year. So you can well understand my situation,” Dutta told PTI at the control room for displaced persons set up at a college in the vicinity.

Most of the evacuated people were put up at various hotels by the Kolkata Metro Railway Corporation Ltd (KMRCL), which is implementing the project, while several others are staying at their relatives' places.

People have been evacuated from more than 50 houses and a few of them were lucky to be allowed by police to enter their residences that are still intact to see if they could retrieve documents or valuables left behind. “Ten more houses may have to be evacuated in the area depending on the situation,” KMRCL General Manager, administration, A K Nandy told PTI.

Anup Baral, a resident of Durga Pituri Lane, said he and his family were forced to leave on September 1 morning.

“From the mahogany furniture to Belgium glass dressing tables, we had to leave all our precious possessions at our house as we had to leave at 15 minutes' notice by the Metro authorities,” Baral said.

The three-storied house of the Baral family has tilted making it impossible for anyone to enter it.

Some of the workers of the jewellery shops in the area claimed that they had to abandon the gold given to them by merchants for making ornaments while leaving their rented rooms in the affected buildings.

Purnima Baral, a resident of Syakrapara Lane, is now staying at a hotel along with her husband and son.

“I don't want to stay in the hotel for long. I want an accommodation of my choice,” said Purnima whose house was damaged in the tunnel work.

The KMRCL has already said if the hotel stay of the shifted residents is prolonged, they will be provided with flats on rent.

Sudipto Sil of Durga Pituri Lane has no complaints about the accommodation arrangement.

“But we want an early end to the problem,” Sil said.

Their problem started when an aquifer broke during tunnel boring work and water and silt gushed in, leading to severe ground loss in the vicinity.

After the incident, the authorities have stopped tunnel boring for the East West corridor that will connect the IT hub of Salt Lake Sector V and Howrah station.

For the first time in the country, tunnels have been bored under a river, the Hooghly, to connect the twin cities of Kolkata and Howrah through the rapid transit system, spanning a length of 16.6 kilometre.

North East Festival to kick off from Nov 8 in capital

NEW DELHI, SEP 8 (PTI): Exotic cuisine, scintillating fashion show and adrenaline-pumping musical showdown by rock bands, the North East festival, in its seventh edition, is all set to make its return to the capital starting November 8. The three-day event will be held here at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.

With around “40 food stalls of diverse North Eastern foods, spectacular fashion show with 20 designers, and musical

performances by top national and international stars”, the festival claims to be bigger and better in scale this time. “The biggest positive of the North East festival is that it has been able to connect with Delhi and helped in bridging the gap.

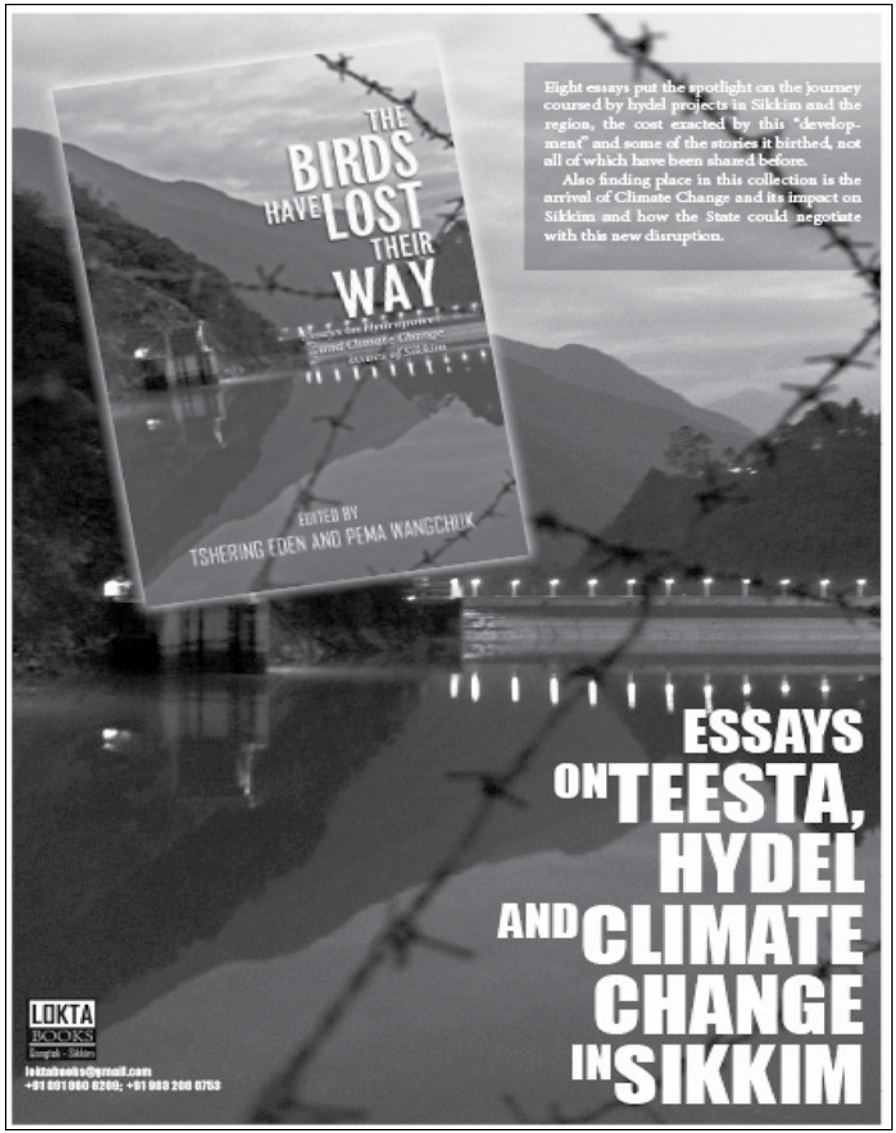
“It has helped in giving a platform for North Eastern people to showcase their talent to the people of Delhi. This year, the festival promises to be even bigger,” Shyamkanu Mahanta, founder and chief organiser of

North East Festival, said.

The event will showcase region's colourful dance forms, various crafts, mask presentation, and the much talked about rock battles between Delhi's colleges, power rock bands of the North East and the capital.

To raise awareness about the diversity of ethnic languages of the region, this edition of the festival will also hold workshops, folk talks, and art installations.

The festival will come to an end on November 10.



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Serena says her poor effort ‘inexcusable’ in US Open final

NEW YORK, SEP 8 (AFP): Serena Williams is wondering when she will start playing like a 23-time Grand Slam champion again in a major final, calling her poor showing in Saturday’s US Open final loss “inexcusable.”

Williams fell to 19-year-old Canadian Bianca Andreescu 6-3, 7-5 at Arthur Ashe Stadium on the same court where she won her first Grand Slam title 20 years ago, nine months before Andreescu was born.

“I love Bianca. I think she’s a great girl. But I think this was the worst match I’ve played all tournament. It’s hard to know that you could do better,” Williams said.

“Bianca obviously played well. I think her returns make me play better and put pressure on my serve.

“At the same time it’s inexcusable for me to play at that level.” Williams had 33 winners but just as many unforced errors. She hit nine aces but misfired eight double faults and hit only 44 percent of her first serves. She dropped 30 of 43 points on her second serve.

“I believe I could have played better. I believe I could have done more. I believe I could have just



been more Serena today,” Williams said.

“I honestly don’t think Serena showed up. I have to kind of figure out how to get her to show up in Grand Slam finals.”

Williams, who remains one Slam title shy of matching Margaret Court’s all-time record, has lost the past two Wimbledon and US Open finals since returning after having a baby two years ago.

And she’s struggling to find answers for bad performances in the

biggest matches. “All of it honestly, truly is super frustrating,” Williams said. “I’m so close, so close, so close, yet so far away.

“I don’t know what to say. I guess I got to keep going if I want to be a professional tennis player. And I just got to just keep fighting through it.” Williams, who turns 38 later this month, downplayed the pursuit of Court’s record.

“I’m not necessarily chasing a record. I’m just trying to win Grand

Slams,” she said. “It’s definitely frustrating, but for the most part I just am still here. I’m still doing what I can do.” Williams fell behind 5-1 in the second set, sounding somewhat embarrassed and humbled at her situation before saving a match point in the seventh game to begin a fightback.

“I was just thinking, honestly at that point, ‘Wow, this is terrible. You got to play better. I have to do better,’” Williams said. “I just

couldn’t go down like that, so I just wanted to play a little bit better.”

- SERENA SEEKS ANSWERS -

Most spectators in the crowd of 26,191 cheered on Williams, helping revive her to level the set at 5-5 before Andreescu broke again in the 12th game to win the title.

“Well, I was thinking, ‘OK, Serena, you didn’t miss a serve, you lost serve maybe twice in the whole tournament, and you didn’t hit a first serve in today,’” she said. “So

that was obviously on my mind: ‘How do I play at a level like this in a final?’”

As her recent Slam finals losses go, she rated the effort superior to that against Simona Halep in dropping last July’s Wimbledon final -- “I definitely did better than I did against Halep” -- and discounted last year’s Wimbledon loss to Angelique Kerber, saying, “Kerber doesn’t count because I was exhausted. My baby was eight months, and that’s tough.”

Williams, who has not won a Slam since the 2017 Australian Open while she was pregnant with daughter Olympia, said the time after her loss was spent pondering why she played so woefully.

“I’m not really happy, but I have to take it one moment at a time,” she said. “I honestly didn’t play my best. I could have played better. That’s the only solace that I can take.”

Williams figures time will heal the pain, but it won’t be any time soon.

“In 20 years, I definitely will be like, ‘Wow, that wasn’t so bad,’” she said. “It’s very hard right now in the moment to take this and say, ‘You did OK,’ because I don’t believe I did.

Need mental stability of different level for Olympic medal: Abhishek

AMIT KUMAR DAS NEW DELHI, SEPT 8 (PTI): He might have clinched his second World Cup gold last week but Indian shooter Abhishek Verma says he will have to achieve a “mental stability of a different level” to claim an Olympic medal.

The 30-year-old from Haryana, who had secured an Olympic quota place by winning the 10m air pistol gold medal at the Beijing World Cup in April this year, won his second yellow metal in the same event at the Rio World Cup last week.

The Indian also bagged a silver with Yashaswini Singh Deswal in mixed 10m air pistol and his performance has fuelled hopes of a medal at the 2020 Tokyo Games.

“Shooting is more mental than physical. So for the Olympics, we will need mental confidence and stability of a different level. So I plan to do mental exercises, yoga and meditation as preparation for the Games,” Abhishek told PTI.

“I need to work on my overall training technique but the main focus will be on mental calmness. When you are in the final and all are shouting from the back, at that time you can lose focus and that is when you get a 9 or 8, so I need to focus on that.”

In Rio, Abhishek had shot 244.2 in the 10m air pistol final to win gold, beating Turkey’s Ismail Keles (243.1) and teammate Saurabh Chaudhary (221.9).

“The feeling has sunk in now. I was well prepared for everything. I have been practicing with my coaches according to my schedule. We had a coaching camp at Rio 15 days ahead of the world cup, so all these adds to the confidence and we all have performed well,” he said. India currently boasts one of the youngest shooting teams in the world and Abhishek said the healthy rivalry at home is helping the Indian shooters.

“It is a good opportunity because there is such tough competition

at home only. It gives us confidence and exposure,” he said.

“From Asian Games, me and Sourabh are room mate in every training camp, every competitions, so we discuss our experiences all the time and it helps improve each other’s performance.”

A record 14 Indian rifle and pistol shooters have earned the right to compete in the year-end World Cup Finals, scheduled to be held in Putian, China between November 17 and 23.

“World Cup Finals happens once in two years. This time we have a big team qualifying so we will look to produce a better performance than Rio,” he said.

Till a few years ago, Abhishek was happy pursuing law while spending his time as a hobby shooter in one of the shooting ranges at Hisar.

“I had done computer engineering first and then did a course in law. I always had interest in shooting but didn’t get the platform. When a shooting range had opened in Hisar, Haryana, I joined it as a hobby. I used to go for 30-40 minutes but focus was on law only,” he said.

“But as I was about to complete law, my scores in shooting had improved a lot. I played in a state event and got a gold and that gave me confidence that I can do well. So after completing law, in 2017, I decided to give shooting my everything for a year.”

Soon results started showing as he won a gold medal in 50m air pistol at North Zone and also performed well at the Nationals.

“I claimed gold in 50m North Zone, then at the Nationals, I got a silver in civilian category. After that I scored well in trials and finals and I was in the Indian squad,” he said.

“In 2018, my aim was to get into the squad but I also won a medal at Asian Games, so I was getting things extra. So after that I had decided that shooting is all I would do now.

No Olympic berths but Indian boxers aim to better medal colour and haul at world championships

EKATERINBURG (RUSSIA), SEP 8 (PTI): The coveted Olympic berths are no longer at stake but Indian boxers will not be short on motivation when they step inside the ring to better a record

which states four medals from 20 editions, in the men’s World Championships here from Monday.

Vijender Singh (2009), Vikas Krishan (2011), Shiva Thapa (2015) and Gaurav Bidhuri (2017) make the exclusive club which has experienced what it feels like to be on the podium at amateur boxing’s marquee event. All these men ended with bronze medals and that is another aspect in which the Indians would be eyeing an improvement. “It is going to be tough. The aim is to improve on what we have done in the past. That’s what we work for,” Indian Boxing’s High-Performance Director Santiago Nieva told PTI.

It was meant to be

an Olympic qualifier and features the revised eight weight categories (52kg, 57kg, 63kg, 69kg, 74kg, 81kg, 91kg, +91kg) earmarked for Tokyo 2020, instead of the traditional 10 divisions.

However, the event was stripped of Olympic qualifier status after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) lost patience with the long-standing administrative mess in the International Boxing Association (AIBA) and took control of the entire process, which will now start next year. With that status gone, the tournament has lost a bit of sheen.

Nevertheless, it is still likely to feature around 450 boxers from 87 countries in 400 fights spread across 12 days.

India’s hopes will be majorly pinned on pint-sized dynamo Amit Panghal (52kg). The reticent 23-year-old from Haryana has been on a roll for more than a year.

Only a crash will end slip-streaming qualifying queues, warns Hamilton

MONZA (ITALY), SEP 8 (AFP): Lewis Hamilton warned on Saturday only a crash would prevent future repeats of the slip-streaming farce that concluded Saturday’s qualifying session for the Italian Grand Prix.

The defending Formula One champion, who qualified second behind Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc in his Mercedes, repeated his warning about the dangers of drivers slowing down in a bunch to find a tow.

“I am sure it is going to continue, as positioning is key. If everyone is going out so late, it will continue to be an issue in places where you particularly need a tow,” said Hamilton. “It won’t be until someone crashes that they will change. We are all trying to get a gap, which continues to be key... In some places, you want a bigger gap and in some places it is about the tow. “It is the system that needs to shift a little, but I don’t think we need to start handing out penalties.

“We need to look at it and reflect and see what we can do to make it better. Better for the fans and less dangerous.”

After the session, which ended with only two cars producing lap times while the rest were timed out by the chequered flag, Hamilton had suggested Ferrari had been responsible for the outcome.

This was dismissed by Leclerc, who took his second successive pole following his maiden GP win in Belgium.

Harry Kane hits hat-trick in England’s demolition of blundering Bulgaria

DANIEL TAYLOR theGuardian

Naturally, Gareth Southgate would never be so presumptuous, three games into England’s qualifying group, to assert that his team’s participation in Euro 2020 is virtually assured. The rest of us, however, can probably start to consider it a fait accompli. An argument could even be made that they were virtually guaranteed a place as soon as the draw was made.

Their latest victory certainly left the impression that there is a drowsy inevitability about England’s progression. Harry Kane added another three goals to his portfolio, scoring the second hat-trick of his international career: England have accumulated 14 goals from three qualifiers and Raheem Sterling has scored seven times in his past seven internationals.

Sterling, you may recall, once went 27 games for England without a goal over a three-year period – which can feel perplexing, to say the least, now he is established as such a formidable scorer.

Ultimately, though, this victory will mostly be remembered for the contribution of the man who wandered on to the pitch at full-time to collect the ball as a souvenir. Two of Kane’s goals were penalties and the other originated from some obliging goalkeeping – but he will not worry too greatly about that. Wembley, once again, felt like a happy place. Mason Mount made his debut as a substitute and England will head to Southamp-



ton for their next assignment, Tuesday’s game against Kosovo, optimistically thinking they can maintain their immaculate record in Group A.

It can probably be assumed Southgate will make considerable changes, potentially meaning Trent Alexander-Arnold, Jadon Sancho and Ben Chilwell returning to the starting lineup. He opted for a more experienced team here with Michael Keane and Declan Rice the only players in the XI with fewer than 10 caps. Kane was flanked by Sterling and Marcus Rashford in attack and the onus was certainly on the team to go forward bearing in mind the adventurous 4-1-2-3 system usually favoured by Pep Guardiola at Manchester City.

Could they play like City? Well, not quite. But then again, the Bulgarian goalkeeper, Plamen Iliev, was hardly Eder-son-esque in the way he inadvertently contributed to England taking the lead midway through the first half. Iliev was guilty

of a mix of carelessness and overindulgence as he exchanged passes inside his own penalty area with one centre-half and shaped to play the ball out to his left, where another of the defenders, Vasil Bozhikov, had peeled off.

Sterling and Kane were loitering with intent and the goalkeeper got the pass horribly wrong. Sterling, showing wonderful anticipation, nipped in to steal the ball, spun beyond Bozhikov and cut the ball back to Kane, who turned in a relatively simple finish from six yards.

It was Kane’s 23rd goal for England on the evening of his 40th cap, moving him ahead of Tommy Lawton and Peter Crouch into joint 15th, with Stan Mortensen, on the all-time list of England international goalscorers. The next one put Kane alongside Geoff Hurst and his second penalty left him one short of Bryan Robson, albeit still not quite halfway towards Wayne Rooney’s record of 53.

For what it is worth, Kane overtook Marco van Basten’s 24 for the Netherlands.

Until the mistake from Iliev, England had found it difficult to get behind a packed defence. Bulgaria looked what they were: a team 60th in Fifa’s world rankings, sandwiched between Mali and Burkina Faso, but it quickly became clear they were intent on denying space for the side that is 56 places higher. They also had a couple of first-half chances on the breakaway without really giving the impression that they could put England under any concerted pressure. The mood was genial, the sun was flickering through the gaps in the most vertiginous parts of the stadium and by half-time a sellout crowd could have been forgiven for expecting more goals in the second 45 minutes.

They got what they wanted, too, though the first opportunity of the next half fell to Wander-son, a naturalised Brazilian making his debut in

Bulgaria’s No 9 shirt. Jordan Pickford blocked the shot and within a couple of minutes Rashford had raced upfield, enticing the raw challenge from Nikolay Bodurov that led to the Italian referee Marco Guida pointing to the penalty spot.

Kane reinforced his reputation as a brilliant penalty-taker, aiming it high and to the left of the goalkeeper, and the captain was also prominently involved again in the 55th minute, when each of England’s front players played a part in the third goal.

That one originated, again, from a mistake in the defence. This time it was Bodurov misplacing a pass. Kane’s interception immediately left England’s opponents short at the back and when Rashford returned the ball to his teammate inside the penalty area it was tempting to think Kane would let fly at goal. Instead, he clipped the ball across the goal-mouth and Sterling was running in to add the final touch with his knee.

Ex-UK minister says Johnson not trying to get a Brexit deal

LONDON, SEP 8 (AP): A senior minister who quit British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Cabinet said Sunday that the government is making little or no effort to secure a Brexit agreement with the European Union, despite Johnson's insistence that he wants a deal.

Amber Rudd said "there is no evidence of a deal. There are no formal negotiations taking place."

"What we know is that Angela Merkel and the EU have said, 'give us your proposal,' and we have not given them a proposal," she told the BBC.

Treasury chief Sajid Javid insisted that the government was "straining every sinew to get a deal" and had sent British negotiator David Frost to Brussels for talks.

The EU, however, says Britain has not produced any concrete new ideas.

Rudd's resignation as work and pensions secretary late Saturday is the latest blow to the embattled British prime minister.

Johnson says Britain must leave the EU as scheduled October 31 even if there is no divorce agreement with the bloc. But his plan is meeting fierce resistance, including from some members



of his own party.

Last week Johnson kicked 21 lawmakers out of the Conservative group in Parliament after they sided with the opposition to pass a law designed to prevent a no-deal Brexit.

Those expelled included the longest-serving Conservative in Parliament, Ken Clarke, and Nicholas Soames, grandson of World War II Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Rudd called the expulsions "an assault on decency and democracy."

"The Conservative Party should be a moderate party that embrac-

es people with different views of the EU," she said.

"If we become a party which has no place for moderates like I am, center-right conservatives, then we will not win."

Johnson is seeking a snap election on October 15 as a way to break the deadlock over Brexit, but lawmakers last week rejected his call for an early poll. He is due to try again Monday, but opposition parties say they will veto that attempt, too.

They want to postpone an election until Britain has secured a delay to the October 31 Brexit deadline, removing the risk the UK could

crash out without a deal.

Opposition Labour Party finance spokesman John McDonnell said "we're in a situation where no-one can trust while (Johnson) is in place what could happen."

"We don't believe that we can pin him down and I don't trust him an inch, and I don't think anyone does," McDonnell told the BBC.

Most economists say a no-deal Brexit would severely disrupt trade with the EU and plunge the UK into recession.

Johnson said this week he would rather be "dead in a ditch" than seek a postponement,

leaving government and Parliament at odds with no obvious solution.

Johnson's options all of them extreme include disobeying the law, which could land him in court or even prison, and resigning.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said Sunday that the government would obey the law, but would also "test very carefully what it does and doesn't require."

"It's been a rough week, but the reality is the prime minister is sticking to his guns on what he said to get us out of this rut that we're in," he said.

Kamala Harris apologises for laughing after Indian man calls Trump's actions "mentally retarded"

WASHINGTON, SEP 8 (PTI): Kamala Harris, the first Indian-origin US Senator, has apologised for laughing and saying "well said" in response to a question from an Indian man who called President Donald Trump's actions "mentally retarded."

The 54-year-old California Democrat and presidential candidate termed as "upsetting" the video, circulated on social media, of the Friday's incident at the New Hampshire town hall. She denied she had heard the offensive term. "When my staff played the video from my town hall yesterday, it was upsetting. I didn't hear the words the man used in that moment, but if I had I would've stopped and corrected him. I'm sorry. That word and others like it aren't acceptable. Ever," Harris said in a tweet on Saturday.

The questioner at the Londonderry town hall identified himself as being from Chennai, the same hometown as Harris' mother, and said he had spent "all this effort" to live the American dream and then Trump was elected, the CNN said in report. "Somehow a



racist bigot gets into the White House and then he says if you're not my colour you need to go back to your own country," said the man.

"So I am scared for this country. I am scared for the people of colour in this country," he said.

He then asked Harris what she would do, "in the next one year, to diminish the mentally retarded action of this guy?" the report said. The Indian man was applauded and the crowd laughed.

Harris too laughed and responded: "Well said, well said..." "I plan to win this election, I'll tell you that," she was quoted as saying in the report.

"Thank you for having the courage to stand up and say it is that there are a lot of people living with extreme fear right now in our country, ex-

treme fear," Harris said. The video made the rounds on Twitter on Saturday, hours after Harris had taken the stage at the New Hampshire Democratic Party Convention. Harris was criticised online for using those words, prompting her to tender an apology. Born in Oakland, California, Harris is the daughter of an Indian mother who migrated to the US from Chennai in 1960 and a Jamaican-American father.

Her mother Shyamala Gopalan studied science and complex mechanisms of cancer. Her father Donald Harris grew up in Jamaica, where he became a national scholar and earned the opportunity to study economics in the US. During the Obama era, she was popularly called as the "female Obama". A decade ago, journalist Gwen Ifill called Harris "the female Barack Obama" on the "Late Show With David Letterman". Later, a small businessman from Willoughby Tony Pinto called her "a young, female version of the president".

She is considered to be close to Obama, the first black American President, who endorsed her in her various elections including that of the US Senate in 2016.

Central Beijing locked down for overnight army parade rehearsal

BEIJING, SEP 8 (AFP): The centre of Beijing was under lockdown early Sunday for a nighttime parade rehearsal by the Chinese military which is preparing for October 1 ceremonies to mark Communist China's 70th anniversary.

The enormous Avenue of Eternal Peace, which leads to Tiananmen Square and runs east-west, was closed to traffic for about a dozen kilometres (seven miles) to allow troops to parade around Tiananmen Square, the symbolic heart of Chinese power.

It is where Mao Zedong in 1949 proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The official news agency Xinhua said about 90,000 people were "involved in the rehearsal and related supporting services", and organisers said the run-through "reached the expected results". Areas around the Avenue of Eternal Peace were gradually closed to traffic from late Saturday afternoon and were expected to stay off limits until Sunday morning, causing traffic jams.

Security forces blocked access to residences with views of the avenue, ordering several foreign media outlets in the area to leave their offices for the weekend.

"We warmly celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China," proclaimed immense signs being transported by trucks heading towards Tiananmen Square. Other rehearsals are expected each weekend leading up to October

1, leaving residents facing the same restrictions, a guard told AFP.

Every 10 years Beijing traditionally marks the republic's anniversary with a giant military parade.

The army said at the end of August that the next parade would be larger than those in 1999 and 2009, and even bigger than one in 2015 which commemorated the end of World War II 70 years earlier. On that occasion, 12,000 soldiers marched -- far fewer than the number of people involved in Sunday's rehearsal.

The parade is expected to showcase some of the most advanced weaponry of the Chinese army, in an effort to drum up patriotic fervour.

But it will not be targeted "at any countries or districts," General Cai Zhi-jun, a member of the Chinese Army General Staff, said last month.

Cai said the size of the military parade was not a sign of aggression and the Chinese army was "committed to safeguarding world peace and regional stability." This year's anniversary comes at a sensitive time for Beijing.

It is in a trade war with the United States, Hong Kong is rocked by demonstrations, and it faces criticism over the treatment of Muslims in the western Xinjiang region.

China's two-million-member armed forces is the world's largest and its military budget is the second-biggest, though still far behind that of the United States.

Atomic watchdog chief in Iran for high-level talks

TEHRAN, SEP 8 (AFP): Acting head of the UN atomic watchdog, Cornel Feruta, arrived in Tehran on Sunday for high-level talks with Iranian officials, the semi-official ISNA news agency reported. The International Atomic Energy Agency official's visit comes a day after Iran announced its latest step in reducing its commitments to a 2015 nuclear deal.

The Romanian diplomat was to meet Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation chief Ali Akbar Salehi, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, ISNA said.

The IAEA said the visit was part of its "ongoing interactions" with Tehran, including "verification and monitoring in Iran under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)," the technical name for the 2015 deal.

The accord gave Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme. Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation said on Saturday that it had fired up 20 IR-4 and 20 IR-6 advanced centrifuges -- a third step it has taken back from the nuclear deal. Despite the latest move, the agency said Iran would allow the IAEA to continue monitoring its nuclear facilities in accordance with the 2015 agreement. In response, the IAEA said it had noted Iran's latest move and indicated its inspectors were ready to check its compliance.

"Agency inspectors are on the ground in Iran and they will report any relevant activities to IAEA headquarters in Vienna," spokesman Fredrik Dahl said.

Hong Kong protesters urge Trump to 'liberate' their city



HONG KONG, SEP 8 (AP): Demonstrators in Hong Kong marched to the US Embassy on Sunday, urging President Donald Trump to "liberate" their city as they press for more democratic freedom in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Thousands of people converged at a park in central Hong Kong, chanting "Resist Beijing, Liberate Hong Kong." Many of them, clad in black shirts and wearing masks, waved American flags and carried posters that read "President Trump, please liberate Hong Kong."

Riot police stood watch as they began their march to the nearby US Embassy.

"Hong Kong is at the forefront of the battle against the totalitarian regime of China," said Panzer Chan, one of the organisers of Sunday's march. "Please support us in our fight."

Hong Kong has been rocked by a summer of unrest kicked off by a proposed law that would have allowed criminal suspects to be sent to mainland China for trial.

Many saw the extradition bill as a glaring example of the Chinese

territory's eroding autonomy since the former British colony was returned to China in 1997.

Hong Kong's government promised last week to withdraw the bill an early demand of protesters but that has failed to appease the demonstrators, who have widened their demands to include other issues, such as greater democracy.

The unrest has become the biggest challenge to Beijing's rule since Hong Kong's return from Britain. Beijing and the entirely state-controlled media have portrayed the protests as an effort by criminals to split the territory from China, backed by hostile foreigners.

Protesters on Sunday urged Washington to pass a bill, known as the Hong Kong Democratic and Human Rights Act, to support their cause. The bill proposes sanctions against Hong Kong and Chinese officials found to suppress democracy and human rights in the city, and could also affect Hong Kong's preferential trade status with the US.

The US State Department in a travel advisory Friday said Beijing has undertaken a propagan-

da campaign "falsely accusing the United States of fomenting unrest in Hong Kong."

It said US citizens and embassy staff have been the target of the propaganda and urged them to exercise increased caution.

Some US lawmakers have spoken out strongly in support of the Hong Kong protesters and voiced concern about the potential for a brutal crackdown by China.

Trump, however, has indicated the US would stay out of a matter he considers between Hong Kong and China. He has said he believes the US trade war with China is making Beijing tread carefully.

Sunday's rally followed overnight violent clashes between protesters and police at several metro stations.

Protesters set fire to debris near a metro station that had been shuttered in the crowded Mongkok area but retreated after riot police chased them using pepper spray.

Violent clashes separately took place at a station in Sha Tin new town, where protesters chased police officers into the control room before riot police arrived. Several people were injured and detained.

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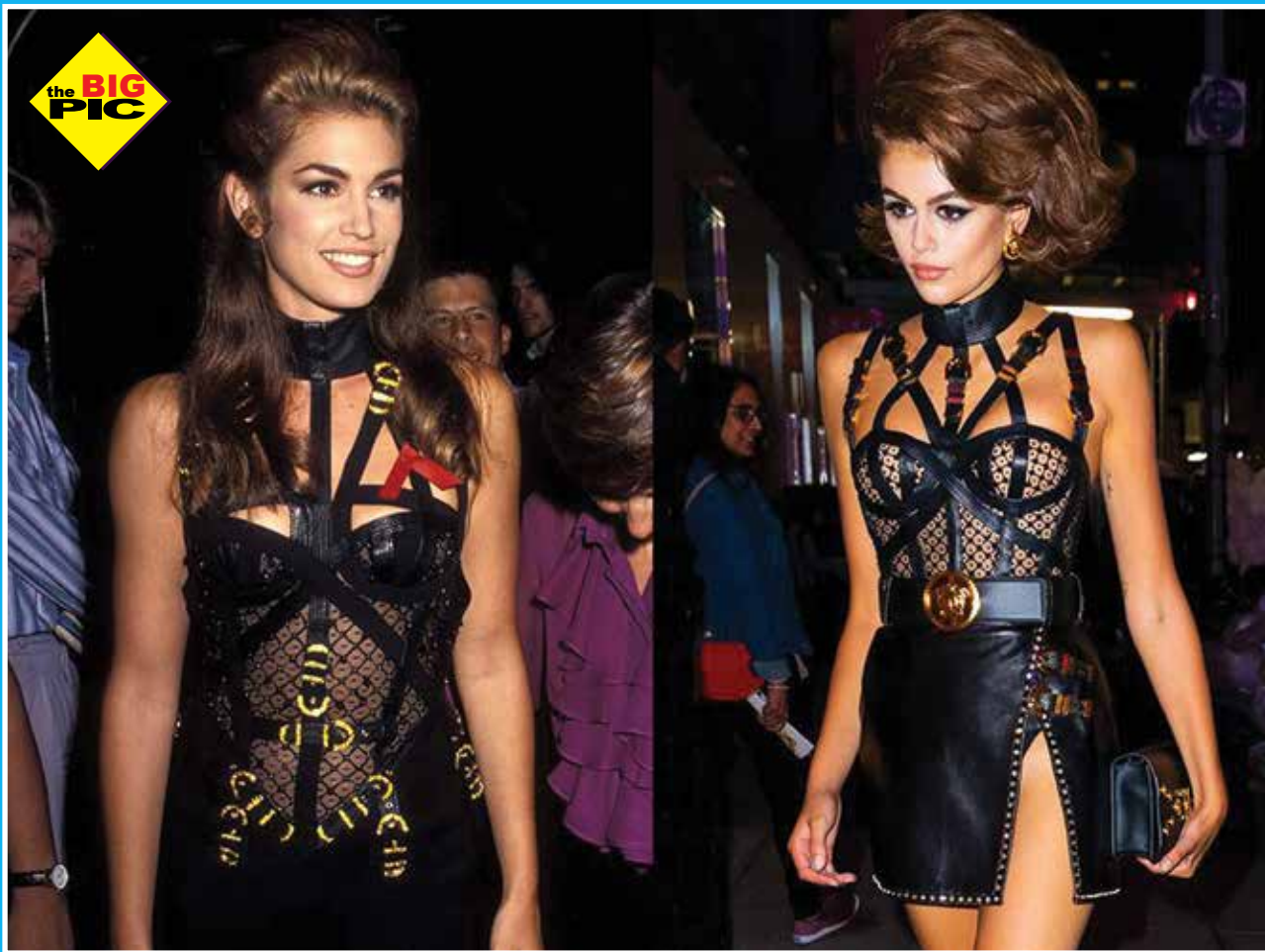
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KAIA GERBER CHANNELS MOM CINDY CRAWFORD: It's her party and she'll dress like a '90s super if she wants to! Kaia Gerber was turning heads and making everyone do a double take after celebrating her 18th birthday in New York City at the Paradise Club. The teenage supermodel seemingly channelled her mother Cindy Crawford and exuded '90s glamour for her Friday night festivities. Gerber looked like the spitting image of her supermodel mother at the 1992 Versace "Rock 'N Rule" Fashion Show and the 1992 MTV Video Music Awards.

Taapsee, Anubhav's next 'dedicated to women of India' to release on March 6



MUMBAI, SEP 8 (PTI): Director-actor duo Anubhav Sinha and Taapsee Pannu's next film will hit the theatres on March 6, 2020, ahead of the International Women's Day.

Anubhav and Taapsee have earlier collaborated on 2018's critical as well as commercial success "Mulk".

The filmmaker and the actor shared the release date of their yet-untitled collaboration on Twitter.

"Eleven is an auspicious number and this is my eleventh film and probably the toughest so far. Keep us blessed. This one is dedicated to the women of India. See you Mar 6, 2020," Anubhav tweeted. Sharing the director's post Taapsee wrote, "This year let's make it even happier Women's Day! See you all ladies along with your men in theatres on 6th of March 2020."

While Taapsee is currently enjoying a good box office run of "Mission Mangal", Anubhav is fresh from the success of his hard-hitting critically-acclaimed film "Article 15".

Biopic on Steve McQueen in the works at Wonderfilm Media

LOS ANGELES, SEP 8 (PTI): A biographical drama about Hollywood legend Steve McQueen is being developed by Wonderfilm Media.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, the production house has acquired the rights to Marshall Terrill's 2010 biography "Steve McQueen: The Life and Legend of a Hollywood Icon". It will adapt the book into a feature film.

Terrill's book chronicles the humble origins of actor, his ascent to Hollywood stardom and his untimely death at the age of 50 in Mexico in 1980.

McQueen made a name for himself in 1960s and 1970s with films such as "The Magnificent Seven", "The Great Escape", "The Sand Pebbles" and "The Thomas Crown Affair", among others. He later earned the sobriquet The King of Cool.

The project will be produced by Jeff Bowler, Bret Saxon and Dan Grodnik. Terrill will

serve as an executive producer and creative consult. Wonderfilm is financing.

The film will include a scene between McQueen and cult leader Charles Manson.

Bowler said, "When I found out from Mar-



shall's incredibly researched and thorough book that McQueen was supposed to be at the Sharon Tate house the night of the Manson murders, I was instantly engaged in that story thread. I think we've found a fascinating way into the story of an incredible legend.

World premiere of Goutam Ghose's 'Raahgir' at Busan film fest

KOLKATA, SEP 8 (PTI): Ace director Goutam Ghose's latest venture 'Raahgir' (The Wayfarers) will have its world premiere at Busan International Film Festival in October. The film, starring Adil Hussain, Neeraj Kabi and Tillotama Shome, will be screened under "A Window on Asian Cinema" section, the auteur said.

'Raahgir', a tale of empathy during crisis, has been

adapted from a short story by Bengali writer Prafulla Roy. A large part of the film has been shot in Jharkhand.

"After the world premiere at Busan, we intend to screen the film at other prestigious festivals across the globe. In India, too, the film will be showcased at a festival and then released for public," he told PTI.

The National Award-winning director asserted that he

wanted his film to travel festival circuits before its release in theatres to avoid indiscriminate sharing on the Internet.

"With the emergence of digital media, there is always a chance that the film might be illegally uploaded on the Internet. This trend has impacted the film industry in a big way... Directors now have to be extra cautious during the first screening of their films," he added.

Desperation not part of my personality: Manoj Bajpayee

KOMAL PANCHAMATIA

MUMBAI, SEP 8 (PTI): It took Manoj Bajpayee a while to enter the ever growing digital space, considered to be a boon for storytellers today, and the actor says the desperation to get viewership by serving overdose of "violence and sex" kept him away from the web world.

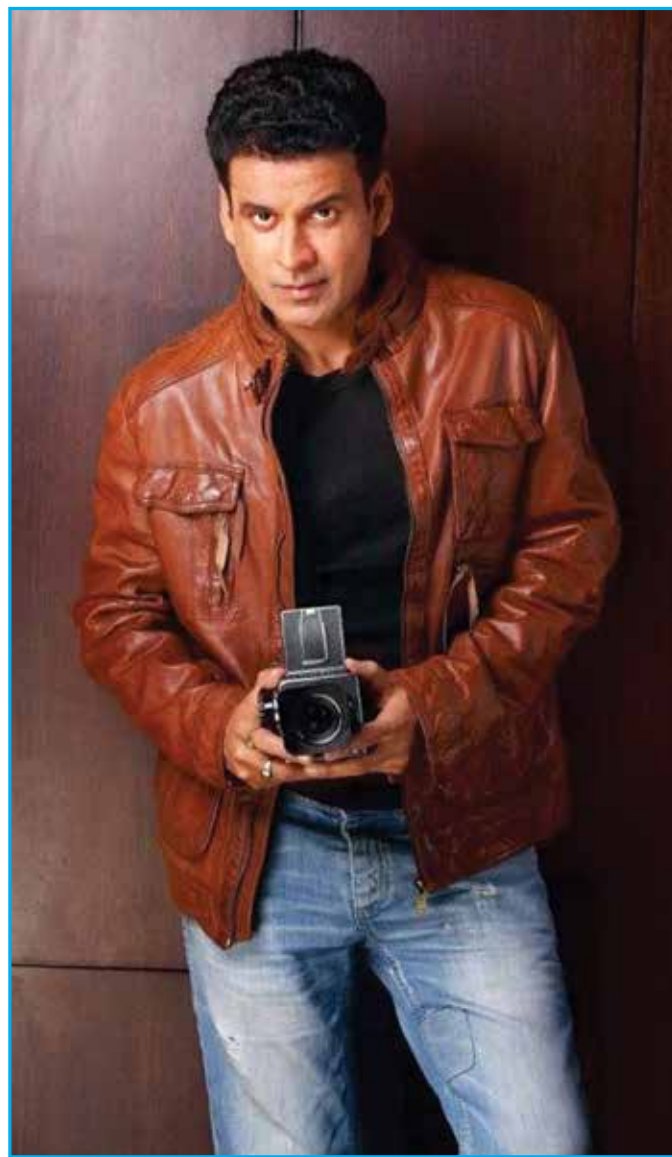
The 50-year-old actor, who is making his digital debut with Amazon Prime Video's "The Family Man", said he always wanted to start with a unique concept which had "integrity" in its narrative.

"I realised, there is a pattern that most of the shows were following. There was a pattern that was forming in front of me and that was quite scary. All the shows, no matter how different the story was, they were trying to please the audience desperately and were trying to grab the eyeballs by showing too much violence and sex.

"I realised, right now, since this medium is at an infant stage and also they (makers) don't know what to do with this freedom, I was sure I was not going to be part of this desperation. I wanted to be part of something that was very unique and something that is not compromising and still having its integrity intact in terms of its narrative," Bajpayee told PTI in an interview. The critically-acclaimed performer said he was trying to "run away from that clutter" and asserted he is not against violence and sex if they are essential to the story.

"It is all about staying true to the story. For me, that is very important. I am not averse to intimate sequence or showing violence. I am averse to banning anything in life.

"But being desperate to get some eyeballs is something that I do not like. That desperation is not even there in my personality. 'The Family Man' goes very well with as a creative person for me,"



he added. "The Family Man", an action-drama series, tells the story of a middle-class man who works for a special cell of the National Investigation Agency (NIA). While he tries to protect the nation from terrorists, he also has to protect his family from the impact of his secretive, high-pressure, and low paying job.

Bajpayee has made a mark for himself as one of the most versatile performers in Hindi film industry and the actor said switching between mediums is not a struggle.

"Your acting will never change. You will always be an actor no matter which platform you are acting on. It gives you the freedom in terms of length, in cinema it is about two-and-half-hours of time frame. "There is no chance of being indulgent or

there is no opportunity to explore your character in great detail in cinema, no matter how great the character is. But in a web-series, there is time to explore so many other facets of a character and scenes and that is so flattering for an actor like me," he said.

The National Award-winner added all he craves for is creative satisfaction and exploring new dimensions as a performer.

"An actors job is not to look at the platform. If the web platform is giving you an opportunity to explore new dimension as a performer and giving you the freedom to work on your skill you should do it. I have done short films because of that despite they not paying a single penny but I have done that."

"The Family Man" will premiere on September 20.

'Gully Boy' to release in Japan in October

MUMBAI, SEP 8 (PTI): Filmmaker Zoya Akhtar's critically-acclaimed movie, "Gully Boy", featuring Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt, is set to release in Japan in October. Ranveer is thrilled that the audience in Japan would now get to see the story of the rap revolution in India.

"I am very happy, very proud that 'Gully Boy' is releasing in Japan. I have never been to Japan but only learnt, heard and seen the most wonderful things about the land of the rising sun. I hope to come there someday," the actor said in a statement.

Ranveer said the film's release in Japan is a proud moment for everyone who worked on "Gully Boy". "... Our film has travelled to the

vast nation of Japan and we hope that you all see it and you all like it," he added.

The film, which had its world premiere at



the 2019 Berlin Film Festival, featured Ranveer as an up-and-coming rapper who sets out to achieve his dream by rhyming about his life on the Mumbai streets.

ARIES: This is a time of wish fulfillment. Get ready to receive exactly what you asked for, in the format you desire. Such is the power of manifestation. For some, this could be a time or completing a significant journey. Ready to share your masterpiece with the world? Remember, perfection is but an illusion.

Tip: This is a time of completion and fruition.

TAURUS: Putting food on the table is paramount. But do you really need to lose you mental peace and sanity to create a stable life? Beware, Taurus. You could be holding on to a false sense of security. Where does your true happiness lie?

Tip: The Universe is supplying all of your needs.

GEMINI: You are closer to your destination than you can imagine. Continue to wrap up your projects and meet

your deadlines. Spend some time at the end of the day to review your progress and adjust the sails. Clearly envision the port you want to dock and speed away. New possibilities are opening up right this minute.

Tip: Envision your destination and set sail.

CANCER: Even though the change seems frightening, you're being asked to roll with it. Resisting it will feel a lot like rowing upstream without a paddle—impossible and exhausting all the same. You've survived a hundred per cent of your bad days.

Tip: Embrace the winds of change.

LEO: There is no harm in mixing business with pleasure, especially if it opens the doorway to more business and pleasure. Your wit and charm know no bounds today.

Tip: A successful partnership is on the cards for some.

VIRGO: The law of attraction works in mysterious ways, Virgo. Be cognisant of the signs and synchronicities, especially if you've been wanting to work in partnership with somebody. You will know if this association is worth your time and effort. On a side note, have you checked in with your body lately?

Tip: A blessed partnership is on the cards.

LIBRA: Oh, the perils of micromanaging. See how and where you need to detach. This will help you focus on what's really important and put your best work out. Thinking about expanding the team to take the load off?

Tip: It's to curate an A-team.

SCORPIO: Life is a giant ferris wheel and you're on the top of it, Scorpio. Expect many breakthroughs today. The blocks that were standing

in your way will now get cleared up. Keep an eye out for signs and synchronicities as you go about your day.

Tip: The blocks are getting cleared.

SAGITTARIUS: Yes, you deserve to be where you are today. Kiss goodbye to the demons. Replace fear and self-doubt with love. Remember there is a reason you were chosen for this sacred mission. What you do need to be mindful of, however, is that there is a lot more to learn.

Tip: Put in the work.

CAPRICORN: This is period of major movement, Capricorn. The blocks that previously held you back are now being cleared. Does that mean you will face no challenges whatsoever? No, it just means that your will to win is stronger. Remember, haters are going to hate, especially when they see you moving closer to the final destination.

Don't let that be the reason you take your sparkle down a notch.

Tip: Let the will to win be strong.

AQUARIUS: Writer's block, what? Here's a simple exercise to get your creative juices flowing: take a piece of paper and start journaling the thoughts that come to you. No stopping. No editing. Revisit the copy with a fresh mind. You'll find that some of the ideas you've channelled are pure gold.

Tip: Give free writing a thought.

PISCES: This is a time of movement and progression. Major news is on its way to you, and it could permanently change the game. Be sure to ground your energy, Pisces. This will help you stay focused despite the endless to-do list. For some, a major business trip may be on the cards. Put your best suit on as you board the flight.

Tip: Things are finally picking up pace.